

The Ivy Leaf

Established in 1917 to honor those who serve

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MULTI-NATIONAL DIVISION - BAGHDAD

“STEADFAST AND LOYAL”

MAY 12, 2008

★ ★ MND-B CG,
CSM
discuss
success, issues



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off Operation Raider
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Task Force XII leaders take to skies



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Brandon Little, TF XII PAO
Command Sgt. Maj. Chad Cuomo, Task Force Storm's senior enlisted leader, settles into the gunner seat of a UH-60 Black Hawk before heading out on a mission.

By Sgt. Brandon Little
Task Force XII PAO

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – “Be Know Do” has been a part of the Army leadership doctrine for more than a decade, and many leaders have interpreted it in many different ways.

For two of Task Force XII's most senior noncommissioned officers, this leadership mantra takes them miles away from the safety of their offices and into a more mobile work station.

It's an alternate work environment that puts them in some potentially dangerous situations. But still, as they say, the view here is a whole lot cooler than any corner office on Camp Taji.

Task Force XII's Command Sgt. Maj. H. Lee Kennedy, along with Task Force Storm's Command Sgt. Maj. Chad Cuomo, help shoulder the workload of UH-60 Black Hawk crew members by serving as crew chiefs and door gunners on missions each week.

The task force's senior officers, all of its pilots, are called on to take to the skies regularly. The same is true for the senior enlisted leaders as well, who also don their flight gear and mount up for missions.

Flying a helicopter as a pilot rarely means washing windows or loading a passenger's bags for them. The door gunners, however, regardless of their rank, have to be ready for any mission.

“I believe, as a leader, that I should lead from the front and that I should not ask my Soldiers to do something that I wouldn't do myself,” said Cuomo, a native of Troy, N.Y. “If we were doing ground convoys, I'd be in those too. There should be no difference in going outside of the wire. Whether it's flying or driving, the leader should lead from the front.”

Their Soldiers appreciate their effort and their “can do” attitudes.

See **Leaders** Pg. 13

Soldiers update Family, friends back home at Forts Hood, Carson during 4th Inf. Div. Town Hall

By Sgt. Mark Matthews
MND-B PAO

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – The 4th Infantry Division is proud of its motto – Mission, Soldier, Family, Team. So it is with the term “Family” in mind that the Ironhorse Division holds its monthly meetings, which are broadcast to loved ones back home, in an effort to keep them informed on what their Soldiers are doing in Iraq.

The meeting also provides a venue for the Soldiers to have a little fun in the process.

Such was the case April 23, when the 4th Infantry Division Town Hall Meeting was broadcast via satellite to Families and friends at both Fort Hood, Texas, and Fort Carson, Colorado, from the friendly confines of Multi-National Division

– Baghdad's Media Operations Center at Camp Liberty.

The meetings are conducted each month, but for this one, a few new faces were on display for those in attendance back home. Maj. Gen. Jeffery Hammond, the commanding general of the 4th Inf. Div. and MND-B was in attendance – as he always is – but decided to forgo the center stage and deferred to two of his fellow leaders.

Serving as the Town Hall's guest host for the event was Col. William Salter, a native of Del Rio, Texas, who serves as the Baghdad Operations Center advisory team chief with the 4th Infantry Division and Multi-National Division – Baghdad. Joining him center stage was Lt. Col. Barry Graham, a native of Huntsville, Ala., who serves as the division G2 (intelligence) officer in charge.

Although the two are not professional broadcasters or TV hosts, they both were right at home in front of the camera as they explained their roles with MND-B.

“My job is to answer all the questions,” Graham said. “I'm kind of like Under Dog. He's a little guy who runs around and gathers a bunch of answers and tries to keep the city safe. Well that's kind of what I do back there in the G2.”

Salter works with Iraqi Security Forces, which is the Iraqi Army and the Iraqi National Police, and advises the Iraqi commanders of all security issues inside Baghdad.

“You know, the (Military Transition Teams) and the concept Military Transition Teams, we have about 1,200 Soldiers out there participating as MiTT members right now,” Salter

See **Town Hall** Pg. 19

MND-B CG encourages Soldiers to continue strong effort

From Maj. Gen. Jeffery Hammond
commanding general, MND-B and 4th Inf. Div.

To all Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines:

Mission – Soldier – Family – Team.

It is a distinct privilege and honor to serve with you at such a defining moment in our country's history, as well as a crucial time for the Iraqi people.

I continually see firsthand your selfless service and courage in the face of a heartless and evil enemy.

Since March 31, there have been 36 Bronze Star Medals presented: nine of those for valor.

Together, with our Iraqi brothers in arms, you are serving with great distinction – protecting the people of Iraq, containing the violence and thereby establishing continuous security and stability throughout most of Baghdad.

Life is getting better for most Baghdadis, and you are succeeding in our primary mission of protecting the Iraqi people.

Daily, you execute this mission with Character and Moral Courage.

Together, as a Team, we will continue targeting Special Group criminal elements with precision targeting to secure the Iraqi people against an enemy who fires rockets and mortars, small-arms fire and rocket-propelled grenades with no thought to the welfare and wellbeing of the innocent.

We define our current enemy as Special Groups Criminals: those who are not in compliance with Muqtada al-Sadr's freeze.



Maj. Gen. Jeffery Hammond

They are involved in kidnapping, murder, intimidation, smuggling, EFPs and indirect fire (rocket and mortar) attacks against the GoI, Iraqi people and their security forces, and MND-B Soldiers.

In short, they are murderers, thugs, criminals and basely evil. They have different networks with different criminal specialties.

Before the uptick in violence that began on March 23, these SG criminals conducted their nefarious activities. Since then, during the uptick in violence following the GoI's operations in Basra, and after al-Sadr said to cease their brutal activities, the SG criminals continue attacking. In short, they haven't changed.

They use Iranian-manufactured rockets and mortars, C4, and other EFP components to kill and maim.

Because of this, U.S. and Iraqi Security Forces will aggressively target those SG criminal elements violating the rule of law through either criminal activity, acts of violence or intent to commit violence.

There is no place they can hide as there is no place we won't go.

Of note, attacks targeting the population have dramatically declined since June 2007.

Even during the recent uptick in violence, attack levels and civilian casualties in April were at their lowest point in more than 12 months.

Your selfless service and sacrifice, and that of your Families back home, are making a difference in the lives of the innocent.

More importantly, you are giving the Iraqi people time: critical time essential for the Government of Iraqi and the Iraqi Security Forces. Continue to lead, mentor and teach your Iraqi partners.

There must be no slack given.

Enforce high standards and discipline as they represent the future of Iraq.

My warmest regards and accolades to the MND-B Soldiers – warriors, peacemakers and humanitarians – in south Sadr City.

You are taking the fight to the enemy, partnering with the ISF and showing compassion to the Iraqi people. It is vital the Iraqi people see you and the Iraqi Security Forces, in full partnership, protecting the Iraqi people where they live, gather and work.

Throughout Baghdad, the U.S. Soldier and the ISF is providing security via the Safe Neighborhood Program (barrier plan).

South Sadr City is just the most recent example where, together, we are establishing sustainable security and stability in conjunction with immediate humanitarian assistance in order to set the conditions for the Government of Iraq to revitalize essential services.

An example is the revitalization of the critical Jamilla Market area, using the Safe Market methodology, as we have done in the past in the Shorja Market in Rusafa.

Also, MND-B Soldiers recently established a Combined Civil-Military Operations Center (with representatives from GoI) in the Thawra 1 Joint Security Station to provide a central point for citizens in the Safe Neighborhood/Safe Market Area to process claims, meet immediate essential service needs, coordinate projects for trash and rubble removal, street repair, local lighting, micro-grants for small businesses, etc.

In closing, I want to reiterate what a privilege it is to serve along side of you.

You each represent the very best our Nation has to offer. Volunteers one and all, selflessly serving – all of you are all-American heroes.

May God bless each one of you, our country and the people of Iraq.

Ironhorse 6

"Steadfast and Loyal"

Enforcing Standards, not Interpreting Standards – It's what NCOs do

From Command Sgt. Maj. John Gioia
MND-B and 4th Inf. Div.

When it comes to enforcing standards, our job is not to interpret the policy – our job is to enforce the policy. It's just that simple. In order to be good, effective leaders, we must be good, effective followers.

This is an issue I would like to address because at times it seems as if everybody has their own take on interpreting policies.

To put this in the simplest terms I can, a policy letter is signed by, in most cases, a commanding officer. NCOs don't write policy.

We are not empowered to write policy – and

there's a reason behind that. Commanders write policy. That's why they call it Command Policy – and that policy is enforced by the noncommissioned officers.

Our mission is very clear. We provide recommendations and advice to the commanders based on our operational experience and input we receive from our subordinates.

When the commander has received all input and makes his or her decision and says "This is now policy," and by signing his or her name to it, then it is our duty and responsibility to enforce that policy.

That is not to say that we are non-effective in the position that we hold as noncommissioned

officers. Rather, it means that there is a time and a place to make recommendations and give advice, but once that is done, the commander will make the final decision. That is their responsibility as the commander.

I bring this up because NCOs and leaders get themselves into trouble when they interpret things the way they want them to be – instead of the way they are intended to be. It's hard enough operating in this environment, especially as a first sergeant, who ultimately has to enforce the set standards for his company.



Command Sgt. Maj. John Gioia

See **NCOs** Pg. 3

The Ivy Leaf

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Do you have a story to share?

The *Ivy Leaf* welcomes columns, commentaries, articles, letters and photos from readers.

Submissions should be sent to the Editor at jason.thompson21@us.army.mil or the operations NCOIC at guadalupe.stratman@us.army.mil and include author's name, rank, unit and contact information.

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Chaplain's Corner: Maintaining strong marriages while deployed requires work, patience, teamwork

By Chaplain (Lt. Col.) James Carter
MND-B and 4th Inf. Div. Chaplain

As Soldiers serving in combat, we're all separated from our loved ones.

Absence does not always make the heart grow fonder unless we work to keep our marriage and Family relationships strong. Maintaining a healthy and vibrant marriage involves many things.

I would like to share five important components to strong marriage and encourage you to invest in your marriage. You are either making a deposit or withdrawal into your relationship – take the time this week to make a deposit. You will enjoy a great return on your investment.

Here are five major characteristics of a strong marriage. I call them the five "C's" of a great marriage.

Communication: It is important that you communicate. Talking with one another is crucial. But just as crucial is what you communicate.

Are you sharing the problems of the day? Are you always complaining about the separation or other matters? Or do you spend time listening to your sweetheart and working toward marital goals and encouraging one another?

Working together through issues and reading books together are ways to keep communication lines open and strong. Reading children's books aloud and recording yourself on a DVD or VCD is another good way to stay connected to your children.

It is so important that you remember to invest and take the time to call, email or write you loved ones in order to enhance communication.

Commitment: It is important to also remember your commitment and covenant you made to your sweetheart.

A covenant is important as it is your oath and pledge to your spouse and God. It builds trust, and trust builds unity and closeness in a marriage.

small basket of flowers delivered to a classroom where your wife works goes a long way in letting her know you remember her birthday or anniversary. She wants to feel cherished and appreciated.

Compromise: Sometimes it is important to compromise. Perhaps you came to Iraq with notions of how your money would be spent while you were here.

Maybe you have specific goals, such as maximizing your Savings Deposit Program contribution within a specific time frame.

But what happens when the unexpected happens?

Family financial issues must be discussed together and compromise is important. Strong couples learn how to negotiate through issues.

Church: The last "C" of a great marriage is Church. A marriage

that prays together stays together. Our Lord loves his bride the Church. Spending time praying for your spouse builds intimacy and closeness. It bonds your spirits and strengthens Family relationships.

I would encourage you to share a devotional with your spouse and kids during this deployment.

Spiritual growth and faith builds the foundation of the home and will give you the power to endure hard times like a deployment. May God bless you and your Family as you work together to build a strong relationship.



When you know your spouse – no matter of location – has your best interest at heart, then you will be motivated beyond belief to continue to invest in your relationship.

Cherish: It is also important to cherish one another. When you communicate with your spouse, do you praise her for the good things she is doing? Do you remind her what you miss about her?

Do not forget that little things can be so meaningful. A

MND-B CSM: NCOs responsible for enforcing every standard

From NCOs Pg. 2

We don't make it any easier on him when we don't assist him by providing clear guidance. There's no room for interpretation in most policies because they are pretty cut and dry.

It's not about whether we agree or disagree with them. It's all about enforcing the standard! And if there are Soldiers who do not follow that policy, it is our job to make sure that they comply. And if that means we need to coach, teach and mentor, then that's what we must do.

Remember, like I said earlier, in order to

be good, effective leaders, we also must be good, effective followers.

Perhaps a good example of this is the following. MNF-I recently put out the policy letter on the wear of the new Army Combat Shirt. It specifically covers when Soldiers can wear it and when they can't wear it. But you watch. Over the next 30 days, some leader will come up with their own interpretation that "what the policy REALLY means is THIS."

A young Soldier will only do what he is enforced to do. So, if you find a Soldier at the PX that's wearing the Army Combat Shirt without having his IBA/OTV on,

chances are he's going to say "My NCO or my leader said I could wear it." That's not the fact.

The fact is you can't wear it.

I'll leave you with this simple analogy, and I think this somewhat sums up how I look at supporting the division commander.

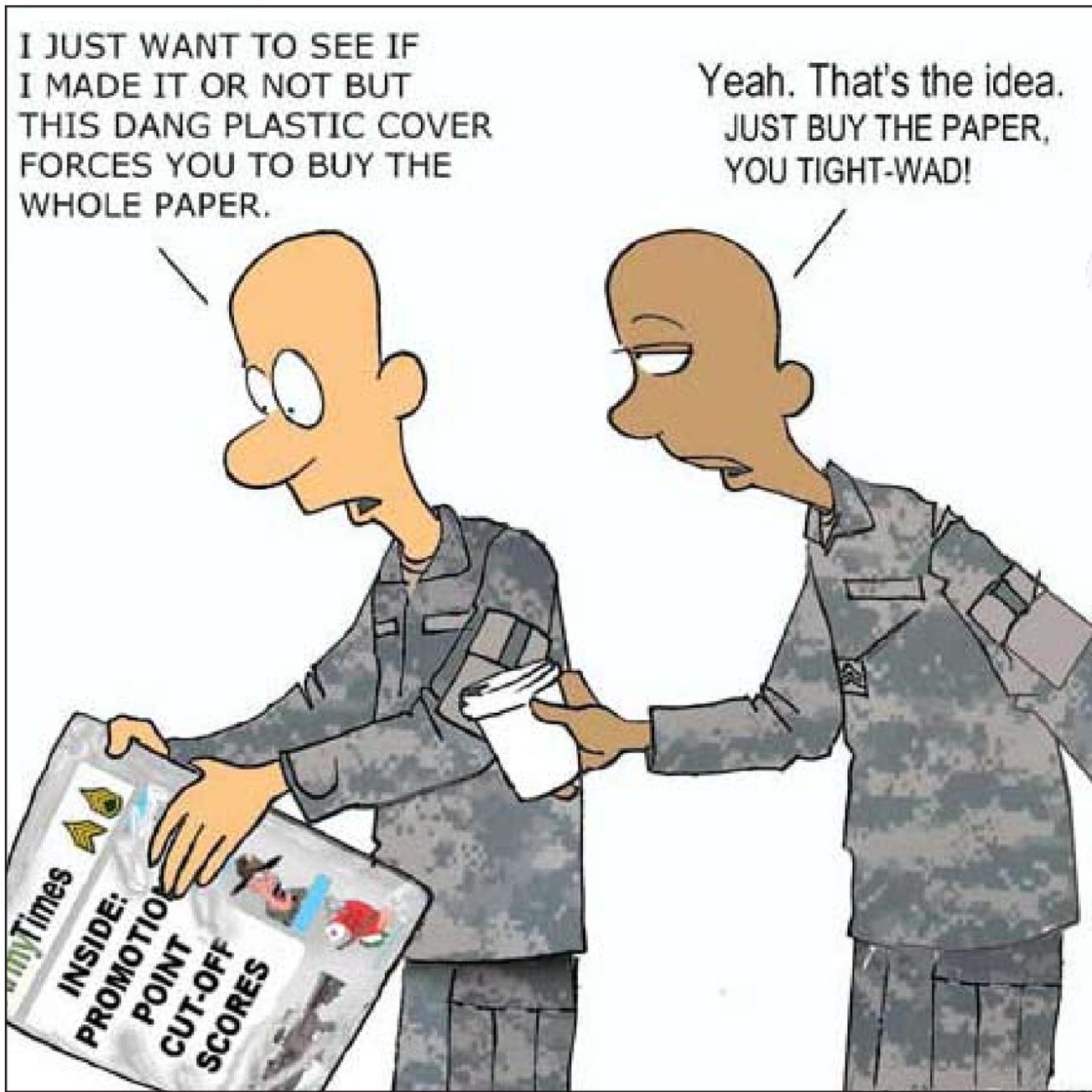
I know, outright, that when the commanding general says "This sentence now has a period." – that period is not a comma, it is a period. I take that statement and I run with it. That's the standard. That is the policy. When the commander speaks, all the time for advice and recommendation is over.

Behind the scenes, before the period is put on the end of the sentence, that is when NCOs provide guidance, recommendations and advice.

But, when the door opens up, and you walk out of the office, and there is a period at the end of the sentence – it's now time to execute.

At the end of the day, when all the dust settles, it's not our job to interpret. Rather, it's our job to follow the guidance and Enforce the Standard.

Live by the Creed!
Ironhorse 9
Steadfast and Loyal!



Ask Dr. Feel Good

MND-B surgeon's office



What's up Doc? My roommate is tripping out here lately. Nothing seems to satisfy him. He's moody as ever some days and very nice on others. I never know who it is that I'm going to run into at the door.

I don't think that he will hurt anyone, but I know he will not go and talk to anyone because he is too tough for that. I can tell that something is not right.

What should I do?

Signed: Tripping in my Room

Dear Tripping in my Room:

There are many possible explanations for your roommate's behavior.

In keeping with the CG's emphasis on Buddy Team and looking out for each other, the best thing to do initially is to talk with him. He may appreciate the support and confide in you. You can then help him to figure out how to address what is bothering him.

Next, if you are still concerned there is a problem that is affecting his performance or safety, don't hesitate to talk with your first-line supervisor/chain of command. Finally, don't forget about other resources like your medics/PA, the Combat Stress Clinic or unit chaplain to express your concerns.

Like your roommate, many Soldiers are reluctant to seek help. But allowing a problem to go untreated is far more likely to impact a Soldier's life and career than is seeking help.

What's up Doc?

I am concerned that my lungs will be black by the time I leave here, not from second-hand smoke, but from the dust.

Are there a long-term risk for exposure on my lungs, and what can I do to mitigate the risks.

Signed: Second Hand Dust

Dear Second Hand Dust:

The dust is so fine here (it just seems to hang in the air) that it seems to get everywhere and I'm sure there are a lot of people who share your concern.

The good news is that the body has its own defense mechanism against fine particulates.

There are small hairs and other cells lining the bronchi that slowly absorb or expel foreign deposits/particles and clean the lungs continuously. The debris is so small that people don't even realize we get rid of them when we cough and swallow.

As far as defense against the dust, placing a cloth over your nose and mouth will filter out some of the larger particulates, but the really fine stuff will still get through.

Don't worry – there are no long term affects to breathing in this dust.

Letters for Dr. Feel Good should be placed in the "Doc Box" located in the D-Main entrance, or email to mndb_pad@mnd-b.army.mil.

Word on the Street:

What do you think your mom is most proud regarding your military service?



Pvt. Tiffani Watson
Kingsville, Texas
supply specialist
BSTB, 4th BCT, 10th Mtn. Div.

“The fact that I’ve learned to work with so many different types of people, and I’ve become more outspoken.”



Pfc. Sean Johnson
Astoria, Ore.
Cavalry Scout
3rd Sqdn., 89th Cav. Regt., 4th BCT, 10th Mtn. Div.

“That I’ve been involved in multiple engagements with the enemy and have brought back zero casualties.”

“I think she’s proud I’m serving my country and the fact I’m doing something I still believe in.”



1st Lt. Matthew Peters
Columbia, S.C.
platoon leader
2nd Bn., 30th Inf.Regt., 4th BCT, 10th Mtn. Div.

News briefs

IA, MND-B Soldiers kill 22 enemy combatants

MND-B PAO

BAGHDAD – Iraqi Army soldiers and Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers engaged and killed 22 criminals attacking an Iraqi Security Force Checkpoint April 27 in northeastern Baghdad.

At approximately 6:35 p.m., 11th Iraqi Army Division and MND-B Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 64th Armor Regiment, 3rd Infantry Division, attached to 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, were attacked by a large group of criminals engaging with small-arms fire while manning a security checkpoint.

U.S. Soldiers used 120 mm fire from M1A12 Abrams tanks and small-arms fire to kill the 22 criminals, forcing remaining enemy forces present to retreat. The criminals' small-arms fire was ineffective and there were no U.S. Soldier or ISF casualties in the attack.

"We are not the aggressor," said Lt. Col. Steve Stover, MND-B and 4th Inf. Div. spokesman. "However, we will defend ourselves, our Iraqi partners and the Iraqi people from the enemy attack."



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. James Hunter, 2nd BCT PAO, 101st Abn. Div.

Watching guard

BAGHDAD – Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers with 1st Platoon, Company C, 1st Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, pull security during a patrol in northwest Baghdad April 18. Coalition Forces continue to maintain a presence on the streets of Baghdad, interacting with the local citizens and mentoring the Iraqi Security Forces.

MND-B Soldiers seize weapons cache

MND-B PAO

BAGHDAD – Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers confiscated several weapons caches in separate actions across Baghdad April 28.

At approximately 9:45 a.m., Soldiers from Company A, 4th Battalion, 64th Armored Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, seized a weapons cache consisting of 10 rocket-propelled grenades, two launching tubes, a suicide vest, two grenades, a 105 mm round, two 60 mm mortar rounds and an unknown amount of home-made explosive in west Rashid.

ISF capture criminal bomb-makers

MND-B PAO

BAGHDAD – Iraqi Security Forces responded to an explosion at approximately 1:15 p.m. in West Rashid May 2.

Iraqi National Police and Iraqi Army soldiers found one criminal dead, another wounded and their vehicle destroyed.

The ISF quickly took control and secured the area, which led to the arrest of three criminals.

An explosive ordnance disposal team determined the blast was the result of a premature detonation of approximately 40 pounds of explosives, with ball bearings, in a suicide vest or improvised explosive device.

A Multi-National Division – Baghdad patrol came across a dead body in the road next to a blast crater west of Abu Ghraib at approximately 10:40 p.m. May 1. Initial reports indicate the suspected criminal was emplacing an IED when it inadvertently detonated.

MND-B Soldiers kill 5 terrorists, detain 24, find 3 caches across Rashid

1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div.

FORWARD OPERATING BASE FALCON, Iraq – Multi-National Division – Baghdad soldiers killed five criminals, detained 24, found two caches and two explosively formed penetrators throughout a 24-hour period in the Rashid district of southern Baghdad May 1.

At approximately 8 p.m. May 1, Iraqi policemen from 5th Brigade, 2nd National Police Division, and soldiers from 22nd Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, were attacked by 10 criminals using small-arms and rocket-propelled grenade fire in the Aamel community during an operation to apprehend a key criminal.

The patrol requested attack aviation support. An aerial weapons team fired a Hellfire missile and killed five criminals.

The "Regulars" soldiers detained 20 suspected terrorists and various equipment.

At approximately 8 p.m. May 2, "Regulars" soldiers from Company E, 1-22nd Inf. Regt., seized roadside-bomb making materials in the Shurta neighborhood.

At approximately 11 p.m. May 2, soldiers from 4th Battalion, 64th Armor Regi-

ment., attached to the 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div. found an emplaced EFP while conducting a combat patrol. The soldiers notified an explosive ordnance disposal unit about the cache in the Risalah community.

At the same time, soldiers from Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 4th Battalion, 64th Armor Regiment, received a tip from local Sons of Iraq, or Abna al-Iraq members of a possible IED on the side of the road in the Furat area. The patrol requested EOD support, which determined the site was a cache consisting of roadside bomb-making materials.

On their way to the Furat site, the 47th EOD Company from Fort Hood, Texas, located and removed another EFP from the side of the road in the Risalah neighborhood at approximately 12:30 a.m. May 3.

"The 'Raider' Brigade is a dedicated and professional unit, and remains committed to providing a safe and secure environment for the Iraqi people," said Maj. Dave Olson, 1st BCT Spokesman. "By killing or capturing dangerous criminals and finding these bombs, the Raiders are supporting the Iraqi Security Forces to make the Rashid district safer for everyone."

ISF capture criminal bomb-makers

MND-B PAO

BAGHDAD – Iraqi Security Forces responded to an explosion at approximately 1:15 p.m. May 2 in West Rashid.

Upon their arrival at the scene, Iraqi National Police and Iraqi Army soldiers found one criminal dead, another wounded and their vehicle destroyed.

The ISF quickly took control and secured the area, which led to the arrest of three more

criminals.

An explosive ordnance disposal team determined the blast was the result of a premature detonation of approximately 40 pounds of explosives, with ball bearings, in a suicide vest or improvised-explosive device.

The previous night, an MND-B patrol came across a dead body in the road next to a blast crater west of Abu Ghraib at approximately 10:40 p.m. May 1.

Soldiers attacked with IEDs, SAF, kill 28 criminals

MND-B PAO

BAGHDAD – Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers killed 28 criminals in an extended small-arms fire engagement against Special Groups criminals in eastern Baghdad April 29.

At approximately 9:30 a.m., a U.S. patrol received small-arms fire, wounding an MND-B Soldier. As the Soldier was being evacuated, a U.S. vehicle was struck by two improvised explosive devices, and received small-arms fire and rocket-propelled grenades.

One vehicle was damaged in the attack and two other Soldiers were injured. The three Soldiers and a fourth also injured in the heavy SAF and RPG attacks that followed were evacuated to a nearby combat outpost.

Another U.S. vehicle was damaged by a third IED in the attack, and two Soldiers suffered minor injuries in the fighting that followed. None of the U.S. injuries are life threatening.

Using a combination of weapon systems available, including a Guided Multiple Launch Rocket System, MND-B Soldiers from 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, defended themselves and as the fighting ebbed, at least 28 militants were killed in the four-hour engagement.

"We will defend ourselves and the law-abiding Iraqi citizens," said Col. Allen Batschelet, chief of staff, MND-B and 4th Inf. Div. "We continually show great restraint and professionalism when attacked, and clearly identify the enemy before engaging their positions. The enemy continues to show little regard for innocent civilians, as they fire their weapons from within houses, alleyways, and rooftops upon our Soldiers.



1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div.

Cougar Squadron kicks off Raider Typhoon

By Staff Sgt. Brent Williams
1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div.

FORWARD OPERATING BASE FALCON, Iraq – Knocking on doors; greeting the Family; talking about politics, the neighbors or just the weather over a hot cup of overly sweet chai – a pleasant side of operations for Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers who have operated in the southeastern Rashid district for the past eight months.

For Soldiers of “Fox,” Company F, 2nd Squadron, 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment, attached to the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, MND-B, interpersonal relations, consensus information and the pictures they create are the biggest contributors to the safety and security of the citizens living in the Saha and Abu T’shir communities of southern Baghdad.

“We want to build a relationship to give the people a normal life – to bring the resources into the community,” said Lt. Col. Myron Reineke, commander, 2nd “Cougars” Sqdn., 2nd Stryker Cav. Regt., MND-B.

“This is about building relations in Abu T’shir and Saha,” said Reineke to his commanders and staff officers during the unit’s final rehearsal for a three-phase operation that began April 16 in support of 1st BCT’s Operation Raider Typhoon.

Stationed at Vilseck, Germany, and deployed as part of the “surge” force sent to reinforce security in support of MND-B and Operation Iraqi Freedom, the Stryker infantry unit, will handover their areas of responsibility to the troops of 7th Sqdn., 10th Cav. Regt., 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., in May.

In the meantime, the Soldiers of Co. F, occupying a combat outpost in northeast Rashid, want to take a few more bad guys off the streets before they leave Baghdad.

“We are conducting point operations to improve security for the people of Iraq,” said Capt. Kevin Ryan, commander, Co. F, 2nd Sqdn., 2nd Stryker Cav. Regt.

“Once security improves, we can focus on improving the quality of life for the people of Abu T’shir and southeastern Rashid.”

The ongoing clearing operations are part of 1st “Raider” BCT’s first effort since assuming its mission April 13, to deny terrorists and criminal elements a safe haven in the area that is home to approximately 1.2 million citizens in Baghdad.

The three-phased operation is reminiscent of the same work that the squadron has undertaken since the unit assumed responsibility for the area in August, said Ryan, a native of Quincy, Mass., and a graduate of the Citadel Military Academy, S.C.

Soldiers conducted pinpoint raids April 16-17, acting on military intelligence and information from Sons of Iraq (Abna al-Iraq), to capture some of MND-B’s most wanted

Operation focuses on forging trust, teamwork between Iraqi communities, MND-B Soldiers



Soldiers of Company F, 2nd Squadron, 2nd Cavalry Regiment, attached to the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, search a pool hall for any evidence that could lead to the apprehension of high-profile terrorists and criminals operating in Baghdad’s Abu T’shir and Saha communities in the southeastern Rashid District April 17.

terrorists and criminals, said Ryan, who is on his third deployment to Iraq.

The units then transitioned into the second phase of their operations, conducting ongoing atmospherics in the neighborhoods, working with the SoI, the sheiks, and members of the local community, to gather data with the intent to build better relations with the predominately Shia and mixed Sunni-Shia communities, he explained.

“People who are sitting on the fence, and don’t know which way to go, will go our way just because we talked with them,” Ryan explained. “If we do this right, we will build relationships with the people which will empower them to be able to keep these bad guys from coming back into their neighborhoods.”

Conducting census operations, checkpoint inspections, joint patrols, combined operations and traffic control points with Iraqi Security Forces is nothing out of the ordinary for the Stryker Soldiers, said Sgt. 1st Class Roberto Huie, a platoon sergeant assigned to Co. F, 2nd Sqdn., 2nd Stryker Cav. Regt.

“Us walking through the neighborhoods – that is an everyday thing,” he explained.

Early morning operations hunting down 1st BCT’s most wanted criminals is just an added bonus for the ‘Fox’ Soldiers, said Huie, a 19-year veteran, who hails from Brooklyn, N.Y., and is the company’s acting first sergeant while his se-

nior noncommissioned officer is on environmental leave.

“Our preferred method is to knock, and 90 percent of the people are more than willing to let us in,” stated Huie. “Conversely, if we find a house that looks suspicious to us, or a Family that looks suspicious to us, and they don’t want to let us in their house, sometimes we have to cut their locks.

“We may not see the results in the next three weeks, but I think this (operation) is going to generate a lot of tips and a lot more leads ... and eventually we will get them,” added Huie. “Whether the people like it or not, we are coming through their whole neighborhood to get these criminals off the streets.”

The company’s mission has varied greatly during their time as a “surge unit” operating in southern Baghdad since August of 2007, said Huie.

The Fox Soldiers have worked throughout Saha and Abu T’shir in southeastern Rashid to assist with essential services, force protection for Iraqi contractors to fix sewage or electricity issues in the Iraqi mulhallas (neighborhoods), as well as providing over watch for ISF and SOI manning checkpoints, providing security for the local communities, he said.

Staff Sgt. Scott Campbell, squad leader, Co. F, 2nd Sqdn., 2nd Stryker Cav. Regt., said that he hopes to see more changes for the better as the unit prepares to leave Baghdad for the unit’s future mission in Baquaba.

“There’s a better peace now, than there was before the ‘surge,’” said Campbell, a native of Orlando.

Campbell a veteran of 11 years, said that in three deployments in support of OIF, from 2003 to today, he has seen many changes, especially in the security situation around southern Baghdad.

“I think that when we go around and meet the locals and get to know them better on a personal basis, they become more at ease with us,” he explained. “The more we get to talk with them the better they trust us; the more they like us.”

Campbell said that in addition to improving security, units must continue to work to improve the infrastructure to better meet the needs of the Iraqi people.

“They need to improve faster,” he said. “Iraqis need to start pushing a lot more effort into rebuilding their infrastructure; power, water, medical treatment, jobs, ways to create jobs. Stuff that could be making them money is not making them money right now, and I believe that we need to pursue those endeavors more.”

The Cougars will begin their third phase of the operations in May, as they begin to transition the Abu T’shir and Saha neighborhoods to 7th Sqdn., 10th Cav. Regt., 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B.

Do you have a story to share?

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The Ivy Leaf

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Indiana National Guard takes on force protection

By Spc. Andrea Merritt

1st Sust. Bde. PAO

CAMP TAJI, Iraq — After seven months of duty in Iraq, the Soldiers of 1st Battalion, 143rd Field Artillery Regiment, a California National Guard unit attached to the 1st Sustainment Brigade, successfully completed their tour of duty.

As the Soldiers prepared for their departure from theater, the 1-43 FA Regt., officially relinquished its force-protection mission to the 1st Squadron, 152nd Cavalry Regiment, an Indiana National Guard unit, during a transfer of authority ceremony April 17.

“I think our Soldiers performed as professionals — they were dedicated and disciplined,” said Lt. Col. Ian Falk, commander of the 1st Bn., 143rd FA.

“They embraced the mission ... they improved on everything and continued to make things better. I’m in awe of their performance.”

The Soldiers of the Indiana National Guard unit will now be responsible for running the Area Defense Operations Cell and providing security to the forces on Camp Taji.

After all of their hard work and training, the Soldiers are more than eager to step into their new role.

“We trained just for this mission that lies before us. We’re ready to execute and take over from our National Guardsmen from California,” said Lt. Col. Robert Burke, commander of the 1-152nd Cav. Regt.

In the process of preparing for deployment, the Soldiers of the 1-152nd Cav. Regt had to withstand three challenges simultaneously.

Before deploying, the unit underwent a trans-

formation from an infantry battalion to a cavalry squadron, which involved re-training its infantry Soldiers to be cavalry scouts.

“We put together a (military occupational specialty) qualification course, in conjunction with Fort Knox, to get our Soldiers MOS (qualified) in a quicker timeline due to our upcoming mobilization,” Burke said.

As the unit was undergoing transformation and re-training, its Soldiers also had to go through mobilization training to prepare for its deployment.

Despite the challenges, the Soldiers performed their duties well.

“They did very well. With good planning and good preparation, Soldiers tend to excel,” Burke stated.

Upon the unit’s arrival to Iraq, a number of personnel from the unit’s headquarters element were sent to Victory Base Complex and the Anbar Province.

Although it lost some elements, the unit gained two new companies: the 1123rd Transportation Company and the 1038th Engineer Company, which are both Arkansas National Guard units, will be attached to the 1-152nd Cav. Regt. for the duration of their deployments.

“That’s what the Army’s all about. We have these plug and play type units to fill in and take over for another unit’s mission and still drive on with no diminishment of current operations,” Burke said.

“I’m just excited to be here. It’s nice to finally have something where we’re wanted and where there’s a need for us to step up and take over an important job here,” Burke concluded.



U.S. Army photo by Spc. Andrea Merritt, 1st Sust. Bde. PAO Lt. Col. Robert Burke, commander of the 1st Squadron, 152nd Cavalry Regiment, and Command Sgt. Maj. James Martin uncase their unit’s colors during a transfer of authority ceremony April 17.

New bank opens in southern Baghdad center of commerce

By Spc. David Hodge

1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div.

FORWARD OPERATING BASE FALCON, Iraq — Eight months ago, opening a bank in the Rashid district of southern Baghdad sounded like a good way to stir up trouble.

Times have changed in the area however, and local residents now have tangible proof of the economic resurgence in the area as they gathered for the grand reopening of the Rashid Commercial Bank April 20 in Doura.

A crowd of excited faces, joined by members of the Iraqi Security Forces and Soldiers from the 2nd Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment, attached to the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division — Baghdad, assembled around a doorway that was secured only by a strand of ribbon.

With a snip of the scissors, the crowd of Iraqi citizens, which had amassed hours earlier, began filing inside to use the bank’s services.

“Today is a historic day for us,” explained Zuhair al-Jumaili, bank manager. “We are pleased to reopen this branch and provide services to the residents of Doura.”

With tellers already in position to begin work, the residents of this center of commerce, known by many as the Doura Market, trickled inside through the taut security.

“In the past, Doura’s situation was very bad,” Jumaili explained. “Today, the area is safe and secure. The bank will serve a large number of residents, and we are very pleased with the efforts of the Coalition Forces.”

Capt. Daryl Carter, commander, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Bn., 4th Inf. Regt., 4th Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, works with the residents of Doura and patrols the streets daily.

“The place was basically desolate until about eight months ago,” Carter explained. “Now, if you walk down Market Road, it’s a gold mine. We can barely drive through this area without being surrounded by people.”

When the community was at its worst, many of the residents abandoned their homes and businesses to seek refuge some place else, explained Carter.

The lead contract manager for the opening of the Rashid Community Bank, Ahmed al Hadad, said he knew the residents would be surprised when the rumor of the bank reopening spread around.

“All the people are very happy,” Hadad said. “We invited everyone that lives in the community to the opening.”

The bank opening is a significant achievement and is indirectly the result of the hard work and efforts put forth by the ISF and MND-B Soldiers in enhancing security in the area.

“It was a pretty monumental event,” said 1st Lt. Justin Chabalko, platoon leader, mortar platoon, HHC, 2nd Bn., 4th Inf. Regt.

“Since security has been good, there has been a lot of progress in the area.”

It is “monumental” because it shows there is stability in the region and also that the government can provide for its people, stated Chabalko, who hails from Hazleton, Penn.

In the afternoon, when the bank’s business hours were near completion, a nearby vehicle’s loudspeaker announced the bank would stay open until all the customers outside had been served.



U.S. Army photo by Spc. David Hodge, 1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div. A crowd of Iraqi citizens awaits the opportunity to use the newest edition in the Doura community, the long-awaited reopening of the Rashid Community Bank in the Rashid district of southern Baghdad April 20.



4th BCT, 10th Mtn. Div.

NP takes lead in combined cordon, search operation

By **Spc. Grant Okubo**

4th BCT PAO, 10th Mtn. Div.

FORWARD OPERATING BASE RUSTAMIYAH, Iraq— Iraqi National Police took the lead during a combined operation with Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers in the eastern Baghdad neighborhood of Kamilayah April 21.

NPs from 2nd Battalion, 4th Brigade, 1st National Police Division, in Beladiat, worked with Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 66th Armor Regiment, and 2nd Battalion, 4th Brigade, 1st

National Police Division, National Police Transition Team, during the cordon-and-search mission; the Soldiers from both supporting units are attached to 4th Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division.

“The operation went perfect,” said Bilal Jahsem Ahmed, a National Policeman with the 2nd Bn., 4th Bde., 1st NP Div. According to Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki’s orders, the objective (was) to halt the bad activities carried out by Jaysh Al Mahdi members and other terrorists, explained Ahmed.

“We did a great job today,” he declared.

A recent change to security policies was the focus of the cordon and search, said Ahmed. In the past, residents in the area were allowed to carry weapons; however, the policy has changed and now all weapons in the neighborhood must be collected.

“This was actually our first time going out with them on a cordon and search of this magnitude,” said Capt. John Coligado, an Elk Grove Village, Ill. Native, who serves as the executive officer for 2nd Bn., 4th Bde., 1st NP Div. NPTT. “It’s not an abnormal operation, but it is the first time that they are going out and conducting a mission of this size.”

A company-size element of NPs rolled out with their MND-B counterparts to lead the mission. Coligado said the NP’s ability to follow the orders of their chain of command was key to mission success. The NPs held themselves to the same standards of the rules of engagement MND-B Soldiers do, and they were able to reassure area residents of their safety and security, he added.

“A mission like this denies JAM (Jaysh Al Mahdi) and terrorists areas of operations to work in,” explained Coligado. These missions are a preventative measure against the establishment of weapons caches in the area. Their partner battalion, 1st Bn., 4th Bde., 1st NP Div., recently found a weapons cache just north of the area they were searching.

“It’s an important step,” said Coligado, in talking about the development of the NP. Eventually, he added, the goal is for the NP to operate autonomous from its MND-B counterparts.

“We are going to continue some more training events and more leadership courses and try to coordinate more joint patrols,” he added. “They will continue to conduct operations like this in which NPs are in the lead and, hopefully, NPs will be able to run an operation like this without Coalition support.”



U.S. Army photo by Spc. Grant Okubo, 4th BCT PAO, 10th Mtn. Div.

Iraqi National Policemen with the 2nd Battalion, 4th Brigade, 1st National Police Division, conduct a combined operation with Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 66th Armor Regiment, and the 2nd Battalion, 4th Brigade, 1st National Police Division National Police Transition Team in the eastern Baghdad neighborhood of Kamilayah April 21.



18th MP Bde.

Iraqi police partner with MND-B Soldiers, improve security for citizens in Tarmiyah

By **Sgt. Daniel Blottenberger**

18th MP Bde. PAO

CAMP VICTORY, Iraq – The citizens of Tarmiyah have seen a substantial reduction in violence over the past four months, which can readily be seen throughout the vibrant market places mid-day April 17 as consumers packed the markets to purchase needed goods from vendors.

“Things have been very quiet in Tarmiyah over the past four months,” said Staff Sgt. Mikey Fernandez, who is attached to Troop A, 1st Battalion, 14th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team “Warrior,” 25th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad.

“You would not see the markets the way they are now four months ago. The people of Tarmiyah are no longer afraid to come out of their homes,” added the New York native.

Fernandez said he credits the city’s success in fighting violence to the fact that the Iraqi Army, Iraqi Police and Sons of Iraq in Tarmiyah are all working together to reduce criminal activity in the area.

“The combination of the three – IA, IP and SoI – working together to improve security is what has helped decrease violence here in Tarmiyah,” said Fernandez, whom his mission is to oversee the Iraqi Army training of the Iraqi Police at the Tarmiyah local police station.

“There is a constant Iraqi Security Force presence in Tarmiyah,” he added.

There are SOI checkpoints set up down the winding roads on the way to the Tarmiyah city center, and ISF and CF security patrols constantly travel the routes while checking on security.

The ISF not only work together on the streets, but they also are seen working together while training to become more proficient in performing their missions.

Fernandez, an Iraqi Police advisor, along with members of the 411th Military Police Company Police Transition Team, oversee the training of the Iraqi Police Force at the Tarmiyah Joint Service Station.

“There is no language barrier when the Iraqi Army instructors teach the IP,” said Fernandez. “This makes the classes run smoother, and the IP respond very well to the IA instructors.”

The training consisted of foot patrol training, entry control point training, detainee operations, how to setup a security perimeter and room-clearing procedures.

Following the long day of training, Craig Chrissinger, an Iraqi Police Advisor, who oversees the training of the IP at the Tarmiyah station, sat down and conducted an after action review with the IP about the days training.

“They know the basics; they just need to keep practicing when they get chances to perfect their skills,” said Chrissinger, a native of Denver.

“The hardest thing to do is find time when the IP aren’t on shift to train them in advanced tactics to further their skills,” said Chrissinger.

At the end of the day, the IPs thanked the instructors before heading off on mission to further deter violence in their city.

The 411th Military Police Company, which oversees the Tarmiyah Iraqi Police Station, is deployed from Fort Hood, Texas, and is currently assigned to the 716th Military Police Battalion, 18th Military Police Brigade, Multi-National Division – Baghdad.



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Daniel Blottenberger, 18th MP Bde. PAO

A squad of Iraqi policemen move alongside a wall and scan their sectors of fire outside the Tarmiyah Iraqi Police Station while conducting counter-insurgency training April 17 in Tarmiyah.

IA provides first aid, supplies to Sadr City

By Spc. Joseph Rivera Rebolledo

3rd BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div.

BAGHDAD – Iraqi Army soldiers conducted a combined medical assessment in the southern portion of the Sadr City district of Baghdad April 17.

The operation was supported by Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Squadron, 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment, which is currently attached to the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National-Division – Baghdad, by providing citizens with essential medicines and personal hygiene supplies at Joint Security Station Tharwa 1.

For the assessment, Iraqi Security Forces provided military and civilian doctors to ensure visitors received medical supplies and were not in need of immediate or critical medical care.

Among the attendees were citizens ranging from the very young to the elderly.

During the event, the ISF had the opportunity to deal directly with the Iraqi citizens as they showed the people they can care for them. The assessment brought more than 400 citizens in less than two hours, making the event a successful one.

“It really turned out good; it was successful and turned out better than I thought,” said Capt. Ryan Mendenhall, a native of Ephraim, Utah, who serves as the fire support officer for the HHC, 1-2 SCR.

Mendenhall said he was surprised by how quickly the people reacted and came to the project.

“This is just a small step to let the people know that we are not here to destroy a home. There is a lot of work ahead of us, and we will continue doing it; eventually, it will pay off,” Mendenhall said.

For others, the amount of people who attended the assessment was unbelievable, due to the gunfire that could be heard in the distance.

“It exceeded my expectations; I didn’t expect anybody to show up because what was going on,” said Sgt. 1st Class Lawrue Bush, a native of Cleveland, who serves as the fire support NCO with HHC, 1-2 SCR. For the ISF and Soldiers of the HHC, 1-2 SCR, this is not the end for this mission.

The Soldiers are expecting the next assessment to be a bigger, and they are preparing to get more supplies, said Bush.

The combined efforts are geared toward helping to improve the location where the assessment was conducted.

“Hopefully the next one is a little bit better,” Bush said.



U.S. Army photo by Spc. Joseph Rivera Rebolledo, 3rd BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div.

An Iraqi Army doctor provides medical care for an Iraqi boy during a combined medical assessment at Joint Security Station Tharwa 1 in the southern portion of the Sadr City district of Baghdad April 17. The combined mission provided medical checks, medicines and personal hygiene kits for the local residents.

19 Iraqi detainees return to Families during ceremony

By Spc. Joseph Rivera Rebolledo

3rd BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div.

BAGHDAD — Multi-National-Division – Baghdad Soldiers hosted a release ceremony April 24 for 19 Iraqi citizens, former detainees, at Combat Outpost Apache.

The ceremony was hosted by 3rd Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, and marked the end of detention for Iraqis, who have paid their debt to society for being associated with criminal activities in the Adhamiyah district.

The ceremony is part of the reconciliation effort in the district by the 3-7 Cav. Regt., which is attached to the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division.

“It shows a great deal of unity among the Iraqi people, Army, police and ourselves, and only together we will be able to reach sustainable security,” said Lt. Col. Jeff Broadwater, a native of Radcliff, Ky., and squadron commander of the 3-7 Cav. Regt.

The citizens to be released were brought to the ceremony area at approximately 1 p.m., where Family members of the former detainees invited to attend the ceremony waited for their loved ones.

After making their entrance, the former detainees were received by their Families and friends with hugs, kisses and



U.S. Army photo by Spc. Joseph Rivera Rebolledo, 3rd BCT, 4th Inf. Div.

A group of Iraqi citizens and former detainees, place their right hands on top of the Koran during a release ceremony April 24 at Combat Outpost Apache north of Baghdad.

candies tossed in the air, which is a way Iraqis celebrate. Once the newly released citizens greeted their Families, the ceremony began with the Iraqi anthem and a prayer.

At the time of their detention, some of the detainees were linked with criminal and terrorist activities in Baghdad, which

includes planting improvised-explosive devices and weapons caches, said 1st Lt. Jose Rivera, a native of Mentor, Ohio, who serves as the assistant adjutant with the 3-7 Cav. Regt.

The former detainees placed their hands on the Koran took an oath to support the Iraqi constitution and signed a commitment to not get involved in any further criminal activities.

There is consternation associated with releasing former criminals back into society, Rivera said, but it’s all part of law, justice and a democratic society.

“Since they took the oath in front of their Families, neighbors and police, the chances of having them committing a crime are less,” Rivera said.

Lt. Col. Broadwater conducted the opening of the ceremony, while the oath and signature of the release was officiated by a local Sheik and an Iraqi Police official, which made the ceremony truly a combined event.

“The goal of the repatriation is to create a sense of community,” Rivera said.

Once all the proceedings were over, the now free men received their release papers and left with their guarantors and Family members.



2nd BCT, 25th Inf. Div.

IA, MND-B Soldiers search for caches

By Sgt. Waldemar Rivera

2nd SBCT PAO, 25th Inf. Div.

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers from 3rd Platoon, Company B, 52nd Infantry Regiment, attached to 1st Battalion, 27th Infantry Regiment “Wolfhounds,” 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, worked alongside Iraqi Army soldiers from the 36th Mechanized Brigade to search for weapons caches April 17 in Fahad Fadhil, northwest of Baghdad.

The purpose of the mission was to follow-up on reports that indicated the presence of cache sites in the area, to clear the area of possible caches, and show the people of the town the IA is there to protect them.

The mission took place under bad weather conditions caused by an almost blinding sandstorm, which resulted in visibility being reduced to roughly 100 feet all for the combined forces.

“Even with the inclement weather and limited visibility we were facing, we still had to accomplish the mission,” said Sgt. Jason Tippie, a Glouster, Ohio, native, who serves as a squad leader with Co. B. “At times, it seemed as if we were walking on Mars.”

Despite poor visibility, IA soldiers discovered a bag full of suspicious wires lying in a field near a home.

After a short inquiry on about the origins of the wires, the children pointed to an old air conditioning unit next to the house where the IA soldiers found an unopened box of 7.62 caliber ammunition, a bag full of loose ammunition, higher caliber than normal shot gun ammunition, weapons parts and three AK-47 magazines full of ammo.

Each household is only authorized to have one AK-47 and one magazine unless the occupants have a permit for another weapons system, said Sgt. 1st Class Raymond Zwicker, a Concord, Calif., native, who serves as a platoon sergeant with Co. B, 52nd Inf. Regt.

“When we are in a situation where there are more weapons than allowed, we have to confiscate the excess and hand them over to the IA,” he explained.

Inside the house, the IA soldiers found a disassembled AK-47, a jar full of ammunition and six more magazines full of ammo. All excess ammunition and weapons parts were confiscated.

Despite no big finds, the IA soldiers and MND-B Soldiers will continue to work together to clear the area of caches and bring peace of mind to the people in the area.



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Waldemar Rivera, 2nd SBCT PAO, 25th Inf. Div.

Pfc. Daniel Cortes, a native of Queens, N.Y., uses a metal detector to look for weapons April 17 with an Iraqi Army soldier from the IA's 36th Mechanized Brigade follows behind during a cache-clearing mission at Fahad Fadhil, northwest of Baghdad. Cortes is assigned to Company B, 52nd Infantry Regiment attached to 1st Battalion, 27th Infantry Regiment “Wolfhounds,” 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad.

MND-B Soldiers deliver law books at Tarmiyah Courthouse

By Sgt. Waldemar Rivera

2nd SBCT PAO, 25th Inf. Div.

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – Multi-National Division – Soldiers from the 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team “Warrior,” 25th Infantry Division’s Office of the Staff Judge Advocate helped the growing legal processes of Iraq April 24 by dropping off 50 Arabic-language law books to the courthouse in the town of Tarmiyah, northwest of Baghdad.

The books, donated by the High Court in Baghdad, were dropped off in conjunction with a visit with the judge at the courthouse to check progress and address any issues they may have, said Capt. Harrison Kennedy, a native of San Diego Calif., who serves as an attorney with 2nd SBCT.

“Bringing them the books assists the judge on doing his legal work,” said Sgt. 1st Class Willyum Beach, a Marion, Ohio, native, and the noncommissioned officer in charge for the OSJA.

They come from a different kind of regime, and they are transferring into the new system. We are helping them to get the books and the legal resources they need, “ he said.

The books are just one aspect of providing assistance, and Beach said the OSJA staff members continues to assist where they can.

“Without resources like the building, the judge, the paralegals and the books, they cannot function. It is an ongoing process that we are trying to assist with,” said Beach.

The building where the Court house is now was previously occupied by the Ministry of Water Department for the Government of Iraq, said Kennedy. The Ministry of Water did not need the building. So, the GoI turned it into the town’s courthouse, he added.

The new courthouse in Tarmiyah is just one of the many projects on the list of success stories in the reconstruction of Iraq and its people. The legal staff of 2nd SBCT will continue to do its part to help the judges and lawmakers of Iraq ensure citizens follow the rules.



Capt. Harrison Kennedy, a native of San Diego Calif., and an attorney for the Office of the Staff Judge Advocate, 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team “Warrior,” 25th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division-Baghdad, unpacks 50 Arabic-language legal books destined to help the local population at the Tarmiyah Courthouse, northwest of Baghdad, April 24.





Cobra Soldiers look for tips leading to criminal suspects

By Sgt. James Hunter

2nd BCT PAO, 101st Abn. Div.

BAGHDAD – Weeks have passed since northwest Baghdad rang from the sounds of small-arms fire and rocket-propelled grenade attacks.

The combined efforts of the Iraqi Security Forces and Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers quelled the violent outburst, and although many criminals were killed in fending off the attacks, some still roam the streets – living among innocent Iraqi civilians.

The outburst of violence is not something that has been forgotten in the minds of the Soldiers nor in the minds of the Iraqi citizens.

“These men are fools,” explained an Iraqi man in referring to the attackers. The man lives in Salam, a neighborhood just south of the Kadhamiyah district in northwest Baghdad. “They are criminals – killers.”

The man answered the door wearing just his pajamas April 18. You see, it was a day of rest for this Iraqi Family. Although he has only lived in the neighborhood since May 2007, he said that, for the most part, he feels the area is very quiet and safe.

“We’re not fighting al-Qaeda,” said Staff Sgt. Ramon Baca, the platoon sergeant for 1st Platoon, Company C, 1st Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment. “We are fighting these criminals and gangsters who go against the Government of Iraq and attack Coalition and Iraqi Security Forces.”

He asked the man to be on the lookout for the criminals who, for all he knows, could be living in the calm area amongst the population and possibly using the area as a safe-haven – a place to re-fit or even to meet and plan future attacks.



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. James Hunter, 2nd BCT PAO, 101st Abn. Div.

A Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldier with 3rd Platoon, Company C, 1st Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, shakes hands with an Iraqi child while on patrol in northwest Baghdad April 20. Soldiers from the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), continue to patrol the streets of northwest Baghdad.

“They are hiding among the innocent people,” Baca said. “With your help and your tips, we can crush them forever.”

MND-B Soldiers from Company C, 1st Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, patrol through northwest Baghdad daily to interact with the local populace in an attempt to gather needed information regarding the criminals operating in the area.

“The people are fed up with the criminals and with the insurgents,” said Baca. “They want to stand up against them by either tipping them off or fighting against them.”

It can be very difficult gaining information from the local residents because they fear the potential reprisals from the criminals; however, Baca said, they are fed up with them.

The MND-B Soldiers often receive tips from the local residents, either via phone or one-on-one conversations, about the criminals’ whereabouts or potential future plans of attacks against the ISF and CF, said Baca.

“We get general tips – masked men gathering with weapons, (criminals) gathering for a meeting or tips on individuals transporting weapons through the (operational environment),” Baca said.

It’s a determined effort on the part of the ISF and MND-B troops because in order to continue the rebuilding of the local economy, infrastructure and ISF, the criminal element must be dealt with.

Perhaps the odd thing however, is that the Cobra Soldiers don’t necessarily mention the criminals to the citizens they speak with. They have a round-about way of doing it – a simple, yet effective way.

“We don’t talk to them about those targets but what is going on within the community,” Baca said. “We talk to them about what we are trying to do and what we are trying to help them with.”

It’s all about building rapport and trust with these residents, which, in the past, they may not have seen from their own government. The residents seem to have a circle of trust within their communities – people they can go to when they need help or those they can count on when they face daunting challenges.

The MND-B Soldiers are earning that trust but make sure not to promise anything they can’t deliver.

With the ISF, what they can deliver is security. It is a vital mission they have been performing for some time.

“Because of the constant patrolling and keeping these bad guys quiet, every day, we get thanks for that. We are keeping criminals on their toes so they don’t have that opportunity to attack,” Baca said. “The Iraqis do appreciate us – and they do trust us.”

With the trust, and the ability to provide constant security, the tips will flood in because the local residents are tired of the criminal activity in the area. As Iraq continue to grow, so does the ISF. However, it is the help of the citizens of the proud land that is vitally needed, said Baca.

Strike Soldiers help open Iraqi Public Works substation

By Sgt. Paul Monroe

2nd BCT PAO, 101st Abn. Div.

BAGHDAD – In the United States, it is easy to overlook all it takes to keep a city’s trash and sewage system up and running.

Take the trashcan out to the end of the driveway, return from work and it’s empty. Turn on the faucet and clean water flows.

In Baghdad, basic services like sewage, water and trash service are tied to security. While Soldiers work to make the streets safer, their leaders work to put systems in place that will give residents a sense of normalcy.

To help residents restore basic services, Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers from the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, opened the first of four proposed Public Works Substations in Adil, a neighborhood in the Al Mansour District of Baghdad April 16.

Soldiers, local officials and members of the community marked the occasion with a ribbon-cutting ceremony at the substation.

The substations will serve as hubs where workers will be able to store and maintain the equipment used to keep basic services going. They are located next to joint security stations.

Workers will meet with Iraqi Security Forces at the JSS to coordinate services with ongoing security efforts in the area. The close proximity to the JSS will help ensure the safety of the equipment and the workers.

Capt. Adam Harris, the civil military operations officer with 1st Battalion, 64th Armor Regiment, worked for the past month to get the substation ready for the opening.

“We refurbished (the building). After it was completed, we hired out city workers,” Harris said.

The opening is the culmination of nearly a year’s work.

Col. Louis Fazekas, who serves on the embedded Provincial Reconciliation Team with 2nd BCT, 101st Abn. Div., started working on the project in May 2007. When he arrived, the 2nd BCT, 1st Infantry Division, averaged more than 19 attacks a day in the Al Mansour District.

“We knew as things started to calm down, we needed to start to restore services,” said Fazekas.

While the Soldiers of the Dagger Brigade worked to make northwest Baghdad safer, Fazekas and his team focused on services. They met with local leaders and put together a plan to improve the already existing system to provide services that both sides could agree on.

“You have to look at the existing institutions, not create new ones,” said Fazekas, “See what’s wrong with them and see what we can do to try and fix them.”

Over the next two weeks, the Strike Brigade will open three more Public Works Substations in northwest Baghdad.



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Paul Monroe, 2nd BCT PAO, 101st Abn. Div.

A prominent local sheik cuts the ribbon at the opening of the Adil Public Works Substation in Adil, a neighborhood in the Al Mansour District of Baghdad, April 16. Soldiers with the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, are scheduled to open three more substations over the next two weeks.



35th Eng. Bde.

230th Concrete Team patches roads after IED blasts

By Sgt. Henry Bauer

769th Eng. Bn., 35th Eng. Bde. PAO

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – Craters from improvised-explosive devices can be found throughout the thousands of miles of roadway that cover Baghdad and the surrounding areas. They are the direct result of IED blasts that were detonated by cowardly criminals against the people of Iraq, its Iraqi Security Forces and Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers.

When the attacks occur, it is time for the Soldiers of the 230th Concrete Team to “pour” into action.

The team is based out of from Purvis, Miss., and is attached to the 769th Engineer Battalion, 35th Engineer Brigade, MND-B.

The 230th Concrete Team consists of Soldiers who specialize as concrete mobile operators and concrete masonry troops in performing what is known as rapid crater repair.

“Through precise planning from the 769th Eng. Bn. from Baton Rouge, La., these missions are flawlessly executed with the assistance of the 851st Vertical Engineer Company from Little Falls, Minn.,” said Lt. Col. Keith Waddell, a native from New Roads, La., who serves as the commander for the 769th Eng. Bn.

“Since arriving to Baghdad in October, this small group has repaired over 105 craters using 828.5 cubic yards of concrete to better assist the local Iraqi people by making their roads safer to drive on and to prevent anti-Iraqi forces from using the same crater to cause further harm,” said Capt. Jason Mahfouz, a native of Lake Charles, La., who serves as the operations officer for the 769th Eng. Bn. “These repairs also benefit the Soldiers of the Multi National Division – Baghdad to carry out their mission here in Iraq.”

A local Iraqi who serves as an Iraqi citizen security officer said “the repairs made to the road are good. The smoother road makes for better driving.”

Whether the sun is beginning to rise or set, the Soldiers from the 230th Concrete Team, with assistance from the 851st Vertical Eng. Co., prepare to head out to perform the rapid crater repair missions. The Soldiers and their equipment head out to various sites, day after day and night after night, to

repair the roads that wait ahead of them.

“Once on site, and all security measures have been emplaced, the crater is dug out and shaped so that the reinforcing rebar can be properly placed,” said Sgt. James Bridges from Gulfport, Miss., who serves as a concrete mobile operator with the 230th Concrete Team.

Because of the hardness of the rock below the roadway, sometimes a pneumatic jackhammer is used to shape the crater that is being repaired. It is a physically demanding task due to the fact that the Soldiers wear sixty pounds or more of protective gear. Once the road is shaped, the Soldiers of the 230th Concrete Team begin to pour concrete from their concrete mobile vehicles.

The task can be challenging at times to get the concrete at the proper texture and consistency. At times, sand needs to be shoveled manually into the mixer. Once the proper mixture is established, the tiring task of spreading the concrete evenly is performed with metal concrete rakes and shovels, said Bridges.

Once the concrete is evenly spread out, it is smoothed over with a large float to ensure that it is evenly packed on top. While the process is performed, another Soldier uses a hand trowel to assure that the edges of the newly repaired crater are smoothed over the adjoining edges of the roadway.

Once the crater is repaired, these Soldiers, who have nicknamed themselves the “Goons,” sign the newly repaired road-



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Henry Bauer, 769th Eng. Bn., 35th Eng. Bde.

Spc. Robert Fancher, from Grenada, Miss., uses a hand trowel to smooth out the edges of the concrete with the adjoining roadway while performing rapid crater repair in northwestern Baghdad.

way with their nickname, date and time. Before leaving the newly repaired area, the Soldiers mark the site in the hopes that passing vehicles in the night will not damage the setting concrete. Once properly marked, the entourage of vehicles move further down the road towards the next crater awaiting much needed repair, said Bridges.

It is with the tireless and physically demanding effort from the Soldiers of the 230th Concrete Team and the 851st Vertical Eng. Co. ensure the roadways throughout the Baghdad area are safe once again for the citizens of Iraq and their brothers and sisters in arms.



2nd SCR

Gimlets give new life to 19 men

By Capt. Benjamin Roark

1st Bn, 21st Inf. Regt., 2nd SCR

BAGHDAD – As part of national reconciliation efforts, 19 detainees from the Abu Ghraib district, south of Baghdad, were re-incorporated into society and reunited with their families in a ceremony April 25.

The ceremony was hosted by elements of 1st Battalion, 21st Infantry Regiment “Gimlet,” 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment, Multi-National Division – Baghdad at Coalition Outpost Ibrahim Bin Ali, which is north of Abu Ghraib.

At the ceremony, the men pledged in front of friends, family and local leaders, that they will maintain their allegiance to the Government of Iraq, give support to the Iraqi Security Forces and work for the stability of their country. They signed an oath of allegiance in front of the people and sealed it with their fingerprint.

“Today is a great day for me,” said one of the released Iraqis. “I’m so happy to finally reunite with my family.”

Before the ceremony, Soldiers verified the former detainees’ information and had a local leader sign as a guarantor for their release as a testament of their readiness to return to society.

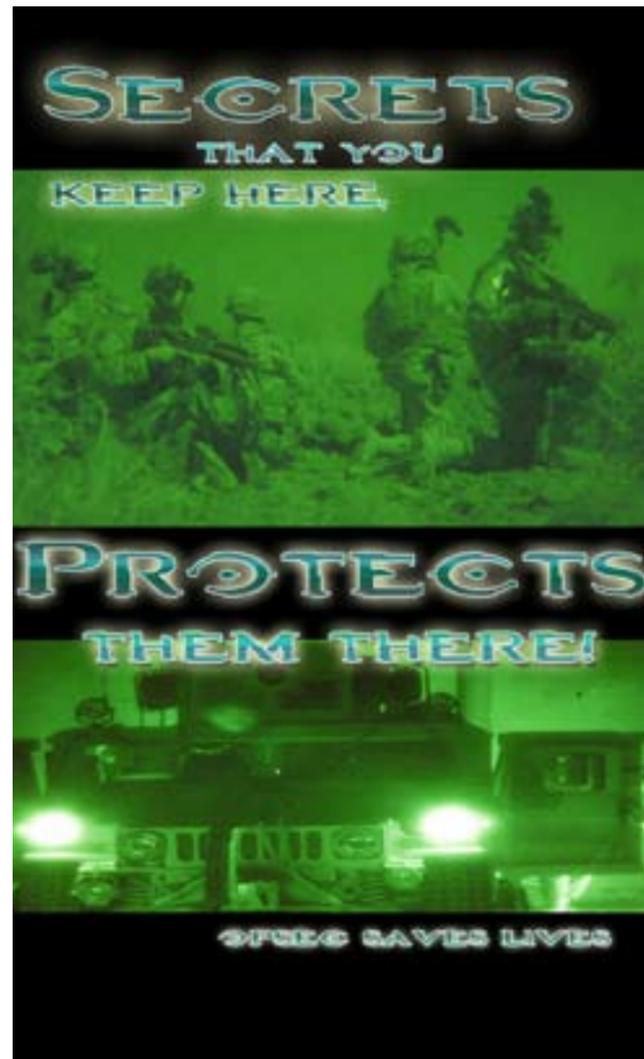
The Gimlet Soldiers will be involved in many more release ceremonies in the future.

“The reintegration of these Iraqi citizens into the community is an important part of the reconciliation process,” said Capt. Jon O’Dea, a native of Providence, R.I., who serves as the battalion assistant operations officer, 1st Bn., 21st Inf. Regt. “The most important aspect of this reintegration process is the role that the ISF, GoI and local leaders have in the future of those released.”



U.S. Army photo by Spc Dustin Weidman, 1st Bn., 21st Inf. Regt., 2nd SCR

Capt. Rafal Stachowski, a native of Warsaw, Poland, and military intelligence officer, 1st Battalion, 21st Infantry Regiment “Gimlets,” 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, watches as a former detainee sign an oath to maintain peace. Nineteen men were released in Ibrahim Bin Ali, northwest of Baghdad, April 25.





MND-B medics join forces with Iraqi partners to provide needed care

Aviation medics get opportunity to help out 'on the ground'

By Sgt. 1st Class Chris Seaton
Task Force XII PAO

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – It's turned into a near-weekly ritual for the medic-Soldiers of the 1st Battalion, 27th Infantry Regiment. They load up as many medications, stuffed animals and bags of candy as they can fit into a Stryker vehicle and head out into a remote village.

They call these ventures cooperative medical engagements. The older Soldiers used to know them as medical civilian aid programs but, as with the rest of the operations in Iraq, the medics aren't there to single-handedly rescue the civilians. Their role is to help the Iraqi doctors already in the communities – hence the term “cooperative.”

“The way we practice medicine in the United States is a lot different than the way the Iraqis practice medicine,” said Capt. Ken Smith, 1-27th Inf. Regt. physician's assistant. “I've learned techniques that we don't traditionally use to treat certain conditions that are quite common with Iraqis.”

The mission for this day was special for two of the medics. Despite having been in the country for several months, it was the first time either ventured outside the wire on their current deployment.

They work for Task Force XII, Multi-National Division – Baghdad's aviation task force at Camp Taji.

While their mission is vital and their experience rivals that of any of their contemporaries, their job descriptions don't often call for them to leave the base – at least not on the ground.

Capt. Joe Dominguez, TF XII physician's assistant, helped



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. 1st Class Chris Seaton, Task Force XII PAO

Spc. Holly Jackson, an Elma, Wash., native, gives out candy to a family of Iraqis at a cooperative medical engagement held by 1st Battalion, 27th Infantry Regiment, April 21. Jackson is a medic in an aviation unit, 4th Squadron, 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment, but volunteered to help with the engagement. Her role in the engagement was important to the Iraqi women who came looking for help and felt more comfortable talking to female medical personnel.

to arrange their involvement. He and Smith, a native of Phoenix, Ariz., went to school together and saw it as a great opportunity – not only to broaden the horizons for Dominguez's medics but to lighten the load for Smith's.

Dominguez has participated in exercises like these before during previous deployments to Iraq. This mission though, he said, was a contrast to those he'd seen before. Since Iraqi medical personnel have taken on a more active role, the missions themselves have changed.

“(Iraqi doctors) know their people and their culture,” he said. “They know what they're used to, what is okay to give them and how to approach the individuals, so they help out a lot.”

“It's an awesome opportunity for us,” said Dominguez, a native of Amarillo, Texas. “And, it's a great chance for us to help build the confidence of the Iraqi people.”

The Soldiers said the opportunity to meet with the Iraqi citizens was beneficial to all.

“I'm so lucky I got this opportunity,” said Spc. Holly Jackson, a medic from Task Force XII's 4th Squadron, 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment. “It's something I can call home about. I'll tell my parents I was safe, for one, and then I'll tell them I was helping people.”

One of the lessons learned over time has been the value of bringing female medics, said Jackson, a native of Elma, Wash, since most of the women who visit the impromptu clinics consider it taboo to be examined by men.

“I get to play an important role because the women want a female provider or a female medic,” she said. “If they feel like they can actually tell us what's wrong, we're

more likely to give them the proper treatment.”

The medical engagements are here to stay, said Smith. They've proven to be a huge force multiplier, not only helping the locals get much needed medical attention, but also providing an outlet for the infantry Soldiers who regularly patrol the areas to talk to the locals and find out how else they can be effective in the communities.

The medics from Task Force XII said they hope their first opportunity to help out is not their last.

Senior enlisted leaders help shoulder burden with crew chiefs, door gunners

From **Leaders** Pg. 1

“I think it's great that they get out here and help us with the mission,” said Sgt. Ian McDougal, a crew chief in Company A, 3rd Battalion, 158th Aviation Regiment. “Seeing higher ranking Soldiers doing the same job as us really means a lot to the younger Soldiers.”

Both Cuomo and Kennedy are crew chiefs by profession. Combined, the two leaders have more than 50 years of Army aviation experience.

“When a young 19- or 20-year-old Soldier sees a 50-year-old sergeant major wandering around, they say ‘that old man doesn't know anything about the Army today ... what he knew 20 or 30 years ago is obsolete;’ but it's not,” said Kennedy, a native of Abingdon, Va. “We still use those same tactics and procedures from back then because all those things are standard.”

And like their officer counterparts, the command sergeants major don't just fly once in a while to get flight-pay, Kennedy and Cuomo are incorporated into the flight schedule and act as replacements when an additional crew chief or door gunner is needed for a mission.

“If a Soldier gets medically grounded or can't fly for whatever reason, they come to (us) to fill in for them; we do that on a regular basis,” said Cuomo.

“I normally try to fly at least once a week, depending on my meetings and work schedule, but I try to fly as much as

time permits.”

Even though he outranks all the crew chiefs and door gunners he works with, Kennedy said he doesn't expect to be treated any differently when it comes to the mission.

“(As leaders), we should follow the standard harder and set the example truer,” he said. “If I'm cut some slack on any section or piece of that mission, then the other Soldiers should be cut slack too; I must follow exactly what my Soldiers are tasked to do – to the letter.”

“When you're part of an aircrew,” added Cuomo, “you all have the same level of responsibility; and if one member of the crew starts to slack, it puts everyone's life at risk.”

The Soldiers also respect it when their leaders get out there and know how to follow the rules while flying and can con-

“I can perform at the same skill level as any other door gunner, and I think that it's sometimes second nature to me because I've been doing it so long.”

Command Sgt. Maj. Chad Cuomo
Troy, N.Y.
Task Force Storm

duct up-to-date aircraft maintenance, said Kennedy.

“No matter what the rank of the person seated across from me on the aircraft, I'm confident in their abilities to perform their duties because we all train to the same standard,” said McDougal, a native of Eugene, Ore.

Being such a “seasoned aviator” has its advantages and disadvantages, said Kennedy.

“I guess rumor has it that since I'm 51, I'm a little slower getting in and out of the window,” he said. “That may be true; but as far as (scanning my sector) and getting out there doing preflight checks and maintenance, I'm right up there with the 19 year-olds.”

Even though their “Be Know Do” leadership technique may take a little more effort than it used to, Kennedy and Cuomo said they hope to motivate Soldiers by helping shoulder the workload and letting them know the standards must be kept – regardless of the Soldier's rank.

“I can perform at the same skill level as any other door gunner, and I think that it's sometimes second nature to me because I've been doing it so long,” said Cuomo. “I hope that (my flying) shows the Soldiers that I care and I'm willing to do the same things they're doing. I think they should be extremely proud of everything we've accomplished here in Iraq.”

TOP GUN TROOPS ESTABLISH COP IN RATHWANIYAH

Efforts attempt to halt enemy movement

By Sgt. James Hunter

2nd BCT PAO, 101st Abn. Div.

BAGHDAD – Well before the sun came up, Soldiers from Battery B, 1st Battalion, 320th Field Artillery Regiment, were out of their beds and patrolling Rathwaniyah.

This may sound like an everyday patrol for these Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers; however, things were much different this time around as they pushed into sector and set up a combat outpost in an abandoned Iraqi home April 29.

The house, which sat only one-story high with stairs leading to the roof, was filled with Soldiers and surrounded by concertina wire.

“Our main purpose out here is to disrupt enemy movement coming through the (area of operations),” said Capt. Geoffrey Gorsuch, commander, Battery B, 1-320th FA. “Also, it shows our support for the locals in our area.”

One of their main goals is to be in sector to push small patrols out to react, to any situation and engage with the local nationals, said Gorsuch.

Normally, the Soldiers patrol the very rural area of Baghdad in an attempt to meet the needs of the local Iraqis through home assessments as well as to halt any enemy activity in the area through constant mounted and dismounted patrols.

However, after finding two improvised-explosive devices and hearing reports that criminals were using foot bridges along the canal in the area to transport weapons, the Soldiers believed the best option was to place a outpost within Rathwaniyah, said Gorsuch, a native Peoria, Ill.

The Soldiers, who operate out of the COP, patrol and monitor the foot bridges daily in an attempt to halt any criminal movement or activity, said 1st Lt. Christopher Robertson, a native of Clarksville, Tenn., who is the platoon leader for 3rd Platoon “Spartans,” 1-320th FA, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division.

“Putting this here for a significant amount of time would stop that flow of enemy activity across the canals,” said Gorsuch.

Although they are trying to halt the enemy’s use of this region for transporting weapons and terrorizing the law-abiding citizens in the area, the Soldiers are also using this home to build an even stronger relationship with the local Iraqis within the community, said Gorsuch.

Granted, they already interact with the Iraqis in the area on a daily basis; however, Gorsuch said he believes living among the people will bring them closer in trust and with respect for one another.

“I hope they see that we are out here living with them and that it builds their confidence and trust that we are really out here to help with their security,” Gorsuch said.

During a dismounted foot patrol on a very humid, dusty afternoon April 29, the Soldiers left the combat outpost and moved house-to-house, talking with some of the local citizens regarding their living conditions and any difficulties they face with their water.

Electricity and water remain the two major problems in the area, said Robertson.

“It’s a common theme,” he said. “Everyone I talk to either has electricity or water problems.”

The problem mostly stems from a persistent drought in the area, he added; however, part of it deals with them being uneducated on using the canals as a resource for harvesting their crops.

“The people out here really like us. In our area, we have started up drinking water for the first time in two years so they are extremely happy about that,” Gorsuch said.

“We are working really hard on the irrigation water because we found that through all the problems, their number-one worry is safety – and they feel we have accomplished that.

“However, their number-two worry is water. If they don’t have water, they can’t grow their crops; it’s a very rural area. It might take some time because it’s very complex.”

The only way to help them solve these problems is to get to the bottom of it by talking with the Iraqis.

“Talking to people is completely essential,” Robertson said. “The thing is, when you go and talk to someone randomly and have no real agenda in mind, as long as you treat them with respect, they are so willing to talk with you.”

On April 30, they met up with Abu Mohammed, a local Sheik in Rathwaniyah, about the ongoing projects, current problems and everyday life in the area. They even shared a delicate breakfast – made up of salted eggs, cucumbers, tomatoes and hard-boiled eggs – prior to getting down to business.

“You’re responsible for this area, and any time we have a problem, we can come to you,” said the elderly, yet energetic Sheik.

“We have their trust and confidence. We have been working with them for six or seven months now,” said Gorsuch. “They like us coming over. We have fun with them and joke around with them, but then we get down to business. They trust we are going to work until we can complete the mission.”

Sheiks play an important role in the community, almost acting as the voice within the community, said Gorsuch. The Sheiks know all the problems within the community and can voice it to Gorsuch and his platoon leaders during their weekly meetings.

They seem to have a real working relationship with Sheiks. It is a bond built over time. Even Robertson said he considers a Sheik he deals with on a daily basis a very close friend.

“You never want to be too close to someone necessarily because anyone could betray you, but the truth is... my relationship with him is very good,” Robertson said.

The Sheiks may also play a role in whether they Soldiers decide to keep the COP in Rathwaniyah.

“We are possibly looking to do it consistently. This is our validation – us just being out here is going to disrupt the enemy,” Gorsuch said.

“If we get a lot of good reactions from the sheiks, we will see where to go from here.”



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. James Hunter, 2nd BCT PAO, 101st Abn. Div.

Spc. Scott Woods, a native of Warrior, Ala., hammers a post into the ground while setting up concertina wire around their combat outpost in Rathwaniyah April 29. Woods serves with 3rd Platoon, Battery B, 1st Battalion, 320th Field Artillery Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), Multi-National Division – Baghdad.



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. James Hunter, 2nd BCT PAO, 101st Abn. Div.

Pfc. Kyle Stout, a native of Texarkana, Texas, places concertina wire around their combat outpost in Rathwaniyah April 29. Stout serves with 3rd Platoon, Battery B, 1st Battalion, 320th Field Artillery Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), Multi-National Division – Baghdad.



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. James Hunter, 2nd BCT PAO, 101st Abn. Div.

1st Lt. Christopher Robertson, a native of Clarksville, Tenn., talks with a local Iraqi man during a dismounted foot patrol April 29 while operating out of a combat outpost in Rathwaniyah. The Soldiers continue to interact with the local population in an attempt to solve the many problems they face. Robertson serves as the platoon leader for 3rd Platoon, Battery B, 1st Battalion, 320th Field Artillery Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), Multi-National Division – Baghdad.

Day in the life ...

Orderly room clerk keeps brigade's HQ company running smoothly

By Spc. David Hodge
1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div.

FORWARD OPERATING BASE FALCON, Iraq – Her alarm sounds for only a second before the day begins and she rushes off, beginning her service to her country, unit and fellow Soldiers.

It's 5 a.m.

This is the first step toward completing her daily duties of assisting the command by helping to keep her unit organized and by processing all administrative matters for Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad.

Pfc. Latasha Kennedy, 25, is the orderly room clerk for HHD, 1st BCT, which operates from Forward Operating Base Falcon and is located in the Rashid district of Iraq's capital. Kennedy works in a supporting role within the walls of the FOB to contribute to the Raider Brigade's mission of providing a safe and secure environment for the citizens of the Rashid district.

Even though she is more than 7,000 miles away from home, carries an M-16 rifle and occasionally has to take cover from indirect fire, Kennedy's work day while deployed is much like that of garrison back at Fort Hood, Texas.

After she awakens and conducts personal hygiene, she dons the trademark gray, moisture-wicking shirt, black shorts, and bright neon-orange physical training vest that Soldiers wear for physical training.

Five days a week, Kennedy runs to improve her cardiovascular endurance. "Running is important to me because, unlike weight training, it works out the entire body," said the native of Jacksonville, N.C.

Kennedy enjoys listening to Rhythm and Blues music after her exercise session as she gets dressed for work.

On her way to the workplace, she stops by the brigade's support battalion to pick up daily reports and information that pertains to the company.

"I pick up the daily distribution because it keeps the commander and I informed with what is going on for the day," Kennedy said.

After arriving at the office no later than 9 a.m., she sits at her desk and begins to check her e-mail for anything requiring immediate attention.

Kennedy attended Advanced Individual Training to become an aviation operations specialist and was originally assigned to the Air Defense, Air Management and Brigade Aviation Element sections within the 1st BCT.

After a year working in the section, a position within the HHD Orderly Room became available.

When the orderly room needed a replacement, Kennedy volunteered to take the job, and the company's leadership has been grateful ever since, said Capt. Daniel Hoffman, a North Glenn, Colo., native, executive officer, HHD, 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B.

Kennedy has worked in the orderly room for about six months and has made her mark in the company as a professional Soldier.

She has those qualities that are very hard to find in privates in the Army, said Hoffman.

"Kennedy is the type of Soldier that learns new systems quickly," Hoffman said. "She took over the orderly room as we deployed without missing a beat."

Kennedy said the new job was a welcome challenge and she was excited about the vast opportunities.

"The different job was challenging at first," Kennedy said, "but once I learned what to do, it became very easy."

Kennedy's duties involve typing memorandums for the company commander, ensuring personnel status reports and sensitive item reports are completed every day, and occasionally taking the lead at first sergeant meetings when the company's top enlisted leader is otherwise engaged in the morning.

"What impresses me the most is that she takes the initiative to get things done," Hoffman said. "She constantly keeps the command informed of everything that comes across her desk."

What remains of Kennedy's day is spent running errands and making sure that all aspects of the office are in tiptop shape.

This includes maintaining all personnel files, awards, promotion packets and leave forms for approximately 210 Soldiers in the company. She makes sure that all necessary paperwork gets turned in at both the battalion and brigade level, said Hoffman.



U.S. Army photo by Spc. David Hodge, 1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div.

Pfc. Latasha Kennedy, an orderly room clerk assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, fills out the daily personnel status report in the HHD Orderly Room here April 29. Kennedy, who hails from Jacksonville, N.C., went to college for nursing before enlisting in the Army in June 2006.

"Without Kennedy, the orderly room would not function anywhere near as efficiently as it does now," Hoffman said. "All of the things she does make her a very valuable asset to the Renegade Orderly Room."

Kennedy intends to reenlist for station of choice in June but is unsure whether or not she will make the military a career. She plans on finishing college and following in her mother's footsteps of becoming a nurse.

She said she enjoys attending church on Sundays and exchanging e-mails with her parents, Family and four siblings.

Kennedy also makes it a point to regularly call Edward, her husband of six years, who is a former Marine.

"Other than my husband, I miss sleeping in my own bed and driving my car," said Kennedy, who is adjusting to her first deployment since joining the Army in 2006.

At the end of the day, it is back to her room where Kennedy reflects upon the day's events and ponders what tomorrow's calendar will bring.

"Then the day starts all over again," Kennedy said with a smile.



Photo courtesy of Pfc. Latasha Kennedy, 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div.

Pfc. Latasha Kennedy, an aviation operations specialist assigned as an orderly room clerk for the Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, is pictured with her husband of six years, Edward Kennedy, while on vacation to South Carolina Feb. 18.

Teacher joins Army to provide better life for Family

Soldier achieves dream of becoming American citizen in process

By Sgt. Brandon Little
Task Force XII PAO

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – More than 10 years ago, Staff Sgt. Maranata Temese was an elementary school teacher living in American Samoa with his wife, Leaiseaiga, and their three children. Wanting to provide a better life for his Family, he decided to join the military but there was one problem ... he was not a U.S. citizen.

American Samoa is a U.S. territory and its natives have the same U.S. rights and privileges as natives of Guam and Puerto Rico; Temese, however, was born in the independent country of Samoa but his wife and children were born in American Samoa.

“When I walked into the recruiting office to ask if I could join the Army, I even told them my wife was a U.S. citizen,” said Temese, a platoon sergeant in Company G, Task Force XII. “The recruiter, knowing that I was from Samoa, told me no, I cannot join the Army; it was because of (biased views) held by some people born in American Samoa against people born in Samoa.”

His desire to provide a better life for his Family through service in the military was now fueled by a determination to prove his recruiter wrong, he said. His next step was to write a letter to the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) and find out what he needed to do to join the Army.

“The USCIS wrote me back and told me the process I needed to follow (to get a Visa) since I was married to a U.S. citizen,” he said. “After I filled out all the paperwork, and they accepted my application, I received a quota number, and I was now able to move to the U.S. and live.”

Instead of moving to the United States, Temese took his paperwork and went back to that same recruiting station to see the recruiter who told him he couldn't join the Army because he wasn't a citizen.

“Now that I had a (Visa), they wanted to help me,” said Temese. “After (the recruiter) made a few phone calls, he said ‘you can join the military’ and I told him I'd be more than happy to join.”

He enlisted as a light wheeled vehicle mechanic and deployed a few years later in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. By then

his Family had grown from three children to six children, and he had provided a better life for his Family – but he was still not a U.S. citizen.

“Every time we went to the airport I got stopped because of my island passport,” he said. “My wife got tired of waiting with the kids while I got checked, and she finally said ‘this has got to stop; you need to get your citizenship and a U.S. passport.’”

To make this happen, Temese contacted the Immigration and Nationalization Services, but they told him he needed to travel to New York to process his request. This was a difficult task considering he had just begun his second deployment; so, he decided to talk to his chain of command and Task Force XII's top enlisted Soldier, Command Sgt. Maj. H. Lee Kennedy, to get help.

“While I was in Kuwait, waiting to enter Iraq, I saw (Kennedy) and explained my situation to him,” he said. “As soon as I asked for his help, he took out a piece of paper and pen and promised he would help make this happen for me; he was really on top of things.”

With a little persistence and a lot of help from Soldiers working the Task Force XII legal office, Kennedy kept his promise. Temese was one of several Soldiers in Task Force XII to become a citizen during a Multi-National Corps – Iraq Naturalization Ceremony held on Camp Victory April 12.

“(Temese) is a very special Soldier, and it was a real privilege to watch him walk across that stage and become a U.S. citizen,” said Kennedy.

Although his journey to citizenship may have taken a little longer than expected, Temese said his original goal of providing a better life for his Family happened without delay and he tries to help others do the same.

“Every time I go back to my island, I go to the school I used to teach in and tell the children some of the things the Army has done for me,” said Temese. “I think they appreciate the information I give them and some of them are actually joining the military. I know that by (serving in the Army) I am helping my country of Samoa be a better place because the United States always tries to fight for little people who get overlooked – just like my tiny island.”



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Brandon Little, Task Force XII PAO

Staff Sgt. Maranata Temese, a platoon sergeant in Company G, Task Force XII, poses near his company's guidon. Temese joined the Army to provide a better life for his Family and to prove his recruiter wrong.

MND-B CG, Iraqi commander discuss Sadr City in joint press conference

By Spc. Aaron Rosencrans
MND-B PAO

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq — Maj. Gen. Jeffery Hammond, a native of Hattiesburg, Miss., who serves as the commanding general of the 4th Infantry Division and Multi-National Division – Baghdad, and Gen. Abboud Qanbar, commanding general, Fard al-Qanoon (Baghdad), declared they have no plans to move further into the Sadr City district of Baghdad during a press conference with western Iraqi media representatives at the Media Center located on Forward Operating Base Prosperity April 24.

The leaders discussed recent events in Sadr City and the future plans for the northeastern district of Baghdad.

“We went into south Sadr City to protect against the rocket threat,” said Hammond. “Since late March, these criminals have increased their attacks against the Government of Iraq, against the innocent civilians, the security forces and U.S. Soldiers. To do that, they’ve used rockets, they’ve used mortars, small-arms fire and IEDs.”

Abboud pointed out the armed groups, who are operating outside the law, are the ones who instigated the attacks against the security forces and citizens, and they started by

firing hundreds of rockets and mortars in the direction of safe neighborhoods in Baghdad.

Hammond said those criminals needed to be dealt with, so he ordered U.S. forces to conduct precision strikes to prevent unnecessary damage or loss of life to innocent civilians.

Hammond also decided to block the criminals' ability to launch rocket attacks on the International Zone by pushing into Sadr City and having the Iraqi Security Forces control the southern portion of the district to prevent further attacks on the diplomatic and governmental zone in the heart of Baghdad.

“We determined, based on our analysis, we found right about what we’re calling Phase Line Gold, or our most northern reach of Sadr City, is the point at which the rockets exceeded their range to strike the International Zone.”

Phase Line Gold runs along Route Gold in Sadr city, which represents roughly one-third of the northeastern district of Baghdad.

After achieving security to the line Hammond described, he said there are no future plans of pushing deeper into Sadr City, but he and Abboud decided to create a safe neighborhood in the now secure southern region of Sadr City.

“Being where we’re at now, we have no plans of going further,” Hammond said. “We made the decision to create a safe neighborhood to protect the people from the resurgence of such an attack and also to create better living conditions for the people living there.”

Part of the initiative to create safe living conditions for residents of the southern portion of Sadr City, MND-B Soldiers and the ISF have been building walls to protect the citizens in the newly secured area of Baghdad.

“This (Iraqi) government-led and government-endorsed program, the safe neighborhood program, has proven very effective across Baghdad in restoring security to threatened communities,” said Hammond. “These barriers help the ISF deny movement of illegal materials, such as rockets and mortars, to keep them out from intimidating and harming the people.”

Abboud added the walls are meant to protect the residents of not only that southern part of Sadr City, but the innocent civilians who live around the International Zone of Baghdad.

He also said the walls are not intended to be permanent fixtures in Baghdad and will be taken down once a stable environment has been created in the city.

MND-B Soldier turns life around by signing up

By Sgt. Jerome Bishop

2nd SBCT PAO, 25th Inf. Div.

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – Every Soldier has a different reason for enlisting to be in the Army. Some do it for patriotic reasons, others for help paying for college, but one Multi-National Division – Baghdad Noncommissioned Officer signed up in 2005 for an entirely different purpose.

Before enlisting, Sgt. Wyatt Karney, an Albuquerque native who serves as a mortarman and Personal Security Detachment NCO with Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 2nd Squadron, 14th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, “Warrior,” 25th Infantry Division, MND-B, led a life of hard work, shared custody of a child and an unwanted drug problem.

“I decided to join the Army because I had a drug addiction and I had to get out of my home town,” said Karney who now calls Colorado Springs, Colo., home.

Karney’s addiction cost him his Family. It ended his marriage and resulted in shared custody of his son.

“At the time we were divorced and I had joint custody of my son, I tried to get off drugs several times for years and couldn’t do it,” he said.

For Karney, the worst was telling his son.

“He didn’t ever see it, but I would explain to him that I had a drug problem and he didn’t notice it, but I just got sick of myself,” he added.

Karney said he decided he had to leave the town where he was born and raised so he could rid himself of his addiction.

“I have close Family members and a lot of friends who are involved with drugs and I had to get away from it.”

The call to serve came, as it did with many Soldiers, when the attacks on New York and Washington happened Sept. 11, 2001. Even though he felt the call to duty, it was several years before he enlisted.

“I wanted to join when the towers fell on 9/11, but because I had joint custody of my son, I didn’t want to leave him,” he said.

Karney said he would join if there was a chance he would defend his country.

“I’ve always liked the military, but I never wanted to join unless there was a conflict going on. I didn’t want to just join and do garrison stuff,” he said. “My grandfather served in WWII and my father served in Vietnam, and I wanted to serve only if there some kind of war going on.”

In the end, his close relationship to his son eventually led him to leave.

Two weeks after he pledged his commitment to the Army,



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Jerome Bishop, 2nd SBCT PAO, 25th Inf. Div.

Before enlisting, Sgt. Wyatt Karney, an Albuquerque native, led a life of hard work, shared custody of his son and an unwanted drug addiction. Today he leads Soldiers and serves on his squadron commander’s personal security detachment and mortarman with Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 2nd Squadron, 14th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, “Warrior,” 25th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad.

Karney said goodbye to his son and headed toward a new life in the Army.

“I’m kind of a perfectionist,” he said. “Even though a lot of people said I was a good dad, I knew I could do better, and I didn’t want to keep myself down and not be the best dad I could be so I needed the change.”

decided to get back together,” he said.

After his four years of service are up and his duty fulfilled, Karney hopes to one day take a job as a government employee in Colorado Springs. Until then, he’s sure to continue to fight the good fight, both against the enemy in Iraq and against the ghosts of a former addition.

Since enlisting, Karney was able to clean up his life. He credits being away from his hometown and the people associated with his drug problems, as well as the Army’s no tolerance stand on drug use as reasons for his success in getting sober.

Today, Karney is contributing to the mission of providing security on a routine basis for the commander of the squadron in which he serves.

“Many Soldiers in my command have long histories. What makes the Army great is it is not about what you have done in the past, it is how you carry yourself into the future that truly matters,” said Capt. Ken Bernier, a Garland, Maine, native who serves as the commander of HHT, 2nd Squadron, 14th Cav. Regt. “Sgt. Karney is a reliable member of my team, who can be depended on to be a rifleman, vehicle commander and a proficient mortarman.”

Back home, his son is waiting for his return, but he is not waiting alone. There is another member of Karney’s Family who waits for him. He said she was instrumental in him turning his life around.

The woman Karney speaks so highly of is his ex-wife, who he remarried in 2007.

“I didn’t have a squared away mind to be able to deal with things that she was going through, but she dealt with her stuff and I dealt with mine while we were separated and we’ve both grown a lot so we de-

Fort Sill Soldiers awarded for valorous actions

By Spc. Andrea Merritt

1st Sust. Bde. PAO

CAMP TAJI, Iraq — Personal courage and other Army values are drilled into Soldiers throughout their military careers. Although it is last mentioned on the list, it often presents itself first in a time of chaos and crisis.

Four Soldiers of the 15th Transportation Company, a Fort Sill, Okla., unit attached to the 1103rd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, which is attached to the 1st Sustainment Brigade, were awarded for their personal courage in a ceremony April 14.

The quick actions they took after their convoy underwent an explosively formed penetrator attack Sept. 2, 2007, ultimately saved the lives of two wounded Soldiers.

On the night of the attack, the Soldiers of the 1103rd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion were conducting a mission to deliver ammunition and vehicles to Forward Operating Base Hammer.

Even though the unit they replaced had traveled the same route without any incidents, they knew something wasn’t right.

“Normally, you will see people. They’re not supposed to be out, but they’re out,” said Sgt. Michael Johnson, a Dickson, Tenn., native and truck driver with the 15th TC.

Some of the Soldiers’ intuition went into overdrive as they entered into the Sadr City district of Baghdad because they noticed the town was not bustling with activity like it was when they passed through it the previous night.

“That night we were headed back from (FOB) Hammer coming into Sadr City and the hair on the back of my neck

stood up,” said Staff. Sgt. Colin White, an Ocala, Fla., native, and squad leader with the 15th TC. “It was like a ghost town. We were just saying, ‘Something is about to happen,’ then the whole block lit up like Christmas.”

An EFP had detonated within five meters of the first vehicle in the convoy, causing it to erupt in flames. As Soldiers went to assist those who were trapped inside, a gunman atop a roof targeted the troops with small-arms fire.

White took action and engaged the gunman. After suppressing the small-arms fire, White made his way to the burning vehicle, where he was informed there was a Soldier still inside.

As he attempted to enter the vehicle and rescue the Soldier, the intense heat from the fire caused rounds inside to cook off. White sustained cuts to his face from the debris, but continued his efforts to rescue the Soldier.

Johnson, a trained combat lifesaver, initially pulled security for White during the attack.

When he was relieved of his security duties he noticed another Soldier near the burning vehicle was injured. Johnson moved him away from the flames and began treating the life-threatening wounds.

“Honestly, I don’t think anything runs through your mind. You look out for your buddy and make sure nothing has happened to him,” said Johnson.

“If you take fire, you fire back and take care of the people who are hurt.”

After receiving the call to put out the fire, Sgt. Brandon Stovall, a Philadelphia, Miss., native and truck driver with the 15th TC, moved forward in his truck.

Stovall, who is also a trained combat lifesaver, began rendering aid to the Soldier, who kept going in and out of consciousness.

“You do what you are trained to do. It’s instinctive,” Stovall said. “(The training) is redundant, but it’s embedded in the back of your mind so when something does go down, you don’t have to think about it. You know what to do.”

In the midst of the chaos, Spc. Joshua Dupuis, a New Iberia, La., native, who serves as the night operations noncommissioned officer in charge for 15th TC, served as the primary link between the convoy and the battalion due to limited communication abilities at the time.

“When they said that (Dupuis) was the only communication the (combat logistic patrol) had between us and battalion, they’re not exaggerating,” White said.

The information Dupuis provided to the battalion on the attack enabled them to get help to the convoy and medical evacuation for the wounded Soldiers.

For their actions that night, White was awarded a Bronze Star Medal with Valor and a Purple Heart.

Johnson and Stovall were awarded an Army Commendation Medal with Valor; and Dupuis was awarded an Army Achievement Medal.

Although many may consider these four men heroes for their actions that night, it is a term they quietly reject. They simply think of themselves as Soldiers who performed their duties.

“We got an award for doing our job. These guys would have done it for me. Any of these guys would have done it for anybody,” Johnson said.

Soldiers update Family, friends back home at Forts Hood, Carson during 4th Inf. Div. Town Hall

From Town Hall Pg. 1

said. "Their primary mission is to advise, train and assist the Iraqi forces.

"As we go through this process, the goal is to eventually hand over all of the battle space over to the Iraqis. When we get to that point, we will be coming home."

After the brief introductions, the hosts took questions from the Fort Hood and Fort Carson audiences and asked for help from time-to-time from their fellow 4th Inf. Div. leaders in the Baghdad audience in answering them.

The first question came from a concerned spouse about why their Soldier should reenlist. For this, the hosts called on Command Sgt. Maj. John Gioia, a native of Buffalo, N.Y., who serves as the senior enlisted leader for the 4th Inf. Div. and MND-B.

"I was on a roof top looking at a great Soldier with the last name of Courage. He's been in the Army for about seven months, and I asked him why he joined the Army – and he said 'why not, the country needs us over here,'" Gioia said. "The 4th Inf. Division is doing very well on retention even though there has been a dampening on the bonuses."

Apart from the questions, the audiences at Fort Hood and Fort Carson were also able to meet with an Iraqi-American legal advisor.

Hussain Alnahi, a native of Baghdad, who serves as a special advisor for Iraqi Rule of Law with MND-B, spoke about what he does and why serving here means so much to him.

"The Rule of Law is very important here in Iraq because under Saddam Hussain, the Rule of Law changed based on Saddam Hussain," Alnahi said. "This is how we Iraqi's lived for 35 years."

"It's going to take a long time and intensified efforts to make the people of Iraq confident in their legal system," he added, "but the Iraqi authorities, along with U.S. support, are taking the necessary steps to implement the concept of the Rule of Law."

Alnahi is married and has five children, all of whom currently live in Dallas. That being case, it made the special Ivy Division gifts presented to him even more appropriate as Gioia presented him with a cowboy hat and the coveted 4th Inf. Div. belt buckle as a token of the division's appreciation for all of his hard work.

Hammond, a native of Hattiesburg, Miss., took advantage of an opportunity to introduce the audiences back home to one of the division's young married couples, who are currently deployed together at Coalition Outpost Callahan.

The Soldiers, of course, had a story of their own and shared



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Mark Matthews, MND-B PAO

Maj. Gen. Jeffery Hammond, a native of Hattiesburg, Miss., who serves as the commanding general for the 4th Infantry Division and Multi-National Division – Baghdad, presents his coins to Spc. Jake Reed, a native of Mooreland, Okla., and Pfc. Andrea Reed, a native of Walpole, Mass., during a Town Hall meeting held at the Media Operations Center April 23.

some of their experiences since arriving in Iraq.

"Recently, there was a baby abandoned at the gate of COP Callahan, and after making sure the baby was healthy, we cared for the baby for several days until an adoption was arranged," said Pfc. Andrea Reed, a native of Walpole, Mass., who serves as a medic with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 68th Armored Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Inf. Div. "While (the baby) was in our care, many of the Soldiers came by the aid station to see the baby and hold him.

"Lots of people said that having him there reminded them of their own children," she added. "It was nice to see the boost

in everyone's morale and the softer side of the Army."

Her husband, Spc. Jake Reed Both, is a native of Mooreland, Okla., and also serves as a medic with HHC, 1st bn., 68th Arm. Regt.

As the memorable Town Hall Meeting neared conclusion, the 4th Inf. Div. band took center stage for the plating of the 4th Inf. Div. song. Afterward, a prayer was given and Hammond gave a few words about what lies ahead for the Soldiers in Iraq.

"Your Soldiers – your credentials – are doing everything they can to bring this thing in the direction it needs to go," Hammond said. "Each day is better than the one before it."

Smoothies from home help thaw hot day in Baghdad



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Zach Mott, 3rd BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div.

Sgt. Bart Gammon, a Bonne Terre, Mo., native, enjoys a smoothie donated by local business back home in the Soldier's home town of Colorado Springs, Colo., prior to conducting a mission in the nearly 100-degree temperatures.

By Sgt. Zach Mott

3rd BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div.

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – Temperatures in Iraq have begun their annual climb into triple digits in mid-April, and Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers seek out any number of ways to combat the heat.

In their endeavors to overcome the "heating up" challenges, the roadmasters of Company A, 64th Brigade Support Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, sought relief in the form of smoothies donated by the Smoothie King in Colorado Springs, Colo.

"It's real nice. It quenches the thirst," said Sgt. Bart Gammon, a Bonne Terre, Mo., native who serves a fueler with Co. A, 64th BSB.

The Co. A Soldiers are on the roads of Iraq nearly every day delivering supplies to Soldiers at outlying combat outposts and forward operating bases. The unit's Family Readiness Group partnered with the Colorado business to

help provide the treat to the Soldiers.

"Everybody knows it came from the states. It's just like a homemade cookie when you get it in a care package," said Capt. Erik Corcoran, a North Attleboro, Mass., native, who serves as the commander of Co. A, 64th BSB.

The smoothies were originally intended as an Easter treat. However, because of mission requirements, the smoothies were kept frozen until today.

"Everybody has been waiting for this day to come. Every day I've been asked, 'When are we going to have smoothies?'" said Sgt. Evan Brooks, a petroleum supply noncommissioned officer with Co. A, 64th BSB.

Brooks, whose wife, along with her co-worker, helped get the smoothie ball rolling, has also been waiting for this day.

"It's nice to know that there's actual individuals, as well as companies, that are looking out for (Soldiers) and will do something for us," said the native of Thermopolis, Wyo.

Military mom remains 'Army Strong' through multiple deployments

By Spc. Philip Klein

MND-B PAO

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – The daily stresses of a mother can already be a difficult, full-time job. Now, factor in the burdens for serving multiple deployments to a combat zone – and “Army Strong” takes on a new meaning for many military mothers.

This is the case for Spc. Ocie Terry, Company B, Special Troops Battalion, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad. Terry is an administration specialist in the G1 section for the division Headquarters and, more importantly, a single mother of three girls.

Terry's children, Samantha, 6, Amari, 4, and Sunnieday, 2, are currently living with her mother in Jacksonville, Texas, while Terry is deployed.

Terry has been in the Army for seven years, seen two deployments, and has called the Ivy Division home for her entire career.

Lt. Col. Kerk Brown, the G1 officer-in-charge, appreciates the work Terry does for the division and the G1 section.

“She is an outstanding Soldier, a superb combat multiplier that enables G1 to take our work to the next level,” said

“Being a mom is the best thing ever, and I would love to be home with my kids; but if being here in Baghdad means my kids and other American and Iraqi children can be safe – it's worth it,”

Spc. Ocie Terry
Jacksonville, Texas
administration specialist
Co. B, STB, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B

Brown. “Terry makes a real difference in the office with her attitude and work ethic. I can always count on her whenever we need something accomplished in and around the office.

“She is an asset to this team and is also a great mother to her three daughters,” continued Brown. “I know being over here, away from her young Family, is a difficult task – it is for anyone – but she handles everything with a positive attitude. I never see her without a smile on her face.”

Terry, however, said she could not be able to handle the stress as well if it wasn't for her number-one hero, her

mom.

“It's great to have the support of my mom while I am deployed,” said Terry. “I sent her flowers for this Mother's Day just to let her know I am grateful for her help while I am over here completing our mission.”

Though Terry would love to be with her kids, she knows she has an important role in assisting the division accomplish the mission at hand.

“It would be nice to be home with my kids this Mother's Day, but it is also important to be here protecting our way of life so that other Americans can enjoy this Mother's Day – and many Mother's Days to come.”

For this Mother's Day, Terry plans to have dinner with her kids over the internet via a Web camera.

“This is just something I can do with my kids that helps shrink the distance between them and their mom,” said Terry. “It's the next best thing to being there with them, and at least we can spend some time together and we can see each other.”

Terry is proud of her service with the 4th inf. Div. and the Army, but her favorite duty title is “mom.”

“Being a mom is the best thing ever, and I would love to be home with my kids; but if being here in Baghdad means my kids and other American and Iraqi children can be safe – it's worth it,” said Terry.

Radio operators play vital role in aviation missions

By Sgt. 1st Class Chris Seaton

Task Force XII PAO

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – It's not exactly what he had in mind when he joined. He came into the Army in February 2006 to be an aviator. His dream was to become a pilot, but the job he picked, aviation operations specialist, was close enough for now.

Two years later, Spc. Randall Griffeth, a native of West Fargo, N.D., now a member of Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 4th Squadron, 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment, found himself watching the skies over Baghdad – on a black and white screen, behind a desk in a tactical operations center.

He serves as a radio transmitter operator. His job is to monitor the pilots' radio traffic, as well as feeds from unmanned aerial vehicles, writing down spot reports and making sure the pilots are kept in the loop.

It's a busy and important job, say the Soldiers who do it, but not quite as exciting as flying the helicopters – and certainly not as glamorous.

April 21 was just another day for Griffeth. Halfway through a 12-hour shift, an AH-64 Apache helicopter crew had reported a group of men who looked like they were up to no good. The crew watched for a while but couldn't positively identify any hostile intentions. Soon enough, they were called to another sight.

But Griffeth kept watching.

A video feed from an unmanned aerial vehicle in the area finally confirmed the pilots' suspicions.

“It looked like they were taking pot shots at a ground convoy,” Griffeth said.

He quickly called the air crews to the scene – all the while watching as the men moved weapons in and out of a vehicle, resupplying attackers on the ground and shooting at Coalition Forces when they had the chance.

Within moments, Griffeth found himself controlling a potentially deadly situation. It was up to him to talk the pilots onto a relatively small target in a very busy city.

“When the pilots are up there, they don't always see what we see because they're so far out,” he said. “I had to explain one small area in a city where everything looks the same.

“You start from big to small. You start by saying it's a building with an awning, or there's a white car in front of it, or anything that's moving around it,” added Griffeth.

Minutes later, with the help of another pilot in the TOC, he and the pilots in the air had confirmed that they were looking at the same thing; the shooters on the ground became the target and, courtesy of a precision shot from the lethal attack helicopter, the situation was summarily resolved.

“It felt good,” said Griffeth. “It's always good when you can help the ground guys. They're out there getting shot at, and I'm sitting here in an air-conditioned building. I didn't do anything different than what all the operators do every day.”

But the difference between monitoring a feed and doing something about it is crucial, said Sgt. 1st Class Marde Stephens, the senior aviation operations noncommissioned officer.

“It's a huge step for a guy to be able to identify something and then feel empowered enough to make the call and follow through,” said Stephens, a native of Killeen, Texas. “Of course it's part of the job, but he grew as a Soldier that day. Determining he had to take the initiative was huge.”

Like many of his fellow Soldiers, Griffeth still has the dream of one day becoming a pilot.

“There's a few guys, like Griff, who want to be pilots,” said Stephens.

“We encourage them to get it done, but I want them to know how important their current jobs are. These guys may be (young Soldiers), but they're making vital decisions every day – just like any of the pilots.”

“I like what I do,” said Griffeth. “It's pretty important to the pilots but, more importantly to me, I feel like we're really helping with the fight on the ground.”



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Brandon Little, Task Force XII PAO

Spc. Randall Griffeth, a native of West Fargo, N.D., stands outside the 4th Squadron, 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment headquarters building April 25. Griffeth is an aviation operations specialist assigned with the duty of communicating with Multi-National Division – Baghdad's attack helicopter pilots from the ground.



Soldiers blow whistle on sexual assault

MND-B leaders emphasize importance of preventing, reporting assault crimes

**Story and photo by
Spc. Aaron Rosencrans**

MND-B PAO

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers have been working to raise awareness of sexual assault in and around Camp Liberty by hosting training programs designed to prepare unit representatives to properly handle sexual assault cases with the level of dignity and respect victims deserve when he or she undergoes the reporting process.

The restricted program, which was implemented by the Department of Defense in 2005, gives victims of sexual assault the opportunity to receive the care they need after being assaulted.

“The way the program used to work, we just had the unrestricted reporting option,” said Sgt. 1st Class Thomas Perry, a native of Birmingham, Al., who serves as the MND-B deployed sexual assault response coordinator. “When someone was sexually assaulted, they brought it to their chain of command, and they initiated a formal investigation with (Criminal Investigation Command) involvement. There was very little sensitivity to the fact the Soldier has just been through a very traumatic experience in their life. Also, if the Soldier needed medical care, that wasn’t an option, it had to go through the whole investigation first.”

Now, the implementation of the new program added options for a victim to choose the services he or she needs to get through the traumatic assault.

“In 2005 (the DoD) came out with the restricted reporting process,” said Perry. “What this program allows is if a Soldier has been sexually assaulted, they can go to certain key people

“Sexual assault is not a crime that only happens to women, it can happen to anybody at any time, to include the strong bodybuilder who always works out in the gym.”

Maj. Pete Stanonik
Killeen, Texas
sexual assault prevention and
response program coordinator.
MND-B and 4th Inf. Div.

in the program, such as the sexual assault response coordinators, the unit victim advocates, medical personnel at the troop medical clinics or the chaplains, which allows us to provide services for the assaulted Soldier.”

Perry mentioned the Soldier’s chain of command is still informed with the restricted reporting option, but the Soldier is given the opportunity to receive the medical care, psychological care or whatever resources they choose.

“This allows the Soldiers to make choices early on,” he continued.

When sexual assault cases occur in MND-B, unit commanders have resources to help victims through the reporting process.

“I would like everyone in the command to think unit victim advocate, or UVA, every time they hear sexual assault,”

said Maj. Pete Stanonik, a native of Killeen, Texas, who serves as the MND-B sexual assault prevention and response program coordinator.

April was Sexual Assault Awareness Month where MND-B Soldiers recognized the dangers of sexual assault and learned about the programs, which are offered when someone is sexually assaulted.

“We’re letting young people know times have changed,” said Stanonik.

“The good-old-boy type attitudes toward sexual assaults no longer exist in society. It is the UVA’s job to keep sexual assault awareness up in their units.”

Sexual assault is a crime that can happen to anyone and there are ways of reducing the chance of being sexually assaulted, explained Perry.

“Sexual assault is not a crime that only happens to women, it can happen to anybody at any time, to include the strong bodybuilder who always works out in the gym,” he said. “If someone wants to sexually assault another person, they will find a way. The best way to prevent this is to use the buddy system.”

Materials, such as information pamphlets and sexual assault whistles, are available at the MND-B deployed sexual assault response office behind the Ironhorse Sports Oasis.

Victims of sexual assault should feel comfortable knowing there are trained professionals who are capable of properly handling sexual assault cases with the wellbeing of the victim in mind.

Soldiers graduate EO Course, promote equality throughout MND-B

By Sgt. Mark Matthews
MND-B PAO

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – The U.S. Army is one of the most diverse organizations around. Men and women from all over the world have raised their right hand and joined the Army, trusting that they will be treated with respect and as equals regardless of race, gender or religion. Soldiers with Multi-National Division – Baghdad are ensuring this stunning reputation continues to progress.

MND-B Soldiers graduated from the division's second Equal Opportunity Leaders course in Iraq at the "Stadium" conference room here April 19. Due to the combat environment, the 60-hour course was condensed from approximately two weeks to just six days.

"This course covers everything from interpersonal skills to Army policies and essentially how to make these individuals be able to support the command and the command's equal opportunity program," said Sgt. 1st Class Thomas Perry, a native of Birmingham, Ala., who serves as a division equal opportunity advisor with Company A, Special Troops Battalion, 4th Infantry Division.

It seems to take a special person to become a good equal opportunity leader in today's Army, and Perry said the 32 graduates from the class have all the skills they will need to be great EOLs.

"A good EOL is someone who can listen – not afraid to set the standard – and can step out and say 'hey, this isn't right,'" said Perry. "Typically, anybody can be an EOL, as long as they have the intestinal fortitude and personal courage to do what's right by people, not so much because of the regulation, but because it's what's appropriate to do for people."



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Mark Matthews, MND-B PAO
Thirty-two Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers graduated the 60-hour Equal Opportunities Leaders Course here April 19. The graduates will now return to their units to help ensure every Soldier is afforded the same opportunities regardless of race, sex or religion.

The guest speaker for the ceremony was Sgt. Maj. Jihad Ali, a native of Bronx, N.Y., a former graduate of the course, who serves as the Fire and Effects Cell sergeant major with the 4th Infantry Division and MND-B.

"Although I was never afforded the opportunity to serve as an (equal opportunity representative), I leapt at the chance to attend the 2nd Infantry Division's EO course while serving as a first sergeant," Ali said. "In a class full of staff sergeants and sergeants first class, I stuck out like sore thumb. Why did I go to the course? Because as a first sergeant and my role as the units top mediator and disciplinarian, I knew it was vital for me to verify my quality compass."

Ali expressed the ever-present need for highly trained and qualified individuals in today's military.

"While I have never personally been a victim of overt

prejudice or unfair treatment based on race or religion, as a Soldier with over 25 years as a noncommissioned officer, I have witnessed, first-hand, the subtle and sometimes obvious institutional injustices," said Ali. "While these may no longer be the rule but rather the exception, these isolated but real instances make this course all the more important in the time of war."

Although the class graduated more than 30 students, one set himself apart from his peers and was recognized as the course's honor graduate.

"I was just glad to learn a lot of information about communication and how I can go back to my company and make things better," said Staff Sgt. Michael Wilkinson, a native of Palatka, Fla., who serves as the EOR with Company C, 626th Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team Brigade, 101st Airborne Division, MND-B. "This class was very important because everyone comes from different cultures. I'm really glad I made

the grade, but I feel everyone in the class did just as well as I did." Like with most military courses, the quality of the instruction is really based on the quality of the instructors, and it was the instructors who made the class both informative and fun, said Wilkinson. "The instructors were very professional, but they were also very lively," Wilkinson said. "They really cared about what they were doing and did everything they needed to do in order to get the point across." After completing the course, the graduates will begin serving in their units as trained EORs, ensuring every Soldier, regardless of color, gender or religion, is given the same opportunities to excel in their units, their careers and in their military service.

Raider commemorates recent accomplishment in Rashid DC Hall

By Staff Sgt. Brent Williams
1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div.

FORWARD OPERATING BASE FALCON, Iraq – In efforts to improve stability for the people of Iraq, leaders from across Multi-National Division – Baghdad and the Rashid district of southern Baghdad are looking to Iraqi citizens to create permanent solutions to the problems that have plagued the nation's capital before and after the war.

Rashid district community leaders held a special gathering, alongside the leadership of the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, MND-B and local Iraqi Security Forces, April 26 to demonstrate a joint commitment to improving the quality of life for Iraqi citizens during the commemoration of a new building for the Rashid District Council Hall.

"This building provides the leaders and citizens of Rashid a place to voice their concerns to their elected officials, to plan, and with wisdom, map out the way of progress for all Iraqis here in Rashid," said Col. Ted Martin, commander, 1st BCT.

The Rashid District Council is a self-governance program, where community leaders are working with the estimated 1.2 million people of the Rashid district to help restore order to local neighborhoods and communities in Baghdad.

"It promises to serve as a meeting place where great people share ideas for improving security, fostering cooperation and responding to the voice of those who need help," said Martin, a native of Jacksonville Beach, Fla.

The DC Hall was first opened by Coalition Forces and the Coalition Provisional Authority in the fall of 2003. Since then, the building has hosted meetings and events for local leaders and council members for more than 20 Neighborhood Councils operating in Rashid.

"When terrorism attempted to halt creativity and progress, our efforts were pulled together to repel all forms of terrorism for the purpose of moving forward and rebuilding," said Ya'aqob Yosif, head chairman of the Rashid DC.

The meetings are an opportunity for community leaders to develop real solutions for problems within the neighborhoods, he said during the commemoration.

"Today we are here to open the (DC) building and we are hopeful that it becomes the first of many projects in our beloved Iraq in general and in Al-Rashid district in particular," Yosif explained.

The local council leaders are responsible for working with the Iraqi neighborhood advisory councils and leaders in the various

muhallahs to address concerns about public health, education, electricity, water and sewage programs, and Iraqi Security Forces operating in southern Baghdad.

"As we stand here today, we would like to thank the efforts of the friendly forces and their cooperation with us in this project and helping our wounded country – Iraq," Yosif said.

The 1st "Raider" BCT continues to work with Iraqi Security Forces to provide improved security in Rashid, said Lt. Col. Paul Hossenlopp, deputy commanding officer, 1st BCT.

With improved security, the 1st BCT will work with local leaders and the Government of Iraq with essential services and projects to improve Iraqis' quality of life, he said.

One example of the brigade's ongoing efforts to stabilize everyday life for the people of Rashid, MND-B and 1st BCT leaders met April 25 for the unearthing of a new construction project to build a headquarters for the Civil Services Department in the Jihad community of Rashid, said Hossenlopp.

"The CSD Building will be the first community services building in the Rashid district of southern Baghdad," explained Hossenlopp, a native of Cincinnati.

The CSD project once complete will eventually operate with the support of the

Government of Iraq and provide permanent jobs for local communities by creating and sustaining an Iraqi workforce employed to rebuild Baghdad's infrastructure and eventually restore essential services to the citizens of Rashid, said Hossenlopp.

The construction project currently employs an estimated 400 Iraqis, providing vocational tutoring combined with on-the-job training for the unskilled laborers, who will help local contractors create the new civic center in southern Baghdad, said Maj. Timothy Reed, civil affairs officer, 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B.

"Stability plays a big part in the work that we are accomplishing," Reed said, about the \$1.6 million project to create a civic center for essential services and public works in southern Baghdad.

The intent is that once the Iraqis are trained, the crew of construction workers and civil engineers will eventually lead their district in reconstruction efforts in Baghdad, said Reed, a native of Las Cruces, N.M.

"It is a great concept for the people to create a headquarters for a new civic services department to better service the needs of the people of Rashid and Baghdad," he added.

Based on the program's success, other CSD Buildings will be planned for the Rashid district and Baghdad, he added.

ISF, MND-B work together, live under same roof

By Sgt. James Hunter

2nd BCT PAO, 101st Abn. Div.

BAGHDAD – As early as 2 a.m., the sound of a rooster can be heard in the distance as cats and dogs rummage through trash on the streets of Baghdad looking for their morning meal. The sounds seem loud coming through the walls as it echoes around the room.

“Cock-a-doodle-doo,” the annoying, yet recognizable rooster screams. Maybe it’s time to wake up.

Soldiers awoken from their dreams – perhaps thinking of their families or driving along the coast – to begin their early morning guard shift.

It’s just another day in the lives of the Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers from Company C “Cobra,” 1st Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, as they work side-by-side with the Iraqi Army at Coalition Outpost 412 in northwest Baghdad.

It’s a home away from home for the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division Soldiers, with nothing all that interesting in their two-story building. There are only three couches, overhead lights and fans, and the surrounding Iraqi neighborhood that really catches anyone’s attention.

The couches are somewhat comfortable; the fans keep it cool, and it’s anyone’s guess what may happen in the neighborhood. That can keep anyone on their toes.

However, it’s the working relationship between Iraqi Security and Coalition Forces that keeps it interesting. These are infantrymen from both the American and Iraqi Armies brought together to live as one entity under the same roof. They don’t share the same language, but they still manage to laugh and joke with each other and trade stories of the past.

It’s a working relationship these grunts share: a bond built over time as MND-B troops continue to mentor these men, said Sgt. Christopher Warnes, a native of Guilford, Conn.

“We have a good relationship with the IA. They work generally pretty hard, so we are generally happy,” Warnes said. “They are our Iraqi counterparts. They are Iraqi infantry and we are American infantry.

“We are the same people – except for they are from Iraq. We joke around and eat together. We do everything together, short of personal hygiene,” he said with laughter.

Initially it was an outpost – one of three different outposts – for the Iraqi Army to push out into their area of operations. However, now it is used to man the tactical checkpoint, which secures the main supply route in the area and as a more direct way of mentoring and developing the Iraqi Army.

Their position is critical to the security of the area, said Warnes.

“We monitor all the traffic going to Kadhamiyah, coming out of Hurriyah, Washash,” he said. “Generally, if anybody



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. James Hunter, 2nd BCT PAO, 101st Abn. Div.

Sgt. Patrick Delacruz, a native of Saipan, and an Iraqi Army soldier talk with an Iraqi man while operating at a tactical checkpoint in northwest Baghdad April 20. Delacruz serves with 3rd Platoon, Company C “Cobra,” 1st Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), Multi-National Division – Baghdad.

wants to go anywhere on this end of Baghdad, they have to come down the route.”

The outpost has matured more into higher-level leadership mentoring, said Warnes. It’s graduated from TCP training to planning patrols and setting defensive postures.

“We coordinate with them where they want their barriers, what supplies they need to make their building more secure,” Warnes said. “We started off with just the Soldiers; now, we are helping establish the (noncommissioned officer) corps.”

Soon, two-thirds of Cobra’s area of operations will be handed over to the Iraqi Security Forces. From the ongoing efforts in the area, due to the constant combined patrols, the area has stabilized, which will allow the ISF to take over in the near future, said Warnes, a team leader with 3rd Platoon, Co. C, 1-502nd Inf. Regt.

The Iraqi soldiers have shown obvious signs of improvement, especially with their relationship with the Iraqi people, said Warnes. They are generally pleased to see the MND-B and Iraqi troops patrol together.

“We do constant patrols with the Iraqi Army,” said Staff Sgt. Ramon Baca, the platoon sergeant for 1st Platoon, Co. C. “We go out with them and do knock and talks. A lot of the time they take point. They are getting a lot of face time with the Iraqi people.”

However, it has taken time to get the Iraqi Army to this point because they basically came from nothing to the point they are at now, said Warnes.

“I’ve only been in Iraq twice, but I can relate to my last tour. I was in a different part of Iraq, in the Sunni triangle,” he said. “However, in the last year I have seen basic Soldiering get much better, a start of a noncommissioned officer corps and good weapons discipline.”

When Special Groups criminals put up arms against the MND-B and Iraqi troops mere weeks ago, “the Iraqi Army stood tall and manned their positions,” said Warnes.

“They wanted to fight. They are really are developing into a unit that one day will be able to handle the country themselves.”

MND-B Soldiers link brigade through cables, switches

MND-B PAO

BAGHDAD – Soldiers of the Multi-National Division – Baghdad G6 cable platoon recently returned from Forward Operating Base War Eagle in northern Baghdad, where they completed the installation of a fiber optic-based cable ring that will soon support 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division.

The team of eight-soldiers and one civilian technician spent three weeks as guests of the Striker Brigade as they continued to build a command and control capability at the newly designated FOB. Eventually, FOB War Eagle will be home to the brigade headquarters.

On this mission, the cable team, led by Sgt. Scott Guerrero installed more than 3,000 feet of fiber optic cabling, including switches and access panels, which will facilitate the distribution of the Striker’s voice and data networks.

Guerrero, who has plenty of experience as a cable and wire installer on previous deployments, said that he really enjoyed getting off of Camp Liberty.

“For several of my guys, this will be

(was their) first experience off the FOB,” he remarked, as they headed out on mission. Guerrero, a native of Waterbury, Conn., is on his third tour of duty and his second with MND-B. He has assisted on most of the cabling across the MND-B operational environment.

“This time around, there are many more demands for secret and non-classified capability at lower levels,” said Maj. Marc Edquid, MND-B G6’s Strategic Network Operations officer and former S6 for 3rd BCT. “BCTs are stretched to the limit with their organic equipment, so I send my teams out to extend services to folks around the FOBs. The automation sections can use their own assets to support combat outposts and joint security stations.”

MND-B’s cable platoon is part of the commercialization cell of the strategic network operations section of the G6. Their primary mission is to install commercial fiber cable solutions across the operational environment in order to extend the tactical data networks of the division’s units.



U.S. Army courtesy photo

A Multi-National Division – Baghdad cable team prepares to head to FOB War Eagle in northern Baghdad to install fiber optic cabling for the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division. Standing from left to right are Spc. Brandon Beall, Chris Obregon, Cpl. Michael Nieves, Pfc. James Arvin, Spc. Scott Reed, Sgt. Scott Guerrero, Spc. Mathew Braley. Kneeling from left to right are Pfc. Thomas Lafollette and Spc. Victor Boyd.

Stage Right Review: *Some thing has found us*

By Pfc. Samantha Schutz

MND-B PAO

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – If you lived in America during the terrorist attacks of 9/11 – especially if you lived in New York City – it's hard to imagine something worse happening to destroy a beloved part of our country in such a terrible way.



Pfc. Samantha Schutz

One thing that might just be scarier, if you use your imagination, is the attack of a giant, relentless, unidentified monster.

The “monster movie” genre has been around for ages. Looking back over their history, it can be inferred that these types of films are more than just entertainment; they serve to either displace or absorb part of a society's terror resulting from recent events. King Kong took place in 1933, during America's Great Depression. Japan's Godzilla debuted only a few years after the nuclear devastation of two of their cities.

Cloverfield, produced by JJ Abrams (Lost), and written by Drew Goddard (Lost), is the newest American addition to the “creature feature” phenomenon, boasting a massive, malicious, alien-looking monster that barges in uninvited on an unsuspecting Manhattan.

But Cloverfield puts a welcomed new spin on the genre. Unlike previous movies of this type, this one gets the viewer involved.

The film opens with a government warning presenting the forthcoming footage as a tape that had been recovered from “the site previously known as Central Park.” When the footage begins rolling, we realize we are watching the personal recording of a group of 20-somethings in the city.

Hud, played by T.J. Miller (Carpoolers), is behind the camera for the purpose of documenting the surprise going-away party for his best friend, Rob, played by Michael Stahl-David (The Black Donnellys), who leaves for Japan soon to start working as the vice-president of a Japanese company.

Throughout the first 15 minutes of the film, we ease into the environment, becoming a guest among friends. We meet Jason, Rob's brother, played by Mike Vogel (Poseidon), and his girlfriend Lily, played by Jessica Lucas (The Covenant). We have a drink with Marlena, played by Lizzy Caplan (Mean Girls), on whom Hud has an obvious crush. When Beth, played by Odette Yustman (October Road), comes in with a random date in tow, we're filled in on the gossip about how she and longtime friend Rob “hooked up” a few weeks prior.

We are drawn into the drama when Hud and Jason give a motivational talk to Rob after he has a spat with Beth and she leaves the party. Just as Rob begins to realize that he must track Beth down and tell her how he feels, the city is rocked by what seems to be a mild earthquake.

The group, with camera in tow, hurries to the TV to investigate. Although the news anchors can't identify what caused the tremor, they do reveal that an oil tanker has capsized in the New York Harbor near the Statue of Liberty. Majorly intrigued and maybe a bit intoxicated, the friends decide to go to the roof of their apartment building to try to see the wreckage.

While they are speculating, there is a massive explosion not far from their location, sending huge, flaming debris hurtling through the air toward them. Everyone makes it back inside safely, but panic is setting in. They rush to the streets,



where the panic is amassed – it seems everyone in Manhattan is running around down there, screaming about some “thing” attacking the city.

Hud's camera catches the moment when Lady Liberty's decapitated head, pitted with what look like bite marks, plummets into the middle of the street. He zooms in down the street, trying to catch a glimpse of whatever is causing the carnage, but to no avail. Since he is only an inadvertent documentary maker, he isn't intent on sticking around too long. He and his pals join the flow of people who are trying to escape the area via the bridge; however, their progress is stopped when a giant tentacle takes down the bridge.

At this point, the group is certain that a monster is attacking. Rob, our hero, feels compelled to go rescue Beth, whom he finds out is trapped in her apartment downtown. After a brief argument, the rest of the friends follow.

This is where the quest begins.

The viewer remains just as ignorant as the people experiencing the horror, since we see only what they saw. As our new friends struggle to stay alive, we can't help but root for them.

**“This thing could've come from anywhere!
It could've come from outer space!”**

As many “monster movies” that have come out over the years, no one has ever approached one quite the same way as the Cloverfield crew. Take The Blair Witch Project, merge it with the American remake of Godzilla, then pepper it heavily with witty dialogue – that's Cloverfield.

Since the entire film is shot with a handheld camera, some viewers are bound to suffer motion sickness, especially considering the cameraman is running most of the time. However, the fact that an amateur cameraman and his hipster friends

are the ones we're watching definitely adds to the appeal.

The actors playing these normal-people characters are only the least bit recognizable from TV shows and from minor movie roles, which makes them all the more believable in this cast. We might not recognize them, but that doesn't mean they're not good at their jobs – their performances are real. It's as if the audience really is watching a homemade video of some aloof people just fighting for survival.

So since the characters have no idea what's going on, neither does the audience. To some, this is frustrating. If a moviegoer prefers all loose ends to be neatly tied up by the end of the movie experience, he or she will be gravely disappointed.

Although Hud does indeed catch the creature on film several times (once a little too close for comfort), never do we find out exactly what it is. All we know is that it's terrifying...and hungry. Americans have been exposed to all sorts of ghouls in movies, from a giant primate to legions of flesh-eating undead humans, so it could be said that it's getting hard to surprise us. Perhaps the horror invoked by the Cloverfield monster is partially because we don't know where it came from or what it wants.

For the hardcore movie buff, I will add that there are certain hints throughout the movie should you care to wager guesses. Anyone who is familiar with JJ Abrams' work – like the “Lost” series – knows how much he loves keeping his audience in the dark. The summer before Cloverfield hit theaters (in January), anyone who went to the theater to see the blockbuster Transformers would have gotten a first glimpse of the Cloverfield trailer. At that time, it had no title – just a website with the film's release date.

Curious viewers who visited the site were led into a labyrinth of clues as to what tricks Abrams had up his sleeve. For six months, there was an underground following of the project now known as Cloverfield.

“Whatever it is, it's winning.”

Okay, I admit it. I'm one of those movie nerds who got strung along all that time, waiting for this flick to hit theaters. My only disappointment with Cloverfield was that I couldn't see it on the big screen; I was here in Iraq, facing America's real enemy.

Hopefully I'll be able to catch the sequel on the big screen – it's been announced for next year. Who knows if it'll be shot the same way; maybe it will be more like a documentary of what happened, or it could even be years later when the creature strikes again..!?

Personally, I'm fascinated by the Cloverfield saga; I think it's genius.

Beyond the classic interpretation of “monster movies” relating to social tragedies, as I mentioned before, there isn't anything deep about this storyline. It's a first-person action thriller, with a love story on the side. That's all.

But it does succeed in showing, realistically, the bond between friends and the mix of fear, bravery, triumph and defeat we'd all inevitably feel if (heaven forbid) any kind of humongous creature started terrorizing us. I laughed, jumped, re-wound a couple parts to see the details, screamed in surprise and, yes, I cried. (Why do I always watch movies that make me cry?)

Cloverfield is guaranteed to leave you white-knuckled. JJ Abrams and crew did just what they set out to do with this film – displace and absorb terror.

I give Cloverfield 5 stars out of 5.

Gaming Review: Super Smash Bros

Mario 'brawls' with Nintendo's fleet of superstars

By Sgt. Mark Matthews
MND-B PAO

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – It seems like only a few short months ago my Nintendo Wii was working overtime, soaring through the galaxy with the mustached marvel – Mario. Now he's back, and this time he's brought his friends – or, at least they used to be his friends.

Super Smash Bros. Brawl for the Nintendo Wii is the third installment of the franchise, and it packs as big of a punch as ever before.

High flying acrobatics, a variety of game modes, simple controls and the opportunity to take your favorite Nintendo characters from the days of old to the present and kick some serious butt, are all what make this game well worth \$49.99 price point.

First off, the name says it all. This game is nothing more than an all-out brawl. I remember how frustrated I was when I first played Super Mario Bros. on the Nintendo Entertainment System; I'd struggle for hours, fighting past the evil mushrooms only to find the Princess was in another castle.

Well, now that's all out the window. All you need to do is take Mario, pit him up directly against the Peach Princess and make sure that next time – she's stays put.

In SSBB you can settle scores from one end of the Nintendo universe to the end, all the favorites are here: Samus from Metroid, Bowser and Yoshi from the Mario series, Olimar, from Pikmin, and Link and Zelda from the Zelda series, plus many, many more.

Apart from all the characters available at the start there is a slew of unlockable characters as well, including: the blue blur himself, Sonic the Hedgehog and the meanest mercenary ever to grace a video game console, Snake from the Metal Gear series.

Along with each character comes at least one level from their series. For example, Captain Falcon from the F-Zero series on the Super Nintendo Entertainment System fights one of the race tracks from the game. Fox McCloud from Star Fox brings a level from space with a background most will remember.

From what I have seen, the levels are accurate right down to smallest detail, and each brings with it its own challenges. These aren't just battlegrounds like the old Mortal Combat series – these are opponents all by themselves.

Not only are you fighting up to three different characters at any given time, you are also dodging go-karts on the Mario Kart Stage, charging bore riders from the Zelda level and trying not to tumble out of the high swinging Donkey Kong stage.

The music is great as well. Hundreds of familiar songs are either available or unlockable. If you ever owned an original NES and paid the slightest attention to any game, you will most certainly find one here that will take you back to the good old days. Of course, they have been remastered and remixed but are still very much recognizable.

As far as the game controls go, this is as easy as they come. You have the left, right, up, down buttons and a punch and special button. For the most part, that's about it.

There are also four different controller configurations you can use: the Wiimote turned sideways, the Wiimote and Nunchuck combination, the Wii Classic Controller or the old GameCube Controller. Some of these work better for me than others, but they are all pretty easy to get used to.

However, don't let the ease of the controls full you. The game is super challenging. Well, it's moderately difficult. Okay, okay, it's super easy, but very enjoyable.

To me, this game isn't a game that glues you to your television for hours upon hours, but it is a game you put in almost every day for about 20 minutes. It just takes you back for a moment of nostalgia.

What will suck you in is the huge number of trophies available. You unlock the trophies by beating opponents in a certain timeframe, beating a certain number of opponents, beating certain mini-games or whatever. There are literally hundreds and hundreds of trophies available.

The last surprise from the Nintendo developers was a very decent adventure game mode, where you play as all the good characters in the game and fight through levels to save the day.

This, to me, was not the meat of the game like I believe the developers wanted, but it is entertaining to some degree and an easy way to unlock all of the characters.

The true enjoyment lies strictly with brawling against your friends. While most fighting games are one-on-one, SSBB can battle up to four people at once. This can be done in teams or every man for himself Either way, it sure to be a smash.



Sgt. Mark Matthews



Is this game the greatest thing since peanut butter a jelly? No.

Will it keep you entertained? Probably.

However, this game is meant for those 'old-school' gamers who wish to experience a little nostalgia every once in a while and say: "Wow, I so remember that" every 2 minutes.

I love this game, I really do, but I think most casual gamers will pick it up play for a few minutes and be done with it.

On that note, I give Super Smash Bros. Brawl on the Nintendo Wii 4 classic Nintendo systems out of 5.



Toby Keith brings country music to Iraq

**Story and photo by
Spc. Aaron Rosencrans
MND-B PAO**

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – World-renowned country music star, Toby Keith, brought a big taste of home to Soldiers, Sailors, Marines and Airmen during a concert at the Camp Liberty Post Exchange Stage April 26.

Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers, along with their fellow service members from every corner of the Victory Base Complex, filled the Liberty PX courtyard to watch Keith perform during his sixth trip to Iraq.

Part of the reason Keith has visited deployed service members so frequently is because of his love for the service members and the American way of life.

“We like to come over here and say thank you to the troops,” Keith said. “We hope the music we bring takes everybody’s mind off of what they’re doing for a couple hours and lets them enjoy life the way free Americans are supposed to enjoy it.”

Soldiers seemed overjoyed to have the country great perform for them in the combat zone.

Sgt. Steven Haught, a native of Hillsborough, N.H., who serves as a forward observer with Company B, 1st Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, MND-B, repeatedly thanked the United Services Organizations for bringing Keith here.

“Toby Keith is the bomb – he rules,” Haught said. “USO, you’re the best for bringing Toby Keith to Liberty. “These concerts give us something to look forward to and it’s good for us.”

One Soldier’s excitement for the concert

brought him to the stage more than 12 hours before the concert even started just so he could have a good spot to watch Keith in action.

“I’ve been waiting since about 7:30 this morning,” said Warrant Officer Brad Carpenter, a native of Opelika, Ala., who serves as the brigade communications technician with Headquarter and Headquarters Company, 62nd Medical Brigade, Multi-National Corps – Iraq. “I’m a big patriot and I love our country. Toby Keith is like an idol. He’s the biggest country singer and patriot I know, so I’m honored to be here for my first concert ever.”

Keith’s father served his country as a Soldier, so he has felt a deep connection to service members and veterans from an early age.

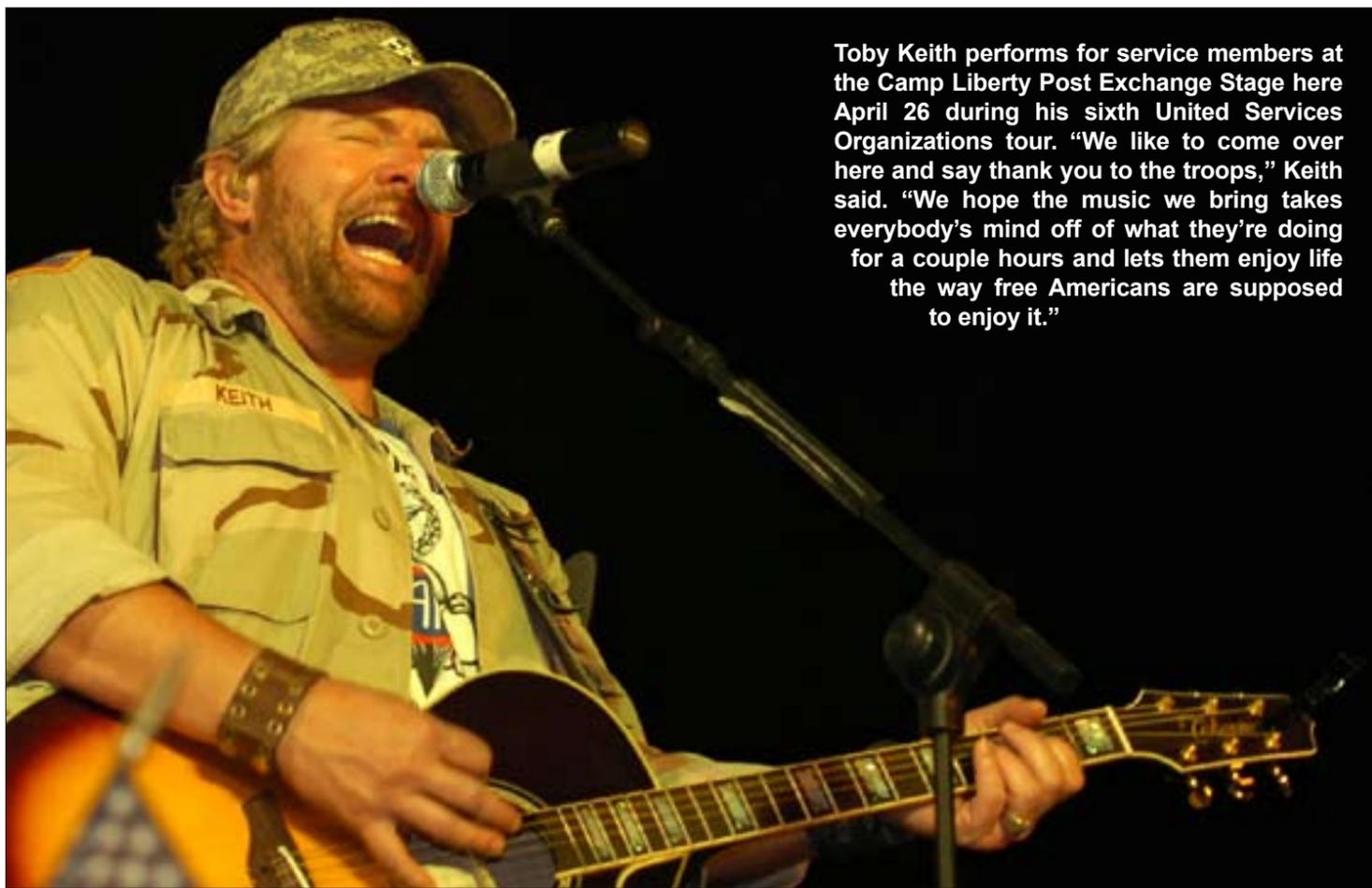
“My father was a Soldier, so he instilled in us three kids, at a young age, to respect veterans and how important the military is to free people,” Keith said. “(These concerts) are pretty much a tribute to him.”

Soldiers were drawn into the music and sang along with the band as Keith sang some of his hits like “Whiskey Girl” and “American Soldier.”

Before the concert, Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers lined the hallway at the division’s headquarters building for the opportunity to shake Keith’s hand and have their picture taken with him.

Keith said he wanted to make sure all service members know they are supported back home and to keep driving forward here.

“Godspeed, you’re doing a great job,” said Keith. “America is behind you – and don’t listen to the morons. There’s 10 percent of the right wingers and the left wingers who make all the racket. Don’t listen to none of them; it’s no good for you. Just keep doing your job at hand and Godspeed to you. You’re doing a hell of a job.”



Toby Keith performs for service members at the Camp Liberty Post Exchange Stage here April 26 during his sixth United Services Organizations tour. “We like to come over here and say thank you to the troops,” Keith said. “We hope the music we bring takes everybody’s mind off of what they’re doing for a couple hours and lets them enjoy life the way free Americans are supposed to enjoy it.”

‘Big Rain’ rocks the house at Liberty’s MWR field house

MND-B PAO

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – Big Rain, the definitive working man’s band, rocked the house for the Soldiers of Multi-National Division – Baghdad and the 4th Infantry Division at the Morale, Welfare and Recreation Field House here April 17; the band also went about its rocking ways at the Tigerland MWR here the following night.

The members of the band said they were excited about the opportunity to play for the audience because it provides them the opportunity to give something back to the service members, who are sacrificing time with their Families and risking their lives to bring freedom to the Iraqis.

Byron Bonham, the band’s drummer, said he didn’t want to just say he supported the Soldiers who are deployed all over the world – he wanted to come to Iraq personally and show his support by entertaining the troops.

“I wanted to give something back,” said Bonham. “There are artists out there who say they support the troops, but when they are invited to come over, they turn down the offer. I wanted to put my money where my mouth is and say I support the troops and give them a little slice of home while they’re out here.”

As part of the show, Big Rain belted out “Sound of Freedom,” which was written by Bruce Guynn, the band’s lead singer and bassist.

Although the song was written in response to the Persian Gulf War, it is one that carries on and is pertinent to the current war in Iraq.

“I was looking at the world as a whole, saying we all need to be free,” Guynn said. “It’s not just my freedom, and it’s just not your freedom – we all need to be free.”

The song, he explained, relates to the work Soldiers are doing in Iraq because the troops are fighting to bring freedom to all Iraqis, And in doing so, they are sacrificing themselves, and perhaps even some of their beliefs, to ensure all Iraqis can taste the freedom everyone should have the opportunity to enjoy.

Due to a back injury, one of the band members was not able to make the trip to Iraq, so up stepped the 4th Infantry Division’s own Spc. André Goncalves, a native of Wichita, Kan., who rocked the crowd with his new band-mates. You could say Goncalves was moonlighting with the band. His normal “gig” is as a guitar player with the 4th Inf. Div. Band.

Goncalves said shows were exhausting, but he relished the opportunity to jam with a nationally-recognized band.

“We didn’t meet before the gig or anything,” said Goncalves. “I just hooked up my guitar and we started playing.”

The Big Rain “team” said they developed a bigger appreciation for the work Soldiers are doing in Iraq – and they can’t wait to share those experiences when they get back home to the friendly confines of the U.S.A.

“You guys really have it rough out here,” said Bruce Wandmayer, the band’s saxophone player. “I wanted to talk to the Soldiers and see what you have to say. Back home, people really have no idea what it’s really like out here. I can’t wait to share my experiences with my friends and Family.”



U.S. Army photo by Spc. Aaron Rosencrans, MND-B PAO

Bruce Wandmayer smoothly croons his melodic tunes on his saxophone as the band “Big Rain” performs for the servicemembers of Multi-National Division – Baghdad and 4th Infantry Division at the Morale, Welfare and Recreation Field House here April 17.

Mol's Wide World of Sports

Mol's must-see sporting events

By Staff Sgt. Michael Molinaro
4th Inf. Div. PAO

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq—The recent running of the 134th Kentucky Derby, the first leg in the Triple Crown for horse racing at Louisville's world-known Churchill Downs, got me to thinking – what are the few sporting events every sports nut must attend in his or her lifetime?

I'll give you a quick look at my list. It starts with the Masters. Have you ever seen a Masters Sunday where the weather wasn't just beautiful and the course absolutely breathtaking with its bright colors? Hot Dogs are still a buck, Coke's are free, and it's almost impossible to get a ticket, so getting in is an accomplishment in itself. And that's all before the golf. It is the first major of the year and is reserved for the games best of the best. It's where the holes all have nicknames, and each has their own stories of taming golf's toughest into looking like one of us on the course.

The Final Four is high on my list. One weekend, four teams, all vying for one title. I have been to the first and second rounds of the NCAA tournament, and it was phenomenal to watch these amateur athletes play their butts off for a national championship. But to see the last four teams out of 64 in one building with the bands playing and the alma maters and all of the hoopla is something I must see for myself.

I must go to an AFC Championship game in Pittsburgh. For me, this is the best there is, better than being at the Super Bowl. I would be in my glory to be at our home field with the cold air blowing, hopefully some snow, and thousands of terrible towels waving non-stop.

I would be surrounded by my people.

The crowd would be electric and help push the team to yet another Super Bowl. I went to one championship game for the tailgate party that started around 2 a.m. for a 1 p.m. kickoff but didn't make it inside. I will never make that mistake again.

Why not the Super Bowl?

The Super Bowl is too corporate, and there wouldn't be so many die-hards there due to the cost of attending the game and the expenses attributed to it. I'd rather be at a Super Bowl party with my friends or at a sports bar on the South Side of Pittsburgh. I am willing to bet the same could be said for many of you and your hometown as well.

A game seven of a Stanley Cup final or World Series would be awesome. Knowing that a champion would be crowned and see the pros give it all they got for the glory would have to be something else to take part in.

I admit that baseball on TV is a little boring for me, and the majority of fans think the same way about hockey, but being in person for the finale would be overwhelming.

And to go with the horse racing theme, the Derby is always a moment in glory, but imagine being at the Belmont Race in New York with a horse going for the Triple Crown. I was at the Preakness in 2004 when Funny Cide won, giving him the first two legs of the crown. The hype walking out of the track that day was thick, and that was three weeks before the Belmont. I can't imagine how intense it would be to witness a horse attempt something that hasn't occurred since 1978.

And finally, how about the Army-Navy football game?

Now that is a must-see. The game has always been a big event. But unlike Michigan-Ohio State or Auburn-Alabama, this game is about more than football.

Everyone that steps on the field knows that it is just a game. The atmosphere, with the cadets in the stands and all of their slogans and chants back-and-forth, is unlike any other. They lay it all on the line for 60 minutes and once the clock runs out, they become brothers-in-arms again and realize they may see each other on another battlefield, working side-by-side defending our great country.

I know there are some others I missed. I could have mentioned the Olympics, the Little League World Series and the BCS championship. But this is my list – and I'm sticking to it.

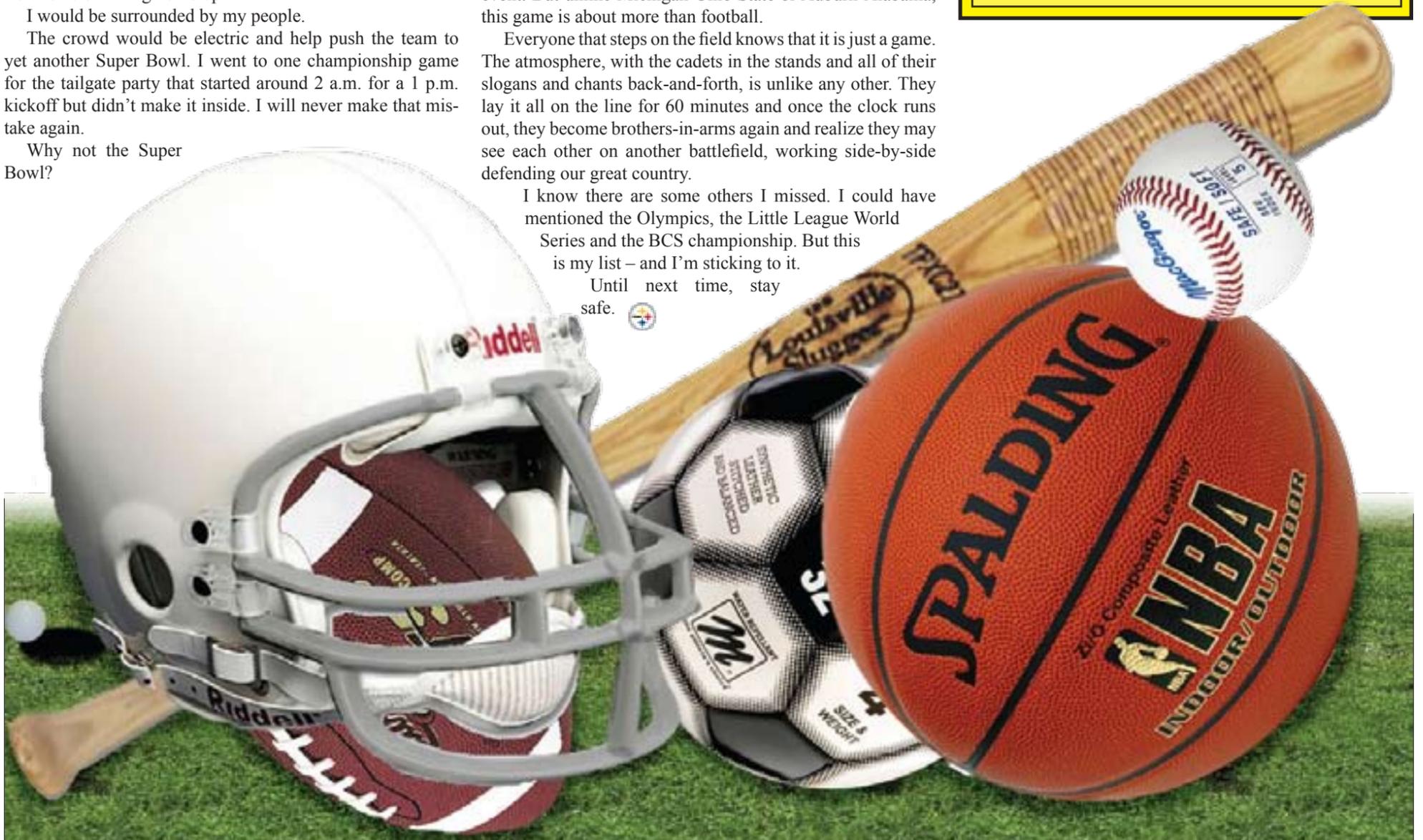
Until next time, stay safe.

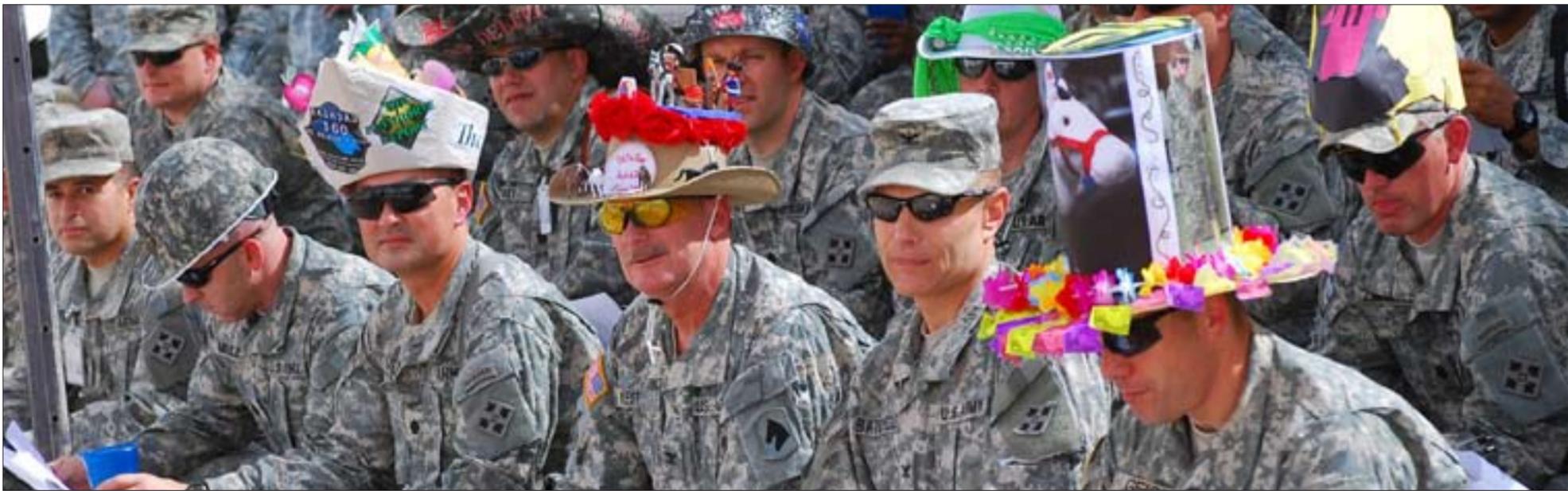


Staff Sgt. Michael 'Mol' Molinaro

Top 10 sporting events for fans to experience

10. Wimbledon
9. Game 7 of World Series, NBA Finals, or Stanley Cup Finals
8. NASCAR night race at Bristol Motor Speedway
7. Army-Navy football game
6. Little League World Series
5. Kentucky Derby
4. Indianapolis 500
3. Superbowl
2. The Masters
1. NCAA Final Four





U.S. Army photo by Spc. Elvyn Nieves, MND-B PAO

The officers-in-charge of the various sections throughout the Multi-National Division – Baghdad headquarters support their “jockeys” from the stands during the 1st running of the 138th Kentucky Derby at the MND-B and 4th Infantry Division headquarters building May 3.

Soldiers gallop to glory in Kentucky Derby – Iraq

By Spc. Elvyn Nieves

MND-B PAO

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – Determination filled the faces of both the decorated stick horses and their jockeys as they approached the line – and as fast as they rode in, they were off. This was the big one. The one everyone had been preparing for, and even though this wasn’t the most traditional “Kentucky Derby” ever held, it was close enough for the Soldiers of Multi-National Division – Baghdad and the 4th Infantry Division.

MND-B Soldiers got a taste of the 1st running of 138th “Kentucky Derby” race held at the divisions headquarters parking lot May 3. The “Kentucky home-grown Gala” was hosted by Soldiers of the Kentucky National Guard’s 138th Fires Brigade.

Each section within the MND-B headquarters building was represented by a “jockey,” which had to “gallop” one lap around the building as they mounted a creatively-decorated stick horse.

The event was celebrated the first Saturday of May – just like the classic American horse race held at home in the Commonwealth. Three races took place during the event: The Baghdad Mile, The Quarterback Cup and the main event, of course – The “Kentucky Derby.”

“It’s a way to pay honor to the state and the tradition of the horse racing industry,” said Col. Billy West, a Richmond, Ky., native, is the commander of the 138th Fires Brigade. “The Kentucky Derby is an event watched worldwide, and here, we’re just a small part.”

“Kentucky guardsmen take the safety and security of the Commonwealth of Kentucky seriously, and anything we can do to bring honor to the state is a good thing,” West added.

In the “Kentucky Derby” race, the participants paraded with their stick horses to make an amusing representation of the real one. There were Mint Juleps, without the alcohol of course, and the traditional playing of “My Old Kentucky Home” by the 4th Infantry Division Band.

The biggest difference between this race and the real Kentucky Derby is the fact that these horses ran on only two legs – the jockeys.

“I feel sweaty and hot, but it’s exciting

to bring my section to the winner’s circle,” said 1st Lt. Aaron Zwirner, the winner of the Baghdad Mile, who is a native of Alexandria, Va. Zwirner serves a liaison officer with the intelligence security command, Company B, Special Troops Battalion, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B.

The key element for the victory was the horse. You can see it’s a natural thoroughbred, joked Zwirner. “I was excited during the whole race, and I saw a lot of enthusiasm from the Soldiers,” said Zwirner. “I saw a lot of creative horses out there.”

There was a lot of excitement during the last race where the spectators intently listened to the announcer’s narration of the race and telling what section was taking the lead, but in the end, there was only one winner.

“It was pretty hot and rough,” said Sgt. George Martinez, the winner of the “Kentucky Derby.” Martinez is a native of Los Angeles and serves as the assistant battle captain with the division engineers office.

Martinez said his strategy to win the race was to change horses at the last minute. He paraded around with a big, stylish horse, but just before race time, he changed it for a swifter, lighter breed.

“It surprised everybody when I came out with the other horse,” said Martinez. “Everybody thought we were going to race with the big horse and have the disadvantage, but we actually came in the lead and won the race.”

Martinez said the big horse was rough to “gallop” with and, for that reason, he hid the lighter horse between the head of the bigger one.

“It was a pretty big event today,” said Martinez. “It got everybody taking their minds out of their busy daily schedules to come out here and have some fun and enjoy our time in Iraq because we don’t get a lot of that here.”

To conclude the event, the winner of the “Kentucky Derby” was brought to the “Winners Circle” and the winning horse was presented with a wreath. Although, this was just a celebration of the 138th running of the Kentucky Derby, the Soldiers who participated will always be able to say, “I was once a jockey, and I ran the Kentucky Derby – in Iraq.”



U.S. Army photo by Spc. Elvyn Nieves, MND-B PAO

Sgt. George Martinez, a native of Los Angeles, who serves as the assistant battle captain with Company A, Special Troops Battalion, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, visits the “Winners Circle” after winning the 1st running of the 138th Kentucky Derby at Camp Liberty May 3.



U.S. Army photo by Spc. Elvyn Nieves, MND-B PAO

Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers break out of the “gates” during the 1st running of the 138th Kentucky Derby at the MND-B headquarters building May 3.