

JOINT BASE BALAD'S  
**EXPEDITIONARY TIMES**  
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Vol. 1, Issue 4



Photo by Spc. Anthony Hooker

Col. Darrell Williams, commander of the 3rd Sustainment Brigade, holds a son of Dr. Muhammad Ismail Ramah after visiting for lunch near Forward Operating Base Q-West June 25.

## 3rd SB leaders get neighborly with locals

by Spc. Anthony Hooker

Expeditionary Times Staff

**FORWARD OPERATING BASE Q-WEST, Iraq** – Col. Darrell Williams, commander of the 3rd Sustainment Brigade, along with his Soldiers, enjoyed a traditional Iraqi lunch at the home of Dr. Muhammad Ismail Ahmad Ramah, June 25 just outside of Forward Operating Base Q-West.

Ramah is a medical practitioner by trade, but enjoys a large sphere of influence with the military leadership at Q-West and local citizens living near the base.

Ramah, who lives only a short distance from Q-West, is an important person to the base leadership and this lunch represents a continuation of a strong relationship Williams has built with Ra-

mah over the last year. Not only has he provided information about insurgent activity around the base, but has also been a key facilitator of finding skilled and unskilled employees to work with the base's Department of Public Works.

"Doc's presence in the community is beneficial to both the military and the local populace," said Williams. "His cooperation helps us maintain a strong presence in the area and his ability to reach people in the community allows them opportunities to get jobs working for us."

Prior to the luncheon, Williams and his staff were able to get comments from Ramah's brother, Hussayn Ismail Ahmad Ramah, who serves as the village Muktar (Mayor), and said neighboring locals were interested in obtaining work on the base to help stimulate financial growth in their communities. But there were concerns however, the effort might not be worth enduring the threats of insurgents.

Lt. Col. Keith Dinn, Q-West's mayor cell

commander, said he is looking to bring in locals that can work under an apprenticeship, and so far, more than 325 locals currently work on the base.

"We will be offering training in fields like carpentry, construction and plumbing," said Dinn. "This training will give these guys the chance to enhance their skills along with the opportunity to build up their local economy."

Ramah said he has been associating with the military in this area since 2003, at the start of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

"When the Coalition Forces came here, (Iraqis) were afraid to meet them and (the Coalition Forces) seemed cautious about approaching us," Ramah said. "I just decided to go up and introduce myself."

That meeting led to Ramah serving as a host to the military leadership, personally taking the

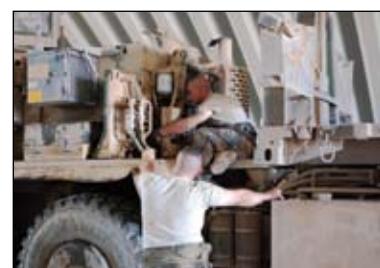
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### How to make it through Customs

Getting through Customs with little to no problems

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### Ressurrecting the fleet

24th Trans. Co. brings its motorpool back to life

Pages 8,9



### Village of Hope

Local Iraqis learn basic skills to stay on the road to self sustainment

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## Provost Marshal Office: Weekly police blotter

Week of 30 June

**The Provost Marshal Office conducted:** (341) Security checks, (40) Traffic stops, issued (19) DD Form 1408 Armed Forces Traffic Tickets, registered (63) vehicles on the installation, investigated five minor traffic accidents and (23) common access cards were reported lost.

**Crime Prevention:** Report suspicious activity and crimes immediately to the Provost Marshal Office Law Enforcement Desk. Dial 911 for emergencies and 443-8602 for all others.

**Lost & Found:** The following unclaimed property has been found between June 30 through July 6 and turned into the Provost Marshal's office:

**CAC identification cards: 4**  
**Eagle Cash card: 1**  
**Identification badge: 1**  
**Portable radio: 1**  
**Driver's license: 2**  
**Cordless lamp: 1**  
**Dog tags: 4**  
**Debit/credit cards: 4**  
**Photos: 7**  
**DVD: 1**  
**Notebook: 1**  
**Social security card: 1**  
**Columbia college packet: 1**  
**Wallet: 1**  
**DD form 2501/Courier card: 1**

If you believe any of the unclaimed items listed above may be yours, please contact Staff Sgt. Joshua Jackson or Staff Sgt. Jonathon Phillips at 443-6105. (jonathon.jackson@blab.afcent.af.mil or joshua.phillips@blab.afcent.af.mil).

By Air Force Tech Sgt. Michael Hodgman

## From the Chaplain's chair...

by Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Wilbert Harrison

3d Sustainment Command (Expeditionary)

You have heard the old adage, "one should think before you speak" Sorry, to say but this is one I have not faired well with.

It is easy to blurt out your opinion when the other person is talking and when this happens, it makes for bad communications. Over the years I have discovered that good communication requires good listening skills.

The key to understanding the other person is to listen to them without any kind of rebuttal. This is not easy especially when anger sets in. Here are a couple of helpful examples that have improved my communications with my spouse, children, and the people I work with.

First, listen actively: What do I mean by listening actively? It means try putting yourself in the shoes of the person who is speaking. In other words try to feel what they are feeling when they speak. Most people listen with their heads and not their hearts. You will score lots of points with the person if you learn to identify with the feelings of the speaker. A simple way to say this is, "I see that you are hurt by what I said," or you may want to say something like this, "So, you are feeling bad about what happened." Use feeling words that connect with the speaker.

Second, choose your words carefully: Don't just blurt out the first thing that comes to your mind, and do not talk

for the sake of talking. There is a time to speak and a time to be quiet and listen. In Proverbs 17:28 it reads, "Even a fool is thought wise if he keeps silent, and discerning if he holds his tongue." We all can learn a lesson here.

Third, curve your anger: In Proverbs 29:11 it reads, "A fool gives full vent to his anger, but a wise man keeps him under control."

When you give full vent to anger it means you are uncontrollable or out of control. There are a lot of sad stories of people who have lost their jobs, marriages, promotions and friendships all because anger got the best of them. There is nowhere in the Bible where it states, it's a sin to be angry, but the Bible does state it is sinful to act out on your anger. Ephesians 4:26 "In your anger do not sin. Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry." In other words, do not let anger control you, but you control it by resolving it as soon as possible. This can be an emotional challenge for some and in this case you might need to see or attend an anger management class.

Good communication skills are like a good marriage or friendship; it takes work and plenty of effective communication, but if you are determined to improve on your communication skills with spouse, friends and co-workers then why not enroll in classes that teach effective communication. If you have more questions about how to improve your communication contact your chaplain, ACS or Combat Stress Support team for more support. Life is a lot easier when you communicate effectively. God bless.

**READ THIS!** Tell us what  
you THINK about the \*new\*  
*Expeditionary Times!* Write a  
"LETTER TO THE EDITOR..."

**Note:** Letters will be subject to review based on content and relativity to the newspaper and its contents.

- Likes/dislikes
- Story ideas
- Soldier-related events
- Tell the CG your thoughts
- **SERIOUS INQUIRIES ONLY!**
- Changes
- Base policies

*anaconda.times@iraq.centcom.mil*

## EXPEDITIONARY TIMES

3<sup>d</sup> ESC Commanding General, Brig. Gen. Mike Lally

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CJSOTF-AP  
76th Infantry Brigade Combat Team  
Task Force 49

**Mission Statement:** The Expeditionary Times Staff publishes a weekly newspaper with a primary mission of providing command information to all Servicemembers, partners, and Families of the 3<sup>d</sup> Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) team and a secondary mission of providing a means for units on Joint Base Balad to disseminate command information to their audiences.

# Good to the last drop

Due to the lower than normal water levels on and around Joint Base Balad, the Mayor Cell is notifying ALL tenants and visitor's to be cognizant of the seriousness of the situation and to become good stewards of our community.

**Steps towards Stewardship**

- As experts and professionals within our fields, maintaining resource conservation is not only a good idea, it fosters integrity.
- It is in our interest to help the Iraqi people economically, socially and environmentally.
- Taking steps to ensure a healthy environment paves the way for future generations.

**Tips for Water Conservation**

- Take brief showers – a shower uses 1.6 gallons per minute.

- Turn off the water while brushing your teeth – only run it when you are actually using it.

- Only wash your clothes when you have a full load.

- Report constantly running toilets, dripping faucets or any leaking plumbing fixture (toilet, sink, pipes, etc.) to your base housing office or building manager.

- When you are washing your hands, don't let the water run while you lather.

- Keep Showers to 5 Minutes or less (combat shower):

- you can save thousands of Gallons per month!

- Stop water between shampooing and conditioning

- When you aren't rinsing your hair, try turning off the showerhead

# 553rd Soldiers receive combat patch



Photo by Pfc. Kirian A. Muran-de Assereto

**CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – First Sgt. Shevetta Wallace, a Killeen, Texas native, and the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, receives her combat patch from Capt. Louis J. Jackson, the Headquarters and Headquarters Company commander, and New Orleans native, during the combat patch ceremony for 553rd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 1st Sustainment Brigade, here recently.**

## NEIGHBOR, from Page 1

commander around the area in his personal vehicle.

“His security was not too happy about that decision,” Ramah said, “but it made a lot of the locals very comfortable with the military presence.”

Ramah also has others keeping an eye on those who threaten base security. One of his neighbors, an Iraqi Army veteran, was visited by two of his old IA buddies and discussed ways to attack the post. When Ramah was told of the conversation, he informed the base leadership of the possible attack, which in turn led to the insurgents being captured.

That kind of cooperation has brought Ramah some enemies, including Al-Qaeda. Earlier this year, his car struck

a victim-activated improvised explosive device, destroying the car and crushing his feet and lower legs. He was evacuated to a base hospital where his injuries required amputation of both legs. Despite having to use metal crutches to walk, Ramah remains pledged to the alliance he has forged with the CF.

“I’ve tried to help all understand the good influence the Coalition has brought,” said Ramah. “And how (their) presence ultimately allows for good business to flow among Iraqis.”

The response the military showed towards Ramah sent a ripple effect through the local community, allowing him to rise to an even higher status within the community.

“Doc has gained what they call in Iraq, wastta, (a god-

father like status),” said Lt. Col. Bert Owens, chief security officer for Q-West. “When the locals saw how the military came to rescue Doc and how he was taken care of, that was huge to the community.”

Owens said Williams also visited Ramah at the hospital, confirming how strong the relationship between the two is.

After lunch, Williams and his staff shared pleasantries with Ramah and his family, scooping up the kids that wandered in and out of the dining room. After preparing to leave, Williams gave a hug and thanked Ramah for the meal and his hospitality. These simple acts reaffirmed the standing commitment the two men have made towards one another in the struggle to provide some stability in an uncertain environment.

# WORSHIP SERVICES

**PROTESTANT – TRADITIONAL**

SUNDAY 7:30 A.M.	AIR FORCE HOSPITAL CHAPEL
9:30 A.M.	PROVIDER CHAPEL
10:30 A.M.	FREEDOM CHAPEL (WEST SIDE)
11 A.M.	CASTLE HEIGHTS (4155)
5:30 P.M.	GILBERT MEMORIAL (H-6)
7:30 P.M.	AIR FORCE HOSPITAL CHAPEL

**PROTESTANT – GOSPEL**

SUNDAY 11 A.M.	MWR EAST BUILDING
NOON	FREEDOM CHAPEL (WEST SIDE)
12:30 P.M.	GILBERT MEMORIAL (H-6)
7 P.M.	PROVIDER CHAPEL

**PROTESTANT – CONTEMPORARY WORSHIP**

SUNDAY 9 A.M.	MWR EAST BUILDING
10:30 A.M.	GILBERT MEMORIAL (H-6)
2 P.M.	CASTLE HEIGHTS (4155)
8 P.M.	EDEN CHAPEL
7 P.M.	FREEDOM CHAPEL (WEST SIDE)
9:30 P.M.	FREEDOM CHAPEL (WEST SIDE)

**PROTESTANT – LITURGICAL**

SUNDAY 9 A.M.	EPISCOPAL FREEDOM CHAPEL
11 A.M.	LUTHERAN (CHAPEL ANNEX)
3:30 P.M.	GILBERT MEMORIAL

**PROTESTANT --MESSIANIC**

FRIDAY 8:30 P.M.	FREEDOM CHAPEL (WEST SIDE)
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**PROTESTANT—SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST**

SATURDAY 9 A.M.	PROVIDER CHAPEL
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**PROTESTANT—CHURCH OF CHRIST**

SUNDAY 3:30 P.M.	CASTLE HEIGHTS (4155)
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**ROMAN CATHOLIC MASS**

(SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION 30 MIN PRIOR TO MASS)	GILBERT MEMORIAL (H-6)
SATURDAY 5 P.M.	FREEDOM CHAPEL (WEST SIDE)
8 P.M.	GILBERT MEMORIAL (H-6)
SUNDAY 8:30 A.M.	PROVIDER CHAPEL
11 A.M.	AIR FORCE HOSPITAL CHAPEL
11 A.M.	PROVIDER CHAPEL
MON-SAT 11:45 A.M.	AIR FORCE HOSPITAL CHAPEL
THURSDAY 11 A.M.	PROVIDER CHAPEL
MON,WED,FRI 5P.M.	GILBERT MEMORIAL

**LATTER DAY SAINTS-(LDS)-(MORMON)**

SUNDAY 1 P.M.	PROVIDER CHAPEL
3:30P.M.	FREEDOM CHAPEL (WEST SIDE)
7 P.M.	GILBERT MEMORIAL (H-6)

**JEWISH SHABBAT SERVICES**

FRIDAY 6 P.M.	GILBERT MEMORIAL (H-6)
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**ISLAMIC SERVICE**

FRIDAY 12:30 P.M.	PROVIDER CHAPEL (WEST SIDE)
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**PAGAN/ WICCAN FELLOWSHIP**

THURSDAY, SATURDAY 7 P.M.	EDEN CHAPEL
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**BUDDHIST FELLOWSHIP**

TUESDAY 7 P.M.	EDEN CHAPEL
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**PROTESTANT – SPANISH NON-DENOMINATIONAL**

SATURDAY 7:30 P.M.	PROVIDER CHAPEL
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**EASTERN ORTHODOX- DEVINE LITURGY**

SUNDAY 9 A.M.	CHAPEL ANNEX
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*\*Please note, schedule is subject to change.*

# Iraqi, U.S. engineers partner for the long haul

by Capt. Nicole Mazikowski

5th Engineer Battalion

**JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq** – Army Engineers across the world seem to have the same needs: from shortages of repair parts, force protection barriers, and construction materials to limited construction equipment and transportation assets.

Just as the 5th Engineer Battalion was short of the required noncommissioned officers when they reorganized in 2007; the 5th Iraqi Army Engineer Regiment stationed in Diyala Province is also short NCOs, since being re-organized from a field engineer company to an engineer regiment.

Similarities are striking, yet the two engineer units are organized essentially the same; both have combat capabilities and construction engineers along with a boat and bridge assembly unit.

The Soldiers, materials, and equipment give the units common ground that established a burgeoning partnership.

From the beginning of this training partnership, the 5th IAER and the 5th EB knew they were a good match. Not just because they both start with the number five but because of the similarities of the units' priorities, personalities and operational missions.

In the Diyala Province, Lt. Col. Joel Cross, commander of the 5th EB from Ft. Leonard Wood, Mo., and Col. Raad, Com-



Photo by Staff Sgt. Christopher Stigall

**Lt. Col. Joel Cross, Commander of the 5th Engineer Battalion and Col. Raad, Commander of the 5th Iraqi Army Engineer Regiment, shake hands solidifying the six-month training and operations plan between the two engineering units.**

mander of the IAER, shook hands and broke bread recently after agreeing to an aggressive six month training and combined operations partnership.

Since assignment to Iraq in late May, various elements of the 5th EB have met with the 5th IAER to assess their needs, prioritize requirements, develop a training plan and

determine a combined operation schedule for the next six months. After that the commanders from both units will get together and reassess the plan for the remaining time of the partnership. The intended goal is for the IA engineers to be able to operate on their own, conducting full spectrum operations alongside their fellow maneuver units.

“Working with the 5th IAER is my number one priority while here in Iraq,” said Cross. “It is a tremendous opportunity to make a difference for Iraq and the sooner they achieve full operational capability the sooner we will be able to go home permanently.”

The plan for partnering includes immediate combined operations such as route clearance and road repair.

They will be conducting medical training, basic engineer Soldier skills and equipment handling throughout the coming months.

A steady factor in all the training and operations is vehicle and equipment maintenance; the mechanics from both units have bonded over a need for parts and greasy hands. The maintenance sections plan to work together and develop a strong program within the 5th IAER that can better support the operations of the unit. This will enable Iraqi engineers to better support their maneuver units from the 5th IA Division conducting daily operations throughout Diyala Province.

Soldiers from the two units will train hard, work hard and even play hard over the course of the deployment.

“Our two units will part ways after 15 months and be able to look back and know that a permanent mark was left that will forever affect the way we operate and train in the future,” said Cross.

## How to make it through Customs smoothly



Photo by Naval Petty Officer 3rd Class John Rosario

**US Navy Customs agents inspect a unit's equipment prior to returning home from a year long deployment at Joint Base Balad.**

by Air Force Staff Sgt. Ruth Curfman

332 Air Expeditionary Wing

**JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq** -- Although everyone leaving Joint Base Balad must process through the Customs service area, being able to make it a smoother process will ease a lot of frustrations.

Sailors assigned to the Navy Expeditionary Logistics Support Group Forward Hotel Delta Company are responsible for ensuring everything leaving the area is inspected for illegal items.

“People need to understand that we are not here to make life more difficult on them,” said Petty Officer 2nd Class Joseph Fech, Customs border clearance agent, deployed from Naval Operational Support Center Portland, Ore. “We are here to ensure items that can potentially be harmful are not transported out of country.”

“Our mission is to prevent anything that could cause harm to the agriculture or environment back in the United States from leaving this area,” said Petty Officer 2nd

Class James Fessano, CBCA, deployed from Earle Weapons Station, N.J. “This also allows us to protect our other military interests around the world and to demonstrate the concern we have for other countries.”

In an average week, the CBCA's process approximately 400 passengers with 1,200 bags of luggage. In addition to personal gear, the customs unit also inspects all vehicles, storage containers and anything else leaving the base.

“We coordinate and conduct inspections on up to 10 vehicles a week and about 8,000 additional items to include something as small as organizational tools and equipment or as large as a footlocker full of personal gear,” said Petty Officer 3rd Class John Rosario, CBCA, deployed from Naval Operational Support Center, N.Y. “In order to meet the high demand, we are open 24/7 and we are available to answer any questions people may have prior to coming through the customs area.”

Customs agents have seen a recent increase in items that violate customs laws and military regulations or items that are allowed, but must be accompanied by the proper paperwork.

“A lot of the items we are confiscating are either considered war trophies or souvenirs, spent ammunitions and automatic knives,” Fessano said. “There are regulations surrounding these items but some of them can be brought back as long as they have the correct forms and they are signed off by the proper authorities.”

In addition to forms, people should consider sending any paper products home prior to out processing through customs; unless they are required to hand carry them.

“We are required to physically inspect everything leaving the base,” Fech said. “This includes every single piece of paper, every item of clothing and anything else that people pack prior to leaving. One of the trends we have been seeing here is people leaving with the maps of the base they are given when they arrive. People need to remember, just because you received it here, does not mean you can leave here with it.”

Although they are always open for business, Fech said

that when it comes to inspecting a unit's equipment or containers, it is best to set up an appointment.

“I set up all of the appointments to go out to the various locations and conduct the Customs inspection on their equipment, but they need to be sure to call me at least two weeks prior to their proposed departure date to ensure we have time to get it done,” Fech said. “This not only helps us, but it also helps the units to smooth the transition to their next location, whether it is another base or home.”

Another way to ease the transition of departing from JBB is to have a positive attitude.

“Most of the people we see are going home,” Fessano said. “The most important thing to remember is to be cheerful and friendly when you come through Customs. Not only will this help the process, but it is infectious and the rest of the people will follow suit and we will get through this together. After all, we are all on the same team and we all want to make sure everyone gets home safely.”

## Helpful Hints

- **Do not plan on carrying any type of aerosols or butane lighters.**
- **All prescription drugs or pills must be in their original containers. If it is a prescription, the name of the passenger must match the name on the container.**
- **Lithium batteries must be removed from electronic devices and taped, side-by-side, for transport.**
- **All thumbdrives or external hard drives must be marked with an unclassified, classified or for official use only sticker. Also, all drives are subject to search procedures. For classified materials, the person must have all paperwork required to accompany this information.**

# News around the JBB area

## Operation Iron Round-up

**TIKRIT, Iraq** – Coalition and Iraqi forces discovered weapons caches and detained three suspected terrorists as part of Operation Iron Round-up II, a Multi-National Division—North operation in pursuit of al-Qaeda in Iraq.

The week-long operation wrapped up July 6 and resulted in several weapons caches from provinces north of Baghdad—Diyala, Salah ad Din, Kirkuk and Ninewa.

The caches included small-arms ammunition, explosives and a mortar round that tested positive for mustard gas.

## CF find weapons caches in cemetery

**TIKRIT, Iraq** – Coalition force Soldiers found two weapons caches in a Christian cemetery south of Baqubah, Iraq, July 7.

The caches, together, consisted of two rocket launchers, rockets, seven rifle grenades, three AK-47's with magazines and multiple other devices used to make improvised explosive devices.

“This cache find demonstrates that we continue to add pressure on criminals who conduct indiscriminate attacks and eliminate their illegal weapons and disruptive accelerants as they attempt to run and hide,” said Maj. Jon Pendell, a spokesperson with the 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment.

## ISOF, IA detain 8 suspects

**BALAD, Iraq** – Iraqi Special Operations Forces and Iraqi Army soldiers detained eight suspected criminals and killed a suicide bomber in the Ninewah province, July 4.

In one operation, ISOF conducted a mission in the outskirts of Mosul to detain the leader and other cell members of the Islamic State of Iraq, a front organization for al-Qaida in Iraq. The group is known for operating support networks for weapons supply lines through Mosul to the north along the Tigris River.

Based on warrants, ISOF detained seven suspected criminals. The suspects make up a cell that reportedly uses intimidation to silence local Iraqis and extortion to finance the ISI as well as other criminals. The cell leader is also suspected of killing an Iraqi Police officer.

During the operation, one cell member targeted in the operation fled into a home and exited wearing a suicide vest with explosives. ISOF killed the individual with small-arms fire before he was able to detonate the vest in the area.

In another operation in Ninewah Province, the 3rd Iraqi Army Division captured an individual believed to be the leader of a separate AQI cell.

The suspect is allegedly operating along the Syrian border in the Ninewah province, providing refuge to transient foreign fighters, and is also involved in the facilitation of improvised explosive devices, vehicle-borne IEDs and other criminal activities.

During this operation, IA soldiers detained six other individuals believed to be involved with the AQI cell.

## Thousands of Shi'a partake in mass pilgrimage to holy city of Samarra

**SAMARRA, Iraq** - For the first time since 2003, Shi'a Muslims participated in a mass pilgrimage to the holy city of Samarra July 7.

A mass celebration was held in honor of the former Shi'a Supreme Islamic Iraqi leader, Imam Sayyid Baqir al-Sadr. Thousands made the pilgrimage to Samarra to show their respect for the anniversary of Baqir's death on this date 28 years ago.

The day was full of celebration and remembrance and demonstrated that security has improved to a level that an event such as this could be held in the once precarious city of Samarra.

Iraqi Security Forces provided protection along the route from Karbala to Samarra, where over 110 buses carrying the pilgrims traveled to the northern-Iraqi city.

“At this time last year, Samarra was a city under siege by al-Qaeda criminals and criminal activity,” said Lt. Col. Thomas Hauerwas, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault). “Today, Shi'a pilgrims came to the Al Asharia Shrine because of their faith in the Iraqi Security Forces and the overall security of Samarra.”

Balad, a predominately Shia city, also held a ceremony paying respect to Baqir.

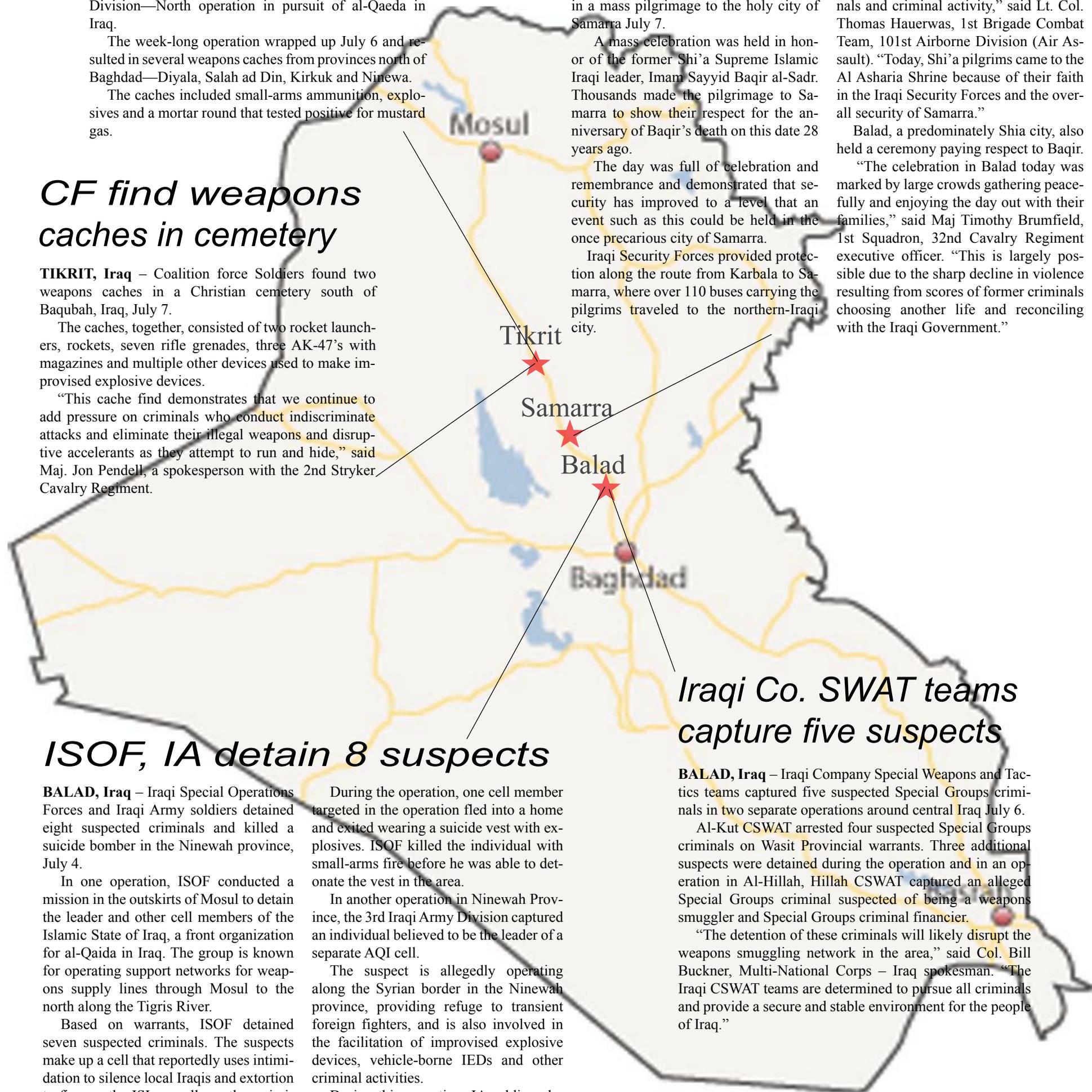
“The celebration in Balad today was marked by large crowds gathering peacefully and enjoying the day out with their families,” said Maj Timothy Brumfield, 1st Squadron, 32nd Cavalry Regiment executive officer. “This is largely possible due to the sharp decline in violence resulting from scores of former criminals choosing another life and reconciling with the Iraqi Government.”

## Iraqi Co. SWAT teams capture five suspects

**BALAD, Iraq** – Iraqi Company Special Weapons and Tactics teams captured five suspected Special Groups criminals in two separate operations around central Iraq July 6.

Al-Kut CSWAT arrested four suspected Special Groups criminals on Wasit Provincial warrants. Three additional suspects were detained during the operation and in an operation in Al-Hillah, Hillah CSWAT captured an alleged Special Groups criminal suspected of being a weapons smuggler and Special Groups criminal financier.

“The detention of these criminals will likely disrupt the weapons smuggling network in the area,” said Col. Bill Buckner, Multi-National Corps – Iraq spokesman. “The Iraqi CSWAT teams are determined to pursue all criminals and provide a secure and stable environment for the people of Iraq.”



# 412th Soldiers get coins, 'thank you' for re-enlisting



Photo by Sgt. Dale Sweetnam

**Capt. Casey Haines, the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 412th Aviation Support Battalion, presents coins to Soldiers in his company, who reenlisted in theater, during a ceremony held here July 2.**

by Sgt. Brandon Little

Task Force 12

## JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq

— Each year thousands of Soldiers are faced with the decision of whether or not they should continue their service in the military. Many factors, like providing for their Families and patriotism, helped to influence the decision to raise their right hands and renew

their pledge to defend the Constitution and the United States.

Several hundred Soldiers from 412th Aviation Support Battalion received coins and a special “thank you” for making the decision to stay “Army Strong” from their battalion commander, Lt. Col. Sam Hamontree, during a ceremony held here July 2.

“While talking with some of the Soldiers in Kuwait, at the

beginning of our deployment, they told me it would be a great idea to give Soldiers a coin for reenlisting; but as a commander I’m only authorized to purchase a certain number of coins,” said Hamontree, who hails from Canyon, Texas. “Soon after arriving in Iraq, we had a lot of Soldiers reenlisting and it quickly took out the entire supply of coins I had.”

After several unsuccessful attempts to have his request for more retention coins approved, Hamontree says, he received help from an unexpected source.

“A few months ago, some of my friends and Family, back in Ohio, asked what they could do to help show their support and tell the Soldiers thank you,” said Hamontree. “I just happened to mention the coin project I was working for the Soldiers who have reenlisted, and they took the idea and ran with it; they just wanted a recommendation for the coin’s design.”

The coins, presented during the ceremony, display the 412th “Professionals” crest on the front, and the back is inscribed with the “Reenlistment Oath.”

“I think having these coins presented during a ceremony like this really lets us know that the

people back home really support us,” said Staff Sgt. Steven Prockish, with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 412th ASB and a native of Wichita, Kan. “It’s good to see, somewhere other than the Armed Forces Network, that people are supporting what we’re doing over here.”

There are 277 Soldiers in 412th ASB who have chosen to reenlist so far, and the retention noncommissioned officers have given out more than \$2.96 million in reenlistment bonuses.

“It wasn’t difficult getting Soldiers to reenlist because our office is usually filled with Soldiers who love being in the Army and want to continue their service to their country,” said Sgt. Percy Britton, the 412th ASB retention NCO. “We talk to the Soldiers about more than just reenlisting in the Army; we talk to them about their career in the Army and after the Army.”

“I couldn’t be happier with the efforts of our career counselors and retention NCOs,” said Hamontree. “Their hard working, they do a lot of research on the Soldier’s situations, and you couldn’t ask for a better team.”

The 412th ASB has Soldiers located from here all the way

down to Basra, and each of them receives the same attention and dedication when they want to discuss their future in the military, said Britton.

“I’m in awe with the decision these Soldiers have made to continue to serve their country while we are at war,” said Hamontree. “It’s humbling to hear their stories and motivation for staying in — these aren’t Soldiers without hope or no other means of making a living — they’re patriots and dedicated warriors ... it’s just humbling.”

During the ceremony, the companies in 412th ASB made a “horseshoe formation” and their commanders presented each of the reenlisted Soldiers with a coin after a short speech from Hamontree. There will be another ceremony held, at Baghdad International Airport, in the upcoming months for the Soldiers who were unable to attend this ceremony.

Whether they chose to reenlist out of patriotism, or because they feel the Army can help them continue to provide a good life for their Families, the coins presented to them were small mementos to thank them for their choice to “Stay Army Strong.”

# Mechanics maintain engines for America’s air power

by Staff Sgt. Mareshah Haynes

332nd Air Expeditionary Wing

**JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq** - The roar of F-16 Fighting Falcons is more than just noise to the jet engine mechanics assigned to the 332nd Expeditionary Fighter Squadron Tiger Aircraft Maintenance Unit. To these Airmen, it’s the sound of a job well done.

The Airmen who work in the propulsion shop ensure the jets’ engines are in top operating condition, maintaining one of the U.S. Air Force’s key capabilities: air superiority.

The Tiger AMU’s jet engine mechanics inspect engine components daily for cracks, missing coating, normal wear and tear and anything else that could pose a problem. They also perform inspections and routine maintenance on the planes at regular intervals.

“After every flight the engines are downloaded,” said Senior Master Sgt. Patrick Muldoon, propulsion element supervisor. “We process them in the computer to see if there are any faults; if there are we troubleshoot them.”

The computer is a diagnostic machine similar to those used on car engines in auto shops.

The 14 mechanics of Tiger AMU, all deployed from the New York Air National Guard, inspect 12 aircraft engines daily. Each jet must be inspected to make sure it’s always mission-ready. Such a task requires intense and specialized training.

“The technical school is 13 weeks, and after that there’s at least one year of hands on training before (mechanics) are somewhat efficient,” said Tech. Sgt. Mike Mullan, a jet engine mechanic assigned to the Tiger AMU. “(Students) actually take apart the motor that we use, the G10-100. They tear it down and rebuild it. The guys who have been coming out of tech school are very sharp. It’s surprising some of the skills these guys have.”

The training given at the school combined with the continuity and expertise of NG members helps to make the Tiger AMU mechanics a balanced team.

“Being in the Guard, (some) people have been in the shop 20-plus years,” Muldoon said. “Some of the active-duty shops just don’t have as much experience.”

In part because of their training and experience, the mechanics from New York have encountered no major engine problems since arriving here in May. They take a proactive approach to prevention by controlling Foreign Object Debris - (anything that could be sucked into a jet engine.)

“We’ve heard that a lot of people have FOD issues,” Mullan said. “We haven’t seen them here. We run a FOD boss 24 hours a day and do FOD walks.” During a FOD walk, Airmen form a line and walk side-by-side to ensure runways are clear of debris.

Mechanics work long hours under harsh conditions, but there’s more to the job than just turning wrenches.

“I don’t think people realize how much

technology and electronics are involved in the motors,” Muldoon said. “They relate it to a car, but they don’t realize how many moving parts are in a jet engine - how detailed it is. There’s so much engineering and design with these motors.”

“A lot of the time we don’t see the end result of what the pilots are doing,” Muldoon said. “But if I know we did something that got the plane up in the air and saved a Soldier’s life - some 20-year-old kid - that’s what it’s all about.”



Photo by Staff Sgt. Mareshah Haynes

**Senior Airman Andrew Molina, an engine mechanic assigned to the 332nd Expeditionary Maintenance Squadron Tiger Aircraft Maintenance Unit, inspects the liner of an augmentor - commonly known as an afterburner - for missing coating and rivets here July 7. Each jet must be inspected daily to ensure it’s mission-ready at all times.**

# Finance gives service with a smile

by Spc. Andrea Merritt

1st Sustainment Bde

**COMBAT OPERATING BASE Q-WEST, Iraq** – In July 2007, the Soldiers of Detachment F, 15th Finance Battalion, 1st Sustainment Brigade, left Fort Riley, Kan., and deployed to Iraq in support of Multi-National Division – North.



While most of the detachment went to Kirkuk, Iraq, an eight-man team was sent to Forward Operating Base Q-West, where they are the sole providers of financial services for a base of about 5,000 strong.

“Not only are we an eight-man team, but we are doing more business than our counterparts, which is a 16-man detachment,” said Staff Sgt. Jeremy Sams, an Olive, Okla., native and NCOIC for F Det. “Not as far as volume because we don’t have commercial vendor services, but as far as the number of customers we’re seeing, we’re seeing more than them on a daily basis.”

Seven days a week, the Soldiers in F Det. assist customers with obtaining cash, enrolling in the Savings Deposit Program, or solving pay problems they may have.

“We are patient and I think the Soldiers are patient too, so we will work with them and they will work with us,” said Spc. Carmita Cando, a military pay clerk with F Det.



Photo by Spc. Andrea Merritt

**Spc. Maria Eslinger, military pay clerk with Detachment F, 15th Finance Battalion, 1st Sustainment Brigade, assists Cpl. Brandon Billingsley, with Headquarters and Headquarters Sustainment Battery, 3rd Battalion, June 8 at the finance office in Combat Operating Base Q-West.**

Sometimes the Soldiers go on financial support team missions twice a month. They travel to three different areas and provide financial services to FOB’s that do not have a finance office that wasn’t available until the unit set it up.

“It’s important because the last thing on a Soldier’s mind should be their pay when they’re on a mission,” said Spc. Maria Eslinger, a military pay clerk with F Det.

Often times, when the finance team arrives, a smile ap-

pears on the faces of the Soldiers they are visiting.

“Whenever they do see us, they say, ‘Thank God you guys are here because we need money,’” said Cando. “It makes you feel good that you’re going out there to help them because they really need it.”

Sometimes, after going out on FST missions, the finance Soldiers come back with greater pride in what they do.

“I think, if nothing else, these Soldiers can appreciate their small piece in the greater scheme of the Army,” said Sams. “They’ve been able to go outside this wire and see Soldiers who are out there on the road everyday, doing the dirty jobs, and I think it gives them a greater appreciation for what we actually do and how our small piece has a bigger effect on the individual Soldiers.”

With only four months left on their 15-month rotation, the Soldiers of F Det., 15th Fin. Bn., are looking forward to returning home, but while they are still here, they are finding ways to expand their service potential.

“We will be standing up pay agents, which we haven’t had here. We’re trying to establish a growth so we can provide more services to the FOBs and to the units,” said Sams. “Hopefully, the guys who replace us can build on the paying agent portion and establish commercial vendor services here.”

The unit’s tour of duty is scheduled to come to an end in October 2008, but all the work they have done to improve the financial services on Q-West should continue even when they leave.

## IBIZ opens recycling center at JBB



Photo by Sgt. Robert G. Cooper III

**Naseb Saad Hasan Altememy, the general manager for Almandhour United Co., holds up a can of future profits for his recycling center site here July 7, at a refuse collection site at Joint Base Balad.**

by Sgt. Robert G. Cooper III

76th Infantry Bde Combat Team

**JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq** – A war can be messy, literally; from daily trash collections, to amassing scrap metals born

from the aftermath of battle. The trash business is about to become a valuable commodity for the Iraqi people and further consolidate security gains made by the Iraqi government and se-

curity forces.

During a ribbon-cutting ceremony, July 10, U.S. Forces, contractors and Iraqi business leaders commemorated the opening of a recycling center here designed to turn the military’s trash into Iraq’s economic treasure.

The center is designed to spur green practices among Joint Base Balad’s waste management operations by creating a hub for recyclables to be collected and shipped to recycling plants throughout Iraq.

In the past, recyclables collected, are either burned in incinerators or stockpiled throughout various holding areas on post. With this new recycling center, large amounts of aluminum, glass, plastics, cardboard and steel products are instead packed up and shipped to recycling centers near Baghdad and sold on the Iraqi market.

Neseb Saad Hasan Altememy, the general manager of Almandhour United, said that his company plans to profit most from the large amounts of aluminum thrown away on JBB.

“This is a great day for Joint Base Balad because we’ve solved a problem that’s been present here for a long time, and it’s a great day because we have yet another opportunity to help the local economy,” said Brig. Gen. Brian Bishop, 332nd Air Expeditionary Wing and instal-

lation commander.

According to U.S. Army figures, more than 90,000 aluminum soda cans are thrown away daily on post. Altememy said that the center will be able to export more than a ton of aluminum each day, which goes for about \$750 on the Iraqi market.

“With the addition of this center, Joint Base Balad looks to reduce its trash volume by literally tons a day,” said Col. Kenneth Newlin, deputy commander of the 76th Infantry Brigade Combat Team. “The center will also have the ability to drive new industries here and allow us to aggressively seek a new market for plastics recycling locally.”

Besides providing a green approach to bolstering the Iraqi economy, the center will also present jobs to local Iraqis. JCC-I crafted the contract, hiring and negotiations were headed up by members of the 76th IBCT, Indiana National Guard, and their work with the Iraqi-Based Industrial Zone initiative. Because both departments have strict hiring standards written into the contracts, the Iraqi people have first pick when it comes to these jobs.

“The I-BIZ program does an excellent job because it allows the U.S. government to share these kinds of contracts more often with the Iraqi people, rather than with larger contractors who

are here from other countries,” Altememy said. “We feel like we have developed trust from the U.S., and so now better jobs are available to us.”

Better jobs equal better security measures, said Capt. Lynn Thompson, Joint Base Balad’s waste management officer. “We give them a safe job, so they don’t need a dangerous one like shooting at American Soldiers or planting improvised explosive devices,” said Thompson.

In addition to making money for its host nation, U.S. Forces plan to benefit from the contract in the form of cost savings. Originally, a contract with non-Iraqi contractors was envisioned, with a price tag of about \$1.5 million per year. Because Almandhour United will profit from the recyclables alone, no bidding costs were incurred through contracting agreements.

“They key is that we’re doing this for free,” Air Force Capt. Robert Yates, a contracting officer with the Air Force’s Joint Contracting Command-Iraq. “Rather than paying one contractor to help look after our environment, we instead took a win-win approach by choosing to localize.”

“If we’re ever going to leave this country, we have to build it not only by supporting its people, but its economy, too,” said Yates.

# Trans. Co. resurrects



Photo by Spc. Andrea Merritt

**Pfc. Jesse James Flores, a Los Angeles native and all-wheel vehicle mechanic with the 24th Transportation Company, works to replace the muffler on a Palletized Load System vehicle June 5.**



**Pfc. Adam Ward, a Ravenna, Ohio, native and truck driver with the 24th Transportation Company, makes a brace for their repair parts connex June 5. The Soldiers also reorganized the motor pool.**

by Spc. Andrea Merritt

1st Sustainment Bde

**COMBAT OPERATING BASE Q-WEST, Iraq** – Out of 60 vehicles that were on the yard at Forward Operating Base Q-West, only eight were fully mission capable when the 24th Transportation Company, from Fort Riley, Kan., took over a previous unit's battle space.



With only a 12 percent readiness rate, mechanics of the 24th Trans. Co., a unit deployed in support of Multi-National Division – North, knew they had a long, hard task ahead of them.

Instead of griping and complaining, the Soldiers just rolled up their sleeves and went to work resurrecting their fleet.

“We started off with eight vehicles that were fully mission capable, so we had to utilize those vehicles and maintain those to accomplish our missions going out on convoys,” said Sgt. 1st Class Richard Flores, a Victoria,



Photo by Spc. Andrea Merritt

**Pfc. Jesse James Flores, a Los Angeles native and Pfc. Robert Linn, a Detroit native, both with the 24th Trans. Co., replace the muffler on a Palletized Load System vehicle June 5.**



Photo by Spc. Andrea Merritt

**Spc. Ricardo Victorino, an Alpine, Texas, native and truck driver with the 24th Transportation Company, replaces a leaky central tire inflation system valve on a vehicle June 5.**

# s the fleet in Q-West



Photo by Spc. Andrea Merritt

Truck driver with the 24th Trans. Co., June 5. Along with repairing their fleet,



Photo by Spc. Andrea Merritt

Two Soldiers with the 24th Trans. Co., a Fort Riley, Kan., unit deployed to COB Q-West in support of Multi-National Division – North, check an air hose on a Palletized Load System vehicle June 5.

Texas, native, and the vehicle maintenance supervisor for the 24th Trans. Co.

“We ran in 18-hour day shifts constantly for approximately six months to get all these vehicles fully mission capable,” Flores said.

In order to repair all of the vehicles, Flores and other supervisors in the motor pool implemented a service schedule, which allowed the mechanics to perform maintenance on 12 to 15 vehicles a week.

During the six months of 18-hour days, the mechanics changed fluids, inspected tires, checked and rechecked torques, updated service packets, ordered and installed necessary parts, and conducted technical inspections on 100 percent of the vehicles.

“When I was down here, you’d get a truck, get it (inspected), go through it and work it out as quickly and as best you can,” said Sgt. Matthew Leavitt, an Ontario, Oregon, native and the noncommissioned officer in charge of recovery operations.

“As soon as you were done working with that one, you would have another one right behind it. It was just back-to-back trucks constantly,” said Leavitt.

The mechanics also had to make and install gun turrets on many of their Palletized Load System vehicles because the ones they had were not up to standard.

“Some of the turrets were a design not approved through the Department of the Army. Myself and Chief designed new turrets and had them fabricated through the welding shop and installed on 80 percent of our fleet,” said Flores.

Aside from vehicle repairs, the Soldiers also remodeled and cleaned up the work space themselves.

“We did our own renovations to this motor pool. We established our own platoon lines. We got rid of a lot of debris and hazardous waste,” said Flores. “We painted and the connexes are all organized with repair parts on hand.”

Although the first six months of their 15-month deployment were “long and grueling,” the service schedule and the work put into the vehicles caused the unit’s readiness rate to skyrocket to 98 percent.

“We’ve come a long way. It’s a big accomplishment, something to be proud of,” said Pfc. Jesse James Flores, a Los Angeles, native. “We worked a lot of long hours and put a lot of blood and sweat into these vehicles, literally. We came a long way.”

All of the effort the Soldiers of the 24th Trans. Co. put into their work area, as well as their vehicles, shows just how much pride they have in what they do.

With about a month left in their deployment, the Soldiers are determined to leave behind an organized and functional work area for their replacement unit when they leave.

“For the unit that’s coming to replace us, this will probably be the best motor pool to be falling into because of the continuity books that we’ve established and our maintenance systems that we’ve put in place. It should assist them with mission readiness and success throughout their deployment,” said Richard Flores.



Photo by Spc. Andrea Merritt

Sgt. 1st Class Richard Flores, a Victoria, Texas, native and the vehicle maintenance supervisor for the 24th Trans. Co., hands a Soldier a repair part out of the connex June 5.

# When does friendship become improper

by Spc. Michael Behlin

Expeditionary Times Staff

**JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq** – Today's war on terrorism has brought more Soldiers closer together, from all over the world, and settled them in a potentially dangerous environment in more ways than one. Working close with one another day after day offers the opportunity of making new friendships that can last a life time. However, if that friendship goes beyond what is permissible, that's when the issue of improper relationships or fraternization becomes a crime.

Joint Base Balad leadership is looking for ways prevent these instances from happening by continued education. Arguably the best way to prevent these improper relationships is within the unit itself and the chain of command.

"Improper relationships cause disorder within units and causes tension amongst unit members when Soldiers have improper relationships," said Sergeant First Class Aaron Loos, Inspector General Non-Commissioned Officer in Charge for the 3d Sustainment Command (Expedition-

ary). "A major way for Soldiers to prevent this from occurring would be to practice self-discipline and to live up to the Army values.

By definition an improper relationship is one that's not in accordance with the accepted standards, which includes sexual relations. While this definition is one that could be found in just about any civilian dictionary, it does not differ much from what the military qualifies to be an improper relationship, per in Army Regulation 600-20.

"Units can teach, train and mentor Soldiers on Army regulations and policies because it's the leaders of the unit that are responsible to insure that Army regulations and policies are upheld," said 1st Sgt. Jeffery W. Burnsworth, 3d Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) Headquarters and Headquarters Command first sergeant, "We train our Soldiers to do right and obey the orders and regulations governing us and no matter if the individual wears four stars or one stripe on their chest they are all subject to the same regulations."

Personal and business relationships are considered a crime between officers and

enlisted members, which can be prejudicial to good order and discipline. Personal relationships can include but are not limited to dating, living together, and a one time sexual relationship. A business relationship is loaning and or borrowing money from one another and becoming or creating a business partnership.

Fraternization is the relationship between officers and enlisted members only, while an improper relationship is between any ranks.

"It's often misunderstood that fraternization and improper relationships are the same thing," said Maj. Deon Green, 3d Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) staff judge advocate. "While the two are similar, one pertains to officers in particular while the other includes Soldiers of all ranks."

Violations of fraternization and improper relationships may be punishable under Article 92, Uniform Code of Military Justice as a violation of a lawful general regulation. Maximum punishment for violating a lawful general order or regulation is two years confinement, dishonorable discharge and forfeiture of all pay and

allowances, said Green.

Punishments for fraternization by officers under article 134 are dismissal, forfeiture of all pay and allowances and two years confinement.

Through education and preventative measures, progress is made to reduce and eventually end the problems surrounding improper relationships and fraternization on JBB. Within the 3d ESC, "mandatory training sessions on fraternization and improper relations will be given by JAG or other qualified personnel," said Burnsworth. "Also the enforcement of local policy letters and oak tree counseling, which allow leaders to get to know Soldiers on a more personal level, allow leaders to explain what the potential downfalls of improper relationships, and fraternization could be beneficial," said Burnsworth.

While the chain of command is mainly responsible for the education of its Soldiers, it is each Soldiers responsibility to live up to the Army values. For more information of improper relationship and fraternization, contact the JBB JAG or IG offices.

## Promotions gone wild!



Photo by Pfc. Amanda Tucker

Cpt. Henry Vazquez, the 330th Transportation Battalion Commander, prepares to receive a "love tap" during his promotion ceremony from Lieutenant Col. Ronald Ross, his battalion commander, in the 3d Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) Joint Operations Center July 1st.

## MND-B Soldiers, ISF discover munitions

by Courtesy Story

Multinational Division - Baghdad

### FORWARD OPERATING BASE FALCON, Iraq

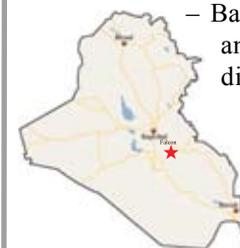
– Iraqi Security Forces and Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers discovered weapons and munitions July 10 in the Rashid district of southern Baghdad.

Policemen from 5th Brigade, 2nd National Police Division, discovered a munitions cache containing 73 AK-47s, 84 AK-47 magazines, rifles, a PKC machine gun, an RPK machine gun, more than 3,500 7.62 mm rounds, multiple handheld radios, radio chargers, 10 kilograms of explosive material, 40 military uniforms, an improvised explosive device, protective masks, a 60 mm mortar tube, 20 ammo pouches, multiple pieces of body armor, rocket propelled grenades and assorted knives at approximately 1:45 p.m. in the Aamel neighborhood.

Soldiers from the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, seized a rocket propelled grenade found by Sons of Iraq members at approximately 2:15 p.m. in the Masafee community.

An explosive ordnance disposal unit responded to both events to handle and destroy the munitions.

"These Soldiers continue to take the fight to the enemy alongside their counterparts, the Iraqi Security Forces, to keep the Iraqi people safe and allow the Government of Iraq the freedom to operate," said Maj. Dave Olson, a spokesperson for the 1st Brigade Combat Team. "With the cooperation of citizens, our Soldiers can rid the streets of munitions and violence."



## SHOUT OUT!!!

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E-mail [Lee.Fowler@iraq.centcom.mil](mailto:Lee.Fowler@iraq.centcom.mil)

# Q-West welcomes DHL flights



Photo by Spc. Gaelan Lowers

**A Soldier uses a fork lift to remove a pallet of mail off of a flat bed at the new postal hub at Contingency Operating Base Q-West.**

by Spc. Gaelan Lowers  
3rd Sustainment Bde

**CONTINGENCY OPERATING BASE Q-WEST, Iraq** – Contingency Operating Base Q-West made it more practical and safer for

Military servicemembers and civilians alike to send and receive personal mail. By moving the postal hub from Forward Operating Base Marez East, to the safer and better equipped COB Q-West, The Army created the third largest postal hub

June 23rd in Multi-National Division North.

The Army uses DHL, originally standing for Dalsey, Hillblom and Lynn, as their major distributor for mail in Iraq. But there were standards that the Army and DHL needed in place before both could reach an agreement for the postal hub's move.

Safety, being one of the biggest factors, played a key role in the decision to move the postal hub. FOB Marez's location made deliveries difficult, if not impossible in some cases, for Soldiers and civilians to receive their mail as well vital equipment needed to complete their missions.

"Over the past 12 months, we have had a number of cancelations of DHL flights into



Marez due to enemy hostility," said Lt. Col. Douglas McBride, commander of

the Special Troops Battalion, 3rd Sustainment Brigade. "It was slowing down the distribution of mail to the Soldiers as well as critical repair parts and commodities that need to get out to the outlying FOBs."

When building the new postal hub, Army and civilian personnel made sure to build a location that would surpass the facilities at FOB Marez.

"The amount of space available and allotted to the new hub exceeded FOB Marez enabling workers to move more freely and have more storage areas for inbound and outbound flights," said Cpt. Shay O'Neil, 3rd SB Postal officer. "The tents used for storage are also air conditioned allowing packages a better waiting environment until they are ready to be shipped off to their individual destinations."

The new postal hub faced many challenges, it took the combined effort by the Army, Air Force, and DHL to get the facility as well as the runway ready to receive DHL flights before getting approval from

DHL officials.

"One of the big challenges was runway conditions and the taxi ways of the ramps," said Air Force Tech Sgt. Spincer Jones, the COB Q-West airfield manager. "Our runways are very old and very used. They've gone through the first Gulf War sustaining a lot of battle damage. All of that had to be repaired and we just wanted to make sure that when the aircraft did come, they would be able to come without damaging the aircraft or our pavement."

Many of the Soldiers, Airmen, and DHL contractors stated the move of the postal air hub just made sense. The facility is improved, the safety is improved and COB Q-West now serves as the logistical hub for many of the commodities including fuel and water to MND-North.

"The new air hub will enhance combat operations in MND-North," said McBride. "When you have a happy Soldier, you have a productive Soldier and everyone knows that mail is a true combat multiplier."

## Building the Village of Hope



Photo by Air Force Capt. Michael Askegren

**A member of the 557th Expeditionary Red Horse squadron shows Iraqi citizens how to do some basic electrical work as part of the "Village of Hope" training center in Hawr Rajab.**

by Spc. Justin Snyder  
Task Force 49

**CAMP STRIKER, Iraq** — After attacks by al-Qaeda left Hawr Rajab, a village on the outskirts of Baghdad, in ruins November 2007, many houses were left un-inhabitable.

Putting the pieces back together seemed an insurmountable task for the local residents. But help came from an unexpected source and has rejuvenated the citizens and reconstruction efforts.

The "Village of Hope" training center graduated its second class during a

ceremony held at Patrol Base Stone in Hawr Rajab, July 3.

Air Force Capt. Michael Askegren, 557th Expeditionary Red Horse Squadron officer in charge of the "Village of Hope", said rebuilding the town is one of the biggest goals of the course.

"We are teaching these guys important skills that will prove very useful upon leaving the course," said Askegren, a native of Mandeville, La. "Not only are they gaining jobs but they are gaining pride in their community."

The class of 58 Iraqi citizens spent 60 days training on how to repair electricity, carpentry and plumbing classes. Six of the students were returning trainees who took part in a newly created supervisors' course.

Graduates of the first class began

working on rebuilding those houses following their completion of the course in May, while the current graduates will soon begin work on a boys' school in Hawr Rajab.

"There has been marked improvement in the students' work since the beginning of the course, and the students have all been very enthusiastic and willing to learn," said Tech. Sgt. Jose Castro, instructor of the electrician class.

The students in the supervisor's course are chosen by the instructors and are taught different leadership skills, enabling them to take on a foreman-like role at the work sites downtown.

Askegren said he believes this class is very important so the Iraqis can eventually take over the rebuilding effort completely in Hawr Rajab.

"By teaching these guys, we are essentially working ourselves out of a job," said Askegren. "Eventually we are going to leave, so we are providing them the skills so they can take leadership and control to take this project to the next level."

Following the ceremony, the students received a diploma and tool kit for their respective trade, signifying the completion of the course.

Mahamood Adel, a graduate of the structure class, came to the class with a very limited knowledge of carpentry. He said he is very thankful to the Coalition forces for their hard work, and he wants to build on his newly gained knowledge.

"I've had a great experience with this course," Adel said. "Me and my fellow students will carry that experience with us into town and use it to serve our community."

## Soldiers play the waiting game



Photo by Pfc. Amanda Tucker

**Pfc. Zach Douros, a mechanic for the 525th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade, rests his eyes while waiting at Joint Base Balad passenger terminal for his flight back to Camp Sykes July 9th after having minor surgery done.**

## 3d ESC's Hooah Soldier of the week



Photo by Spc. Michael Behlin

**JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq** - Sgt. 1st Class Adam J. McKinney was selected the 3d Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) hooah Soldier of the week. McKinney, the 3d ESC career counselor, was instrumental in the reenlistment of nine 3d ESC Soldiers during last week's mass reenlistment ceremony held in Baghdad.

## Soldiers get mentally fit

by Pfc. Amanda Tucker

Expeditionary Times Staff

**JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq** – The Chaplain's office and 1835th Combat Control Medical Detachment here work together to help Soldiers overcome mental barriers.

"Our job is to restore the Soldier back to a normal way of living," said Chap. (Lieutenant Col.) Wilbert Harrison, Officer in Charge of the 3d Sustainment Command (Expeditionary)'s chaplain office.

Holding issues inside can be dangerous, and can destroy a Soldier's ability to do their job, said Harrison. Chaplains are a resource for Soldiers outside of the unit, providing a means to bring forth issues without embarrassment to the Soldier.

While chaplains can help Soldiers with minor combat stress problems, there are times when problems go beyond the chaplain's expertise.

"We do counseling on a small scale," Harrison said. Stresses as abuse, trauma, post traumatic stress disorder, or reoccurring problems are elevated to the mental health fitness center. They have a good track record of restoring mental health to the Soldier, Harrison said.

The chaplain comes into the health fitness center on a weekly basis to give classes to Soldiers that are in the Combat Stress Center.

"We all have the same mission in mind. If we work together we'll have Soldiers at their best," said Staff Sgt. Paul Patterson, the non-commissioned officer in charge of the 1835th Combat Control Medic Detachment.

Another way to help protect the mental health of Soldiers coming home from a combat zone is the Post Deployment Health Reassessment. Chaplains, health personnel or senior non-commissioned officers assist Soldiers in completing the Army PDHRA through the Army Knowledge Online account within 90 to 180 days after returning from combat.

Changes in documents also help. The Standard Form 86, questionnaire for National Security depicts changes on the form so it no longer asks for details on mental health. The form is designed for soldiers to answer honestly without fear of losing a security clearance.

"I think it is an outstanding thing to remove," said Patterson. "The stigma placed on mental health makes most people lie anyway. It's the best thing the Army's done to further mental health."

"We need good mental health to accomplish the mission," said Maj. Margaret Avina, officer in charge of the MHFC. In the same way we would seek to heal physically, we should seek to heal mentally. The Army of One is a mentally and physically strong Army.

## A meeting of the stars



Photo by Pfc. Amanda Tucker

**JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq** - General Charles C. Campbell, commanding general of the United States Army Forces Command, visits with Brig. Gen. Mike Lally, commanding general of the 3d Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), at the the 3d ESC Joint Operations Center here July 10.

## Going home:

*the bodies of two Soldiers are found after 14 months of searches*

Courtesy Story

Multinational Division- Baghdad

**BAGHDAD, Iraq** – Coalition forces have found the remains of two Soldiers who went missing in Mahmudiya, Iraq, May 12, 2007.

The Armed Forces Institute of Pathology in Dover, Del., positively identified the human remains recovered in Iraq as those of Sgt. Alex R. Jimenez, 25, of Lawrence, Mass., and Pfc. Byron W. Fouty, 19, of Waterford, Mich. July 10.

The search to find Sgt. Jimenez and Pfc. Fouty ended when Coalition Special Operations Forces captured an individual July 1, suspected of knowing where the Soldiers were buried. The suspect's information led investigators to the site several kilometers west of Jurf as-Sakhr, where the Soldiers' remains were eventually recovered July 8. The remains were transported to the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology for identification July 9.

Sgt. Jimenez and Pfc. Fouty were reported missing after their unit was attacked by insurgent forces May 12, 2007. Their remains were recovered after a year-long search by Coalition forces.

The remains of a third Soldier reported missing in the ambush, Pfc. Joseph J. Anzack Jr., 20, of Torrance, Calif., was found by Iraqi police May 23, 2007.

All three Soldiers were assigned to the 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment, 2nd

Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, Fort Drum, N.Y.

Multi-National Division – Center and 10th Mountain Division commander, Maj. Gen. Michael L. Oates expressed his condolences to the families.

"Every combat death is a tragedy, but this has been especially difficult for the families of these two 10th Mountain Soldiers because of our not knowing for over a year of their whereabouts. We take solace in the fact that they are finally home."

"Although this is a difficult and sad moment for the families and our Army, it is also a time in which each of these courageous families can finally bring to closure the loss of their loved ones," said Lt. Gen. Lloyd J. Austin III, commanding general of Multi-National Corps - Iraq. "On behalf of the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines and Coalition force members of the Multi-National Corps - Iraq, our deepest condolences and prayers go out to the families, and we remain committed to standing by them throughout this tough time ... they will forever be an important part of our Army family. Our entire Army family stands with these two courageous families in this time of need."

"We are deeply indebted and grateful to all of those service members involved in searching for these two great Americans for more than a year," Austin said. "It has been a tough and relentless search, but one that reinforces to all of us who serve today that we will never leave our comrades behind."

The incident remains under investigation.

# Photo favorites for the week



Photo by Spc. Gaelan Lowers

An Iraqi girl waits in line with her big sister to receive shoes and school supplies during a humanitarian mission to the village of Jedallah Anuk, Iraq Feb. 27.



Photo by Sgt. Gary Hawkins

Staff Sgt. Jeremy Schutzmann, a convoy commander for the 164th Military Police Company, looks around a corner as he patrols the streets of Ad-dujayl, Iraq, March 10 as an Iraqi boy plays in the street.

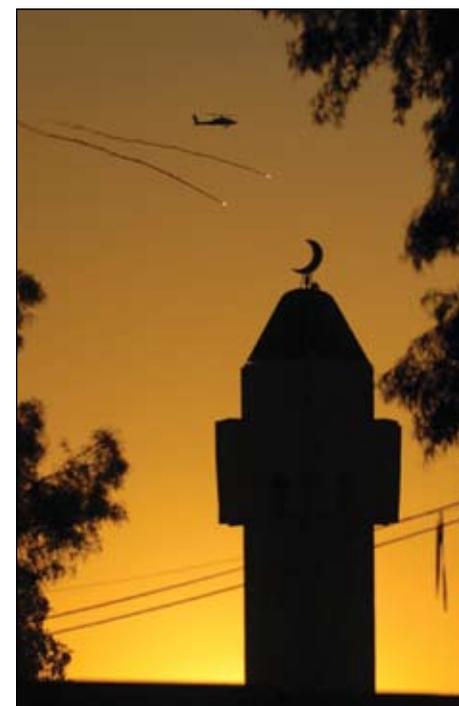


Photo by Staff Sgt. Les Newport

An Apache AH-64 gun ship releases flares over Mosul, Iraq, a tactic to direct enemy fire away from the aircraft. The helicopter is operating in northern Iraq in support of counterinsurgency missions of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

**WESTSIDE MWR**

**MARTIAL ARTS**

**FURMAN'S**

**TRAINING**

**NO HOBBIES**

Having no limitation as limitation  
from our world

**MONDAY & WEDNESDAY**

**TIME: 1 p.m.**

FOR CLASS REQUIREMENTS CONTACT: Andrew.Furman@us.army.mil

**TOURNAMENTS STARTS @ 8 P.M.**

**FRIDAY NIGHTS**

**CHESS**

**IN BALAD**

**BOULE**

**POKER**



Spc. Jeffrey Abernathy

## America's warrior

*A snapshot of servicemembers in the Global War on Terrorism*

**Full name and rank:** Spc. Jeffrey Abernathy.  
**Job Title:** Artillery gunner.  
**Time in service:** 2 years, 3 months.  
**Unit:** 3rd Battalion, 139th Field Artillery Regiment.  
**Hometown:** Danville, Ind.  
**Pastimes (Hobbies):** Hang with friends, fishing.  
**Life-changing event/moment:** The day I joined the Army... I didn't realize how much stuff we do.  
**Person I admire the most:** Sister. We are very close. Her daughter is almost like my child.  
**If I wasn't in the military I would be:** in college in culinary arts.  
**One thing I would change about the Army:** Pay increase.

**The one thing I think the military got right:** Setting rules and guidelines to do things.  
**What makes a good Servicemember?** Someone who does what they can and then some... Someone who isn't afraid to do their job.  
**What makes a good leader?** Someone who looks after their Soldiers and does whatever they possibly can for them.  
**Unusual fact about you:** Normally very quiet, but I have a big voice when I yell while going out on patrol.  
**Goals:** To start a private restaurant.  
**Hardest part of my job:** The heat is killer.  
**Best part of my job:** Knowing my family has my back on a lot of things.

# JB BALAD ACTIVITIES

## INDOOR POOL

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

## EAST FITNESS CENTER

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

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

**Kyu Kyu Kempo:** Sunday- 2 p.m.

**Edged weapons and sticked fighting combative training:** Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays 8 p.m.

**Open court volleyball:** Sunday- 6 p.m.

**Shotokan Karate Do:** Monday, Wednesday and Friday- 6 p.m.

**Soo Bahk Do:** 6 p.m.

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

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

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

**Abs-Aerobics:** Tuesday and Thursday- 6 a.m. and 5 p.m.

## EAST RECREATION CENTER

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

**9-ball tournament:** Wednesday- 3 p.m. and 8 p.m.

**Game Console Tourney:** Thursday- 8 p.m.

**Country Dance Class:** Thursday- 7 p.m.

**Dominoes:** Friday- 8 p.m.

**Karaoke:** Monday- 8 p.m.

**Model building:** Sunday- 1 p.m.

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

**Poker tourney:** Sunday- 6 p.m.

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

**Swing dance:** Tuesday- 7p.m.

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

## WEST RECREATION CENTER

**8-ball tourney:** Wednesday- 1 p.m. and 8 p.m.

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

**Dungeons & Dragons:** Saturday- 8 p.m.

Friday- 8 p.m.

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

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

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

**Ice Ball Tourney:** Thursday- 4 p.m.

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

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

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

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

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

## WEST FITNESS CENTER

**3-on-3 basketball tourney:** Saturday- 7:30 p.m.

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Open court basketball:** Thursday- 7 p.m.

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

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

## CIRCUIT GYM

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

# SUSTAINER REEL TIME THEATER

## Movie Times

Wednesday, July 16

5 p.m. The Strangers

8 p.m. The Chronicles of Narnia

Thursday, July 17

5 p.m. Sex and the City

8 p.m. Hancock

Friday, July 18

2 p.m. Iron Man

5 p.m. Indiana Jones

8 p.m. Journey to Center of Earth

Saturday, July 19

Theatre closed for

Air Force show practice

Sunday, July 20

Air Force Top and Blue show

Monday, July 21

5 p.m. Indian Jones

8 p.m. Journey to Center of Earth

Tuesday, July 22

5 p.m. Iron Man

8 p.m. Indiana Jones

(Schedule is subject to change)

## New Next Week

Dark Knight  
Don't Mess with the Zohan

## New Movies

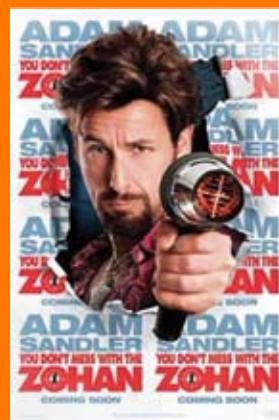
### The Dark Knight



Christopher Nolan steps back into the director's chair for this sequel to Batman Begins, which finds the titular superhero coming face to face with his greatest nemesis -- the dreaded Joker. Christian Bale returns to the role of Batman, Maggie Gyllenhaal takes over the role of

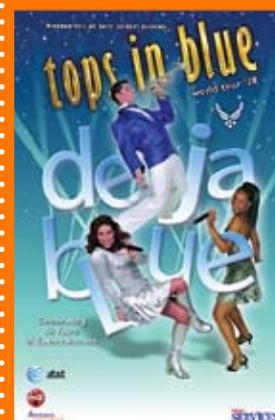
Rachel Dawes (played by Katie Holmes in Batman Begins), and Brokeback Mountain star Heath Ledger dons the ghoulishly gleeful Joker makeup previously worn by Jack Nicholson and Cesar Romero. Just as it begins to appear as if Batman, Lt. James Gordon (Gary Oldman), and District Attorney Harvey Dent (Aaron Eckhart) are making headway in their tireless battle against the criminal element, a maniacal, wisecracking fiend plunges the streets of Gotham City into complete chaos and forces the Dark Knight ever closer to crossing the fine line between hero and vigilante.

### Don't Mess with the Zohan



Tired of all the fighting in his country, legendary Israeli commando Zohan (Adam Sandler) fakes his own death and goes to New York, where he can fulfill his fondest dream: to become a hairstylist. Zohan's sexy way with a cut and curl makes him a hit with Manhattan's women, but when enemy Arabs spot him, Zohan has to call on his military skills if he is ever to wield scissors again. I Now Pronounce You Chuck and Larry's Dennis Dugan directs for Happy Madison Productions and Columbia Pictures.

### Tops in Blue



This world-renown production, Tops In Blue, is an all-active duty US Air Force special unit made up of talented amateur performers selected for their entertainment abilities. Each year, thousands compete in base talent contests and the most talented move on to higher levels of competition. The result is an elite group composed of 35 of the most talented vocalists, musicians, and dancers anywhere. Known as the Air Forces' Expeditionary Entertainers; the group's main mission is to perform for military personnel and their families throughout the world.



# Sustainment Soldiers step it out!



Photos by Spc. Andrea Merritt

**Residents on Camp Taji enjoy a step aerobics July 1 at the Durable Gym. The class, which is taught by Soldiers of the 1st Sustainment Brigade, is a motivating class that has had an estimated combined weight loss of 1550 pounds.**

by Spc. Andrea Merritt

1st Sustainment Bde

**CAMP TAJI, Iraq** – About 15 minutes before class starts, people begin to trickle through the gym doors. Some take time to stretch, and others use those few moments to vent about the day they just had.

As soon as the clock strikes 7:00 p.m., the troubles of the day fade away behind the dance music, which has a steady, pulsating rhythm.

Five nights a week, Monday through Friday, Soldiers, civilians and Airmen who reside on Camp Taji challenge themselves during the one-hour step aerobics class at the Durable Gym.

“I first heard about step aerobics through friends that were already involved in the program. It sounded like a lot of fun, like a stress reliever, and for the ones going on a regular basis, they were seeing results,” said Sgt. Jasmine Burks, a medic with the 1st Sust. Bde.

Word about step aerobics spread, and people continued to show up to

see what the class was all about.

Although step aerobics may not sound like a tough workout to those who have never tried it, the evidence of its taxing physical demand can be seen in the sweat that drips from the skin of its participants.

“Spc. Leas asked me to come out and told me it was a good thing to help me with my PT test. At first I was like, ‘No, this is not for guys,’ but I decided to try it out and I enjoyed it, so I continued to go,” said Sgt. Danny Williams, with the 1st Sustainment Brigade.

Williams enjoyed step aerobics so much that when Leas had to leave for a few months, he took over teaching the class.

“Spc. Leas had to leave for a little while so I told her I would keep it going, and it just turned into an everyday thing. With doing step aerobics, I lost 90 to 100 pounds,” said Williams, a Dallas native.

Although weight loss is the primary reason people attend step aerobics, some people have seen other benefits of the workout.

“I cut about 30 to 40 seconds off my run time,” said 1st Lt. Percy Williams, the assistant logistics officer for the 165th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion.

“I’m bringing sexy back. I wasn’t

in the best of shape since I had just had surgery on my Achilles six months ago, so I wanted to get back in shape. Aerobics was the best way to do it,” said Williams.

“We put a lot of work into it. We do it five nights a week. We don’t get paid anything extra. We do it for the fun of it and to help people out,” said Leas.

“I could be asleep, but it’s something that’s good for me and it kind of helps the time go by faster out here because I have something to look forward to everyday out of the week,” said Williams.

“It’s really [exciting] and feels really good to know what you’re doing up there is the reason why people are losing weight,” Hannah concluded.

Since step aerobics has become such a popular workout, a class is offered Tuesday and Thursday mornings at 6:00 a.m. at the Durable Gym. The morning class, which also lasts one hour, is led by Spc. April Hannah, a unit supply specialist, with the 1st Sust. Bde.

The love the instructors have for teaching the class keeps people coming back, and people coming back is what motivates the instructors to keep teaching. In the process, everyone is seeing results.



**Sgt. Danny Williams, a Dallas native and human resources NCO with the 1st Sust. Bde., assists instructing the step aerobics workout July 1 at Durable the Gym.**



**Spc. Tia Leas, a Peoria, Ill., native and unit supply specialist with the 1st Sust. Bde., leads step aerobics July 1 at Durable Gym. Leas began teaching the class nine months ago when the previous instructors redeployed to Fort Hood, Texas, and asked her to take over.**



**Soldiers, civilians, and Airmen who reside on Camp Taji, Iraq, enjoy a step aerobics workout July 1 at the Durable Gym. Word about the step aerobics workout spread, and the class grew from having about 20 people to having almost 50 participants.**