

The Ivy Leaf

Established in 1917 to honor those who serve

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MULTI-NATIONAL DIVISION - BAGHDAD

"STEADFAST AND LOYAL"

NOVEMBER 10, 2008



Friendly smiles

Local children ride on a swing at the grand opening of Dover Park in the Qahira neighborhood in the Adhamiyah District of Baghdad Oct. 28. It is the first public park in the neighborhood. It has a small pond with a generator-run fountain, benches, solar lights, several swings, slides and seesaws. There is also a tiled path lined with flowers and new grass has been planted. The park is intended to be self-sufficient, and seven small kiosks will be rented to vendors. The rent will provide an income stream to buy fuel for the generator, pay the salaries of the staff and any other expenses.

Carnival receives facelift, transformation to public park

By Sgt. Jerry Saslav
3rd BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div.

BAGHDAD – “As I drove by the Army canal every day, I saw this park, and I said this is something we can do to help the citizens,” said Col. John Hort, commander of the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division.

Dover Park, as it is known by

Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers, sat abandoned for years; located in the Qahira neighborhood of the Adhamiyah District of Baghdad, its carnival rides were unusable and the land was overgrown with weeds.

“It was your typical abandoned park here in Iraq,” said 1st Lt. Rosita Rodriguez, a civil affairs team chief with Company C, 404th Civil Affairs

Battalion, attached to 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, MND-B.

Thus, the mission to rehabilitate the park became Rodriguez’s mission.

Two months later, the refurbished park was completed and handed over

see **Public Park Pg. 12**

4th Inf. Div. leaders address Fort Carson move concerns

By Staff Sgt. Brock Jones
MND-B PAO

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – Fulfilling a 15-month deployment, along with its trials and tribulations and long separations, is a challenge all its own. A 15-month deployment coupled with the prospect of pulling up roots and moving to a different part of the United States within months of redeploying is a unique pressure that Soldiers and leaders of 4th Infantry Division are increasingly feeling as the day for their return gets closer.

“It’s basically part of the Army campaign plan that the 4th Infantry Division would move to Fort Carson,” said Maj. Michael McGregor, a native of Roaring Spring, Pa., who serves as the deputy director of the human resources section, 4th Inf. Div., Multi-National Division – Baghdad. “We knew that would happen in the summer of 2009, and so FORSCOM (Forces Command) has generated orders that put that in motion.”

see **Fort Carson Pg. 7**

Strike Brigade redeploys following successful OIF tour Dagger Bde. to reassume authority of central, western Baghdad

Multi-National Division – Baghdad PAO

BAGHDAD – U.S. Soldiers from 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), currently serving with Multi-National Division – Baghdad, will redeploy to Fort Campbell, Ky., in November following a successful 13-month tour in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

The “Strike” Brigade Soldiers were instrumental in reducing violence in northwest Baghdad and returning a sense of normalcy for the residents of the Mansour, Karkh and Kadhamiyah districts of the capital city.

Their tour began by focusing on protecting the people amidst sectarian strife and incorporating the Sons of Iraq into the Iraqi security framework. The brigade’s Soldiers were instrumental in helping to rebuild and reopen parks and schools throughout the area.

The Strike Brigade took responsibility for the Mansour and Kadhamiyah security districts of northwest Baghdad from 2nd Bde, 1st Inf. Div., on Nov. 17, 2007, and later assumed responsibility for the Karkh security district in January 2008 when the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, departed.

During the past 11 months, the Strike brigade has secured the population of northwest Baghdad in partnership with the Iraqi Security Forces and other Government of Iraqi officials.

Throughout the brigade’s deployment, more than 980 criminals were detained in partnership with Iraqi Security and Special Operations Forces, and more than 240 weapons and munitions caches were seized.

Additionally, a total of 870 Sons of Iraq volunteers graduated from Police Academy and assisted with security. Seven new police stations were built and many of the Sons of Iraq members worked out of these new facilities to provide for the protection of the people.

With the improved security provided by Coalition Forces, Iraqi Security Forces and Sons of Iraq forces, attacks in the region were greatly reduced. There has been a 50-percent decrease in overall attacks within the three security districts since September 2007. There has also been a 92-percent decrease in murder events and a 94-percent decrease in murder victims since September 2007.

During this time period, the local economy improved dramatically as more than 25 markets were revitalized and a total of \$2.4 million was spent through \$2,500 micro-grants that benefitted more than 200 business.

“The American and Iraqi people are indebted to the Strike Brigade Soldiers, one and all. They are men and women of character and moral courage – each one a volunteer,” said Maj. Gen. Jeffery Hammond, the commanding general of Multi-National Division – Baghdad and the 4th Infantry Division. “The great news is these Soldiers will be home in time for the holidays.”

The 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, based out of Fort Riley, Kan., will return to Baghdad and replace the 2nd BCT, 101st Abn. Div., for an anticipated 12-month tour in northwestern Baghdad.

The brigade’s mission in Iraq will be to continue to assist Iraqi leaders and the Iraqi populace in the Baghdad area in order to establish a secure and stable environment.

“The Dagger Brigade arrived safely in Kuwait,” said Col. Joseph Martin, commander, 2nd BCT, 1st Inf. Div. “We are taking every opportunity to continue to prepare for the next chapter in this brigade’s long and honorable history.”

The Ivy Leaf **Commentary / Editorials**

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4th BCT, 10th Mtn. Div.
18th MP Bde.
926th Eng. Bde.

 **Index**

Mission	4
Photo Feature	12-13
Soldier	14
Family	19
Entertainment Reviews	20
Team	22



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Submissions should be sent to the Editor at jason.thompson@mnd-b.army.mil or the Public Affairs Chief at eric.d.lobsinger@mnd-b.army.mil and include author's name, rank, unit and contact information.

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4th Inf. Div. crosses cultures, unifies nation

By Spc. Benjamin Crane
MND-B PAO

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – Soldiers and leaders of the 4th Infantry Division and Multi-National Division – Baghdad gathered at the Media Operations Center on Camp Liberty for the monthly 4th Infantry Division Town Hall meeting in the early morning hours Oct. 23.

Maj. Gen. Jeffery Hammond, a Hattiesburg, Miss., native, the commanding general of 4th Inf. Div. and MND-B, along with the co-hosts: Lt. Col. Monty Willoughby, commander of 4th Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Inf. Div., and Lt. Col. Tania Martin, division staff judge advocate, talked to Soldiers and Families at Fort Carson, Colo., and Fort Hood, Texas, via a live broadcast about gaining a greater understanding of the Iraqi culture, daily rituals and customs.

Hammond welcomed the viewers watching back in the States and gave an update as to what the units here in Baghdad were doing to help further the progress of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

“Last night in Sadr City, our 3rd Brigade, out of Fort Carson, under (Col.) John Hort’s leadership, and the Iraqi Army, picked up a very significant cache find that’s going to put a dent in things,” said Hammond. “You need to know that your Soldiers have killed or captured well over 2,300 (enemy forces) going back to Dec 19.

“They have made a difference. The glass is truly half full and we’re moving in the right direction, and we are doing it one U.S. Army Soldier step at a time. We are grateful you back home continue to support us.”

The guest speakers at the live broadcast included Hammond’s cultural advisor and his translator, along with a Soldier who had grown up in Iraq, moved to the United States and later joined the Army.

Alaa Abdelazim, who goes by just Al, lives in Killeen, Texas, and serves as Hammond’s cultural advisor, was the first of the guest speakers.

Al was born in Kuwait, has a degree from Oxford University, and has served in the U.S. and Egyptian Armies. He demonstrated the proper way to serve the local drink, Chai, as well as explaining the differences between Sunni and Shiite head dresses and how to show respect to Iraqi women.

“They call it Chai over here,” said Al. “We cannot call it ‘Chai Tea’ like Starbucks or something; it’s just Chai.”

Al went on to explain that you cannot leave a spoon in any of the glasses and that the glass needs to be completely full when served to show the hosts generosity.

The second guest was David Yousif, who lives in Chicago and works as Hammond’s personal translator.

Yousif was born in Mosul, grew up in Iraq and moved to Baghdad to attend college.

He has a degree in business administration and served a year and a half with the Iraqi Army. He moved to the states soon after and has made permanent residence there since. He is married and has three children.

“I came back to Iraq for the first time in May of 2003 when I heard about this opportunity of jobs with the U.S. Army as a linguist,” said Yousif, who speaks three languages: Aramaic, Arabic and English.

He took the opportunity to explain the difference between his native tongue of Aramaic and Arabic.

“Aramaic is part of this country’s history. It’s one of the oldest languages, and actually was the first alphabet put together in history and was spoken widely in this region.



U.S. Army photo by Spc. Benjamin Crane, MND-B PAO
Maj. Gen. Jeffery Hammond, a Hattiesburg, Miss., native, the commanding general of the 4th Infantry Division and Multi-National Division – Baghdad, talks to Soldiers and Families at Fort Carson, Colo., and Fort Hood, Texas, via a live broadcast, about gaining a greater understanding of the Iraqi culture during the division’s monthly Town Hall at the Media Operations Center Oct. 22.

“My goal is to build a bridge between the two cultures – the Iraqi culture and the U.S. Army, and the American people in general,” said Jadan. “But first of all, I am an American Soldier, a warrior and a member of this team.”

He proudly talked about his gratitude to the United States and the Army commanders for allowing him to work for them and help him to complete his goal.

The final speaker of the night was an American who had grown up in the Middle East region.

Ms. Elbel (she preferred not to give a first name), who works as a cultural adviser for MND-B and is from Columbus, Ohio, described life growing up as a foreigner in an Arabic country. Her parents did church work and, through that, Elbel was able to see a lot of the Middle Eastern countries.

After all the speakers finished, the floor was opened to questions from the Soldiers and Families back in the States.

The hot topic at hand was when and how the move to Fort Carson was going to take place.

Maj. Mike McGregor, deputy director of the human resources section, 4th Inf. Div., answered the question and reminded the viewers that information was being posted on the division’s web page – www.hood.army.mil/4id – and is being continually updated.

“On Oct. 9, Human Resources Command identified all E-8s and below who will be moving to Fort Carson. Really, nothing has changed; it’s just a method by which HRC can safeguard both of our units – DSTB and 1st BCT – to be mission capable upon arrival at Fort Carson,” said McGregor. “HRC will post orders for the STB, and you will receive those no later than the end of November and, for 1st BCT, by the end of December.”

Other questions posed and answered were in reference to deployments for the Aviation Brigade, the chances that 4th Inf. Div. will be deployed to Afghanistan, the greatest achievement of the division during this deployment and whether Soldiers get their block leave around spring break.

Hammond concluded the meeting by introducing the new division chief of staff: Col. Pete Utley. Utley takes over for Col. Allen Batschelet, who is leaving MND-B to go to Fort Carson. He will be promoted to brigadier general and will oversee the division’s move to Colorado’s Mountain Post.

Hammond also thanked the Families for their support and expressed his pride in them for being the strength behind the Soldiers of the Ironhorse Division.

“God bless our Families at Fort Carson and Hood, and the absolutely exceptional extended Families, and the central Texas communities that love us just because, with no strings attached, and we will always and forever be grateful.”

“Also, in the movie ‘Passion of the Christ,’ the whole movie is spoken in Aramaic,” said Yousif.

Yousif sees his work with the United States Army as his way of giving back to a country that has given him so much.

“My wife was kind of mad when I told her I was thinking about doing this job ... but I told her: ‘Honey, listen, we have lived in this country for 25 years now, and it’s given us a lot of prosperity, and we have been able to live the American dream, send our kids to college, and it’s time now to pay back for what this country has given to us,’ and that’s when she got convinced and said, ‘Okay, it’s payback time,’” he said.

After Yousif spoke, Spc. Emad Jadan, who lives in West Bloomfield, Mich., and works as an interpreter with the 18th Military Police Brigade, MND-B, talked about how he came to join the Army and his goal to be a conduit for peace between his two home nations. Jadan was born in Baghdad and left when he was 23. He was granted U.S. citizenship in 2002.

Chaplain's Corner

Deployed Soldiers stay spiritually fit through religious support

By Maj. Norman Jones

2nd BCT, 101st Abn. Div. chaplain

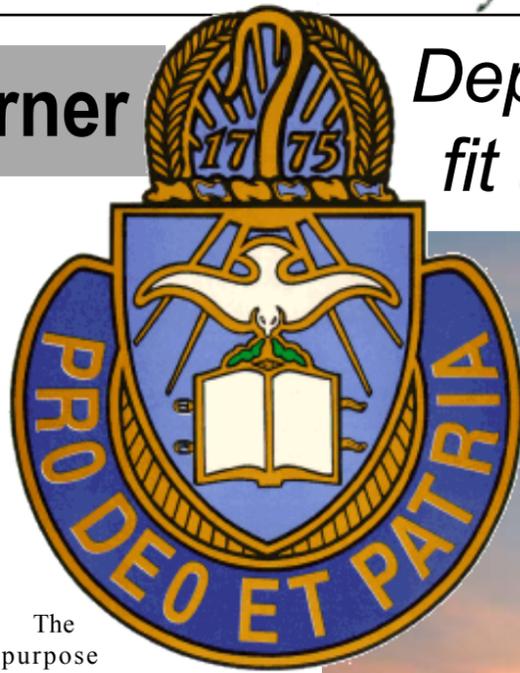
BAGHDAD – Throughout the battlefield, unit chaplains and chaplain assistants have been instrumental in providing and performing timely religious support for Soldiers to enhance and maintain their spiritual fitness.

I believe chaplains and chaplain assistants are unsung heroes in the life of deployed Soldiers because they provide inner sustenance that strengthens the mind, soul and spirit. No matter how strong a Soldier may be, if the Soldier is spiritually unfit, he can easily become a liability to his unit. These Soldiers are detrimental to combat operations or missions that support combat operations.

Religious Support Teams stand in the gap to provide the religious support that keeps Soldiers spiritually fit. The teams provide and perform comprehensive religious support to deployed Task Force Soldiers in a broad complex and lethal battle space within their command. They provide and perform religious worship services, memorial ceremonies, marriage enrichment seminars, Bible studies, pastoral counseling, and Ministry of Presence within the workplace and combat outposts.

Additionally, the teams provide other spiritual fitness programs, such as cultural awareness programs, prayer breakfasts, suicide prevention training, and special holiday programs for Christmas or Thanksgiving Services.

The brigade's Suicide Risk Management Team consists of the brigade's command sergeant major, executive officer, surgeon, behavioral health officer and the chaplain. Each of the brigade's battalions also have teams, which consists of the battalion command sergeant major, a medical representative and the battalion chaplain.



The purpose of the brigade team is to provide resources and training to the battalion teams so they can push the information to the lowest level within the chain of command to help them identify "at risk" Soldiers and provide timely help.

The brigade team is also responsible for providing resources and training for the battalion teams, which focus on helping Soldiers cope with deployment stressors, home-front issues and personal struggles. The brigade team conducts monthly face-to-face (sometimes through secure telephonic means) meetings with the battalion teams for training, distributing resources and for roundtable discussions on programs that were effective in helping Soldiers.

The religious support and spiritual fitness programs are combat multipliers because they directly contribute to high morale, stable and productive Soldiers.

While Soldiers are not flocking to chapel services and Bible studies like the first few years of the war, there still remains a consid-

erate amount of faithful followers who are spiritually vibrant and actively engaged in their religious practices. Soldiers who stay connected to their spiritual roots tend to be resilient, productive and highly motivated. It appears that those who regularly practice their faith tend to cope better with the rigors, trauma and challenges of a combat environment.

From my observation, Soldiers who practice their faith regularly usually attend chapel services, Bible studies, read scriptures or some sacred writings, pray, meditate, listen to sacred or religious music and fellowship with fellow believers. These Soldiers are spiritually connected to their spiritual roots, which supply them with spiritual nourishment, ener-

gy, vitality and stamina. The Army craves for such soldiers because they tend to be highly productive, motivated and resilient.

Many Soldiers have shared with me that they become more spiritual when they are deployed or away from their Families. I can personally attest that the same is true in my life. I tend to draw closer to God while being separated from my Family and loved ones. I usually draw closer to God in prayer, meditation and scripture reading for daily protection, strength, peace, wisdom and direction.

Religious Support Teams are available 24 hours a day to provide and perform religious support for deployed Soldiers so they can remain spiritually fit and stay in the fight to accomplish the mission.



Word on the Street:

What does Veterans Day mean to you as a Soldier?

By Sgt. David Hodge

1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div. MND-B



Spc. Chris Egge

*X-ray technician
64th BSB, 3rd BCT, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B*

"I get to honor fallen Soldiers in general in a positive light as opposed to the negative light shown by some media."



Spc. Hollie Bailey

*financial management technician
1st Sust. Bde., 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B*

"Veterans Day makes me understand the sacrifices of those who have served before me."



Spc. Jessica Scott

*medic
4th SB, 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B*

"It is a day for us to remember the veterans that have fallen in previous wars and pay tribute to all veterans."



1st Lt. Robert Ganim

*platoon leader
HHD, 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B*

"I know I am part of an organization that is bigger than myself; I have an obligation to uphold the honor of previous servicemembers as well as my comrades now."

News briefs

Tips, Sol lead INP, MND-B Soldiers to seize weapons

Multi-National Division – Baghdad PAO
BAGHDAD – Tips led Iraqi National Policemen and Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers to weapons caches in Baghdad Oct 29.

At approximately 3 p.m., policemen serving with 1st Battalion, 5th Brigade, 2nd National Police Division, found a 122 artillery round and a 120mm mortar round in the West Rashid district of Baghdad. EOD assessed the munitions were intended to be used for improvised-explosive devices due to blasting caps attached to the rounds.

A Sheik with the Sons of Iraq (Abna al-Iraq) turned in a 160mm high-explosive round with a bag of miscellaneous IED components to Soldiers serving with Company A, 1st Battalion, 14th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, MND-B, north of Baghdad at approximately 6:30 p.m.

After receiving a tip, soldiers serving with 3rd Battalion, 22nd Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division, found suspicious material in a bag on the top of a broken elevator at the Kadamiyah hospital in the Kadamiyah district of Baghdad at approximately 7 p.m. The items include two motion sensors, four 9-volt batteries, three fabricated LED wires, four short antennas, four red battery packs, a switch box, three 9mm magazines, 10 rounds of 9mm ammunition and an aid bag.

“While levels of violence are significantly down from an average of 37 attacks per day in July ’07 to an average of four attacks per day in Baghdad, U.S. and Iraqi Security Forces are not resting,” said Lt. Col. Steve Stover, spokesman, MND-B and the 4th Infantry Division. “Our aggressive pursuit of the enemy, contributions of the SoI and citizens is essential to lasting security and stability.”

IA soldiers seize 2nd large weapons cache in Sadr City in week

Multi-National Division – Baghdad PAO
BAGHDAD – In another independent operation in the Sadr City district of Baghdad, the Iraqi Army seized a second large cache of weapons, munitions and IED-making material in less than a week Oct. 28.

At approximately 8:30 a.m., IA soldiers from 44th Brigade, 11th Iraqi Army Division, conducted an operation in northern area of the Sadr City. Based on intelligence gathered from local sources, the IA soldiers dis-

covered the large cache at a suspected IED making factory.

The cache included 160 blocks of C4 explosives, 34 complete explosively-formed penetrators, 53 copper plates, 40 shaped plates for EFPs, three presses and a punch, all believed to be used for making EFPs, and 14 107mm rockets.

“This is another great effort by the Iraqi Army and further demonstrates their ability to develop their own intelligence and defeat

the threat to Iraq from Iranian-backed special groups,” said Col. John Hort, commander 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division. “The weapons the IA discovered today were especially deadly. Thanks to the IA’s resolve, these weapons will never be used to harm innocent people.”

The Iraqi Army, with support from Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers, is exploiting the contraband for evidence to assist in targeting those responsible for the cache.



U.S. Army photo courtesy 3rd BCT, 4th Inf. Div.

Shown are explosively formed penetrators captured by IA soldiers from 44th Brigade, 11th Iraqi Army Division, in northern area of the Sadr City Oct. 28. The large munitions capture was the second in less than a week by the IA Soldiers, which included 160 blocks of C4 explosives, 34 complete explosively-formed penetrators, 53 copper plates, 40 shaped plates for EFPs, three presses and a punch, all believed to be used for making EFPs, and 14 107mm rockets.

Tips lead INP, MND-B Soldiers to seize weapons throughout Baghdad

Multi-National Division – Baghdad PAO
BAGHDAD – Tips led Iraqi National Policemen and Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers to weapons caches in Baghdad Oct 28.

A tip from a concerned citizen led to the seizure of a munitions cache by Company C, 1st Battalion, 21st Infantry Regiment, 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, west of Baghdad at approximately 3:30 p.m. The items seized include two 60mm mortar base plates.

At approximately 7 p.m., policemen serving with 1st Battalion, 5th Brigade, 2nd National Police Division, found 18 60mm rusty projectiles in a building that is being renovated to become a mosque in the West Rashid district of Baghdad.

After receiving a tip, Iraqi Policemen serving with 1st Bat-

alion, 8th Brigade, 2nd National Police Division, found a cache in the New Baghdad district of Baghdad. The IPs transported the munitions, which consisted of three 60mm high-explosive mortar rounds, three 81mm high-explosive mortar rounds, four rocket-propelled grenade launchers, five RPG-9 warheads, three RPG fuse assemblies and a bag containing approximately 400 rounds of 7.62 mm ammunition, and turned them in to Soldiers serving with Company B, 2nd Battalion, 30th Infantry Brigade, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, at approximately 10:50 p.m.

“Iraqi citizens continue to provide valuable assistance to Iraqi Security and Coalition Forces in the seizure of these dangerous weapons and munitions,” said Lt. Col. Steve Stover, spokesman, 4th Infantry Division and Multi-National Division – Baghdad.

MND-B Soldiers capture Special Group criminals, confiscate large weapons cache

4th BCT PAO, 10th Mtn. Div.
BAGHDAD – Soldiers from 4th Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (Light), Multi-National Division – Baghdad, raided a meeting of suspected extremists in eastern Baghdad Oct. 27, capturing six Special Groups insurgents and confiscating weapons and criminal paraphernalia.

Based on a citizen's tip, Soldiers assigned to 2nd Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment conducted a raid to interdict the meeting about 9:45 p.m. The six detainees, who a witness identified, are known SG

criminals wanted by Iraqi Security Force officials.

Weapons and ammunition the Soldiers confiscated included five AK-47 assault rifles with 32 magazines, a 9mm pistol with three magazines, a shotgun and 60 shotgun shells, an SKS rifle, a rocket-propelled grenade launcher, a fragmentation grenade, a Dragonov rifle scope with nine Dragonov magazines and 3,000 rounds of small-arms ammunition. Other seized items included 2.6 million Iraqi Dinar, two passports, a set of binoculars and a scale.

“Capturing these Special Group extremists and confiscating the weapons they use to attack and kill civilians and security forces is tremendously satisfying,” said Maj. Joey Sullinger, a spokesperson for 4th Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (Light).

“An Iraqi citizen provided intelligence leading to a successful operation; and similar cooperation between the people of Baghdad and their Iraqi Security Forces is necessary to foster a safe and stable future for Iraq.”

Raiders detain Special Group Criminal cell leader and accomplice

1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div.

FORWARD OPERATING BASE FALCON, Iraq – Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers detained a suspected special groups criminal cell leader and an operative Oct. 24 in the Abu T'shir community in the Rashid district of southern Baghdad.

At approximately 12:30 a.m., Soldiers from Troop C, 7th Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, detained the SGC leader suspected of murdering Sunni Iraqis and conducting roadside bomb attacks against Coalition Forces and Iraqi Security Forces.

The Soldiers also captured a known accomplice of the suspected cell leader at approximately 2:15 a.m. when conducting close encounters with residents in the muhallah after the raid. The patrol returned to a CF combat outpost with the suspects for additional questioning.

“Capturing known criminals involved in acts of violence and terrorism against the Iraqi people, shows the commitment of U.S. Soldiers to provide a safe and secure environment for the 1.5 million residents of the Rashid district,” said Maj. Dave Olson, 1st BCT spokesman, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B.



4th BCT, 10th Mtn. Div.

Oqba Bin Nafea school reopens in Rusafa

Story and photos by Sgt. Grant Okubo

4th BCT PAO, 10th Mtn. Div.

FORWARD OPERATING BASE LOYALTY, Iraq – Iraqi citizens, local officials and Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers came together and celebrated the reopening of a school in the Rusafa area of eastern Baghdad Oct. 22.

Al'aa Dagher, the Rusafa District Council chairman, kicked off the celebration of the reopening for the Oqba Bin Nafea School with a ribbon cutting ceremony. Joining in the celebration were Soldiers from 3rd Squadron, 89th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, MND-B.

The school is a secondary school for boys, explained Capt. Timothy Green, effects coordinator for 3rd Sqdn., 89th Cav. Regt, who is a Columbus, Ohio native. The school will be educating boys from seventh to twelfth grade.

"School started two weeks ago and this school ... has about 1,000 students," said Green, adding that many in attendance were pleased with the overall results.

"The school looks nice," said Green. "There is still work that needs to be done."

Green said the ministry of education has been working hard on the overall improvements of the schools, and the project itself is important as it directly correlates to the quality of life for the children, explained Green.

"I think the kids are happy here," he said. "It's a definite improvement."

Green added he hopes that the improvements help to create a positive environment.

The reactions to the school from members in the community were very positive, said Basim, who is the contractor in charge of the renovations.

"They were very happy about (the) improvements made in school," said Basim, adding that the work to improve the school took approximately seven weeks for him and his team.

"It felt very good to do something for my country," exclaimed Basim.

The work on the school included fixing the tiles, repainting the walls, installing a generator for the school and a water tank for the restrooms, he added.



▲ Al'aa Dagher, District Council chairman, cuts the ribbon to mark the official reopening of the Oqba Bin Nafea School Oct. 22. Iraqi officials and Soldiers from 3rd Squadron, 89th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, celebrate the reopening of the secondary school for boys.



◀ Col. Craig Collier, squadron commander for 3rd Squadron, 89th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, and Al'aa Dagher, Rusafa District Council chairman, cut a cake following a ribbon-cutting ceremony to celebrate the reopening of the Oqba Bin Nafea School Oct. 22.

Zafaraniyah residents celebrate school opening

By Sgt. Jeremy Todd

4th BCT PAO, 10th Mtn. Div.

FORWARD OPERATING BASE LOYALTY, Iraq – Three select schools in Zafaraniyah, a suburb in eastern Baghdad, received essential renovations this year. Contractors and Coalition leadership celebrated the completion of those renovations Oct. 25.

Dr. Qais, lead advisory contractor for the projects, and his daughter, Essra, coordinated with the non-lethal effects section of 5th Battalion, 25th Field Artillery Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, to make repairs to the schools.

A secondary and two primary schools received facelifts and major septic repairs to ensure the students received a proper education under livable standards.

Before renovations, students were subjected to a less than conducive learning environment, according to Qais.

Playing a large role in the project was Qais' daughter, Essra. She helped make all the necessary contacts and orchestrated the much-needed repairs to each of the structures from complete septic overhauls to window installations. In addition to that, she also helped with painting appealing murals on the walls.

"She did it all," added Qais. "I am extremely proud of

"With a little bit of encouragement, guidance and financial backing, these schools may lead to the positive change this country so direly thirsts for."

Maj. Robert Machen

executive officer

5th Bn., 25th FA Regt., 4th BCT, 10th Mtn. Div., MND-B

my daughter and the leadership role (5th Bn.) has bestowed upon her."

"Their trust in her ability to accomplish the mission is a major step in changing the views many Iraqi men have on the traditional role women have in this society," explained Qais. "Not only has she earned a name for herself in Zafaraniyah, but she has been able to show her dedication to her country."

"I am very proud of her," he added.

"Education is one of the most important facets of social infrastructure," said Maj. Robert Machen, executive officer for 5th Bn., 25th FA Regt.

"It leads the way to everything else, added the College Station, Texas, native. A proper education leads to good governance, good security and good infrastructure," he added.

"We are just playing our part as the facilitators of this action," explained Machen.



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

Contractors celebrate with Soldiers from the 5th Battalion, 25th Field Artillery Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, during a ribbon-cutting ceremony celebrating the continued efforts in renovating select schools in Zafaraniyah Oct. 25.

"With a little bit of encouragement, guidance and financial backing, these schools may lead to the positive change this country so direly thirsts for," he said.

Projects like these are "near and dear to my heart because my wife is a schoolteacher (back in the states). I know that she would want me to do this."

"The investment in our youth, not just American youth, but youth all across the world is a sustainable investment into our future as a conglomerated society."

Keeping with Iraqi tradition Soldiers from 5th Bn., 25th FA Regt., along with local council members and contractors, celebrated this success with a proper feast following the ribbon-cutting ceremonies.



1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div.

Airmen assume Iraqi Police Transition Team responsibilities in Rashid

By Sgt. David Hodge

1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div.

FORWARD OPERATING BASE FALCON, Iraq — Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers welcomed a U.S. Air Force detachment to its ranks recently at Forward Operating Base Falcon in southern Baghdad.

The Airmen of Detachment 3 have assumed responsibility for all Iraqi Police Transition Team operations for the entire Rashid district and now work alongside Soldiers from the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, MND-B.

“There are very few Air Force units that go outside the wire, and that’s what we do every day,” said Master Sgt. Tom Daniels, a flight sergeant assigned to Det. 3, 732nd Expeditionary Security Forces, 332nd Air Expeditionary Wing, attached to the 716th Military Police Battalion, 18th MP Brigade.

With less than a month on the ground, the Airmen of Det. 3 have already been tested “outside the wire,” said Daniels, who is in charge of three squads and six IP stations in Rashid.

“Now that we got our feet under us, our main push is to get the IPs into the community because the public is used to seeing the Iraqi Army and Iraqi National Police,” explained Daniels, a San Diego native.

The Airmen are from 52 different bases worldwide, said Daniels. All but one of them is active-duty Air Force, and they all volunteered to deploy for the year-long mission.

The group met in Fort Dix, N.J., for a two-month training exercise before deploying.

“The training we had at Fort Dix was very realistic,” said Tech Sgt. Charles Fortier, a squad leader assigned to Det. 3.

Shortly after the unit’s arrival, the Airmen responded to an attack Oct. 12 on innocent Iraqi civilians in the Bayaa community. The team served as the only American forces at the scene of a car bomb explosion for the first hour, said Daniels.

Fortier said he heard the blast from a nearby IP station when the vehicle detonated.

“We heard it and felt it,” stated Fortier, who hails from Wausau, Wis.

Fortier and other members of the detachment followed the IPs to the scene.

“After driving to the site, the IPs immediately began caring for and evacuating the wounded,” said Fortier, who is on his first deployment to Iraq but has experienced four other deployments to the Middle East. “The IPs handled the situation excellently. Even the IP commander was right in the middle of the blast site helping out.”

Fortier said he believes the IPs are a self-sufficient force capable of conducting many routine police investigations without any outside help.

The transition team holds a bi-monthly conference at FOB Falcon to measure improvements and gather information for IPs, said Capt. Matt Ballanco, detachment operations officer for Det. 3.

The focus of the transition team is to identify and fix administration issues at the IP stations, continue to improve the emergency response system, and develop tactics for better crime scene preservation, said Ballanco, a native of Tampa, Fla.

Maj. Nathan Schallas, the commander of Det. 3, challenged the IP leaders to take the lead during an IP Summit Oct. 22 as American forces move into over watch control and the Government of Iraq raises its interest in aiding the Iraqi Security Forces throughout the Rashid district.

“The top priorities for the IPs are the safety of the Iraqi population and the disruption of criminal activity,” stated Schallas, who hails from Carlisle, Pa.

The Airmen of Det. 3 remain committed to ensuring the IPs are a fully-capable and self-sufficient police force in every respect, from securing the community and its people to completing necessary paperwork at the station, concluded Daniels.



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

U.S. Air Force Capt. Matt Ballanco, operations officer for Detachment 3, 732nd Expeditionary Security Forces, 332nd Air Expeditionary Wing, speaks to Iraqi Police leaders at a summit Oct. 22 at Forward Operating Base Falcon in southern Baghdad’s Rashid district. Ballanco, who calls Tampa, Fla., his home, and his unit, as the IP Transition Team, are responsible for all IP forces in the district. Det. 3 is attached to the 716th Military Police Battalion, 18th MP Brigade, Multi-National Division – Baghdad.

1st BCT Leaders meet with Rashid DC leaders to discuss ongoing progress

By Maj. Dave Olson

1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div.

FORWARD OPERATING BASE FALCON, Iraq – Senior leaders of the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, visited with leaders of the Rashid District Council Oct. 22 to congratulate the community’s newly elected officials on their continuing success in the beladiyat located in southern Baghdad.

Earlier in the day, local community leaders, members of the District Council from East and West Rashid, voted the reigning DC Chairman Yaqoub Yosif, and Deputy DC Chairman Hashem Mahmood Dahash to another term, another year of service, for the 1.6 million Iraqis in the Rashid district.

Both Yaqoub and Hashem, who competed against other candidates to be re-elected for their second term as heads of the District Council, are responsible for the administration of the neighborhood and district civil self-governance program, working with the Government of Iraq and local neighborhood councils to provide the resources, direction and order for the people of Baghdad’s Rashid district, said Lt. Col. Paul Hossenlopp, deputy commander of the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, MND-B.

Yaqoub, who was first elected to be the Rashid DC Chairman Oct. 24, 2007, said that he witnessed a dramatic change in the security situation since the implementation of the National Security Plan, Fardh al Qua Non, Iraq’s Rule of Law.

“At the beginning of my election period as the Chairman for the Rashid District Council, the task was difficult due to the National Reconciliation, the displaced families (returning), as well as the Fardh al Qua Non plan, were all at their beginning stages,” said Yaqoub.

Serving as the Rashid DC Chairman requires a considerable amount of time and effort to provide support for the district’s neighborhood councils and visit with local communities and neighborhoods in the Rashid district, said Yaqoub.

The leaders of the DC were able to accomplish its many tasks to help secure and rebuild the Rashid district, because of the support from Coalition Forces and Iraqi Security Forces during the past year, explained Yaqoub, who began his tenure as a neighborhood council leader in the Bayaa community of the Rashid district.

“I am proud to serve with you,” Yaqoub said to leaders of the 1st “Raider” Brigade. “You have made a big difference in Rashid, and I am much happier that you are supporting us.”

The re-election of the current leadership is an important step toward the provincial elections tentatively scheduled to occur early next year, said Tom Lynch, leader of the 1st BCT Embedded Provincial Reconstruction Team.

The leaders of the 1st BCT are pleased with the recent security gains in the Rashid district, especially the level of activity in the market place, said Lynch, who hails from Fairfax, Va.

“The people look better than the real estate,” Lynch said. “The level of violence has greatly dropped since last year, and this is a lot of momentum for the District Council leaders to take to the next level.”

Hashem, deputy chairman of the Rashid DC, took the opportunity to discuss with the 1st BCT leadership the education opportunities, in particular the building of a new library and media resource center for Iraqis in the Rashid district.

“There is no difference than when security was an issue,” Hashem said to Hossenlopp and Lynch.

“Education is still important. It’ll take us one step forward.”

“The library will be an important step to move education forward,” he added.

A community library would be a step forward for the people of the Rashid district, agreed Lynch, who said that he hopes to stand up community classes at the library.

“It’s a place people can go to use internet and exchange ideas,” said Lynch, who brought examples of a curriculum for a proposed computer class to be taught at the media center.

Yaqoub said that he hopes the GOI will take an active role in the area as a legitimate elected government providing services such as the library for the citizens of Rashid.

Serving the needs of the Iraqi people is a huge responsibility, said Hashem, whose many duties include addressing the needs of the citizens of Rashid.

“We need advanced hospitals,” Hashem said. “We need services that will help to improve our environment.”

The DC leaders are working several projects through the Iraqi Ministry of Labor to obtain funding through the Amanat, Baghdad’s center for administration of public services under the capital’s mayor, explained Yaqoub.

The projects will be approved through the DC and submitted to a committee to push through the ministries for approval and funding, he said.

The 1st BCT leaders departed the Rashid DC Hall after congratulating the civil leaders one more time.

“I congratulate Mr. Yaqoub and Mr. Hashem for victory in today’s election,” said Hossenlopp, who hails from Cincinnati. “I am proud to serve with you. You have made a big difference in Rashid.”

600+ Sol arrive for IP training



U.S. Army photo by Lt. Col. Michael Indovina, 18th MP Bde. PAO

A Sons of Iraq leader (right) explains the registration and in-processing procedures to one of the Sols from Taji as more than 600 Sols arrived at the Al Furat Iraqi Police Training Center Oct. 29. More than 1,300 Sols are expected to begin a four-week basic police recruit training course that will teach focus on policing skills as the Sols are integrated into the Iraqi Police Force.

By Lt. Col. Michael Indovina
18th MP Bde. PAO

BAGHDAD – More than 600 Sons of Iraq began in-processing Oct. 29 at the Al Furat Iraqi Police Training Center.

As Sons of Iraq begin the transition into Iraqi Security Forces, these Sols are officially signed in as Iraqi Police recruits and will begin a four-week basic recruit training course, which will result in the Sols becoming Shurta.

The class registration will continue through the upcoming days and is expected to register and accept approximately 1,300 Sol to the course.

Throughout the four-week basic recruit training, which is conducted at the Al Furat Iraqi Police Training Center, the Sols will be trained in basic police skills as they prepare to become certified Shurta.

As the Sols were in-processing, several local council members and assistants to the some of the tribal Sheiks assisted in making sure the Sol were ready to attend the in-processing and training.

An Sol leader from the Karadah District was also in attendance and provided valuable assistance during the in-processing tasks.

“I came today to ensure my representative (Sols) were in the right place as they get ready to start training, said Mr. Salon Hason. “I work with the Coalition Forces in my District as a Sol facilitator and am very happy for the Sols

that will be starting official IP training.”

In the first several days of the class at the Furat IP Training Center, the Sol members will be provided an orientation on how the Iraqi Police organization in Baghdad functions.

The recruits will also be instructed and trained on basic marksmanship techniques, arrest tactics, to include how to conduct proper checkpoint operations, search of vehicles and personnel, as well as Rule of Law background, human rights training and community policing techniques.

“I am very excited to be included in this training and ready to train,” said Abdlah Jaseon, a new recruit and Sol from the Taji Province. “It has been very organized today, but I am ready to start training.”

The Sol program was organized by Coalition Forces in recent years, but the Iraqi Government program assumed responsibility over the Sol program Oct. 1 in order to integrate the Sols into the ISF.

The Sol program has been very successful. Sol members paid a heavy price as they assisted Coalition Forces in defeating the terrorists. The integration of the Sols into the Iraqi Police force demonstrates a positive commitment of reconciliation to the SOIs by the Iraqi Government.

Once the introduction and administration events are completed, the four-week training program will officially begin on Nov. 3.

With move to Fort Carson looming, taking care of Soldiers, Families high priority for Ironhorse leaders

(Continued from Pg. 1)

News of the coming move caused a string of concerns from Soldiers and their Families, with most of those questions having been asked and sufficiently answered until recently, when many who thought the issue was settled discovered that it was not.

“About two weeks ago, Human Resources Command went in and basically said if you hadn’t reenlisted to go somewhere else, if you are not (separating from the service) or retiring, then you have an assignment eligibility code of six, which means that you’re tagged to move north with the Fort Carson move,” said McGregor.

This caused some increased angst for some service members and their loved ones because some Families that had anticipated staying with Fort Hood now find themselves preparing to move to Fort Carson, Colo., said McGregor.

“The angst comes from the fact that it’s not their expectation, which was that they would get to go on and do something else,” he said.

As soon as HRC finalizes the assignments for all Ironhorse Soldiers and leaders at its level, the division then will be able to step in and make case-by-case exceptions based on parameters the division command group is in the process of establishing.

“As a command, how do you determine the parameters for allowing who to move and who not to move?” said Command Sgt. Maj. John Gioia, a native of Buffalo, N.Y., who is the senior enlisted leader of 4th Inf. Div. and MND-B. “That’s the work we have ahead of us right now as the division command leadership. We will probably set some parameters in terms of Army Married Couples Program being first and of course high-demand assignments, such as recruiter, drill sergeant, and those that will help to better the institutional Army to prepare the war fighter to go back to the fight.”

Gioia said the division policy all along has been to ensure that Families with children still in school would be afforded the opportunity to finish out the school year before moving to Fort Carson.

The division leadership has acted quickly to ensure the many questions on the minds of service members are answered and that the concerns of Soldiers and their Families raise regarding the move are directly addressed.

“We have had a kind of an information campaign going on since about May,” said McGregor.

The most frequently asked questions posed by Soldiers and Families were gathered through monthly town hall meetings, emails and other means. A FAQ page was created on the 4th Inf. Div. Web site and a direct link was put on the left-hand side

of the division’s homepage for anyone to access, he said.

In addition to the FAQ page, which will continue to be updated as new questions arise and answers are provided, there is also a planned telephone hotline for Soldiers and Families to call for answers. The number to the hotline will be passed along through the proper channels as soon as it is up and running.

“We will have a hotline back at Fort Hood where our Families and Soldiers can call with a question that is not answered on one of the FAQ sheets, and we will get back to them with the answer in a reasonable amount of time,” said McGregor.

Even with all the proper answers to the questions and concerns regarding the division’s future move to Colorado, uprooting a Family from the place they call home is never an easy thing to do.

“Any time that an Army Family has to pick up and move, there’s a certain amount of angst that goes with it,” said Gioia. “This is not something that’s going to be easy, and it’s not going to be something people are going to embrace and be overjoyed about. But, at the end of the day, I’m confident that when the division moves to Fort Carson, the Soldiers and Families will be taken care of no differently than they are at Fort Hood.”

Gioia went on to express his, and the division’s, commitment to the Ivy Division Families.

“When we reenlist a Soldier, we not only reenlist a Soldier, but we also retain a Family,” said Gioia.

The division motto – Mission, Soldier, Family, Team – is a creed that Soldiers and leaders of 4th Inf. Div. have taken to heart during this long tour and are words that will continue to serve them well as they move into the future. Whether a Soldier and his or her Family are granted their wish as it pertains to the future move to Fort Carson or not, they can be assured that the Ironhorse Division will certainly accomplish the mission of relocation to Colorado and, at the same time, will continue to take care of its Soldiers, Families, and the entire Ivy Division team.



The 4th Infantry Division home page contains a link to the frequently asked questions page regarding the coming relocation of the division to Fort Carson, Colo. The link can be found on the left-hand side of the page and takes viewers to a multiple-page list of questions that have been asked about the move by Soldiers and their Families. For more information, check out the 4th Infantry Division homepage: <http://www.hood.army.mil/4id/index.html>.



2nd BCT, 101st Abn. Div.



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

Capt. Daniel Hickey poses for a quick picture with Iraqi school boys during the opening ceremony of the Ibon Khaldon Elementary School in the northwest Baghdad neighborhood of Kahdra Oct. 20.

In former al-Qaeda stronghold, life beginning to return to normal

By Staff Sgt. James Hunter

2nd BCT PAO, 101st Abn. Div.

BAGHDAD – It couldn't have been more than a year ago when al-Qaeda in Iraq controlled the northwestern Baghdad neighborhood of Kahdra.

The area seemed to be under constant enemy fire, with the threat of a suicide bomber or improvised-explosive device waiting around the next corner.

The threats were there. The enemy was evidently looking to create as much havoc as possible, and those who were taking the biggest loss were the innocent Iraqi people. The infrastructure was damaged; the streets were cluttered with trash, and people stayed locked within their homes because of their fear of the unknown.

However, many things have changed within northwest Baghdad, especially the neighborhood of Kahdra, where the streets seem to be much cleaner and filled with many Iraqi people moving about from shop to shop. The people seem happier – and no more do they remain undisclosed.

“Kahdra is honestly really safe right now. Kahdra a year ago was probably one of the worst neighborhoods in (northwest) Baghdad,” said Capt. Daniel Hickey, commander, Troop A, 4th Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, operationally attached to the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), Multi-National Division – Baghdad.

With the security situation stable, it opened the door for opportunities not afforded to the area and its people in quite some time. Though many would like to see the electricity problems or sewage problems dealt with, Hickey said taking

care of the schools within his area of operations was his main objective.

The Ibon Khaldon Elementary School, which educates nearly 500 students, reopened its doors during a ceremony in Kahdra Oct. 20.

The school, which was initially assessed in April 2008, was in bad shape prior to the refurbishment process.

The electricity was shot, many of the windows were damaged, the floors and tiles were coming loose and, worst of all, the plumbing within the bathrooms was backing up, which could have led to some serious health issues as the toilets began overflowing and spilling onto floors.

Through a lot of hard work, the school opened its doors to a wave of screaming, smiling children, who have always been eager to learn because even when times were hard, these children still found their way to the classroom.

Though the education system in Iraq needs further development, said Hickey, having a place for these children to learn and educate themselves is key – especially with a country continually growing and rebuilding daily.

Amera Abed Alli, the school's principal, was extremely happy during the day's events as she witnessed her school reopen its doors to the many children and teachers who have fought through so much to keep the spirit of education alive and well within Kahdra.

Alli said there is still much to be done within her school and the surrounding neighborhood but having survived the worse of times and still come out on top is all that matters as long as her teachers have a place to teach the future engineers, politicians and soldiers of this country.

Captive school free again in Ameriyah

By Dan Martin Jr.

2nd BCT PAO, 101st Abn. Div.

BAGHDAD – More than 13 months following a sting of violence, the face of Ameriyah has changed. With security stable because of the tight grip Coalition Forces have on al-Qaeda in Iraq members, clinics are reopening, shops and markets seem constantly busy and smiling faces light the streets of Baghdad.

During a ceremony Oct. 14, Iraqi Army soldiers and local community leaders gathered at the school with Coalition Forces to celebrate the recent renovations to the school.

What was once a haven for insurgent activity, the school is back to its normal routine of educating the future of Iraq.

Al-Qaeda had a large presence in Ameriyah and had been overrun with criminal groups. To add to the fear of the students, the attacks that had swarmed the area now surrounded their school with some originating from within its walls.

According to reports, gunshots would ring out with bullets striking the southern wall of the school as snipers trained and zeroed in their rifles. Armed men would fire at convoys passing the school. Education had gone to the wayside and the students and faculty had no say in the matter.

“This place was pretty beat up,” said Lt. Col. Monty Willoughby, commander of 4th Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment, attached to the 2nd Brigade Combat Team,

101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), whose unit is responsible for the area.

Now the school has a refreshed appearance and updated interior. New plaster and fresh paint restored the weathered and worn exterior. A new computer lab brings technology to a school which had none in the past. Some of the teachers who fled the violence have returned and new teachers have been hired to fill faculty vacancies.

Omar Farooq, a member of the Ameriyah Neighborhood Advisory Council, was present at the ceremony.

“We thank the Coalition Forces for helping fix the school,” he said, acknowledging the work done to the school, which was done by Iraqi workers.

IA soldiers, local firefighters quickly react to market fire

By 1st Lt. Christopher Taylor

Co. B, 1st Bn., 502nd Inf. Regt., 2nd BCT, 101st Abn. Div.

BAGHDAD – As smoke billowed from what looked to be the Saha Market in the northwest Baghdad neighborhood of Shulla Sept. 30, the Soldiers at Joint Security Station Shulla began receiving reports from other Coalition Forces moving through the area and phone calls from nearby Iraqis in regards to the fire.

Preliminary reports from sources confirmed that the Saha Market was on fire. This market is vital to the economic growth and stability in Shulla.

Capt. Jeremy Ussery, commander of Company B, 1st Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, made the decision to launch a dismounted patrol to the site of the fire to assist in whatever way possible.

The dismounted patrol continued to see large amounts of smoke as they approached the scene.

“As we moved closer to the smoke it became evident that the Saha Market was, in fact, the source of the fire,” said 1st Lt. Nicholas Stout, with 1st Platoon, Co. B. “Given the amount of smoke that continued to billow from the market, it was obvious that this would be a significant emotional event for the people that work and live day-to-day out of the market.”

Upon arriving on the scene, Ussery was faced with a problem he did not foresee.

There was nothing for them to do, Ussery said. The area was swarming with firefighters and Iraqi Army Soldiers with the 2nd Battalion, 22nd Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division, had already responded in full force.

“This specific situation is a prime example of how far the Iraqi Army and essential services have flourished during our tenure in Shulla.”

The Iraqi Army battalion operating in Shulla has increased its proficiency since they took over the area.

“Each and every day, we edge closer and closer to becoming hands off and allowing the Iraqi Army to conduct operations on their own,” said 1st Sgt. Richard Skidis. “This is my third deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and this is the first time I can honestly say the Iraqi Army is ready to take the reigns and lead from the front. Coalition Forces can take a back seat and provide minimal assistance (to the Iraqi Army) when needed.”

Michael Morgan, a civilian contractor working side-by-side with Coalition Forces on a human terrain team, has been to many war stricken countries and is an expert on Iraqi essential services and is currently conducting an anthropological study of Iraqi culture.

Morgan's study brought him to Shulla on the day of the fire in time to experience their emergency services first hand.

“The fire department was quick to respond, efficient and the firemen appeared to be very dedicated to their work,” he said. “I did not witness any hesitation in their efforts to put out the fire.”

He was impressed with the professionalism and technical proficiency displayed by the fire department and Iraqi Army.

As if the fire emergency services had not already achieved a great victory in the eyes of the populace, they took it one step further. The firemen began recording the names and contact information for each shop owner that was affected by the fire.

In the past Coalition Forces would have to act as a catalyst to recover from a disaster like this.

“It is great to see such initiative being taken for the sole purpose of serving the Iraqi people,” boasted Stout. “I would compare this to a child finally removing their training wheels on their first bike. Shulla is on track for great success.”

The foresight of the emergency personnel to record contact information for each affected individual led to a very simple and organized micro-grant process.

The IA used one of the shops that were still standing as a staging area to fill out the micro-grant applications.

The 68 shop owners were organized, by the firemen and Iraqi Army, into a line and waited their turn to apply for a micro-grant.

3rd BCT, 4th Inf. Div.



Al Tajadud school reopens in Adhamiyah

By 2nd Lt. Josh Woodke

3rd BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div.

BAGHDAD – Rebuilding schools is a top priority for Multi-National Division – Baghdad to eliminate terrorist and criminal activities and set the condition for a brighter future for Iraqi youth.

Al Tajadud school in the Adhamiyah district of Baghdad reopened Oct. 26 after undergoing a two month long renovation. With \$220,000 from the Government of Iraq, the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, facilitated the rebuilding of this important infrastructure.

“There have been some challenges to get schools funded and rebuilt here in Iraq,” said Capt. Patrick Soule, a native of Poth, Texas, and commander for Company D, 2nd Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment, 10th Mountain Division, currently attached to 1st Combined Arms Battalion, 68th Armor Regiment.

Soule said the school is a two-session school, each one having their own name. The morning session is Al Tajadud School, which is a boys and girls elementary school. The afternoon session is called Al Abda School, which is an all-girls junior high school.

The school, built in the 1960s, was in desperate need of work after witnessing several years of fierce fighting and its use as a mortar platform by terrorists and criminals.

“The school was in bad shape when it was recommended to us by the local NAC (Neighborhood Action Committee). You could tell it was pretty shot up,” said 1st Lt. Rosita Rodriguez, a native of Morristown, N.J., and team chief of Company C, 404th Civil Affairs Battalion, currently attached to 3rd BCT, 4th Inf. Div.

Rodriguez said the improvements made included new classrooms, new roof and

floor, a completely new electrical network and additional bathrooms with a complete sewer network. The outside was painted tan with a green trim, and a play ground was installed in the courtyard consisting of a basketball court and volleyball net.

The school’s headmaster said the new facility is a complete turn around from less than a year ago confirming that terrorists used to lob mortars from the courtyard of the school.

“It was notorious for finding caches,” Rodriguez said.

The official opening of the school was marked with a ribbon cutting by Omar Rahmani, vice chairman for the Adhamiyah District Advisory Council, followed by a poem in Arabic recited by the boys and girls of the elementary school.

The children clapped in rhythm, welcoming all guests and thanking everyone for their “prettier school.”

The pomp and circumstance continued when a young Iraqi boy stood in front of all the guests and sang a traditional Iraqi song.



U.S. Army photo by 2nd Lt. Josh Woodke, 3rd BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div.

1st Lt. Rosita Rodriguez, from Morristown, N.J., and team chief of Company C, 404th Civil Affairs Battalion, currently attached to 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, enjoys refreshments handed out by a student at Al Tajadud Elementary School opening Oct. 26 in the Adhmaiyah District of Baghdad.

Then Iraqi girls from the junior high school passed out refreshments as a group of students recited lines in English they had learned from their textbooks.

When the ceremony concluded, Soule, Rodriguez and Rahmani handed out backpacks to a line of eager children.

Rodriguez was happy with the turn out and the importance this school opening has had on the people.

“It impacted the children and the community. They are very grateful for this school,” Rodriguez said.

Soule said he believes education is the cornerstone that will help rebuild Iraq and give the Iraqi people confidence in their government and the local leaders.

“It’s a good step forward,” Soule said, “putting money back into the schools and investing in future generations”

IA engineers graduate 1st ‘Iron Claw’ class

By Sgt. Jerry Saslav

3rd BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div.

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – Approximately 40 Iraqi Army engineers from the 11th IA Division graduated from the Iron Claw Academy at Camp Taji Oct. 17. The Iron Claw Academy, run by Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers from Company A, 40th Engineer Battalion, taught the Iraqis the basics of route clearance.

“Our job is going to be looking for IEDs and work on them without any damage or injuries,” said Iraqi Capt. Mamood Jabir, platoon leader, Route Clearance Platoon, 11th Field Engineer Regiment, 11th Iraqi Army Infantry Division.

The mission of the MND-B engineers at the Iron Claw Academy is to share their skill and techniques with IA engineers at clearing critical routes of improvised-explosive devices and other hazards that criminals and terrorist use to attack Iraqi Security and Coalition Forces and to incite fear and intimidation in the Iraqi people.

“All of the jundi’s (Iraqi enlisted soldiers) have been grasping on to the individual and crew drills that we’ve been trying to teach them; the leaders are actually participating in the leading,” said 1st Sgt. Brian Schoonover, Co. A, 40th Eng. Bn., attached to the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division.

The course consists of both classroom work and hands on training. The Iraqi’s are taught battle drills, how to look for and recognize IED’s and what to do when they think they’ve encountered one, methods of structuring their route-clearing convoys and how to keep the public safe from IEDs. The final test is clearing a simulated route riddled with simulated IEDs.



U.S. Army photo provided by Co. A, 40th Eng. Bn.

“There was nobody training the soldiers before. This training makes my soldiers very professional,” said Iraqi Lt. Col. Hatem Hameed Jahwy, commander of the 11th Field Eng. Regt.

Schoonover said 100 percent of the Iraqis passed their final test.

“It is very good that we have everything now that we have the Coalition forces team over here teaching us how to work on it,” said Jabir.

While the Iraqis still need equipment that the United States would consider standard, they recently acquired their own mine resistant armored protection vehicle equipped with an interrogator arm capable of reaching out and inspecting suspected IEDs from a safe distance.

“A lot of officers and jundi got killed because we did not have that much equipment or technology. It makes a lot of

difference today,” said Jabir.

Previously, without the new equipment, the Iraqi Army would have to send out a soldier to investigate and potentially disarm an IED. Schooner said that is simply too dangerous.

“The very last thing we do is send a Soldier on the ground,” Schooner said.

“The last thing is going to be that,” added Jabir.

The training was intensive, but the Iraqis were very eager students.

“They’re going through the drills ... their telling us, ‘hey, this is the next thing we would do, this is the next step.’ They’re grasping everything very well,” Schoonover said.

The graduation ceremony itself was short, a few words from each command’s respective leaders culminating with each of the graduates being recognized and receiving their certificate of completion.



2nd BCT, 25th Inf. Div.

'VISION OF HOPE'

Tarmiyah leaders, residents pave road ahead

By Ken Griffin

2nd SBCT PAO, 25th Inf. Div.

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – Residents of Tarmiyah, a small city on the Tigris River northwest of Baghdad, stood tall with smiles on their faces Oct. 22 as they spoke words of hope and reconciliation; according to those gathered, the date was yet another dramatic turning point in their recent history.

Led by Sheik Sa'ed Jassim al-Mashadani, chairman of the Municipality Committee of al Tarmiyah Qada, Tarmiyah's local officials hosted a number of provincial and Government of Iraq representatives at their first Civic Expo.

City residents hope to accomplish a number of tasks in the future, and they chose a unique, effective way to accomplish their goals, such as bringing Government of Iraq officials to them so they could show, first-hand, the economic and political progress

they've made in the area.

"Two years ago, an event like this would not have been possible," said Capt. Calvin Kline, a native of Cincinnati, who serves as an information operations officer with 1st Battalion, 14th Infantry Regiment "Golden Dragons," 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team "Warrior," 25th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad. "Even one year ago, the security situation would not have allowed it."

Kline, who played a key role in supporting Tarmiyah's planning for the event, should know. He's witnessed the gradual transformation of Tarmiyah from one of the "worst places in Iraq" to the booming economic center it is today.

Soldiers from 1st Bn., 14th Inf. Regt., shared the brunt of the work with residents to get the city where it is. During the past year, they've seen their role in the area shift

after effectively training Iraqi Security Forces in the area and witnessing the Sons of Iraq (Abna al-Iraq) stand up for their security. They now serve more as advisors in an over-watch position with Iraqis responsible for their own security.

This is also true of the construction there. The majority of reconstruction funds in Tarmiyah come from the GoI. As such, Iraqis are now planning and supervising their own projects in coordination with the GoI, explained Kline. Local officials recognize the Soldiers' role in reconstruction but are anxious to continue on their own.

"I want this information to reach others," said Sheik Qassim Khalifa, vice president of the Tarmiyah Qada Council. "Most of the armies around the world are used for destruction. The mission of the American Army is to construct, not destruct."

As politicians and citizens spoke of progress inside the event, ISF, SoI and Coalition Forces representatives spoke of security outside. Soldiers supported the ISF and SoI guards as they secured the city. The two-day event was a coup against extremism. Despite being an inviting target for extremists and anti-Iraqi forces, everyone arrived and conducted business peacefully.

When the event kicked off, sheiks from the surrounding areas poured into Bukhari Hall, followed by government officials from Baghdad and their representatives.

Inside the packed hall, city officials and their guests talked about the display they'd worked all night to construct. There were presentations highlighting their struggles against the extremists, construction, industrial progress and more.

"Today we'll show you all of our accomplishments," Sheik Jassim announced.

"We'll show you the huge burden and suffering we went through. With

our Sons of Iraq efforts, we were able to defeat terrorists."

The sheik may be one of Tarmiyah's best examples of the blood and sweat residents have put into securing the city. He's lost two sons to terrorism, and his eldest son was wounded by a suicide bomber.

"We have a large number of martyrs," he continued. "All Iraqi Security Forces in the area, they put their hands together with our Sons of Iraq – we're not going to encounter any obstacles that will keep us from achieving these goals."

Among other things, Tarmiyah Qada representatives proudly displayed how packed their market is now. Not too long ago, there were only a few shops open. Currently there are no empty shops along Tarmiyah's main drag. Industry is booming in the Tarmiyah area as well, and local companies advertised their services – some even showing videos on computer screens for visitors.

Toward the end of the event, it seemed Baghdad politicians were getting the message and sharing Tarmiyah's enthusiasm.

"We should all help each other and cooperate to rebuild our lovely Iraq," said Maji al-Sudani, representing the Baghdad Provincial Government. "(The people of Tarmiyah) are generous. They are honorable."

As the expo wrapped up, attendees flooded Tarmiyah's main street and witnessed another great event: the grand opening of the Tarmiyah Media Center. Local residents were now broadcasting on the radio, continuing to produce their own newspaper and have the capability to broadcast television.

The overall message of the expo and opening of the media center was unity, said to Lt. Col. Tom Boccardi, a native of Colorado Springs, Colo., the Golden Dragon commander.

"Not only did it bring together the Sons of Iraq, Iraqi Police and Iraqi Army – it also brought the local government together with the tribes and Government of Iraq," he said. "Bottom line, they had a vision that I interpret as one of hope."



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Jacob Smith, 2nd SBCT, 25th Inf. Div.

Children hand out copies of Tarmiyah's Amala Laooma newspaper outside the Tarmiyah media center, northwest of Baghdad, Oct. 22.

Gimlets help plan to rebuild 1 of Aqur Quf's oldest historical landmarks

By Sgt. Karl Schell

1st Bn. 21st Inf. Regt., 2nd SBCT, 25th Inf. Div.

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – Plans are in the works to help restore one of Aqur Quf's oldest landmarks: the Ziggurat.

The Ziggurat of Aqur Quf, which lies west of Baghdad, is one of the best preserved religious landmarks of its kind in Iraq. It dates back to 1400 B.C. and was built as a monument to the local religion.

Soldiers from Company C, 1st Battalion, 27th Infantry Regiment, attached to 1st Battalion, 21st Infantry Regiment, 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team "Warrior," 25th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, are working in conjunction with the citizens of Iraq and branches of the Government of Iraq to rebuild and repair the site and buildings in an effort to reopen the Ziggurat as a tourist attraction.

Once open, it will offer a promising future of commerce from around the Middle East. The rebuilding alone will offer work for the Iraqi citizens through the rebuilding, and once the rebuilding is complete and open to the public, it will pro-

vide the economy with a steady working environment and a constant flow of tourists, which will provide business to other merchants in Aqur Quf, said Capt. Devon McRaney, native of Dublin, Ohio, and Co. C executive officer.

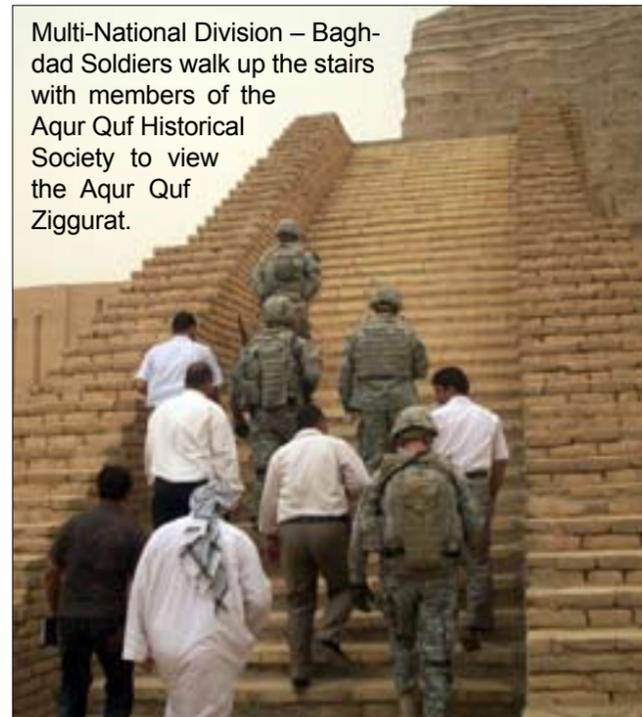
"It feels good to be a part rebuilding important historical sights of Iraq's culture," he said.

The project will begin with the repair to the fence that surrounds the Ziggurat. The next step is to ensure the safety of the historical artifacts, which will be brought back to the site from a holding place in Baghdad. The artifacts are currently held by the Ministry of Ruins until the completion of the repairs.

Once the project is finished the Aqur Quf Ziggurat will be the home to a new restaurant, park and tours guided by historians.

"This will stand as an example that Iraqi security is improving," said Capt. David Uthlaut, a native of Charleston, S.C., and Co. C commander. "If we leave any mark on the people of Iraq, this will be a great one."

Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers walk up the stairs with members of the Aqur Quf Historical Society to view the Aqur Quf Ziggurat.



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Karl Schell, 2nd SBCT, 25th Inf. Div.

4th Combat Avn. Bde. 

Two 'Iron Eagle' NCOs recommended for prestigious Sergeant Audie Murphy Club

By Sgt. Jason Dangel
CAB PAO, 4th Inf. Div.

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – Two noncommissioned officers from the Combat Aviation Brigade, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, were recommended for membership into the U.S. Army's Sergeant Audie Murphy Club after successfully completing a board competition at Camp Taji Oct. 29.

Staff Sgt. David Gomez, air traffic control equipment repairer, Company F, 2nd Battalion, 4th Aviation Regiment, and Sgt. Raphael Ayala, petroleum specialist, Co. E, 3rd Battalion, 4th Avn., Regt., both from San Antonio, achieved the highest scores during the competition.

The two stood out amongst their brothers in arms in hopes of gaining membership into the club that is synonymous with one of the greatest enlisted leaders in U.S. Army history.

"We have produced winners at the division-level boards. We have produced winners at Forces Command level boards. What I have heard in the formation is if you get through a 4th Combat Aviation Brigade board, you can reach the top – and that's the bottom line," said Command Sgt. Maj. Archie Davis, the brigade's senior enlisted Soldier, after announcing the winners of the competition.

"We want the fiber of the NCO Corps and the fiber of the Audie Murphy Club to stay rich and solid as part of our tradition and heritage as noncommissioned officers, and that is what all of you have shown us today," he continued.

Both Gomez and Ayala still have a long road ahead of them as they wait to see if they will be

admitted into the club. The club started at Fort Hood more than 20 years ago.

The board victory only ensures a recommendation to the club. The Soldier's records will be further reviewed by 4th Inf. Div. leadership before any decisions are made.

If Gomez and Ayala are inducted, their names will forever be tantamount with the prestigious club, and they will also receive a Sergeant Audie Murphy Club medallion that can be worn around the neck with the Army dress uniform.

"I have been in the Army for 17 years, and if I were to be inducted into the club, it would pretty much be icing on the cake," said Ayala shortly after being named one of the winners of the competition.

"Just being recommended is an honor within itself," he added, "and it really says a lot about the accomplishments that I have made during my career in the military."

The Sergeant Audie Murphy Club was founded in 1986 and spread Armywide in 1994 in honor of Audie Murphy, the most decorated American war hero during World War II.

During his time in the military, Murphy achieved the rank of staff sergeant as an NCO and was eventually awarded a battlefield commission to second lieutenant and later as a company commander.

It has been said that Murphy received every decoration for valor the United States had to offer at the time. In total, he received 33 U.S. medals, five medals from France and one from Belgium.



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Jason Dangel, CAB PAO, 4th Inf. Div.

Staff Sgt. David Gomez, air traffic control equipment repairer, Company F, 2nd Battalion, 4th Aviation Regiment, Combat Aviation Brigade, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, from San Antonio, makes his opening statements to the brigade command sergeant majors during a Sergeant Audie Murphy board competition at Camp Taji Oct. 29.

TAC-Lite passes first test, receives 'GO' at station

By Staff Sgt. Scott Wolfe
MND-B PAO

BAGHDAD – Brig. Gen. William Grimsley, a native of Charleston, S.C., who serves as a deputy commanding general, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, spoke at the division's weekly battle update assessment from the Tactical Advance Center – Lite, setup on Joint Security Station Nasir Wa Salam Oct. 31.

The TAC-Lite is a portable command information center roughly the size of two connex units that enables the division commander to have all the capabilities of the division Command Information Center at hand wherever the battle may take him.

Capt. James Hoffman, commander of the Extension Detachment, Company C, Division Special Troops Battalion, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B, oversaw the initial setup and operations of the TAC-Lite during its validation the day before its final test in the Battle Update Assessment.

The rain did not stop his people as they met the guidelines required of them.

For the TAC-Lite and setup crew to receive a "GO," it had to be operational and fully mission capable within a window of eight to 12 hours from the time of survey.

In that time frame, the infrastructure for all the division sections and shops would be in place. A member of the opera-



Brig. Gen. William Grimsley, a deputy commanding general, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, talks with the members of the set-up team outside the Tactical Advance Center – Lite, a portable command center that gives the division commander the ability to move freely across the battle space without losing the command and control capabilities provided by a fully manned command information center.

tions section, for instance, would be able to just plug their laptop into the system network at the portable CIC and they could have tactical control of the battlefield at their fingertips.

In keeping with the football theme of the division, Hoffman and the rest of his set-up detail are calling the system the

"Division Road Show" after the NFL program of the same name.

"This allows the CG to go anywhere in the division's battle space and have the CIC with him," said Hoffman. "Due to boundary shifts and mission shifts, the senior mission commander wanted to deploy a TAC with the minimum number of people but the same capabilities anywhere in his area of operations."

Spc. Eric Stout, a native of San Francisco, said that the communications systems connect in pre-fabricated modules through a control unit that can run the radios, networks and secret networks on a single laptop.

The TAC-Lite is a custom system made to specifications and capabilities decided on by the division higher staff and there is no other set-up like it. In July, the team met with the contractor that had created the system and trained with them for a month and a half before moving to division headquarters and spending another 45 days figuring out what specific set-up was needed. Two weeks at Forward Operating Base Constitution to iron out any kinks in the system and then came the test during the BUA.

On the morning of the BUA, Grimsley, called in on the radio from the TAC-Lite on JSS Nasir Wa Salam. Maj. Gen. Jeffrey Hammond, commanding general of the 4th Inf. Div., MND-B, responded that he could hear Grimsley "clear as a bell."

TAC-Lite, you are a "Go" at this station.

MND-B Soldiers help turn abandoned private carnival into public park

(Continued from Pg. 1)

to the local neighborhood council Oct. 28.

"This is our first park in Qahira. We never had one before," said Mohamed Madaloom, the Qahira Neighborhood Assistance Council chairman.

The park has a small pond with a generator-run fountain with a flock of geese as well as benches, solar lights, several swings, slides and seesaws. There is also a tiled path lined with flowers and new grass has been planted. A gardener and a security guard, he added, will be hired.

The park is intended to be self-sufficient, and seven small kiosks will be rented to vendors. The rent will provide an income stream to buy fuel for the generator, pay the salaries of the staff and any other expenses.

"Everybody admires the park. I know the families are so excited to get here," said Madaloom, who, along with fellow local officials and Coalition Forces leaders, gathered for the official hand over. Iraqi officials and Col. Hort raised the Iraqi flag to symbolize the opening of the park as doves were released. Some families and their children couldn't wait – they were already on the rides.

"I'm so pleased; our kids aren't able to go many places because of the security situation. I am so pleased that we have such a park in our neighborhood," said Aum Achmed, who was there with her daughter and a niece. "It's important for every kid to have a place to go to."

"It's good. It used to be awful before. I wouldn't even look at it before," said Mostfa, a 3-year-old Iraqi child, before running off to a nearby slide.

Two local Iraqi girls try out a slide at the grand opening of Dover Park in the Qahira neighborhood in the Adhamiyah District of Baghdad Oct. 28. The park is the first public park in the neighborhood. It has a small pond with a generator-run fountain, benches, solar lights, several swings, slides and seesaws. There is also a tiled path lined with flowers and new grass has been planted. The park is intended to be self-sufficient, and seven small kiosks will be rented to vendors. The rent will provide an income stream to buy fuel for the generator, pay the salaries of the staff and any other expenses.



Col. John Hort, commander of the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, helps local officials raise the Iraqi flag at the grand opening of Dover Park in the Qahira neighborhood in the Adhamiyah District of Baghdad Oct. 28.



◀ 1st Lt. Rosita Rodriguez, a civil affairs team chief with Company C, 404th Civil Affairs Battalion, attached to 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, pushes two local Iraqi children on a ride at the grand opening of Dover Park in the Qahira neighborhood in the Adhamiyah District of Baghdad Oct. 28.



▶ A father pushes his son on a swing as other local children ride on a nearby swing at the grand opening of Dover Park in the Qahira neighborhood in the Adhamiyah District of Baghdad Oct. 28.

Day in the life ...

From Marshall Islands to Iraq, Strike Soldier works hard to accomplish mission

By Staff Sgt. James Hunter
2nd BCT PAO, 101st Abn. Div.

BAGHDAD – Imagine lying on a beach covered with white sand and lined with gorgeous coral reefs beneath the most pristine ocean water in the Marshall Islands in Micronesia. Spc. Terrence Muller knew that life all too well while growing up on this island, which consists of 27 flat-laying atolls and three islands scattered across the region in the Pacific Ocean.

Muller, who loved the tropical humidity, enjoyed watching the coconut trees sway to and fro with wind in his hometown of Majuro Atoll, the capital city. He often found himself fishing with his father, diving with his friends, sailing canoes or just simply catching a breeze and watching the waves smack the shore of the beach.

“Growing up by the ocean created an addiction for me,” Muller said.

He remembers surfing on plywood he and his friends pried off old homes. When he wasn’t on the beaches surfing or soaking in the weather, he could be found playing basketball, baseball or tennis table with his friends. He always looked to have a good time.

Life wasn’t always a “day at the beach” though. His family struggled and didn’t have much money as they lived in a shack by the ocean side. In his words, “life was a struggle for me.”

He once saw his buddy’s father nearly die while fishing in the ocean. His friend’s father was struggling with a catch and was hit by a shark.

“His arm was tore up,” said Muller. “If we hadn’t helped him to shore, he might have been a goner.”

No matter how tough life was for Muller, he knew he had options and wanted to succeed in life and give his future children the things he never could have possibly enjoyed.

He learned from his father, who has been the biggest influence in his life.

He struggled hard so that I may be where I am today, and I’m trying to turn the tides now,” Muller said.

When Muller graduated from high school, it almost seemed like a dead end for him. He couldn’t find a job and couldn’t afford college.

“I was pretty much a bum and a dead weight on my parent’s shoulders, which was my inspiration in finding the fastest way out of the house and making something of myself,” Muller said. “I couldn’t stand being a burden on my parents anymore, so the recruiter came along and offered me a job.”

Muller soon raised his right hand and was “on my way out to the world with nothing but the pack on my back and my flip flops,” he said.

“Prior to coming in, I saw the U.S. as the land of opportunity,” Muller added.

Muller soon found himself serving as a paralegal. Though he had no experience or knowl-

edge of the field, he came to find this decision a great one.

He now serves with the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), in the paralegal office deployed to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

“Since we’ve been deployed, I’ve been working military justice – Article 15s, chapters and courts-martial,” Muller said. “I’ve also had hands on experience with legal assistance and the Foreign Claims operation. You have to be pretty versatile to be effective in this job. All and all, my experience has been interesting – good times!”

One thing Muller has learned from this deployment is that the experience one gains from it is what they make of it. He has gained great knowledge on the Iraqi culture and learned more about his job than he thought he ever could.

“Spc. Muller is an asset to the Strike legal office,” said Sgt. 1st Class Christopher Hess, a native of Lancaster, Ohio, who serves as Muller’s senior NCO.

“He’s a self-starter who is quite capable of accomplishing the mission with or without supervision and with or without prompting.”



U.S. Army photo courtesy of 2nd BCT, 101st Abn. Div.

Spc. Terrence Muller, a native of the Marshall Islands in Micronesia, makes a phone call while working on a variety of legal issues. Muller, who serves with the legal office of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), has come far from the islands in the Pacific Ocean to a life as a Soldier in the U.S. Army.

Hess said he believes Muller is a Soldier he can count on to get the job done and get it right the first time around.

“During this deployment, he has been an absolute workhorse,” said Hess. “Nearly all of the UCMJ actions processed through our office were completed by Spc. Muller. He was also involved in our claims missions and in the processing of investigations under AR 15-6. Spc. Muller is the kind of Soldier that I want to have working for me in any section of any legal office.”

Muller said he plans to continue his service to the United States and plans to reenlist and take his career to Europe. He plans on continuing his pursuit of gaining a degree in criminal justice as well.

Over the next few years, life will continue to unfold for Muller. Soon he will return home to Fort Campbell to spend time with his wife, who he has known since his high school days and married just before the brigade’s deployment in October.

“This beauty helped in shaping my life too,” Muller said. “She always encourages me to do my best and is always supportive when it comes to me making decisions.”

Besides returning home safely to his bride and Family, Muller also accomplished another major milestone in his life during the deployment.

Muller, along with many other Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers, gained his American citizenship Sept. 1.

“Another checkmark next to my list of future accomplishments,” Muller said, “but I already felt like an American the moment I raised my right hand and swore to take arms and serve this great nation of ours.”



U.S. Army photo courtesy of 2nd BCT, 101st Abn. Div.

Spc. Terrence Muller, a native of the Marshall Islands in Micronesia, poses for a photo with Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers from the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division’s legal office Sept. 1.

Women on the battlefield

CAB Soldiers continue tradition

By Sgt. 1st Class Brent Hunt

CAB PAO, 4th Inf. Div.

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – For more than 230 years, American Soldiers have answered the nation's call to serve and defend the nation.

Throughout the U.S. Army's storied history, men have traditionally served as the force on the frontlines while women supported their endeavors behind the scenes.

In 1941, with the U.S. facing a two-front war, a ground-breaking transition occurred that would forever change women's role on the battlefield.

The Women's Army Corps, disbanded 30 years ago, opened doors for many serving on today's battlefield.

"The Women's Army Corps forged for me the ability to be a pilot in a war zone," said Capt. Erin Braswell, aero medical pilot, Company C, 2nd Battalion, 4th Aviation Regiment, Combat Aviation Brigade, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, who hails from Houston. "I believe we will continue to have women pave the way.

"Obviously though, there are still jobs we as women can't do," she said, sitting on the Camp Taji flight line next to the air ambulance helicopter she spent all night flying around the Baghdad area. "Being a female in the military, you have to show you are strong and you have to be a leader."

Women have made great strides in the military, throughout history, while serving the nation. During World War II, more than 150,000 women served in the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps. The WAAC was the precursor organization for the WAC. Members of the WAAC were the first women, other than nurses, to serve in the ranks of the Army.

Established in 1941 after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, the Army expressed a need for women to perform duties to "free a man for combat" while serving in noncombatant military roles. The WAAC was established to work with the Army for supporting a country engaged in the war effort.

During the WAACs existence, women performed duties such as aerial photograph analysts, control tower operators, maintenance specialists and radio operators.

WAACs members served during World War II, in the Middle East, Burma, India, the Southwest Pacific, China, Europe, the Mediterranean and North Africa, but were never considered in the Army – they worked with the Army. Some women were even instrumental in the planning of D-Day.

After World War II had ended, the U.S. Army asked Congress for the authority to establish a WAC as a permanent part of the U.S. Army. When the bill passed, the WAC became a separate corps allowing women officers the opportunity to obtain the rank of colonel and enlisted Soldiers to ability to earn the ranks of corporal through master sergeant, which was not previously available to women.

As part of the WAC, women continued to serve in the corps until the Army abolished the WACs existence in 1978. After the WAC was abolished, women were fully assimilated into all the branches of the Army.

Today, women serve in many roles in the military to include pilots, doctors, lawyers and commanders.

"It was instilled to me at a young age that serving was something I had to do," said Capt. Jennifer Miles, commander of Headquarters Support Company, 2nd Bn., 4th Avn. Regt. "What I love about the Army is the camaraderie. Taking command of a company is one of the things I am most proud of during my military career.

"I like having Soldiers thank me for something I did, but all I did was empower them to accomplish a goal," said Miles, who is a self-proclaimed Army brat as her father is a retired sergeant first class from the Army. "It's a good feeling when you accomplish something.

"What the WAC did for us was get our foot in the door," she added. "It is not easy spending 365 days away from the United States, but I would much rather be doing this than working in a cubicle in an office somewhere. For me, commanding a company in a warzone wouldn't have been possible if it wasn't for the women who were part of the WAC."



Capt. Erin Braswell, aero medical pilot, Company C, 2nd Battalion, 4th Aviation Regiment, Combat Aviation Brigade, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, who hails from Houston, prepares to take off on a medical evacuation mission from Camp Taji Oct. 27. Braswell is one of the many women who serve on today's modern battlefield.

Miles is just one example of how the role of women in the military has changed. Before the WAC was disbanded, women were not allowed to command men. Today, thousands of men are commanded by women.

Although women can command, they are still not allowed to be in such fields as the Infantry or Artillery Corps. With some seeing this as a stumbling block, many women do not because they are actively engaged in combat operations.

"I had an enemy troop engagement during the CABs deployment to Iraq in 2006, where the enemy was right out in the open, which was a dream come true," said Chief Warrant Officer 2 Nicole Shuman, Apache attack helicopter pilot from Pittsburgh. "This is a great job. Not a lot of women get to fly and especially in a combat role. It feels good supporting the troops on the ground.

"For anyone thinking about joining the Army, this is the greatest job ever," said Shuman, who credits her father, a former Marine, for her initial interest and now career as a combat pilot. "I get to fly for free. I don't have to pay for gas, and I get to blow stuff up."

As many women serving today are seeing more and more combat, some Soldiers have made it their goal to be on the battlefield.

"It has always been my goal to be a flight medic," said Staff Sgt. Christina Martinez, Co. C, 2nd Bn. 4th Avn. Regt., also known in the company as the "mission-magnet.

"One of the highlights of my career was when I was part of the crew who rescued four Iraqi policemen on top of a burning building just outside Sadr City. It was dangerous because we were hovering above a burning building while pulling in



Chief Warrant Officer 2 Nicole Shuman, Apache attack helicopter pilot, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Combat Aviation Brigade, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, who hails from Pittsburgh, talks with a fellow crew member before taking off on a reconnaissance patrol from Camp Taji Oct. 27. Shuman is actively engaged in the Global War on Terrorism as an attack helicopter pilot.

the policemen. We saved their lives, and I'm really proud of that."

When a medical evacuation crew from Co. C pulled Iraqi policemen from a burning building rooftop July 18, Martinez was the flight medic on board and administered first aid to them as they were transported to a combat support hospital.

For her heroic actions, Martinez was awarded the Air Medal with Valor for saving their lives.

"I wouldn't have been able to rescue those policemen if it wasn't for the WAC," said Martinez. "Sometimes it is tougher for me as a woman because I feel I have to work twice as hard. The WAC really opened doors for this next generation. I'm sure we are opening doors now for the next generation of women who will serve."

In difficult times, Ironhorse warriors don't need to

'Let it be'

By Spc. Douglas York
MND-B PAO

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq –

Life offers many opportunities to utter idioms or old sayings, which helps people cope with or understand the various circumstances and situations they find themselves in. Soldiers are no different.

Aside from the usual military jargon, a common phrase among Soldiers goes something to the effect: "Spend a day in my shoes and then you'll really have something to complain about."

Thankfully there are people within the Army, the 4th Infantry Division and Multi-National Division – Baghdad, who not only care enough about those "shoes," but also care enough to walk with the Soldiers in them. These folks step outside their own lives and walk down the paths of other troops and talk with them about how to mentally deal with what happens along the way.

"Home-front issues, that's the number-one problem we're seeing in theater," said Spc. Jon Miles, a native of Olympia, Wash., who serves as a mental health specialist with 98th Medical Detachment, Combat Stress Control, assigned to aid the Soldiers of MND-B. "It is an 'equal opportunity' (issue), and it doesn't matter how long you've been in," he added, while addressing Soldiers of Company D, 1st Battalion, 114th Infantry Regiment, New Jersey Army National Guard, at a recent Warrior Resiliency Training class offered on Camp Liberty.

Miles is one of many mental health specialists currently serving in the Iraq theater of operations. He falls directly under the tutelage and guidance of many seasoned veterans in the field, most notably Maj. Thomas Jarrett, a native of Jonesboro, Tenn., Prevention Team leader, 98th Med. Det., CSC, which, in-turn, falls under the umbrella of 4th Inf. Div. and MND-B.

"We serve 4th Inf. Div. and all of the units on Victory and Liberty," Jarrett said. "Also, 17-18 JSSs, so we spend half of our time going out on missions to train people."

Jarrett, Miles and a host of others are a big part of the Ironhorse Division's and the Army's push to ensure that no Soldier in need of mental help goes untreated. No matter the time or resources, each Soldier seeking help will get it.

"I've never lost a patient, and I've had 14,000 patient hours working with clients," Jarrett said, noting that he's been teaching WRT principles since 2005.

The basic aspect of the approaches that Jarrett and many of his colleagues use involves post traumatic growth and stoicism.

"Stoicism is a mental form of training that's designed to teach you to manage your perceptions of everything you see and to control your emotions," Jarrett said. "They (people in history, such as Roman philosophers) spent 800 years developing it," he added, emphasizing how refined the practice is and how much it compares to the Army's Warrior Ethos.

While Jarrett and the crew he travels with around the MND-B battle space generally rely on stoicism and PTG as their first line of defense against post traumatic stress disorder and the other mental obstacles Soldiers in combat must endure, it is one of many techniques at the disposal of mental health professionals.

"We try to have many methods at our disposal, not just one single approach," said Maj. Christopher Ivany, a native of Harker Heights, Texas, who serves as the division psychiatrist with 4th Inf. Div, MND-B. "Any one provider can take many different approaches to helping a Soldier with a problem – depending on what that Soldier needs," he said.

The stoic principles and principles of resiliency are very important and can help a lot of Soldiers; however, there are other Soldiers who require different methods to help them, he said.

"The important thing is to tailor the approach to what the Soldier needs. There's no one-size-fits-all theory or approach that helps every Soldier," Ivany said. "It's a matter of understanding what's going on with the individual Soldier so we

can help them most effectively," he added.

Regardless of the techniques being used, helping Soldiers cope with mental challenges is exactly what the aforementioned individuals have been doing since they arrived in theater.

"I think Maj. Jarrett was able to bring out the reality aspects of the training," said Capt. Richard Karcher, a native of Tabernacle, N.J., who serves as the commander of Co. D, 1st Bn., 114th Inf. Regt. "Not only was it important for my Soldiers to get this (training) but for my leadership to get this too," he added.

Ivany agreed with Karcher's assessment of his peer's efforts.

"I think Maj. Jarrett's message in those briefs is a very good one, a very positive one that has been, in some degree, incorporated into the combat stress mini-briefs and strategies for several years," Ivany said. "He does a great job pulling those things together and communicating in an easy to use and interesting way that I really think connects with Soldiers," he added.

All involved know that the most important thing is to help the Soldiers and their leaders recognize signs of trouble within their battle buddies and how to act on those signs.

"I think the most important thing for both battle buddies and the first-line leaders who are in close, daily contact with Soldiers, is to know those Soldiers," Ivany said. "Understand what's going on in their lives both at home and in theater because we know that about nine times out of 10, a Soldier who completes suicide here has had, in the previous 30 days, a loss of an intimate relationship," he added.

It is up to a Soldier's leaders and friends to know him or her well enough to care when they are going through a hard time and to ensure that the Soldier gets the appropriate help they need, he said.

One of the biggest obstacles to overcome with regards to mental health lies within the Soldier.

"Something that we fight through in the Army quite a bit is the idea that coming in to seek mental healthcare means that you're weak or that you're admitting a weakness," Ivany said. "In reality, it is in my view, and I think the leaders of this division, a sign of strength that you're able to acknowledge that you are working through an issue and would appreciate the help of someone else to work through that issue.

"It's those with courage that are able to come forward and say 'Yeah, I need help with this issue.'"

Miles taught as much during the recent class with the infantry Soldiers.

"What we're teaching isn't the idea of putting on a pair of rose-colored glasses, looking through and seeing everything perfect," Miles said. "What we are doing is telling you how you can take a step back, take the horse-blinders off, and look at the big picture."

However, all agreed that doing so is easier said than done but were unanimous in saying that Soldiers can overcome their roadblocks with help, with care, and with the knowledge of what to look for in themselves and each other.

Ivany elaborated on what Soldiers can look out for in one another, which can help identify if a friend is under mental duress.

"A clear change in a Soldier's behavior, such as withdrawing from the unit, a change in their daily routine, showing



U.S. Army photo by Spc. Douglas York, MND-B PAO

Maj. Christopher Ivany, a native of Harker Heights, Texas, who serves as the division psychiatrist, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, works at his workstation in the division headquarters Oct. 20. Ivany has been the Ironhorse Division's psychiatrist since July 2007 and is always available to assist Soldiers with mental-health related issues.

up late to work, looking fatigued and tired in the morning, not going to meals with their buddies like they used to or not participating in MWR-type activities that they had with their friends – are all key things," Ivany said. "Certainly any comments about hopelessness or wanting to be dead or things like that should be clear, red flags for buddies and first-line leaders that a Soldier may need help," he added.

In addition to the physical signs, Ivany also pointed out the other behind-the-scenes traumatic events that often signal a Soldier needs help.

"The most common ones here in theater are going through family concerns and issues, marital-relationship problems, workplace conflicts that can be more stressful, and different leadership challenges," Ivany said. "Combat-related stressors are usually easier to identify, such as the loss of a friend or a good buddy to some sort of combat-related incident," he added.

Across the board Ivany, Jarrett and Miles have been successful during their tours in helping MND-B and its subordinate units cope with the day-in-and-day-out grind of a combat zone. In fact, including the more than 8,000 Soldiers Jarrett has seen, either in a large group setting or one on one, have resulted in a 60-70 percent less suicide rate versus the theater average, Jarrett said.

Additionally, they have greatly reduced the number of Soldiers that had to be medically evacuated for mental health reasons by drastically increasing the number of provider to patient contacts by 150-200 percent.

"Our goals all along during this deployment were to make mental healthcare be three things: To be as available to the Soldier as possible; to be effective; and to be free of stigma," Ivany said, recounting the vision which the division's command group asked his section to fulfill. "We've worked through those three issues throughout this whole deployment, so if Soldiers feel like there's care available, they can take advantage of that care without being ridiculed within their unit or even by themselves. And if that care then leads them to a solution, then I feel like we've been successful in what we've tried to do here," he added.

Many people, at one point or another in their lives, may need help in overcoming a traumatic event on some level. One way or another, life's challenges tend to find a way to test our minds and our resiliency.

Thankfully, for the Ironhorse Soldiers and military personnel in general, the idioms regarding whose shoes are the biggest, whose load is the heaviest, and whose burdens are the greatest do not matter because people like Ivany, Jarrett, Miles and others are there to help.



U.S. Army photo by Ray McNulty, 926th Eng. Bde. PAO

First Army instructors who came to Iraq to attend the Iron Claw Academy's Route Clearance Route Recon course, gather for a picture Oct. 2. Fourteen instructors from 1st Army attended an accelerated course at Iron Claw Academy on Route Clearance Route Recon.

Instructors train future trainers at Iron Claw Academy

By Ray McNulty
926th Eng. Bde. PAO

BAGHDAD – Instructors taught future trainers at the Iron Claw Academy recently when a delegation of instructors from 1st Army enrolled in a three-day accelerated Route Clearance and Sanitation course. The 14-member 1st Army delegation was drawn from throughout the United States and arrived at Camp Liberty Oct. 2 after a flight from the States and a brief similar training stop in Kuwait. At Army installations throughout the United States, the 1st Army mobilizes, trains, validates and deploys Reserve units throughout the country.

“When we teach the basics of route clearance and sanitation to units back home, we need up-to-date knowledge of the terrain, operating environment, current improvised explosive devices threat conditions,” said 1st Lt. Ryan Gore, 181st Infantry Brigade, Fort McCoy, Wis., leader of the group.

“That is why the time spent here is so valuable,” 1st Lt. Gore of Albert Lea, Minn., pointed out. “Task Force Iron Claw instructors pass on their knowledge based on what they have experienced in the field.”

“The Iron Claw Academy offers real world experience not available through the 1st Army in the United States,” said Gore.

“Over here at Camp Liberty, we have hands-on training with vehicles not accessible in the United States and purpose-designed for Iraq conditions Mine Resistant Armored Protection vehicles, Buffalos, Hus-

kies and Badgers. And of course, there are armored humvees.”

The three-day Iron Claw Academy course included both classroom work and hands-on training based on route clearance route recon encounters in the field true sapper experience.

Capt. Jimmy Hunt, 926th Engineer Brigade of Chatsworth, Ga., directs the Iron Claw Academy. He said “it is a privilege to pass on lessons learned in the field to 1st Army Soldier instructors who will teach that IED clearance knowledge to teams around the country to some who will come here to Iraq and others who will go to Afghanistan.

Our soldiers teach from their experience clearing routes throughout Multi-National Division – Baghdad.”

The Task Force Iron Claw Academy taught 1st Army instructors the basics of battle drills, how to seek and identify IEDs and what to do when they are encountered.

Methods of structuring route-clearance convoys and how to protect the public from IED's were also presented to the class. In addition to 926th Engineer Brigade instructors hosting the course, guest lecturers included Capt. Robert Hooper, 926th Engineer Brigade, Defense Counsel of Fayetteville, Ark., who spoke on the Rules of Engagement, and 926th Engineer Brigade surgeon, Maj. Stephen Nitz, of Rockford, Ill., whose remarks focused on the importance of medical emergency first aid.

WWII hero changes young man's life, motivates dedicated Soldier

4th BCT PAO, 10th Mtn. Div. (L)

FORWARD OPERATING BASE LOYALTY, Iraq – It isn't every day that a person is afforded the opportunity to serve in an organization that emulates his “hero.” However, such was the case for a Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldier from 4th Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, who joined the coveted Audie Murphy Club at Forward Operating Base Loyalty in September.

Sgt. 1st Class Calvin Cameron, who hails from College Park, Ga., and serves with the Brigade Special Troops Battalion, was nominated by Master Sgt. Ron Camp, his supervisor, who hails from Gary, Ind., to appear before the board and compete for the privilege of becoming an Audie Murphy member.

“He has a strong aggression to accomplish the mission before he's told to,” said Camp.

Part of the process of the Audie Murphy board included a question and answer session by Command Sgt. Maj. Christopher Greca, a Grayslake, Ill., native, who is the brigade's senior enlisted leader.

Cameron said his interest in joining the Army dates back to when he was in high school at Benjamin Banneker High School in College Park, Ga. He explained that his teacher, Mrs. Robinson, provided the names of 50 of the nation's notable leaders for the class to choose to write a report on. One of the names, Audie Murphy, was a bit different, which is really the only reason Cameron selected him as his subject.

Little did he know at that time that his research on Murphy and his accomplishments would inspire and motivate him to serve his nation in the Army – and eventually, drive him to excel to the point he, himself, would join the coveted Audie Murphy Club.

“With the help of the recruiter and the example of Audie Murphy, I was able to lose a massive amount of weight to join the Army,” said Cameron.

As Cameron began his research about the life and history of Audie Murphy, he began to see how Audie Murphy overcame most of the obstacles he faced with his personal courage and sheer determination.

“Audie Murphy was an infantryman,” said Cameron, “but I chose my job as a fire support specialist because as I read the Audie Murphy story, I got excited after he picked up a hand mike in a burned-out armored personal carrier to call for fire. Giving them the enemy's position saved the whole platoon. That earned him the Medal of Honor.”

Murphy's story motivated him to make a major life-changing decision.

“When I was in high school, I didn't know what I wanted to do with my life until I read his story,” said Cameron. “I knew for sure, after writing the report on Audie Murphy, that I was going to join the Army because I wanted to be somewhat like him.”

He said he was even more motivated when he read about Murphy overcoming his own internal demons in his battle against his addiction to prescription drugs, which were given to him for “shell shock” after World War II.

“Murphy recognized he had a problem with drugs and decided to go cold turkey, off the drugs, by locking himself up in a hotel room for a week to deal with the withdrawals,” said Cameron. “I was really impressed then.”

Cameron took that story and channeled that determination against his own inner struggle – his weight.

“The recruiter told me that I was overweight by over 100 pounds, and I could not join until I lost the weight,” explained Cameron.

And up stepped another motivating force, his Army recruiter, who went above and beyond by working with him for year in the delayed entry program to provide him the opportunity to lose the weight and achieve his goal.

Cameron ultimately succeeded in his battle over his weight problem and, as a result of his determination, he became a member of the Army team in June 2000 as a fires support specialist, he explained.

In light of his personal trials and tribulations – as well as that of his “mentor” – he offers the following advice for young Soldiers who may face own obstacles:

“Speed bumps will always come, but once you hit that speed bump, don't quit,” he urged. “Just keep trucking so you can accomplish your goals. “Once you accomplish your goal, set your next goal and accomplish it as well.”

Cameron appeared before the Audie Murphy board in September and said the board was an excellent experience. The questions, he explained, were situational based, which provided the aspiring members the opportunity to communicate their leadership styles and approaches to resolving potential problems and issues.

Cameron said his next goal is to achieve the rank of master sergeant within 12 years.

“I have done great things in the Army – and the Army is the only thing that I know and I love,” he said. “I met my wife, who is my soul mate, and we had our four boys in the Army.

“Everything I have, I have because of the Army.”



'Dragon' Soldiers serve multi-faceted roles while deployed with Raider Bde.

1st STB, 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div.

FORWARD OPERATING BASE FALCON, Iraq – In the U.S. Army Chemical Corps, Soldiers are often referred to as "Dragon" Soldiers because a picture of a dragon is embedded into their insignia, which symbolizes the fire and destruction of chemical warfare.

In the crest, there is a tree trunk, which symbolizes what often served as the only reference points for chemical mortar teams during World War I, said Sgt. 1st Class Mauvet Rawls, a chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear operations specialist, assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Special Troops Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad.

After the onset of the Global War on Terror, the corps' mission expanded, explained Rawls, a native of Brooklyn, N.Y.; in fact, CBRN operations specialists have participated in every stage of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom.

Since that time, the Chemical Corps has remained prepared to protect the homeland, conduct sensitive site exploitation and to protect against an ever-changing list of potential threats, such as CBRN hazards, explained Rawls.

There are a few Soldiers from the 1st STB, 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., serving a dual role and conducting different missions in support of the 1st "Raider" Brigade's combat mission, demonstrating an unmatched adaptability and dedication, stated Rawls.

"We would all love to do what we've

been trained for; however, it's great to know we are needed in other aspects of this operation," he said.

Rawls serves as a project manager for the 1st BCT infrastructure coordinating element team as well as Phoenix CBRN noncommissioned officer-in-charge.

The ICE team works as one with the Iraqi people on projects that develop the country's infrastructure, explained Rawls.

If assigned to a chemical unit, Soldiers fill positions as a member of a decontamination, smoke, recon, or Biological Integrated Detection System Platoon.

On the other hand, Soldiers may serve as a CBRN specialist or a decontamination specialist assigned to a non-chemical unit, added Rawls.

"Dragon Soldiers are not just diverse in their military occupation specialty; we are also diverse in the mission requirements in a time of war," Rawls said.

Several Chemical Corps Soldiers currently serve in different positions throughout the 1st BCT, such as orderly room clerk, personnel security detachment, civil affairs assistant and convoy security, but the Soldiers complete their assigned tasks and accomplish the mission.

"As a Dragon Soldier, when mission calls, I answer that call," Rawls stated.

Spc. AnneMarie Boyer, a CBRN operations specialist assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B, said she hopes to do her assigned job in the chemical field but continues

to work as an assistant in the brigade civil affairs office.

Boyer helps process microgrants for the many companies within the 1st "Raider" Brigade.

"It's good because we get to learn another job when we are not working in a chemical job," explained Boyer, a Philadelphia native.

Sgt Joseph Scheerer, who serves with Headquarters and Headquarters Company as a member of the battalion PSD, is another. Dragon Soldiers serving in the "Phoenix" Bn.

"This is my third deployment and second time to this area of Iraq," stated Scheerer, who calls Peoria, Ill., his home.

"Being a PSD assistant squad leader has given me the opportunity to truly help make a difference in the Rashid district and to understand the positive changes Iraq has gone through."

Another Chemical Soldier fulfilling a supporting role is Spc. Eliane Marquez, an orderly room clerk for Company B, 1st STB, 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B.

Marquez, who hails from Lodi, Calif., said she feels honored to be able to help Sol-



Sgt. Joseph Scheerer, a chemical, biological, radioactive, and nuclear operations specialist assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Special Troops Battalion, shakes the hand of a disabled Iraqi citizen Aug. 22 in the Rashid district of southern Baghdad. Scheerer, who hails from Peoria, Ill., currently serves as an assistant squad leader for the battalion personnel security detachment. He is currently deployed with the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

diers of Co. B, which increases their readiness while performing their duties.

Since 1918, the proud Warriors of the U.S. Chemical Corps have served to protect the Nation and the Army from the threat of CBRN attacks and will continue to do so in the foreseeable future by any means possible, said Rawls.

Ivy Division retention team helps Soldiers get more out of reenlistment

By Staff Sgt. Scott Wolfe
MND-B PAO

BAGHDAD – Most Soldiers wait until a new reenlistment bonus policy comes out to see if there are any changes to the monetary amounts and bonus qualifications before deciding whether it is time to make the jump and re-up.

The newest reenlistment policy arrived Oct. 1, and many 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers were perhaps waiting to see if the money went up or down. Bonus amounts stayed the same, but a few more critical-skills military occupational specialties were added to the Selective Reenlistment Bonus Policy.

"The SRB program is a retention incentive paid to Soldiers in a military skill designated as critical skills," said Sgt. Maj. Don Salinas, noncommissioned officer in charge of the retention team, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B.

It is a tool to help Soldiers with their decisions to stay in the Army and are designed specifically to help fill the slots that are deemed critical and undermanned.

The objective of the program is to increase the number of reenlistments in critical MOSs that do not have adequate retention levels to man the current force, said Salinas.

Last year, the division's Retention Team met its mission. In fact, the team exceeded the goal by 300 Soldiers and more than \$27.5 million was paid to Soldiers in incentives. Not even a month into this fiscal year, the division retention team has already helped Soldiers claim more than \$3 million in reenlistment incentives.

But money isn't the only incentive available to a Soldier wanting to stay in the Army and the Ironhorse Division.

Come of the educational benefits Soldiers can be qualified for are based on the particular incentives being offered at specific installations. Salinas said 4th Inf. Div. Soldiers will not lose any of their education incentives regardless of whether they stay on Fort Hood or are transferred to Fort Carson because the two installations reached an agreement to honor the

"They want something to remind them of the occasion. They can't really touch a reenlistment, but they get to live it."

Sgt. 1st Class Christopher Craig
retention NCO
DSTB, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B

benefits for the Soldiers deployed with the 4th Inf. Div.

Sgt. 1st Class Christopher Craig, retention NCO for Division Special Troops Battalion, 4th Inf. Div., said he believes most Soldiers who come through his office door are already going to sign and they inquire as to what potential benefits are available.

"Most Soldiers have already made up their minds when they talk to me. They might say, 'What am I eligible for?' but that's mainly to keep from missing out on something they didn't know about," he said. "They already have an idea of what they want, but they want to see if there is something they haven't thought that may suit them better."

Craig, who is originally from Independence, Mo., and now lives in Boston, is actually a recruiter participating in a program between the Recruiting and Retention Commands that allows recruiters to deploy with units abroad.

Most retention is done in cycles, with many Soldiers signing soon after arrival in theater for the deployment bonus, said Craig. Then, there is the period when Soldiers wait for changes to the SRB policy to find out if better options are available. These include Soldiers looking for stabilization and choice of duty assignment.

A newer trend is that of Soldiers sitting on the fence before they go on leave about whether to reenlist or not, and then going home to find out that the economy is not a very friendly place, said Sgt. 1st Class Michael Sadler, a retention NCO with the division retention staff. Salinas and Craig both said they have observed seen this as well.

Craig said that he noticed in the April to May timeframe that he has had a few members of DSTB come back from leave and say that they will sign after all because they spoke with their Families about potential job hardships and the stresses of taking care a Family with the economy being how it is, and reenlistment simply made more sense.

"It's nice to know that your food is taken care of, your house is taken care of and especially that your health is covered," he said.

It is hard to deal with deployments, but with the civilian sector being the way it is right now, knowing your Family is taken care of can be a load of your shoulders and mind, said Craig.

There are also some rather interesting incentives available for Soldiers are reenlistment time. Each battalion and brigade retention team hands out different articles geared toward their particular Soldiers.

An example of this is, for Ironhorse DSTB Soldiers who reenlist, Craig presents them with side-loading computer backpacks – for as long as they remain available of course. The Soldiers are also provided some other choice gifts to choose from.

He has his own outlook on the coffee mugs and T-shirts Soldiers get at their reenlistment ceremonies.

"Everybody likes trinkets is the way I look at it. It's human nature. You give them the money, maybe give them an MOS change, or get them a choice of duty assignment, but everybody likes to have something physical that they can touch," he said.

"They want something to remind them of the occasion. They can't really touch a reenlistment, but they get to live it."

Soldiers interested in finding out more about their reenlistment options can visit their company, battery, or troop career counselor for the latest SRB policy.

MND-B chaplain gives words of encouragement to Soldiers

By Spc. Benjamin Crane
MND-B PAO

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – Military chaplains are a vital part of a Soldier's everyday life. They look after service members' spiritual wellbeing as well as their morale.

The chaplain is the one person Soldiers can open up to without worry of consequence.

On any given day, Soldiers working on Camp Liberty are likely to walk past a grey-mustached Army captain who, with a salute, will render a friendly "God Bless You" to them as he walks by.

Capt. Timothy Meier is a chaplain, a scholar and a wise man.

For Meier, a Catholic priest who serves with 142nd Chaplains Detachment, California Army National Guard, currently attached to the chaplain's office, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, he said he felt it was his calling to serve this role to the Soldier.

"In the summer of 2005, I made a 30-day silent retreat called the Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius Loyola," said Meier, a Northville, Mich. native. "In the course of the retreat, it became clear to me that I was being asked to join the Army, which was not at all what I had ever seen myself doing. And so, it was a big surprise and something of a concern for me since I was never a big fan of war. But I could see that the need for Catholic chaplaincy was very great, and if I could be of service, then that's what I feel I needed to do."

For Meier, joining the Army at the age of 50 was a far cry from what he had been spending the majority of his years doing. He had been through what he called the "37th grade" in school. He earned a bachelor's degree in biology and music from Kalamazoo College, followed by a master's degree in philosophy from Loyola University in Chicago.

At Georgetown he received a Bachelor of Science in biology (immunology) as well as master's degrees in Divinity and Theology from the Weston Jesuit School of Theology. He also holds a doctorate in biological sciences (molecular neurobiology) from Stanford with post-doctorate work in molecular virology at Stanford and Yale.

Even with a life dedicated to higher education and being the devout believer he is, he said he couldn't change what he felt God



U.S. Army photo by Spc. Benjamin Crane, MND-B PAO
Capt. Timothy Meier, a native of Northville, Mich., who serves as a chaplain with 142nd Chaplains Detachment, California Army National Guard, currently attached to the chaplain's office, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, stands in front a book shelf of materials Soldiers can come by and pick up from his office. Supplies include Bibles, rosary beads, devotionals and sermons recorded to CD. Meier is a Catholic priest who was commissioned an officer at the age of 50.

wanted him to do.

Once Meier signed the papers to join the military, the consummate researcher in him took over and he researched Army Knowledge Online and did the online courses to become familiar with the skill sets that anyone who has attended basic training would learn.

He went to Chaplain Basic Officer Leader Course at Fort Jackson, S.C., where he found out that the Army was one institution he had very little knowledge about. He also discovered that he would be facing a bigger challenge than even a lack of knowledge: Age.

"I'm old," Meier stated, "and my body is falling apart."

He had both shoulders operated on shortly after he joined the Army and, 90 days after his surgery, he had to take an Army Physical Fitness Test. He passed despite his recover-

'God Bless You'

ing shoulders, bad knees, bad feet and arthritis.

"Another challenge was just learning another language," he said. "The Army has a language unto itself as well as the culture, which was different from anything I had been associated with up to that point."

After the Power Point presentations, "stress tests," and road marches and hours of classes of his initial training, Meier is now here in Iraq, still learning the ropes but with help from his assistant and from those he works alongside.

"I find myself doing a lot of training," said Sgt. 1st Class Matthew McGee, chaplain's assistant to Meier, who also serves with 142nd Chaplains Det. McGee said he and Meier are always going over what to do in certain situations and discussing details on how to go through a firing maneuver together since Meier doesn't carry a weapon. McGee is a perfect fit to assist Meier, having served 15 years in the Army on active duty and almost another 15 years as a part of the reserve component.

"What makes (Meier) a good chaplain is that he relates well with Soldiers," said McGee. "He is pretty versatile at talking to people at their level, and as a leader. I appreciate that he asks my opinions on issues and he is humble enough to ask the opinion of other officers."

Most Soldiers don't know Meier by name but recognize him by his "God Bless You" greeting as they salute in passing. Meier sees his trademark greeting as more than simply an encouraging word.

"I look on that as a way of doing something that I can do for somebody else, which is praying," he said. "I believe even if that other person doesn't have faith, my God can still bless the person, and I like to make that known."

"A member from my religious community, whom I really respect a lot, greeted people that way and I thought, 'Wow, that is a really neat way to interact with people.' We are over here without Family and friends, and we are in more danger than we might be elsewhere if we were in the States, so I figure the more prayer, the better."

When Meier isn't guiding the souls of Soldiers or serving his duties in the Society of Jesus, he works in California as a biology professor at Stanford University.

"I am the undergraduate research coordinator and the director of the honors program in the Department of Biology at Stanford University, and I love my job," said Meier. "It's a wonderful position. I get to interact with all of the brightest-of-the-bright Stanford undergraduates and work with tenured professors, who are the best in the world at what they do."

Meier has tried to be a blessing to the Soldiers he sees on an everyday basis and says that it is he who gets the most blessing out of supporting the troops, who he considers the real heroes.

"I find myself ever more humbled because I find myself with an awful lot of women and men who are very, very courageous and very honorable, whose sacrifices, and whose Family sacrifices, just continually blow me away."

At one time or another, every deployed service member is in need of a kind word of encouragement.

Chaplain Meier's mission, his personal calling here in Baghdad, is to give that encouragement to every Soldier he passes in the form of a friendly "God Bless You," which in reality is also Meier's personal prayer.

Visit the 4ID website for a full archive of past and present news and other important info.

<http://www.hood.army.mil/4id>



Doug's 'dig' on Hollywood: *Scorpion King 2: This Beast's lost its sting*

By Spc. Douglas York

MND-B PAO

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – Watching less-than-stellar copies of movies here, especially when the film turns out to be a dud, is definitely a chore. Thankfully, my new friends from “Colorful Colorado” recently came to my rescue, sending me three newer releases.

While the picture quality of the movies I received is perfect, I can't promise this review will be equally as such. However, the subject matter might have something to do with that.

Enter “The Scorpion King 2: Rise of a Warrior,” the latest offering from the brain trust behind the “Mummy” films and 2002’s “The Scorpion King.” The film was a direct-to-DVD release in August 2008, distributed by Universal Studios and directed by Russell Mulcahy, the same Mulcahy whose resume includes the first two “Highlander” films as well as “Resident Evil: Extinction.”

Trying to be positive, let's start with the good. While he is a poor man's version of a young Mathayus, actor Michael Copon (“One Tree Hill” fame) does well filling in for departed actor Dwayne “The Rock” Johnson, who turned down the opportunity to reprise the lead role. In fact, Copon's ability to mimic the original actor's famous facial expressions is at times uncanny.

The movie begins with Mathayus' father, Ashur of Akkad, fighting in battle. After the battle, he tells an adolescent Mathayus not to join the Black Scorpions, the best warriors of the Emperor of Akkad who, at the film's beginning, was the famous King Hammurabi. However, like any rebellious teenager trying to live up to a parent's legendary reputation, Mathayus ignores his father's counsel and attends the Black Scorpions' recruitment games anyway.

During the games, Mathayus play-fights a childhood friend named Layla, who is disguised as a boy and also wants to be a Black Scorpion and fight like the men. Despite her desires and best intentions, Sargon, the commander of the army, played by fighter-turned-actor Randy Couture, overhears their conversation and detains Layla and Mathayus for breaking the rules.

Sargon is about to execute the out-spoken and insubordinate Mathayus when Ashur intervenes at the last moment. The ensuing fight between Ashur and Sargon ends when Hammurabi arrives on the scene. The emperor forgives all of their misconduct, but only after Ashur agrees to let Mathayus join the Black Scorpions.

Hammurabi's decision angers Sargon and, that night, Ashur is murdered by Sargon's “Scorpion Curse”—think black smoke entering Ashur's bedroom and morphing into multiple Scorpions. While Mathayus knows in his heart that it was Sargon who killed his father, he still joins the Black Scorpions and vows to become the best fighter he can be, seeing it as his only chance for revenge.

Years pass and an adult Mathayus returns to Akkad to participate in a ceremony to formally induct him into the Black Scorpions. He returns as a master swordsman, the best in his class, and much to his dismay, he and the new graduates are greeted by the new Emperor, Sargon, who murdered Hammurabi during the years between and seized the throne.

Sargon instantly recognizes Mathayus and invites him to the palace, where Mathayus declares his unwavering “loyalty” to the Emperor. In turn, Mathayus is rewarded by a night

of “fun” with the palace concubines. The next day, Mathayus comes to the palace throne room only to find his childhood friend, Noa, arrested for spreading word that Sargon murdered Hammurabi.

Sargon tells Mathayus that he must kill Noa to finally prove his loyalty to him. Mathayus pretends to agree with the king, devising a plan

to escape that would have worked had Sargon not used his black magic and released an “enchanted” arrow, which somehow kills Noa just outside the palace walls.

From here, Mathayus contrives a plot to flee to Egypt and obtain the “Spear of Osiris” (the same spear that will eventually lead to his own demise in “The Mummy Returns”), with the hopes that it will kill Sargon, since the king's black magic makes him too powerful for normal methods of killing.

Waiting to board a ship for Cairo, he has a reunion with his old friend, Layla, played by actress Karen David, who is all grown up and even more full of spit and vinegar. The two decide to journey together, and during the trip, they meet a young Greek poet/philosopher named Aristophanes (Ari for short), who becomes their new accomplice.

Ari helps the two Akkadians devise a better plan to kill Sargon rather than using the spear, which he says won't work. Ari convinces them that the only way to kill Sargon is to go to the underworld and retrieve a legendary Grecian hero's magical sword. However, to get to the underworld, they must first kill a mythological creature guarding the portal that leads to hell.

While in hell, the trio, accompanied by a few “expendable” people they pick up along the way, encounter the beautiful goddess, Astarte, played by actress Natalie Becker. The

film takes many other convoluted turns from here, unveiling a plot full of more holes than a block of Swiss cheese.

The main thing above all things you need to remember about this film is that it is a direct-to-DVD release. That fact, in and of itself, should be enough to tell you all you need to know prior to viewing. Watch the film with low expectations in mind and you'll be fine.

Historical references aside, it is easy to understand why this film was a direct to DVD release. First off, it was used as cheap method for hyping-up the latest “Mummy” film and secondly, the script is nothing short of lame.

While I don't hold the film's young actors and actresses accountable for the poor script and the oft-times quirky special effects – movie stars have to get their start somewhere – I do hold the accomplished Mulcahy accountable for agreeing to direct this farce.

Along those lines, it is easy to see why “The Rock” turned this film down (given that the first film wasn't much better and was largely viewed as a box-office flop) as he's moved on to bigger and better things in his career. While the first “Scorpion King” didn't ruin Johnson's career, hopefully this film won't come back to haunt the young and talented individuals who did the best they could with what they had to work with.

Couture, on the other hand, gives a very monotone and boring performance to what should have otherwise been a very interesting villain. Be that as it may, I also give him a free pass on this one, not because he is a muscle-bound fighter and thereby can't be expected to be too witty but because he served in our nation's Army from 1982-1988.

Despite that patriotic disclaimer, it is a shame what the creators of this franchise have done with both “Scorpion King” films. The potential was there for this film to be solid, at least as good as its “Mummy” counterparts; however, the film's makers sorely dropped the ball. Here's to hoping future ‘off-shoot-films,’ such as “X-Men Origins: Wolverine,” due out in May 2009, won't bomb either.

Potential can only win so many fights, and without a doubt, this “Scorpion's” tail was cut off before the battle ever began. As a result, the best rating I can give “SK2” is two chevrons and no rockers.

If you would like me to consider a movie for future review or to give feedback on these films or these films' reviews, feel free to email me at mndb_pao@yahoo.com.



It just takes some time Lit-tle girl you

Bust out your lighter, it's time for an encore

By Sgt. Jason Thompson
MND-B PAO

BAGHDAD – The release of Rock Band last year launched music games into a whole new arena. No longer did music games have to be about just playing the drums or the guitar or singing. All three elements were merged together into a cohesive and thoroughly enjoyable package. But while Rock Band was a breath of fresh air, it did have some issues.

Now, the sequel to the already popular series, released less than a year after the original, is certain to keep gamers rockin' for another year.

The biggest addition isn't a new feature or function but 84 new songs. All master tracks, these 84 songs represent the single greatest collection of songs in a game to date. Headlining the new tracks is the first Guns N' Roses single in more than a decade, "Shackler's Revenge." Along with it is a slew of incredible songs that span the '60s right up to today. AC/DC, Metallica, The Talking Heads, Pearl Jam, Journey, Megadeth, Modest Mouse, Rage Against the Machine, Bon Jovi, Jane's Addiction – I could keep going, but you get the point. There are some brilliant songs here. And, while there are going to be a few tracks each person will not care for, there's far more good here than bad.

What makes Rock Band 2 special is that it doesn't end with 84 tracks. All previously downloaded tracks you may have downloaded for the original Rock Band are immediately useable with Rock Band 2. In addition, you can export 55 of the original tracks for use in Rock Band 2. Add to that an additional 20 free songs available for download to anyone who purchases Rock Band 2.

Conceivably, you could boot up Rock Band 2 for the first time and have more than 300 songs available. That's pretty awesome.

Most importantly, the new tracks play better than those from the first Rock Band. Now, I'm a realist, original Rock Band tracks were a bit easy for guitarists. That is not the case with RB2. While there are a good number of warm-up songs that are a breeze for even moderately skilled players, there are a lot more challenging songs for all instruments this time around.

Bassists are in for a treat as there are some truly slick bass lines. "Livin' on a Prayer," "Shackler's Revenge," and "You Oughta Know" are all stand-outs. Drums have also seen some real progression as there are even more challenging tunes. By the time you reach the conclusion of World Tour, you'll be facing a ton of metal songs that will be a true test for your entire band.

One thing that became clear following the release of Rock Band is that there is a distinct dichotomy between players. There are those who are really hardcore and want to be tested as they progress through a deep career mode. Then there are those who

Rock Band 2



just want to bring out Rock Band at parties or when friends and Family are over. These folks just want to have a good time. Rock Band 1 didn't service either properly as there weren't enough difficult songs for the hardcore and the set-up for casual play was a pain in the behind.

Bands no longer have to be tied to a specific character, and characters are no longer tied to a specific instrument. Additionally, you no longer need to sign in each player to a different account. Just hop in, grab any of a number of pre-generated characters, select your instrument and you're ready to go. It's easy to have people pop in and out during World Tour or any other mode, and you can set fill-in characters for your band so if someone isn't available to play an instrument, one of your created characters will still show up on stage.

If you just want to play and have fun, there is a "No Fail" option you can switch on and enjoy quick play set lists. This is perfect for parties or casual gatherings where all you want is to create a set list and rock out.

When playing, you aren't going to notice many gameplay differences from RB1. All of the stages from the first game are back with only 15 new arenas added to spice things up. The on-stage presentation has been strengthened with smarter camera cuts and more active band members, but the core gameplay is nearly identical to RB1.

That's not such a bad thing. As my dad always told me, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it."

Rock Band 2 has a few new welcome features but let's face it – most folks will go straight to World Tour. Though the core functionality is the same, you can now play World Tour solo and still earn fans, cash and stars even if you play alone on drums, whereas before if you were playing solo you were limited to playing straight down the list of songs as in Guitar Hero.

Assuming you own RB1, then it's just \$60 to own 84 new tracks (plus 20 free DLC tracks) with some nice tweaks and additions. That's a great deal.

But what if you want new instruments? Rock Band 2 is also available with a new instrument bundle. The bundle comes with a guitar, drum kit and microphone. Both the drum and guitar are upgrades on the originals, but only one is worth the cheddar.

The guitar features the same mold as the original, but has a slick new starburst faceplate. The strum bar has been tweaked to be "less mushy," but the

guitar itself is not much different from the original. The bonus for buying the new guitar is that it's wireless and has an auto-calibration feature. Unless purchasing with the rest of the bundle, I'd recommend against it.

The drums, on the other hand, may just be worth the \$89.99 price tag to purchase separately. Though from the same mold as the original, the drums are wireless and much quieter than before. The pads are velocity sensitive, measuring the speed and force used to hit the pads. During fills, hitting a pad softer creates quieter sounds. The pedal, which broke for many people last year, is now metal and should be impervious to destruction.

Again, the overall bundle, which I believe is the best overall value, brings you the game, a guitar, a drum set and a microphone for merely \$190. It is a small price to pay for the endless hours of play time you'll get out of the game.

Rock Band 2 improves in several areas over the original. The track list is better; the difficulty has been bumped up; it's more accessible, and all previously released downloadable content works from the get-go.

That said, music game fans would be absolutely crazy not to buy Rock Band 2. Even if you hate a few of the songs on disc, you are still getting an incredible deal. It's less than a dollar a song with an additional 20 free downloadable songs available now. That's just too good to pass up.

I give Rock Band 2 a well deserved 5 guitar picks out of 5.



Record number of 'Warriors' choose to remain Army Strong

By Maj. Al Hing

2nd SBCT PAO, 25th Inf. Div.

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – Soldiers from Multi-National Division – Baghdad's 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team "Warrior," 25th Infantry Division, have reenlisted to "stay Army" at record rates during fiscal 2008.

In fact, so many Warriors committed to remaining with the team, they broke the U.S. Army's reenlistment record for soldiers in a deployed brigade.

The brigade's Soldiers kicked off the deployment strong as Soldiers began lining up to reenlist when they arrived in Kuwait in December. By the end of the fiscal year, 1,263 Warriors had reenlisted to remain part of the Army's Team. The previous record had been 1,253 reenlisting Soldiers from the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, which is based out of Fort Lewis, Wash.

The Warrior Brigade's retention sergeants knew just making the mission was going to be a tough task let alone setting a new standard for others to follow.

"Before we left Hawaii, the (United States Army Pacific) reenlistment mission was at 1,140 (Soldiers), and that's a jump from the previous deployed brigade requirement of 1,113," said Master Sgt. Sean Milhauser, of Clearwater, Fla., brigade senior retention sergeant. "That's a big jump of a requirement – and the highest mission I've seen as a retention sergeant."

The reenlistment mission was aggressively attacked with reenlistments happening just as the Warrior Brigade arrived in theater.

"The successes started in Kuwait with the 'Sappers' of the 66th Engineer Company knocking in the door to re-up," said Sgt. 1st Class Louis Montanez, of Chicago, a brigade retention sergeant. "The leadership in the Sapper command was key, getting the Soldiers to feel secure in their decisions."

The leaders of the 66th Eng. Co. "Sappers" aggressively pursued encouraging their Soldiers to remain with the team and to reenlist while the unit was in Camp Buehring and preparing for its onward movement to Iraq, said Maj. Anthony Barbina, of Belmont, Ohio, who serves as the brigade engineer and is a former Sapper commander.



Pfc. Salis Giberti, a native of Tucson, Ariz.; Sgt. Nicholas Lemay, a native of Oakview, Calif.; and Sgt. Aaron Walters, a native of Stevens Point, Wis., take the oath of reenlistment Aug. 14 at Combat Outpost Falahat, northwest of Baghdad.

U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Guillermo Allen, 2nd Sqdn. 14th Cav. Regt., 2nd SBCT, 25th Inf. Div.

The leaders and reenlistment sergeants used a variety of methods to inform their Soldiers on what options were available to them, using venues such as command announcements, a solid company reenlistment campaign, retention sergeant briefings and direct involvement by the leadership. Another benefactor in the campaign was a newly announced critical skills bonus.

"With the brigade and company leadership pushing Soldiers hard to reenlist," said Barbina, "the company retention sergeant stayed proactive by talking to all the Soldiers on multiple occasions while capitalizing on direct involvement by platoon leaders and platoon sergeants with each Soldier. The Soldiers got the information they needed for their future prospects and decided to reenlist."

Millhauser said active involvement by the brigade's leaders is vital in ensuring units meet their reenlistment mission because it shows the Soldiers that their leaders are committed to them and their mission.

"Leaders have to provide the groundwork and talk to their Soldiers," Milhauser said. "Younger Soldiers are mentored by sergeants and leaders. They are given informed, sound options, and their decisions are based off what benefits they have versus what they may or may not get in the civilian job market."

Leaders taking such an active interest and sharing their views and experiences with their subordinate Soldiers are the keys to success.

"Leaders are the key. The more they work with Soldiers, the more they understand how the Army is a great place to stay," said Montanez. "Soldiers know when a senior sergeant reflects his or her service to what they can become, there's always that part of leadership that adds to their decision."

Another key element in being informed on the reenlistment options that are available, which provides Soldiers the opportunity to make sound decisions for both themselves and their Families.

"It's all about esprit de corps and knowing your options before Soldiers reenlist," Montanez said. "The Soldiers re-up knowing they're securing a place for their Families and their future. The school credits, education opportunities, health, dental and other benefits are just great. Everything they get contributes to a sound choice to reenlist."

Of course, a key factor to remaining with the team, said Milhauser and Montanez, is exactly that – remaining with the team. It is that teamwork and sense of belonging to something that is much greater than an individual, that truly motivates Soldiers who wholeheartedly believe in their organization.

"There's a love to being a Soldier, and they know it," Milhauser said. "They understand that they're part of something bigger than themselves."

This is even more significant, added Montanez, given the environment the Soldiers are reenlisting in given that most are very aware of the fact that they will inevitably deploy again some time in the future, adding that it is the nature of today's Army and that Soldiers know they are part of a "greater whole" that is making history every day.

"The Army is a great place to serve," said Col. Todd McCaffrey, a Hudson, Ohio, native, who is the 2nd SBCT commander.

"The Army is an organization is over 500,000 strong and incredibly diverse – there is something for everyone in an organization as large and distributed as the Army."

The bottom line is that the Army needs committed men and women to remain with the team and keep the Army strong.

"Our (reenlistment) mission affects Americans directly, and when a Soldier and Family make the decision to stay with the team, we all benefit – the U.S. Army, the Soldier and the Family," said McCaffrey. "The reenlistment is a two way contract. The Soldier commits to service; we commit to the Soldier and their Family. It's that mutual commitment that makes this organization and lifestyle so compelling and so satisfying."

Training continues for medics even through deployments

64th BSB, 3rd BCT, 4th Inf. Div.

BAGHDAD – Even after 10 months into their deployment, Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers continue to improve their skills through vital training events, such as the emergency services training conducted Oct. 22 at Camp Taji.

Medics from 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, attended training on emergency rescue equipment provided by Wackenhut Services, Inc. Fire Department.

Ken Setty, an instructor for Wackenhut, taught four combat medics from Company C, 64th Brigade Support Battalion, on the proper procedures for using equipment such as hydraulic spreaders, cutters and rams, used by fire fighters to extricate injured persons from damaged vehicles.

"The opportunity to train on equipment like this is rare. I would do it again if I could," said Spc. Charles Thompson, a Bronx, N.Y., native, who serves in the evacuation platoon.

During the class, the Soldiers were instructed on proper operation of the equipment and specific safety considerations when attempting to gain access to an injured patient, in addition to considerations such as non-

deployed airbags, leaking fuel, jagged edges from ripped and cut metal, and the general danger from the use of hydraulic equipment.

The most exciting portion of the training however, was the opportunity for the Soldiers to tear through a damaged vehicle by ripping off a door, breaking a window with an axe or sawing through steel to get to a simulated patient.

"I was able to actually pick up a tool and just tear a car door off. Not only was it a great learning experience, but it was also a great stress reliever and a good workout," said Spc. Andrea Ernst, from Houston.

The special rescue training was a cooperative effort between the Soldiers of the 64th BSB, and the Kellogg, Brown and Root recovery section to enhance the lifesaving skills of the battalion's medics, said Staff Sgt. Timothy Matz, who hails from Crestview, Fla.

"The use of this equipment is a skill that our civilian counterparts are trained in," Matz said. "It's a great opportunity to learn the skills that could help our medics further their knowledge of extricating patients from a wrecked vehicle."



U.S. Army photo courtesy of 64th BSB, 3rd BCT, 4th Inf. Div.

Staff Sgt. Timothy Matz, who hails from Crestview, Fla., and Spc. Charles Thompson, a native of Bronx, N.Y., use a hydraulic device to enter a damaged vehicle to rescue a simulated casualty Oct. 22 at Camp Taji. Medics took part in emergency rescue training to enhance their lifesaving skills. Both are medics, who participated in the emergency rescue training to enhance their lifesaving skills. Matz and Thompson are assigned to Company C, 64th Brigade Support Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad.

Mol's Wide World of Sports

Install a playoff system and be done with it!

By Staff Sgt. Michael Molinaro
MND-B PAO

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – As we head into the stretch run of college football, it pains me more and more each year that there isn't a playoff system in Division-I football. Every other level in college football has a playoff. In fact, I can't even name another sport that doesn't have a playoff. I mean, even golf and NASCAR have playoffs and those are individual sports!

University presidents usually give one of two reasons for the cause behind not having a playoff: prolonging the season for the "student-athletes" or taking away from the prestige of the college bowl season. Who do they think they are kidding?

First of all, prolonging the season is such a ridiculous explanation it makes me laugh. They claim that if there was a playoff system then the season could go well into January. Huh? Let's look at how the other levels of college football do it.

After the season ends around the second week of November, conference winners automatically make the playoffs and the others are selected to make the 16-team field. They play for four weeks and usually have the championship game the second week of December. Division-I has regular season and conference championship games well into December. Why? Money. They play 12 games now instead of 11. Some teams also have two or even three bye weeks a year. This year, USC had only played two games heading into the final weekend of September.

University presidents like a long season. They get more money when it comes to securing a TV contract, ensuring the TV executives that they'll be filing their Saturday schedules into December. So get rid of the bye weeks, play 10 or 11 games, and that ends the regular season a week or two before Thanksgiving.

Think about how enjoyable it would be around the

Thanksgiving holiday: we'll have our annual NFL games as we feast on turkey, and then eat the leftovers while watching the national semi-finals on Friday and Saturday.

Another contention being made is that December is when the players take their final exams for the semester and they can't interfere with that. While that argument makes a lot of sense, if it were only true then it would be validated. There are seven bowl games before Christmas Day this year. So what they are really saying is they don't want to hamper the studying for the student-athletes who play for the good teams and aren't playing in the Weedeater Bowl and the Credit Union Bowl.

College basketball has games mid-week for months at a time. Have you ever heard anybody complaining about hoopsters and the amount of class time they are missing during the winter and spring? Heck, we're talking about games on Saturdays when it comes to football. Isn't practice at the end of the day? They have all week to attend their classes, get tutored and take their exams. So please, enough of that jibber-jabber.

The other big argument they make is a playoff would take away the prestige of the college bowls. This is the one contention they make that is the easiest to adapt to. All they would have to do is use the bowls as the playoff system. And they could scrap everything I said before about a longer or shorter season, about taking final exams or not taking them, and have all of the bowl games.

Let's say we have an eight-team playoff. I for one think there are always going to be eight teams who are good enough to play for the national championship. Sixteen may be pushing it. So you would need seven games to determine a national champion. Well you already have five games marked as BCS bowls – Sugar, Fiesta, Rose, Orange, and the BCS championship game. You could select two more traditional bowls as playoff sites, such as the Gator and Cotton Bowls, and there are your seven sites for the playoffs.



Staff Sgt.
Michael Molinaro

The site would rotate yearly as they do now to hold the championship game.

And what about the rest of the bowls? Don't change a thing. Keep playing them. What do they count for now? Nothing. So what would be the negative? I can't think of one.

You could start the playoffs right after Christmas with an eight-team playoff and it would take the playoffs right to where the championship will be played this year, around the second week of January.

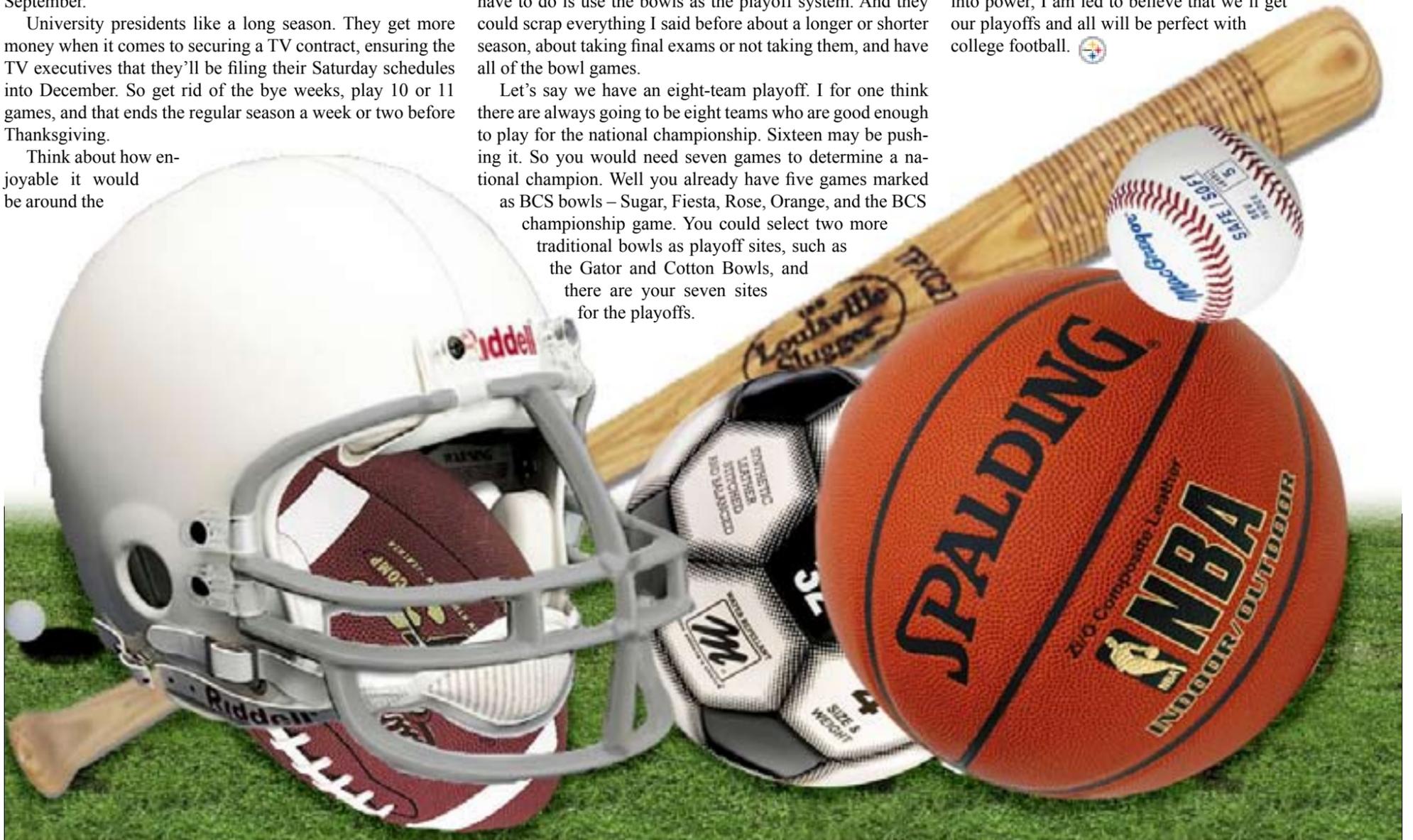
The teams not good enough to make the playoff get their bowl game and the NCAA gets to promote the upcoming playoff games during every one of these bowls. The season is not prolonged, the bowls are being played, and the hype and attraction of a national playoff would blow through the roof.

Football is our national pastime. People pack bars, living rooms, buy satellite dishes, and do whatever it takes to watch the sport. Look at how the college basketball tournament grips the country for an entire month. What do you think a football playoff would become?

This argument is not a new one to be made. The one-loss teams and non-BCS schools will continue to get ripped off until there is a playoff. I am not very confident that this will come into fruition this year or next. But it will happen in our lifetime – I am convinced of it.

We have a lot of old-school presidents running these universities who don't like change and like getting those big checks.

But once they all retire and smart people our age come into power, I am led to believe that we'll get our playoffs and all will be perfect with college football. 🇺🇸





An Iraqi Army soldier with the 4th Battalion, 22nd Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division, helps wheel out a disabled Iraqi man from a clinic during a joint medical operation in Ghazaliyah Oct. 13. Iraqi Security and Coalition Forces teamed with local Iraqi physicians held the event to bring free medical to the Iraqi citizens.

Iraqi Army soldiers with the 4th Battalion, 22nd Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division, download a truck during a joint medical operation in Ghazaliyah Oct. 13. Iraqi Security and Coalition Forces teamed with local Iraqi physicians held the event to bring free medical to the Iraqi citizens.



A father explains his child's illness to an Iraqi physician at a local clinic during a joint medical operation in Ghazaliyah Oct. 13. Iraqi Security and Coalition Forces teamed with local Iraqi physicians held the event to bring free medical to the Iraqi citizens.

Iraqi Army takes lead in largest medical event in Ghazaliyah

Story and photos by Sgt. Matthew Vanderboegh

1st Bn., 75th Cav. Regt., 2nd BCT, 101st Abn. Div.

BAGHDAD – Iraqi Security and Coalition Forces, working side-by-side with local physicians in Ghazaliyah, held a joint medical exercise in the northwest Baghdad neighborhood of Ghazaliyah Oct. 13 to provide free healthcare to the local citizens, many of whom cannot afford medical treatment.

As word quickly spread of the free medical care and humanitarian assistance boxes available, more than 700 local citizens crowded the entrance to the clinic.

“This is a wonderful thing for the neighborhood and for the Iraqi people,” said Dr. Hyder, the lead physician at the clinic. “I know that there are some people that are in desperate need for care.”

For many assorted reasons, Iraqi citizens stood in line for hours to receive the free medical care.

“We are very grateful for the Iraqi Army to provide this for us. I have not had any medical care for a very long time,” said Abu Assad, a man who stood in line for over an hour to receive treatment for his back pain. “I own a small (convenience) shop and I cannot afford the medicines. There are many here who are in the same position.”

This event marks the fourth time since its inception that the Iraqi Army, Coalition Forces and local physicians have cooperated in conducting these events. Each time the actual presence of the Coalition Forces has diminished from security and command and control to now simply serving in an advisory role.

“The only things that we were responsible for were to reconnoiter the area and find a suitable place to set this up,” said Capt. Michael Haith, a native of Yorktown, Virg., and commander of Company C, 1st Squadron, 75th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault). “The medical officer coordinated for the medicines and the civil affairs officer coordinated with the Iraqi contractor to supply the humanitarian aid boxes. The Iraqi Army has provided the security and their medics are handing out the medicines.”

An Iraqi contractor, working with Capt. Robert Laudoff, a civil affairs officer with the 432nd Civil Affairs Battalion, were able to provide five wheel chairs, and 150 boxes filled with cooking oil, soap, towels, tomato paste and cheese. There were also bags of rice, bulgur, beans and chick peas.

“We had an additional 200 boxes of hygiene items to give out,” said Laudoff, a native of Green Bay, Wisc.

For the Iraqi Army, 1st Lt. Zamir coordinated all security forces and facilitated the numerous issues the citizens that grew impatient for medical assistance.

“This is a very exciting thing we are doing. It is our job to put the welfare of the people first and these medical exercises are a wonderful way to show it,” said Zamir. “They really help us out to build trust in the neighborhood. Normally they see the Iraqi Army and the Coalition Forces providing security. In this setting they can see that we are more than patrolling and capturing criminals. We are also here to assist them in their daily lives.”

At the end of the day, as the people begin spilling out of the clinic, many of them approached Haith noting how well the Iraqi Army performed.

“I came into this knowing that there would be some setbacks,” said Haith. “However everyone is receiving medical care and no one is leaving empty handed.”