

The Ivy Leaf

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MULTI-NATIONAL DIVISION - BAGHDAD

"STEADFAST AND LOYAL"

NOVEMBER 24, 2008

Raiders oversee Sol payday



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. 1st Class Brent Williams, 1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div.

Command Sergeant Major Muataraf, 1st Battalion, 53rd Brigade, 14th Iraqi Army Division, pays a Banaat al-Iraq (Daughter of Iraq) at the Jihad Neighborhood Advisory Council Nov. 11 in the Rashid district of southern Baghdad.

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

FORWARD OPERATING BASE FALCON, Iraq – Soldiers of the 1st Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, joined their Iraqi counterparts at various locations across western Rashid to assist Iraqi Security Forces issuing the first payday to the Sons of Iraq Nov. 10-13.

The long-awaited payday activities are a critical step in uniting the Iraqi people for the future of Iraq, said Staff Col. Ali Abood Thamer, commander of the 1st Battalion, 53rd Brigade, 14th Iraqi Army Division.

“What is happening here, in my opinion, is extremely important because we are training them, putting tools in their hands, and what is the most important thing, taking them away from terrorism,” Ali said. “We are going to give them money; we are going to give them jobs; we are going to give them goals for their future lives.”

Ali said that he took responsibility for supervising and paying the more than 1,000 West Rashid Sol in the Hayy Furat and Hayy Jihad communities after the Government of Iraq assumed control of the citizens-led security program Oct. 1.

see **Sol** Pg.6



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. 1st Class Brent Williams, 1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div. 1st Lt. Nolan Maxwell, a fire support officer from Santa Maria, Calif., assigned to Company C, 1st Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, cross checks names of Sons of Iraq receiving their first payment from the Government of Iraq Nov. 11

Iraqi government makes 1st Sol payment in Adhamiyah district



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

Retired Iraqi Army Maj. Gen. Mudher Almaala, vice chairman of the Iraqi Formal Committee for National Reconciliation, speaks to Sons of Iraq members from the Adhamiyah district of Baghdad as they wait to be paid at Combat Outpost Apache in the Adhamiyah District of Baghdad Nov. 13.

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

COMBAT OUTPOST APACHE – Abdul Hadi Fathallah Mahidi and a few hundred fellow Sons of Iraq (Abna al-Iraq) members from the Adhamiyah district of Baghdad stood in line for hours at Combat Outpost Apache waiting to see if the next step in the transition from Coalition Forces control to Government of Iraq control would take place Nov. 13 – it was payday.

Previously, the SOI members had been paid by Multi-National Division – Baghdad; as of Oct. 1 however, the Government of Iraq assumed responsibility for the program.

“When the transformation from the Coalition to the GoI took place, we thought we would never get paid after that,” said Mahidi.

This sentiment was all too familiar to Brig. Gen. Robin Swan, the deputy commanding general for the 4th Infantry Division and Multi-National Division – Baghdad.

“Our press, others have been saying ... there was going to be problem after problem. First it was ‘The Government of Iraq is not going to pay us; we won’t transition. They’re going to detain us, they will not find us jobs,’” said Swan, a native of Ford City, Pa. “None of that has happened.”

Before the war, Mahidi supported his wife and children from his earnings as an auto mechanic. His daughter is disabled, he said,

see **Payday** Pg.9

History made as Daggers prepare to swap with Strike Brigade

By Spc. Dustin Roberts
2nd HBCT PAO, 1st Inf. Div.

BAGHDAD – As the 2nd “Dagger” Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, continues to take the necessary steps in replacing the 2nd “Strike” Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), a huge

mile marker was observed.

In October, one month following the holy month of Ramadan in the Islamic Calendar, one U.S. military service member lost his life in action in Multi-National Division – Baghdad and four Soldiers lost their lives in September. Although losing any Soldiers is too many, the number of lives lost is a dramatic

reduction in the number of fallen Soldiers during Ramadan since the War started and is a significant reduction in the number of lives lost since April 2008, when 23 U.S. service members lost their lives in Baghdad.

Ramadan, usually known for bringing added violence to Baghdad, proved relatively peaceful for U.S. troops, said Spc. Nick Loka-

mas, 1st Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, 2nd BCT, 101st Abn. Div.

Lokamas, who started working with the Strike Brigade team in December, helped bring the violence down by setting up signs and wanted posters in neighborhoods, ex-

see **Daggers** Pg.2

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Index

Mission	4
Photo Feature	12-13
Soldier	14
Family	18
Team	19
Entertainment Reviews	20
Sports	22



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November: Warrior Care Month for Army, DOD



U.S. Army photo by Elaine Wilson, Army News Service

John Ferguson, lead prosthetist at the Center for the Intrepid, uses a digital scanner to create a 3-D image of Spc. David Lawsen's leg for a prosthesis. Wounded warriors are a top priority at Fort Sam Houston.

By Heike Hasenauer
Army News Service

WASHINGTON – Beginning Nov. 5, the Army and its sister services focused attention to one of the Defense Department's highest priorities – caring for wounded, ill and injured warriors.

As directed by Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, November has been designated as "Warrior Care Month." Each branch of the U.S. Armed Forces has events planned during the month to highlight warrior care.

Since reports nearly two years ago that Soldiers recovering from war wounds were living in a substandard facility at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C., the Army has transformed the way it structures and provides military health care to wounded and ill Soldiers, said Brig. Gen. Gary H. Cheek, Assistant Surgeon General for Warrior Care and Transition.

"We have made great strides in garnering more support and more resources for our wounded, ill and injured Soldiers," Cheek said.

"Our key challenge is ensuring Sol-

diers and Families are aware of the various programs and benefits we have to help them with the unique and personal issues each of them face."

The general said the month is more than a way for the Army and other services to show how far they have come in taking care of their own -- the activities and events during Warrior Care Month also make the programs the Army offers more visible to Soldiers who might need them.

"Warrior Care Month is a way to highlight these programs across the Army so our wounded warriors and their Families know what's being done on their behalf, and how to take advantage of them," he said.

Cheek said Warrior Care Month is meant to provide a clear message to servicemembers and the public that caring for those who have sacrificed for America is one of the military's highest priorities.

The Army has unique activities planned throughout Warrior Care Month, which began with the Department of Defense kick-off event Nov. 5.

The Army's 36 Warrior Transition Units, in cooperation with military treatment facilities and installations across the Army will be conducting a variety of events and activities to help educate the force on wounded warrior resources, and to thank local communities and elected officials for their support.

On Nov. 17, designated as Army Service Day for warrior care, Secretary of the Army Pete Geren and the Army Surgeon General hosted a town hall meeting for Soldiers and Families assigned to the Walter Reed Warrior Transition Unit.

Other events during the November observance included a visit by the Army chief of staff with Soldiers at Walter Reed Army Medical Center Nov. 2 and 11; Brooke Army Medical Center at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, Nov. 19; and Bethesda National Naval Medical Center Nov. 29 and 30.

Besides visits by officials to major military medical facilities, caregivers and recovering Soldiers alike will speak at various public venues about the state of care of wounded and ill Soldiers during Operation Tribute to Freedom events.

2nd HBCT, 1st Inf. Div., assumes control of Western, Central Baghdad

From Daggers Pg.1

plaining who the enemy was and why Coalition Forces were after them.

"We've been doing a lot of Information Operations campaigns, going into the muhallas, broadcasting on loud speakers, letting the civilians know who we are looking for, and I think the enemy is scared to come back into the area," said Lokamas. "The area of operations has been a lot safer since we've been here."

He also said the Iraqi Security Forces have done an excellent job of keeping the peace as well.

"The ISF have made major improvements since we've been

here," Lokamas said. "They seem to have a good handle on what they are doing, and it seems like the people trust them more."

As the Dagger Brigade transitions into the Strike Brigade's operational environment and works with the ISF, the main focus is keeping the security level stable, said Sgt. Christopher Robinson, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd HBCT, 1st Inf. Div.

"I'm very confident in my chain of command. This is really not our first deployment over here because we have many experienced noncommissioned officers in this unit," said Robinson. "We are willing and ready to take the fight and the mission forward."

Chaplain's Corner

5 ways God uses problems to strengthen you

By Lt. Col. Jim Carter
MND-B Chaplain

BAGHDAD – Many Soldiers experience trials and adversity every day. It is important for us to learn how to handle adversity and to realize that God will strengthen us along the journey.

Problems can stretch you or stop you. Recognizing struggles is the first step to overcoming them. I love sports and will use some sporting analogies in this article, which I hope you can relate to as you handle adversity and see that God uses problems in our life to make us stronger.

Recognition is a skill for the quarterback that comes by spending countless hours studying game films and by repeated repetitions on the practice field. Recognition helps the quarterback understand and deal with the many situations he faces during the course of a game.

This important ability allows the quarterback to overcome the attack and persevere under intense pressure. It allows him to read the defense and see the blitzing linebackers.

Problems and swarming defenders surround the quarter-

back as defenses seek to take him out of his rhythm and game plan.

We realize that how the quarterback handles these problems will determine the outcome of the game.

How we handle problems in our life will determine how we grow in our faith and how we develop character in our spiritual life. God will use problems in our life to develop us.

It is important for us to remember that God is more concerned about our character than our comfort.

Here are five ways that God uses problems in our life.

First, God uses problems and adversity to direct you. Problems often point to a new direction and motivate us to change.

Sometimes God must use a problem or trial in your life to get us moving and shape our character.

Second, God uses problems and adversity to inspect you.

People are like tea bags. If you want to know what's inside them, just drop them into hot water. God will test your faith with problems. What does a problem or trial reveal about you?

Third, God uses problems and adversity to correct you. Psalm 119:71.

"It was good for me to be afflicted so that I might learn your decrees."

Some lessons we learn only through pain and failure.

Next, God uses problems and adversity to protect you. Genesis 50:20. "You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done."

A problem can be a blessing in disguise if

it prevents you from being harmed by something more serious."

Lastly, God uses problems and adversity to perfect you. Romans 5:4. "We know that suffering produces perseverance, character, and hope."

The bottom line is that God is at work in our life, even when we don't recognize it or understand it.

Recognizing the blitz as a quarterback is important, and recognizing God's love is even more as we continue in our faith journey.

Allow your problems to deepen your faith this week as you seek to glorify God.

It is my prayer that our Lord will bless you and keep you as you turn your obstacles into stepping stones.

(Editor's Note: Part of this devotional was taken from Doug Reese's: *Take It to The Next Level.*)



Word on the Street: What is your favorite Thanksgiving Day tradition?

By Sgt. Zachary Mott
3rd BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div.



Kevin Albrecht
Watertown, Wisc.
Sabre International Security

"Spending time with Family and friends."



Spc. Israel Saravia
Tampa, Fla.
HHC, 3rd STB, 3rd BCT, 4th Inf. Div.

"Turkey."



1st Lt. George Rolston
Conrad, Iowa
Co. B, 3rd STB, 3rd BCT, 4th Inf. Div.

"Getting together with Family and just being thankful for having them in my life."



Spc. Randi Wurdinger
Moalla, Ore.
HHT, 3rd BCT, 4th Inf. Div.

"We always get a smoked ham by Dosser."

News briefs

Sol, citizens assist IA, MND-B Soldiers to clear streets

Multi-National Division – Baghdad PAO
BAGHDAD – Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers, with help from Sons of Iraq members and citizens, took weapons off the streets of Baghdad Nov. 10-11.

Soldiers from 4th Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment, attached to the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Infantry Division, worked with the Iraqi Army's 3rd Battalion, 54th Brigade, 6th IA Division, to seize munitions in the Mansour district of Baghdad Nov. 10, at approximately 10 a.m. The munitions included an 85mm PG-7M, three 130mm OF-33s, a 115mm OF-27 and 15 pounds of unknown powder.

An Iraqi citizen reported to a local SoI that her children had found weapons inside of a mosque in Adhamiyah at roughly 5:30 p.m. Nov. 10. The SoI informed National Police and found three AK-47s, a machine gun, four rocket-propelled grenade launchers, six RPG-7 rockets, an Iranian-manufactured RPG, a 125mm sabot round, two OG-7 anti-personnel rounds, spare parts for PKCs, 15 RPG propellant chargers, 34 Dishka rounds and five anti-aircraft rounds.

In Mansour, a team of Soldiers with the 4th Infantry Division's Battery B, 4th Battalion, 42nd Field Artillery Regiment, attached to the 2nd BCT, 101st Airborne Division, found several weapons while searching a factory at approximately 10 a.m. Nov. 11. The weapons consisted of four 60mm mortars and three blasting caps.

A citizen north of Baghdad found a hidden store of munitions and turned them in to Troop C, 2nd Squadron, 14th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25 Infantry Division, at approximately 10:45 a.m. Nov. 11. The find totaled eight 125mm projectiles.

"U.S. Soldiers and their Iraqi counterparts continue to take munitions and weapons out of the hands of those who would harm the innocent," said Lt. Col. Steve Stover, spokesman, MND-B and 4th Inf. Div. "SoI also continue to have a role in improving security in and around Baghdad."

NPs, IA soldiers seize weapons caches

Multi-National Division – Baghdad PAO
BAGHDAD – Iraqi Army soldiers and Iraqi National Police seized three weapons caches north of Baghdad Nov. 14.

A tip by an Iraqi citizen led Iraqi policemen serving with 3rd Battalion, 4th Brigade, 1st National Police Division, to seize a weapons cache north of Baghdad at approximately 4 p.m. The cache consisted of three rocket motors, four 105mm artillery rounds, three rocket warheads, six ballistic windshields, and three RPG launchers.

At approximately 5:30 p.m., Iraqi Army soldiers serving with 3rd Battalion, 36th Brigade, 6th IA Division found two 155mm rounds north of Baghdad.

At approximately 7 p.m., IA soldiers serving with the 2nd Battalion, 36th Bde., 6th IA Div., discovered two rocket-propelled grenade rounds and a .50-caliber machine gun north of Baghdad.



U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. James Selesnick, combat camera, attached to 4th BCT, 10th Mtn. Div.

Ready on the line

BAGHDAD – Iraqi Policemen conduct rifle drills while participating in rifle and pistol marksmanship training during the Iraqi Police Leadership Course conducted at the Iraqi Police Patrol Station in Karada, Baghdad, Oct. 29. The Iraqi PLDC aim is to train IP on advanced policing skills as the shurtas prepare to take on future leadership positions as they move up through the ranks of the IP force.

ISF, MND-B Soldiers seize weapons

Multi-National Division – Baghdad PAO
BAGHDAD – Iraqi Army soldiers, Iraqi national policemen and Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers seized weapons caches in the Baghdad area Nov. 11-12.

Soldiers serving with Company A, 1st Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, found a 155mm round, four AK-47s, two ballistic plates and tactical gear in the West Rashid district of Baghdad at approximately 1:15 p.m. Nov. 11.

At approximately 4 p.m. Nov. 12, Iraqi Army soldiers informed Soldiers serving with Company C, 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, of a possible vehicle-borne improvised-explosive device. After further investigation, the MND-B Soldiers removed two 57mm mortar rounds and homemade ammonium nitrate from a parked vehicle in the neighborhood of Saalam in Baghdad.

Iraqi policemen serving with 2nd Battalion, 5th Brigade, 2nd National Police Division, found two Iranian-manufactured 107mm rockets and an unknown number of 7.62mm and PKC ammunition in an abandoned house in the New Baghdad district of Baghdad at approximately 11 p.m.

"Removing these munitions from the hands of extremists is vital in ensuring the safety of the Iraqi people," said Lt. Col. Steve Stover, spokesman, MND-B and the 4th Inf. Div. Our Soldier's efforts, along with those of their Iraqi counterparts, continue to make a difference every day."

MND-B Engineers disable IED, Soldiers detain wanted criminal

Multi-National Division – Baghdad PAO
BAGHDAD – Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers dismantled an improvised-explosive device and detained a suspected Special Groups criminal Nov. 13-14 in the Rashid district of southern Baghdad.

At approximately 3:30 p.m., Nov. 13, National Policemen from 3rd Battalion, 7th Brigade, 2nd National Police Division, discovered a roadside bomb and alerted Soldiers of Company E, 4th Battalion, 64th Armor Regiment, attached to the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, who dismantled and disabled an IED with a 155mm round rigged with a cell phone in the Doura community of the Rashid district. Thereafter, an explosive ordnance disposal team arrived and safely destroyed the bomb.

At approximately 12:15 a.m., Nov. 14, Soldiers of Co. C, 4th Bn., 64th Armor Regt., attached to 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., conducting a target raid in Rashid's Shurta community, detained a suspected Special Groups Criminal associated with a weapons trafficker known to operate in Baghdad. The patrol moved the suspect to a combat outpost to conduct additional questioning.

"The Soldiers of the 1st 'Raider' BCT continue to find caches and capture wanted criminals to protect the residents of the Rashid district and Baghdad," said Maj. Dave Olson, spokesperson for the 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div. "MND-B Soldiers are committed to teaching, coaching and mentoring the Iraqi Security Forces, as the ISF chase and pressure the enemy to provide a safe and secure environment for the Iraqi people."

ISF discover munitions, arrest criminal

Multi-National Division – Baghdad PAO
BAGHDAD – Iraqi Security Forces, partnered with Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers, arrested a criminal and discovered a mortar round Nov. 12 in the Rashid district of southern Baghdad.

At approximately 5 a.m. in the Hadar community, Iraqi Army soldiers partnered with Soldiers from the 2nd Battalion, 4th Infantry Regiment, attached to the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, MND-B, arrested a wanted criminal.

Iraqi National Police from the 1st Battalion, 5th Brigade, 2nd National Police Division, discovered a 120mm mortar round

while on patrol at approximately 7 p.m. in the Risalah community.

The NPs transported the munitions, to a nearby joint security station. An explosive ordnance disposal unit arrived on the scene to properly dispose of the round.

"The Iraqi Security Forces continue to find caches and capture wanted criminals proving themselves to the residents of the Rashid district that Government of Iraq security forces are the legal authority and quite capable of providing security throughout Baghdad," said Maj. Dave Olson, spokesperson for the 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B.



4th BCT, 10th Mtn. Div.

Local leaders, U.S. Soldiers bring micro-power to Zafaraniyah



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Jeremy Todd, 4th BCT, 10th Mtn. Div.

A contractor pushes a button to start a micro-power generator that will provide power to 300 Families in Zafaraniyah Nov. 1. Local government officials conducted ribbon-cutting ceremonies for two micro-power generators that day, one in Hayy Sindabad and one in Hayy Diyala. Leaders from 5th Battalion, 25th Field Artillery Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, assisted with the project and hosted a celebration feast after the ceremonies.

By Sgt. Jeremy Todd
4th BCT, 10th Mtn. Div.

FORWARD OPERATING BASE LOYALTY, Iraq – Local leaders and U.S. Soldiers brought sustained power sources to eastern Baghdad residents in two areas of Zafaraniyah when they officially started two micro-power generators Nov. 1.

Residents of Hayy Sindabad and Hayy Diyala gathered to celebrate installation of the micro-power generators, which will provide power to approximately 300 homes each – supplementing the main power grid.

“People of Diyala have been waiting for this day for a long time,” said Capt. Sean O’Brien, non-lethal effects officer for 5th Battalion, 25th Field Artillery, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (Light), Multi-National Division – Baghdad, following the Hayy Diyala grand opening. “We were extremely pleased to see such a large collection of residents arrive for the unveiling of the generator. Both civic leaders and Iraqi Security Forces attended the ceremony too.”

Prestigious leaders who attended the ribbon-cutting ceremonies included Ali Abdul Zahra Al Lamy, Zafaraniyah representative to the Karadah District Council; Sabah Hassan Al Rubaiyee, Hayy Diyala leader; Iraqi Lt. Col. Awad, battalion commander for 2nd Battalion, 37th Brigade, 9th Iraqi Army Division; and the contractor for the generators.

Other 5th Bn., 25th FA leaders joined O’Brien, a Sanborne, Iowa, native, for the ceremonies, including Lt. Col. Dennis Yates,

battalion commander, a Chesterfield, N.J., native, and Maj. Robert Machen, battalion executive officer from College Station, Texas. In addition, 5th Bn., 25th FA leaders coordinated with the contractor and local leaders, who prioritized which neighborhoods most needed the generators, and they hosted a celebration feast at Joint Security Station Zafaraniyah following the ceremonies.

“I am glad we were able to work with the neighborhood council and local Sheikhs to help bring this essential service to the people of Zafaraniyah,” said Capt. Lawrence Sekajipo, commander of Battery A, 5th Bn., 25th FA.

“Lack of electricity continues to be the most important issue for residents of Zafaraniyah. This is just one step and doesn’t eliminate the problem, but it will help ease frustrations.”

Sekajipo explained that the main power grid only provides electricity four hours a day. Therefore, micro-power generator projects that bring more sustainable power for longer periods of time are extremely important, especially for heat during winter months, he said.

As security continues to improve in Baghdad, residents will continue to see services such as sewer treatment and power return to the areas, claimed O’Brien. “With the help of Iraqi Security Forces (and) council leaders, and cooperation of southeastern Baghdad residents, it won’t be long before residents here begin to enjoy the fruits of their government’s labors,” he said.

Iraqi, U.S. communities sign pact for longterm partnership

By Staff Sgt. Matt Meadows
4th BCT PAO, 10th Mtn. Div.

FORWARD OPERATING BASE LOYALTY, Iraq – Karadah district local leaders and government officials of an Iowa town came together in partnership Oct. 28, creating a relationship that could bind their communities for years to come.

Members of the Karadah district council, with Dr. Mohamed Al-Rubeiy leading them, met via video teleconference with Mayor Tom Hanafan and other Council Bluffs, Iowa, city officials to sign an “Agreement of Friendship.”

“It’s good to be exchanging culture and ideas between the district councils,” expressed Al Rubeiy. “We pray from the bottom of our hearts to keep this friendship between our countries.”

“We believe the cooperation from this agreement will make the city of Council Bluffs and the district of Karadah stronger,” said Hanafan in the local newspaper.

The idea of linking the communities as sister cities was the brainchild of Lt. Col. Rick Burns, an Army Reserve civil affairs officer assigned to 418th Civil Affairs Battalion, who recently redeployed to Iowa after being attached to 4th Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (Light). The agreement was a product Burns’ hard work to establish a partnership between Karadah, where he worked with local leaders, and a city or a town in the United States, explained, Conrad Tribble, team leader for Baghdad 2 embedded Provincial Reconstruction Team.

Such a partnership could form a foundation for work and cooperation “that would last beyond his tenure in Iraq, a tenure he was very committed to,” explained Tribble. This friendship could reach “beyond our tenure here ... something Iraqis and Americans, at a sort of people-to-people level, could build on over the next several years.”

Tribble said Burns spent a lot of time and energy to develop support for the partnership in Council Bluffs, Iowa, which already had an established sister-city program. Council Bluffs, Iowa, citizens are open-minded and immediately supported the union, so Tribble helped put together the signing event via VTC, which he referred to as a launching of the

partnership between the two areas.

A lot of work went into getting to this point, and now everyone concerned is looking toward how to build on it in the future. Tribble said, Karadah is one of the most secure and stable districts in eastern Baghdad that “has really come back to life in the past couple of years as a commercial district. When you drive down the streets, shops are open; they are selling like crazy. There is a real economy going on there.”

Al-Rubeiy and the rest of the district council members are looking for support to continue building and progressing Karadah into an even greater commercial and business center within Baghdad. They are hoping the partnership with Council Bluff, Iowa, will aid them with these efforts through links and investments from international companies and stimulation of economic growth in Karadah, explained Tribble.

To assist Karadah representatives achieve these goals, the e-PRT plans to help send a delegation from Karadah to Council Bluffs, Iowa, next spring, said Tribble. The delegation will include two or three council members, two or three business representatives, several educational institution leaders, probably a couple non-government organization leaders; and municipality representative such as Public Works Department officials, he said.

The plan is for Karadah delegates to meet with their corresponding institution representative from Council Bluffs and surrounding area to see how they accomplish their tasks and goals.

“This will establish partnerships that will form the basis for future cooperation beyond the trip and (allow them to) have a look into how Americans in the middle of America organize themselves on things like business associations or universities and their linkages to the economy or how the public works department handles daily activities,” commented Tribble. “The learning experience and the exposure Karadah representatives will get, they will bring back here to hopefully use to improve their situation.”

Tribble said, Council Bluffs residents would benefit from the partnership too. He wholeheartedly agreed with Hanafan, who said the relationship with the people of Karadah gives

Council Bluffs citizens “a real concrete connection to Iraq ... and it gives them a real connection to people in Iraq and personalizes the people verses what they see in the newspapers.”

Tribble relayed that the Hanafan wanted local citizens to understand there are real people in Iraq who are doing good things for their country and are working with the United States. Tribble explained that, based on his time spent in other countries, “the people-to-people connections with Karadah delegates would give Council Bluff citizens enormous satisfaction and bring to them the realization that they are helping contribute to stabilizing and strengthening a county that has become very important to the United States.”

The relationship between the Baghdad 2 e-PRT and civil affairs is a seamless one, explained Tribble. Burns’ idea of linking Karadah representatives with connections he has in Iowa fit with the e-PRT programs of developing and promoting local business and economic growth, he said.

The “Agreement of Friendship and the partnership it formed is a winning proposition for everybody involved, expressed Tribble. It makes sense from the brigade, civil affairs and e-PRT perspectives and is something they can all feel good about putting together in cooperation, he said.

“Americans read about the security issue in Iraq all the time. When you think Iraq, you think security. Whether it’s good or it’s bad, it’s surge, it’s bombing, it’s improvements in security – that is the issue,” said Tribble. “My deal is that this stuff – building up people-to-people relationships and developing contacts among NGOs (non-governmental organizations) and business leaders and colleges and universities; that is the stuff real progress is made of, that is the stuff that all the security is meant to enable.”

“And so, developing this sort of program is why we are here in the first place, once we get past that security issue,” continued Tribble.

“This is the stuff that will last beyond us. This is stuff that will make the relationship solid and will help build the stability in Iraq that will enable us to withdraw troops and ... leave in good shape.”



1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div.

ICE Team manages projects to improve Iraqi quality of life

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

FORWARD OPERATING BASE FALCON, Iraq – Although capturing terrorists and finding weapon caches in Iraq make the headlines in the news, restoring essential services and key infrastructure elements to the citizens of Baghdad are considered by Soldiers of the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, Infrastructure Coordination Element Team as the real victories in the Global War on Terror.

All coordination issues, from brainstorming for a contract to the final inspections of a multi-million dollar construction project, are handled by the ICE Team, which works coordination issues between Iraqis and Coalition Forces, said Maj. Tom Clark, ICE chief, assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Special Troops Battalion.

The restoration begins and ends with coordination from a small team of Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers, contractors and Iraqi civilians.

“We make sure the construction in sector is done to standard,” added Clark, who is part of the 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div.

Staged at Forward Operating Base Falcon, Clark and his team of Soldiers and civilians work with members of the Government of Iraq and the District Council in southern Baghdad’s Rashid district.

Six Iraqi quality assurance and quality control inspectors help the ICE Team ensure contracts are completed to standard by holding local contractors accountable for the work produced.

Working with the ICE Team is a good team environment, said Spc. Gregory Chism, a fueler working as a clerk for the ICE, assigned to HHC, 1st STB, 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div. Everybody is really easy to get along with.

It is a different kind of accomplishment working with the ICE Team, said Chism, who deployed to Iraq as an infantryman with the Army National Guard in 2005.

“Working for the ICE Team feels like I am working for a purpose,” said the native of Tupelo, Miss. “It feels like I’m making a big difference.”

Bilingual, bicultural advisors also work with the ICE Team and provide technical expertise, stated Clark, who calls Copperas Cove, Texas, his home, but was born and raised in Singapore.



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. David Hodge, 1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div. Iraqi National Policemen raise an Iraqi flag during the Airport Road Renovation Ground Breaking Ceremony July 5 in the Rashid district of southern Baghdad.

“The BBAs are a natural bridge between us and the Iraqis,” Clark explained.

“They understand the Iraqi culture and how to negotiate with the locals.”

The ICE Team is charged with ensuring America’s tax dollars are spent wisely, said Clark, who has years of engineering experience in underdeveloped countries throughout the world.

“Our mission is very important because we are asked to be good stewards of the American taxpayer’s dollars as far as

construction and initiatives in the operational environment,” explained Clark, a 1994 graduate of West Point. “I’m really proud of my team. They have performed very well.”

One of the major projects coordinated by the ICE Team is the Airport Road Renovation Project, a multi-million dollar highway reconstruction effort paid for by the GoI.

As Iraq starts to open up again, it will open its doors to foreign investors, said Clark.

Another major breakthrough for the citizens of Rashid is the opening of a regional office for the Ministry of Labor Social Affairs in the Hayy Jihad community.

“There is a great need for providing support for the unemployed, widows, orphans and people who are on the fringes of society,” Clark explained. “The GoI is looking to extend that support through a headquarters in southern Baghdad.”

Last summer in Rashid, the ICE Team worked with numerous schools to get them ready for the start of the school year.

Clark said he believes when Iraqi people see the neighborhood schools in better condition, they understand the genuine concern CF has towards Iraq and its people.

Throughout their time in Iraq, Soldiers from the ICE Team encourage the local leaders to set goals and develop their own systems, said Master Sgt. Jason Staub, ICE noncommissioned officer-in-charge, assigned to HHC, 1st STB, 1st BCT.

“As we work with the Iraqi leadership, we make suggestions to them on how to manage ongoing projects and planning for future projects,” stated Staub, who hails from New Cumberland, Pa.

As the GoI and Iraqi Security Forces continue to gain more control of Rashid, Clark and his team must prepare to decrease the amount of CF involvement in operations.

“Basically we are working with our counterparts to ensure that when we leave Iraq, they are able to pick up where we leave off,” Clark stated. “There is a lot of work to do. Some departments are not quite manned for the synchronization piece, but they are steadily working on it.”

The Iraqis are breaking through more than 20 years of negligence from the Saddam Hussein regime, and the ICE Team is working with them to overcome Iraq’s out-dated infrastructure system, said Clark.

“It is heartening to see Iraqi patriots out there who put their lives at risk when things are bad in order to serve their own people,” Clark explained.

Raider Soldiers oversee Hayys Jihad, Furat Sons of Iraq’s 1st payday under GoI

From Sol Pg. 1

“We are bringing all these people into the IA and the National Police,” said Ali. “They are extremely important because we can train them, and they will be our eyes in the muhallahs. They will keep us better informed on the overall situation.”

Initially beginning in early 2007, Coalition Forces sponsored the Sons of Iraq program, an Iraqi initiative employing local citizens as security guards for their neighborhoods and communities.

The program, which grew stronger with the recognition and support of the Iraqi people, multiplied the presence of the ISF and increased security in the area, said Capt. Christopher Watkins, commander, Company C, 1st Bn., 22nd Inf. Regt., 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div.

“The concern with the SoI program transitioning into the ISF was that the Government of Iraq would not buy into it,” said Watkins, who hails from New Orleans. “The added security measure was virtually on the verge of disappearing.”

In light of the growing concern by the SoI members that the Iraqi government would disband the program, the ISF have, in fact, embraced it, said Watkins.

“They have allowed the supervisors to maintain their roles and will hold the Sons of Iraq accountable in the same way that Coalition Forces have always done,” he explained. “My guess is because it is yet another step in the right direction for Iraq — another step toward the Iraqi people securing their country for themselves.”

The payday activities are currently one of Multi-National Division – Baghdad’s top priorities as the SoI transition into the control of the GoI, said Watkins.

“This is a critical step that has to be completed,” he said. “We have to work those kinks out before we can move out. We are just making sure that the Iraqis are getting paid.”

Coalition Forces currently are responsible for overseeing the first payday for the SoI, providing advice and ensuring that the interests of both sides are served during this critical transition of the SoI into the GoI control, said Watkins, an armor officer with more than 11 years in the U.S. Army.

“We still need to keep in touch with the SoI as well as the ISF,” Watkins explained. “(SoI) must maintain their relationship with CF.”

The Soldiers of “Copperhead” Company, an armor company in a combined arms battal-

ion deployed to the Rashid district in southern Baghdad, also secured the multiple sights for the SoI payday activities and assisted the IA soldiers in maintaining order during the day-long events, said 1st Lt. Jonathan Muir, an infantry officer from Pittsburgh, assigned to Co. C, 1st Bn., 22nd Inf. Regt.

Platoons increased their presence in the muhallahs and surrounding areas to disrupt any potential enemy activity and to ensure that there were no interruptions to the payout process, said Muir.

The SoI in the Hayy Jihad and Hayy Furat communities will continue to man checkpoints and provide local security working in support of the Iraqi Army and Iraqi Police in the area, said 1st Lt. Nolan Maxwell, fires support officer assigned to Co. C, 1st Bn., 22nd Inf. Regt.

Coalition Forces are preparing for the eventual transition of the SoI to the GoI and ISF’s control since early 2008, and the Soldiers of Co. C began facilitating the process, registering members and creating personnel packets in mid-September, said Maxwell, a native of Santa Maria, Calif.

“This is the first payday under ISF control,” Maxwell explained. “We’re watching over, monitoring the payday activities, to

make sure all the Iraqis we are tracking are the same guys the ISF are tracking, but it’s not 100 percent accurate yet.”

Working with ISF and local community leaders from the joint security station in Jihad, the Jihad Neighborhood Advisory Council, and the Jihad and Furat Support Council Office, a reconciliation council, Maxwell said that Coalition Forces are comparing their master list to the ISF list of names to ensure that there are no discrepancies, and the SoI are paid their due wages.

“Our ISF counterparts are in direct contact with us, and so far there has been no problem,” he said. “They are doing a great job so far.”

In the past, the SoI have faced difficulties validating their organization to the ISF, but both sides seem to realize that this is the next step in uniting Iraq and are working together toward a solution, said Maxwell.

“I think it is pretty important we are employing a lot of the young adults in our area of operations,” said Maxwell, a 2006 graduate of the Virginia Military Institute.

“The more of them who have jobs, the less likely they will fall in with the gangs and begin conducting criminal activity with the special groups and terrorists.”



1000+ Sol complete 1st week of IP training



More than 1,000 Sons of Iraq completed their first week of Iraqi Police basic recruit training Nov. 6 at the al Furat Iraqi Police Training Center for their official Iraqi Police training as they prepare to become a Shurta.

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

BAGHDAD – More than 1,000 Sons of Iraq (Abna al-Iraq), Iraqi Police recruits, completed their first week of IP training at the al Furat Iraqi Police Training Center.

To kick off the program, 608 Sol registered for training at the al Furat Iraqi Police Training Center Oct. 31. Now with the first week of training completed, 1,031 Sol are integrated into the IP training program.

The second phase of training began Nov. 3 with the inclusion of 19 female recruits preparing themselves to be future Shurta.

“We have seen a great abundance of pride from the former Sons of Iraq and now IP re-

cruits,” said Staff Sgt. Jacque Hayes, non-commissioned officer in charge, IP training center, who facilitates the training program with Iraqi Police.

“I am impressed with the willingness of the recruits to learn and train as they train to become future Shurta,” added Hayes, a native of Louisville, Ky., who serves with the 233rd Military Police Company, 18th Military Police Brigade, Multi-National Division – Baghdad.

The Sol will continue to train for the next three weeks as they take on the challenge to become certified police.

Throughout the four-week basic recruit training the Sol will be trained in basic po-

lice skills. The first week’s sessions taught the recruits the basics of what a police officer stands for and included an orientation on how the Iraqi Police is organized and basic drill and ceremony techniques.

“We taught the students classes on human rights,” said Iraqi Police Lt. Sejed Swadde, an IP instructor. “It is important for the recruits to know when they are Shurta that all people are created equal and race or religious background should not mix with enforcing the law.”

Throughout the course, 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 and community policing techniques.

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 Sol 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 Sol into the Iraqi Police force demonstrates a positive commitment of reconciliation to the Sol by the Iraqi Government.

926th Eng. Bde.



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Medical team fits child for wheelchair

By 1st Lt. Angel Richardson
926th Eng. Bde. PAO

BAGHDAD – The 926th Engineer Brigade’s medical and chaplain sections planned and organized a pediatric wheelchair adjustment Oct. 28 for Ahmed Kadhem, a four-year-old boy and resident of Sadr City Sector 4. Ahmed Kadhem has been crippled since birth.

Brad Blauser linked up with Lt. Col. Carlton Fisher, chaplain, 926th Engineer Brigade, and Maj. Victor Estes, the brigade’s medical operations officer, to start phase one of the Sadr City pediatric wheelchair donation. Brad Blauser of “Wheel Chairs for Kids” have given many children throughout Iraq pediatric wheelchairs. During this phase, Estes brought in Capt. Scot Tebo, surgeon, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, to assist in the wheelchair fitting and coordinate with Nadam N., a member of the Sadr City Health Committee.

Every child who receives a wheelchair must be properly fitted before they can leave. Ahmed’s wheelchair was fitted by Blauser and a medical team from the 926th Eng. Bde. and 3rd BCT. The team received a lot of assistance from Nadam N.

“Nadam searched out and identified Ahmed, then coordinated to get the child to the DAC Hall with his parents,” Estes said.

The second phase of the Wheelchair donation will be next month. Brad Blauser will bring in more than 100 wheelchairs for handicapped children in Baghdad.

“I love healing and reconciliation,” Fisher said. “This project provides help to children who cannot walk. The project also engenders peace making. If we want to win the war against terrorism and promote a free republic in Iraq, peace-making is the answer.”



U.S. Army photo by Maj. Victor Estes, 926th Eng. Bde. Ahmed smiles as Brad Blauser, his parents and District Advisory Council members, properly adjusts his new wheel chair. Ahmed is four years old and has been crippled since birth.



2nd BCT, 1st Inf. Div.

Dagger security detail hits streets

By Sgt. Brian Tierce
2nd HBCT PAO, 1st Inf. Div.

BAGHDAD – The streets of Baghdad are sprawling with business. As security takes hold in the Iraqi capital, Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers of the 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division security detail are hitting the streets with their counterparts.

The purpose of their current mission is to get familiar with the routes they will be navigating over the next year as the Dagger Brigade works to provide security and transition even more of that security to their Iraqi counterparts.

“Situational awareness is one of the most basic, fundamental assets Soldiers can have to keep themselves safe,” said Staff Sgt. Galo Roman, a New York City native with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd HBCT. “We need this time to learn these routes to ensure we don’t make a mistake, which could cause Soldiers undue harm.”

A typical day for the Soldiers currently consists of early morning briefings followed by a full schedule of convoys throughout the brigade’s area of responsibility.

“It is a lot different now than the last time I was

here, that is for sure,” said Sgt. Dustin Lerch, HHC, 2nd HBCT, of Farmersberg, Iowa. “Even with the added security, it is still a war zone, and you have to be prepared for anything at any time.”

Another aspect of the current mission of personal security is the mission the Soldiers will face in the coming year.

A key part of the rebuilding process involves key leaders engaging the local leaders of the community, which involves trips into the community to conduct these exchanges.

“We will definitely get to see Baghdad up close and personal during this deployment,” said Roman. “But for me, I think there will be more handshakes than firefights this time around.”

It won’t be long now before the Daggers assume full responsibility of their area of operations from the 2nd “Strike” Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), but with the knowledge that is being exchanged between the Soldiers, the transition is expected to be smooth.

“This is actually the unit I served with during my last tour,” added Lerch. “They are top notch, and we consider ourselves to be just as good so I expect no problems as we take over the area.”



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Brian Tierce, 2nd HBCT PAO, 1st Inf. Div. Col. Joseph Martin, commander, 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, and Sgt. 1st Class Bill Collins, who serves with the brigade’s personal security detail, talk prior to a recent mission.

Local, ISF, MND-B leaders attend bridge reopening



U.S. Army photo courtesy 1st Bn., 18th Inf. Regt., 2nd HBCT, 1st Inf. Div.

The Al Aima Bridge, which has been closed since a deadly stampede in 2005, reopened in the Kadhamiyah district of northwest Baghdad Nov. 11 as a result of the combined efforts of local leaders and Iraqi Security and Coalition Forces.

By Sgt. Brian Tierce
2nd HBCT, 1st Inf. Div.

BAGHDAD – Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers of the 1st Combined Arms Battalion, 18th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, attended a bridge reopening ceremony in the Kadhamiyah district of northwest Baghdad Nov. 11.

The Al Aima Bridge has been closed since 2005 when a deadly stampede caused the deaths of nearly 1,000 Shiite pilgrims.

The reopening was more than just a ribbon-cutting event, said Lt. Col. John Vermeesch, the commander of 1st CAB, 18th Inf. Regt., who oversaw the ceremony.

“The opening of this bridge is symbolic of the unity in Baghdad,” said Vermeesch. “Opening this bridge also indicates sectarian relations and security have improved due to the hard work of local leaders and Coalition Forces.”

The ceremony marking the reopening of the bridge was a festive event and included an

Iraqi Army band and ceremonial sheep sacrifice. The Mayor of Baghdad, along with the major Iraqi Army and Iraqi Police commanders of the Karkh District, was in attendance for the ceremony. Before the ceremony, National Policemen from the 2nd NP Division and Iraqi Army soldiers from the 3rd, Battalion, 22nd Brigade, 6th IA Division, cleared and secured the bridge.

“Iraqi Security Forces have played an instrumental role in not only making an event like this possible but also in helping the bridge reconstruction project run smoothly,” said Maj. Koné Faulkner, spokesman, 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Inf. Div.

The event went off without incident and traffic began flowing across the bridge.

“The people were in a celebratory mood, waving Iraqi flags as they drove across the bridge,” said Vermeesch. “This event, along with others scheduled for the future in the Kadhamiyah district of Northwest Baghdad, will continue to promote security and good sectarian relations in the area.”

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

3rd BCT, 4th Inf. Div. 

Mountaineers erect 24 cabins in 8 days



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

Soldiers from the 64th Brigade Support Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, work on a cabin at Camp Taji Oct. 11. Each building is 8 feet wide, 16 feet long and 8 feet high. They have one door, no windows, are wired for electricity and weather proofed. The Soldiers designed and built the cabins from scratch. A total of 24 cabins were built by Soldiers from the 64th BSB.

By Sgt. Jerry Saslav

3rd BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div.

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers completed 24 plywood cabins 19 Oct. at Camp Taji to protect Iraqi Army soldiers from the elements on checkpoints in northeast Baghdad.

“They’re on 24-hour missions over there; it helps them get out of the weather, out of the sun,” said Sgt. 1st Class Dwain Johns, in charge of the general supply office for the 64th Brigade Support Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division.

Johns, a native of Mercersburg, Pa., said each building is 8 feet wide, 16 feet long and 8 feet high. They have one door, no windows and are wired for electricity and weather proofed. The cabins are built in Taji and moved to their final destinations so they have to be built to withstand being moved by a forklift and trailer.

Johns said the idea for the cabins came from Col. John Hort, a native of Fayetteville, N.C., and commander of 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division.

Hort wanted 24 cabins built by Oct. 28. The task fell upon the capable shoulders of Sgt. Johns and his crew.

“I have all the classes of supply; I have lumber, pretty much you name it I can get my hands on it,” said Johns.

While getting the materials was no problem, Johns had to rely on his own skill to accomplish the task.

“I made the plans. They told me what

they wanted. I sat down with a piece of scratch paper and started figuring everything out,” said Johns, who has a side business doing remodeling and construction in Colorado Springs, Colo.

After collecting the necessary supplies, Johns and seven fellow NCOs built one cabin as a prototype. The prototype met all the requirements. Soldiers from each company in the battalion assisted with the construction when time was available.

Johns divided the Soldiers with construction experience into three teams to train and supervise the crews.

“We taught Soldiers how to swing a hammer properly. We had Soldiers who’d never worked with power tools. I’d give them a safety class and my NCOs would watch them,” said Johns.

There was competition between the sections as to who could finish each shed first, but the winning section would then help the other teams finish their cabins.

This teamwork enabled the Mountaineers to build all 24 cabins in eight days.

“They (the Soldiers) loved this detail,” said Johns. “Everyone keeps asking me when I’m going to start the shed detail again. They loved it.”

Once completed, the cabins were transported to Iraqi Army checkpoints in the Adhamiyah and Sadr City districts of Baghdad.

“They (the Iraqi Army) keep asking for them; we keep sending more out,” said Johns. “I haven’t heard any complaints.”

Gol makes 1st SOI payment in Adhamiyah district

from **Payday Pg. 1**

and requires expensive medication. He lost his job and eventually volunteered for the neighborhood security group.

“There were no jobs because of the violence,” said Mahidi. “This was a good opportunity to get rid of the bad guys, to make security for the area and to find a job.”

Now Mahidi waited in line to be paid. The wait was longer than the payroll process.

The SOI members waited until they were called into a room, where they lined up to have their names checked against the rosters kept by the GoI. If everything checked out, they waited in another line, where their SOI identification cards and their national identification cards were checked again.

If everything matched, the men then placed their thumbs on an ink pad and left their fingerprint on a roster to indicate they had been paid. Once completed, they were handed their money, which they quickly counted. Then, it was off to the final line, manned by MND-B Soldiers, who double checked that their former employees had been successfully paid.

While Mahidi and the others waited to be paid, retired Iraqi Army Maj. Gen. Mudher Almaala, vice chairman of the Iraqi Formal Committee for National Reconciliation, stopped by to check on the process.

Seeing the lines, he called for all the men to gather around him. He reassured the men that the government would pay their salaries as long as they stayed in the SOI. Some men would be brought into the security forces if they passed a background check and had not committed any terrorist or criminal acts. If they didn’t want to or were not able to stay in the SOI, the government would still help them.

“Those who have a degree will be given government jobs. Those who do not have much of a degree or any trade can go to a vocational school.

The Iraqi Government realized that the (SoI) did their part, a good job really, bringing security and stability on the ground in Baghdad,” said Almaala. “For the effort they put in, some of them sacrificed their lives and some of them got wounded, the government realized they have a good role really, a positive role bringing security in Baghdad.”

After waiting a few hours, it was finally Mahidi’s turn. He sped through the process in less than 15 minutes. He counted his money; it was all there. He was happy the government kept its word.

“The government will not abandon these people. The government will provide employment opportunities for these people ... as a reward for their sacrifice and their duties,” said Almaala.



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

Abdul Hadi Fathallah Mahidi, a Sons of Iraq member from the Adhamiyah district of Baghdad, receives his monthly salary from Iraqi Authorities at Combat Outpost Apache in the Adhamiyah District of Baghdad Nov. 13. The payday activity marked the first time the Government of Iraq paid the SOI since it assumed responsibility for the organization from Coalition Forces in October.



2nd BCT, 25th Inf. Div.

Comanche Troop Soldiers help recruit new IP officers

By Cpl. Cerone Waddy

2nd Sqdn. 14th Cav. Regt. 2nd SBCT, 25th Inf. Div.

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – Soldiers from Troop C, 2nd Squadron, 14th Cavalry Regiment “Strykehorse,” 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team “Warrior,” 25th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, hosted a recruiting drive at Combat Out Post Falahat, northwest of Baghdad, Oct. 30 for Sons of Iraq (Abna al-Iraq) members.

Since the Government of Iraq took control of the SoI, many of its members look to pursue positions with the local Iraqi Police or elsewhere within the Iraqi Security Forces.

Coalition Forces, along with the GoI, came to an agreement to transition many SoI guards into ISF positions. Local leaders were asked to select potential candidates for the selection process.

“We asked the sheiks to select their best men for IP positions based on health, physicality and background,” said 1st Lt. Daniel Yun, a native of Potomac, Md., executive officer for Troop C.

Approximately 200 applicants showed up to the COP Falahat to apply for an IP position. The screening process was completed with five different stations. The first and last stations were processing stations. Here, applications went thru a Quality Assurance and Quality Control screening to ensure all entries were filled out correctly.

After completion of their paperwork, the applicants moved on to a medical screening.

The medical exam was to ensure none of the applicants had any ailments which may preclude them from performing their duties as an IP, said Capt. Drew Webb, a native of Monterrey, Calif., who is a physician assistant assigned to 2nd Sqdn. 14th Cav. Regt.

Once screened, all applicants were put through a rigorous physical fitness test consisting of push-ups, sit-ups, a 100-meter sprint and a 1,500-meter run.

“I think, overall, we were really impressed with the results of the fitness test,” said Sgt. Kristobal Takawo, a native of Palau, who serves as the forward signal support noncommissioned officer for Troop C. “I underestimated the grit and determination a lot of them had.”

After the applicants finished the screening process; everyone celebrated the success of the drive.

“The local area sheiks and leaders did an outstanding job with selecting their applicants,” said Capt. Travis Shain, a native of Victoria, Texas, commander of Troop C. “There was a tremendous showing of support from the local leaders and sheiks from the immediate area as well as the surrounding communities.”



U.S. Army photo by Cpl. Cerone Waddy, 2nd Sqdn., 14th Cav. Regt., 2nd SBCT, 25th Inf. Div.

Sgt. Kristobal Takawo, a native of Palau, grades an applicant during the fitness test portion of the Iraqi Police screening process at Combat Out Post Falahat, northwest of Baghdad, Oct. 30. Soldiers from Troop C, 2nd Squadron, 14th Cavalry Regiment “Strykehorse,” 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team “Warrior,” 25th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, hosted a recruiting drive for Sons of Iraq (Abna al-Iraq) members who wish to transition into the IP force. Takawo is a forward signal support noncommissioned officer assigned to Troop C, 2nd Sqdn. 14th Cav. Regt.

Sab al Bour residents ‘see light at end of tunnel’

By Ken Griffin

2nd SBCT PAO, 25th Inf. Div.

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – Only a year ago, reliable electricity in Sab al Bour was just a dream.

The city, just north of Baghdad along the Grand Canal, was practically deserted, with only diehard residents and pockets of insurgents sticking around in the dark.

As of Nov. 8, residents in this small agricultural city are literally seeing the light at the end of the tunnel, according to Sheik Nadeem Hatem al Tamimi, an influential leader in the area. Outside the city’s new electrical substation, the sheik spoke literally and metaphorically about the town’s emergence from darkness.

“We had evil forces trying to kill Iraqis ... and they destroyed all essential services,” he said, describing insurgent attempts to control the city and population. “Today, we are calling for unity between all people of Iraq.”

The top Coalition Forces leader in the Taji area said he believes peace and stability starts with electricity and was at the event to congratulate Sab al Bour on its achievement.

“Reliable and sustainable access to power allows businesses to flourish, water to crops, schools to educate our chil-

dren and light on the dark nights of the Iraqi winter,” said Col. Todd McCaffrey, commander of 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team “Warrior,” 25th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad. “Sab al Bour is now postured to accept the return of its rightful residents.”

The rightful residents McCaffrey referred to is a large portion of Sab al Bour’s citizens that fled due to violence and lack of essential services. The internally displaced people are now returning at a rate of up to 50 Families per week.

If the substation opening only meant more electricity, it would be meaningful enough. But the impact of this substation doesn’t stop with keeping the lights on. It will have a direct and immediate positive effect on other essential services in the area.

First, there’ll be more drinkable water. Purification stations, of course, rely on electricity to produce potable water.

Even more significantly, irrigation pumps in the area will work harder and longer. Soon, passing helicopters will notice large swaths of farmland turn from a dirty brown to lush green, all thanks to the substation, said Capt. Mark Gillman, the engineer at Warrior Brigade in charge of electrical reconstruction.

“The pump station, due to power improvements, will irrigate thousands of acres of farmland with little interruption from blackouts,” said Gillman, who provided oversight and expertise for the otherwise Iraqi-ran project.

Because the Sab al Bour area depends heavily on agriculture, the local economy should get a noticeable boost. Gillman, who is originally from Las Vegas, explained how all of the intertwined projects, which depend on electricity, are part of a “tailored network.”

“It started with the Ministry of Electricity, which brought up to 30 people in here at a time. They really set the pace for the other ministries,” Gillman said. “There was a lot of Government of Iraq support for this small, mostly Sunni community.”

Attendees marked the substation’s opening with a ribbon cutting, tour and then singing and dancing.

As they celebrated their victory and announced the lights were on to stay, they proclaimed they could move on to other goals.

“Now we will ask for other things – forgiveness and unity,” said the last speaker at the event. “Let’s now bring together all Sunni and Shia in Iraq.”

Combat Avn. Bde., 4th Inf. Div.



Soldiers conduct 'Fat Cow' operations for continued sustainment of MND-B forces



Soldiers refuel two Apache attack helicopters with an Extended Range Fuel System II integrated Chinook helicopter at Camp Taji Nov. 10.



Sgt. Tyler Woodworth, Chinook helicopter crew chief, Company B, 2nd Battalion, 4th Aviation Regiment, Combat Aviation Brigade, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, watches as two Apache attack helicopters takeoff after being refueled by a Extended Range Fuel System II integrated Chinook cargo helicopter during a training exercise at Camp Taji Nov. 10.



Two Soldiers from Company E, 2nd Battalion, 4th Aviation Regiment, Combat Aviation Brigade, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, refuel an Apache attack helicopter during an Extended Range Fuel System II training exercise at Camp Taji Nov. 10. The ERFS is a system integrated into a Chinook helicopter, or "Fat Cow," that provides increased mission flexibility by providing a highly mobile forward area fuel source.

Story and photos by Sgt. Jason Dangel CAB PAO, 4th Inf. Div.

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – Soldiers from the Combat Aviation Brigade, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, executed a training exercise at Camp Taji Nov. 10 aimed to provide added versatility to refueling operations for both aviation and ground units operating in and around the Iraqi Capital.

With the implementation of the CH-47F Chinook cargo helicopter-based portable refueling system, respectively called the "Fat Cow," the brigade's refueling mission can now extend to virtually any location in theatre.

In an attempt to offset the heavy demand placed on MND-B's various fixed refueling points, the Fat Cow will enable both forward-deployed air and ground assets to conveniently receive fuel directly from a Chinook integrated with a crash resistant internal 2,400-gallon fuel apparatus called the Extended Range Fuel System II.

"The helicopter can use the fuel itself or it can pump the fuel into other aircraft or vehicles. It provides the CAB the ability to place a Forward Area Refueling Point anywhere on the battlefield with a suitable landing zone. The capability can extend the reach of any aviation mission," said Capt. Michael Cerchio, commander, Company E, 2nd Battalion, 4th Avn. Regiment, from Walden, N.Y.

This adaptable system makes it possible to set-up a fuel point anywhere the Chinook can land, he said, and for the CAB, this means aviation crews now have the ability to extend the range of attack or assault missions by providing a fuel stop that otherwise would not be there.

Despite the fact this mobile system is extremely

convenient, it is limited in terms of how much fuel and security personnel it can carry. The prescribed range of the aircraft must also be taken into account when conducting Fat Cow operations. Lengthy mission specific planning is required when considering this type of operation in a combat setting.

In a tactical environment, the Forward Area Refueling Equipment, or FARE, can be set up in as little as 15 minutes, but during Friday's exercise the set-up time took longer due to the implementation of additional safety features, Cerchio explained.

"Speed is extremely essential for the Fat Cow mission," he continued. "Anytime an aircraft is stationary on the ground in a combat operation, it is vulnerable. A great deal of pre-mission planning goes into any Fat Cow mission to limit the amount of time aircraft spend on the ground."

the Fat Cow mission is extremely applicable and beneficial on the modern battlefield, said Sgt. Tyler Woodworth, a native of Missoula, Mo., who is a Chinook crew chief and participant of the training exercise, assigned to Company B, 2nd Bn. 4th Avn. Regt. This training exercise is just another example of the brigade's combat power and sustainment capabilities, he said.

A popular phrase heard around the U.S. Army is "We train like we fight." For the Soldiers of the CAB, this mentality remains part of daily operations even when engaged in a war against a determined yet dwindling enemy.

This was the first time the 'Iron Eagle' brigade performed the exercise in combat, adding yet another bullet to its long list of combat aviation capabilities that are used to benefit the Soldiers of the 4th Inf. Div. and MND-B.

CONNECTING CULTURES ABROAD

Cultural borders extended during Iraqi, American VTC



Teachers and school children from al Khartoum Primary School, an Iraqi grade school in the Rashid district of southern Baghdad, file into the Forward Operating Base Falcon Morale, Welfare and Recreation Center Nov. 12 for a video teleconference with American students from Nolanville, Texas.

Story and photos by Sgt. David Hodge
1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div.

FORWARD OPERATING BASE FALCON, Iraq – “All for Iraq” adorns the light blue flags held by Iraqi children Nov. 12 as they recited Iraq’s National Anthem during a live video teleconference at the Forward Operating Base Falcon’s Morale, Welfare, and Recreation Center.

The cultural exchange video teleconference between Iraqi and American children began with the opening remarks from Maj. Gen. Jeffery Hammond, the commanding general of the 4th Infantry Division and Multi-National Division – Baghdad.

“We have a program in Baghdad with 31 Iraqi and American schools partnered with 11 different states in America,” Hammond explained to the teachers, students and leaders on both sides of the world. “The School Partnership Program continues to build and grow in all directions.”

More than 20 Iraqi children from the al Khartoum Primary School in the Shurta community of southern Baghdad gathered at Forward Operating Base Falcon to participate in a question-and-answer VTC with a group of their peers from Nolanville Elementary School in central Texas.

“My experience is that the young school-age children in Iraq are no different than the children in America,” stated Hammond, who hails from Hattiesburg, Miss, who explained that the program is designed to foster communications between Iraqi and American youths and develop a better understanding of the different cultures.

During the exchange, the two sides asked questions and made remarks on a multitude of subjects, such as school, life and culture.

“I was very pleased to talk to the American students, and I was well educated on how their educational system works,” said Aseel Mazin, a 12-year-old girl, in what is the Iraqi equivalent to 7th Grade in American schools. “I got to learn what their daily schedule is like too.”

The conference offered a chance for Iraqi teachers and students to experience the cultural warmth and good will the Americans exude, said Maj. T.J. Reed, civil affairs officer assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div.

“We will foster a cultural change to a time of enlightenment – not to change Iraqis to be like Americans but to exercise their freedoms and make their own decisions,” explained Reed, who calls Las Cruces, N.M., his home.

Interactions between the schools will continue to blossom and extend into high school and college for both sets of children, said Reed.

Many of the student’s parents, residents of Nolanville, a neighboring town of Fort Hood, are servicemembers currently deployed with the 4th Inf. Div. in Iraq. In fact, Reed’s 11-year-old daughter, Jordan, participated in the event with the rest of her class.

“Jordan was very excited about finding out what her father experiences on a daily basis, interacting with Iraqis,” Reed said. “She is always interested in the stories I tell her about life at home in America being different than life in Iraq.”

Following a question by an American student about the Arabic language, an Iraqi child asked why Americans do not learn the Arabic language in their school.

“It’s not really in our curriculum,” answered Jordan, whose response brought about laughter.

Hand-painted banners displaying cultural symbolism and national pride filled the television screen after the question-and-answer portion of the VTC.

Hammond said he believes the children are a nation’s greatest credentials, and that is a major factor in the Government of Iraq and Coalition Forces’ decision to invest in schools across Baghdad.

During the past year, he added, Coalition Forces renovated approximately 267 schools and more than 350 this year.

A GoI official offered his thanks to Coalition Forces for helping with the Iraqi educational system.

“This meeting represents a good will between these children,” said Satter Muhammed, deputy general of the Karkh II School District. “Be assured that Iraqis’ memory is deep, and we will never forget this. We will pay our friends back.”

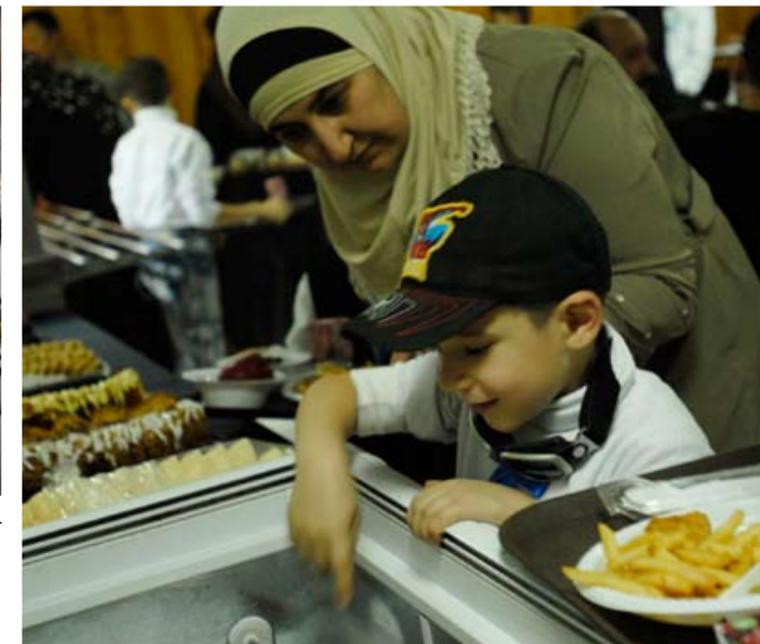
The Soldiers of the 1st “Raider” Brigade and the 4th Inf. Div. headquarters are currently serving a combat deployment in support of MND-B and Operation Iraqi Freedom.



School children from the al Khartoum Primary School, a grade school for children in the Rashid district of southern Baghdad, recite Iraq’s National Anthem during a cultural exchange with American school children from Nolanville Elementary School in Central Texas Nov. 12. Maj. Gen. Jeffery Hammond, the commanding general of the 4th Infantry Division and Multi-National Division – Baghdad, hosted the event via video teleconference between the Iraqis visiting Forward Operating Base Falcon and students from Nolanville, Texas. The good will event is part of MND-B’s School Partnership Program that connects 31 Iraqi and American schools from Baghdad and 11 different states from the United States of America.



Iraqi school girls enjoy french fries and chicken nuggets and ice cream Nov. 12 at the Raider Café Dining Facility on Forward Operating Base Falcon, Iraq.



An Iraqi boy, a student from al Khartoum Primary School in the Rashid district of southern Baghdad, picks out his favorite flavor of ice cream during dinner at the Forward Operating Base Falcon Dining Facility Nov. 12.

Day in the life ...

Military policemen serve special mission with canine counterparts

By Staff Sgt. Matt Meadows

4th BCT PAO, 10th Mtn. Div.

FORWARD OPERATING BASE LOYALTY, Iraq – Many Soldiers work outside of their military occupational specialties when they deploy to Iraq; but for some who do not, it's a dog's life – or something very close to it.

Although a dog's life is associated with an easy and lazy existence, that's not the life of a military working dog or the military professionals who handle them. They earn their money each and every day.

"We give them as much down time over here as we possibly can, but still, training has to be conducted because it's a diminishing skill," explained Staff Sgt. Robert Moore, a specialized search dog handler and kennel master from Charleston, W.Va. "We try to put them on odors every day so that we can keep them in tune to what they are doing."

Deployed in support of Multi-National Division – Baghdad's 4th Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division units at Forward Operating Bases Loyalty and Rustamiyah, Moore said MWDs and their handlers' schedules vary according to requests from various maneuver units they support. Therefore, keeping the dogs on a regular schedule doesn't always work out, but he at least tries to feed his dog, Wisky, about the same times every day: once in the morning and once in the evening.

"Everything revolves around what missions need to be done," commented Moore, who is assigned to 217th Military Police Detachment at Fort Lee, Va., and attached to Multi-National Division – Baghdad's 4th Infantry Division Provost Marshal Office while deployed to Baghdad. "We are Soldiers just like everybody else. We have to mold (our schedules) around missions the way that everybody else does."

Moore has been in the Army for 19 years and has been a SSD handler since 1997. Although he just deployed here Oct. 27, he has previously deployed 10 times and has served in Surinam, Honduras, Ecuador, Peru, Kosovo, Bosnia, Kuwait, United Arab Emirates and Iraq. He has worked with his canine partner, Wisky, a 2-year-old Weimaraner, since March 2008, when he went to specialized search dog handler school at Lackland Air Force Base in Texas.

Most of the MWDs here are used for explosives detection, explained Moore, but there are four main areas for which the military uses dogs: patrol narcotics detection dogs, patrol explosive detection dogs, specialized

search dogs and combat tracker dogs.

MWDs might as well wear stripes too because their handlers put many of the same expectations on them as they do Soldiers. They even fall into formation with them.

"We treat them just like Soldiers. They get a place in the line just like everybody else," explained Moore. "We give them their rank through the respect that we show them. Through the stuff that they do, we give them the respect of the next rank higher."

Air Force Staff Sgt. Travis Hazelton, a MWD handler from Sachse, Texas, in the fifth month of his second deployment to Iraq, is assigned to the 37th Security Forces Squadron at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas. He said the dogs all have different personalities, and he agrees with Moore about the MWDs being just like Soldiers.

Hazelton compared MWDs to privates, who are brand new to the Army. They must be taught everything about their jobs, beginning with the most basic principles, because they don't know anything, he said, adding that MWDs need constant training to keep them focused on performing their missions. Hazelton said handlers training a MWD is never complete and no day as a handler is ever the same.

"There is always something different you can do. You are never actually done training your dog because there is always more stuff you can do or stuff you can fine tune," explained Hazelton, whose MWD is a 10-year-old German Shepherd patrol explosive dog named Sinda. "The effort you put into your dog shows in the long run."

Just as all MWDs have different personalities, their relationships with their handlers take on various forms. Hazelton said Sinda acts like a 3-year-old child half of the time. He described their relationship as a partnership.

"Like a regular cop would have a partner," he explained, "he's like my partner on the road."

However, Spc. Jacob Evans said he and his German Shorthair Pointer named Muddy share a father-son type of relationship. Evans is not a military policeman but is a combat engineer trained as a MWD handler. He is from Dover, Tenn., and is attached to 4th Inf. Div. from 67th Engineer Canine Detachment at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo. Muddy is trained in explosives detection dog.

Moore also has a special bond with his MWD. Wisky "can be a knucklehead at times, but he is a driven dog," he said. "When he is on mission, he is on mission. His little eccen-



U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Matt Meadows, 4th BCT PAO, 10th Mtn. Div.

Air Force Staff Sgt. Travis Hazelton (right), a military working dog handler from Sachse, Texas, observes as his dog, Sinda, "attacks" Staff Sgt. Robert Moore, a specialized search dog handler and kennel master from Charleston, W.Va., during aggression training Nov. 12.

tricitities, like everybody else has, is hard to describe."

Handlers are responsible for feeding, medications and everything their dogs need, so forming a bond when one is with their dog every day automatically happens, he said.

"He relies on you for everything that he needs, where you rely on him for everything he does – for finding things that may harm other Soldiers," expressed Moore. "You talk to them just like anybody else. It's just like if you're with somebody every day, like your squad mates or people who are in your team that you've worked with for a whole year – that bond comes together. Yes, it's a very strong bond."

The bonds and realistic daily training transfer to mission success. A handler really has to know his MWD's habits and movements when performing their jobs, said Moore.

"You have got to know any little eccentricities that he has because you have to know his change in behavior, you have to know his personality," explained Moore. "Of course, a dog can't talk, so you need to know if that dog is doing something he is supposed to do so that you detect if he is 'on something' or not. Is he just searching? Is he on something?"

Evans is nearing the end of his deployment and said he and Muddy have conducted at least 70 missions. A successful mission does not necessarily equate to finding caches of explosives.

"You don't always find something with your dog when you go out. Nine times out of 10, you actually do not find something," explained Evans. "But as long as nobody gets hurt, that is a success to me."

Not all MWDs are aggressive, and they go through aggression training, said Evans, adding that he didn't think many people realized that. In fact, this allows MWD teams to enter schools.

MWDs are a great asset to Coalition Forces because of their detection capabilities. Wisky and other MWDs simply are able to find things humans cannot, and that still excites Moore and keeps him going.

"It is just an added advantage that we have for our forces over here using the dogs because of what the dogs can do. The things that these dogs can do are just amazing," exclaimed Moore. "It is an interesting job."

"I would not be in the Army still if I wasn't a dog handler. The job is awesome. You can't beat it."

Pizza guy delivers smiles to MND-B Soldiers



By Sgt. Jason Thompson
MND-B PAO

BAGHDAD – Some like it plain. Some favor more supreme. Others enjoy it topped with lots of different meats while others choose more vegetables. There's no debating it, pizza is among the most popular foods in America. With so many different combinations of toppings, who could resist a tempting slice of pizza?

Americans on average eat approximately 23 pounds, or 46 large slices, of pizza per person every year, according to a market research survey.

Now, with the help of one Multi-National Division – Baghdad chef, customers to the 4th Infantry Division's Ironhorse Oasis Dining Facility are able to enjoy a slice of home with fresh homemade pizza.

Early in his deployment, Staff Sgt. Michael Hood, a Belzoni, Miss., native, and senior cook with Headquarters Support Company, Division Special Troops Battalion, 4th Inf. Div., saw the opportunity to provide a piece of home to the Soldiers serving in Baghdad and began a pizza night, cooking fresh homemade pizza with everyday ingredients already supplied in the dining facility.

"While I was home on mid-tour leave and cooking for my family, I thought of the idea to bring a piece of home back here to Iraq for the rest of the Soldiers," said Hood. "I purchased cooking sheets, pizza cutters and other supplies that we didn't have here before and I shipped them here so I could cook pizza for these Soldiers."

"At first I was only cooking 10-15 pizzas during an occasional meal, but as it continued to grow more popular among the Soldiers eating here, we've had to cook more and more every meal that it is offered," Hood continued. "Now, it's at a point where we are making it a themed night and every Friday and Saturday we're cooking upward of 100-150 pizzas per meal."

Hood said cooking has long been a passion of his and often prefers cooking over other various forms of recreation.

"In my kitchen, I'm comfortable. It's my zone where I can disappear and relax," said Hood. "However, even more enjoyable than simply cooking is watching the reactions of the Soldiers who come in here and are enjoying the food."

The reaction from the Soldiers has been positive as they welcome the variety in the menu.

"I loved the pizza," said Sgt. Greg Kunkle, a team leader with the personnel security detachment for Command Sgt. Maj. John Gioia, the senior enlisted leader of 4th Inf. Div. and MND-B.

"It is a great change from the normal menu, and it definitely brings a smile to my face after a long, hard day on the roads."

Whether you prefer deep-dish or a thin crust, extra cheese or light sauce, the combinations are endless and people across the globe are enjoying the great flavors of pizza – and now, Soldiers serving in Baghdad have an opportunity to share their own slice of the pie.



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Jason Thompson, MND-B PAO
Staff Sgt. Michael Hood, a Belzoni, Miss., native, and senior cook with Headquarters Support Company, Division Special Troops Battalion, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, helped inspire a new homemade pizza dinner night at the 4th Infantry Division's Ironhorse Oasis dining facility on Camp Liberty.

1st sergeant overcomes adversity to set example, mentor Soldiers



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

FORWARD OPERATING BASE FALCON, Iraq – Growing up in Montgomery, Ala, Rakimm Broadnax-Rogers wanted to join the military from a young age to see what it was like.

After 16 years of service in the U.S. Army, 1st Sgt. Rogers is the only female first sergeant currently assigned to the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, at Forward Operating Base Falcon in southern Baghdad's Rashid district.

"Never once have I felt isolated," explained Rogers, who is assigned to Company C, 4th Support Battalion, 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div.

"It actually dawned on me in Kuwait when the brigade command sergeant major called a meeting with all the first sergeants. I looked around, and that's when it became obvious to me that I was the only female."

Rogers held various duty positions throughout her career, such as operations sergeant, battle staff noncommissioned officer and anti-terrorism program manager.

Rogers admits being a female in her position can be challenging at times.

"There are instances when I am in a setting and the male first sergeants are strictly talking about combat or infantry, and then they see me and realize that there are support elements contributing to the fight too," explained Rogers, a 2001 graduate of Columbia Southern University.

While speaking to a group of Soldiers, of-

ten dominated by males, Rogers said there would sometimes be a barrier even though she was a subject-matter expert.

"But quickly that barrier would be overcome," she explained.

Throughout her Army career, Rogers served in the Army Reserve, active duty and Army National Guard and was stationed at different military bases in the United States and Korea.

At the FOB Falcon troop medical clinic, Rogers' Soldiers provide a myriad of services other than typical clinical operations to 1st BCT Soldiers, such as the brigade medical supply office, medical evacuation operations, combat stress team, FOB Falcon flight operations and Iraqi Security Forces partnership training.

Rogers and her Soldiers trained approximately 200 security personnel in first aid in recent months and are currently working to train them in a combat life-saver course, which is considered an advanced first-aid course.

Rogers said she influences her Soldiers through training, counseling and mentorship, which are all essential and fundamental aspects in developing Soldiers into lead-



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. David Hodge, 1st BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div.
1st Sgt. Rakimm Broadnax-Rogers, Company C, 4th Support Battalion, serves as the only female first sergeant currently serving the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, at Forward Operating Base Falcon in southern Baghdad's Rashid district.

ers, whether it extends to a successful career in the military or toward their civilian job after the military.

"Leaders owe this to their Soldiers to ensure they receive the training and guidance they need to maintain a constant state of readiness and confidence in their ability to perform when faced with challenges beyond their normal limits," explained Rogers.

Shortly after assuming her first sergeant responsibilities in December 2007, Rogers implemented a mentorship program for the Soldiers in the company.

"I get mentored at least once a month at a minimum," said Spc. Jessica Scott, a combat medic from Cincinnati, assigned to the Evacuation Platoon, Co. C, 4th Supt. Bn., 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div. "It taught me things that most Soldiers without experience wouldn't have known."

The mentorship program gives Soldiers an opportunity to bridge a gap in communication and fosters an environment where everyone is learning from each other, explained Rogers.

All the Soldiers try to take care of each other, even if they are from another platoon, said Spc. Nicole Manley, a combat medic assigned to the Treatment Platoon, Co. C, 4th Supt. Bn., 1st BCT, 4th Inf. Div.

"My mentor spent the extra time with me to prepare me for the board," stated Manley, a San Antonio native.

Rogers said the program also capitalizes on leader involvement with the Soldiers.

"I felt that it was imperative that every junior enlisted Soldier get something that I didn't get," explained Rogers.

"It's been highly effective and affords each junior enlisted Soldier and leader the opportunity to grow and excel beyond the limits of the monthly professional growth counseling."

"1st Sgt. Rogers is very professional," said Scott. "She cares about the development of her Soldiers."

Upon redeployment, Rogers plans to complete her master's degree in health care administration.

Mississippi Soldier gets dirty turning wrenches

By Sgt. Carmen Guerrero

890th Eng. Bn., 926th Eng. Bde.

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – Women have been integrated in the military for 30 years. Former President Jimmy Carter disbanded the Women's Army Corps in 1978 and recognized females as a part of the armed forces.

Now 30 years later, females serve alongside their male counterparts as Soldiers in the armed forces. Spc. Carin Hanson, a native of St. Michael, Minn., has served in the Army National Guard for nearly four years and proves that women in the military cannot only get the job done, but aren't afraid to do an unusual job. Not only does she serve in Iraq as a mechanic, she also has the luxury of working in the same area as her husband, Sgt. Daniel Hanson, native of Otesgo, Minn.

Hanson, a generator mechanic, joined the Minnesota National Guard four years ago and was assigned to the 134th Brigade Support Battalion in St. Cloud, Minn. Her brother was in the military, so she quickly followed in his footsteps. She and her husband moved to Mississippi and transferred into the 890th Engineer Battalion, a Mississippi Army National Guard unit located in Gulfport, Miss., in 2007. Carin and Daniel lived in Gulfport a little more than a year before deploying with their battalion to Camp Liberty, Iraq.

Daniel is a Track Vehicle Mechanic so naturally, the Hanson's both work in the motor pool, where they work on vehicles and equipment all day long.

Out of the 25 females in her battalion, Hanson is the only female mechanic, a job which she does with pride. Even though she works with approximately 10 to 12 males, she isn't treated any differently. Hanson is quick to be the first one to get underneath the hood of a vehicle without being asked to.

"Carin works on the Maxx Pro and humvee," said Sgt. 1st Class Billy Inmon, a Sumrall, Miss., native, and motor sergeant of the 890th Forward Support Company. "She preps engines, transmissions and wiring. She can outwork most of the men in the section, and they all work well together. Carin is one of the first people that I go to when I need something done."

Hanson explains the work she accomplishes.

"I work on vehicles and do services on vehicles for the battalion if they break down," said Hanson. "Right now, I don't do a lot of generator work because Kellogg, Brown, and Root does most of it. The guys in the motor pool have been very supportive of my role in this section. Unless I ask someone for help, no one really bothers me. You can't be afraid to get dirty. Anyone can do; it-it's not difficult work; you just need the right mindset."



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Carmen Guerrero, 890th Eng. Bn., 926th Eng. Bde.

Spc. Carin Hanson, native of St. Michael, Minn., works on a vehicle Nov. 11. Hanson is a generator mechanic, with Forward Support Company, 890th Engineer Battalion, 926th Engineer Brigade, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, but also dabbles in other things at the motor pool where both she and her husband work.

Hanson was recently coined by Command Sgt. Maj. Daniel Zebrauskas, native of Chicago Ill., senior enlisted advisor of the 926th Engineer Brigade, for good conduct and a job well done on an engine she changed on a HEMMT.

Hanson keeps a level head throughout her current deployment.

"I've learned to have patience by dealing with different personalities on a daily basis," said Hanson. "You've got to know how to work, with all types of people. I am lucky to have my husband here even though we don't really see each other at work and that can be difficult at times, but it's nice to have him around if I need him. Just knowing that he is here helps keep my mind at ease."

On her down time, Hanson likes to relax by watching tele-

vision, movies or shopping at the PX. Due to her taking an interest in cutting her husband's hair, a lot of the male Soldiers in her company have requested her to cut their hair as well. It's a task that she happily accepts.

Once their tour ends, the Hanson's plan on returning to Gulfport, Miss., and while Hanson goes to nursing school, Daniel plans on working with the Operation Warrior Trainer program and furthering his military career. Once Hanson finishes school, plans for a baby could be in the works.

"You know, I guess I've gotten used to being a female mechanic. It's not so bad, and I've been treated as an equal. Aside from my husband being a mechanic, in the civilian world, once, I started dabbling in mechanical work on my free time back home. It just seemed natural," declared Hanson.

Special inspector general for Iraq reconstruction visits MND-B

By Sgt. Shana Henline

MND-B PAO

BAGHDAD – Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers had a distinguished visitor, Stuart Bowen Jr., the special inspector general for Iraq Reconstruction, who stopped by during their Sewage, Water, Electric, Agriculture, Trash and Health meeting Nov. 11.

Bowen attended the MND-B SWEAT-H

meeting during his 21st visit to Iraq, where he is currently visiting for approximately two weeks. His visit with the MND-B leaders was but one of the numerous stops he has planned throughout Iraq.

To date, he has spent a good amount of time meeting with military leaders in Iraq, to include Gen. Ray Odierno, the commanding general of Multi-National Forces – Iraq, and Brig. Gen.

Robin Swan, the deputy commanding general of the 4th Infantry Division and MND-B.

"The significance of the visit is that MND-B encouraged the participation of SIGIR, as a neutral third party, to review our process of using a variety of funds to assist the GoI in reconstruction and helping them achieve primacy in rebuilding their nation," said Lt. Col. Gerry Messmer, an Interlaken, N.Y., native,

who serves as the chief of civil military operations (G-9) with the 4th Infantry Division and MND-B.

As the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction, Bowen is responsible for the oversight of \$50 billion of appropriated U.S. funds that are being used in the reconstruction of Iraq. His team investigates and audits the use of the money for the rehabilitation of Iraq and ensures there is no misuse of the funds.

Following a visit with Swan to Sadr City's Jamilla Market Nov. 11, Bowen said he was impressed with the improvement in security.

"I would not have been able to make that trip in 2006; it was too dangerous," said Bowen. "The increasing engagement of the Iraqi government is another big change I have seen."

Bowen said he is hopeful about the future of Iraq and that he already sees the Iraqi citizens needing more of our expertise instead of money.

"Getting this country back on its feet and restoring daily life is contingent on the elections, reconciliation between the Sunni and Shia sects, and the improvement of their central services," said Bowen. "The leadership exerted at the SWEAT-H by Maj. Gen. (Jeffery) Hammond is impressive and exemplifies the type of help Iraq will receive to assist it in fending for itself," he concluded.



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Shana Henline, MND-B PAO

Maj. Gen. Jeffery Hammond (left), commanding general, Multi-National Division – Baghdad and 4th Infantry Division, along with Brig. Gen. Robin Swan, deputy commanding general, MND-B and the 4th Inf. Div., and Stuart Bowen, special inspector general for Iraq reconstruction, listen to the various briefings regarding reconstruction projects in the MND-B operational environment Nov. 11 during a Sewage, Water, Electricity, Agriculture, Trash and Health meeting.

Striker Strong



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

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – Col. John Hort, a Fayetteville, N.C., native, leads a group of more than 120 Soldiers from the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, in a lightning bolt formation prior to a mass re-enlistment ceremony at Camp Taji, Iraq, Nov. 11. Hort commands the 3rd BCT, 4th Inf. Div.

More than 100 Strikers reenlist on Veterans Day

By Sgt. Zach Mott
3rd BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div.

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – More than 120 members of the Striker Brigade made a further commitment to the Army during a mass reenlistment ceremony at Camp Taji Nov. 11 on Veteran's Day.

The ceremony, punctuated by a speech from Col. John Hort, a Fayetteville, N.C., native, was held at the Striker Landing Zone on a picturesque fall day in Iraq.

The Soldiers, either assigned or attached to the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, chose to continue serving their country during a time when deployments continue to dominate the future landscape of today's fighting forces.

"We wanted to have the ceremony on Veteran's Day so we can thank the Soldiers for their service and do something nice for them," said Sgt. 1st Class Melissa Wolfe, an Elizabeth, W.Va., native, who serves as the career coun-

selor for the 3rd Special Troops Battalion, 3rd BCT, 4th Inf. Div.

In addition to making a further commitment to serve their country, the Soldiers were presented a variety of items, such as computer bags, T-shirts and water bottles.

"It's a thank you to all those veterans who died for our freedom that we can do those things that we do," said Spc. Anthony Hobbs, a military policeman with 3rd Special Troops Battalion, 3rd BCT, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B.



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Jeremy Todd, 4th BCT PAO, 10th Mtn. Div.

Sgt. Nicholas Hoffert, a Bismarck, N.D., native, with 191st Military Police Battalion, applies the final additions to an antenna system of a DUKE Version 2 during a class on the base Oct. 29. The DUKE deters improvised-explosive device attacks. The training taught the skills necessary to install and make minor repairs to the system.

MND-B Soldiers learn electronic warfare skills in eastern Baghdad

By Sgt. Jeremy Todd
4th BCT PAO, 10th Mtn. Div.

FORWARD OPERATING BASE RUSTAMIYAH, Iraq – Multi-National Division – Baghdad personnel conducted electronic warfare training for selected 4th Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (Light) Soldiers and other MND-B Soldiers on the base Oct 29.

Electronic Warfare can be defined as applying the radio frequency spectrum to defeat an enemy and save lives on the battlefield. Improvised-explosive devices are the highest threat to Coalition and Iraqi Security Forces personnel safety, and defeating that threat is the biggest concern for leaders, explained Navy Lt. Christopher Winters, the 4th Infantry Division's EW training officer from Waterville, Maine.

EW specialists are Air Force and Navy personnel, but the Army is moving toward educating its Soldiers in these skills and will soon offer the EW career field.

"This is something the Army needs to be concerned about," said Air Force Maj. Jason Eckberg, an EW officer for MND-B, who hails from Las Vegas.

The Army will be adding electronic warfare specialist to its collection of military occupational specialties in 2010, he explained, adding that the Soldiers attending the EW class on Forward Operating Base

Rustamiyah will be among the first to attain the new MOS.

"This job offers the Soldiers a sense of pride; it is a very important to them," expressed Eckberg. "The most important factor of this job is the care and maintenance of the equipment. The components of the counter-IED systems are extremely intricate and must be cared for by trained personnel."

Eckberg said training the Soldier at the lowest possible level ensures mission stability and offers leaders the capability to alleviate the responsibility from a brigade asset to the company level.

Civilian technicians and military officers conducted the EW workshop, which entailed 40 hours of hands-on training. Fourteen Soldiers from throughout MND-B attended the class. The 18th Military Police Brigade, which is based out of Sandhofen, Germany, sponsored the training.

"I am extremely excited to learn a new skill – especially one that will save Soldiers' lives," said Sgt. Nicholas Hoffert, a Bismarck, N.D., native, assigned to 191st MP Battalion. "This skill will save time on the battlefield as well.

"We will no longer have to wait in line to fix a fault in the system. We will be the on-site technician for most problematic issues that may arise."

Soldiers share name tags

Married couple exchanges wedding vows in Iraq

By Sgt. Daniel Blottenberger
18th MP Bde. PAO

BAGHDAD – As the Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 18th

Military Police Brigade, serve in the final weeks of their 15-month deployment, they took time to gather together just before sundown Nov. 10

for a rather unique

ceremony that would be the first of its kind in the unit's history.

The reason for the gathering was that two of the brigade's Soldiers: Sgt. Lori Cortner, a native of Portland, Ore., and Sgt. Joshua Klassen, a native of Pocatello, Idaho, both of whom are assigned to HHC, 18th MP Bde., were actually married mere days prior to the event Nov. 7. The ceremony served to commemorate their new union as they exchanged name tags and wedding vows as the unit chaplain blessed their marriage.

Col. Mark Spindler, the commander of the 18th MP Bde., walked the 'bride to be' down the aisle – in this case, the motor pool – and presented her to her 'soon to be husband,' before the couple recited their wedding vows.

What made this unique coupling possible was the fact the couple was married by way of a double-proxy marriage through the state of Montana. A proxy marriage is performed in cases where either the bride or the groom could not be physically



present for the wedding ceremony.

During the solemnization of the marriage, which is based on a power of attorney, a stand-in, or proxy, acts on behalf of one of the parties. If neither party is present, it is called a double-proxy marriage.

In this case, the Klassens' parents stood in as the party acting for them at the courthouse in Montana while the couple was deployed to Iraq.

"We were in a hurry to get married so that we could make sure we stayed together when we redeployed in the upcoming weeks," said Joshua.

Even though they were deployed, they said they wanted to have a small ceremony with their unit and friends, which they now call their Family after spending 14 months deployed in the capital city of Iraq.

"Everyone in our unit has been so supportive, and that meant a lot to us," said Lori, following the ceremony. "This unit has become like Family to us here, and we wanted to share this special moment in our lives with them."

During the ceremony, the couple recited their wedding vows to one another, followed by the blessing of their marriage by Lt. Col. Peter Baktis, chaplain, 18th MP Bde., who is a native of Brooklyn, N.Y.

"It was a very nice and unique ceremony," said Baktis. "It showed total brigade support for their marriage and showed them having a religious commitment to their marriage."

Having their fellow Soldiers there, in Iraq, was a fitting background for their wedding, said the couple.

"We have known everyone in this unit since we met," said Joshua. "We wanted them to be a part of our ceremony and to share in the joy of our marriage."



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

Sgt. Joshua Klassen (left), a native of Pocatello, Idaho, and Lori Klassen, a native of Portland, Ore., both members of Headquarters and Headquarters Company 18th Military Police Brigade, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, hold hands Nov. 10 as their marriage vows are blessed by Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Peter Baktis, 18th MP Bde., who is a native of Brooklyn, N.Y. and the brigade's headquarters building. The Klassens were married Nov. 7 by way of double-proxy marriage through the state of Montana.

MND-B Soldier, Family finds 'source' for peace of mind

By Sgt. Whitney Houston
MND-B PAO

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – The anxiety that many military personnel feel

when separated from Family members can be an overwhelming vexation, especially when children are involved. The knowledge that spouses and children are taken care of and receive the love and attention they need can help alleviate these anxieties.

Maj. Allan Dollison, a Los Angeles native, who is a husband and father of two children, has become familiar with the many opportunities available through the military that are designed to assist the Families of deployed service members. Dollison serves on a civil affairs planning team with the 425th Civil Affairs Battalion, assigned to 4th Infantry Division and Multi-National Division – Baghdad.

"Military OneSource was described to me in such a way that if a deployed Soldier had a need, like a busted water heater in his house, OneSource could get a plumber out to the house to get it fixed," Dollison said.

Dollison explained that over the last four and a half years, he has been mobilized three

Wife of MND-B Soldier uses Military OneSource to keep children busy during husband's 3rd deployment

times, twice for deployments in the Middle East and once for a training stint done state-side.

Dollison's wife, Martha, has become very familiar with Military OneSource and its benefits, finding ways to keep their children anxiously engaged while her husband is away.

"My wife got online and found out about a scholarship program they have that engages children in sporting activities," said Dollison, "so she applied for the scholarship and got it. So now the Army, through Military OneSource, is paying for my kids to get karate lessons, which is really cool, and I'm very thankful that they were able to do that."

Karate has given Dollison's son, Robert, 8, and his daughter, Alicia, 9, a distraction three times a week and has simultaneously provided them valuable lessons in hard work and physical fitness, which has driven them to excel in other areas.

"They actually competed in a karate tournament yesterday," Dollison said. "It cer-

tainly keeps them busy. You know, they go to school and take these (karate) classes three times a week so their minds are off the fact that their daddy is away from home. My son just won student of the month for September at his school, so they seem to be excelling despite the fact that I'm not there."

With his kids at karate practice and his wife given a nice break three times a week, Dollison said he can focus on his job while away from them. His knowledge and experience as an attorney in the United States provides him an edge in Iraq's judicial and political battlefield.

"As a civilian, I am a deputy district attorney for Humboldt County, Calif.," Dollison said, "so I prosecute rapes, robberies, murders, sexual predators, people that attack cops, people that sell drugs – you name it. Here in the G-9 (civil affairs) section we'll be working with governance and rule of law issues – the whole civil affairs fight."

As an undergraduate, Dollison went to

California State University and proceeded on to law school at the Western State University College of Law, both located in Fullerton, Calif. Given this

extensive knowledge in the field of law, his opinion and input will be vital to policies that will be discussed and implemented in meetings within the civil affairs realm while on his tour in Baghdad.

"He brings the element of realism to the table for the implementation of policies, not just idealism," said Maj. Ekkahard Grimm, a colleague and friend of more than 19 years, who is a native of Anaheim, Calif., and serves with the 425th Civil Affairs Battalion. "He deals with the reality of prosecution, and with that in mind, east and west are very different. So, when we try to recommend policies, he can give experienced input."

The demands on Dollison's time are high and extensive as a deployed Soldier. However, he rests assured knowing that his Family will be taken care of while he is gone through sources like Military OneSource and other similar programs that center on Families faced with the hardship of having their beloved Soldiers abroad.

2 MND-B Soldiers are truly 'Brothers in Arms'



Capt. Lionel Macklin (left), a native of Ozark, Ala., poses with his younger brother, Sgt. Donnell Macklin, during a reenlistment ceremony at Camp Taji, northwest of Baghdad, Nov. 7.

By Spc. Curtis Riffle

Co. B, 52nd Inf. Regt., 2nd SBCT, 25th Inf. Div.

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – Serving in the Army can be a long, difficult road. For many, the best way to survive is to embrace friends and coworkers along the way.

Fellow Soldiers often become brothers. For two Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers however, they are brothers in the literal sense.

Such is the case for Sgt. Donnell Macklin and Capt. Lionel Macklin, who were happily reunited Nov. 7 at Camp Taji to commemorate Donnell's commitment to remain a part of the Army Team.

Donnell serves as a forward signal support noncommissioned officer with Company B, 52nd Infantry Regiment "Hammer," 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team "Warrior," 25th Infantry Division, which is based out of Hawaii. Lionel, his older brother, serves as a platoon leader with the 4th Infantry Division's Company A, 3rd Battalion, 4th Aviation Squadron, Combat Aviation Brigade, which is based out of Fort Hood, Texas.

The two are natives of Ozark, Ala., and are in-

timately aware of the bonds that bring "Brothers in Arms" together.

For the two of them, they were able to take advantage of the unique opportunity for the older brother to officially reenlist his younger brother as he renews his commitment to his other Brothers in Arms.

"For me, it was an obvious choice as to who was going to swear me in," said Donnell. "I haven't seen my brother in four years, and for this opportunity to present itself, there was no other way I would have it done."

Lionel shared his brother's pride and enthusiasm and said he was honored for the opportunity to not only attend his brother's life-making decision but to actually conduct the ceremony itself.

"This is a great honor for me, for our Family, for him to let me do his re-enlistment," he said.

Both brothers will continue to serve in their respective units for the duration of the deployment, and both said they hope to visit home during their block leaves to share their experiences with the rest of their Family.

Iraqi Army soldier's actions results in U.S. Army medal

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

BAGHDAD – A small group of Iraqi and Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers gathered at an Iraqi Army base in the Sadr City district of Baghdad Nov. 4 for an infrequent but worthy ceremony.

Col. John Hort, commander, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, who is responsible for northern Baghdad, traveled to the headquarters of Col. Fares Khaleel, commander of the 44th Brigade, 11th Iraqi Army Division, to present the U.S. Army Commendation Medal to Iraqi Army Maj. Jamil Mahmood Kadori for his actions in ridding the Hamidiyah neighborhood of Special Groups criminals.

Hamidiyah, historically a Special Groups safe haven, was being used by the criminals as a supply line connecting Sadr City to southern Diyala province.

"I am filled with happiness that I am able to liberate the civilians from this enemy," said Maj. Kadori, commander, 3rd Company, 1st Battalion, 44th Bde., 11th IA Div.

During a ceremony, the award citation was read commending Kadori's leadership and his company for developing a balanced operation of lethal and non-lethal targeting that permitted leaders of Hamidiyah to work with Coalition Forces and Iraqi Army without fear of retribution.

"The Iraqi people up there truly see him as the security element, the police force, the true legitimate part of the government, which they have not seen in some time," said Hort, a native of Fayetteville, N.C.

One major factor to Kadori's success is the residents of Sadr City.



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

Col. John Hort, commander, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, who is responsible for northern Baghdad, traveled to the headquarters of Col. Fares Khaleel, commander of the 44th Brigade, 11th Iraqi Army Division, to present the U.S. Army Commendation Medal to Iraqi Army Maj. Jamil Mahmood Kadori for his actions in ridding the Hamidiyah neighborhood of Special Groups criminals at an Iraqi Army base in the Sadr City district of Baghdad Nov 4.

"He treated the people with dignity and respect. The Iraqi population had a very negative view of the Iraqi military. He went in there and got the local leaders and the average Iraqi citizen on his side," Hort said.

He said another factor was the way he pursued the criminal elements.

"He was very precise in his targeting. He did not go in and knock down and detain a bunch of people. He went in after individuals that he had intelligence on. Based off of that, the people recognized that if you are doing bad things and there is evidence, the Iraqi Army is going to pick you up," Hort said.

He said Kadori's diligence led residents to provide him with information on suspected criminal activities.

"You have to recognize that the people are really your best ally or your worst enemy," Hort said. "I think he's a great example of what we're seeing in the Iraqi military today."

JAG Corps commander visits Ironhorse Soldiers

By Staff Sgt. Scott Wolfe
MND-B PAO

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – Maj. Gen. Scott Black, the Judge Advocate General of the U.S. Army, visited and shared a meal with Staff Judge Advocate Soldiers and leaders serving with 4th Infantry Division and Multi-National Division – Baghdad, as part of his "Article Six" visit Nov. 6.

According to Article 6 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice, the Judge Advocate General, also known as TJAG, is required to visit the units of the JAG Corps, said Capt. Keith Schellack.

"We call it the 'Article 6' visit," said Schellack.

Black was accompanied by Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Glaze and Chief Warrant Officer 4 Richard Johnson, the senior noncommissioned officer and senior warrant officer of the JAG Corps.

The Article 6 visit is usually a formal affair when in garrison; however, this event, put together by Schellack and hosted by Lt. Col. Tania Martin, the 4th Inf. Div. and MND-B staff judge advocate, had a more relaxed atmosphere with games and music playing in the background.

A relaxed and friendly hum filled the small building known as the "Stadium" in front of 4th Inf. Div. headquarters as each of the guests was seated at a different table. They seemed to enjoy themselves as they answered questions or caught up with old friends over a shared meal.

Johnson had previously served with Capt. Alan Wehbe, who arranged to sit at his table, and they rehashed old stories in between catching up on current affairs and future assignments.

Martin presented some mementos of the 4th Inf. Div. to Black and invited him and his staff to take part in the Gilmore Gallop, the first of what will be an annual run held in memory of Army JAG Corps fallen heroes, which include Command Sgt. Maj. Cornell Gilmore and Chief Warrant Officer 5 Sharon Swartworth, who were killed in 2003 when their helicopter was shot down in Tikrit during an Article 6 visit.

Black told the MND-B SJA officers and enlisted Soldiers about their boss, Martin, who came to work for him as an intern many years ago and how happy he was to see her in her current place of employment as the SJA for the 4th Inf. Div. and MND-B. He congratulated the entire MND-B legal staff on their hard work throughout the deployment and reaffirmed his faith and trust in them.



Spc. Douglas York

By Spc. Douglas York
MND-B PAO

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – Some people will argue that laughter is the best medicine. Living the “groundhog day” existence that some of us occasionally find ourselves trapped in, I would tend to agree.

Thankfully, I was recently prescribed with a medicine that was just what the good doctor ordered, temporarily laughing my cares away.

No, I’m not talking about “wacky tobaccy.” I’m talking about a different kind of high that you are sure to get while watching the 2008 film “Forgetting Sarah Marshall,” distributed by Universal Pictures. The film is directed by newcomer Nicholas Stoller and brings together many of the funny people responsible for “Knocked Up,” the “40 Year Old Virgin” and “Super Bad.”

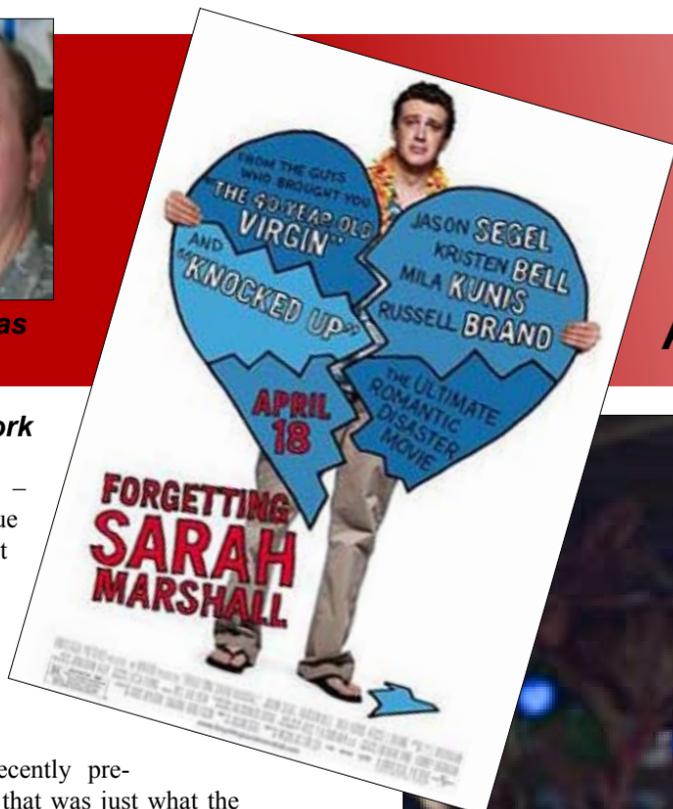
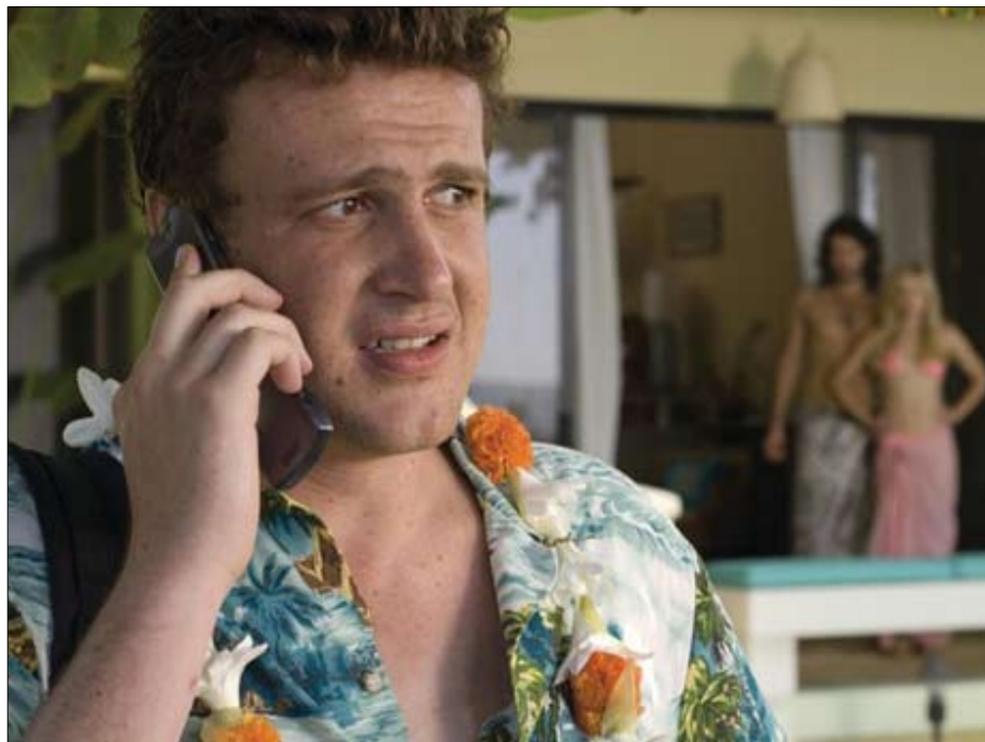
From the film’s outset, we are introduced to a composer by the name of Peter Bretter, played by the film’s screenwriter Jason Segel, who was the nice but kind of creepy housemate in “Knocked Up.” Although Bretter is successful, he is also a bit of an underachiever, who has spent the last five years of his life dedicated to and living in the shadow of his beautiful and famous girlfriend “Sarah Marshall,” played by actress Kristen Bell, who is famous for her roles on “Veronica Mars” and “Heroes.”

Marshall is the star of a highly rated and very cheesy CSI-type crime drama show called “Crime Scene: Scene of the Crime,” in which actor William Baldwin costars as ... himself, and for which Bretter conducts the musical score. His job is a poor use of his talent as he mostly plays repetitive “dark and ominous” tones during the forensic scenes.

Accustomed to taking the back seat to the mega-star Marshall, in addition to his duties on her lame-duck TV show, Bretter has also spent the couple’s time together trying to write a musical using “Muppets” created by Jim Henson’s Creature Shop. The play involves Dracula and is called “A Taste for Love on the Side.” As farcical as it sounds, it is actually hilarious.

Although he is taking his sweet time to realize his dream, living in relative obscurity, Bretter is seemingly comfortable with his life. Be that as it may, he quickly learns the hard lesson that an idle life is never as blissful as we think.

Things take a twist for the worst when Sarah breaks up with him for another man, Aldous Snow, played by British ac-



Doug's 'dig' on Hollywood: Arrested for laughing by town's new 'Marshall'



tor Russell Brand, who is the eccentric lead singer for a band called “Infant Sorrow.”

The aftermath of the break-up leaves Bretter having one-night stands with various women as a way of trying to cope with being dumped. However, in the process of “soiling” his oats, he becomes terrified of getting a sexually transmitted disease, leading to further mental anguish, and he finally has a nervous breakdown on the set of Marshall’s TV show.

After his TV show meltdown and after satisfying his carnal cravings, Bretter is nearly finished. Thankfully, his step-brother Bryan, played by actor Bill Hader (the goofy four-eyed policeman in “Super Bad”) suggests that he go somewhere to clear his head, and Peter decides to take a spur-of-the-moment trip to Hawaii.

The Islands however, don’t offer him any paradise and he is confronted by his worst nightmare: Marshall and her lover Snow are already staying at the resort when he arrives!

Enter now the film’s stunning heroine Rachel, played by actress Mila Kunis (she played the lead role in “American Psycho 2”), who serves as the hotel’s main receptionist. Initially she tells the depressed Bretter that the hotel is booked except for the most expensive room, a \$6,000.00 per night suite.

Despite the limited vacancy, the kind-hearted Rachel ends up giving Bretter the expensive suite free of charge as she witnesses the painful run-in he has with Sarah Marshall. It is during the former couple’s condescending exchange that Rachel intervenes and gives Bretter a free week’s stay in the expensive suite, explaining that her only condition for the kind gesture is that he “cleans up after himself.”

Though purely coincidental, Marshall initially and wrongly suspects that Bretter is stalking her, and from this point, we watch the film unfold into many

uncomfortable and sometimes heart-warming scenarios. Additionally, we are introduced to a laugh-a-minute supporting cast that includes actors Jonah Hill (co-star of Super Bad) as Matthew the Waiter and Paul Rudd (the guy who can’t get over his girlfriend in “40 Year Old Virgin”) as Chuck, the hotel’s always stoned surf-board-rental guy.

Between crying alone in his suite, drinking alcoholic cocktails well before “happy hour” and beating himself up over losing Marshall to her new life – he bumps into her and Snow everywhere he goes – Bretter’s Hawaiian vacation is a disaster. In turn and with a bit of poetic irony, we discover that Snow and Bretter actually get along quite well given the circumstances.

Aside from his “normal” encounters with Snow and a few of the hotel’s other employees, Bretter’s only relief comes in the form of Rachel. Her laid-back approach begins to help him rejoin the “real world,” and though they share a common bond, getting along very well in the process, Rachel is reluctant to move things forward with him too soon as she is going through a recent break-up as well.

Through Rachel, his step-brother Bryan, his new hotel friends, a newlywed couple named Darald and Wyoma, and oddly enough Snow, we wait with baited breath to see if Bretter can indeed “forget Sarah Marshall.”

Believe it or not, you will be laughing your head off during all of Bretter’s misfortunes – not because you won’t feel sorry for him, because you will, but simply because the movie’s themes are something all of us have dealt with at one point or another and can easily relate to.

With a myriad of twists and turns, including Bretter’s flashbacks revealing the negative aspects of his relationship with Marshall, all things come to a head (in more ways than one) in this film. Short of spoiling the funny conclusion, during which the most jaded heart will have a hard time not being touched, the ending will leave you wanting a sequel.

Like any film made by this group of young stars and their friends, it is best that you expect to gasp at certain points during the movie as well as to be prepared to feel very uncomfortable during others.

Keep those things in mind and by the end of this unforgettable flick, you will see why I have no problem giving this “Marshall” its “star,” smack dab in the middle of three chevrons and three rockers.

If you would like me to consider a movie for future review or to give feedback on this film or this film’s review, feel free to email me at mndb_pao@yahoo.com

Gamer Beware!

Warning! Top 5 worst games of 2008 to avoid



Sgt. Jason Thompson

By Sgt. Jason Thompson
MND-B PAO

BAGHDAD – With the Christmas season right around the corner, I have been approached by a number of parents looking for video game gift ideas for the gamers in their Families back at home. To each, I've offered my advice and tried to help as much as I could.

However, this week I'd like to take a little bit of time to list a few of the games that I consider the worst of 2008.

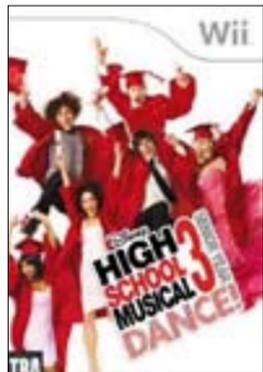
5 Alone in the Dark

Alone in the Dark follows the tale of a paranormal investigator who wakes up in a burning building, unable to remember who he is and how he came to be surrounded by menacing thugs. He soon learns that he is Edward Carnby, a foul-mouthed tough guy who's mixed up in some devilish doings.



Alone in the Dark has some good ideas, but it fails at most because it tries them all. Nice visuals, great fire effects and valiant efforts at innovation don't make up for boring combat, frustrating controls, poorly designed levels and a hackneyed story. There's a certain amount of old-school adventure charm in Alone in the Dark, but it shines only as the dimmest of lights, hemmed in by the darkness of its many failures.

4 High School Musical 3: Senior Year Dance



Look, I'm not going to pretend that my opinion matters much in this regard. This is High School 'Freaking' Musical here; it's already entranced the nation with its catchy tunes and wholesome characters. If your kids love High School Musical, they are going to want Senior Year Dance, and they're probably going to love it because it has Troy, Gabriella, Sharpay and everybody else from the movies. But if you're trying to figure out if you should get this for your kid (or hey, yourself, I'm not judging!), then listen up.

The Wii version is \$50 and has you swing your arms to dance. The PS2 version is \$50 (\$30 if you already have a dance pad) and you step on arrows to dance. It really just depends on if you like dance pad games or arm swinging dance games. However, unless you are a hardcore High School Musical fan, there are much better dance games available, such as the original Dance-Dance Revolution.

The PC version of Senior Year Dance is the cheapest at only \$30 but totally misses the point by making you use your keyboard to play. They're all just okay rhythm games that have the benefit of featuring the most popular teenagers in the world.

3 Ironman



Let me start by saying there has yet to be a solid game molded after any of the comic book movies, and I would warn against purchasing any video game that would fall into this category, but Ironman takes the cake of all the rest.

Loosely based on the blockbuster movie bearing the same name, Iron Man casts you as Shellhead and sets you loose on more than a dozen missions of enemies, missiles and anti-aircraft guns. The game pulls in characters from the comic universe that weren't in the big screen version, folks such as Whiplash and Titanium Man, and gives you an incredibly glossed over version of the events happening on the silver screen.

The problem with Iron Man is that at some point someone sat down and said: "You know what would be fun? Drop players into situations where they have to do repetitive, meaningless tasks and then add overwhelming evildoers." That's a shame.

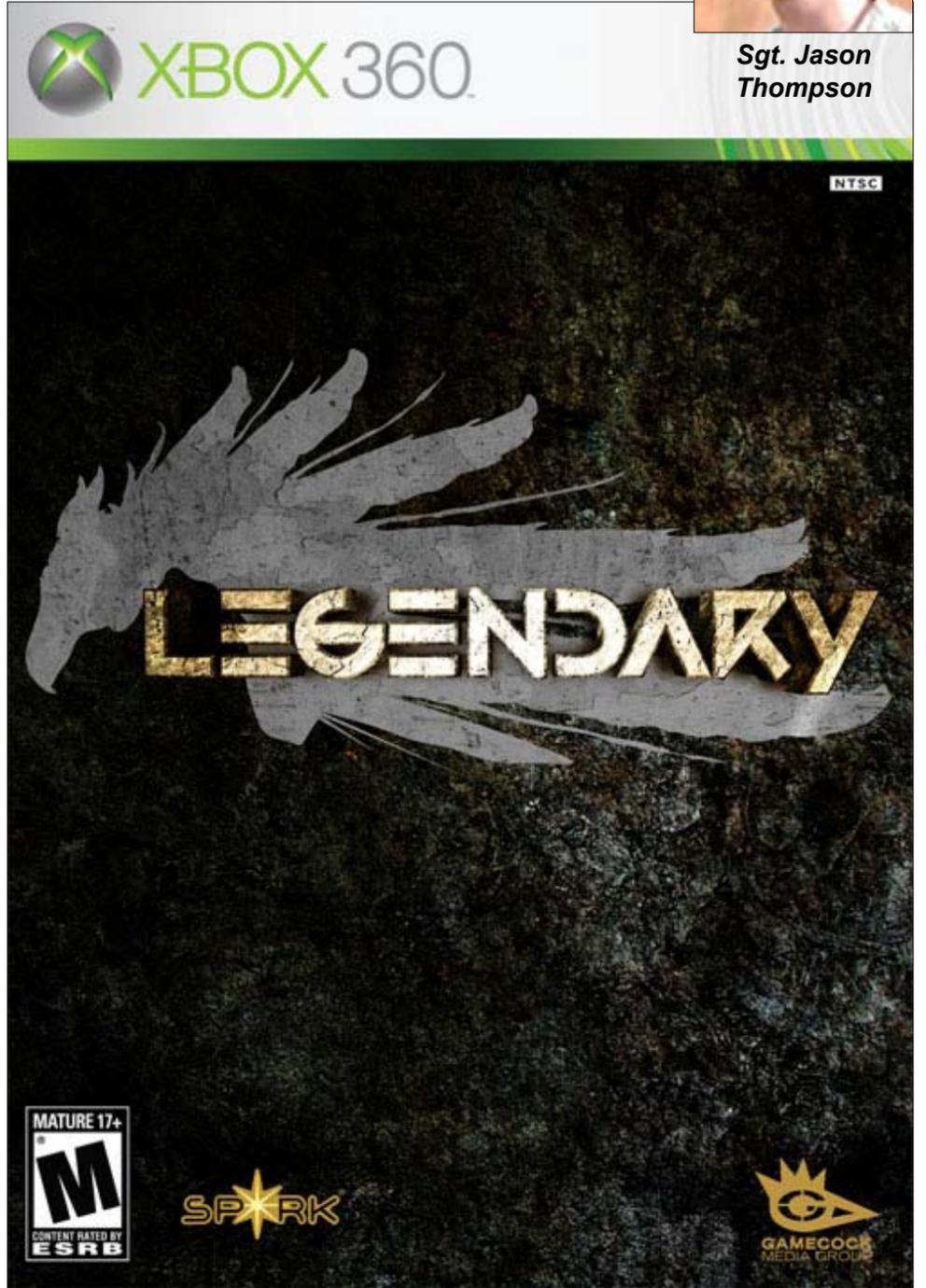
Flying is fun; the upgrades are neat, and the game can look good. However, these pros are far outweighed by the aforementioned frustration, crappy storyline and lame cutscenes. You never feel like Iron Man in this game, and if you're like me, you never feel like you're having fun.

2 Operation Darkness

Don't be misled, Operation Darkness sounds great on paper. It's a turn-based strategy RPG set in World World II, but this isn't your daddy's war. This one pits you and a band of super-soldier werewolves against the Nazis and a clan of vampires. It's like Shining Force meets Brothers in Arms with a twist of Van Helsing. You'll take a squadron of supernatural soldiers into battle; meticulously move them across the grid one at a time to take down Hitler and his band of undead monsters with guns, bazookas, magic fireballs and werewolf slashes at your disposal.

That's Operation Darkness on paper. Reality isn't so kind. Even with the inclusion of supernatural beings in World War II, the story is corny and boring. The game itself is as ugly as they come. The camera angles, when not lost underground, are atrocious.

Pretty much, everything that could have gone wrong in this game has gone wrong.



Legendary

Legendary is the story of Charles Deckard, a thief that's tricked by a mysterious employer named LeFey and his associate, Vivian, into breaking into a New York museum and inserting an object into an ornate golden box, which, unbeknownst to him is actually Pandora's Box.

By opening the box, Deckard unleashes a large number of supernatural creatures upon the world, destroying society and threatening to erase humanity from the globe. Now it's up to him to eliminate the beasts of the world and seal Pandora's Box once again.

Thanks to the premise of the game, Legendary could've been an interesting adventure with monsters, powers and the apocalypse as a backdrop.

Unfortunately, the gameplay comes across as messy and incomplete, the arrangement of hazards and threats from monsters is ineffective at best and boring at worst. Plot points and development is practically nonexistent, and the standard shooter mechanics just fall flat.

If you need a shooter, look elsewhere, because Legendary isn't close to what its name-sake claims to be. It's more along the lines of "Legendarily Atrocious."

Next issue, I'll have a list of my best games of 2008.

Do you have a suggestion of what should make that list or have a game worse than any of these? Let me know at jason.thompson@mnd-b.army.mil

Now you know the titles, but watch out for these Genres:

- ◆ Movie/TV Games: Harry Potter, Superman, Transformers, Fantastic Four, Lost
- ◆ Hunting Games: The Deer Hunting series or anything involving fishing
- ◆ Party Games: Wario Ware, Mario Party, Viva Piñata: Party Animals

Soldier – Taekwondo champion – brings success to himself, mission

By Staff Sgt. Jody Metzger

MND-B PAO

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq –

The arm of the coach came up and slapped him across the face. Tired and disoriented, Staff Sgt. Michael Bennett fought the sting of the coach's slap as the crowd looked on.

Humiliation and disbelief ran through all of his 6-foot 3-inches, unleashing the focus and determination to go back in the ring and fight one more fight.

"I fought 'Mamook the Whale,' tall and fast, a good fighter, but I knew I was better," said Bennett. "We went pound for pound, but we couldn't get an edge, and then it was down to 15 seconds. He became arrogant, he dropped his guard and I closed in and clocked him upside the head with a round house."

The All-Army Taekwondo Team claimed the gold and walked out victorious, proclaiming Bennett a champion.

It was one of the most memorable events in Bennett's life, a moment in time where Soldier and fighter became one.

"The All-Army training called to me and told me to keep fighting," said Bennett. "That is the strength of the Army – a desire and love to fight for our country."

Perceived as a big man with a voice to go with his size, Bennett has a larger-than-life handle on being a Soldier and on his assigned position as a noncommissioned officer and assistant commandant, Division Special Troops Battalion, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad.

Those working with him literally and figuratively have much to look up to.

"He is always a voice of reason and always has a joke to make you laugh," said Capt. Zachary Keller, who serves as the commandant's section officer in charge with Company A, DSTB.

Keller smiled while thinking of Bennett because he says that Bennett always takes on more than he is originally given. The happy and joking NCO has been a mentor and helper to his section and Keller acknowledges that with confidence.

"He is what you would call a 'go-to guy.' If there is anything I need, I can ask Staff Sgt. Bennett."

Bennett found his martial arts passion and talent early on. Tucked against his mother's side, a 12-year old Bennett looked on for the first time at a Kung Fu class and appreciated the discipline and brutality of the sport. The youngest of seven brothers and one sister growing up in Shreveport, La., Bennett's mother pushed her son to learn a martial art for defense.

He was attracted to the art of Taekwondo by a good friend from school and because of growing up during the Bruce Lee era.

"I wanted to learn all the fighting art and an opportunity came. It was what Bruce Lee said on the movie screen, 'The art of fighting without fighting.'"

While walking into the classroom, elated for the chance to participate in the sport, for Bennett it was the philosophies that captured his heart.

In the 1980s, racial segregation still ran rampant in Louisiana; yet, in the hands of the instructors of Taekwondo, he learned that the only colors in the class were that of the belts.

"It humbled me and made me very patient with people and gave me a better perspective on understanding diversities be-



U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Jody Metzger, MND-B PAO

Staff Sgt. Michael Bennett shows Sgt. Brian Brokling, geographic analyst with 4th Infantry Division, how to perform a round house kick during Taekwondo instruction at the Camp Liberty gym Oct. 28.

"I fought 'Mamook the Whale,' tall and fast, a good fighter, but I knew I was better. We went pound for pound, but we couldn't get an edge, and then it was down to 15 seconds. He became arrogant, he dropped his guard and I closed in and clocked him upside the head with a round house."

Staff Sgt. Michael Bennett
assistant commandant,
DSTB, 4th Inf. Div. MND-B

cause it was a mixed class, a multi-cultured concept – everybody was friends," he said.

"I enjoyed the martial arts because we were not just a color but we were a Family. We fought together, had a good time together.

"It was never that we couldn't hang out together because you were black or Asian. It was always a fun time."

Just as the belts represent reward and responsibility, the military has taken hold of Bennett in much the same way.

Bennett first enlisted in the Army as an infantryman after being approached at the United States National Taekwondo Team trials in Dayton, Ohio, in 1988. Although Bennett had already achieved a bachelor's degree at Southern University A & M College in Baton Rouge and was working at a good job, he was still anxious to pursue his dream of becoming a U.S. National Taekwondo champion and a U.S. Olympic athlete. But training for such an event would take eight grueling hours of training per day, time he did not have as a full-time employee.

The All-Army Taekwondo military athletic program shot

Bennett to stardom as he was able to focus his attention on his passion – fighting.

Within five years, Bennett had won his first national championship. A year later, Master Sgt. Bruce Harris, the All-Army Taekwondo coach, called him up and wanted him on the All-Army Taekwondo Team and to try out and make the U.S. Taekwondo Olympic Team.

Six years later he would fight "Mamook the Whale" and claim the gold for the All-Army Taekwondo Team and go on to

become a two-time U.S. Olympic athlete in 1992 and 1996.

Iraq and the Army has seen the many faces of Bennett, decorated with experience as an infantryman, airborne qualifier and tanker – a Soldier using his love of fighting to better his country.

"We have a desire and love for fighting for our country," said Bennett, as he talked of fighting in the ring and as a Soldier, as if they were one. "That is what keeps our hearts alive."

With almost 20 years in the Army, Bennett finds comfort in his accolades and commitment to the team but looks forward to a coming retirement.

Family, he admits, is calling him, and just as his Family has been intertwined with his military brethren, he looks forward to the reunion with his daughters.

Bennett holds three United States Open Taekwondo gold medals, three United States National Taekwondo Championship gold medals, three World Taekwondo Championships, two 8th Army Championships, and is a three-time World Conseil International du Sports Militaire Taekwondo champion.

Mol's Wide World of Sports

Change is needed throughout sports

By Staff Sgt. Michael Molinaro
MND-B PAO

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – So we have a new president coming on board here in a few months and “change” is upon us.

What a great day it was in American history, regardless of who you voted for, to show the world how dynamic and evolving a country we are.

Now, it's time to take it even further. Let's show them what kind of change we really want. And if the new commander-in-chief needs an assist from a sports freak, then Mr. President-elect, I am your man.

I wouldn't be shocking anyone if I continued my rant for a college football playoff. But this one would be easy because the big guy recently stated his desire for a playoff as well.

I am very much looking forward to seeing the BCS explain their decision when Florida, who lost to an unranked team at home, beats Alabama and gets a championship game berth along with Texas, who gets in because the team they lost to, Texas Tech, lost a game later in the year than the Longhorns did.

Number two on my list would be allowing fans to celebrate on the field and court when their team wins the championship like they did in the old days.

The only stipulation would be that it has to occur on the team's home field.

It was wonderful watching a baseball team win the World Series and see its fans rush the field after they won the title.

Let's face it: when a team wins, the whole city wins.

Yes, the players are the ones who win the rings, but the fans' love affair with their home team is forever and they feel as if they won the title themselves.

And think about this: fans used to rush the field or basketball court in the 60s, 70s and 80s, and there were no problems. Nowadays, security is as tight as ever, so you would be led to believe that it is safer now than before for fans and especially the players, right?

Think about it.

Next up is a complete realignment in major league baseball. There would still be two leagues but they would consist of the big market teams and the small-market teams.

Put the New York teams, the Chicago teams, the Los Angeles teams, etc. into one league split into three divisions, and the same with the small-market teams. Eliminate interleague play, since interleague play really is having those big cities have their two teams play each other for the TV ratings and revenue stream.

I think this would give more hope to more fans of baseball. Small-market teams have fared well of late, like what we have seen in Tampa and Miami with the Marlins, but it is something that is needed.

The World Series would be superb every single year. Everyone would watch because the storyline would already be created with a David vs. Goliath theme.

Change is needed at stadiums and arenas all across the country by making a certain number of seats cheaper so the everyday fan can take in a game, especially a playoff game, and experience the euphoria of creating a home-field advantage.

With the advent of the new stadium all over the sports landscape, owners made the prices of all of the tickets up front and close skyrocket to the point where only rich sports fans and corporations can afford to purchase those tickets.

This would especially work in basketball. The atmosphere at high school and college games is electric because the student body is right down on the floor in certain designated sections.

Why not do this in the pros? Designate a few sections as general admission seating and cut the prices in half.

Same for football. Cleveland kept the dog pound, and while it is not as close to the end zone as it is in the old stadium, that section is still reserved for the regular, avid die-hard fan and carries on a tradition established years ago.

How about some change with the Olympics?

This past Olympic games was fun to watch but some of those events were plain stupid.



Staff Sgt. Michael
'Mol' Molinaro

I will never understand synchronized swimming and cannot watch that event without thinking of Martin Short (Saturday Night Live fans know what I'm talking about.) What is that? And the trampoline? That is fun and all, but a sport? So let's install some sports in their places.

Dodge ball is a sure thing. I see that as a no-brainer and a television juggernaut. And if the Olympics has boxing, wrestling, judo and taekwondo, it should most definitely have mixed-martial arts.

The final thing I would change during the first term would involve golf. I think it's about time we level the playing field in golf.

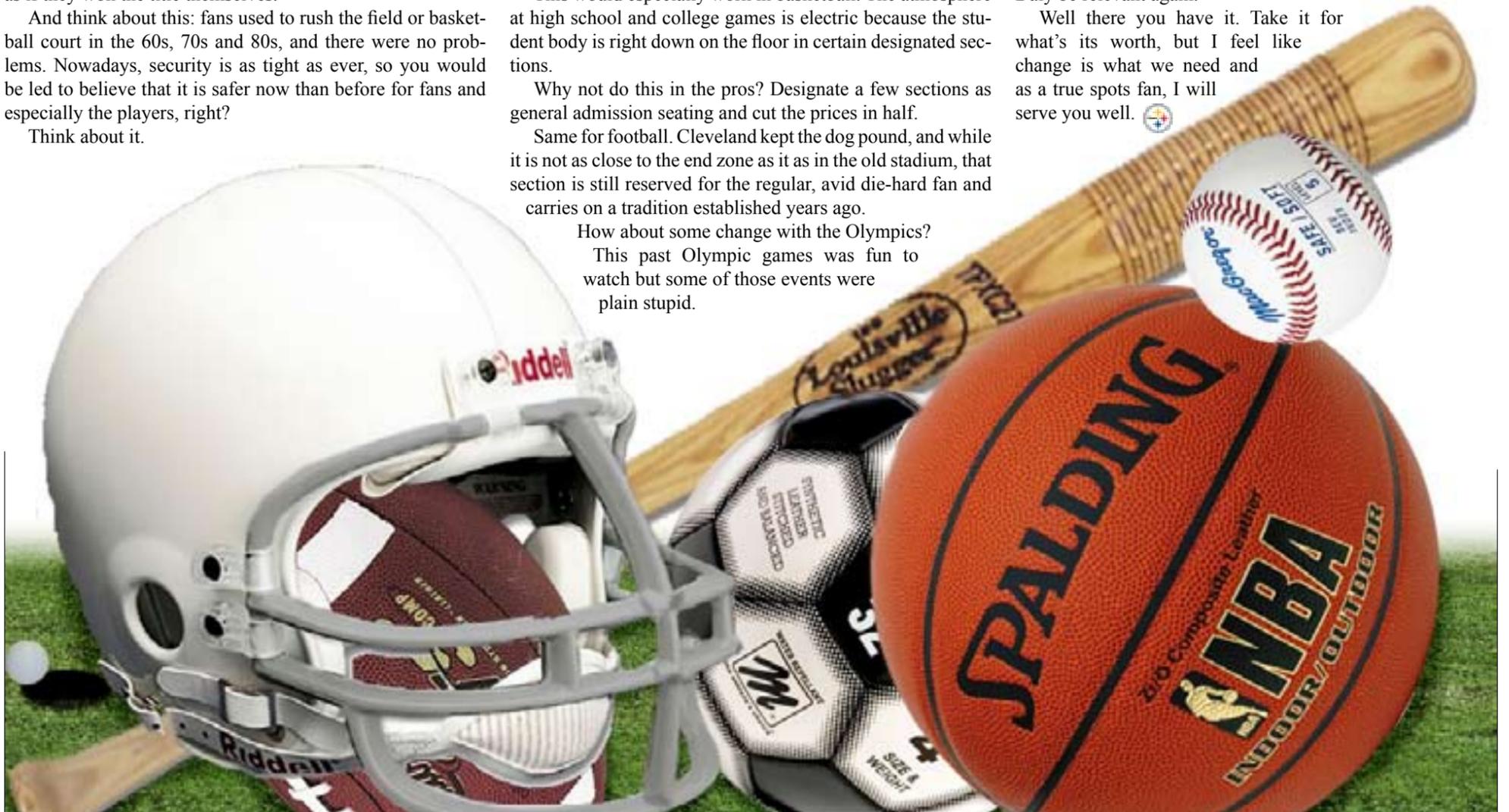
I have two options: heckling or alcohol.

I want to see Tiger and Phil stand up on the first tee on Sunday at the Masters and the gallery begins that famous clap you see in so many sports movies where it starts slow and gains speed and volume and then ends with everyone hootin' and hollerin'. Or right before a big putt on the 18th, all of the fans pulling for Ernie Els start heckling the heck out of Vijay Singh as if he were about to shoot a free throw in a basketball game.

I would really like to see how they reacted to that kind of pressure.

If that didn't pass Congress, then I suggest that we encourage the pro golfers to sip on a frothy beverage or two like we all do when we take in a round of golf at our local course. That is half the fun of golfing – enjoying a beer and a cigar outdoors with your buddies, away from the office. I would like to see these guys drive the ball when they're a little tipsy. And the best part of it all, sports fans would get to see John Daly be relevant again.

Well there you have it. Take it for what's its worth, but I feel like change is what we need and as a true sports fan, I will serve you well. 🍷



MND-B Soldiers grapple for top honors in combatives tourney

Story and photos by
Spc. Benjamin Crane
MND-B PAO

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – Soldiers from the many units around Multi-National Division – Baghdad came together at the Camp Liberty Field House for a Modern Army Combatives tournament to see who was king of the ring Oct. 30 and Nov. 1.

The tournament was a two-day event that coincided with the United Services Organization tour that brought mixed martial arts professionals to Baghdad. Hermes Franca, Tony Schiena, Tom “Mr. Endurance” Jones and Kevin “The Monster” Randleman were some of the professional fighters that the USO arranged to be here to visit the troops.

“We do this to increase the morale of the troops,” said Capt. Ryan Schrock, a native of Daytona Beach, Fla., who serves as commander of Battery C, 2nd Battalion, 44th Air Defense Artillery Regiment, attached to Division Special Troops Battalion, 4th Infantry Division, MND-B, who served as the tournament’s coordinator. “Also, we focus in on what we think is important as far as workouts and drills.”

The hand-to-hand combat-fighting techniques are taught to every Soldier in the Army, but not all Soldiers take it to the next level. For Soldiers who want to learn more, there are four levels in the Modern Army Combatives program that Soldiers can learn and train for and there are tournaments such as this to show off those skills.

“It builds the Warrior Ethos, Soldiers love it ... and it builds the morale of those Soldiers here in Iraq,” said Schrock

The tournament had 120 fighters participate and even more spectators cheering on their friends.

“This is a great thing,” said Spc. Colter Brown, a Carl Junction, Mo., native, who serves with Company D, DSTB, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B. “This has kept me motivated for months. Just training for this and having the day finally come is great!”

Brown went on to win the championship for the 205-pound weight class.

Another fighter was happy he joined the competition even though he wasn’t able to make it to the final round.

“I am not disappointed” said Spc. Ryan Dickinson, from Tampa, Fla., who serves with Company A, DSTB, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B. “(My competitor) had the upper hand on the technique. He had to fight for it, but he finally got his hooks in there and he got me. I am glad that I entered, and I don’t regret it at all.”

But it wasn’t just the participants happy to be involved. It was the stars in the stands watching the men and women wrestling who also had a great experience.

“This is the most exceptional of all the events,” said Tony Shiena, Mixed Martial Arts professional fighter. “It’s a real honor to be here. We’re your biggest fans.”

Shiena not only participates in the mixed martial arts but he also works in the film industry as an action movie stunt actor and also has been in TV shows such as “CSI: New York.”

“It’s a small price to pay for us to come over here to give (the Soldiers) some entertainment,” said Kevin “The Monster” Randleman, Ultimate Fighting Championship’s former heavy weight champion. “Being over here for the last four days, I realize that I take my life for granted. I am glad I got this opportunity from my manager. He asked me to help out, and for me it was a no-brainer.”

At the end of the tournament, the professional fighters spent time talking with the troops and posing for pictures and signing autographs, making the occasion a winning experience for fans, fighters and professionals alike.



Spc. Colter Brown, a Carl Junction, Mo., native, who serves with Company D, Division Special Troops Battalion, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, wrestles with another Soldier during his semi-final round in the MND-B Modern Army Combatives tournament at the Camp Liberty Field House Oct. 30.



Spc. Matthew Reynolds, who serves with Division Special Troops Battalion, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, poses with Kevin “The Monster” Randleman, Ultimate Fighting Championship’s former heavyweight champion, after the MND-B Modern Army Combatives tournament at the Camp Liberty Field House Nov. 1.