

EXPEDITIONARY TIMES

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Vol. 2, Issue 1

Strengthen Relationships

16 SB, local Iraqi leaders talk security

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Sustainer Aims High

B Co, 16 SB supports JABS

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Strap in Safely

Improved GRS saves lives

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Bracing in Balad

APG instructor teaches blocking and bracing

Page 14



U.S. Army photo by Spc. Brian A. Barbour

A local Iraqi works on the rebar for a concrete platform in the container repair yard at Joint Base Balad, Iraq, Dec. 06.

Sol learn new skills, page 6

New York Sustainers get a Christmas surprise

STORY AND PHOTOS BY
SPC. KIYOSHI FREEMAN
EXPEDITIONARY TIMES STAFF

AL ASAD AIR BASE, Iraq – New York Army National Guardsmen received a Christmas surprise here over the holidays: a visit from their governor, representatives; even reporters bearing gifts.

On Dec. 21, New York Governor David Paterson and U.S. Representatives Anthony Weiner (Brooklyn/Queens, N.Y.) and Steve Israel (Long Island, N.Y.) handed out Yankees and Mets baseball caps during a lunch with Soldiers from the Brooklyn-based 133rd Quartermaster Company, 371st Sustainment Brigade, 3^d Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), here at Dining Facility 1.

According to an article in the "Daily News," Paterson said he was "overwhelmed"

by the response he received from service members.

He went on to say, "The least we can do is come over and bring them some gifts, and tell them how much the American people, in particular New Yorkers, are behind them."

They were not the only Quartermaster company's holiday guests.

Reporters Marvin Scott and Jill Nicolini from WPIX, a New York City television station, spent the holiday with the Soldiers – and they didn't come empty handed. Along with gifts of DVD players and Toby Keith-singing teddy bears, New York-style cheesecake and



Soldiers with the 133rd Quartermaster Company, 371st Sustainment Brigade, 3^d Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), at Al Asad Air Base, Iraq, Dec. 24, got a Christmas surprise from visiting reporters: holiday greetings from their friends and Families back home. The 133rd QM Co. is a New York Army National Guard unit from Brooklyn, N.Y.

hotdogs, the reporters also brought pre-recorded holiday greetings from Gov. Paterson; New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg; and the Soldiers friends and Families.

"I'm energized by it because it's not often in this business we

get to tell such positive, uplifting stories and to show our support of our courageous men and women of the military," Scott said in a prepared statement on the WPIX website. "We're

See NEW YORK, Page 8



AIRBORNE

Do you have what it takes to be a Screaming Eagle?

Page 7

332 ESFS Blotter

Dec. 25 – Dec. 31

General Order 1B, violation X3:

A Soldier brought three additional Soldiers to file a complaint concerning suspected use of alcohol. SF patrolman initiated rights advisement IAW Article 31/UCMJ to each of the three Soldiers. Two Soldiers gave statements concerning the incident, one Soldier declined giving a statement and requested legal counsel. The subjects were then transported to the base hospital for blood samples to be drawn and determine level of intoxication. The Soldiers were transported back to the Eagles Nest and released to their unit leadership.

Larceny of Private Property/Secured:

A civilian contractor entered the Eagles Nest to file a complaint concerning theft of his private property. The contractor stated in Air Force form 1168 that he departed his quarters to shower and upon return noticed his property had been removed. Security forces wrote a report concerning the incident. The victim was instructed to report back to security forces in 72 hours to obtain a copy of the report.

Patrol Response/General Order 1B Violation:

A civilian contractor contacted security forces regarding a Soldier incoherent on a bus. SF patrols were dispatched to the scene and made contact with the subject. Once the patrolman made contact with the subject, they deemed the Soldier too intoxicated to accomplish a written statement however, SF patrolman advised the Soldier of his rights IAW Article 31/UCMJ. The Soldier was transported to the base hospital where a blood sample was drawn to determine level of intoxication. The Soldier was then transported to the Eagles Nest and placed in a holding cell. The Soldier was released to his unit leadership.

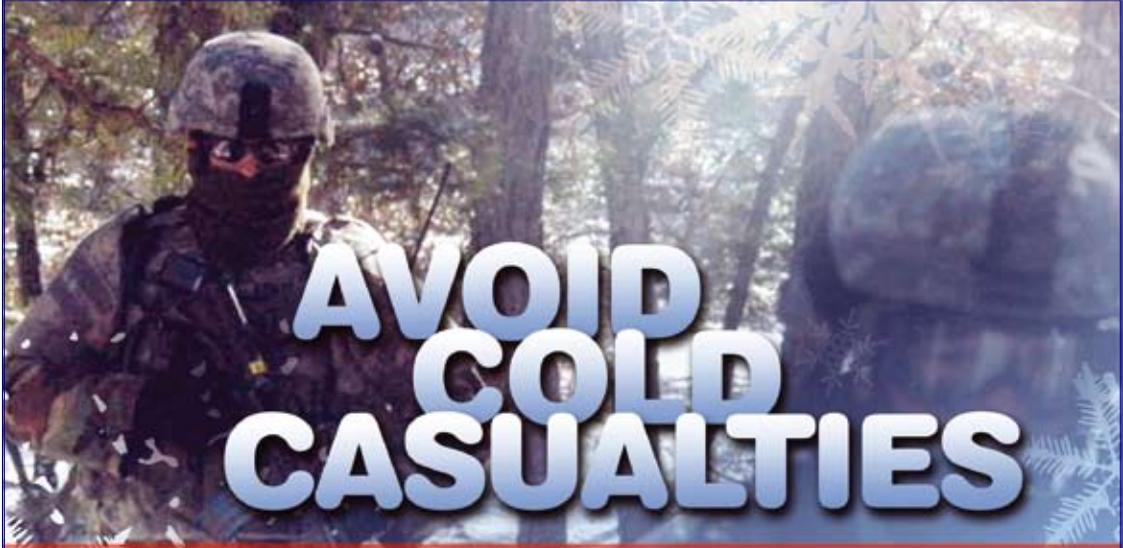
Patrol Response/Communicating a Threat:

A Soldier entered the Eagles Nest to make a complaint concerning a communicated threat. A written statement concerning the events was taken. SF patrols were dispatched to the scene and apprehended the subject. The subject was transported to the Eagles Nest and placed in an interview room. The subject was read his rights IAW Article 31/UCMJ and given an opportunity to recount the events with a written statement. The subject declined and requested legal counsel. The subject was released to his unit leadership.

NIPR- 443-8602

SIPR- 241-1171

Email- PMOdesk@iraq.centcom.mil



AVOID COLD CASUALTIES

When using Cold-Weather Clothing, Remember C-O-L-D

- Keep it ... Clean
- Avoid ... Overheating
- Wear it ... Loose and in Layers
- Keep it ... Dry

Notify an instructor / leader, if you or your buddy experience—

In cold environments ...	
Effects to the skin, such as:	Effects, such as:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Swollen red or darkened • Pain, tenderness, hot or itchy • Numbness or tingling • Bleeding or blistered • Gray, waxy feeling or "wooden" to the touch 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dizziness, weakness or blurred vision • Vigorous shivering • Lack of coordination and impaired judgment • Painful, red, watery or gritty feeling in the eyes (snow blindness)

In enclosed areas where heaters are used ...

- Excessive yawning, cherry red lips or grayish tint to lips and mouth
- Confusion, disorientation or mental slowness
- Drowsiness, lack of coordination or unconsciousness

Information contained in this poster is from the U.S. Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine website at <http://usachppm.apgsa.army.mil/coldinjury/>

ARMY SAFE IS ARMY STRONG

U.S. ARMY
ARMY STRONG

U.S. ARMY COMBAT READINESS CENTER
<https://crc.army.mil>

EXPEDITIONARY TIMES

3^d ESC Commanding General, Brig. Gen. Michael J. Lally

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371st Sustainment Brigade
287th Sustainment Brigade
332nd Air Expeditionary Wing
555th Engineer Brigade
304th Sustainment Brigade
CJSOTF-AP
Task Force 34

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

JBB Religious Service Schedule

PROTESTANT

TRADITIONAL

Sunday 0730 Air Force Hospital Chapel
 0930 Provider Chapel
 1030 Freedom Chapel (West side)
 1100 Castle Heights (Bldg 4155)
 1730 Gilbert Memorial Chapel (H-6)
 2000 Air Force Hospital Chapel

HISPANIC SERVICE

Saturday 1930 Provider Chapel

GOSPEL

Sunday 1100 MWR East building
 1200 Freedom Chapel (West side)
 1230 Gilbert Mem. Chapel (H-6)
 1900 Provider Chapel

CONTEMPORARY

Sunday 0900 MWR East building
 1030 Gilbert Mem. Chapel (H-6)
 1400 Castle Heights (Bldg 4155)
 1900 Freedom Chapel (West side)
 Wednesday 2000 Gilbert Mem. Chapel (H-6)

LITURGICAL

Sunday 1500 Gilbert Chapel (H-6)

SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST

Saturday 0900 Provider Chapel

CHURCH OF CHRIST

Sunday 1530 Castle Heights (Bldg 4155)

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE

Call the Provider Chapel

LATTER DAY SAINTS (MORMON)

Sunday 1300 Provider Chapel
 1530 Freedom Chapel (West side)
 1900 Gilbert Mem. Chapel (H-6)

ROMAN CATHOLIC MASS

Saturday 1700 Gilbert Mem. Chapel (H-6)
(Sacrament of Reconciliation Sat 1600 or by appointment)
 2000 Freedom Chapel (West side)
 Sunday 0830 Gilbert Mem. Chapel (H-6)
 1100 Provider Chapel
 1100 Air Force Hospital Chapel
 Thursday 1100 Air Force Hospital Chapel
 Mon, Wed, Fri 1700 Gilbert Mem. Chapel (H-6)

JEWISH SHABBAT SERVICES

Friday 1700 Gilbert Mem. Chapel (H-6)
 Saturday 0800 Gilbert Mem. Chapel (H-6)
 1700 Gilbert Mem. Chapel (H-6)

ISLAMIC PRAYER

Friday 1230 Provider Chapel

PAGAN/WICCAN FELLOWSHIP

Thursday 1900 Eden Chapel
 Saturday 1900 Eden Chapel

GREEK ORTHODOX

Sunday 0900 Provider Annex

For more information, call
 Gilbert Chapel: 433-7703
 Provider Chapel: 433-2430
 Freedom Chapel: 443-6303

“Hooah of the Week”



U.S. Army photo by Spc. Michael Behlin

Maj. Barbara Crawford and Pfc. Miguel Guidino are congratulated by 3^d Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) commanding general, Brig. Gen. Michael J. Lally for being selected this week’s “Hooahs” of the Week. Crawford, a native of St. Louis, Mo., and 3^d ESC force protection officer was chosen for her coordination and leadership balancing volunteers, equipment and VIP visits for the JBB holiday events that included the Jingle Bell 5K run, Christmas parade, holiday variety show and Santa Claus reception. Guidino, a native of Los Angeles, Calif., was selected for his assistance to event coordinators of Operation Ho-Ho-Ho as well as the prepping and painting of the 3^d ESC HHC T-wall during his personal time.

How to nominate a Hooah of the Week

The “Hooah of the Week” program is a recognition and reward for excellence in the 3^d Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) at Joint Base Balad.

The program is for any Soldier, Airman, Marine, Sailor or Coast Guardsmen assigned or attached to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 3^d ESC.

Brig. Gen. Michael J. Lally, 3^d ESC commanding general and Command Sgt. Maj. Major Willie C. Tennant Sr., 3^d ESC command sergeant major, chooses the “Hooah Soldier of the week” each week.

The “Hooah Soldier of the Week” is recognized at the end of the battle update assessment, (BUA) on Thursdays, and presented:

- Certificate of Achievement
- CG’s coin
- 3^d ESC T-shirt
- Telephone calling card
- One day off (to be coordinated with the Soldier’s leadership)
- A privilege to drive or ride in an MRAP
- An opportunity to be interviewed via telephone by a radio station in his/her hometown

Service members can be nominated more than once, but can win only one time.

Nominations must be returned to Sgt. 1st Class Caprice Walker by 1:00 p.m. every Wednesday.

For any questions, to request a nomination form or to submit a service member’s name for nomination, e-mail: caprice.walker@iraq.centcom.mil.

Nominate your “Hooah of the Week” today.

If other units within the 3^d ESC have a similar program, feel free to submit photos of your award winners via e-mail for publication to: expeditionarytimes@iraq.centcom.mil

Corrections to previous Expeditionary Times

Dec. 24 issue: Cover photo credit was a courtesy photo of the Al Asad chaplain’s office.

Dec. 31 issue:

-Page. 12, photo credit for the Operation Ho-Ho-Ho parade winning float was printed as first place. The A Co., 181 BSB float actually took second place, and the correct first place float was for the 2nd Bn., 5th FA Regt., and shown on page 16 of this issue.

- In the JBB 2008 Holiday parade article, Maj. Barbara Crawford’s correct title is the 3^d ESC force protection officer.

- Sustaining the line photo with the DA civilian showing Brig. Gen. Michael J. Lally, 3^d ESC commanding general regarding the M915 retrofit program was actually of an LMTV, not a M915.

Logisticians work with local village leaders to sustain Iraq

STORY AND PHOTO BY
SGT. 1ST CLASS ADAM V. SHAW
16th Sust. Bde. PAO

JADDILIAH SOFLIH, Iraq – Logisticians met with local Iraqi leaders in order to strengthen the relationship between contingency operating base Q-West and other local villages, Dec 17.

Col. Martin B. Pitts, commander, 16th Sustainment Brigade and Command Sgt. Maj. James E. Spencer, command sergeant major, 16th Sust. Bde. met with community leader Doctor Mohammed, known as "Doc Mo," and discussed the security situation in the

community and at COB Q-West.

"Establishing and maintaining a vibrant relationship with the local Iraqi leadership is a critical component to the success of COB Q-West operations and more importantly, gets at the core of the 16th Sustainment Brigade's Multi-National Division-North mission: fostering a secure, stable and self-reliant Iraq," said Pitts.

Dr. Mohammed wanted to meet with the leaders from the 16th Sust. Bde. at his house to share a custom meal.

"When you eat together, in Arab culture, it means that you will not stab someone in the back," said Dr. Mohammed. "This is an opportunity to share

our culture and build on our relationship with the west."

Dr. Mohammed realizes his importance to the Coalition forces.

"Without the help of the locals, it would be tough to know who the insurgents are," he said.

During the visit, Soldiers from the personal security detail, Bravo Co., 16th Special Troops Battalion, 16th Sust. Bde., gave the village elementary school a new swing set.

"We did it for the kids," said Sgt. Nicholas Nipitella, vehicle commander, PST. "They don't have much and we'll do anything we can do to put a smile on their face for a little bit."

One of children's fathers

said it was a kind gesture from the Army.

"We thank you very much,"

said Hussin Ismml. "We thank the Coalition forces and will do anything we can to help you."



Col. Martin B. Pitts, commander, 16th Sustainment Brigade and local Iraqi community leader Doctor Mohammed, known as "Doc Mo," discuss the security situation in the community and at contingency operating base Q-West in the village of Jaddilah Sofliih, Iraq, Dec 17.

304th SB Soldiers earn combat patch

STORY AND PHOTO BY
SPC. MICHAEL BEHLIN
Expeditionary Times Staff

JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq – Soldiers of the 304th Sustainment Brigade officially marked their deployment here by receiving their combat patch during a ceremony Dec. 24.

Lt. Col. Norman Green, commander of the 304th Sust. Bde., presided over the ceremony in which Soldiers donned the 304th Sust. Bde. patch on their right shoulder.

"The mission of my brigade is to sustain Coalition forces through transportation, contracting, and help train the Iraqi Security Forces," said Green, a native of Columbia, S.C. "What we want to accomplish while we're here is

not only to continue to provide support at a high level, but also improve the proficiency of the overall logistical posture here in theater."

The 304th Sust. Bde. activated on Sept. 16, 2008 at March Air Reserve Base in Riverside, Calif. Green mentioned upon activation, his unit had a month to mobilize and get acquainted with one another.

Although Green stated there was only a short time-frame to get Soldiers ready to deploy, he is pleased with their performance so far.

"I'm very proud of my unit considering we only had a month to mold them together, as a team," said Green. "We mostly have a young team, but they

have the motivation to achieve anything. It all goes along with our unit motto, "Bridge the gap, sustain the force," because

anything out there that other units can't do, my unit can."

The brigade is one of 35 in the Army re-configured to support the Army's rapidly changing combat and support structure. The brigade's expeditionary capability allows it to rapidly deploy anywhere in the world, open and operate air and sea ports, establish a theater distribution system, and provide sustained logistics support to the Warfighter in a joint, interagency, and multinational environment.

The shoulder sleeve insignia of the 304th Sust. Bde. represents a rich history that includes many important pillars of the sustainment brigades. Consisting of a bridge with a river flowing underneath, the patch has many symbols

that embody sustainment operations.

On the insignia, the color blue symbolizes honor and highlights the units call to duty. The bridge symbolizes strong support, with the seven stones on top representing the seven Army values of loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity and personal courage. The river, which flows in the shape of an "S", represents the missions of sustainment, service and support which govern the task and purpose of the unit.

The combat patch, which is worn on the right shoulder of an U.S. Army uniform, symbolizes past or active participation in wartime service. The wearing of a combat patch also signifies a Soldier's participation in the continued freedom and protection of the liberties for the people of the United States of America.



1st Sgt. Gail Smith, HHC 304th Sust. Bde. first sergeant, receives her combat patch from Lt. Col. Norman Green, the 304th Sust. Bde. commander. The 304th Sust. Bde., an Army Reserve component unit based out of March Air Reserve Base in Riverside Calif., is one of 35 sustainment brigades in the Army configured to support the Army's rapidly changing combat and support structure.

MNF-I TF SAFE **Check CHUsdays** MNF-I TF SAFE

Each Tuesday Check The Following In Your CHU

- ✗ Power strips are free of debris and clothing
- ✗ Electrical devices not in use are unplugged
- ✗ Power strips and outlets are not overloaded
- ✗ Smoke detector is operational
- ✗ Fire extinguisher is serviceable (in the green)
- ✗ Room is neat and orderly

This Simple Act Could Save You, Your CHU and Your Buddy Too

**Stressed?
Relax and go see
a movie!**

**See this weeks movie schedule
page 21**



1 January 2009



CONVOY OPERATIONS

1. Due to the 1 January 2009 Security Agreement between Iraq and the United States and the changing operational environment, it is time to change our terminology. Effective immediately all 3^d ESC subordinate units will start using the doctrinal term "Convoy" vice "Combat Logistics Patrols" or "CLPs".
2. As leaders we must be clear to our Soldiers, Non-Commissioned Officers and Officers that while the environment has changed...our mission remains the same...and our procedures will remain the same. We must continue our focused efforts on PCC/PCI, safety, convoy briefings, rehearsals, TTPs, and after action reviews. These are crucial to the success and safety of our Soldiers. Additionally, we will ensure all procedures are in coordination with directed Rules of Engagement and Escalation of Force measures.
3. The many transitions of 2009 will be challenging. I know that it is often difficult, but your actions to share the roads of Iraq visibly demonstrate our true spirit of partnership and help maintain the positive momentum achieved during the past year.
4. For additional information concerning this memorandum, contact LTC Martin Morford, 3^d ESC G3 Plans at DSN: 433-2410, SVOIP: 242-9727, or martin.morford@s-iraq.centcom.smil.mil

Sustaining the Line!

Michael J Lally
 MICHAEL J. LALLY
 Brigadier General, USA
 Commanding

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 # 2

"WHATEVER THE TASK, HOWEVER COMPLEX THE CHALLENGE, WE ALWAYS SUSTAIN THE LINE!"

Sons of Iraq learn carpentry, welding skills from Sustainers

BY SPC. KELLY ANNE BECK
Expeditionary Times Staff

JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq – After a hard day's work, most people want to relax. For some Iraqis working at Joint Base Balad, Iraq, relaxation comes only after completing an 18-mile walk home.

For "Mohammed," a Sons of Iraq member who works for the Iraqi-owned Miran Company, at a container repair facility here said the walk home does not bother him or his co-workers. In fact, their job is probably the reason they each have their own home.

"I'm very happy to work, my family is happy," he said. "I can help my family; my mom, my

dad. Now we have salary and pay ... we have a house."

Sustainers from the 155th Inland Cargo Transportation Company and the 259th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 3^d Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) trained approximately 35 SoI on welding, painting and carpentry skills since Oct. 2008. The training partnership enables the SoI to repair and inspect shipping containers at the Iraqi-owned container repair facility.

Capt. Jason Whitehorn, the support operations transportation officer in charge for the 259th CSSB said the training has been rewarding for both the Iraqis and Soldiers.

Not only does the training provides the Iraqis with valuable job skills; it also saves the Army money, he said. Additionally, repairing containers here

reduces the amount of convoys and Soldiers traveling Iraqi roads on their way to Kuwait to deliver damaged containers

"I want to thank the Soldiers for giving them a job, a chance at a better future and for building a good relationship with us."

- Hashim
Manager/owner
Miran Company

for repairs.

Whitehorn added that until this training began, Kuwait was one of the few places where shipping containers could be repaired.

Staff Sgt. Jesus Grajales and three other Soldiers from the 155th Inland Cargo Trans. Co., along with an Iraqi partner taught classes on welding for

two weeks as well as a hands-on portion to every worker at the facility.

Grajales said they are teaching the Iraqis how to weld, repair and inspect shipping containers so they might eventually be able to start a container repair company of their own.

"Only about five percent of Iraqi welders know how to use a plasma cutter (a tool to cut steel and other dense metal materials), but all the workers here have learned to use one," said Hashim, the manager and owner of the Miran Company. "That puts them ahead of others and helps them get opportunity to make money."

Whitehorn said the most challenging aspect during training was overcoming cultural differences. They not only taught Iraqis, but learned from them as well.

"One day the schedule would say we were teaching welding, but it would soon turn into an English lesson or an Arabic lesson for our guys," he said. "Some words don't translate so you work around it, but it built the relationship between us even stronger."

Hashim said the training not only benefitted the Iraqi workers monetarily; it has also helped them get to know American Soldiers better.

"Some Iraqis don't get to be close with Soldiers, they just see convoys, and they have no chance to talk with them or learn about their families," he said. "But we get to meet and joke around with Soldiers and learn each others' language."

"I want to thank the Soldiers for giving them a job, a chance at a better future and for building a good relationship with us," Hashim said.

Soldiers address concerns at SMA town hall meeting

BY SGT. ALEX SNYDER
Expeditionary Times Staff

JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq – Sgt. Maj. Of the Army Kenneth O. Preston held two town hall meetings with enlisted Soldiers here Dec. 21.

One town hall meeting was held for Soldiers of the rank staff sergeant and below; another was held for Soldiers sergeant first class and above. In total, Preston addressed nearly 250 Soldiers.

"The most important thing for me as I travel and talk to Soldiers is to get your concerns, what's on our mind, what you are thinking about, what your questions are ... those questions, coming back lets me know what's important to you," Preston said during one of the meetings.

Here is a sampling of issues Soldiers brought to Preston's attention during the E-6 and below town hall meeting:

No more bonuses?

One Soldier from North Carolina said she wanted to know more about elimination of bonuses for certain military

occupational specialties, as reported by the Stars and Stripes. Stars and Stripes recently reported that 25 of 88 MOSs are losing their bonuses.

"We can only pay a bonus to those occupational specialties and those skill levels where there is a shortage ... because it's about recruiting," Preston said.

No one would enter certain career fields without bonuses, he said.

Bonuses are created to keep certain units filled and manned to 100 percent with the right people, right grade and right skill level, Preston said; these can only be paid to MOSs and skill levels where there are shortages.

Preston explained that, by law, once a career field is up to 100 percent, Lt. Gen. Michael D. Rochelle, the deputy chief of staff, G-1, is required to turn its bonus off.

"And that's exactly what's happening now," Preston said.

The Operational Reserve

A guardsman from Genesee, Idaho, wanted to know if the National Guard will see more deployments in the future.

Preston responded by saying that the Army is in a transition period, one in which the National Guard and Army Reserve are transitioning from their former role as an "Strategic Reserve" to their new role as an "Operational Reserve."

During the Cold War, Preston explained, guardsmen and reservists were intended to be used only in the event the Soviet Union invaded Western Europe.

Today, these same components are being used – and will continue to be used – as interchangeable with their active-duty counterparts.

This, Preston said, is part of the modular force structure the Army has moved to.

"Like units across the Army, regardless of what component ... are all the same," Preston said. For example, a military police company – regardless of component – now has the same equipment and capabilities of an MP company in any other component and can be used interchangeably, he said.

"That's how we're seeing the Guard and Reserve being used, just as a regular unit," Preston said.

Ideally, Preston said,

guardsmen and reservists should receive at least a year of notification to prepare for their mission.

No Time for School

A Soldier from Dallas, Texas, asked what guidance Preston could give to future leaders who were having a hard time getting into Army schools, such as Warrior Leadership Course or Basic Noncommissioned Officers Course, because of tight deployment schedules.

Preston responded by saying it's up to a unit's leaders to ensure that the window of opportunity – the time between redeployment and train up for the next deployment – is utilized so that Soldiers can attend the schools they need.

Preston noted that, although many restrictions for promotion have been lifted, not attending a school can put a Soldier behind his or her peers.

To stay or not to stay

Another Soldier asked what advice Preston could offer Soldiers who are about to reach the end of their term of enlistment, had been deployed multiple times and are thinking about getting out.

"That's a personal choice that everyone has to make," Preston said.

Preston said Soldiers stay in the Army for three main reasons, the first being the command climate.

"The command climate creates the atmosphere where ... Soldiers want to continue to serve, they want to ... continue to be part of that organization."

Job satisfaction is also important, Preston said.

"It's more than a occupational specialty, it's being satisfied with the unit's role, regardless of where you are deployed, seeing the value of your contributions to the unit and how they lead to success, and being appreciated for that when you return from deployment," he said.

The third reason is quality of life. While the paycheck is important, Preston said, there are other factors too – like housing, barracks, medical, dental and retirement.

When the Army can provide a package of benefits that is as good or better than what a Soldier can provide his or her Family back on the civilian side, Preston said, then that Soldier will re-enlist

Do you have a story idea?

Contact the Expeditionary Times

expeditionarytimes@iraq.centcom.mil

Farewell To The Pittsburgh 3/444th Postal Platoon

BY 1ST. LT. LIANNA SCHARFF
AND STAFF SGT.
RENE WILLIAMS
UPAR, 101st Human Resource Company

eight-month deployment Friday. They support the military postal operations here and at forward operating bases Paliwoda & Grizzly.

Joint Base Balad.”

Attached to the 101st Human Resources Company, Johnson and the 3/444th Soldiers were responsible for processing over 13,000,000 pounds of mail and ensuring they were sent to their final destinations.

Other additional duties involved providing support for processing personnel in and out at the JBB passenger terminal, as well as real time casualty reporting at the base hospital.

life support for FOB Paliwoda, Grizzly, Normandy and Caldwell by sending the necessary supplies as well as coordinating with the Red Cross in getting the Soldiers Starbucks coffee and other amenities that were not available at their location.”

JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq
--- Soldiers of the 3rd Platoon, 444th Human Resources Company from Pittsburgh, Pa., recently transferred authority to 4th Plt., 18th HR Co. of Fort Bragg, N.C., after completing an



The 3/444th was recognized for their hard work and dedication during an award ceremony held here on Dec. 2.

“I am proud to have served with the 101st HR Company and its postal operations mission,” said Sgt. 1st Class Kevin Johnson, platoon sergeant. “I am leaving with a wealth of knowledge and experience as well as knowing that I have positively affected the morale of thousands Soldiers on

During their deployment, they helped process over 15,000 absentee ballots for delivery to the United States for the November 2008 election. 3/444th Soldiers provided unit postal operations training to over 1,000 mail clerks and conducted unit mail room inspections for units assigned to JBB.

“It was a good learning experience in comparison to my last deployment. I was able to see as well as be a part of the mail process from the U.S. to the Joint Military Mail Terminal and throughout MND-N (Multi-National Division-North),” said Staff Sgt. Tracy Snow of her experience as the contracting officer representative. “I am also proud to have been a part of the

“Overall, my ability to help service members as well as all DoD DA civilians in reception of their organizations mail and seeing the effect that it had on their morale made my job worthwhile,” Snow said.

The Mechanics of Finance on the ECC program

BY SGT. JERMEKA WILLIAMS
Delta/101st FM Co.,
UPAR, 10th Sust. Bde

deployed to a combat zones and peace-keeping missions.

The card saves the customer and the finance office time because it reduces the need for advance payments for Soldiers. Soldiers can access their accounts any time using their ECC.

deployed areas by reducing the number of finance support missions to disburse U.S. currency in the outlying areas of Iraq.

from their bank accounts and transfer into their ECC so they can make purchases or get cash back on Coalition forces installations in Iraq.

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq
The Eagle Cash Card program supports troops, contractors, and civilians



The ECC provides these personnel a more convenient and secure way to access their personal funds. It reduces the amount of US currency on the battlefield and the card helps prevent counterfeit bills in circulation.

The ECC program enhanced the safety of finance Soldiers and support personnel in

The ECC kiosks are an integral part of the ECC program. The kiosk allows service members and support personnel to draw funds

All this is done without incurring the fees that are usually associated with automated teller machines.

**THE TIME HAS COME TO PREPARE FOR THE
101ST AIRBORNE DIVISION (AIR ASSAULT)
12 MILE ROAD MARCH/RUN**

DATE: 10 JANUARY 2009

TIME: 0530 HOURS

LOCATION: HOLT STADIUM




If you're up for the challenge, the 101st Airborne Division (AASLT) standard is to complete the road march in 4 hours or less. Certificates will be given to all personnel that meet the uniform and time standards. Uniform Requirement above is optional. Runners and those not seeking a certificate are not expected to adhere to the road march uniform requirement.
T-Shirts will be given out to the first 400 finishers.



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Sponsored by the 101st Human Resource Company



NEW YORK *Continued from Page 1*

letting our neighbors—our citizen Soldiers—know they haven't been forgotten this holiday season."

The 133rd QM Co. is responsible for several important sustainment operations at Al Asad, said 1st Sgt. Henry Mack, the company first sergeant, from Brooklyn, N.Y. The unit runs a class I and class III logistics yard, providing everything from food for the troops to fuel for convoys and helicopters. In

addition, the Soldiers manage a water purification and distribution site.

"As a quartermaster unit, the quartermaster motto is 'supporting victory,' and that's what we do," said Capt. Tony Plata, 133rd QM Co. commander, from Bronx, N.Y.

The 133rd QM Co. had to adapt to accomplish their mission, Plata said. The unit was initially made-up almost entirely of clerks, some of whom had to

retrain as fuelers and water purification experts.

"The guys have definitely stepped up to the plate and show they're capable," he said. "We can definitely help out the regular Army any time we're called."

Plata said spending the holidays in Iraq was both the most memorable and the most difficult experience in his deployment. It helped, though, to see they were not forgotten, and to

get a small taste of home – even if the media did neglect to bring any New York pizza, he said with a smile.

"It was great to have Marvin and Jill [the reporters], the governor out here, the two representatives, to show support for the New York National Guard," Plata said. "It definitely brought a smile to everyone's face."



LEFT: Reporter Jill Nicolini poses for a shot for cameraman Dave Kimmel during a Christmas Eve party at Al Asad Air Base, Iraq, Dec. 24. Nicolini, Kimmel and Marvin Scott, another reporter, were visiting troops for the holidays.



LEFT: Reporters Marvin Scott and Jill Nicolini prepare for a live broadcast with Soldiers from the 133rd Quartermaster Company, 371st Sustainment Command, 3rd Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), at Al Asad Air Base, Iraq, Dec. 22. The 133rd Quartermaster Company is a New York Army National Guard unit from Brooklyn, N.Y.

RIGHT: New York Governor David Paterson (in white), Congress Representative Steve Israel (green windbreaker) and Congressional Representative Anthony Weiner (in the blue blazer), lead New York Army National Guardsmen with a chant of "Go, Mets!" in front of Dining Facility 1, Al Asad Air Base, Iraq, Dec. 21. Paterson, Israel, and Weiner had lunch with the Soldiers of the 133rd Quartermaster Company from Brooklyn, N.Y.



Reporter Marvin Scott and cameraman Dave Kimmel interview Sgt. Sonia Allen, 133rd Quartermaster Company from Bronx, N.Y., as she eats a New York cheesecake during a Christmas Eve party at Al Asad Air Base, Iraq, Dec. 24. The visiting news media brought a special gift for the New York National Guardsmen: New York-style cheesecake, bagels, and hotdogs.



Spc. Harry Colon, a maintenance specialist with 133rd Quartermaster Company, from Flushing, N.Y., cooks chicken on a barbecue for a Christmas Eve party at Al Asad Air Base, Iraq, Dec. 24. Visiting New York City reporters brought gifts, cheesecake, hotdogs and bagels to give the National Guardsmen a taste of home.



U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. Erik Gudmundson

Marine Cpl Aaron Wagner (Left), of Marine Air Wing 3, Camp Pendleton, Calif.; Navy Chief Petty Officer Dan Boyles from the Expeditionary Combat Readiness Center at Naval Station Norfolk, Va.; Petty Officer 2nd Class Nathan Humphreys, of the ECRS and Spc. David Jarvis of Bravo Company, 16th Sustainment Brigade, 3rd ESC are all assigned to the 777th Expeditionary Airlift Squadron, Joint Airborne Battle Staff detachment. On Dec. 6 at Joint Base Balad, the crew prepared for a mission by testing equipment. JABS assist convoys when they have communication problems and need help.

Sustainer works with 777th EAS; takes JABS at convoy protection

BY AIR FORCE TECH. SGT.
CRAIG LIFTON
332nd Air Expeditionary Wing
Public Affairs

JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq -- Likened to 911 operators in the air, the Joint Airborne Battle Staff members are tasked with ensuring convoys operating throughout Iraq are never without communications.

This is especially important on the dangerous Iraqi roads where improvised explosive devices, vehicle malfunctions and accidents threaten mission success.

When convoys are operating in areas where ground communication is limited, the JABS crew steps in to bridge the gap.

"The Army needed an airborne communications platform," said Capt. Seana Jones, Multi-National Corps-Iraq JABS detachment commander. "We can be more mobile and can provide coverage in the communications gaps."

JABS was created to fill the Army's need to keep in constant communications with convoys as they travel throughout Iraq.

Ground communications stations dot the countryside, but due to distance, terrain, mechanical issues and atmospheric conditions, the ground systems can't always provide 100-percent radio coverage.

"JABS is a crucial part of the convoy mission," said Army Spc. Jamie Lipscomb, a movement control specialist with the 486th Movement Control Team from Kaiserslautern, Germany. "Without JABS, it would be virtually impossible to speak with the convoys."

Soldiers, Sailors, Marines and Airmen make up the JABS crew. Coming from different bases and career fields, these service members are joined to fulfill the JABS mission.

"I am learning about how the other branches work," said Spc. David Jarvis, a signal support specialist deployed to JABS from Bravo Company, 16th Sustainment Brigade, 3rd Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) and deployed from Bamberg, Germany. "Everyone brings something different to the table."

Operating onboard a 777th Expeditionary Airlift Squadron C-130 Hercules aircraft, the JABS crew listens to convoy communications traffic. When ground communications are out, the conveying service members can rest

assured, knowing that JABS is overhead.

"Either we intercept the call and pass the information on, or they call us directly," said Jones, a New Smyrna Beach, Fla. native deployed from Elmendorf Air Force Base, Alaska. "We can call out a quick-response force, explosive ordnance disposal or aeromedical evacuation [to assist in the situation]."

Ensuring the service members on the ground are ready for the fight is what JABS brings to the team.

"It's essential to the guys on the ground," said Navy Chief Petty Officer Dan Boyles, an avionics technician from the Expeditionary Combat Readiness Center at Naval Air Station Norfolk, Va. "JABS gives the warfighters on deck a warm, fuzzy feeling to know they can count on us."

When JABS first started in March 2007, they had to start from scratch. They improvised and adapted to make the mission a success.

Resembling a police and fire emergency dispatch center in the air, the operating area -- four chairs arranged around a sturdy and equally secured table with laptop computers on top -- comes fully secured on a pallet, connected by cables to a second pallet with their communications equipment.

"We look out for all of the convoys," said Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Nathan Humphreys, an operations specialist deployed to the MNC-I JABS Detachment from the Expeditionary Combat Readiness Center at Naval Station Norfolk, Va. "We know what can be potentially harmful and relay the information to them."

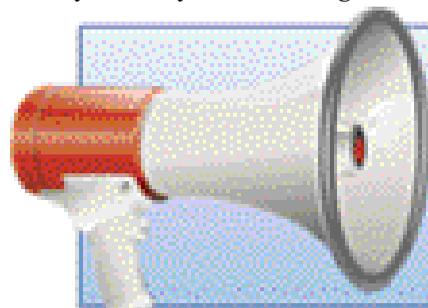
"When JABS first started, they strapped down a card table and four folding chairs," Jones said. "Now, we use chairs from salvaged vehicles that are comfortable and can recline."

The radio system, known as the Joint Airborne Communication System or JACS, was originally, large and difficult to move on and off the aircraft. The newest JACS weighs 80 pounds and fits in a box.

The 777th EAS aircrews said they are proud to be a part of the mission.

"We work seamlessly with the JABS crew," said Capt. Kevin Eley an aircraft commander with the 777th EAS aircraft commander and native of Vienna, Va., who is deployed from Little Rock AFB, Ark. "We are one team, one fight."

As convoys continue to roll out on to the roads of Iraq, JABS crews will keep an open ear to their communications, ready to help at a moment's notice.



Give a Shout Out!

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419th CSSB assumes responsibilities of 165th CSSB

STORY AND PHOTO BY
PFC. MICHAEL SYNER
10th Sust. Bde. Public Affairs

CAMP TAJI, Iraq - The Soldiers of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 419th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 10th Sustainment Brigade officially assumed responsibility for their mission from the headquarters element of the 165th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion from Bossier City, La., during a ceremony held here, Dec. 18.

The transfer of authority ceremony is the final step, and clear symbol of, the actual changing of a unit authority.

This is the 419th's, from Irvine, Calif., first deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, though many of the Soldiers assigned to the unit have deployed several times, said Lt. Col. Kristan L.K. Hericks, the commander of the 419th CSSB and an Irvine, Calif., native. Hericks has been in command of the CSSB for nearly two years.



Lt. Col. Kristan L.K. Hericks and Command Sgt. Maj. Paul C. Swanson, the senior leaders of the 419th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 10th Sustainment Brigade, uncasing the battalion colors for the first time in Iraq, officially marking their assumption of authority at Camp Taji, Iraq, Dec. 18.

"Wolfpack," said Hericks, addressing the 419th CSSB, "your extended preparations, challenging training and steady commitment to the Army's goals and ideals over the last year will at long last be put to full employment as we now assume command and control of this professional organization and crucial mission. Thank you for your continued efforts, and your sacrifices, motivation and dedication to the mission and each other."

The 419th CSSB will be deployed here for the next nine months.

"Our mission is to provide distribution oversight for logistics services," Hericks said. "We are very enthusiastic about the opportunity to participate in this mission."

"Soldiers of the Chariot battalion, welcome to the 10th Sustainment Brigade and the Muleskinner team," said Col. Mark E. Drake, a St. Paul, Minn. native and the commander of the 10th Sust. Bde. "I know your team has prepared and trained very hard for this mission and are ready for the challenges that await you."

The outgoing commander, an Alexandria, La. native, Lt. Col. Randall

"Beau" Bradford, gave his remarks following the casing of the colors. "This has been a time of great transition, and our Soldiers have met every single one of the many challenges they faced."

"My Soldiers did well," said Capt. Jason B. Kendall, the 165th HHC commander, and a Bossier City, La., native. "We can walk away with a real feeling of accomplishment."

The 165th activated on January 3, 2007, and officially accepted authority for their mission from the 1103rd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion in April 2007.

"The 165th CSSB command group and staff's dedication and devotion to duty during their tour of duty in Taji were evidenced by their accomplishment of a wide variety of operational commitments and missions," said Hericks.

"We [have] got all the tools we need to accomplish the mission," said the Irvine, Calif. native Pfc. Chris M. Sonnenburg, an information technology specialist with the 419th CSSB. "The 165th gave us good training. With that, we'll be able to give the detachment commanders what they need to finish their missions."

ISWAT, NP, ERU complete PAO course

STORY AND PHOTOS BY
U.S. AIR FORCE STAFF SGT.
BRYAN FRANKS
CJSOTF, PAO

CAMP TAJI, Iraq - Iraqi Special Weapons and Tactics, Emergency Response Unit and National Police Soldiers graduate from the Public Affairs course Dec. 23 in Camp Taji, Iraq.



A student responds to questions from mock reporters during the on-camera interview portion of the Public Affairs course in Camp Taji, Iraq, Dec. 23.

Iraqi participants came from all over Iraq including Tikrit, Baqubah, Muqadiyah, Samarra, Kirkuk and Taji to learn how to prepare public information, command information and community-relations activities to communicate Iraqi Security Forces information to both external and internal audiences.

"The class went very well and the students were very motivated and active," said a Coalition forces Soldier. "Everyone performed extremely well

in the news release writing and on-camera interviews. I feel this is something they will take back to their units and build on."

Students are advised how to inform and disseminate news to reach audiences; they took

part in writing news releases, taking photos and conducting on-camera interviews. Participants learned how to do all of this without jeopardizing missions or inadvertently giving away secrets to enemies. This was covered in more detail during the operational security brief.

"We really enjoy the class. All of the information was very helpful," said an Iraqi student. "Learning how to write press releases and learning not to discuss past, current or future operations or tactics with anyone outside our units will improve our ability to conduct successful missions."

During the operational security brief, students learned how to protect



A student practices writing press releases during the Public Affairs course in Camp Taji, Iraq, Dec. 23.

operational secrets from adversaries and identify weaknesses in the security of operational information.

Students are now armed with the knowledge and the tools they need to initiate public affairs plans and activities to inform audiences, conduct media relations and coordinate community relations, without compromising OPSEC.

According to the workshop "... Iraqis value the role information operations, including public affairs, which U.S. military doctrine identifies as a central component of successful counterinsurgency strategies."

Hark! Harold the Angel sings

STORY AND PHOTOS BY
SPC. KIYOSHI FREEMAN
Expeditionary Times Staff

ALASAD AIR BASE, Iraq – On Christmas Day, approximately 100 service members attended a Christmas pageant here at the main chapel.



“Harold the Angel” – a play on words from the classic Christmas carol “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing” – was written and produced by Chaplain (Major) James Lewis, the brigade chaplain from Kent, Ohio, 371st Sustainment Brigade, 3d Sustainment Command

(Expeditionary).

“For myself and others who grew up with (these kinds) of Christmas shows, to not have (a Christmas pageant), leaves kind of a hole,” Lewis said. “A part of the normal Christmas expectations for me is that there be some kind of Christmas pageant.”

Essentially a nativity play, which recounts the birth of Jesus, Lewis’ version instead focused more on an untold, behind-the-scenes type of story. It featured a fictitious character: Harold, a new angel getting on-the-job training.

This approach lent the pageant a comedic edge, and allowed Lewis to localize it for his audience.

The angel who teaches Harold to

fly, for example, was a swaggering, long-haired, sunglass-adorned aviation officer. The angels’ armor: Army-issue interceptor body armor, complete with bright orange reflector belt.

More importantly, Lewis said, the comedic approach gave the players – many of whom had never done something like this before – room to recover if they missed a cue or forgot a line. The pageant, though, did not rely on their performances alone.

“The story is carried by the narration and the songs,” Lewis said. “It was built with the assumption that we’re not going to have a lot of time (and) we’re not going to have a lot of resources to put this story together.”

Instead of building a set or props, Lewis decided on using a slideshow presentation to set the stage, relying sometimes on iconic Nativity scenes.

All of the nearly two dozen performers – the narrators, the actors, and the choir – were volunteers who rehearsed every Sunday afternoon and Wednesday night for a month to prepare for the show, which was performed only once.

The biggest obstacle that had to be overcome, Lewis said, was simply getting everybody together at the same time for those rehearsals and dealing with last minute attacks of anxiety.

“You come to the last few days, and you’re supposed to be ready, but it’s never all ready,” Lewis said. “But every show I’ve been involved with has been something like that . . . everyone comes together at the end.”

After the performance was over, the audience applauded and players congratulated each other on a job well done – this in spite of scheduling conflicts and inexperience.



The choir for the Christmas pageant, “Harold the Angel,” is led through another chorus at the main chapel, Al Asad Air Base, Iraq, Dec. 25. More than half of the volunteers in the show had never participated in a pageant or choir before.



Chaplain (Major) James Lewis, the brigade chaplain, 371st Sustainment Brigade, 3d Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), leads service members through a prayer before a Christmas pageant begins at the main chapel, Al Asad Air Base, Iraq, Dec. 25. Lewis organized the event, called “Harold the Angel,” as a morale and welfare event for service members and civilians.

Commanding General of the Army Reserve visits Balad

STORY AND PHOTOS BY
SPC. KELLY ANNE BECK
Expeditionary Times Staff

JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq – Lt. General Jack C. Stultz, chief, Army Reserve and commanding general, U.S. Army Reserve Command, visited Joint Base Balad to celebrate the holiday

season and speak with troops on Dec. 25.

Stultz attended and judged the Soldiers decorated vehicles in the Operation Ho-Ho Holiday parade along with Brig. Gen. Michael J. Lally, the commanding general of the 3^d Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), and later served Soldiers lunch at the Oasis dining facility. He also spoke at the education center and

attended the Operation Ho-Ho Variety Show at the Sustainer Theatre.

After serving lunch to the Soldiers, Stultz held an open forum, answered the Soldiers’ questions, and spoke with them about their hometowns and military backgrounds.

While at the town hall meeting in the Blackjack Education Center, Stultz discussed the transformation



Lt. Gen. Jack C. Stultz visits the Corps Distribution Center and speaks with Soldiers from the 259th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, who support the 3^d Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), and discusses the ordering and distribution process at Joint Base Balad on Dec. 25.

Reserve and re-enlisted two Soldiers. Those Soldiers who re-enlisted were Sgt. 1st Class Thaddeus C. Benton, 244th Military Intelligence Battalion and Staff Sgt. Anna Bruski, 259th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion.

of the Army

Lt. Gen. Jack C. Stultz speaks with Airman 1st Class David Charette and Tech. Sgt. Russell Sarkela from the 332nd Expeditionary Maintenance Group while waiting in line for lunch at the Oasis dining facility at Joint Base Balad, Iraq on Dec. 25.

GUNNER RESTRAINT SYS

STORY AND PHOTOS BY
SPC. MICHAEL BEHLIN
Expeditionary Times Staff

JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq – Mine-Resistant Ambush-Protected vehicles have proven to be a safer form of transportation for service members, but it could still present many possible hazards for crew members in Iraq and Afghanistan.

With some models weighing in excess of 52,000 pounds, the MRAP have accounted for 51 rollovers from November 2007 to August 2008, according to safety officials during a recent 3^d ESC safety council meeting.

Common fatalities from these rollovers have been the gunner, as they were unsecured in their hatches.

Though service members adapted the “gunner down drills” and practiced with the various models of humvees that calls for passengers to pull the gunner down in case of a rollover, there was still a chance these methods would not work.

To aid in this process, the U.S. Army Tank Automotive Research, Development Engineering Center was tasked to produce a universal restraint system to ensure

gunners won't be thrown from the vehicle in the event of a rollover.

What TARDEC produced was a new system adopted from the existing 5-point restraint harness and retractor previously used in humvees.

TARDEC took the existing platform and created a design to work with the different variations of MRAPs. For each vehicle, whether it's the MAXPRO, RG-31, RG-33 or the Caiman, there is a GRS specifically designed for it.

The push of this new equipment led Multi-National Corps-Iraq to place the 3^d Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) in charge of fielding the GRS to its convoy security companys theater-wide.

“What the units were doing previously was using kits from M1114 humvees and modifying them to work in the MRAP vehicles,” said Capt. Jude Verge, a Boston, Mass., native and 3^d ESC logistics maintenance officer in charge. “The contractors looked at what units had done in the past and improved upon it, making a safer variant, and is being pushed to units theater-wide.”

Verge said that the new gunner restraints are high-priority items and the 3^d ESC is pushing them out to units as soon as they receive them. In fact, he said they are such a high-priority that units are expected to install

them within 24-hours of receiving them.

With the push of the new GRS, the 3^d ESC is distributing them out as soon as they get them.

“The systems are steadily arriving in theater daily,” said Verge. “There has just been a big shipment of gunner restraint systems to our subordinate brigade in (COB) Adder.”

Verge said what the 3^d ESC is trying to create is a constant flow of systems to the point of where they arrive, get transferred to units and then installed into the vehicles.

While the 3^d ESC has been successful so far installing the GRS to its subordinates, there were some challenges along the way. Some GRS kits were held at the central receiving and shipping point here and the 3d ESC maintenance personnel had to personally process and expedite the order to forward the kits to their subordinate brigades. Otherwise, Verge said that everything has gone smoothly, as the main purpose of the GRS is to ensure the safety of those out on convoys.

“This was a test of me being a logistics officer,” he said. “These new harnesses are just a way to ensure the safety of the guys who help keep us safe every day.”



Private 1st Class James Anderson, a native of Port Orchard, Wash., and member of the 1st Bn., 161st Inf. Regt., tries on the gunner restraint system for his MAXPRO Mine-Resistant Ambush-Protected vehicle before heading out on a convoy. Adapted from the existing 5-point harness used in humvees, the new system is designed to fit the different types of MRAPs.



TEM AIMS TO SAVE LIVES



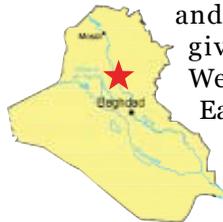
Steps for fastening the Gunner Restraint System

1. Securely adjust the straps of the GRS to your body
2. Pull straps to adjust tension as necessary to fit a Soldier
3. Fasten the straps into the five-point harness
4. Adjust as necessary
5. Continue to tighten to meet desired comfort

Blocking & bracing class enhances service members' safety

STORY AND PHOTOS BY
SPC. KELLY ANNE BECK
Expeditionary Times Staff

JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq – A blocking and bracing class was given at the Morale Welfare and Recreation-East center here, Dec. 9 - 13.



The class taught proper packing procedures for shipping containers in order to increase Soldiers' safety and reduce the amount of damaged materials.

John Antal, a training instructor for the Ordnance Mechanical Maintenance school at Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md., came here to teach the five-day blocking and bracing course to 45 service members and civilians.

Capt. Christopher Roback, the deputy chief of the 3^d Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) and the officer in charge of the class, said a lot of time people don't realize how dangerous shipping containers can be if they are not packed correctly.

"A Soldier almost died last year just by opening a container," Roback said. "All the contents came shooting out at him like one of those cans of snakes you buy at a prank shop. We're going to do our best to make sure that doesn't happen anymore."

Safety was emphasized throughout



Two airmen work together to move a water tank toward a shipping container in the Redistribution Property Accountability Team yard during the hands-on portion of the five-day blocking and bracing class held at Joint Base Balad, Iraq from Dec. 9 - 13.

the whole course. The first four days of training, used slides and videos focusing on the importance of how not

to over pack or under pack; the different methods to protecting materials; ways to weatherproof materials; and how to

properly mark packages for shipping and storage.

"The class is important because it teaches people that there are consequences to our actions," said Spc. Anthony Scott, a native of Columbiaville, N.Y. a member of 23rd Ordnance from Grafenwoehr, Germany, 304th Sustainment Brigade. "If we don't do our job right, someone can get hurt."

The last portion of the class was hands-on training at the Redistribution Property Accountability Team yard. The class was divided into two groups and was given several materials to demonstrate blocking and bracing in a shipping container.

Roback said the training in the RPAT yard resulted in joining the training together and taught service members and civilians to utilize the resources they have to work with.

"We're doing this class for the Soldiers, for their safety," Roback said. "Also, by learning to treat and package our equipment properly, we will be saving the Army money."

Antal said he got a very positive response from the service members and civilians who took the course. He said their positive attitudes really made teaching the class a rewarding experience.

"If one student got something from the class and it helps the safety of a Soldier down the road, then it was worthwhile," he said.



Sgt. Eric Rodman of the 23rd Ordnance Company speaks with John Antal, the blocking and bracing class instructor, about how he and his team plan to block and brace the materials they are given during a hands-on exercise at the Redistribution Property Accountability Team yard here.

The “Renegades” of 3rd Platoon, 68th Trans executes mission; accomplishes teamwork

STORY AND PHOTO BY
1ST LT. BRIAN KINSELLA, UPAR
3rd Plt, 68th Trans. Co.

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – The 3rd Platoon of the 68th Transportation Detachment deployed here as a subordinate to the 297th Inland Cargo Transportation Company, 398th Combat Sustainment

Support Battalion, 10th Sustainment Brigade. The platoon is one of the most unique small units in the Army with its headquarters located in Vicenza, Italy. The unit deployed to Baghdad in March 2008 and in nine months the platoon has become the Brigade’s “go-to” team for strategic combat line-haul support.

One of the most fascinating aspects of the 3rd Plt., 68th Trans. Det., it is comprised of Soldiers from both Italy and the parent unit, the 68th Transportation Battalion in Mannheim, Germany. The Soldiers united in Grafenwoehr, Germany for two training rotations prior to deploying. As a result, the Soldiers and non-commissioned officers of both units quickly bonded to form a cohesive team, which is needed to seamlessly execute their mission.

Due to the autonomous nature of the unit and its level of esprit de corps, the Soldiers dubbed themselves the “Renegades.” Under the supervision of 1st Lt. Brian Kinsella of Freehold, N.J., and Staff Sgt. Anthony Latham of Columbus, Miss., the Soldiers rapidly adapted to Iraq and their combat mission in support of Multi-National Division - Baghdad.

The 3rd Plt., 68th Trans. Det. has conducted over 150 successful convoys, without incidents or accidents. They traveled more than 60,000 miles on some

of the most dangerous roads in Baghdad. Recently, their mission changed to spearhead the Brigade’s logistical needs.

vastly improved their infrastructure by adding an office trailer, internet, power, and functioning maintenance tent with

our Soldiers.”

Equally astounding is the 3rd Plt., 68th Trans. Det. maintenance section, headed

by Staff Sgt. Alan Rivas of Houston, Texas his section of four personnel worked diligently to maintain and service over 50 pieces of equipment. Assuming control of “worn out” equipment, due to four rotations of heavy use, the maintenance section raised their unit’s operational readiness rate from 60 percent to 95 percent. Working with the unit’s vehicle operators and command team, the section completed significant vehicle upgrades to increase equipment performance and safety. The unit has also completed the retrofit program of the M915 line haul tractors with upgraded armor. This upgrade is paramount to the safety of the operators and durability of the equipment while in convoy operation.



The Renegade team poses for a photo before a convoy at Camp Taji, Iraq, June 2008.

After demonstrating their diligence conducting convoys throughout Iraq, the unit began supporting tactical movements on Victory Base Complex.

Staff Sgt. Gerald Rice of Bainbridge, N.Y. and truck master said he plays a critical role in managing these missions and acts as a liaison between the different battalions and the unit.

Throughout the deployment, the 3rd Plt., 68th Trans. Det. had also worked hard to improve their motor pool, as their base of operations. In nine months, they

gravel, fence and concrete barriers. The completed construction projects for the motor pool are some examples the Renegades have made to improve their work area.

When asked about the unit and its many achievements, Staff Sgt. William Langer of Buffalo, N.Y., and convoy commander said, “The Renegades had to build everything we have from the ground up, with only ourselves to lean on, so we take the greatest pride in our mission, what we’ve accomplished, and

Since deploying, the unit moved to facilitate the high priority transportation needs of the Brigade. The 3rd Plt., 68th Trans. Det. prides itself on teamwork and a lead from the front attitude. Soldiers of all ranks contributed to the company’s equipment maintenance and upgrades, as well as mission accomplishment.

Sgt. Richard Negrete of San Antonio, Texas, reflects on his four years of service in 3rd Plt., 68th Trans. Det., “I’m just glad that I was privileged enough to be a member of such a unique organization.”

51st Trans gets Bay Doors before cold months

BY CAPT. MATTHEW DAVIS
UPAR 51st Trans Co., 30th CSSB

CONTINGENCY OPERATING BASE Q-WEST, Iraq – The 51st Transportation Company, 30th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 16th Sustainment Brigade here, provided work for some Iraqi contractors and installed the much needed maintenance motor pool doors, Dec. 18.

The 51st Trans. Co. motor pool, home to the maintenance platoon, has long been without its maintenance bay doors. The building has been nothing more than a hollow ‘tube’ since the unit first arrived here, and has been through all the harsh elements of desert life and direct rainfall. The Soldiers working in the maintenance

bay were subject to the intense heat in the summer; sand and dust storms would sweep through at will. With the winter months coming, the Soldiers had no way to contain the heat inside or shield themselves from cold rains and wind.

The bay doors were needed with urgency. After being held in storage for several months, the doors finally arrived; only to find out no one could install them. An Iraqi contractor was contacted; Mustafa and Wahid along with their team came to lend their knowledge and expertise. With their immeasurable skills and outstanding work ethics, the doors were up in two days.

“It is a good thing,” said Chief Warrant Officer 2 James Inman, maintenance tech for the 51st Trans. Co. “Now the Soldiers working [in the bay] can be as warm as I am in my office.”



U.S. Army Courtesy photo

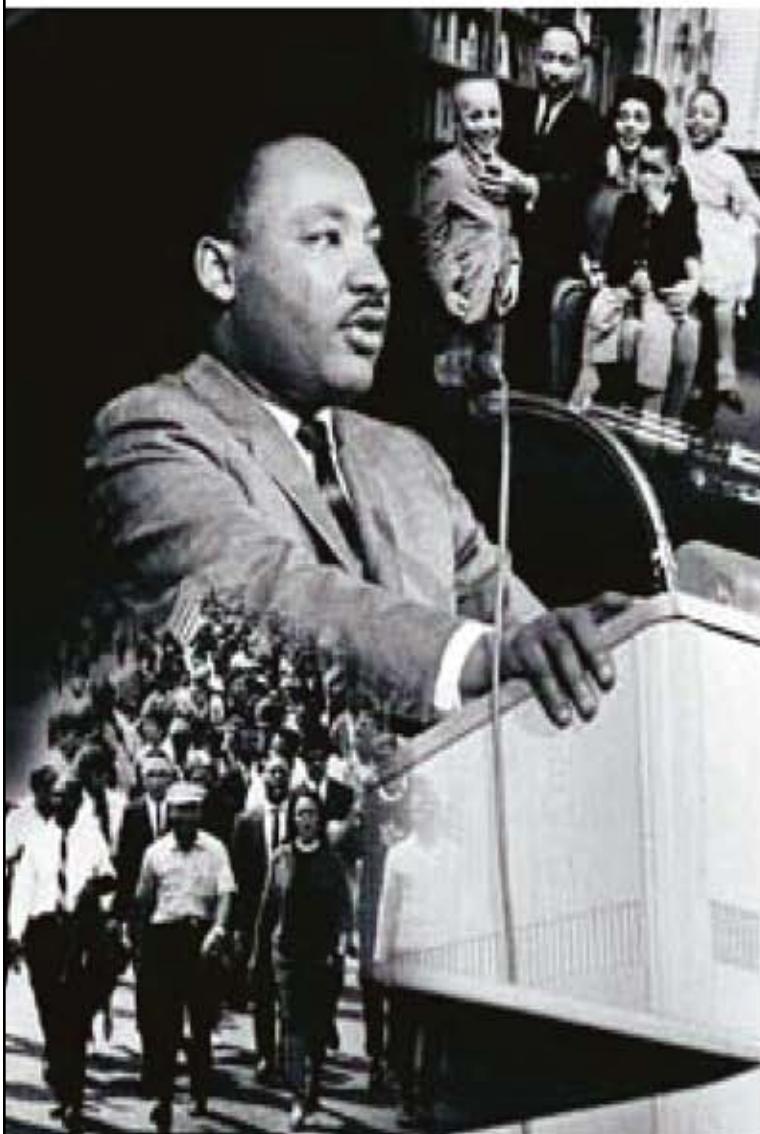
Iraqi contractors install the new maintenance bay doors on the 51st Trans. Co., maintenance building at contingency operating base Q-West, Iraq, Dec. 18.

"Sleighbing down JBB's New Jersey Ave."



Photo courtesy of Alpha Battery, 2nd Battalion, 5th Field Artillery Regiment

Forty-three Soldiers of Alpha Battery, 2nd Battalion, 5th Field Artillery Regiment, out of Fort Sill, Okla. worked very hard to build a float for the Operation Ho-Ho-Ho Christmas Day parade at Joint Base Balad on Dec. 25. The battery's float took first place in the parade's float competition, while the MRAP reindeer from Alpha Company, 181st Brigade Support Battalion took second place.



Martin Luther King Jr. Day 5K run

JOINT BASE BALAD

Come celebrate. Start the day with a run

Date: Jan. 15, 2009

Start point: Holt Stadium

Opening remarks: 6:15 a.m.

Run start time: 6:30 a.m.

T-shirts to be given to the first 1,000 finishers

POC: SFC Shonda Kelley, 330th Trans. Bn. 433-2417

MSG Tuynuykua Jackson, 3^d ESC 433-2527

MSgt Joseph Newton, 332nd AEW 443-8459



JOINT BASE BALAD



OBSERVANCE COMMITTEE

Many faiths, many holidays

BY STAFF SGT. DON BRANUM
332nd Air Expeditionary
Wing Public Affairs

JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq -- Muslims, Jews, Christians, Hindus, Buddhists and Pagans all observe major holy

days in December. Air Force chaplains here spent much of the month making sure everyone in the diverse Joint Base Balad community had an opportunity to worship according to his or her beliefs.

For the first December since assuming overall responsibility for religious services here, the 332nd Air Expeditionary Wing Chapel staff and their Army counterparts worked together to ensure observances went smoothly for each the month's holy days: Hajj and Eid al-Adha for Islam, Boddhi Day for Buddhism, Hanukkah for Judaism, the Immaculate Conception and Christmas for Christians and Yule for Pagans.

In order to meet service members' religious needs in December, the chapel staff held or sponsored nearly 40 religious services, said Senior Master Sgt. Michael O'Donnell, 332nd AEW superintendent of chapel operations. O'Donnell did not have information about how many people attended December's services but said it was likely to be higher than the approximately 7,500 people who attended services in November.

"We have different setups for each group," O'Donnell said. "Catholic services are pretty much the same wherever you



U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. Erik Gudmundson

Army Capt. Jeffrey Daley and other service members celebrate Christmas Eve during a candlelight service in Gilbert Memorial Chapel at Joint Base Balad, Iraq. Daley is the officer in charge of administrative support for the 51st Expeditionary Signal Battalion, which is deployed from Fort Lewis, Wash.

go. Protestant services depend more on the denomination of the chaplain, and chaplains may add their own uniqueness to a service based on how they want things set up."

One challenge the chapel staff had to overcome was the difference in organizational structure between the Air Force and Army, said the Marshfield, Wis., native who is deployed

from Langley Air Force Base, Va.

"Army brigades will have a brigade chaplain who works directly for the brigade commander, whereas our chaplains all work for the wing chaplain," he said. "Because of their missions, Soldiers don't always have the same opportunities to worship that Airmen do, so the chaplain

works for his unit."

Another challenge is supplies, said Chaplain (Capt.) Andrew Cohen, the 332nd AEW's Jewish chaplain and the first rabbi to deploy to the wing.

"A military environment always creates its own unique challenges regardless of whether we're stateside or deployed," said Cohen, a Pittsburgh native who is deployed from Andrews AFB, Md. "The main challenge in a deployed setting is almost invariably resource-related, having adequate usable supplies."

Thankfully, more than 20 donors, including private individuals and communal organizations, have provided "more than adequate" supplies, including menorahs, olive oil, wicks, candles and traditional foods such as potato pancakes for Jewish religious services, Cohen said. The chapel staff likewise has received supplies for other congregations' religious needs.

A third challenge is finding representatives for faith groups that are not directly represented by chaplains. That's where lay leaders, also called distinctive faith group leaders, come in, said Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Terese Erickson, the deputy wing chaplain.

"Accommodation doesn't mean chaplains lead all worship services," said Erickson, a native of St. Paul, Minn., who is deployed from Maxwell AFB, Ala.

"Accommodation means making sure everyone has an opportunity to worship," she said. "In some cases, it means I find appropriate qualified leaders and help them find a facility and resources. Freedom of religious expression is a key right that we have as citizens

of the United States, so it's a privilege to support the Airmen and Soldiers who are defending the U.S. Constitution."

Lay leaders conduct services for members of their faith groups. In some cases, they lead worship; in others, they conduct religious studies or fellowships, Chaplain Erickson said.

Army Spc. William Corum, an operations clerk with the 555th Engineer Brigade's 561st Engineer Company, 5th Engineer Battalion, is one of three lay leaders for a group of Wiccans and Pagans that meets here Thursdays and Saturdays.

"The chaplains here are very supportive," said Corum, a carpentry and masonry specialist deployed from Schofield Barracks, Hawaii. "Chaplain Erickson has helped us with numerous things: getting locations and times (for services), helping us get the word out.

"(The chaplains) occasionally sit in on our groups and send me e-mails to see how we're doing," he said. "They've worked with us to get us the things the group needs, and they've really gone above and beyond."

Erickson also works alongside Army chaplains and said she has a great deal of respect for them.

"Many of these chaplains are on their third deployment," she said. "Some have been deployed almost 15 months. And they've been terrific. They've shown a lot of goodwill, a lot of enthusiasm and a lot of teamwork in making the Army garrison chapel program work. I appreciate their dedication and their resiliency and their commitment to their people. It's been a joy working with them."

READ THIS!

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- Likes/dislikes
- Changes
- Story ideas
- Base policies
- Soldier-related events
- Tell the CG your thoughts
- Serious inquires only



expeditionarytimes@iraq.centcom.mil

Air Force engineers answer the call for Soldiers in Iraq

BY U.S. AIR FORCE STAFF
SGT. ANDREA THACKER
U.S. Air Forces Central
News Team

JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq -- Combat-trained Air Force engineers assigned to the 732nd Expeditionary Civil Engineer Squadron Detachment

6 will build anything anywhere to help Soldiers in Iraq accomplish their mission or to improve quality of life.

"We do vertical and horizontal construction projects at different forward operating bases," said Maj. Thomas Taylor, Det. 6 commander. "We can build a FOB from the ground up or expand facilities to provide more space for Soldiers to live and work in. We

give Soldiers who go outside the wire to conduct the combat mission a better quality of life."

Although the nature of their mission hasn't changed, these Airmen who work with the Army -- and in most cases fill Army civil engineer positions -- have adjusted to a mission that takes them outside the wire to provide their construction and electrical services.

"What we do here is basically what we do at home station; we just do it in a combat environment," said the major, who is deployed from F.E. Warren Air Force Base, Wyo. "We provide Air Force construction and maintenance capabilities to our Army brethren. We support the Warfighter."

The team includes Airmen with plumbing, carpentry, masonry, electrical, and heating,

ventilation and air conditioning skills. It also includes heavy equipment operators, vehicle maintainers and logistics or supply Airmen.

"We try to mirror an Army engineer team to the best of our ability," said Senior Master Sgt. John Mazza, Det. 6 superintendent. "We need to be a self-sustained unit that can maintain our vehicles and get the supplies needed to get the job done."

On a recent mission, they put the finishing touches on a 15-building construction project at forward operating base Caldwell, Iraq, which increased lodging space to house up to 550 Soldiers.

"These Airmen bring an awesome capability to the fight. They provide the facilities that allow Soldiers to have some personal space and give them the opportunity to

spread out," said Lt. Col. Joel Cross, 5th Engineer Battalion commander. "What they provide is a better quality of life for our Soldiers."

Although the team's construction projects are inside the confines of the FOBs, they have convoyed 364 times, logging more than 32,000 miles on the dangerous roads of Iraq. But they are happy to do so to help a fellow service member.

"It's a very exciting mission," said Senior Airman George Benson, a Det. 6 electrical systems journeyman deployed from Elmendorf AFB, Alaska. "We get to travel off the base, see what it's like outside the wire and experience a deployment from an Army point of view."

The Airmen of Det. 6 are using their Air Force skills to directly impact overall

operations in Iraq.

"It's rewarding to know that we are directly supporting the Soldiers who are going outside the wire to conduct operations," Taylor said. "If we can provide a bathroom with porcelain instead of a burned-out toilet, a dining facility in a building instead of a tent, or just a place to sleep at night, then we make it a little nicer to come back at the end of the day and relax."

Military leaders understand that quality-of-life improvements can affect more than just unit morale.

"A happy Soldier is a Soldier who is dedicated to the mission," Cross said. "This utilities team is second to none. I'm glad they're here. Without them, we couldn't do our job, and I'm proud to be on the same team with them."



JOINT BASE BALAD

Presents

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
ESSAY WRITING CONTEST

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday



- **Open to all on JBB**
- **12 point font size, Double space, 2 pages or less**
- **Must pertain to the National 2009 Theme: "Remember! Celebrate! Act! A Day On, Not A Day Off!"**
- **Please submit all essays by COB January 8, 2009**

Send essays to:

joseph.newton@blab.afcent.af.mil
everett.worman@iraq.centcom.mil
damon.walker@iraq.centcom.mil

Prizes for the top three essays will be presented at the **Martin Luther King Jr. Day Observance Celebration Luncheon**

January 15, 2009 at 1130 hours at MWR East Facility

POC: MSG Jackson, Tuynuykua EO Advisor 3d ESC at 433-2527,
MSgt Joseph Newton, EO Directory 332 AEW at 443-8459,
SFC Everett Worman, EO Advisor 555th EN BDE at 483-4645
SSG DaMon Walker, BN EOL 51 SB(E) at 483-2217

Sudoku

The objective is to fill the 9x9 grid so that each column, each row, and each of the nine 3x3 boxes contains the digits from 1 to 9 only one time each.

Level: Very Hard

		6				3		
						2	9	4
7	3				5			
				3		1		6
		3		8		7		
4		9		6				
			2					3
5	1	2						8
		8				4		

Last weeks answers

2	9	1	6	7	4	3	8	5
3	7	8	5	1	2	9	6	4
6	4	5	3	9	8	1	2	7
5	6	4	1	3	7	8	9	2
1	2	9	4	8	6	5	7	3
8	3	7	9	2	5	4	1	6
7	8	3	2	4	1	6	5	9
4	5	2	8	6	9	7	3	1
9	1	6	7	5	3	2	4	8



Upcoming sports on AFN

Wednesday 1/7/08

Minnesota Wild @ Boston Bruins, Live 3 a.m. AFN/xtra
 2009 GMAC Bowl: Ball State vs Tulsa, Live 4 a.m. AFN/sports
 New Orleans Hornets @ Los Angeles Lakers, Live 6:30 a.m. AFN/xtra
 Connecticut @ West Virginia, Tape Delayed 11 a.m. AFN/sports
 Ohio State @ Michigan State, Tape Delayed 2 p.m. AFN/sports
 Texas @ Arkansas, Tape Delayed 4 p.m. AFN/sports
 2009 GMAC Bowl: Ball State vs Tulsa, Tape Delayed 9 p.m. AFN/sports

Thursday 1/8/09

Davidson @ Duke, Live 3 a.m. AFN/sports
 Orlando Magic @ Atlanta Hawks, Live 3 a.m. AFN/xtra
 Miami Heat @ Denver Nuggets, Live 5 a.m. AFN/sports
 Detroit Pistons @ Portland Trail Blazers, Live 6 a.m. AFN/xtra
 Louisville @ South Florida, Tape Delayed 11 p.m. AFN/sports
 Gonzaga @ Tennessee, Tape Delayed 1 p.m. AFN/sports
 Houston Rockets @ Boston Celtics, Tape Delayed 9 p.m. AFN/sports

Friday 1/9/09

Dallas Stars @ Detroit Red Wings, Live 3:30 a.m. AFN/xtra
 2008 FedEx BCS National Championship Game: Florida vs Oklahoma, Live 4:15 a.m. AFN/sports
 Anaheim Ducks @ Los Angeles Kings, Live 6:30 a.m. AFN/xtra
 Minnesota @ Iowa, Tape Delayed 11 a.m. AFN/sports
 2008 FedEx BCS National Championship Game: Florida vs Oklahoma, Tape Delayed 2 p.m. AFN/sports
 2008 FedEx BCS National Championship Game: Florida vs Oklahoma, Tape Delayed 9 p.m. AFN/sports

Saturday 1/10/09

Columbus Blue Jackets @ Washington Capitals, Live 3 a.m. AFN/xtra
 NBA Friday: Boston Celtics @ Cleveland Cavaliers, Live 4 a.m. AFN/sports
 Tampa Bay Lightning @ Anaheim Ducks, Live 6 a.m. AFN/prime pacific
 Indiana Pacers @ Los Angeles Lakers, Live 6:30 a.m. AFN/xtra
 NBA Friday: Dallas Mavericks @ Phoenix Suns, Live 6:30 a.m. AFN/sports
 Boston Celtics @ Cleveland Cavaliers, Live 4 a.m. AFN/sports
 Indiana Pacers @ Los Angeles Lakers, Live 6:30 a.m. AFN/xtra
 Dallas Mavericks @ Phoenix Suns, Live 6:30 a.m. AFN/sports
 Dallas Mavericks @ Phoenix Suns, Live 6:30 a.m. AFN/sports
 Detroit Pistons @ Denver Nuggets, Tape Delayed 2 p.m. AFN/sports

Louisville @ Villanova, Live 8 p.m. AFN/prime atlantic
 Oregon @ Arizona State, Live 10 p.m. AFN/xtra

Sunday 1/11/09

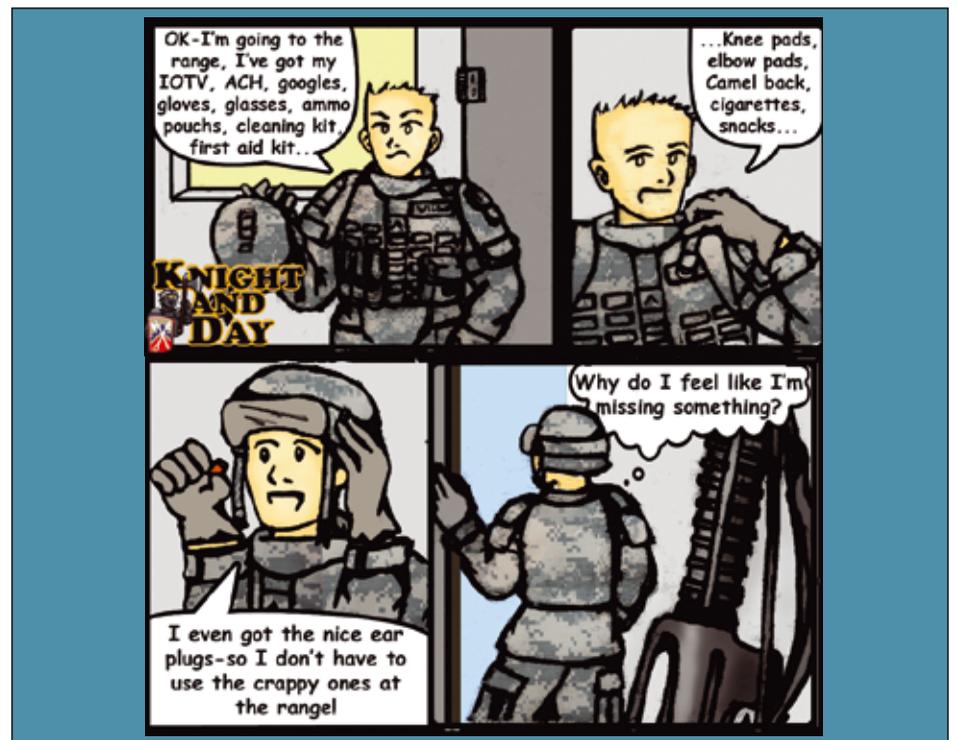
Iowa State @ Texas, Live 12 a.m. AFN/prime atlantic
 NFL Playoffs - Divisional Playoff Game: Teams TBD, Live 12:30 a.m. AFN/sports
 Mississippi @ Florida, Live 2 a.m. AFN/prime atlantic
 Milwaukee Bucks @ Minnesota Timberwolves, Live 4 a.m. AFN/xtra
 NFL Playoffs - Divisional Playoff Game: Teams TBD, Live 4 a.m. AFN/sports
 Dallas Stars @ Phoenix Coyotes, Live 5 a.m. AFN/prime atlantic
 New Jersey Devils @ Los Angeles Kings, Live 6:30 p.m. AFN/xtra
 NFL Playoffs - Divisional Playoff Game: Teams TBD, Tape Delayed 11 a.m. AFN/sports
 Oklahoma City Thunder @ Chicago Bulls, Tape Delayed 2 p.m. AFN/xtra
 Pittsburgh Penguins @ Colorado Avalanche, Tape Delayed 5:30 p.m. AFN/xtra
 St. John's @ Pittsburgh, Live 8 p.m. AFN/xtra
 NFL Playoffs - Divisional Playoff Game: Teams TBD, Live 9 p.m. AFN/sports
 Philadelphia 76ers @ Atlanta Hawks, Live 10 p.m. AFN/xtra

Monday 1/12/09

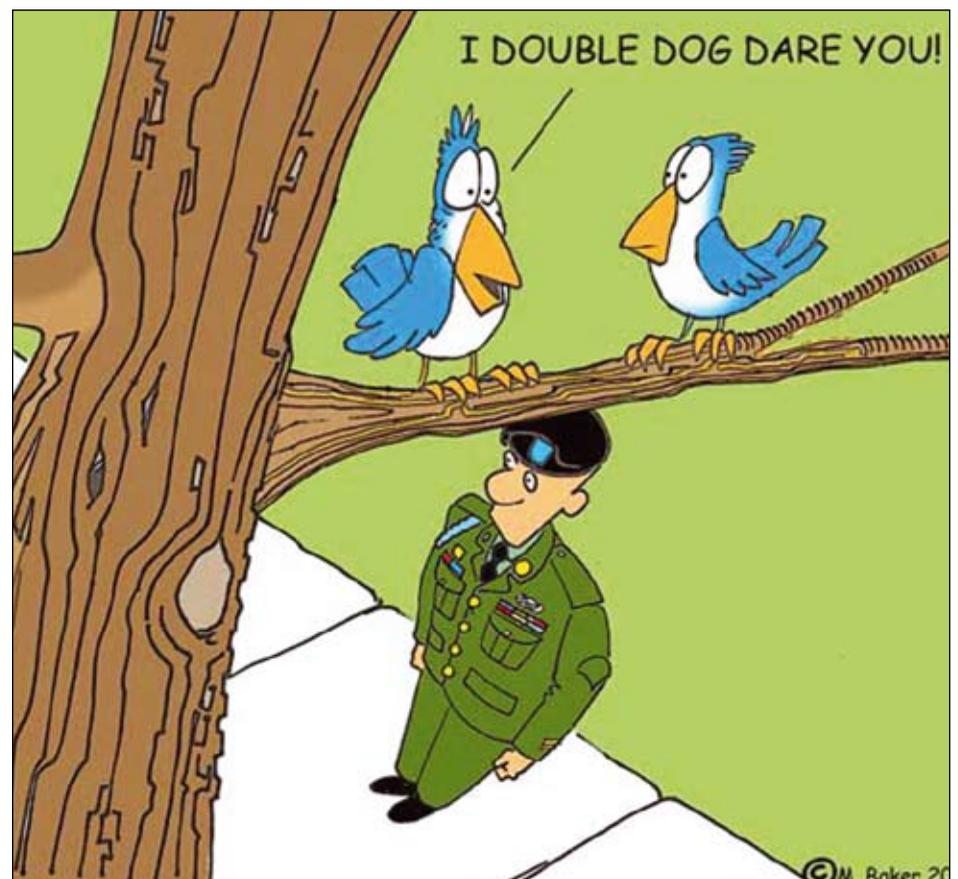
Iowa @ Michigan, Tape Delayed 1 a.m. AFN/xtra
 Nashville Predators @ Chicago Blackhawks, Live 3 a.m. AFN/xtra
 North Carolina @ Wake Forest, Live 4 a.m. AFN/sports
 Miami Heat @ Los Angeles Lakers, Live 5:30 a.m. AFN/xtra
 UCLA @ USC, Live 6:30 a.m. AFN/sports
 Boston Celtics @ Toronto Raptors, Tape Delayed 8 a.m. AFN/xtra
 New Jersey Devils @ Anaheim Ducks, Tape Delayed 10:30 a.m. AFN/xtra
 NFL Playoffs - Divisional Playoff Game: Teams TBD, Tape Delayed 12 a.m. AFN/sports
 North Carolina @ Wake Forest, Tape Delayed 5 p.m. AFN/sports
 Orlando Magic @ San Antonio Spurs, Tape Delayed 6 p.m. AFN/xtra
 NFL Playoffs - Divisional Playoff Game: Teams TBD, Tape Delayed 9 p.m. AFN/sports

Tuesday 1/13/09

Notre Dame @ Louisville, Live 3 a.m. AFN/sports
 Detroit Red Wings @ Dallas Stars, Live 4 AFN/xtra
 Texas @ Oklahoma, Live 5 a.m. AFN/sports
 Tampa Bay Lightning @ Los Angeles Kings, Live 6:30 a.m. AFN/xtra
 Texas @ Oklahoma, Tape Delayed 1 p.m. AFN/Sports
 Toronto Raptors @ Boston Celtics, Tape Delayed 6 p.m. AFN/Sports



PVT. MURPHY'S LAW



Iraq according to Opet



THEN & NOW



2003

An uninhibited street in 2003 on the current Joint Base Balad, east side.

U.S. Army courtesy photo

The Joint Base Balad buildings are now occupied by the Central Issue Facilities.

2009



U.S. Army photo by Spc. Brian A. Barbour



U.S. Army photo by Spc. Brian A. Barbour

Capt. Katherine Sheads from Newnan, Ga., and the highway traffic division chief for the 330th Transportation Battalion, hands out a ticket for a t-shirt to a runner finishing the New Year's Day 5K run at Joint Base Balad, Iraq. The run drew in approximately 500 participants and was JBB's first 5K for 2009.

JB BALAD ACTIVITIES

INDOOR POOL

Swim Lessons:
 Mon., Wed., - 6 p.m.
 Tue., Thu., Sat., -
 6:30 p.m.
 Aqua Training:
 Tue., Thu., - 7:30 p.m.,
 8:30 p.m.

EAST FITNESS

CENTER

Open Court Volleyball:
 Sunday- 6 p.m.
 Aerobics:
 Mon., Wed., Fri.-
 5:30-6:30 a.m.
 Yoga Class:
 Mon., Fri.- 6-7 a.m.
 Step Aerobics:
 Mon., Wed., Fri.-
 5:30 p.m.
 Conditioning Training
 Class:
 Mon., Wed., Fri.- 7:15-
 8 p.m.
 Brazilian Jui-Jitsu:

Mon., Wed., Fri.-
 8-9 p.m.

Abs-Aerobics:
 Tue., Thu., 6-7 a.m.,
 5-6 p.m.
 Edge Weapons & Stick
 Fighting Combative
 Training:
 Tue., Thur., Sat.,-
 8-10 p.m.

EAST RECREATION

CENTER

4-ball tourney:
 Sunday- 8 p.m.
 8-ball tourney:
 Monday- 8 p.m.
 Karaoke:
 Monday- 8 p.m.
 Swing Class:
 Tuesday- 8 p.m.
 Table Tennis:
 Tuesday- 8 p.m.
 9-ball tourney:
 Wednesday- 8 p.m.
 Dungeons & Dragons:

Thursday- 7:30 p.m.

Poetry Night:
 Thursday- 8 p.m.
 6-ball tourney:
 Thursday- 8 p.m.
 Caribbean Night:
 Friday- 8 p.m.
 Chess & Dominoes
 Tourney:
 Friday- 8 p.m.
 Salsa Class:
 Saturday- 8:30 p.m.
 Poker:
 Saturday- 7:30 p.m.

H6 FITNESS CENTER

Spin:
 Sunday- 9 a.m.
 Mon., Wed., Fri.,- 2 a.m.,
 8 a.m. 2 p.m., 7 p.m.,
 9 p.m.
 Tue., Thu., -5:45 a.m.,
 9 a.m., 8:30 p.m.
 Saturday- 9 a.m., 7 p.m.
 Boxing:
 Sunday- 4 p.m.

Tue., Thu.,- 2 p.m.
 Boot Camp:
 Sunday- 8:45 a.m.
 Tue., Thu.,- 7 p.m.
 Power Abs:
 Mon., Tue., Thu., - 8 p.m.
 Friday- 9 p.m.
 CC Cross Fit:
 Monday-Saturday-
 10:30 p.m.
 Cross Fit:
 Mon., Wed., Fri.,- 5:45
 a.m., 7 a.m., 3 p.m.,
 6 p.m.
 Tue., Thu.,- 7 a.m.,
 3 p.m.
 Sunday- 5:45 a.m.,
 7 a.m., 3 p.m.
 P90x:
 Monday- Saturday- 4:30
 a.m., 4 p.m., 10 p.m.
 12 a.m.
 Soccer:
 Tue., Thu.,- 8 p.m.
 Yoga:
 Wednesday- 8 p.m.
 MCAP Level 1:
 Friday- 8 p.m.
 5 on 5 Basketball:

Saturday- 8 p.m.

H6 RECREATION

CENTER

Bingo:
 Sunday- 8 p.m.
 Texas Hold'em:
 Mon., Fri.,- 2 p.m.,
 8:30 p.m.
 8-ball tourney:
 Tuesday- 2 a.m.,
 8:30 p.m.
 Ping-pong tourney:
 Tuesday- 8:30 p.m.
 Spades:
 Wednesday- 2 a.m.,
 8:30 p.m.
 Salsa:
 Wednesday- 8:30 p.m.
 9-ball:
 Thursday- 2 a.m.,
 8:30 p.m.
 Karaoke:
 Thursday- 8:30 p.m.
 Dominos:
 Saturday- 8:30 p.m.
 Darts:
 Saturday- 8:30 p.m.

WEST RECREATION

CENTER

Green Bean Karaoke:
 Sun., Wed., 7:30pm
 9-ball tourney:
 Monday- 8 p.m.
 Ping-pong tourney:
 Tuesday- 8 p.m.
 Foosball tourney:
 Tuesday- 8 p.m.
 Jam Session:
 Tuesday- 7:30 p.m.
 8-ball tourney:
 Wednesday- 8 p.m.
 Guitar Lessons:
 Thursday- 7:30 p.m.
 Game tourney:
 Thursday- 1 p.m., 8 p.m.
 Enlisted Poker:
 Friday- 1 p.m., 8 p.m.
 Officer Poker:
 Saturday- 1 p.m., 8 p.m.
 Squat Competition:
 Saturday- 8 p.m.

WEST FITNESS

CENTER

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

6 on 6 volleyball
 tourney:
 Friday- 7 p.m.
 Aerobics:
 Monday, Wednesday,
 Friday- 7 p.m.
 Body by Midgett Toning
 Class:
 Tue., Thu., - 7 p.m.
 Dodge ball Game:
 Tuesday- 7:30 p.m.
 Furman's Martial Arts:
 Mon., Wed., Sun.,- 1 p.m.
 Gaston's Self-Defense
 Class:
 Fri., Sat.- 7 p.m.
 Open court basketball:
 Thursday- 7 p.m.
 Open court soccer:
 Mon., Wed., - 7 p.m.
 Zingano Brazilian Jui
 Jitsu:
 Tue., Thu.,- 8:30 p.m.

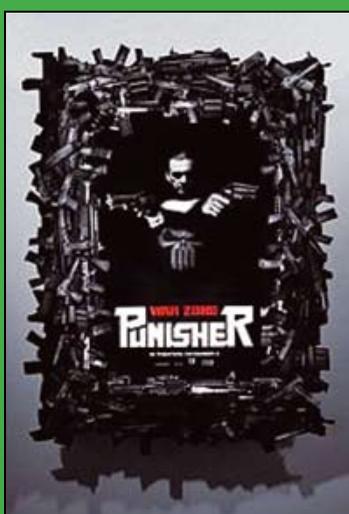
CIRCUIT GYM

Floor hockey:
 Mon., Wed., Fri.,-
 8-10 p.m

SUSTAINER REEL TIME THEATER

PUNISHER: WAR ZONE

Punisher: War Zone is a 2008 comic book film based on the fictional Marvel Comics vigilante and antihero the Punisher. The film is a reboot rather than a sequel to 2004's The Punisher. British actor Ray Stevenson replaces Thomas Jane as Frank Castle. In the film, Castle wages a one-man war against a horribly disfigured mob boss known as Jigsaw (Dominic West). Punisher: War Zone was released in North America by Lionsgate on Dec. 5, 2008.



The Curious Case of Benjamin Button



The Curious Case of Benjamin Button is a 2008 American film whose main character is adapted from a 1921 short story of the same name written by F. Scott Fitzgerald. The film was directed by David Fincher, written by Eric Roth, and stars Brad Pitt and Cate Blanchett.

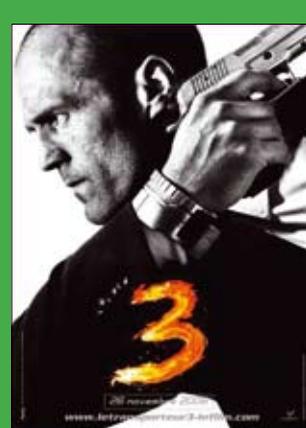
Movie Times

Wednesday, January 7
 5 p.m. Bolt
 8 p.m. Sex Drive
Thursday, January 8
 5 p.m. Sex Drive
 8 p.m. Twilight
Friday, January 9
 2 p.m. Punisher: War Zone
 5 p.m. Transporter 3
 8:30 p.m. The Curious Case of Benjamin Button
Saturday, January 10
 2 p.m. Transporter 3
 5 p.m. The Curious Case of Benjamin Button
 8 p.m. Punisher: War Zone
Sunday, January 11
 2 p.m. The Curious Case of Benjamin Button
 5 p.m. Punisher: War Zone
 8 p.m. Transporter 3
Monday, January 12
 5 p.m. Transporter 3
 8 p.m. The Curious Case of Benjamin Button
Tuesday, January 13
 5 p.m. The Curious Case of Benjamin Button
 8 p.m. Punisher: War Zone

(Schedule is subject to change)

TRANSPORTER 3

Frank Martin (Jason Statham) has been pressured into transporting Valentina (Natalya Rudakova), the kidnapped daughter of Leonid Vasilev (Jeroen Krabbe), through the use of a device attached to his wrist which will explode if Frank goes more than 75 feet from his car. Vasilev is the head of the Environmental Protection Agency for Ukraine. He must travel from Marseilles through Stuttgart and Budapest until he ends up in Odessa on the Black Sea. Statham again drives an armored Audi A8 W12 in the film.



TWILIGHT



Seventeen-year-old Bella Swan moves to the small town of Forks, Washington to live with her father, Charlie, after her mother remarries. She is quickly befriended by many students at her new high school, where she is intrigued by a mysterious group of siblings known as the Cullens. Bella sits next to Edward Cullen in Biology class on her first day of school, and he appears to be disgusted by her, much to Bella's confusion. A few days later, Bella is nearly hit by a van when Edward suddenly appears and stops the vehicle with his hand. Although he refuses to explain this act to Bella, Edward warns her against becoming friends with him.

PHOTOS AROUND IRAQ

U.S. Air Force Sgt. Jarrett Cox of Lilburn Ga., assigned to 732 Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division scans his perimeter during a joint walking patrol with Iraqi National Police in the Sadiyah district of southern Baghdad, Iraq, Dec. 17.



U.S. Navy Photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Todd Frantom



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Gustavo Olgiati
Capt. Charcillea Barrett, commanding officer, 21st Military Police Company (Airborne), Fort Bragg, N.C., distributes new backpacks to Iraqi elementary students in the Al Hayyannah district, Basra, Iraq, Dec. 23.



U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Eric Harris
Sgt. 1st Class Michael McKinney from Newark, Del., of the 2nd Battalion, 8th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division meets with Iraqis to ask about the upcoming provincial elections during a patrol in Budayr, Iraq, Dec. 23. The Soldiers patrol local areas to ensure the villagers needs are addressed and to provide security.



Maj. Scott Spiers participates in Rudolph's 5K swim at Joint Base Balad, Iraq, Dec. 24. Participants completed 100 laps in the indoor pool during the Christmas Eve event. Michael Fuller, the 332nd Civil Engineer Squadron Contract management flight chief, won the competition with a time of 1:06:20. Spiers, the 332nd Expeditionary Security Forces squadron commander, is deployed from Hickam Air Force Base, Hawaii.

U.S. Air Force photo by Airman 1st Class Jason Epley

NEWS AROUND IRAQ

Iraqi, Coalition military leaders meet for Sol conference

FORWARD OPERATING BASE KALSU, Iraq – Approximately 40 Iraqi Security Force leaders representing various provinces throughout Iraq met with Coalition leaders on Forward Operating Base Kalsu Dec. 24 to discuss future plans for the Sons of Iraq.

Leaders of the ISF, Multi-National Division - Center and the 172nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team considered the future of Sons of Iraq employment and payment, and potential threats throughout the provinces.

“The SoI program and its structure under the Government of Iraq are already established,” said Col. Jeffery A. Sinclair, 172nd IBCT commander. “The phase we’re in now is stepping back, assisting them and making sure they have plans in place to take care of the SoI program on their own.”

The SoI program employs regular non-uniform wearing citizens to man security checkpoints throughout the provinces. Beginning nearly 19 months ago, the program created jobs for approximately 94,000 Iraqi people and contributed significantly toward increased stability in Iraq.

Portions of the SoI program are still funded through the U.S., though the transfer to the GoI is underway. When the transfer is complete, the Iraqi government will assume full responsibility.

“With the assistance that the U.S. military has given us, our transition should be smooth and easy,” said Shaykh JaaFav Hussain Al Masodie. “Everything that they help us with is all in support of our mission, which is to help ourselves, our people, our provinces and our country.”

“The U.S. wants to help rebuild Iraq and get our country to the level that everyone has respect for,” he said.

That respect continues to grow for Iraqi citizens who continue to demonstrate that they are capable of securing their nation.

“As long as we’re in Iraq, we will be affiliated with every component of the Iraqi people. Whether it’s governance, ISF, shaykhs or SoI,” said Sinclair. “But the ultimate goal is to eventually give them what they need to do everything on their own.”

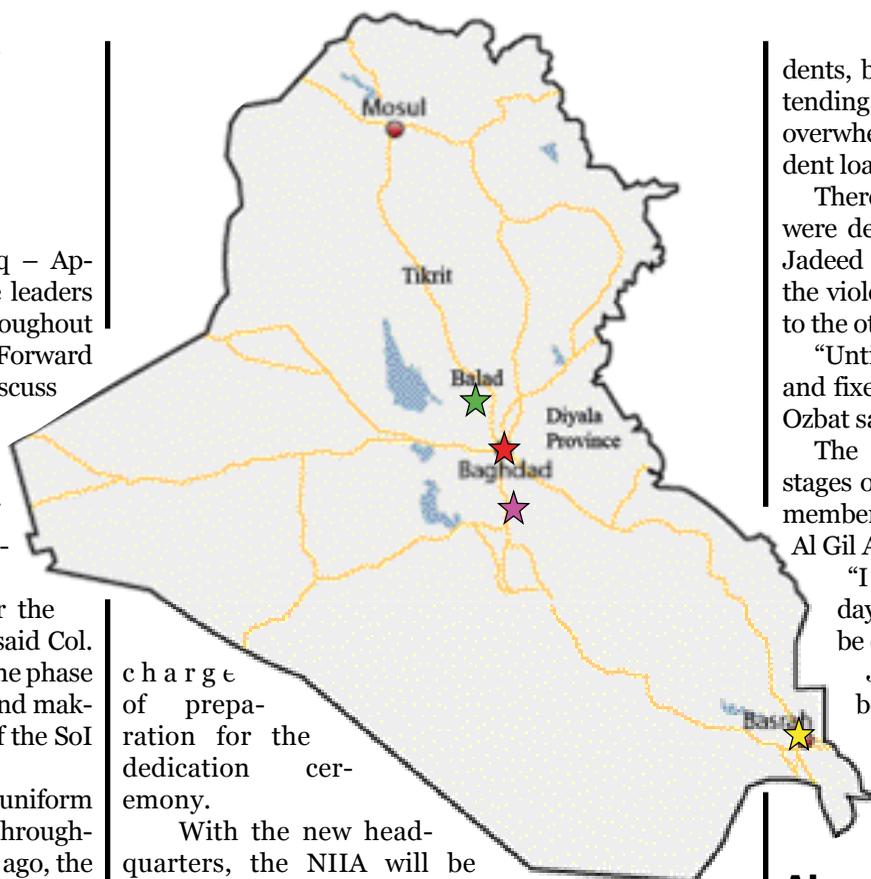
NIIA opens new headquarters in Baghdad

BAGHDAD – The Iraq Ministry of Interior’s National Information and Investigation Agency held a dedication ceremony Dec. 27 at its new headquarters in Baghdad. The agency and its employees are working to build a more secure future for Iraq.

Minister of Interior Jawad al-Bolani cut the ribbon opening the new headquarters. He praised the NIIA employees for their dedication and progress in improving security throughout the nation.

The new site contains two large office buildings: the headquarters of the NIIA and the Baghdad Bureau headquarters. Construction on the \$17 million project started in June 2007 and was completed this summer.

The ceremony formally marked the handover of the facility from the U.S. government to the Ministry of Interior. Brig. Gen. Amer Kudair Abbas, Director of the National Information General Directorate, was in



charge of preparation for the dedication ceremony.

With the new headquarters, the NIIA will be able to consolidate several directorates and operations spread throughout Baghdad in one convenient and efficient location. In the past three years, the NIIA had grown from 3,500 employees in 2006 to more than 9,000 today. It has become the premier national law enforcement agency in Iraq. NIIA conducts criminal intelligence and investigative operations throughout the country to defeat domestic criminal activities that threaten Iraq’s national security.

“The NIIA progress is remarkable. It has grown to 9,000 employees today, adhering to the principles of the Rule of Law to make Iraq safer, more secure and democratic,” said Lt. Gen. Frank G. Helmick, commanding general of Multi-National Security Transition Command – Iraq. MNSTC – I provided the funding for the NIIA project.

Col. Benjamin D. Lukefahr, senior advisor for the NIIA, said the Intel-TT has worked diligently to build capacity and improve the performance for the NIIA. He said with the new facility, the NIIA will have its administrative, security, logistics and operations offices working side-by-side with the Baghdad Information Bureau in conducting “critical investigative and intelligence operations.”

The NIIA consists of a national headquarters, 15 provincial offices, six regional bureaus, 56 district offices and 13 Port-of-Entry offices. It conducts criminal intelligence and investigative operations at the national level.

School brings new beginnings to Mushada students

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – A ribbon-cutting ceremony signaled the completion of refurbishments on the Al Gil Al Jadeed Primary School in Mushada, northwest of Baghdad, Dec. 29.

Approximately \$90,000 in Iraqi Commander’s Emergency Response Program funds were spent to improve the existing structure, repair electrical work and ensure students have a good place to go to school, said 1st Lt. Jesse Ozbat, fire support officer assigned to Company C, 1st Battalion, 14th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad.

Normally, the school houses approximately 600 stu-

dents, but there are currently double that amount attending. Students are crammed into classrooms, and overwhelmed teachers do their best to handle the student load.

There were two more schools in the area, but both were destroyed by terrorists years ago. The Al Gil Al Jadeed Primary School was spared from the brunt of the violence and only needed minor repairs compared to the other structures.

“Until the other two schools in the area are rebuilt and fixed, children will have to go to this one school,” Ozbat said.

The other two schools are currently in differing stages of repair, but Ali Janabi, Mushada City Council member, said he has bigger plans for the future of the Al Gil Al Jadeed Primary School.

“I would like to see this school grow,” he said. “One day, I would like to see this place large enough to be considered a secondary school.”

Janabi said he and the other city council members take pride in this school because “reading and writing are the foundations of a strong future. This school is the beginnings of strong foundations for many students.”

Airport transitions to civil authority in southern Iraqi province

BASRA, Iraq – Iraqi authorities took control of the Basrah International Airport from Coalition supervision Jan. 1 in a ceremony in the southern city of Basra.

This transfer of authority comes after four years of operation since it closed after the start of the war in 2003.

On hand for the event was Basrah Governor Mohamad El Wa’ili, Basrah International Airport Director Abdul Ameer, Director General of the Iraqi Civil Aviation Administration Sebeeh Al Shebany and Multi-National Division-South East Commander British Maj. Gen. Andy Salmon, as well as other officials, members of Iraqi Security forces and Iraqi media.

“This is a very positive time for Iraqis,” said Basrah Governor Mohamad El Wa’ili, through an interpreter. “I thank the coalition for all of the effort they have put into this project.”

Coalition forces will continue to assist BIA with its transition into an Iraqi operated international airport until they leave this summer. They will focus on communications support runway operations, fire and rescue services, business planning and infrastructure delivery.

“I think this day marks the true spirit of cooperation and partnership between Coalition forces, Iraqi authorities and the Iraqi people,” said Salmon. “It aligns the fact that significant progress has been made since 2003.”

Civilian scheduled flights returned in 2005 at BIA with a steady increase in flights varying between 80 and 130 flights for an average of 5,000 passengers per month. There are occasional surges during times like the hajj. Currently, there are 12 airlines that fly in and out of Basrah, but airport officials said they are hoping to expand.

Most flights to and from the airport are within Iraq; however, external flights are becoming more common from locations like the United Arab Emirates.

New renovations have allowed for extended hours and night flights. These upgrades include new lighting, a radar system, partitioning of arrival and departure areas for added security and new floors to add to the aesthetic appeal of the facility.

Sustaining the Line

Staff Sgt. Larry McDowell (far left) of Chicago, Ill., and Spc. Nicolle Carroll (far right) of Saint Louis, Mo., from the 110th Quartermaster Company, 553rd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 10th Sustainment Brigade, poses with the company commander and first sergeant after being selected as the 553rd CSSBs NCO and Soldier of the month in Camp Liberty, Iraq, Nov. 27. Both Soldiers will compete in the Soldier of the Quarter board.



U.S. Army photo by 1st Lt. Dezerie Jemmott



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Alex Snyder

Airman 1st Class Luke Page, an Airman with the 1st Expeditionary Air Support Operations Squadron, prepares to throw a football to teammates during a New Year's Day football game between Army and Air Force service members at Killeen Field, Joint Base Balad. The Air Force defeated the Army 26-6. The game was a rematch of November's Thanksgiving Day game, which the Army won.



U.S. Army photo by Spc. Kiyoshi Freeman

The graduating students of the GT Improvement course 02-09 pose for a class photograph at Al Asad Air Base, Iraq, Dec. 19. The students successfully completed the four-week course, which was organized by the 371st Sustainment Brigade and taught by soldier volunteers.

Spc. Luis A. Lopez with the 356th Quartermasters Company, strums his guitar on Dec. 27, for the Belated Spanish Christmas Celebration at Joint Base Balad. Lopez, plays his guitar for the musical group "Nuestra Familia" and entertained the crowd at the Morale, Welfare and Recreation East center.



U.S. Army photo by Spc. Mario A. Aguirre