



The Striker Torch

The Official Newsletter of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division

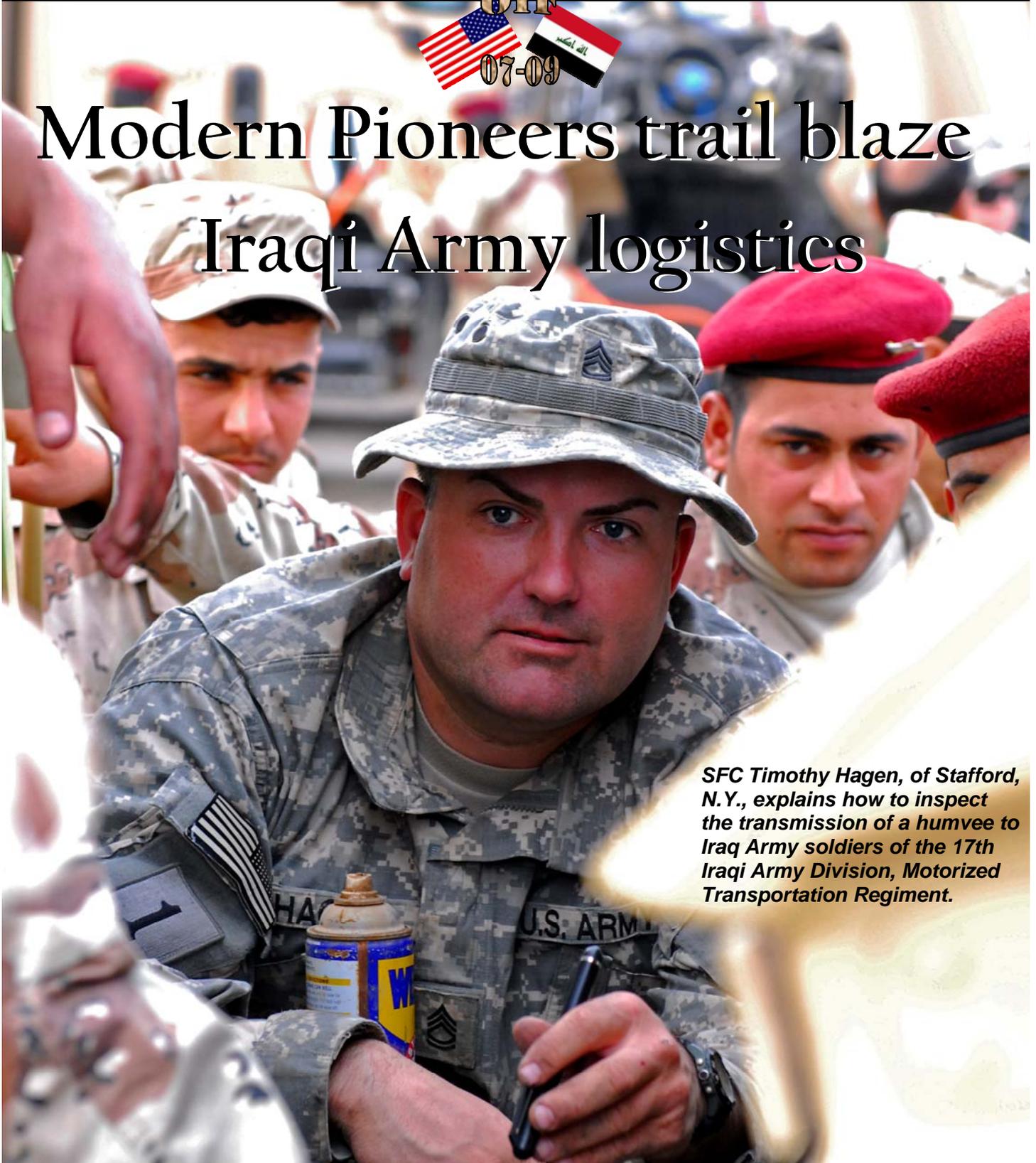
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Modern Pioneers trail blaze Iraqi Army logistics

SFC Timothy Hagen, of Stafford, N.Y., explains how to inspect the transmission of a humvee to Iraqi Army soldiers of the 17th Iraqi Army Division, Motorized Transportation Regiment.



STRIKER 6

On Line

By COL Pat White
2nd BCT Commander



Provincial Elections—Let Freedom Reign

I congratulate all Iron Brigade Soldiers for your outstanding performance in execution of our mission to support the Iraqi Security Forces during the Iraqi Provincial Elections. Saturday, January 31, 2009 will be remembered as one of the most historic days in Iraq. It was a day when the Iraqi people put aside sectarian differences in order to elect a government which represents all Iraqi people. In this election, Iraq had over 15 million registered voters voting for 14,400 candidates who were vying for 440 provincial seats.

With three combat tours in Iraq in the past six years, the seeds of Iraqi democracy and the Iron Brigade are forever intertwined. The blood of Iron Brigade Soldiers, who made the ultimate sacrifice for not only their countrymen but for the citizens of Iraq, enabled the seeds of democracy which the Iraqis now enjoy.

One Iraqi man jubilantly told me that he was grateful for the Americans laying down the foundation for a democracy in Iraq. History will little remember the difficult task the Soldiers of the Iron Brigade were charged to accomplish in Iraq, but it can never forget the contribution to Iraqi democracy which will live on past our time.

Our mission was to protect the people of Iraq, to eradicate from Iraq the fanaticism of AQI so that Iraq could have a birth of freedom they have not experienced in decades. We were charged to wage war against an extremist group cloaked in the wrappings of religion who knew no rule of civility but used terror and barbarism to cower Iraq into submission. We did not cower and fought them in the streets of Baghdad, the desert of Diyala, the Mada'in and the Mahmudiya Qada.



We have, to date, successfully accomplished our mission, BUT we are not done. We must continue to provide security with our Iraqi Security Force partners. We must continue to provide stability for the civil leaders in our area, and we must do this until our leaders tell us we are mission complete. Now is the time to press hard, to not let up, and to ensure that we accomplish what we came for so that future generations are spared from continuing this mission.

I charged each Iron Brigade Soldier to assist our Iraqi partners to ensure a safe, credible and legitimate provincial election. Your dedication and professionalism ensured there were no acts of violence at the polling stations, or in the operating environment. We assisted the Iraqi Army, and they executed. They took the lead and provided for success.

I am proud of the hard work the Iron Brigade did over the past month in assisting our Iraqi partners in the 9th and 17th Iraqi Army Division prepare for this historic election. We stood side by side, the American and Iraqi soldier, protecting the Iraqi people to allow freedom to reign.

We have accomplished much since this deployment began, we still have much more to accomplish. History awaits the great things we will do as a Brigade.

STRIKE HARD!

COL Pat White
Commander, 2BCT
“Striker 6”



STRIKER 7

On Point

By CSM Michael Eyer
2nd BCT Command Sergeant Major



Don't forget nothing!

Striker Soldiers and Families, though we only have a few months left in Theater, our Soldiers are continuously working toward a better Iraq. As a unit we have seen many changes over the past 10 months from better living standards and equipment to the turn-over of numerous FOBs and COPs to the Iraqi Security Forces. Our Soldiers helped develop both the Iraqi Army and Iraqi Police to become strong and independent organizations. Additionally, our Soldiers are always working hard to support the local populous by not only providing everyday essentials such as food, water, and clothing, but also aiding in the construction of vital buildings such as schools and hospitals. Our Soldiers' hard work has definitely shown over the last week when thousands of Iraqi citizens voted in their historic election. Election Day went off without any terrorist events in sector, truly an achievement for the 2nd Brigade Combat Team.

Throughout our area of operation, our Iron Brigade Soldiers helped guide the decisions of the Iraqi Security Forces leaders in development of a security plan for over 150 polling sites. Unlike elections in the past, the Iraqi Security Forces Leaders developed a plan with only guidance from our Sol-



diers. Our Soldiers then taught Iraqi Soldiers and Police how to properly fortify their polling site locations to ensure maximum security was maintained during the elections. The Iraqi Security Forces were solely responsible for maintaining security during the elections proving just how far they have come. With the help of our Soldiers, the Iraqi Security Forces will continue to gain the experience and confidence in order to protect their country.

Though our deployment will soon come to an end, it is important to maintain focus on our mission and the mission of our Iraqi Security Forces counterparts. Everything we do as a unit will assist in a better Iraq. Ensure you are eating correctly, drinking water, and always keep your head in the game.

To The families of our great Soldiers, we thank you.

STRIKE HARD!

**CSM Michael Eyer
"Striker 7"**



Regulars Focus on Quality of Life

By CPT
Don Makay



TF 1-6 IN

Living on a Joint Security Station (JSS) is not known as comfortable living. However, through many hours, hard work, creativity, and cooperation with our Iraqi friends, our small outposts have become something the Regulars can call home.

The Joint Security Station concept was one of the results of the surge in 2007, requiring U.S. Soldiers to live and work in and amongst the population. The JSS's incorporate Iraqi Police, Iraqi Army, and Iraqi Emergency Services (Fire, Ambulance) liaisons and Task Force 1-6 personnel into Joint Operating Centers (JOCs) that have proven critical in improving coordination and cooperation amongst all of the security and service personnel in the area.

The Regulars occupy three Joint Security Stations—JSS Sadr City, JSS Ur, and JSS Comanche. All of these locations were selected for their tactical importance and close proximity to the population—not for their conveniences or comforts. JSS Ur, for example, is at one of the lowest elevations in a two-kilometer area, resulting in significant flooding during the rainy period. JSS Sadr also has had to contend with a neglected sewage sys-

tem that caused flooding and drainage problems.

Upon TF Regular's arrival in their new area of operations in April 2008, the JSSs were little more than empty buildings or lots. At JSS Sadr City, for example, an old schoolhouse provided the shell for most of the living and office space for the Battalion Headquarters Company. It lacked in every way, including electricity, water, shower / latrines, security walls and towers, drainage, and even covered areas for providing protection from the elements such as intense sun, dust, or even rain. The Regulars went right to work, establishing command centers, overhead cover, cement perimeters and guard towers, and generators for operating their communications centers.

Over the past 10 months, the Regulars have built fully-functional and relatively comfortable living—including the installation of dozens of Containerized Housing Units, or CHUs. These CHUs are akin to shipping containers, but are modified to house 4-6 Soldiers, provide electricity, heating and air-conditioning, and most importantly—a little bit of privacy and private space for the Soldiers.

One critical resource made available to the Regulars is the ability to contract for skilled and unskilled labor. Through multiple sources of funding available, the Regulars have been able to employ hundreds of Iraqis for long and short-term projects. These projects have joined the skills of the Iraqis to the needs and resources of the Regulars to help meet the needs of both—quality of life and employment. Together these efforts have made life better for the Regulars and their Iraqi neighbors.

Improvements on TF 1-6 JSSs

Built new Gym
Built new shower trailers
Installed dozens of generators
Installed roofing on building
Delivery / spreading of Gravel
Sewage system repair
Solar security lights
MWR rooms w/ TVs / AFN
AC / Heating in all rooms
Containerized housing units
Built a Helicopter Landing Zone
Built 2 x maintenance areas



By SSG
Alan Caldwell

Leaning Forward In the Saddle



TF 2-6 IN

As the end of January bears down on Ghost Troop, the Troopers continue pushing forward to meet the challenges ahead. The Strategic Framework Agreement has been ratified and is firmly in place.

All of our Soldiers' efforts in three deployments to Iraq have garnered a new Iraq. An Iraq which is free and capable to govern and secure itself.

An ever increasing professional and dedicated Iraqi Army, National Police, and local Iraq Police work in concert with the Sons of Iraq providing security over the region.

We have worked diligently with our partners in the Iraqi Security Forces in combined training and operations. We have partnered with our Iraqi Army counter parts to capture High Value Individuals and to settle disputes between neighbors. The increased security situation has allowed the Iraqi people to hold free, credible and legitimate provincial elections.

The urban landscapes of this region is now dominated by colorful pictures and posters of local leaders campaigning for positions in the local government. We can easily see the resemblance to the local elections that happen in our own counties and townships. The local villagers speak freely to U.S. Soldiers showing handouts from the



SPC Kenneth Scott and Lieutenant Khalil of the 35th IA BDE inspect voting polling sites. (Photo by SFC Ken Salyers)

candidates; affirming their confidence in a chosen representative as a good leader.

In turn, our Troopers keep a watchful eye on their surroundings, but a simple smile of acknowledgement speaks volumes. For many it is the first quantitative evidence that proves "We did it!"

The U.S. continues census operations, security missions, and infrastructure programs. However, the primary source of labor and personnel is no longer the ACU armor-clad Warrior, but the Iraqi Security Forces in sector.

The Soldiers throughout Task Force Gator, still find evidence of those who harbor ill-will towards the peaceful Iraq. But it is no longer Iraqis hiding in their houses, and convoys of Coalition Forces being attacked by an unseen enemy. 



SSG Eugeniy Mikityuk provides security while LT Khalil inspects polling sites in the area for the upcoming elections. (Photo by SFC Ken Salyers)

Florida National Guard



40 EN

By SGT
Joseph Gerbine

Join the 2BCT Fight

From the sands of Florida to the sands of Iraq, six warriors from the Florida Army National Guard arrived to provide communications support to the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division for Operation Iraqi Freedom 07-09.

SSG John Allen, SGT Jason Wink and SGT Lydia Edmonds of Company B, 146th Expeditionary Signal Battalion, all from Pensacola, Florida, are members of CPN Team 23 located at COP Meade.

SGT Anthony Harper, of Jacksonville, Florida, SPC Adam Langford, of Gainesville, Florida, and PFC Peter Storozuk, of Orlando, Florida, are members of Company C, 146th Expeditionary Signal Battalion, CPN Team 45 located at COP Mahmudiyah.

These two CPN teams were assigned directly from MNC-I as a Corps asset to help the 2nd BCT, 1st Armd. Div., perform their mission in their expanded area of operations.

The Guardsmen started their training together at Camp Blanding, Fla. where they spent a month performing a switchex to test their equipment. After their equipment was proven deployment worthy, it was time to prepare the teams for combat and convoy operations. The Soldiers headed to Fort Bliss, Texas where they conducted combative tactics and convoy live fires for a month and a half.

The Soldiers completed their pre-deployment training and arrived at Camp

Striker Dec. 4. The 589th Signal Company assisted them in conducting another switchex, further testing their combat readiness.

The Soldiers were optimistic about this deployment despite it being the first deployment to OIF for most of the CPN members. Some of the soldiers did have some trepidation.

"You just push the worries to the back of your mind and you stay focused on the job and each other," said Allen. "I have a good team and together we can do anything."

That is the mentality needed by any leader who wants to be successful in this dust bowl that we all have grown to love. These six signal Soldiers arrived well trained and well prepared for their mission. They already have the esprit de corps that is needed for a team to be successful throughout a deployment.



Bravo Company 146th Expeditionary Signal Battalion From left: SGT Jason Wink, SGT Lydia Edmonds, and SSG John Allen.



Until the Well Runs Dry

By 1LT
Kalani Cablay



47 FSB

At the patrol bases and combat outposts throughout the Striker OE, there exists a certain quality of life that must be maintained in order for these locations to remain mission capable. Life support systems and simple comforts such as showers, hot food, and plumbing are provided to sustain the combat forces at these locations. The common denominator in all of these amenities is the vital resource of water; however, not just any water source is adequate. The water must be clean and, above all, potable. The water dogs, MOS 92Ws, of Alpha Company, 47th Forward Support Battalion have championed this cause.

SFC Michael Silver, of N. C., is the platoon sergeant for the brigade's main water purification effort, and his standards for success are evident in the ability of his Soldiers to accomplish their mission. SGT Carlos Cordero, of Corozal, Puerto Rico and SPC Kevin Tabron, of Norfolk, Va., are also located at Camp Striker, ensuring that all water equipment becomes operational when swapped out for repairs.

Every task force in the brigade is provided with a fully-manned water purification site with a bulk storage capacity. TF Gator, located at COP Carver, has been provided potable water since May 2008 under the supervision of SSG Sidney Babineaux, of Houston, Texas and SPC Renato Reyes, also from Texas. At COP Cashe South, TF Knight has had a water site for over four months now.

As the Striker OE has expanded, the water dogs are in tow, ready to tackle

any mission for water purification. TF Thunder had requirements for bulk water at COP Meade and COP Dolby. This has been a daunting mission for the Soldiers due to the limited expertise within the theater of operations. Soldiers such as CPL James Lynch, of Erie, Pa., SPC Mitchell Johnson, of S. C. and SPC Nicholas Mayfield, of N. C. have had to rise to the challenge and put their previous training to work supplying COP Dolby with crucial water sustainment.

CPL Maria Campos, of Texas, SPC Jocelyn Kherbouche, of Calif., SPC Jesse Hiatt, of Wash., and SPC Kristen Nixon of Calif. occupy the water site at COP Meade. They not only provide water for COP Meade, but also purify enough water to sustain the troops at PB Copper. COP Cashe South has a 50,000 gallon water bag with two 92Ws, SGT John Albert and SPC Gary Jones, both from N. Y., ensure TF Knight has enough water for all life support.

COP Carver has been the hallmark of all water purifications in theater. What was once a simple 50,000 gallon operation has been continually improved to a water purification site that sustains the largest combat outpost in the Striker OE with 150,000 gallons of bulk water storage capacity. The water dogs of A/47th FSB will never accept defeat and will never quit. Without the dedication and hard work of these Soldiers and NCOs, the 2BCT would indeed be left "high and dry."



Securing Ashura

By 1LT

Francis De Rosa

Commemorations



1-63CAB

The Feast of Ashura is one of the most important holidays in the Muslim Calendar. For Shia Muslims, it represents the martyrdom of the Imam Hussein, the Prophet Muhammad's grandson and the key individual responsible for carrying on Muhammad's message. For Shia Muslims, direct descendants down the line of Muhammad's family are the authority on all things regarding Islam.

On October 10, 680 AD, the Imam Hussein and his travelling party, which included 108-136 men, were attacked in Karbala by an Army of roughly 4,000 men. Karbala is a city in modern-day Iraq which is south of Mahmudiyah. Hussein and his men fought valiantly; however, they were all slain. The women and children were deported to areas under foreign control. As a result of this massacre, Hussein became seen as a defender of Islam and a martyr for its cause.

Mahmudiyah is a city with a majority Shia population that celebrates Ashura. This year, according to the Muslim calendar, Ashura fell on January 7. A large-scale celebration was held at the Mahmudiyah Soccer Stadium, located just outside of downtown Mahmudiyah. It is estimated that 7500 people flocked to the stadium in observance of prayer, mourning, and recreations of the suffering Imam Hussein and his party went through in Karbala.

People came from all over the area to observe the holiday. Also, all schools and businesses were closed. The holiday provided an opportunity for all of the Death Dealers to learn something new about the local Iraqi culture.

"It was great to observe local tradi-

tions," said 1st Platoon's Platoon Leader, 2LT Kevin Mussman. "The events surrounding Ashura helped to give a better understanding of the people and the area."

Delta Company contributed to the local Ashura celebration by dedicating three of its four platoons to the event.

"Our role here was to support the Iraqi Army and Iraqi Police as a security force and to enable them to keep the population safe while celebrating Asura," said CPT Landgrave Smith, commander, Company D.

The Iraqi Army and Iraqi Police had positions throughout the city and the Death Dealers reinforced the Iraqi Security Forces through roving patrols and tying into Iraqi positions. However, it is important to note the exceptional job the ISF made in securing Mahmudiyah as well.

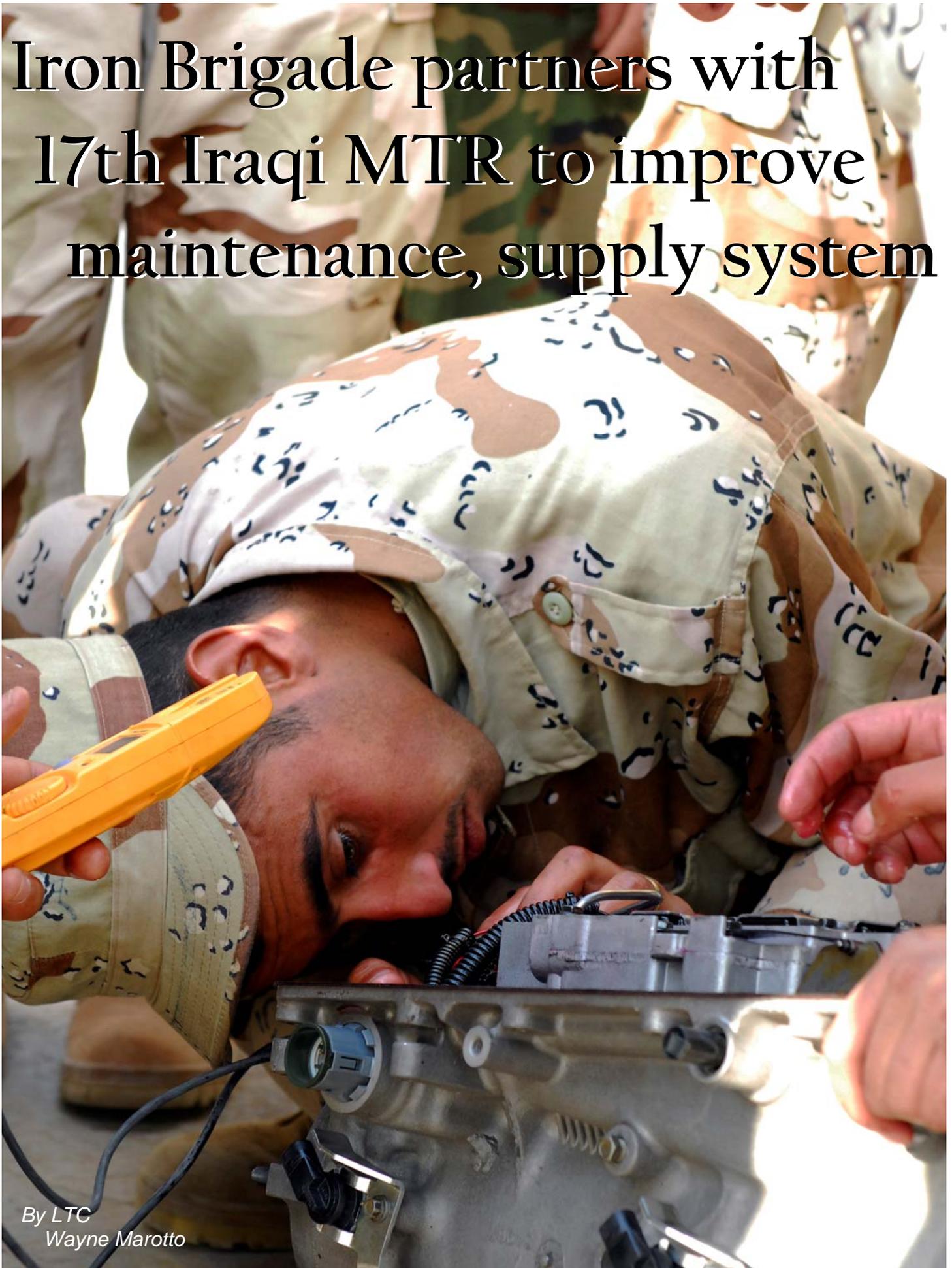
"The IA were incorporating all of the manpower they could," said Mussman. "The IA providing security were on top of their job with the Coalition Forces serving mainly in an observation role."

The holiday was a great success for all involved, including the Death Dealers, the ISF, and most importantly, the local nationals observing the holiday. The crowds were largely peaceful and orderly, with no major incidents or injuries to report.

"From top to bottom, this operation was conducted jointly, including IA, IP, and the Coalition Forces in support; an excellent example of the Iraqi Security Forces taking the lead," said Smith.



Iron Brigade partners with 17th Iraqi MTR to improve maintenance, supply system



By LTC
Wayne Marotto

The 17th Iraqi Army Division continues on its path to a self-sufficient logistics and maintenance program with a little help from a team of MND-B Soldiers from the 47th Forward Support Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad.

SFC Timothy Hagen who is assigned to Company B, 47th FSB, is a maintenance vehicle supervisor who taught the 17th Iraqi Army Division Motorized Transportation Regiment a class on humvee maintenance at Patrol Base Deason in Mahmudiyah Qada on Dec. 31.

“I am trying to teach the Iraqi soldiers a preventive maintenance checks and services program,” said Hagen. “I want to teach them the proper procedure to trouble shoot and figure out the problem. I also want them to be able to order the part and fix it themselves.”

Hagen, a native of Stafford, N.Y., who is on his third OIF tour, has taught the “jundis” – Iraqi Army privates, nine classes on maintenance since the 2nd BCT, 1st Armd. Div., assumed the Mahmudiyah Qada battle space in November 2008.

The logistics and maintenance program has long been a weak area for the Iraqi Army. Ordering parts is still a problem for the IA; it may take weeks to get the part through their system and all too often the units rely on the local economy to purchase parts.

“When we first arrived here, they (the IA) were reluctant to submit an Iraqi Army request form,” said WO Julian Prince, a native of Melbourne, Fla. “The local economy was their first choice for parts. We have gotten them to put trust in the supply system.”

Hagen, a 24-year Army and Desert Storm veteran, led the Iraqi Army soldiers through a series of hands-on classes on trouble shooting a humvee transmission.



Iraqi jundi Nemir checks the transmission fluid on a humvee to ensure it is properly filled during a practical exercise training session at Patrol Base Deason in the Mahmudiyah Qada on Dec. 31. Nemir is a member of the 17th Iraqi Army Division, Motorized Transportation Regiment. (U.S. Army photo by LTC Wayne Marrotto, 2nd BCT PAO, 1st Armd. Div., MND-B)

Each soldier, including their maintenance platoon leader 1LT Qusai Ahmed, gathered around the transmission to disable it and check the electronic switches to ensure the transmission was shifting properly and smoothly. The training was peppered by Hagen’s questions to the jundis as they checked the transmission.

“They like to learn by doing,” said Hagen. He has taught the soldiers to conduct a PMCS using an Arabic -10 manual



1LT Qusai Ahmed (left) maintenance platoon leader for the 17th Iraqi Army Division, Motorized Transportation Regiment and Iraqi jundi Nemir take apart a humvee transmission during a hands on maintenance training session at Patrol Base Deason in the Mahmudiyah Qada on Dec. 31. (U.S. Army photo by LTC Wayne Marotto, 2nd BCT PAO, 1st Armd. Div., MND-B)

and an inspection form similar to the Army's 2404 form.

"The training from SFC Hagen is a benefit for my soldiers. It helps my soldiers understand maintenance," said Ahmed. "The humvee is new for us and the system is different, so there is a need for this training."

Both the MND-B and Iraqi Soldiers agree that because of the training of Hagen there has been an improvement in maintenance and supply with the MTR soldiers.

"There has been a definite improvement in maintenance and training," said CW2 Lashanda Hill who is on the Logistics Training Advisory Team embedded with the 17th IA MTR.

Hill, a native of Long Beach, Calif., is partnered with the unit and has advised the unit on the importance of utilizing and trusting the Iraqi supply system.

She has earned the respect of CPT Sadoon, the operations officer for the 17th IA MTR.

"Chief Hill is very good. Any problem we have, she gives us a solution. She helps and supports with training," said Sadoon.

The 17th IA DIV MTR, with the assistance of its partner 2nd BCT, 1st Armd. Div., is learning how to conduct maintenance and supply procedures in order to become a more professional Army and increasingly capable of pro-

tecting the Iraqi people.

"This is good training because before when a humvee was broken, we had no idea how to fix it," said Nemir an Iraqi jundi. "Now, with this training, we can fix it."

9th IA and Iron Brigade Sappers

By SSG
Scott Wolfe

continue partnership

Soldiers from the 1st Engineer Company, 9th Iraqi Army Division and Coalition Forces from Company B, 40th Engineer Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad conducted a combined operation in accordance with the Security Agreement Jan. 3 in the Al Rasheed area of south-east Baghdad.

The new year marked a transition in the way that CF and their Iraqi allies executed missions. MND-B Soldiers and units have moved to a supporting role with their ISF counterparts.

But no changes were needed for Company B, and their partners at 1st Company. After a communications check and some minor vehicle repairs, the two units filed into one convoy and set out to conduct patrols with the Iraqi engineers in the lead.

Just as the units had been operating for the past few weeks.

CPT John Holcombe, from Shawnee, Okla., is the commander of the Company B “Bulldogs” and says that very little will change with the way the reconnaissance patrols are run because of how

eager and thorough the 1st Company was during their training.

The Bulldogs put the 1st Company through a rigorous regimen of basic and advanced engineer skills from early October to the end of November and they are very pleased with the results.

“The IA (engineers) surprise me a lot. They like going out,” said SGT Russell Slaven, a Tulsa, Okla., native and combat engineer with Company B.

“This is the group I trained,” he said with a note of pride in his voice. “They found three improvised explosive devices during training in 35 minutes. None of the other groups were even close.”

“This is my third deployment,” he continued, “and I have worked with the IA every time, but this time more than any other. I have to say, they are a lot like us.”

The lead vehicle for the route clearance patrol was an Iraqi Badger, a vehicle based off of CF Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicle.

This Iraqi armored vehicle had an interrogation arm that they used to good effect, stopping the convoy three times to check suspicious debris and trash on the

SGT Ali Balad (back left) looks on as one of his soldiers receives a certificate of training from CPT John Holcombe, a native of Shawnee, Okla., and commander of Company B, 40th Engineer Battalion, 2nd, Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad Jan.3. Company B “Bulldogs” trained the 1st Engineer Company, 9th IA Division in route clearing techniques from early October to late November. Since then, the two units have been conducting joint clearance patrols and the Bulldogs officially passed over the lead of these missions Jan. 1. (U.S. Army photo by SSG Scott Wolfe, 2nd BCT PAO, 1st Armd. Div., MND-B)



on the side of the road.

Once they had cleared the articles as “safe” and not a danger to the patrol, they retracted the arm and moved out again with a confidence that showed in the banter between each other and the alert scanning they conducted as they continued the mission.

Speaking through an interpreter, the Iraqi sergeant in charge of the patrol, SGT Ali Balad said that he liked working with the Bulldog engineers and was glad that they had given him the training he had received.

He had previously worked with Americans at Camp Anaconda and in very passable English said, “We succeed at our job, because we like it. I like being an engineer and I will stay in the army as an engineer.”

PVT Mustafa Ali, the gunner on Balad’s Badger, said that he has started to see more people cooperating with the IA the now that

there is more visible cooperation between Coalition and IA forces.

When the convoy returned to al Rashheed, a small ceremony was held by Holcombe for the Iraqi soldiers.

Each Iraqi engineer was awarded a small certificate stating that he had completed his training from Company B, 40th Engineer Battalion in a satisfactory manner and was hereby a graduate of Route Clearance Training.

When Jan. 1 marked the beginning of the new year and the implementation of the Security Agreement, there was some confusion expected in the changing of roles between the Iraqi Security Forces and their Coalition allies. But there was none for Company B, 40th Engineers, and certainly not for the 1st Company Engineers.

SGT Ali Balad (right), is the senior sergeant of the 1st Engineer Company, 9th IA Division that conducted a joint clearance patrol with Company B, 40th Engineer Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad on Jan. 3 in the Al Rasheed area. Here, he stands with his gunner, driver and vehicle commander in front of the lead vehicle for the patrol – Badger 1. (U.S. Army photo by SSG Scott Wolfe, 2nd BCT PAO, 1st Armd. Div., MND-B)



Texas, Iraqi students partners in academics



By LTC
Wayne Marotto

Students from the Flowers of the Future school in Salman Pak send greetings back to their 'partners' at Rylander Elementary School in Katy, Texas Jan. 11. The Texas students donated over 1000 items of school supplies to the Iraqi students. The Iraqi students adopted the Rylander Rhino mascot for the day. MND –B Soldiers from 2nd Battalion, 6th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, Multi-National Division-Baghdad dropped off the school supplies to the newly renovated school. (U.S. Army photo by CPT Dusty Gray, 2nd BCT PAO, 1st Armd. Div., MND-B)

Students from Rylander Elementary School located in Katy, Texas partnered with students at the Flowers of the Future school in Salman Pak, Iraq during a school supply drop by a team of MND-B Soldiers from Task Force 2nd Battalion, 6th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad.

The Texas students collected over 1000 school supply items- glue, scissors, crayons, markers, books, paper, and pencils. The money to pay for the shipping

costs to Iraq was donated by Katy area businesses.

The school supply partnership was facilitated by CPT Stephen Johnson, a Soldier in Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd BCT, 1st Armd. Div., MND-B and his wife Tracy Johnson and Ashley Josey all from Katy, Texas.

Johnson, whose son Warner attends Rylander Elementary, wanted to teach his son and classmates the importance of giving. He asked his sister-in-law, Kathleen Briggs, who is a teacher at

Rylander Elementary to help his son and classmates collect the school supplies.

“They (Iraqis) give their children the best education that they can and these supplies will significantly enhance their education,” said Johnson.

The school supplies were distributed by a civil affairs team from Task Force 2-6 Infantry on the grand opening of the newly renovated school. The school has 700 students, 17 classrooms and employs 15 teachers.

“This is a great day for the children of the Marquez Mada’in,” said LTC Michael ShROUT, of Renton, Wash., commander of TF 2-6. “Their school was refurbished by local Iraqi labor, secured by Iraqi Security Forces and the Sawah.”

The school was refurbished with labor provided by 90 students from the Salman Pak area who are in the Civil Service Corps Program with funding provided by Coalition

Forces.

ShROUT said the project is one in a series of infrastructure improvements in the Salman Pak area to improve the quality of life.

The excitement of the moment was apparent as the Soldiers handed out the school supplies to the Iraqi students who adopted the Rylander Rhino mascot for the day.

“The smiles on the faces of the children and the parents gives us a sense of accomplishment,” said CPT William Richardson, a native of Tehachapi, Calif., the commander of Company C, Task Force 2nd Bn., 6th Inf. Regt., 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad. “Many of the parents and local leaders have told me they attended the school and are very happy it has been restored. It is an important part of the personal history for many in this community.”

CPT Stephen Johnson, a Soldier in Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, Multi-National Division-Baghdad, poses with Rylander Elementary School students who collected and donated over 1000 school supply items for Iraqi students at Flowers of the Future Elementary School in Salman Pak, Iraq on Jan. 11. Johnson's wife, sister-in-law, and his son's kindergarten teacher all helped in getting the supplies from Katy, Texas to Salman Pak, Iraq. (Courtesy photo by Tracy Johnson)



Iraqi NP officers promoted by MND-B Soldiers



By SPC
Jamie Vernon

LTC Sami the logistics officer for 3rd Brigade, 1st National Police Division, receives his promotion to COL from MAJ David Raugh, of Altoona, Pa., executive officer of 1st Battalion, 35th Armor Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, and BG Emad, the 3rd NP Brigade commander at Combat Outpost Cashe South Jan. 20. (U.S. Army photo by SPC Jamie Vernon, 2nd BCT, 1st Armd. Div., MND-B)

Multi-National Division-Baghdad Soldiers from Task Force 1st Battalion, 35th Armor Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, partnered with the 3rd Brigade, 1st National Police Division for a promotion ceremony at Combat Outpost Cashe South Jan 20.

LTC Sami, the 3-1 NP brigade logistics officer and LTC Dafor, 3-1 NP Joint Security Station Commander were authorized to be promoted to the rank of colonel.

BG Emad, commander of 3-1 NP, requested the promotion ceremony to be held at COP Cashe South to illustrate the partnership between Coalition Forces and the National Police in the Jisr Diyala and Narhwan Nahias.

Both NP officers wanted the honor of pinning on their new rank to be conducted by

MAJ Dave Raugh, TF 1-35 Executive Officer, of Altoona, PA, LTC Frederick Gottschalk, of Moncure, N. C., 3-1 Bde., NP Transition Team chief and BG Emad.

“I would like to thank the 3rd brigade commander and all of my friends in the coalition forces for this honorable ceremony, and I wish all of you return home safe to your families,” said Sami.

At the end of the ceremony Sami and Dafor cut a promotion ceremony cake and received gifts provided by TF 1-35. The Iron Knight Soldiers congratulated them for their hard work and promotions to colonel.

“We were honored to host the promotions of two fine NP officers. The NP prove again and again that they are a top-notch organization. These officers represent the high quality of all officers in 3-1 NP,” said Raugh.

Rehearsals complete;

By LTC
Wayne Marotto

Time to execute



MG Ali, commander 17th Iraqi Army Division, greets MG Jeffery Hammond, commanding general, Multi-National Division-Baghdad and the 4th Infantry Division prior to a full scale dress rehearsal of its security plan for the upcoming provincial elections at Patrol Base Deason in Mahmudiyah Jan. 24. The purpose of the rehearsal was to illustrate the readiness of the Iraqi Army troops to ensure a secure, free and credible provincial election. (U.S. Army photo by LTC Wayne Marotto, 2nd BCT PAO, 1st Armd. Div., MND-B)

The 17th Iraqi Army Division conducted a full scale dress rehearsal of its security plan for the upcoming provincial elections at Patrol Base Deason in Mahmudiyah Jan. 24.

Staff MG Ali, commander 17th IA Div., walked MG Jeffery Hammond, commanding general, Multi-National Division-Baghdad and the 4th Infantry Division and Col. Pat White, commander 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, MND-B through a series of rehearsals to illustrate the readiness of his troops to ensure a secure, free and credible provincial election.

The Iraqi soldiers demonstrated how they will conduct inspections on vehicles, and on individuals arriving to vote- this included dedicated female inspectors to search female voters.

The Iraqi Army is in the lead to implement and maintain security for the elections with MND-B Soldiers acting in support roles.

This rehearsal is another indication of the ever growing professionalism of the Iraqi Army.

Ali also had each of his battalion commanders brief him on their units security plans. The commanders presented de-

tailed plans coordinating fuel supplies, communications and the evacuation of possible casualties.

Ali quizzed his commanders on what they would do given a hypothetical situations. Ali demanded much detail to his commander's plan.

But first and foremost Ali told his commanders that providing security for the polling sites and voters was the unit's number one priority.

"We must remember, our soldiers are not allowed to influence the election. But their duty is to provide security for a safe election," said Ali.

The Iraqi Jundis have been training for over a month on the proper procedures involved in searching vehicles, bikes and voters.

"I have faith in God that all will go well in the elections," said Ahmad Faz, an Iraqi Jundi. "We have trained well for this."

The Iraqi Army will continue to rehearse for the election which begins Jan. 31. They are confident they are prepared to provide Iraqi voters an environment for free, safe and fair elections.

"You had a great rehearsal, now it is time to execute," said Hammond.

An Iraqi Jundi inspects a role playing voter during a full scale dress rehearsal of the 17th Iraqi Army Division security plan for the upcoming provincial elections at Patrol Base Deason in Mahmudiyah Jan. 24. The Jundis have been training and rehearsing for over a month on the proper procedures involved in searching vehicles, bikes and voters. The purpose of the rehearsal was to illustrate the readiness of the Iraqi Army troops to ensure a secure, free and credible provincial election. (U.S. Army photo by LTC Wayne Marotto, 2nd BCT PAO, 1st Armd. Div., MND-B)



Iraqi and Iron Brigade Soldiers setting conditions for provincial elections with patrols

By SPC
Kevin Holden

An Iraqi Army soldier in the 17th Iraqi Army Division controls a fire in a canal during Operation Armageddon in order to clear the area and thereby make it easier to find weapons caches. The 17th IA Div., conducted a combined operation with Company D, 1st Combined Arms Battalion, 63rd Armor Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, Multi-National Division-Baghdad in Yusifiyah on Jan. 21. (U.S. Army photo by SPC Kevin Holden, 2nd BCT PAO, 1st Armd. Div., MND-B)

Soldiers from the 17th Iraq Army Division and Company D, 1st Combined Arms Battalion, 63rd Armor Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, Multi-National Division- Baghdad conducted Operation Armageddon in Yusifiyah, south of Baghdad on Jan. 21.

The purpose of the combined operation was to find and clear weapons cache in the Mahmudiyah area prior to the provincial elections.

The IA and MND-B Soldiers are conducting daily operations in the area to ensure safe, secure and legitimate elections for the Iraqi people.

1LT Francis De Rosa, of Lincolnwood, Ill., Company D platoon leader, partnered with COL Wasam Abdul Razaq of 2nd Battalion, 25th Brigade, 17th IA Div., during the operation and conducted mounted-vehicle patrols in areas with a prior history of weapons caches.

Many of the insurgents have hidden their weapon caches in overgrown water canals which force the Soldiers to enter and inspect the miles and miles of canals.

“Reed burning of the canals is used to clear irrigation ditches and deeply brushed wooded areas out in farming villages in Iraq,” said De Rosa.



During the combined patrol the Soldiers went door to door in the Yusifiyah area asking residents to participate in a population census using the handheld, interagency, identity, detection, equipment, a biometric identification system better known as the HIIDE system.

“The HIIDE system is not only used for population census data, it also stores information on potentially dangerous individuals and gives MND-B Soldiers a system to identify people living in these areas with a history of insurgents,” said SSG Derick Dillard, of Naperville Ill.

The operation resulted in the discovery of a cache of weapons, unexploded ordnance, detonation cord, and fifteen mortar rounds.

The caches were removed to an alternate location and disposed of in a controlled detonation.

“This mission has been a success, as long as we are finding weapons caches and working with the locals in these areas we will continue to patrol and search for weapons and potentially dangerous individuals,” said CPT Landgrave Smith, of Norman Okla., commander Company D.

A Soldier from Company D, 1st Combined Arms Battalion, 63rd Armor Regiment, Multi-National Division-Baghdad clears landscape of overgrown bushes to deny insurgents an area to hide weapon caches during a combined operation with the 17th Iraqi Army Division in Yusifiyah on Jan. 21. The patrol was in support of the upcoming Provincial Elections in which the MND-B Soldiers and their Iraqi Army partners are setting the conditions for a safe and secure election. (U.S. Army photo by SPC Kevin Holden, 2nd BCT PAO, 1st Armd. Div.)



Task Force 1-6 memorializes CPL Tony Gonzales



By SGT Whitney Houston
3rd BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B

Soldiers pay their final respects to CPL Tony Gonzales at Joint Security Station Old MOD Jan. 5 by leaving their nametapes in front of a display in his honor. Gonzales was killed a week prior in a roadside bomb in the Sadr City district of Baghdad. (U.S. Army photo by SGT Whitney Houston, 3rd BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div. MND-B)

Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers gathered at Joint Security Station Old MOD Jan. 5 to memorialize CPL Tony Gonzales.

Gonzales was killed by a roadside bomb in Sadr City Dec. 28.

“CPL Gonzales epitomized everything that was right in young Soldiers today; he was disciplined, he volunteered for everything and he did not rest until the job was done,” said LTC Brian Eifler, commander of 1st Battalion, 6th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, which is currently attached to 3rd BCT, 4th Infantry Division, MND-B.

Gonzales’s company commander, CPT Andrew Slack, spoke of some of the good times of “Gonzo’s” life and his at-the-ready intelligence as a Soldier.

“Just under two years ago, Gonzo started out in our 3rd Platoon as an M1A1 tank driver. His position was one that most privates find themselves in when they arrive at a tank company besides the front leaning rest. Gonzo was tall, skinny and lanky; his voice squeaked sometimes, and when we went to the field he grew the customary field moustache that looked more like something that he got from a Halloween costume rather than something he



had grown himself. But at the ripe age of 18 he stood out amongst his peers as a very intelligent and mature Soldier with an inclination to quickly understand and learn things.”

Friend and colleague SSG Timothy Cannon continued to speak of Gonzo’s proficiency and good attitude as a versatile Soldier.

“CPL Gonzales was just one of those Soldiers that whatever job you put him in he loved doing it. He who would give 100 percent, from driving a tank, from being the unit armorer, flying his UAV and being a dismount; whatever he did he gave his all.”

Cannon also spoke of Gonzo’s good humor and desire to make people

laugh.

“One of my personal memories that I will never forget of Gonzo is when the guys would be playing *Call of Duty 4*. He would tell everyone what each weapon was and what kind of round it fired while they were trying to play, and all they could do was laugh, cause that was Gonzo. ‘Just trying to help,’ he would say.”

From speaker to speaker throughout the memorial service it was clear that he was an intelligent and proficient Soldier, as well as a Family member would be missed and remembered forever.

Gonzales is survived by his parents Tony and Marlynn Gonzales, as well as his sisters Shaula, Tammy and Megan.

A traditional display of combat boots, identification tags, an M-4 carbine and an Army combat helmet sits in front of a slideshow playing at Joint Security Station Old MOD Jan. 5 in memory of CPL Tony Gonzales, who served with Company C, 1st Battalion, 35th Armor Regiment, Task Force 1-6, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, attached to 3rd BCT, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, who was killed eight days prior by a roadside bomb. (U.S. Army photo by SGT Whitney Houston, 3rd BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div. MND-B)



Regulars gather to mourn PFC Hinkefent

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

Identification tags for PFC Coleman Hinkefent hang from a memorial erected for the Oklahoma native during a ceremony Dec. 29 at Joint Security Station Old MOD. Hinkefent, who was a member of Company A, 1st Battalion, 6th Infantry Regiment, Task Force 1-6, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, which is currently attached to 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, died Dec. 20 after a short battle with Leukemia that developed while he was deployed to Iraq. (U.S. Army photo by SGT Zach Mott, 3rd BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B)



Mourners gathered at an outpost in northeastern Baghdad Dec. 29 to pay tribute to a fellow Soldier who died Dec. 20 after a short battle with Leukemia.

PFC Coleman Hinkefent was an infantryman with Company A, 1st Battalion, 6th Infantry Regiment, Task Force 1-6, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, which is currently attached to 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad. He developed Leukemia while deployed to Iraq and died after being evacuated to Germany.

The Oklahoma native was remem-

bered for his ability to lighten up nearly every situation and as a man who quickly adapted and earned the respect of those with whom he served.

“He had a resounding effect on the lives of many people he came in contact with throughout his life,” said CPT Aaron Newcomer, who serves as the commander of Co. A, 1-6 Inf. Regt.

Hinkefent joined the Army in January and was assigned to Task Force 1-6 in June as it was in the thick of rebuilding Sadr City.

“He reminds me a lot of myself during my first deployment,” said SGT Phillip





Scott, who serves with Co. A, TF 1-6.

Scott also recalled a good natured “war” they shared that began after the NCO threw a banana at Hinkefent on a hot, summer day.

“One thing I remember about ‘Hinke’ was that no matter what, he would never quit something he started,” Scott said.

Hinkefent is survived by his father, Eric, mother, Belinda, siblings, Emil, Erica and Haley, and fiancé, Jordan.

The memorial stand for PFC Coleman Hinkefent is adorned with mementos and other accoutrements Dec. 29 that will be given to the Oklahoma native’s Family during a ceremony at Joint Security Station Old MOD. Hinkefent, who was a member of Company A, 1st Battalion, 6th Infantry Regiment, Task Force 1-6, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, which is currently attached to 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, died Dec. 20 after a short battle with Leukemia that developed while he was deployed to Iraq. (U.S. Army photo by SGT Zach Mott, 3rd BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B)

LTC Brian Eifler, a Farmington Hills, Mich., native, speaks about PFC Coleman Hinkefent during a memorial ceremony Dec. 29 for the Oklahoma native at Joint Security Station Old MOD. Hinkefent, who was a member of Company A, 1st Battalion, 6th Infantry Regiment, Task Force 1-6, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, which is currently attached to 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, died Dec. 20 after a short battle with Leukemia that developed while he was deployed to Iraq. Eifler commands Task Force 1-6. (U.S. Army photo by SGT Zach Mott, 3rd BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B)



Iron Brigade OIF commemorative print



COMMEMORATIVE ART PRINT WILL BE APPROXIMATE 24 BY 22 INCHES

The 2nd Brigade has commissioned a commemorative print by the artist Jody Harmon.

He has created prints for the 1AD and other units who have deployed to OIF and OEF. This is a one of a kind artist rendition commemorating our deployment to OIF 07-09.

“These prints are a great way to remember our journey in Iraq,” said SFC Emmanuel Mines, the brigade point of contact for the commemorative art print.

The above photos will be used by the artist to make the final print.

The print embraces the concept of the Brigade Combat Team.

The artist requires a minimum of 400 preorders by Feb. 15th in order to begin production of the print.

At the beginning of February the Brigade needed 140 preorders for the artist to commit to commissioning the print.

The prints are \$ 50 and can be purchased from your battalion POC which are listed below.

Jody Harmon has been invited by Col. White to present and sign prints upon the Iron Brigades return to Baumholder in the summer timeframe.

Make sure you order yours now. Take pride in your brigade! Iron Brigade– Strike Hard!

Battalion POCs

HHC, BDE: SFC Silkwood 778-7069

40th Eng: CPT Kekuwa 778-7050

47th FSB: SFC Moses 778-7186

1-6th IN: SSG Morgan 778-7624

1-63 CAB: CPT Buttars 776-7309

2-6th IN: CPT Salva 778-7708

4-27 FA: SSG Payne 652-2301

TF Rock: CPT Vargas DSN 314-485-8180

1-35 AR: CPT Perez 778-7223



Wetzel Wizard

JAN 2009

Our Magic is Knowledge!

Focus on Learning: Learning Logs

One of our school wide interventions to support our mission and goals is the use of Learning Logs. Learning Logs are a place where students can write about what they learned and answer critical thinking questions posed by classroom teachers. Learning Logs allow for teachers to see a child's thought process and see the growth of a student over time. Learning logs can be kept in any subject area, even in art, music, PE, and Host Nation. In the computer labs, we even have technology Learning Logs! Parents can also assist in this intervention. A simple log can be kept at your house where your child can write and reflect on their thinking and expand their knowledge.

Lunch and Learn

Our next Lunch and Learn is scheduled for Wednesday, January 28 from 11:45-12:45. Our topic will be Learning Logs. Come and join us for a delicious free lunch and learn about ways to help your child. You can see first hand what your child is doing in the classroom. Please be thinking of future topics you would like to learn. Our Lunch and Learns are parent driven, which means that you get to pick the future topics. We are happy to serve as educational partners! Lunch and Learns are held on the last Wednesday of each month. Mark those calendars!

Mission & Goals of WES

The mission of the Wetzel Elementary School Community is to promote an environment that enables all students to acquire the knowledge and skills to become successful life-long learners and responsible citizens in an ever-changing, global society.

Student Performance Goal #1: All students will increase their literacy skills across the curriculum. Essence: Literacy skills are defined at Wetzel Elementary School as the ability to comprehend written text and communicate ideas.

Student Performance Goal #2: All students will increase their thinking skills across the curriculum. Essence: Thinking skills are defined at Wetzel Elementary School as analyzing and interpreting information, devising strategies for solving problems and justifying solutions to problems.

Dates to Remember:

- Jan. 22 - End of Second Quarter**
- Jan. 23 - No School for Students - Teacher Work Day**
- Jan. 26- CSP Day- No School**
- Jan. 28- Lunch and Learn @ 11:45**
- Jan. 30- Parent/Teacher Conferences**
- Feb. 2-5- AdvancED Visit**
- Feb. 16- President's Day- No School**
- Mar. 9-13- Terra Nova Testing**





Wetzel Wizard

JAN 2009

Our Magic is Knowledge!

Celebration of the Arts

On the evening of December 18, 2008 Wetzel Elementary School presented, *Celebration of the Arts*. The event was sponsored by the Wetzel PTO. Mrs. McKenzie and Mr. Rayburn were co-coordinators for the event.

To begin the event Mrs. Balilo and Mrs. McKenzie presented medal awards to the student winners of the Military Hero Essay contest. The judges for the essay contest were: Mrs. Balilo (principal), Mrs. Chamness (librarian), Mrs. Gustaferrero (literacy coach), and Ms. Strazdas (gifted and enrichment teacher). They were given a rubric to score the essays according to the following categories: ideas/content, organization, voice, word choice, and sentence fluency. The winners were as follows:

2nd grade: 1st place-Lani Foster, 2nd place-Luca Ramos, and 3rd place-Devon Lewis

3rd grade: 1st place-Napua Villarin, 2nd place-Zachary Detherow, and 3rd place-Dallice Tres-sider

4th grade: 1st place-Shaienne Dement, 2nd place-Jalen Myhand, and 3rd place-Terrell Shelton

5th grade: 1st place-Spencer Marlow, 2nd place-Leandra Martinez, and 3rd place-Patrick Rene`

6th grade: 1st place-Kimberly Familia, 2nd place-Andrea Jones, and 3rd place-Kylie Carbaugh

During the second part of the award ceremony the Military Family Art contest winners were presented with medal awards. In art class with Mrs. Poli every student drew a picture for the contest. Mrs. Poli selected 5-8 pictures from each class. Then the PTO Board selected the placing winners. The winners were as follows:

Kindergarten: 1st place- Christian Gomez, 2nd place-Gabriel Mobley, and 3rd place Skylar Scott

1st grade: 1st place- Faith Brewer, 2nd place-Maddy Tribby, and 3rd place Valerie Ramos

2nd grade: 1st place- Amayah Carter-Salsburg, 2nd place-Keila Rosabo, and 3rd place Kimberly Fritsche

3rd grade: 1st place- Kaitlyn Fritsche, 2nd place-Ka Mya McCovery, and 3rd place Ricky Rivera

4th grade: 1st place- Rosario Silva, 2nd place-Shannon Patitucci, and 3rd place Jose Concepcion

5th grade: 1st place- Spencer Marlow, 2nd place-Leandra Martinez, and 3rd place Sierra Garcia

6th grade: 1st place- Jessica Richardson, 2nd place-Jacob Wilson, and 3rd place Xavier Baca

The winners' original pieces of work from the essay and art contest will be forwarded to the national contest sponsored by the YMCA.

After the award ceremony, there was an award ceremony for the Winter Cake Contest. The winners were awarded ribbons and the other contestants were awarded participant ribbons.

The adult winners were: Norma Figueroa (1st place), and Mrs. McKenzie (2nd place). The child winners were: Elvin Figuera (1st place), Cecilia Gutierrez (2nd place), Hannah Tribby (3rd place), and Chaidez Family (3rd place). The top winners' cakes were auctioned off and the proceeds were given to the Wetzel PTO in order to fund future events and sponsorships.

Following the awards and auction, there was a talent show that featured an assortment of acts (instrumentals, dancing, and signing) ranging from solos to groups. The perfect ending to the celebration was a reception of cake and punch.

Registrar Remarks

Parents must call or email the school before or by 9 A.M. the day of their child's absence.

Accelerated Withdrawal Date SY 08/99

14 May 2009 is the accelerated withdrawal date for SY 08/09. That means that students must be in school all day on May 13, 2009 in order to receive full credit. Parents must present verification of the date of their departure to school officials in order to receive consideration for full academic credit.

Wetzel ES Withdrawal Process

1) Ten working days (or sooner) before your child's last day of school, give a copy of PCS orders or other moving documentation to the Registrar with student names and last day of Wetzel ES attendance written at the top



Wetzel Wizard

JAN 2009

Our Magic is Knowledge!

After you have followed the above directions, you may:
2) On your child's last day of attendance at the end of the school day, come to the Registrar's office to pick up a copy of your child's school record to deliver to his/her new school.

Student Demographic Information Updates

When you have changes such as:

- Address
- Work location
- Home, cell, or work telephone numbers

Local Emergency Contacts

Please be sure to email me or come by the registrar's office to update your student files.

Best Regards to Our Wetzel Families,

Susan M. Peterson, Registrar

485-6416 or susan.peterson@eu.dodea.edu

First Grade Classes Make Gingerbread Houses

All of the first grade classes at Wetzel enjoyed the holiday season by reading gingerbread stories, making gingerbread cookies and making gingerbread houses. Some of the classes used T.I.P.S. + E. and planning to design their gingerbread houses before they made them. There was also use on unconventional measurement to see how big the houses. The most fun for the children however was to take them home and eat them. Many parents helped with purchasing the supplies and putting the houses together.

The Importance of Flexible Scheduling in the Wetzel Information Center

Have you noticed that school libraries have a different look and feel? Even the name has changed. Information Centers are preparing students for the 21st century with access to multi-format resources and instruction in information literacy skills. DoDEA has adopted the American Association of School Librarians guidelines and supports the open, flexible policy for scheduling in the Information Center. According to DoDEA,

"Inherent in achieving the goals of the DoDEA Information Center Program is the capacity for the program to provide students and teachers with opportunities to use the Information Center and its resources as an extension of the classroom at the time of instructional need. Flexible scheduling is *vital* if the informa-

tion specialist is to effectively integrate information skills with classroom instruction. In order to achieve this, the Information Center program should allow flexible access to students and staff at all times."

The focus on flexible scheduling began as the result of a study in Colorado that found that standardized test scores were "13-22% higher in schools where library flexible scheduling is in place as compared with schools that did not have library flexible scheduling" (from Colorado Study, 2000). Research also shows that student learning is improved when instruction occurs within the learning context and not in isolation. So when students are learning about habitats, for example, in their classroom as part of their science curriculum, extending that learning into the Information Center not only allows them to have access to additional information in a variety of formats, but provides opportunities to learn and use information literacy skills within the context of the student learning needs at the time. Research also shows that student-centered learning experiences such as inquiry-based projects allow students to take ownership of their learning, to ask questions and to learn how to find and analyze information in order to answer their questions. These types of learning activities are made possible through open, flexible scheduling in the Information Center and through collaboration between the information specialist and the classroom teacher. Students can come to the Information Center, for example, every day for a week or whenever there is a need in order to use resources, receive individual or group instruction, and have the opportunity to work on their projects. Although centered on student learning, Wetzel's Information Center aims at providing a life-long learning environment for everyone in the Wetzel Learning Community, and promoting the use of technology and 21st century skills.

Students are encouraged to come to the Information Center throughout the school day whenever they want to check out a book to read. Parents are also welcome and can have their own library account to check out books for home use. Hours of operation are school days from 8:00 am until 2:40 pm.

Susan Chamness
Information Specialist
Wetzel Elementary School

S1 Personnel

By SSG Matthew Duncan
2BCT, 1AD S-1 NCO



Overseas Tour Options

Serving your country overseas can be very rewarding in many different ways. There is a lot more to being in the military in Germany than driving fast on the Autobahn. You have the opportunity to experience new cultures, foods, and customs. One of the biggest reasons that many soldiers choose to come here is the opportunity to travel. Germany is the central hub of Europe geographically and therefore many locations are only a couple hours away by plane, train, or car ride. Whatever your reason for overseas service there are a few different ways that you can continue it if approved.

Foreign Service Tour Extension (FSTE)

When a Soldier arrives to an overseas location they are given a DEROS (Date Eligible for Return from Overseas Service). A Foreign Service Tour Extension allows the soldier to extend his/her current tour for a period up to the current country/region that they are assigned. What this means to Iron Brigade soldiers? You can extend for 36 months or less.

Intra-Theater Consecutive Overseas Tour (ITT/COT)

This type of COT allows the soldier to apply for up to three locations within their current overseas region. For example you can request to go to Stuttgart from Baumholder.

Consecutive Overseas Tour (COT)

This type of COT allows the soldier to ap-

ply for an assignment to another overseas region. For Iron Brigade soldiers this would allow you to request other overseas commands like Hawaii, Honduras and/or Alaska.

In Place Consecutive Overseas Tour (IPCOT)

This type of COT allows the soldier to apply for a second tour at their current assignment, so the soldier can stay at their current overseas duty station for a subsequent tour equal to the prescribed tour length.

Consecutive Overseas Tour Travel

Good news! Soldiers who perform a PCS move from one overseas location to another overseas location, whether an ITT/COT, COT or IPCOT may receive entitlements equivalent to a free round-trip plane ticket for their dependents and themselves to their Home of Record (HOR). Certain restrictions may apply so it is important that Soldiers consult relevant regulations. USAREUR, G-1 will be in our neck of the woods, in the coming days, to process actions. To see if you qualify for any of the above actions please visit your respective Battalion S-1.

References:

AR 614-30 Overseas Assignment
AE Supplement 614-30
AE Pam 37-10 Soldier's Guide to Financial Readiness



Safety Bulletin

By Jerrold Scharninghausen



Near Misses

Safety professionals know the value of actionable information. We gather and use hazard assessments, injury, and illness information so that we base prevention strategies on this data. But there's a frequent blind spot in our analysis: Near misses. It's not enough to review injuries that have occurred; we must also consider injuries that have *almost* occurred. Unfortunately, near miss data is hard to capture due to individuals' reluctance in reporting those incidences.

Near Misses Are Prevention Opportunities Lost

In the course of conducting an injury investigation, nothing is more frustrating than to learn that the same circumstances that led to an injury resulted in prior incidents that went unreported because accidents were narrowly missed and nobody got hurt. You hear: "That guard has been loose for two weeks;" or, "I slipped on that same spot yesterday;" or, "that's been malfunctioning for three days." It just makes you want to scream. If only the people working in and around the area who knew of the danger had said something, action would have been taken and the injury could have been prevented!

Why Near Misses Go Unreported

Soldiers, employees, and others involved could do themselves and their buddies a world of good by reporting near misses to the unit safety NCO / Officer. So, why *don't* they? There are several reasons:

- They don't recognize the event (incident) as a near miss that needs to be reported. "I didn't get hurt – so nothing actually happened," the thinking goes.
- Soldiers / employees involved fear disci-

pline for causing the incident and don't want to "turn themselves or a buddy in."

- Reporting takes time – time that no one has. "I have to write a report for *this*?" Individuals don't know *how* to report near misses. "Who do I tell?"

Overcoming Reluctance

Everyone needs to be educated so that a red light goes off in their heads when they witness a near miss. They need to understand that the same conditions, unless addressed, are likely to result in future incidents and that the next time it might lead to actual amputations, broken bones, head injuries or even fatalities. They also need to understand that the situation *might not be addressed*, unless they report it.

Leaders play a key role in education and awareness building efforts. They need to instill the urgency of reporting the near miss into everyone.

5 Ways to Get Individuals to Report Near Misses

1. Require that all *incidents* be reported immediately.
2. Expand the definition of *incident* to include not only injuries and illnesses but also near misses and hazards.
3. Educate Soldiers and employees about *what* constitutes a near miss and *why* they're to be reported. Everyone needs to know that reporting a near miss is a Good Thing!
4. Make it easy to report a near miss.
5. When someone reports a near miss, thank them and use their input to remedy the situation.

"DON'T WALK BY!"

Chaplain's Corner

By CHAP (MA) NANA BASSAW
2nd BCT Chaplain



The Power of Prayer

Have you wondered why people stop praying at certain times in their life? Chances are that they think prayer does not work. It could be that prayer does not work for them because they have a wrong idea of prayer.

Writing in the *Through the Year with William Barclay*, this great English theologian postulated that prayer has its laws and talks about three of such laws. I believe these laws are true for us as it was for his days.

First, prayer is not God doing things for us: rather prayer is God helping us to do things for ourselves. My understanding of God teaches me that God does not do anything for us which we can do it very well. A wise parent realizes that while it may be easier to do a child's home work, it is not the best way to teach the child. Great teaching moment occurs when the parent guides, explains, and encourages until the child can do it.

Barclay goes on to write that "prayer is not simply unloading our tasks on to God. Prayer is the means by which God enables us to do them for ourselves.

Second, prayer does not change circumstances. It changes us. While the

circumstances may be the same, we approach them with different sets of eyes... with new courage, new strength and new ability to cope with them.

Long time ago, Epictetus wrote that everything in the world had two handles... one of lead and one of gold. How one faces a situation depends on which handle we use in picking it up.

Lastly, prayer is not escape. It is conquest. Prayer is not a mechanism for helping us avoid a demanding situation. Rather it helps us to face and overcome that situation. It is never meant to offer us an escape from difficult circumstances. The way forward is to embrace what prayer offers... strength to face those circumstances and to conquer or to endure them.



Striker Justice

By SPC Efran Leal
2nd BCT Task Force Paralegal Specialist



Foreign Claims

The Foreign Claims Act (FCA) was enacted on 2 January 1942 and was designed to engender good will and promote friendly relations between the US Armed Forces and host countries. Upon its enactment, the FCA authorized compensation only to a friendly inhabitant of a friendly foreign country, with limitations that the claim must be filed within two years of the incident and limiting payment to \$1,000.00. In 1943, an amendment was passed to raise this maximum amount to \$5,000.00, which was again amended to \$100,000.00 in 1956.

Foreign claims can be paid to Local Nations (LN) for death, injury, and/or property damage caused by Coalition Forces. For a LN to file a claim they need the proper documentation pertaining to the claim such as a Coalition Claims Card, a letter or note from the Coalition Forces, house property deeds, vehicle manifest, pictures, diagrams, or death certificates. Not all events pertaining to US or Coalition Forces can be paid by claims, for exam-

ple: damage caused by combat activities, or exclusions due to combat operations. All citizens, or agencies, of Iraq are authorized to file a claim, with the exception of claims filed by Iraqi Government, Iraqi Army, Iraqi Police, and Iraqi Security Forces, or claims which result in damage or injuries caused by non-Coalition Forces.

Although all units are authorized to intake claims from Local Nationals, the 2d Brigade Legal Section makes routine missions to FOB Mahmudiyah where we see the claimants face to face in order to intake their claims. Once obtained, a thorough investigation by the Foreign Claims Commission is done to consider whether the claim is payable. If the claim is not payable, a consideration for condolence is recommended or the claim is denied outright.

As of January 2009, our Legal Section has paid a total of \$331,000, and has processed over 125 claims filed by Iraqi Local Nationals under the FCA.



Doctor's Desk

By CPT (Dr.) Joseph May, MD
2nd BCT Surgeon



What's the difference between a psychiatrist and a psychologist? How many years of school does it take to become a doctor? Does the Army pay for your medical education? Those of us in the medical profession hear these kinds of questions all the time. So, during the next several editions of Doctor's Desk, I'd like to introduce members of our 2BCT Medical Team to let them present to you why it is that they chose their profession in medicine. The first in this series features 1LT Sarah Culclasure, our Brigade Nurse. LT Culclasure works in C CO, 47th FSB, and spends most of her days at the Aid Station at Camp Striker.

Why did you choose to be a nurse?

"The story of why I wanted to be a nurse is a bit out of the ordinary. When I was 16 years-old and at cashier at Winn Dixie, I had a customer who was rude to me due to Winn Dixie's lack of ice cream cone selection. The customer took his frustration out on me, and I must have gotten a hurt look on my face, because the customer who was next in line, says to me, "It's okay Honey, I am a nurse in the ER and you get to see the absolute worst and the absolute best in people."

She went on to talk about how much she loved her job and the fact that she was there for people during an uncertain time. Ultimately, she was able to lessen my stress through the care and encouragement she provided."

"For some strange reason that comment really hit home with me--the fact that a simple statement of understanding enabled me to have a better day completely changed my entire outlook on life.

That brief experience is what made me want to be a nurse; I wanted to lessen people's uncertainty and suffering through care, encouragement, and understanding. In short, it was a rude customer and a nurse who offered understanding words that guided me to a career in nursing."



1LT Sara Culclasure, 2BCT Nurse, interacts with local Iraqi children during a cooperative medical engagement near Salman Pak.

What educational path did you take to become a nurse?

"I received an Army ROTC nursing scholarship from Clemson University. All four years of college were paid for by good ol' Uncle Sam. ROTC provided a unique college experience with daily physical training sessions, weekly military science classes, and monthly field problems which well prepared me for my entrance into active duty. ROTC also provided a special camaraderie among my fellow nursing students who were also ROTC cadets. We supported and encouraged one another through difficult nursing classes and had study groups. ROTC also provided me with an opportunity to participate in the Nursing Summer Training Program, where I worked at Tripler Army Medical Center for 4 weeks and benefited from the hands on nursing training."



Doctor's Desk

By CPT (Dr.) Joseph May, MD
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What's different about your specialty within the Army than what your civilian counterparts do?

"Where do I begin? Most of my civilian counterparts do not deploy to Iraq, carry a weapon, roll around on convoys or wear boots when they work. I have had a very unique nursing experience compared most of my civilian counterparts. From starting my nursing career on a Medical-Surgical floor at Heidelberg (a former Nazi Signal base and the hospital where General Patton died—everybody believed the ghost of Patton still roamed the halls) to being deployed as a Brigade Nurse and learning to appreciate the real Army outside the world of garrison."

"In my two-plus years in the active duty Army, I have been privileged to have truly unique nursing experiences: visiting an Iraqi medical clinic and Salaam Pak hospital, administering immunizations (and hearing every Anthrax conspiracy theory known to man), having an intimate relationship with the MEDPROS data entry system, and being in awe of our medics' immense knowledge of combat medicine and what versatile Soldiers they truly are! In a hospital setting I only viewed medics as individuals who took vital signs, took out IVs, and passed food trays out; my deployment experience has made me truly experience how well they are trained and ready to complete their mission. I feel that being an Army Nurse enables me to have a wide range of learning experiences that will enhance my nursing career development."

What's the most exciting part about your job?

"The absolute most exciting part of my job is taking care of an extremely ill patient, providing care and encouragement during their sickest days, and seeing them get better and ultimately being discharge. It is a wonderful experience to be able to take care of someone at a rough and uncertain point in their life and to witness and play a direct hand in that individual getting better. Through nursing I have truly benefited from taking care of soldiers and their family members, it is always a privilege to able to take care of them and ease their discomfort in a difficult life situation."

To learn more about Army Nursing, visit www.armynursecorps.amedd.army.mil



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