

# Crossed Sabers

www.cavcountry.net

VOLUME 1 ~ ISSUE 7

MULTI-NATIONAL DIVISION-BAGHDAD

MAY 25, 2009

## In this Issue



**Beautiful game fosters partnership** Pg. 5



**Longknife medics train Iraqi Soldiers in life-saving skills** Pg. 10



**Funding a brighter future through micro grants** Pg. 14



**Steel Knights, SOI patrol Mutanabi neighborhood** Pg. 18



**Just One of the Guys: 1-124 Cav women warriors stand guard in Iraq** Pg. 24

# Caches sweep uncovers new leads, builds trust

**Story by Staff Sgt. Mark Burrell**  
MND-B PAO

**BAGHDAD** – A concerned local citizen tips a community leader in the rural village of Hay al-Skri in northern Baghdad. There might be a weapons cache buried on a farm.

Soldiers of 2nd Squadron, 104th Cavalry Regiment, 56th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, are quick to move and arrive at the farm, May 8, with tools to search for weapons and explosives.

“We follow up on leads for weapons caches with tips that we receive,” said Staff Sgt. Paul Jones, a Waynesboro, Pa., native and cavalry scout squad leader assigned to C Troop. “The locals give us information because they want to save their kids too. They live here and are tired of getting blown up.”

The Soldiers quickly cordon off the farm, make their presence known and talk to the military-aged males at the farm, next to a school. Parents herd the children into a line on a curb. Despite their curiosity, the children bury their heads in their books.

“Overall, you got the insurgency placing these caches at places like this and

when you find them, the locals come out and thank you,” said Cpl. Bryan Eveland, a cavalry scout team leader from Waterville, Pa., also assigned to C Troop.

As the search continues, Iraqi Security

Forces help in the interviewing process and also provide security at the farmhouse.

“Especially in rural areas, it’s good to have the ISF because people don’t have contact with American forces all that much,” said Sgt. Matt Coble, a Reedsville, Pa. native and cavalry scout team leader

See ~ **CACHE** Pg. 3



Photo by Staff Sgt. Mark Burrell, MND-B PAO

**Cpl. Bryan Eveland, a cavalry scout team leader from Waterville, Pa., also assigned to C Troop, 2nd Squadron, 104th Cavalry Regiment, 56th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, walks with a metal detector to search for buried weapons and explosives caches at a farmhouse in Hay al-Skri here, May 8. Eveland and his fellow Soldiers received a tip to come and search the farm, but found nothing.**



Photo by Staff Sgt. Mark Burrell, MND-B PAO

**Sgt. Sean Vinsick (left), who hails from North Versailles, Pa., and Staff Sgt. Paul Jones, a native of Waynesboro, Pa., are both cavalry scouts assigned to C Troop, 2nd Squadron, 104th Cavalry Regiment, 56th Stryker Brigade Combat Team. The Soldiers worked as a team to test the soil for remnants of explosives or weapons using the “Fido,” a portable explosives detection device at a farm in Hay al-Skri here, May 8.**

# Prayers from Baghdad

By Chap. (Lt. Col.) Barb Sherer, MND-B Chaplain

We are very fortunate to have U.S. Air Force personnel who join our HQ and help us understand the potential effects of the weather on military operations. Can you imagine a job where everything depends upon things which are totally out of your control? This is what they face every day, and so this prayer is for them, for the SWOs.

## PRAYER OF THE SWO (Staff Weather Officer)

Dear God,  
Why are you doing this to me?  
You know I need favorable weather  
for the air-assault tomorrow,  
And what do I see? Red!  
Red across the board...  
for Helo Ops,  
for CAS and UAV,  
I'm doomed!

I know, I know...  
There is more at stake here than my simple  
needs.  
But you have such powerful resources at hand.  
You can halt armies with one Shamal  
Or sustain the night fighter with 99% illumine  
Your view of the big picture  
Surpasses that of Google Earth!  
So please, a little help here.

It's bad enough to stare at the computer all day  
Listening to the prattle in the Ops Center  
Then drag home to an Army CHU.  
Now I admit, Lord, my fare is better than most  
And I really have no cause to complain.  
But please, if it be your will,

Let CPOF cooperate  
and my BUA slides be in place.  
Help the Chief forget the times  
my forecast missed the mark.  
And finally,  
If you would only see fit  
To heed the chaplain's weather prayer,  
I know the winds would die  
And the dust would settle.

So I leave my fate in your capable hands,  
And pause to rest with a grateful, Amen.



Questions, comments, story ideas? Contact the Crossed Sabers at [nicholas.conner@mnd-b.army.mil](mailto:nicholas.conner@mnd-b.army.mil). The Crossed Sabers is an authorized publication for members of the U.S. Army. Contents of the Crossed Sabers are not necessarily official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government, Department of Defense, Department of the Army or the 1st Cavalry Division. All editorial content of the Crossed Sabers is prepared, edited, provided and approved by the 1st Cavalry Division Public Affairs Office.

**Maj. Gen. Daniel Bolger**  
*Commanding General*  
**Lt. Col. Philip Smith**  
*Public Affairs Officer*  
**Master Sgt. Nicholas Conner**  
*Command Information Supervisor*

**Sgt. 1st Class Ron Burke**  
*Editor, Layout & Design*  
**Staff Sgt. Jon Cupp**  
*Staff Writer*  
**Spc. Phillip Turner**  
*Staff Writer, Layout & Design*

### Contributing Writers & Photographers:

*211th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment/ 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division Public Affairs Office/ 8th Military Police Brigade Public Affairs Office/ 225th Engineer Brigade Public Affairs Office/ 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team Public Affairs Office/ 56th Infantry Brigade Combat Team Public Affairs Office/ 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division Public Affairs Office/ 56th Striker Brigade Combat Team Public Affairs Office/ 3rd Brigade Combat Team 82nd Division (Airborne) Public Affairs Office/ and the 982nd Combat Camera Co. (ABN).*

**CACHE** ~ From Pg. 1

assigned to C Troop. "People might feel more comfortable and more responsive to us with the ISF there."

While the troops systematically scour the different fields using metal detectors and shovels, the mission develops into two objectives – to provide security for the people here and to build a trustworthy relationship with the community.

"People in the community realize we're out to make the community safe," added Coble. "That's our number one goal. But hopefully it will also encourage community members to speak up. If they come to us with information, then we'll do something about it."

According to Jones, this isn't an overnight process. And like today, following up on leads sometimes doesn't lead to a cache, only another lead. Yet, the Soldiers aren't disheartened because being out in

sector everyday builds relationships.

"From what I've seen being on the ground, the trust is there," explained Coble. "We're going after guys that shouldn't be there and the population sees us and knows that we're there for their security. And as long as we can continue to integrate ISF into missions like we did today, it's going to be better off for everybody," he said.

Although the suspected weapons cache was not found after hours of searching, more information was uncovered leading the Soldiers onward to track down another lead with the ISF. The children sat diligently by as the adults said goodbye and their neighbors looked on, maybe realizing that their farming community just became a little safer. ✂



Photo by Staff Sgt. Mark Burrell, MND-B PAO

**Spc. Jamie "Doc" Williams, a combat medic from Reading, Pa., assigned to C Troop, 2nd Squadron, 104th Cavalry Regiment, 56th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, shouts orders as he provides security along with an Iraqi Army humvee in Hay al-Skri here, May 8.**



Photo by Staff Sgt. Mark Burrell, MND-B PAO

**Staff Sgt. Paul Jones, a Waynesboro, Pa., native and cavalry scout squad leader assigned to C Troop, 2nd Squadron, 104th Cavalry Regiment, 56th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, digs up a possible weapons caches in Hay al-Skri here, May 8.**



Photo by Staff Sgt. Mark Burrell, MND-B PAO

**Spc. Rodney Maze, a cavalry scout from Washington, Pa., assigned to C Troop, 2nd Squadron, 104th Cavalry Regiment, 56th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, uses a pick axe to clear away hard ground after the "Fido," a portable explosives detection device, picked up traces of explosives in the area here, May 8.**



The *Daily Charge* can be viewed at the MND-B Portal, PAO homepage.



MND-B print and broadcast products can be found on the PAO Portal, including the **Cav Roundup** and **The 1st Team Update**. All 1st Cavalry products can be found at [www.cavcountry.net](http://www.cavcountry.net).



**Freedom Radio Baghdad**  
**AFN** 104.1 and 107.7  
American Forces Network FM

## Iraqi, Army engineers find common ground during joint construction mission

Story by 1st Lt. Michael Cirillo

Company A, 46th ECB (H), 225 Eng. Bde., MND-B

**BAGHDAD** – Engineers assigned to Company A, 46th Engineer Combat Battalion (Heavy), 225th Engineer Brigade, along with Iraqi Army engineers, made numerous upgrades to electrical grids, grounded countless showers and living quarters and moved hundreds of tons of trash and debris from roadways throughout Baghdad May 4.

The 23rd IA Brigade Commander, Lt. Col. Akram had a vision to refit existing concrete guard towers with wooden safety platforms to increase the safety of the Soldiers on his base and requested American engineer technical expertise and oversight.

Prior to starting the project, the four guard towers had rickety 15-foot ladders that stretch to the top of the tower. One IA Soldier was recently injured in a fall because of the unsteady ladders. The new ladders protect the Soldiers.

“The construction of two safety platforms per tower breaks a Soldier’s fall at a much safer six feet,” said Capt. Lisa Landreth, commander, Company A, who is a native of Fair Play, S.C. “Emplacing these safety platforms significantly reduces the risk of injury and increases the ability of Soldiers to extract a casualty in the event of an emergency.”

San Antonio native, Sgt. Mark Jordan, a team leader, 2nd platoon, Company A, 46th ECB (H), spearheaded the joint wooden safety platform project and took the

opportunity to give the Iraqi Engineers some much-needed training on the use of power tools while simultaneously making sure that the guard towers were upgraded to standard.

By using an interpreter, the U.S. and IA Soldiers were able to overcome the language barrier, one of the more challenging aspects to the project.

“Having to use an interpreter to translate everything made things go a little slower than normal,” stated Jordan. “But, once [the 23rd IA Soldiers] understood what I was saying, the platforms were built quite easily.”

With the platforms complete, the Iraqi Soldiers can perform duties in their guard towers more confidently. Additionally, they have pride and a sense of ownership of the towers that they helped make more structurally sound and in their ability to pick up carpentry tools and get to work. 



Photo by Capt. Lisa Landreth, 46th ECB (H), 225th Eng. Bde., MND-B



Photo by Capt. Lisa Landreth, 46th ECB (H), 225th Eng. Bde., MND-B

**Sgt. Mark Jordan, team leader, 46th Engineer Combat Battalion (Heavy), 225th Eng. Brigade, from San Antonio, climbs the ladders to the top of the newly renovated guard tower. “Teaching sustainment operations is what it’s all about,” stated Jordan. “This gives the Iraqi Army the ability to conduct these missions on their own once we leave.”**

**(Left) San Antonio native, Sgt. Mark Jordan, 46th Engineer Combat Battalion (Heavy), 225th Eng. Brigade, team leader, instructs a team of 23rd Iraqi Army Engineer Regiment Soldiers on how to outfit their concrete guard towers with wooden safety platforms. Prior to starting the project, the four guard towers had rickety ladders going to the main guard platform at the top of the tower. At 15 feet above the ground, a fall could seriously injure a Soldier.**

## Civil Affairs Soldiers hit home run with partnership

Story by Sgt. Dustin Roberts

2nd HBCT PAO, 1st Inf. Div., MND-B

**BAGHDAD** – Some of the Iraqi youths in northwest Baghdad’s Karkh district set aside their soccer balls and experienced “America’s Pastime” May 7.

Soldiers serving with the 403rd Civil Affairs Battalion out of Syracuse, N.Y. brought enough baseball equipment for three recreation locations in the Karkh district.

About four months ago, when the 403rd’s Soldiers joined up with civil military affairs leaders serving with the 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad to meet with the Karkh Ministry of Sports and Youth, ideas of different sports in Baghdad came to the table of discussion.

“In one of the early engagements, they said they liked sports of all types; soccer, basketball, volleyball, and one that was mentioned, which surprised us, was baseball,”



Photo courtesy of 403rd Civil Affairs Battalion

**A local Iraqi youth throws his first pitch to Maj. Dennis Greco, a native of Syracuse, N.Y., 403rd Civil Affairs battalion, at the Karkh Ministry of Youth and Sports May 7. After receiving donations from many generous U.S. civilians, the civil military affairs Soldiers dropped off enough baseball equipment for three locations in the Karkh district of northwest Baghdad.**

said 1st Lt. Conner Browne, a native of N.J., assistant civil military affairs officer, 2nd HBCT. “There are a lot of people in the states that love baseball and would be willing to donate some stuff, so that’s what we did.”

The group contacted “Pitch In for Baseball,” an organization out of Philadelphia, which is dedicated to donating baseball equipment to youth around the world.

The organization donated running bases, more than a hundred gloves and balls, and more than 60 helmets and bats.

When the equipment was collected, all it took was the will to ship it to Baghdad.

Members of the battalion stationed in the U.S. delivered the equipment from Philadelphia to the unit’s Family Readiness Group in Syracuse, N.Y., who packaged the goods for proper shipping.

“The shipment was paid for by the Central Square Lions Club, located in central N.Y.,” said Maj. Dennis Greco, a native Syracuse, N.Y., 403rd Civil Affairs Bn.

“The Family Readiness Group coordinated the sponsorship, and the Lions said they would cover the whole deal. It turned out to be about \$500.”

When the equipment arrived in country, all it took was a visit to the Karkh Ministry of Youth and Sports.

“We busted out some of the equipment and we got the youth to throw a couple of balls back and forth,” said Staff Sgt. Dane Halligan, a native of Sauquoit, N.Y., 403rd Civil Affairs Battalion. “It went from us showing them how to do it and they started taking it up on their own.”

Halligan said the new baseball players enjoyed the concept and after a little

more practice, will invite the Soldiers back to see a few exhibition games.

“This just reinforces the foundation of that relationship, especially with the young people,” said Greco. “As they get older and they see what’s going on across the world with the United States, they’ll always remember the day a U.S. Soldiers came in and dropped off the equipment.”

As Coalition Forces continue to partner with Iraq’s local governments, Karkh’s youth are able to step up to the plate in a safer environment.

“I think this was a great idea,” said Greco. “What better way to get the two countries together than by using baseball?” 



Photo courtesy of 403rd Civil Affairs Battalion

**Staff Sgt. Dane Halligan, a native of Sauquoit, N.Y., 403rd Civil Affairs Battalion, hands a box of baseball equipment to a local Iraqi at the Karkh Ministry of Youth and Sports May 7. The battalion, along with elements of the 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, gave enough donated baseball equipment to be use on three playing fields in the Karkh district of northwest Baghdad.**

# Beautiful game fosters partnership

Story by Sgt. Joshua Risner

MND-B PAO

**BAGHDAD** – Dust clouds form as American and Iraqi footballers compete under a cloudy sky in the community of Salman Pak, here, May 10. However, this is not a national rivalry grudge-match; both teams are made up of Americans and Iraqis.

The game is a preliminary round of the Combined Forces Football Tournament, according to Maj. Paul Salmon, operations officer assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment. “This is the first round,” the Philadelphia native said. “The second round will be played in Baghdad.”

Soldiers from 1st Bn., 505th PIR, teamed with Iraqi Army Soldiers of the 46th Iraqi Army Division, faced off against Soldiers of 1st Bn., 82nd Field Artillery Regiment and the 3rd Brigade, 1st Iraqi National Police Division.

While it might have been easier to host the game on a Forward Operating Base, the match was held out in sector, allowing the local populace the opportunity to come out and watch, Salmon added. “This is an opportunity to exhibit the security that has been established,” he said. “It’s telling them we’re getting to a point of normalcy with the [Iraqi Security Forces] taking a positive stance of making sure this is a better place.”

An extensive information campaign preceded the event to ensure public awareness, according to Salmon. “We got with our Iraqi partners to establish a vision of how to do it,” he said. “We put up banners, did some soliciting and gave out trinkets and soccer balls to the kids.”

The advertising paid off and the spectators showed up in droves, from American and Iraqi Security Forces to local leaders. “There’s a band, there’s dancing, there’s children and sheiks and no one’s scared,” said 1st Lt. Paul Wistermayer, the assistant intelligence officer for HHC, 1st Bn., 505th PIR. “It says a lot about where we are and where this country’s going.”

Being on an integrated team has produced results with overall partnership, according to Wistermayer. “At first it was hard with the language barrier, but we gelled after a couple of practices,” he said. “It’s helped us become closer to the Iraqis in general, because we have something in common besides training and security now.”

The game itself was a very physical match, with both teams competing hard for the win. The crowd cheered for their team and booed when calls from the officials didn’t go their way. A three-piece band pepped up the crowd when the home team scored a goal, sparking a dance-fest with the 46th IA Div., along with local Sons of Iraq.

In the end, however, the visiting team took away the victory, 3-2.

“It was a good game and of course, the field artillery won,” quipped Spc. Daniel Brindell, from St. Louis, assigned to 1st Bn., 82nd FA Regt. “I never thought I’d be out here without a weapon, playing soccer

with the Iraqis.”

The football match showed that a sense of normalcy is indeed returning to war-torn Iraq. The Beautiful Game, as it is called, is giving the Coalition force and the ISF another opportunity to strengthen their bond and improve their working relationship. 



Photo by Sgt. Joshua Risner, MND-B PAO

**A Soldier with the 45th Iraqi Army Brigade takes a shot on goal during a preliminary match of the Combined Forces Football Tournament, May 10 in the community of Salman Pak.**

**(Right) 1st Lt. Paul Wistermayer, from Denville, N.J., the assistant intelligence officer for Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, takes a header in the opening round of the Combined Forces Football Tournament, a Baghdad-wide tourney featuring teams made up of American and Iraqi players.**



Photo by Sgt. Joshua Risner, MND-B PAO

**1st Lt. Paul Wistermayer, from Denville, N.J., the assistant intelligence officer for Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, takes a header in the opening round of the Combined Forces Football Tournament, a Baghdad-wide tourney featuring teams made up of American and Iraqi players.**



Photo by Sgt. Joshua Risner, MND-B PAO

**A small band, along with Soldiers of the 45th Iraqi Army Brigade, celebrate a goal by the home team during the Combined Forces Football Tournament, in the Salman Pak community, May 10. The game was met with enthusiasm and support from the local community, who showed up to watch the game.**



Photo by Sgt. Joshua Risner, MND-B PAO

# Working with Sons of Iraq



BAGHDAD – Dumont, Colo. native, Pfc. Paul Maurer (left), a driver for Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, attached to the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division is handed a chicken during a patrol May 5. The U.S. Soldiers perform operations aimed at continuing the level of safety and security in the area with the help of local Sons of Iraq security members.



2nd Lt. Christopher Esquivel, a fire support officer for Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, attached to the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division takes time during a May 5 patrol down the streets of Tunis, in the Adhamiyah district of Baghdad, to take a picture with local children.

Photos by Pfc. Bailey A. Jester, IBCT PAO, 1st Cav. Div., MND-B

# toward peace efforts



Waco, Texas native, 1st Sgt. John Shumaker (right), company first sergeant for Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, attached to the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division jokes with a local child and his chicken during a patrol in the Tunis neighborhood in northeastern Baghdad May 5.



Newport News, Va. native, Capt. Jason Dudley (right), company commander for Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, attached to the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division talks to a local shop owner (left) about the security changes and increased stability in the Adhamiyah area of Baghdad May 5.



Newport News, Va. native, Capt. Jason Dudley (right), company commander for Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, attached to the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, talks with Kuwaiti Village native, Sheik Ali, a Sons of Iraq tribal leader, about the increased security in northeastern Baghdad May 5.

# Joint Security Station Ur expands as two others close

Story by Staff Sgt. Peter Ford

MND-B PAO

**BAGHDAD** - While many units are preparing to move out of the Iraqi cities to meet the deadlines set in the January 2009 Security Agreement between Coalition forces and the Government of Iraq, Joint Security Station Ur, which is located on the outskirts of Baghdad, is expanding to accommodate the closing of JSS Sadr and JSS Ford.

"We have already put up T-walls on the outer perimeter of the complex to provide security and we have also cleared nearly 10 acres to support the move," said 1st Sgt. James Funk, a native of Logan, Ohio, assigned to Company A, 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division. "It was tough getting the ground

cleared," he added.

The place was a mess, according to Funk. It was like a huge junk pile covering a swamp, which presented a small problem. Funk overcame the obstacles by having the ground cleaned and smoothed out. Front-end loaders cleared out old Hesco barriers and debris from the area to make room for a new motor pool. Then, heavy cranes hooked chains up to cement T-walls and moved them into place to reinforce the inner-perimeter.

"Once we got the right tools we cleaned all of the junk from the area in less than two days," said Funk. "We also filled the ground with rocks to firm it up to keep vehicles from getting stuck."

The expansion portion of the project is complete. The next step hinges on the Containerized Housing Units arriving on time.

Between 50 and 80 CHUs are expected to arrive in Ur

by the end of May according to Funk. "Once the CHUs are in we can apply power and add T-walls around them and we will be ready for the [Soldiers from the] closing JSSs to move in," Funk explained.

Even after the CHUs are put into place and the rest of the Soldiers move in, improvements will continue to be made such as building a Morale Welfare Recreation facility for the Soldiers.

"A new dining facility will be built, which is great 'cause right now our cooks are working out of a Mobile Kitchen Trailer and they are doing a great job," said Funk. "Three shower trailers and three laundry trailers will also be brought in to accommodate the growing facility."

Soldiers at JSS Ur adapt to the changes being made to the expanding base to make room for their fellow Soldiers from the other JSSs. Each day, they are adapting and overcoming obstacles one at a time. 



Photo by Staff Sgt. Peter Ford, MND-B PAO

**Pfc. Alexander Burton**, a native of Kansas City, Mo., who is a combat engineer assigned to Company A, 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, puts sand bags in place with his forklift, May 13, for the range that will be added to Joint Security Station Ur as part of the expansion to accommodate the closing of JSS Ford and JSS Sadr. The range will be for small arm weapons to enhance Soldiers' marksmanship.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Peter Ford, MND-B PAO

Iraqi contractors clear the grounds at Joint Security Station Ur, May 13, for the delivery of the Containerized Housing Units. The CHUs will house Soldiers that will be moved to JSS Ur from JSS Sadr and JSS Ford.

## FIRST CAVALRY SOLDIERS PATROL, MAKE FRIENDS IN SADR CITY

Photos by Staff Sgt. Peter Ford, MND-B PAO



**Pfc. Christopher Story**, a native of Orlando, Fla., who is an infantryman, assigned to Company A, 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, guards the perimeter as some children of the community attentively watch in Sadr City, May 11. The kids ran from their homes to see the Soldiers patrol the streets. "We randomly knock on doors to talk with people of the community about security in the area," said Story. "People have actually told me they feel good when they see our presence in the community," he added.



**Spc. Daniel Fernell**, a native of Lexington, S.C., who is an infantryman assigned to Company A, 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, receives a handshake from a local girl while patrolling the streets of Sadr City, May 11. "The kids love when we give them candy," said Fernell. "These patrols are helping us to build lasting relationships with the people here in Sadr City," he added.

## “Steel Spike” Engineers refurbish high-rise for 82nd Airborne Division

Story by 2nd Lt. Brent Vance

Company A, 46th ECB (H), 225 Eng. Bde., MND-B

**BAGHDAD**—As Coalition forces transition out of Baghdad cities, facility requirements change for U.S. Soldiers. In response to the repositioning of U.S. forces in accordance to the Security Agreement, the engineers of 1st Platoon, Company A, 46th Engineer Combat Battalion (Heavy), 225th Engineer Brigade, expanded housing for the 82nd Airborne Division by transforming a high-rise office building into a high-rise apartment building for Soldiers.

Remodeling a gutted building for housing required a big effort and 1st Platoon worked extended shifts in order to get the Soldiers into better living conditions at Joint Security Station Loyalty.

“When I first saw the building I knew that it was going to be a lot of work, but I could see that by the time we got through it we would really improve the standard of living for these Soldiers,” said Sgt. Antonio Woods, from Seaford, Del., team leader for the project. “We wanted to get the job done as quickly as we could so Soldiers could move in, but we had to have the best quality so it would be nice.”

A construction team installed over 45 tons of e-glass ballistic protection for windows, e-glass is a type of glass that keeps Soldiers safe from various threats. The Soldiers cutting the e-glass had to wear full wet weather gear and respirators to protect them from airborne fiberglass exposure.

“The [e-glass] material was extremely heavy. When we were first learning to work with it we had a hard time, but as we got farther along we got a better idea of how to handle it,” said Allentown, Pa. native, Spc. Kimberly Ortiz, a member of the specialized team.

The electrical crew ran close to five miles of electrical wire inside the high-rise and installed nine electrical panel boxes. The finished electrical system includes

features like fire alarms and exit signs to ensure Soldiers’ safety.

In order to provide adequate exits for the building, the demolition crew broke through two-foot thick brick walls in nine locations with pick axes, sledge hammers and a lot of sweat. The demolition crew also removed an existing non-functional duct system that was filthy.

The six week project resulted in renovated fifth, sixth and seventh floors of the gutted high-rise building and provided 72 rooms outfitted with ballistic protection and improved exits to meet modern building requirements. It now offers 24,000 square feet of finished living space for the paratroopers and each of the newly-finished rooms includes electrical outlets and individual climate controls that can be adjusted using television-style remotes.

Construction missions in Iraq are especially meaningful to engineers because wherever they go there is evidence of the work they’ve accomplished.

“The Soldiers of 1st Platoon, Company A are proud to be able to visit JSS Loyalty and tell their peers, ‘I built that. I made a difference for the troops that are living here,’” said Las Cruces, N.M. native, Staff Sgt. Juan Zavala, a squad leader with the 46th Eng. Bn. ✂



Photo by 2nd Lt. Brent Vance, 46th ECB (H), 225th Eng. Bde., MND-B

**Sgt. Heith Kafer of Medford, Ore., carpenter, 46th Engineer Combat Battalion (Heavy), 225th Engineer Brigade, places plywood on the ceiling of the seventh floor stairwell landing April 22 at Joint Security Station Loyalty. The project provided 72 rooms outfitted with ballistic protection and improved exits to meet modern building requirements and now offers 24,000 square feet of finished living space for the paratroopers of the 82nd Airborne Division.**



Photo by 2nd Lt. Brent Vance, 46th ECB (H), 225th Eng. Bde., MND-B

**(Left) Spc. James Ridgley from Gibsonburg, Ohio, carpenter, 46th Engineer Combat Battalion (Heavy), removes an existing duct system from the fifth floor of the high-rise building being renovated, April 30 at Joint Security Station Loyalty.**

## CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION

### Madam Speaker visits MND-B

Photos by Spc. Phillip Turner, MND-B PAO



**BAGHDAD**—Speaker of the House of Representatives, Nancy Pelosi visits with Chana III. native Pfc. Randi Boardman, the Joint Visitors Bureau administrative clerk, Multi National Division-Baghdad, during her visit to Sather Air Field May 10.



**Speaker of the House of Representatives, Nancy Pelosi addresses Soldiers and Airman at Sather Air Field May 10. Pelosi spoke about the personal sacrifice of many mother/service members who were in attendance for her visit on Mothers Day in Iraq. Pelosi thanked each of them personally for their sacrifice of being away from their children to support the efforts of the United States in Iraq.**

# Longknife medics train Iraqi Soldiers in life-saving skills

Story by Sgt. Dustin Roberts

2nd HBCT PAO, 1st Inf. Div., MND-B

**BAGHDAD**—Multi-National Division—Baghdad Soldiers continue to train with their Iraqi Security Force partners in essential war-fighting skills, but not all training requires the firing of weapons.

Medical Soldiers serving with the 5th Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, taught Iraqi Soldiers with the 6th Iraqi Army Division how to conduct the basic medical skills necessary in saving wounded people's lives.

After four days in an indoor learning environment in northwest Baghdad, the Soldiers left their notebooks and pens in the classroom, moved outside and applied what they learned in a hands-on, simulated combat environment May 6.

"It's important for these Soldiers to get this training because they are not always going to have a medic out with them on patrols," said Sgt. James Scaggs, a native of Beaver, Ohio and one of the trainers from 5th Sqdn., 4th Cav. Regt. "Each one of these Soldiers can do basic level care to sustain a patient long enough to get them to a hospital."

*"What I have noticed is that they love the hands-on training. When they actually get to go in and put their hands on patients and practiced what they learned, that's what they like."*

-- Sgt. David Burke, a U.S. Army trainer

Iraqi Soldiers learned how to treat bullet-wounds, head injuries, broken bones, burns and other battle injuries

They also put their fears of needles behind them and learned how to properly insert a saline intravenous or IV in the veins of the wounded in case of blood loss.

During the trauma simulation, a squad of 6th IA Soldiers ran through a wall of smoke and heard the screams of five freshly wounded comrades.

"We made it interesting and as realistic as we could for them and they learned fast," said Sgt. David Burke, a U.S. Army trainer from Flint, Mich.

Burke said that some of the Soldiers have done this training before and some of them had to start from scratch.

"We just imparted what we know to them and they took it in very well," he said. "They have the grasp to use this training not only on Soldiers, but also civilians who may be wounded. Anyone who needs medical help in a combat situation, they are trained and ready to help in any way they can."

When the classroom portion of the training was over, the 6th IA Soldiers couldn't wait to apply what they had learned in a realistic environment.

"What I have noticed is that they love the hands-on training," said Burke. "When they actually get to go in and put their hands on patients and practiced what they learned, that's what they like."

After each group completed a round of training, the Soldiers huddled up to talk about what they did well and what they needed to improve on.

"We gave them first aid and we tried to keep them alive," said a 6th IA Soldier after a training stint. "We might have had a little bit of confusion; we didn't know what to do at first, but after we saw the situation we took a good look and we knew how to deal with it."

Scaggs said the intent of the training is for the 6th IA Soldiers to take what they learned and teach their fellow Soldiers the same basic medical skills. Because these skills are perishable, he said it was important for them to continue practicing.

As the Soldiers continue to hone their life-saving abilities, he added that the practice will also improve their self-assurance.

"This training improves their capabilities because it gives them confidence in their selves to deal with things a lot of people don't deal with," he said. "Just by doing the trauma lane we allowed them to experience somewhat of what a real situation would be like."

The Combat Life Saver training is scheduled to continue with the Soldiers until the 2nd HBCT redeploys this fall.

"As long as we can keep this going, training these guys up, it's a good thing because it is strengthening that bond between ourselves and the IA," said Burke. "We're going to be out here every month; that's our goal and that is what we are going to do until we roll out of here or somebody comes in and replaces us." 



Photo by Sgt. Dustin Roberts, 2nd HBCT PAO, 1st Inf. Div., MND-B

**An Iraqi Soldier Serving with the 6th Iraqi Army Division holds a saline intravenous bag while "treating" the wounds of a fellow Soldier during simulated Combat Life Saver training in northwest Baghdad May 6. The Iraqis worked with U.S. Soldiers serving with the 5th Squadron, 4th Cav. Regt., 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Inf. Div., MND-B, to learn the necessary skills for helping to save someone's life during combat.**



Photo by Sgt. Dustin Roberts, 2nd HBCT PAO, 1st Inf. Div., MND-B

**(Left) Iraqi Soldiers serving with the 6th Iraqi Army Division look for "wounded" Iraqi Soldiers in a simulated environment during training in northwest Baghdad May 6. The 6th IA Soldiers spent five days learning Combat Life Saver skills from Soldiers serving with the 5th Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, Multi-National Division - Baghdad.**



Photo by Sgt. Dustin Roberts, 2nd HBCT PAO, 1st Inf. Div., MND-B

**An Iraqi Soldiers treats a fellow Soldier's "wounds" during simulated Combat Life Saver training in northwest Baghdad May 6. The Iraqi Soldiers trained with medical Soldiers serving with the 5th Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, Multi-National Division - Baghdad.**

# Vigilant eyes make for safer villages:

## Keystone troops search for caches

Story by Sgt. Doug Roles

56th SBCT, MND-B

**TAJI, Iraq** - Soldiers of the Pennsylvania Army National Guard's 1st Battalion, 112th Infantry Regiment, 56th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, scoured a portion of a canal embankment for buried weapons May 4 near Taji, north of Baghdad, in an area where previous joint patrols have found large weapons caches. Though the latest search did not yield a new cache, Soldiers from Company C, 1-112th said the effort was worthwhile.

Capt. Nicholas Buchheit, commander, Co. C, said finding caches "robs the enemy of resources and takes money out of their pockets."

"It's a good fight to fight," he said. "Today's mission was a follow-on mission to the discovery of a large cache."

Co. C Soldiers, working with Iraqi Army Soldiers and Iraqi Police officers, found three weapons caches April 21 near the village of Uhm Najim. The cache totaled 219 pieces of ordnance, including 94 artillery rounds, 54 grenades, 45 mortars and 26 rockets. Soldiers using metal detectors found the cache.

"It was a pretty good day," Sgt. Daniel Kysela of Pittsburgh recalled.

Kysela, a team leader with Co. C's 1st Platoon, said the April find was gratifying for the Soldiers considering the hours of work spent on previous searches that did not turn up explosives or weapons.

"It was kind of refreshing, because we're always out there searching," Kysela said. "Most of the time, we don't find anything; but eventually we do."

Kysela, a student at Pitt University, is on his second deployment to Iraq, after

deploying in 2004 with the Pennsylvania Army National Guard's 2nd Brigade. He said there have been big gains by Iraqi Security Forces in that time period.

"They've come a long way," Kysela said.

Kysela believes that showing respect to Iraqi Police officers and Iraqi Army Soldiers — through small gestures such as remembering names and exchanging greetings at the start and end of joint patrols — does a lot to develop working relationships, especially with junior Iraqi Soldiers and police officers.

"I believe that will go a long way in developing their junior NCO's [noncommissioned officers]," he said. ✂



Photo by Sgt. Doug Roles, 56th SBCT, MND-B

**Spc. Adam Feldon of Allentown, Pa., from Company C, 1st Battalion, 112th Infantry Regiment, 56th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, mans a radio in a rural area near Taji, north of Baghdad, during a search for weapons caches May 4.**



Photo by Sgt. Doug Roles, 56th SBCT, MND-B

**Spc. John Schloder of Ridgeway, Pa., from Company C, 1st Battalion, 112th Infantry Regiment, 56th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, runs a metal detector searching for weapons caches May 4 at a farm near Taji, just north of Baghdad.**



Photo by Sgt. Doug Roles, 56th SBCT, MND-B

**Sgt. Daniel Kysela (right) of Pittsburgh searches for weapons caches May 4 as an Iraqi Army Soldier and another Soldier from Company C, 1st Battalion, 112th Infantry Regiment, 56th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, pull security near Taji, north of Baghdad.**



Photo by Sgt. Doug Roles, 56th SBCT, MND-B

**Sgt. Daniel Kysela of Pittsburgh operates a metal detector May 4 along a canal near Taji, just north of Baghdad. The Soldiers, with Company C, 1st Battalion, 112th Infantry Regiment, 56th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, were searching for weapons caches.**

# MND-B Deputy CG visits Salman Pak

Photos by Sgt. Joshua Risner, MND-B PAO



Brig Gen. John Murray (left), deputy commander for maneuver for Multi-National Division—Baghdad and the 1st Cavalry Division, walks with Lt. Col. Dave Bair, from Fairfax, Va., commander of 1st Bn., 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, May 7. Murray met with ISF commanders in Salman Pak to discuss security, troop levels and inter-agency cooperation.



Spc. Forat Aldawoodi, 1st Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, pulls security at an Iraqi Army compound in the remains of a hotel, May 7. The Pawtucket, R.I. native keeps watch to ensure the safety and security of Brig Gen. John Murray, deputy commander for maneuver for Multi-National Division—Baghdad and the 1st Cavalry Division.

# “Independence” Doc keeps Iraqi walking

Photos by Staff Sgt. Mark Burrell

MND-B PAO



Reading, Pa., native, Pfc. Melvyn “Doc” Mayo, a combat medic assigned to C Troop, 2nd Squadron, 104th Cavalry Regiment, cuts away infected skin from Yassir Mohammed Abud’s foot while cleaning and treating it in Falahat here, May 9. “For the most part, feet and hands are what they come to me for,” said Mayo. “They get tore up out here and get infected easily because it’s not the ideal environment out here.”



Pfc. Melvyn “Doc” Mayo, a native of Reading, Pa., and combat medic assigned to C Troop, 2nd Squadron, 104th Cavalry Regiment, puts on gloves before he looks at Yassir Mohammed Abud’s injured foot in Falahat here, May 9. Mayo and his fellow Soldiers were on a presence patrol in the area when Yassir showed up complaining of a cut on his foot.



Pfc. Melvyn “Doc” Mayo, a combat medic assigned to C Troop, 2nd Squadron, 104th Cavalry Regiment, cleans the wound of Yassir Mohammed Abud as he winces in pain and his nephew screams words of encouragement in Falahat here, May 9. “It’s a good sign when they’re willing to come to us with issues like this because they trust us,” explained Mayo, a native of Reading, Pa.

# 225th Engineers build B-Huts, build leaders

Story by Scott Flenner

225th Eng. Bde. PAO, MND-B

**BAGHDAD** – Builders by trade, Army specialists from the 46th Engineer Battalion, 225th Engineer Brigade, were recently given the chance to build their leadership skills by managing the construction of 30 ‘B-Huts’ in Iraq, May 4. B-huts are wooden structures that house 10 Soldiers per structure.

The 46th Engineers work from sun up to sun down expanding and improving Combat Outpost Carver, located in the southeastern outskirts of Baghdad, in preparation for troop movement from the cities by their June 30 deadline.

“[Soldiers] are moving out of the cities and turning over the inner establishments that we have over to the Iraqis because we are at that point here in this war,” said Calvin, La. native, Sgt. 1st Class Haden Hobbs, 225th Eng. Brigade liaison at COP Carver.

During this time of transition, engineers must lead the fight to ensure that the outskirt bases have the facilities to house and feed the newly arrived Soldiers at places such as COP Carver. The building of the B-huts is the first step in this process.

“We are building better lives for the troops. The Soldiers out here on this COP are living in tents and we are building a hard structure for them to live in with [air conditioning] and plenty of outlets to plug their computers into,” said Spc. Chance Bailey, a carpenter with the 46th Eng. Bn. from Kilgore, Texas.

And the leadership of the 46th feels no one is more capable of making sure this mission is accomplished than the Army’s future noncommissioned officers like Spc. Bailey.

“Our Soldiers have consistently excelled and worked above their pay grade throughout this deployment. The senior specialists have been asking for the opportunity to take responsibility for a building,” said platoon leader 1st Lt. Virginia Brickner from Van Wert, Ohio.

“This project provided the perfect opportunity. The specialists are each in charge of their own work crews and pace of construction. If an issue or obstacle arises they have to work through it on their own,” she continued.

Given a crew of their fellow Soldiers, and Soldiers from the 1st of the 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division, who hold ranks below and above

their own, does cause some adjustments to be made as seen by some of the senior non-commissioned officers.

“The first few days were a little interesting because he wanted to stand at parade rest and give me direction, but now I am nothing more than a worker bee to him,” Hobbs said with a smile about working for Bailey. “I am learning a lot from him and the Soldiers out here.”

The ‘specialist in the lead’ project will continue for the next two months. It is enough time to meet the deadline for constructing a dining facility extension, food prep area and more living quarters.

“Our hope is that this experience helps them to continue to develop both their leadership and construction skills, making them stronger future noncommissioned officers,” said Brickner. ✂



Photo by Scott Flenner, 225th Eng. Bde., MND-B

**Spc. Chance Bailey from Russellville, Ark., a member of the 46th Engineer Battalion, 225th Eng. Brigade, nails together a floor system frame to prepare it for sheathing. The 46th Eng. Bn. is building 30 B-Huts, a dining facility extension and a food preparation area at Combat Outpost Carver, located in the southeastern outskirts of Baghdad, May 4. The project is being completed with future noncommissioned officers like Bailey in the lead to develop both their leadership and construction skills.**

**(Right) Spc. Miles McFarland from Portland, Ore., a member of the 46th Engineer Battalion, 225th Eng. Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, measures the opening for an environmental control unit before he cuts plywood sheathing for the wall section. The 46th Eng. Bn. is building 30 B-Huts, a dining facility extension and a food preparation area at Combat Outpost Carver, located in the southeastern outskirts of Baghdad, May 4. This project is being led by future Army leaders like McFarland to test their knowledge and give them experience leading troops in combat operations.**



Photo by Scott Flenner, 225th Eng. Bde., MND-B

**A member of the 46th Engineer Battalion, 225th Eng. Brigade, Spc. Todd Buckmeier from Wasilla, Alaska, moves purlins into place before he secures them to the B-Hut truss system May 4. Buckmeier along with his fellow future noncommissioned officer specialists are in the lead in the building of 30 B-Huts, a dining facility extension and food prep area at Combat Outpost Carver, located in the southeastern outskirts of Baghdad.**



Photo by Scott Flenner, 225th Eng. Bde., MND-B

## DAGGER SENIOR LEADERSHIP CONDUCTS VTC WITH KANSAS CADETS



**BAGHDAD** – From Fort Leavenworth, Kan., 15 cadets from the University of Kansas greet Dearborn, Mich. native, Col. Joseph Martin, commander, 2nd Heavy “Dagger” Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, and Greenville, N.C. native, Command Sgt. Maj. Donald Battle, senior enlisted advisor, 2nd HBCT, 1st Inf. Div., MND-B during a video teleconference. The Army’s future officers, some who will be commissioned in the next few months, asked the Dagger leaders questions about the brigade’s mission of serving the people of northwest Baghdad.



**Col. Joseph Martin (right), a native of Dearborn, Mich., commander, 2nd Heavy “Dagger” Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, speaks to cadets in the University of Kansas Reserve Officers’ Training Program at Fort Leavenworth, Kan. during a video teleconference at Camp Liberty May 8. Martin answered many questions the future officers asked about the challenges of being a deployed brigade commander. (U.S. Army photos by Sgt. Dustin Roberts, 2nd HBCT PAO, 1st Inf. Div., MND-B)**

# Paratroopers, IA hang mortar rounds

## Three-day training event showcases combat skills

*Photos by SPC Josh Lowery, 982nd Combat Camera Company*



**BAGHDAD** – Sgt. Ryan Crawford (right) and Sgt. 1st Class Milton Terrell, both with 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, prepare to fire a mortar round May 8 on the live fire range at Joint Security Station Loyalty. The Paratroopers, along with their Iraqi Army partners, held a three day mortar training event on the eastern edge of Baghdad.



**Iraqi Army** soldiers assigned to 35th Iraqi Army Brigade, 9th Iraqi Army Division, prepare to fire a mortar round on May 8, at Joint Security Station Loyalty. IA troops partnered with U.S. Paratroopers from 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division for the training live fire.



**Iraqi Army** soldiers assigned to 35th Iraqi Army Brigade, 9th Iraqi Army Division, "hang" a mortar round, May 8, during a training event at Joint Security Station Loyalty on the eastern edge of Baghdad. The soldiers along with Paratroopers from 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, Multi-National Division-Baghdad held mortar live fire training over the course of three days.

**(Right)** Iraqi Army soldiers assigned to 35th Iraqi Army Brigade, 9th Iraqi Army Division, duck down as a fiery blast comes from the mortar tube during a live fire exercise May 8. During the three day training event, IA Soldiers demonstrated their combat skills along with their U.S. Paratrooper counterparts from 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division.



# Funding a brighter

**BAGHDAD** - A few months ago there were desks caked with dust piled in a corner, no fans or air conditioning, no books—filthy conditions and broken windows in a dilapidated building that was supposed to be al-Irshad primary school in Bata here.

But according to Pfc. Nickolas Klingel, a cavalry scout from Kresgville, Pa., assigned to 2nd Squadron, 104th Cavalry Regiment, 56th "Independence" Stryker Brigade Combat Team, during their 90-day micro grant assessment May 9, this school has transformed into a safe-haven for Iraqi children to come and learn.

Because of the micro-grant program, this school, along with local businesses, now has proper facilities to help improve security and resurrect the Iraqi economy.

At the al-Irshad primary school, the children's future is brighter and the parents notice.

"It's a big improvement when you talk to the adults who have aspirations for their children to become better and bring home more money with their education," said Klingel. "I see the kids getting smarter and learning because the parents know it's a safe place to send their kids."

Independence troops conduct frequent patrols through Falahat to continually assess the progress of businesses that received the \$2,000 grants to see if they are using the money properly. From the 30-day assessment to the 90-day assessment, Staff Sgt. Brian O'Donnell, a senior cavalry scout from Fannettsburg, Pa. said that about 60 percent of the 20 businesses that were given micro grants in their area have been us-

ing them successfully.

"I think they want to show improvement and they don't want to let us down," added 1st Lt. Reed Preece, a troop platoon leader. "For those who took the project seriously and spent the money for their businesses, it was successful."

Preece added that the locals appreciate the Soldiers and are happy with the support the Coalition forces provide by giving them an opportunity they might not otherwise have

"All my products are very good," said micro grant recipient and store owner Arkam Hatim. "I try to help out the community because a lot of guys who didn't have a job, now have a job. There's also less al-Qaeda because of the many businesses."

By employing more and more Iraqis through the micro grant program and constantly patrolling the area where the businesses are located, neighborhoods are secure, added Preece.

"I think it does improve security," said O'Donnell. "They look at Americans as friends instead of just people that invaded their country. You can definitely tell it's helping the community." 



56th  
SBCT



Staff Sgt. Brian O'Donnell, a Fannettsburg, Pa., native and senior cavalry scout assigned to C Troop, 2nd Squadron, 104th Cavalry Regiment, 56th "Independence" Stryker Brigade Combat Team, walks in Falahat, here May 9, as his Stryker vehicle provides extra security down one of the streets where business owners were given micro grants.

“It's a big improvement when you talk to the adults who have aspirations for their children to become better and bring home more money with their education.”

-- Pfc. Nickolas Klingel, 2nd Sqdn., 104th Cav. Regt., 56th SBCT

# through



Sgt. Eric Varner, a cavalry scout team leader from Chambersburg, Pa., assigned to C Troop, 2nd Squadron, 104th Cavalry Regiment, 56th "Independence" Stryker Brigade Combat Team, pulls security as an Iraqi child looks on during a micro grant assessment patrol in Falahat here, May 9.



# er future

Story and photos by:  
Staff Sgt. Mark Burrell,  
MND-B PAO

# gh micro-grants



Pfc. Kerry McCarty, a McConnellsburg, Pa., native and cavalry scout assigned to C Troop, 2nd Squadron, 104th Cavalry Regiment, 56th "Independence" Stryker Brigade Combat Team, pulls security during a 90-day micro grant assessment patrol as the sun sets in Falahat here, May 9.



First Lt. Reed Preece, a native of Gettysburg, Pa. and a platoon leader assigned to C Troop, 2nd Squadron, 104th Cavalry Regiment, 56th "Independence" Stryker Brigade Combat Team, talks with a business owner about the progress of his business during a 90-day micro grant assessment in Falahat here, May 9.

First Lt. Reed Preece, a native of Gettysburg, Pa. and a platoon leader assigned to C Troop, 2nd Squadron, 104th Cavalry Regiment, 56th "Independence" Stryker Brigade Combat Team, talks with Mohad Faisal in Falahat here, May 9. "With the money the Americans have given us, we've bought new freezers," said Mohad. "I feel very good because I get to help out the local people with my shop."

# Hurriyah highlighted in market walkthrough

Story by Sgt. Dustin Roberts

2nd HBCT PAO, 1st Inf. Div., MND-B

**BAGHDAD** – In the past year, a neighborhood in northwest Baghdad has overcome sectarian violence and seen vast improvements in security, essential services and civil capacity.

The Iraqi media saw firsthand, May 11, that through partnership with the local government, Iraqi Security Forces and the 1st Combined Arms Battalion “Vanguard,” 18th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, citizens of the Hurriyah neighborhood of northwest Baghdad are witnessing an improvement in their community.

In a walk-through of a busy market street, various Iraqi television stations met with civic, tribal and security leaders, as well as 2nd HBCT leaders, to see a cleaner environment and thriving shops.

“We’re trying to show the people of Hurriyah, the people who live outside of Hurriyah and throughout Baghdad, the security, civic and essential service improvements in Hurriyah,” said Capt. Nathan Williams, a native of Raleigh, N.C., commander, Company A, 1st Bn., 18th Inf. Regt. “There is a lot of misconceptions out there that security is bad and the area hasn’t been prospering recently.”

From 2003-2006, when the security situation was compromised by al-Qaeda in Iraq and other special group criminals, many Iraqis moved away from Hurriyah and have not had the opportunity to see that the neighborhood has undergone a continuing makeover.

“We’re trying to spread the word that things have improved so people can come back to Hurriyah,” said Williams. “This is a great opportunity to get the word out to the public.”

Because the word came from the neighborhood’s leaders and the local media, it is likely the people of Iraq will find Hurriyah’s improvements more credible.

“Just like in our country, the message doesn’t always get out. It has some sort of shaded lens on it if it comes from us,” said Lt Col. John Vermeesch, a native of Roscommon, Mich., commander of the “Vanguard” Battalion. “If it comes from their own people then it’s more



Photo by Sgt. Dustin Roberts, 2nd HBCT PAO, 1st Inf. Div., MND-B

**Col. Joseph Martin, commander, 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, hands out pencils to Iraqi children in the Hurriyah neighborhood of northwest Baghdad May 11.**

believable and genuine.”

Vermeesch said Hurriyah has turned around because the partnership between the Iraqi and U.S. Soldiers means more than manning checkpoints.

“The 1st Battalion, 22nd Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army is an incredibly effective and efficient unit and they have done great things in partnership with Company A,” he said. “They conduct continuous combined area reconnaissance, combined raids against known targets and they patrol the streets together every day.”

Williams added that the population of Hurriyah also sees street sweepers cleaning up trash and much of the sewage from the past has been removed.

The Vanguard Battalion works with the beladiyah, or the branch of government which deals with public works, to improve essential services.

“Essential services are good, but they need to get better; specifically sewage in [one of the areas],” said Vermeesch. “That is something we are working with the beladiyah to try and improve.”

When the video camera turned off and the interviews were over, Vermeesch said the Iraqi people said the citizens of Baghdad will have a better idea of the situation in Hurriyah.

“Today’s event met our intent and I believe that the right message got out to the people of Iraq that Hurriyah is a safe and stable city,” he said. “As we’ve known from the beginning, with regard to sectarian violence, so goes Hurriyah, so goes the rest of Baghdad and I think the right message got out to Baghdad.” ✂



Photo by Sgt. Dustin Roberts, 2nd HBCT PAO, 1st Inf. Div., MND-B

**Members of the Iraqi Army and Soldiers serving with the 1st Combined Arms Battalion, 18th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, walk a busy market street with civic, tribal and security leaders of northwest Baghdad and members of the Iraqi media in northwest Baghdad’s Hurriyah neighborhood May 11.**



Photo by Sgt. Dustin Roberts, 2nd HBCT PAO, 1st Inf. Div., MND-B

**Sheik Maqمود al-Falahi (right), a tribal leader in northwest Baghdad, speaks to attendees of the “Hurriyah Walkthrough” ceremony in the Kadamiyah district of northwest Baghdad May 11. After the ceremony civic leaders and members of the Iraqi media walked through a thriving market street in Hurriyah in order to see security and economic gains in the neighborhood.**

# First Cavalry troops mount up to patrol Sadr City

Story by Staff Sgt. Peter Ford

MND-B PAO

**BAGHDAD** –With the implementation of a Security Agreement between Coalition forces and the Government of Iraq in January, CF began their plans to move out of Iraq’s cities. However before this happens, CF troops will continue their work patrolling the streets to assist with security and lessen threats from improvised explosive devices and terrorists.

In an effort to quell the potential violence of IEDs and terrorist threats, Soldiers of Company E, 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment of the 1st Cavalry Division, Multi-National Division-Baghdad mount their vehicles on patrols through Sadr City.

“Every day Co. E Soldiers put their lives at risk patrolling the streets looking for IEDs in an effort to keep harm away from the innocent people of Iraq,” said 1st Lt. Pavlo Valerin, a native of Los Angeles, who is a platoon leader in Co. E. “We mostly conduct mounted patrols but we are not afraid to dismount.”

The dismounted patrol is a good way to build relationships with the citizens of the local community. However, it is much more difficult to build relationships during mounted patrols because Soldiers are mostly in vehicles trying to find IEDs, Valerin explained.

“Finding IEDs during our route clearing missions before they can be detonated is crucial to saving the lives of the local Iraqi citizens and CF who travel along the dangerous routes,” he added.

The 1st Cav. Div. Soldiers that conduct route clearance missions slowly ride through the streets in vehicles equipped to investigate possible IEDs, according to Valerin.

“The job is tedious and we don’t mind doing it because we know that our job could make the difference of a smile on a child’s face or tears flowing from a child’s eyes,” said Staff Sgt. Sergio Lopez, a combat engineer assigned to Co. E. “It makes me feel good to see children wave and smile at us as we drive down the streets,” said the Houston native.

According to Valerin, 98 percent of the people in Sadr City are good, hard working people; it is that two percent that tries to disturb the peace in the commu-

nity.

Because of the small percentage of people that are trying to disrupt the peace that has been established by the Iraqi Security Forces and CF, 1st Cavalry Soldiers are once again conducting vigorous mounted patrols in Sadr City. With stepping up their mounted patrols, the Soldiers here continue keeping the streets safe for the Iraqi people.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Peter Ford, MND-B PAO

**First Lt. Pavlo Valerin, a native of Los Angeles who is a platoon leader in Company E, 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, smiles as children from Sadr City grab items he places on the ground for them May 10. “I saw a poor community and wanted to do more so I coordinated with local churches back home; they send items and I give the items to the kids every time I get a box full of goodies,” said Valerin.**



Photo by Staff Sgt. Peter Ford, MND-B PAO

**Houston native, Staff Sgt. Sergio Lopez, a combat engineer, assigned to Company E, 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, inspects a mechanical arm on his Mine-Resisted Ambush-Protected vehicle, the Buffalo, May 10, before going on a mission.**



Photo by Staff Sgt. Peter Ford, MND-B PAO

**First Lt. Pavlo Valerin, a native of Los Angeles who is a platoon leader in Company E, 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, conducts a convoy briefing before the Soldiers of Co. E mount up to patrol the streets of Sadr City, May 10.**

**GOT TREAD?**

- ✓ Never use Radial tires on Bias rims. Eight bolt rims are to be used with Bias tires only. Twelve bolt rims can be used with either Bias or Radial Tires.
- ✓ When using a Bias tire on a Radial rim, use a Bias Runflat as listed in the TACOM MAM #07-010.
- ✓ When changing from Radial to Bias tires, all four tires and run flats must be changed at the same time.
- ✓ Do not mix Radial and Bias tires on the same vehicle.
- ✓ Replace tires when they reach their wear limit.
- ✓ Use only approved bias or radial tires. See TACOM MAM #05-021.

ARMY STRONG. <https://cra.army.mil> **OWN THE EDGE** Leading on the Edge

**THE BATTLE WISE SOLDIER PRACTICES OPSEC HOW ABOUT YOU?**

## NEWS

### Suspected criminal in Mansour

Multi-National Division –Baghdad PAO

BAGHDAD – Iraqi Security Forces and Multi-National Division—Baghdad Soldiers detained a suspected criminal on a warrant May 7 in northwest Baghdad's Mansour district.

At approximately 2 a.m., Iraqi Police Officers from the Jamiyah Police Station and Troopers from the 5th Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division arrested an individual suspected in the downing of a Coalition forces helicopter in 2007 and supporting al-Qaeda in Iraq activities in Baghdad.

The IP officers and MND-B Soldiers escorted the individual to a secure location for holding and further questioning.

### MND-B Soldiers receive tip, discover explosive in Mansour

2nd BCT PAO, 1st Armd. Div., MND-B

BAGHDAD – After receiving a tip from a concerned Iraqi citizen about a possible improvised explosive device, Multi-National Division—Baghdad Soldiers discovered an IED in the Mansour district of northwest Baghdad, May 11.

Troopers from the 5th Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment discovered the IED in an intersection at approximately 9:25 p.m.

A Coalition explosive ordinance disposal team responded to the site and dismantled the device. The device safely transported to a nearby Coalition base to be further examined by an EOD team.

### Weapons cache discovered in Adhamiyah

1BCT, 1CD PAO

BAGHDAD – On May 7, Iraqi Security Forces and Coalition Forces discovered a weapons cache in the Adhamiyah District of northern Baghdad.

At approximately 7:30 a.m. Soldiers from the 1st Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, partnered with 3rd Battalion, 4th Brigade, 1st National Police Division discovered 18 82 mm mortars, eight 60 mm mortars, two mortar tubes with base plates, and 16 fuses while conducting operations in the Sha'ab community of Adhamiyah. A Coalition Forces explosive ordinance disposal team was dispatched to safely identify and destroyed the weapons.

“The National Police and troopers from the “Ironhorse” Brigade are constantly working around the clock to take weapons off of the streets,” said Maj. Brian Carlin. “Our ISF partners have taken the lead and we will continue to assist them in every way possible.”



# Steel Knights, SOI patrol Mutanabi neighborhood

Story by Sgt. Jon Soles

MND-B PAO

BAGHDAD –The Soldiers of Battery A, 1st Battalion, 7th Artillery Regiment, 2nd Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, are trained to put artillery rounds downrange, but are instead putting boots on the ground in Baghdad to strengthen the security gains made in partnership with local Iraqi forces.

The Steel Knight Soldiers conducted a combined forces reconnaissance patrol with local Sons of Iraq members in the Mutanabi neighborhood of Baghdad here May 7, knocking on doors and greeting local Iraqis in hopes of gleaning information about security concerns and possible enemy activity in the area.

As the Steel Knights entered the muhalla, or neighborhood, they were greeted warmly by local Sons of Iraq leader, Gen. Jassim Ibrahim Abdul Razak, who invited the Soldiers into his home for hot tea and cookies. Gen. Jassim praised the devotion and professionalism of the American Soldiers.

“They all feel safe and comfortable when they see us in the road. They feel there is a connection between them and the American forces,” Gen. Jassim said through an interpreter.

1st Lt. Christopher L. Miles, a platoon leader for A Battery, asked Gen. Jassim about local security needs and took down notes. Contact with both Iraqi Army and SOI leaders is a part of every mission now, he said. Local Iraqis are encouraged to contact the local Iraqi Army or SOI when they have information about threats to security or potential enemies, which could be a stranger no one has seen before in the area.



Photo by Sgt. Jon Soles, MND-B PAO

**1st Lt. Christopher Miles of Midland, Texas, a platoon leader with 1st Battalion, 7th Artillery Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, hands out a tip card to an Iraqi man during a combined arms patrol in the Mutanabi neighborhood of Baghdad May 7.**

“A lot of what we try to do is empower our counterparts,” said Miles, of Midland, Texas. “What it comes down to is we have to empower the people, that they can make a difference.”

After the meeting, Gen. Jassim and the Steel Knights walked the tree-lined streets, shaking hands and knocking on doors. Most Iraqis in the neighborhood already know the Soldiers, and greeted them warmly. Two Iraqi women insisted on bringing out plates of food for the Soldiers, who shared family photos with Iraqi families.

An ice cream vendor and two young girls handed out ice cream bars to the Soldiers. It hasn't always been this way, said Spc. Christopher Santos of Battery A, 1st Battalion, 7th Artillery Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division.

“A year ago, you would have never seen kids out in the streets,” said Santos of Beckley, W. Va. “These days, a lot of kids will follow us, you will see them singing and clapping and following us,”

“Our mission from the time we dismounted is a combined area recon, a meet and greet, a knock and talk to interact with the local populace,” Miles said. “It's a show of force to let everybody know we are still around.”

The lieutenant keeps a pocket full of tip cards – cards printed with phone numbers to local Iraqi authorities. The purpose of the cards is to let local citizens know they have a hotline to call if they have security concerns or see someone suspicious in the neighborhood.

“Tip cards have been passed out for a while,” Miles said. “This is something kind of new to the area and we have started to get some tips,” he added.

The tip cards have already proved their usefulness, Miles said. He highlighted a recent example of how a local citizen called to let the Soldiers know about a clandestine route into the neighborhood that bypassed security checkpoints.

“That tip helped us identify that problem and we blocked it off,” he said.

Though the Steel Knights are trained to rain down heavy metal on enemies in the distance, they were performing what was essentially an infantryman's job. Miles exuded pride in his Soldiers, and praised their adaptability.

“I think there is something to be said for these guys,” he said. “These guys are doing something different than they were trained to do and they are doing it well.”

For the Steel Knights, a day of getting hot and sweaty on the streets of Mutanabi may not have been in their original job description, but it was still a mission accomplished with skill and professionalism. ✂



Photo by Sgt. Jon Soles, MND-B PAO

**Spc. Christopher Santos of Beckley, W. Va., an artilleryman with 1st Battalion, 7th Artillery Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, peers inside a parked vehicle for any illegal items on a street in the Mutanabi neighborhood of Baghdad, during a combined arms patrol May 7.**

## IPs, MPs discuss future security expectations

Story by Maj. Jeff Parker

8th MP Bde. PAO, MND-B

**BAGHDAD** – Across Iraq, Coalition forces and Iraqi Security Forces are aggressively changing their missions to implement the new security agreement guidelines.

With this as their focus, the senior leaders of the Karkh Patrol Directorate Iraqi Police and Police Transition Team partners of the 93rd Military Police “War Eagle” Battalion, 8th MP “Watchdog” Brigade, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, conducted face-to-face talks, May 5, to discuss the future of the Iraqi Police and their security responsibilities to their communities, their government, and the future of their country.

“I hesitate to talk about the future before it’s here, but I’m very optimistic,” said Col. Mu’ayid, Karkh Patrol Directorate commander.

Mu’ayid supervises more than 200 officers and over 7,500 Iraq Police, throughout 15 Iraqi Police stations on the western side of the Tigris River in Baghdad.

This was the second meeting for many of the Iraqi Police and their partners of the “War Eagle” Battalion, based out of Fort Bliss, Texas. The purpose of the meetings, according to Lt. Col Thomas Byrd, commander, 93rd MP Bn., 8th MP Bde., MND – B, and a native of Marion, Ohio, is to further discuss issues and concerns that we all may need to address.

Byrd and his PTT teams are slated to work with local Iraqi Police officials of the traffic and patrol sectors, as well as working with the Iraqi National Police in an effort to continue their partnership to ensure a safe and secure Iraq. After each department is engaged by the battalion over the next month, an all-inclusive conference will be scheduled.

“Normally, I’m working with these officers on the streets of Baghdad,” said 1st Lt. Brian Celatka, the Karkh Patrol Directorate PTT officer-in-charge. “But today, it’s nice to share information, discuss policing and build upon already strong relationships.”

**Marion, Ohio native, Lt. Col. Thomas Byrd, 93rd Military Police Battalion commander, 8th MP Brigade, Multi-National Division-Baghdad, speaks with the commanders of the Iraqi Police in the Karkh Local Directorate during a round-table discussion May 5 here.**



Photo by Maj. Jeff Parker, 8th MP Bde. PAO, MND-B

**Capt. Violeta Sifuentes (center), commander, 591st Military Police Company, 93rd MP Battalion, 8th MP Brigade, Multi-National Division – Baghdad and a native of Kenisaw, Ga., discuss police security issues with Maj. Hatim (left), commander, Karkh Patrol Directorate, Taji, during a round-table discussion May 5 here.**



Photo by Maj. Jeff Parker, 8th MP Bde. PAO, MND-B

## NEWS

### ISF, MND-B troops discover weapons cache in Muhalla

1st BCT PAO, 1st Cav. Div., MND-B

**BAGHDAD** – Iraqi Security Forces and Coalition forces discovered a weapons cache in the Muhalla District of northern Baghdad May 16.

At approximately 2 p.m., Soldiers from the 1st Squadron, 5th Cavalry Regiment, attached to the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, partnered with Ameriyah Iraqi Police, discovered two mines, six small rockets, one 82mm mortar tube, two rusted rocket propelled grenade rounds, two warheads and several hundred cases of 7.62 ammunition.

The cache was safely secured by an explosive ordnance disposal team.

### ISF, MND-B Soldiers detain suspected criminal in Mansour district

Multi-National Division –Baghdad PAO

**BAGHDAD** – Iraqi Security Forces and Multi-National Division—Baghdad Soldiers conducting a joint operation detained a suspected criminal on a warrant May 17 in northwest Baghdad’s Mansour district.

At approximately 4:30 p.m., Iraqi Soldiers from the 4th Battalion, 22nd Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division and troopers from the 5th Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division arrested an individual suspected of filming RKG-3 attacks in the Ghazaliyah neighborhood.

The ISF and MND-B Soldiers escorted the individual to a secure location for holding and further questioning.

### ISF, MND-B Soldiers discover explosives in Mansour

2nd HBCT PAO, 1st Inf. Div., MND-B

**BAGHDAD** – While conducting a joint mounted patrol, Iraqi and Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers discovered 29 various sized mortar rounds in the Mansour district of northwest Baghdad May 18.

At approximately 9:50 a.m., Iraqi Soldiers from the 3rd Battalion, 54th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division and troopers from the 5th Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, MND-B, were flagged down by another Iraqi unit and led to a cache site.

The cache contained 13 57mm mortars, 10 80mm mortars, two 82mm mortars and one 120mm mortar.

An Iraqi explosive ordnance disposal team was called to the site and moved the weapons to a secure location for further investigation.



**During a joint mounted patrol Iraqi and Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers discovered 29 various sized mortar rounds in the Mansour district of northwest Baghdad May 18.**

**PROTECT THE SOLDIER PROTECTING YOU**

**OPSEC it's a 24-hour mission**

# Ironhorse Soldiers celebrate National Day of Prayer on War Eagle

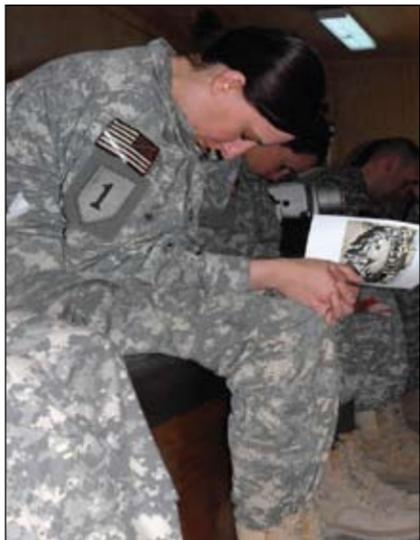
Photos by Sgt. Shejal Pulivarti, 1st BCT PAO, 1st Cav. Div., MND-B



**BAGHDAD** - Soldiers from the 1st "Ironhorse" Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division listen to a speaker as he shares his experiences about prayer during the National Day of Prayer Celebration on Joint Security Station War Eagle, north of Baghdad, May 7. The Ironhorse Brigade congregated together and prayed in unison for all military personnel and their loved ones.



"The Never-Ending Band" lead a song for the congregation, made up of military service members who gathered together to celebrate and participate in the National Day of Prayer on Joint Security Station War Eagle, north of Baghdad, May 7. Soldiers from the 1st "Ironhorse" Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division came together and prayed collectively for all service members and their loved ones.



Langrage, Ga. native Sgt. 1st Class Natalie Lewis, operations noncommissioned officer for the 1st "Ironhorse" Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division reverently bows her head during the National Day of Prayer Celebration on Joint Security Station War Eagle, north of Baghdad, May 7. The Ironhorse Brigade congregated together and prayed in unison for all military personnel and their loved ones.

Compton, Calif. native Command Sgt. Maj. James Norman, senior noncommissioned officer for the 1st "Ironhorse" Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division speaks about the importance of prayer and the immense impact it can have during the National Day of Prayer Celebration on Joint Security Station War Eagle, north of Baghdad, May 7. The Ironhorse Brigade prayed for the service members in uniform around the world and the current state of their various locations.



## WARRIOR

# 'Paxton Rangers' refurbish Abu Ghraib Fire Station

Story by Sgt. Philip Schratwieser

2nd Bn., 112th Inf. Regt., 2nd HBCT, 1st Inf. Div., MND-B

**BAGHDAD** - The Baghdad district of Abu Ghraib continues to improve in civil capacity with the help of the local government and Multi-National Division - Baghdad Soldiers.

Over the past year dozens of projects, to include a new market, electric power lines, water purification systems, trash collection, and school renovations designed to improve the lives of Abu Ghraib's citizens were begun and lately have been coming to completion.

The government leaders of Abu Ghraib and leaders serving with the 2nd Battalion, 112th Infantry Regiment "Paxton Rangers," 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, MND-B conducted a public ceremony for the opening of the Abu Ghraib Civil Defense Directorate and Fire Station May 7 inside the CDD compound.

The project cost over \$219 thousand

for the building structure and about \$219 thousand for equipment.

Many members of the local government participated in the ceremony, including the District Chairman Kamel Abbas and the Abu Ghraib Mayor Shakir Fiza. They were joined by local civic leaders, representatives from the local Sheik's Council and were honored by the appear-

*"This is clearly a win for the entire community. It is a physical example of the cooperation between the Iraqi government and the Coalition forces,"*

*-- Lt. Col. Samuel Hayes III, commander, "Paxton Rangers."*

ance of representatives from the Government of Iraq in Baghdad.

Hussain Al Timimi from the Supporting Council, a group of influential Sheiks recognized by Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, and General Waheed Al-Sultan

from the Baghdad Civil Defense Directorate came to show their support for the recent improvements to the area.

"This project is a gift from the Coalition forces and the Government of the United States to the great, great people of the Abu Ghraib Qada," said Col. Joseph Martin, commander, 2nd HBCT, who hails from Dearborn, Mich.

"It is my honor to be a part of this building and many other projects that are ongoing as a result of the increased and improved security here."

The guests were given a tour of the facilities, a display of some of the equipment purchased, and a traditional Iraqi lunch.

"This is clearly a win for the entire community. It is a physical example of the cooperation between the Iraqi government and the Coalition forces," said Central, Pa. native Lt. Col. Samuel Hayes III, commander, "Paxton Rangers." "The new facility and equipment is an enduring legacy of solid partnership focused on providing safety and security for all of the citizens in Abu Ghraib." ✂



Photo by Sgt Philip Schratwieser, 2nd Bn., 112th Inf. Regt., 2nd HBCT, 1st Inf. Div., MND-B

**Provincial Council representative Taha Dif Aae cuts the ceremonial ribbon at the new Abu Ghraib Civil Defense Directorate in Abu Ghraib May 7. The ceremony was attended by many local government and civic leaders as well as officials from the Government of Iraq in Baghdad.**

# 'Independence' IRR Soldiers answer call

Story and photos by Staff Sgt. Mark Burrell

MND-B PAO

**BAGHDAD**—After spending a year in Iraq with the 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division from 2003 to 2004, Specialists Wayne Mason and Ronnie Whitehurst finished up their time on active duty as infantrymen and transitioned to the Individual Ready Reserve and civilian life.

Everything was going fine. They each had families to take care of and never thought they'd see each other again. Until one day a few years into their IRR commitment when they each received FedEx packages.

"I was scared for real, to be honest," said Mason, a native of Columbus, Ohio. "I didn't want to come back to Iraq. I could've got out of reporting, but I have the mentality of a Soldier. I love this country."

"At first, I was debating on what would happen if I didn't show up," admitted a soft-spoken Whitehurst of Pensacola, Fla. "Cause I really didn't know the consequences."

Both Soldiers swallowed hard and left their families for Iraq again. This time as members of C Troop, 2nd Squadron, 104th Cavalry Regiment, 56th "Independence" Stryker Brigade Combat Team.

"Me being a Soldier in the United States Army is something greater than myself," added Mason. "The war's happened and we're here to do a job and help set up this government."

According to Whitehurst, the Soldiers were luckily assigned to the same platoon and gather strength from one another while performing counter-improvised explosive device missions and patrols from Joint Security Station Falahat in northern Baghdad.

"It's been pretty good and smooth," added Whitehurst. "We're getting more weapons off the streets and getting bad guys off the streets to make the neighborhood more calm and peaceful."

Along with cleaning up the streets in their Stryker vehicle, the two Soldiers use

their time in Iraq for another purpose.

"I believe I'm also here on a humanitarian mission," explained Mason, who has a two-year-old son. "My girlfriend sends me school supplies, candy, etc. to give to the kids."

"When I see kids out here, I know things are getting better," added Whitehurst. "They know we're here to help and I always try to give them some candy or throw something out because it reminds me of my kids back home."

Whitehurst, who has three sons, accepts his destiny and keeps focused on the mission so he can get back home and continue coaching his sons in T-ball.

Mason, on the other hand, has a renewed interest in the military and plans on making a career out of the Army.

"This is a once in a lifetime opportunity here right now," said Mason. "I was going to community college but still didn't have a career field and didn't know where I wanted to go. But I've always had the heart of a Soldier." He added, "You only get that 'Band of Brothers' camaraderie type stuff in the military."

"Being able to meet these new guys and bond with them has been good," said Whitehurst. "Basically, this is like a new family."

According to Mason, these Soldiers aren't related but their paths in life have been linked forever along with the rest of their brothers in their platoon.

"It's been a good experience and it's been worth my time," added Mason with a beaming smile before getting serious. "Your life can change in a blink of an eye; time is important to me."

These Soldier's thought their time in the military was over. As it so happens, they've embraced the challenges that they've been given in life and in the Army creating unforgettable relationships with their new brothers and their 'adopted' children in Iraq. ✂

**Spc. Wayne Mason, a native of Columbus, Ohio, and an infantryman assigned to 3rd Platoon, C Troop, 2nd Squadron, 104th Cavalry Regiment, 56th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, stands guard outside an Iraqi Army headquarters in northern Baghdad, May 8. Mason was called from the Individual Ready Reserve to Iraq for his second deployment.**



**Columbus, Ohio, native, Spc. Wayne Mason, an infantryman assigned to the 56th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, uses a metal detector to sweep for weapons and explosives on a farm in Hay al-Skri here, May 8. "I came here to do my job and help defeat terrorism," said Mason.**



**Spc. Ronnie Whitehurst, an infantryman from Pensacola, Fla., assigned to 56th Stryker Brigade Combat Team kicks away dirt while using a metal detector to find suspected weapons caches after a tip led his platoon to this area in Hay al-Skri here, May 8. "God sent me here for a reason or a purpose," said Whitehurst. "Maybe I'll find out later on when I look back on it."**



**After shaking hands and giving candy to Iraqi children, Spc. Ronnie Whitehurst, an infantryman from Pensacola, Fla., assigned to C Troop, 2nd Squadron, 104th Cavalry Regiment, walks back to his Stryker vehicle in the streets of northern Baghdad, May 8. Whitehurst was also called away from his three children from the IRR for his second tour in Iraq, but is reminded of home often.**

## Army Wounded Warrior Program marks 5 years of support to severely wounded Soldiers, their families

Story by Robert Moore

Army Wounded Warrior Program

WASHINGTON - Just over 4,000 severely wounded Soldiers from the Global War on Terrorism and their families rely on the long-term support of their own Advocate.

Someone who understands their needs, addresses their concerns, and supports their goals for as long as it takes. For the past five years, the Army Wounded Warrior Program (AW2) has been that one constant, providing personalized support through local AW2 advocates, as well as working to improve wounded warrior care and expand national services.

"Before AW2, we were forced to figure everything out on our own, with only the assistance of friends and family back home," said Rosie Babin, mother and caregiver.

Her son, Cpl. (Ret.) Alan Babin, a former combat medic, was severely wounded in March of 2003 during the first days of the war in Iraq. He was moving to provide aid to a fellow soldier when he was struck by enemy fire resulting in extensive and severe internal injuries. Since then, he has undergone more than 70 surgeries.

After the Army established AW2, Rosie Babin saw a dramatic difference. "I, literally, went from being highly stressed out one hour because of a \$70,000-plus invoice we received, to being totally at peace and feeling hope when the AW2 advocate took it over and had it handled. Our advocate is always here for us."

Upon injury, a Soldier is assigned an AW2 advocate and to a Warrior Transition Unit (WTU) to focus on healing. The advocate supports the WTU "triad of care" team consisting of a primary care physician, nurse case manager, and a military squad leader.

More than 120 AW2 advocates provide personalized support to Soldiers and Families across the country and beyond for as long as it takes, even post-medical retirement.

This support can take the form of connecting soldiers and Families with full benefits, educational opportunities, financial and career counseling, or assistance in continuing to serve in the Army.

"I am proud of the resources the Army has put behind caring for our wounded warriors. I want Soldiers and Families to know that the Army is committed to them and to the mission of warrior care. We take care of our own. For as long as it takes," said Gen. Peter Chiarelli, vice chief of staff of the Army.

To help honor AW2's five years of service, the program is launching an AW2 Affiliate Program for organizations to show their local support for wounded Soldiers and their Families.

For more information about the Army Wounded Warrior Program, visit [www.AW2.army.mil](http://www.AW2.army.mil) or call toll free 1-800-237-1336.

AW2 assists and advocates for the most severely wounded Soldiers by providing individualized support for as long as it takes, wherever they are located - regardless of their military status.

AW2 assists the unique population of Soldiers who have, or are expected to receive, an Army disability rating of 30-percent or greater in one or more specific categories or a combined rating of 50-percent or greater for conditions that are the result of combat or are combat related.

Typical injuries include post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, loss of limb, paralysis, burns, blindness and hearing loss. ✂

## Force Structure Actions at Fort Hood and other installations

News release

OCPA Media Relations

The Department of the Army announced today planned force structure changes that support the Army's transformation requirements.

By June 1, 2010, the Army will relocate the following units to Fort Hood, Texas:  
 First Army Division West Headquarters from Fort Carson, Colorado;  
 The 1-393rd and 2-393rd Infantry Training Support Battalions, and 3-393rd Field Artillery Training Support Battalion from Fort Chaffee, Arkansas;  
 The 1-337th Aviation Training Support Battalion from Fort Knox, Kentucky;  
 The 166th Aviation Brigade Headquarters and 2-291st Aviation Training Support Battalion from Fort Riley, Kansas;  
 The 479th Field Artillery Brigade Headquarters from Fort Sill, Oklahoma;  
 The 1-351st Aviation Training Support battalion from Fort Stewart, Georgia.

Because of the changing training environment, First Army initiated a comprehensive transformation to permanently reorganize and re-station its headquarters and trainers at the Mobilization Training Centers (MTCs) where they train and operate. Locating Soldiers and Families where they work will dramatically improve their quality of life.

First Army Division West's mission is to execute pre-mobilization training, readiness oversight, and post-mobilization operations in its geographical area of responsibility in accordance with the Army Force Generation model in order to provide trained and ready reserve component forces to the regional combatant commanders for the full spectrum of operations. ✂

## First Team troopers face future as Army phases out stop loss

Story by Robert Moore

Army Wounded Warrior Program

BAGHDAD - The Army announced in March that stop loss will end in August 2009 for the Army Reserve, September 2009 for the National Guard and January 2010 for the Active Component Army.

Stop Loss Special Pay is an extra \$500 per month for Soldiers whose service has been involuntarily extended beyond their contractual expiration of time and service (ETS) date. Retroactive payments for Stop Loss Special Pay have been implemented for Soldiers who were stop-lossed from Oct. 1, 2008 to Feb. 28, 2009. The retroactive payment was made on the May 1, 2009 Leave and Earnings Statement. Any Soldier who has not received their Stop-Loss Special Pay should contact their local retention office. There are currently 2,393 1st Cavalry Division Soldiers affected by stop loss, according to the division human resources office.

"Soldiers who have questions about it need to see us," said Sgt. Maj. Garrett Luplow, senior enlisted retention advisor for 1st Cav. Div.

In the past, stop loss curbed the impending loss of troops needed to meet mission requirements. Currently, the Army has already met its active duty reenlistment goal for fiscal year 2009, which was 55,000 Soldiers. Luplow said 57,902 Soldiers had already re-enlisted by April 30.

There are benefits for stop-lossed Soldiers.

"I think [Stop Loss Special Pay] is a good thing. People who get stop-lossed have to stay longer so I think it's only fair they get extra money," said Spc. Ervin Lee, of Columbiana, Ohio.

Lee, a cavalry scout assigned to D Troop, Division Special Troops Battalion, 1st Cav. Div., said his contractual ETS date is July 12, but he isn't going to re-enlist.

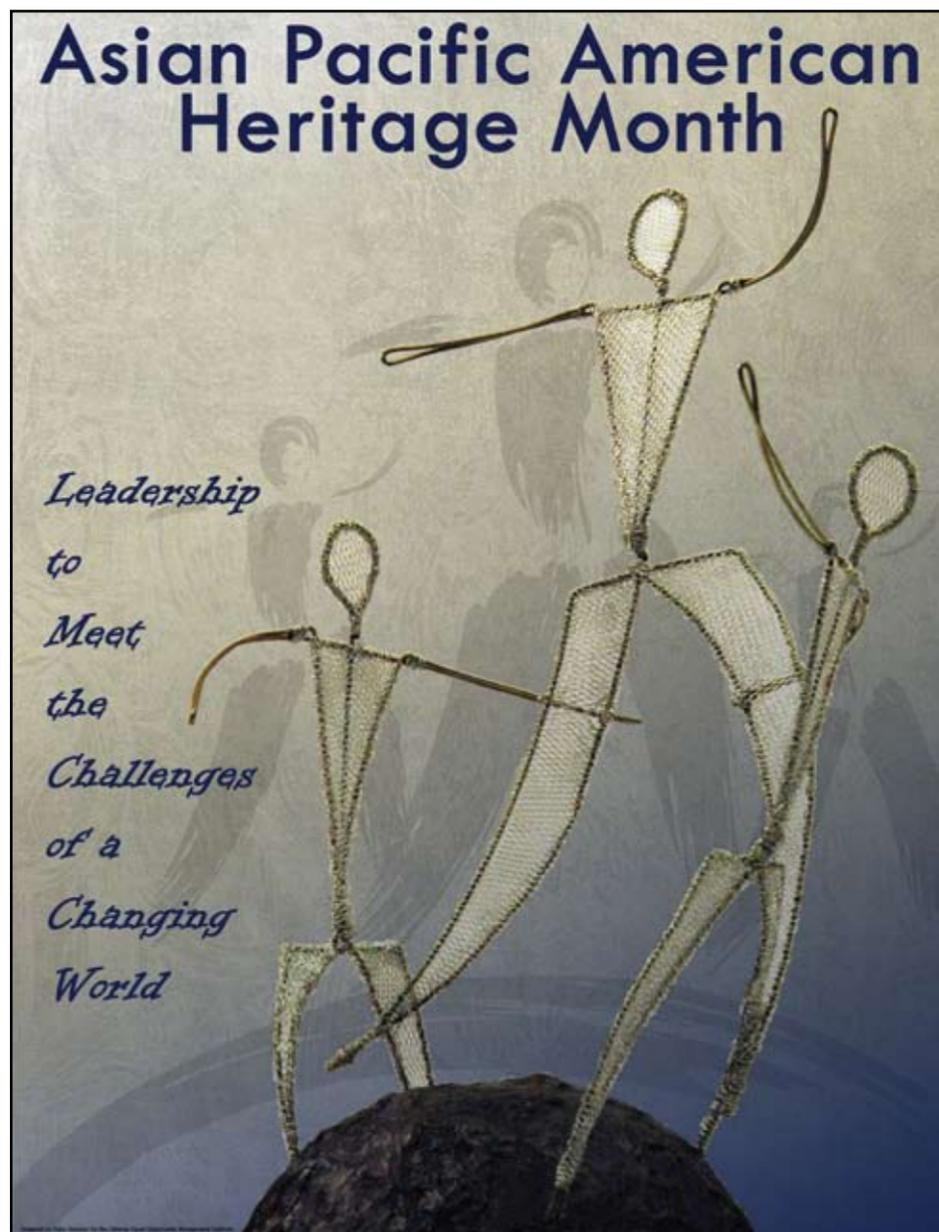
He said he will take advantage of Stop Loss Special Pay and use that extra money to help build a stable foundation for his future after the Army.

"I'm going to finish paying off my car," he said. "I just got married in August and I will probably put a down payment on our house."

Spc. John Flaherty of Tucson, Ariz., also assigned to D Troop, DSTB, 1st Cav. Div., said the Stop Loss Special Pay had nothing to do with his decision not to re-enlist. Flaherty said he plans to attend college, and possibly remain in military service in either the National Guard or Army Reserve.

Stop-loss Soldiers who want to reenlist should see their career counselor, but visit the retention office if they have questions about Stop Loss Special Pay.

"I would encourage Soldiers to get with their career counselor and get all the information they can, so they can make a wise decision on their future," Luplow said. ✂



# Cavalry Soldiers teach IA fiber optics

Story by Sgt. Jon Soles

MND-B PAO

**BAGHDAD** – Iraqi Security Forces are being taught more than just fighting skills by their Coalition force partners. 1st Cavalry Division Soldiers of Company C, Division Special Troops Battalion, are passing on their technical expertise of fiber optics cable technology to Iraqi Army leaders.

An Iraqi Army officer and a senior non-commissioned officer spent three days learning to install, service and maintain fiber optic cables for use in military communications systems. The hands-on training will, in turn, allow IA Soldiers to pass on knowledge of fiber optics technology to their Soldiers.

At the communications infrastructure building on Camp Liberty, the Iraqi Soldiers were in their second day of instruction May 13. Soldiers gathered around a small table with pliers, wire strippers and thin, hair-like strands of multi-colored wires. The wires were not wires at all, but tiny, glass fiber optic cables designed to carry data with light signals.

Spc. Jorge Lugo, assigned to C Co., DSTB, 1st Cav. Div., grabbed a thick black cable and used a pair of pliers to hack away the outer covering and tether, which protects the delicate fiber optic cables bundled inside.

Lugo, of San Juan, Puerto Rico, handed one end of the half-cut cable to Iraqi Sgt. 1st Class Saad Jafar Kareem and asked him to pull in the opposite direction. In what looked like the Thanksgiving tradition of yanking apart a turkey wishbone, Lugo and Kareem pulled the cable in opposite directions until the fiber optic cables snapped in half. The break was deliberate; intended to simulate what often happens when cables are damaged during installa-

*“We are basically cross-training pretty much our expertise, everything we know about fiber optic cables and making splices.”*

*– Spc. Eugene Collado, assigned to C Co., DSTB, 1st Cav. Div.*

tion, repair or during construction.

“We are basically cross-training pretty much our expertise, everything we know about fiber optic cables and making splices,” said Spc. Eugene Collado, assigned to C Co., DSTB, 1st Cav. Div.

Lugo used a fusion splicer to repair a broken fiber optic cable. The device uses heat to melt the glass cable, fusing the two pieces together seamlessly.

“The splicer takes both ends of cable and melts the inside of the cable, like replacing a joint,” Lugo said. “It makes it like a perfect joint, with no loss of glass.”

Kareem carefully inserted the two ends of a broken cable into the splicer and mended them back together. A display screen on the splicer allowed Kareem to see if the mend was successful. The screen showed that the mend was perfect, and the cable was restored as if it had never been broken.

“It is a scenario of, if a fiber optic cable was cut, instead of running a new cable, you can splice them,” Collado said.

A real repair job was also part of the training. Collado said Kareem and Iraqi 2nd Lt. Jassim Mohammed Walid, helped install a fiber optic line to the 1st Cavalry Division’s band hall on Camp Liberty.

“We are trying to cover every aspect of fiber optics,” Collado said.

Kareem said his training was thorough and was explained to him in simple terms by his American partners.

“We learn, so we can do the same,” Kareem said.

“Watching was an easy process.”

Sgt. Nekito Turner, cable section squad leader, as-

signed to C Co., DSTB, 1st Cav. Div., who oversaw the training of the IA Soldiers, said he was pleased with the classes.

“From what I’ve seen, they did a good job teaching and the IA did a good job learning,” said Turner, a Miami native. “Hopefully, he can go and teach his counterparts the same thing he is learning here.” ✂

**Iraqi Army Sgt. 1st Class Saad Jafar Kareem, from Headquarters, 6th Iraqi Army, uses a fusion splice machine, May 13, to splice a broken fiber optic cable. The machine uses heat to melt the cable, which is made of glass, together. “The splicer takes both ends of cable and melts the inside of the cable, like replacing a joint,” Lugo said. “It makes it like a perfect joint, with no loss of glass.”**



Photo by Sgt. Jon Soles, MND-B PAO



Photo by Sgt. Jon Soles, MND-B PAO

**Spc. Jorge Lugo (left) assigned to Company C, Division Special Troops Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division, of San Juan, Puerto Rico, begins the process of cutting a fiber optic cable, May 13, so he can let Iraqi Army Sgt. 1st Class Saad Jafar Kareem demonstrate re-joining the delicate glass cables using a fusion splicer to melt the tiny glass fibers together. Fusion splicing creates a seamless joint in a fiber optic cable, which eliminates the need to install an entire new cable. Lugo said Kareem, who is a trained electrician, is a quick learner.**



Photo by Sgt. Jon Soles, MND-B PAO

**In what looks like a game of tug-of-war, Spc. Jorge Lugo (left) assigned to Company C, Division Special Troops Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division, and Iraqi Army Sgt. 1st Class Saad Jafar Kareem, from Headquarters, 6th Iraqi Army Division, pull apart a fiber optic cable so Kareem can practice repairing broken cables May 13. Lugo, of San Juan, Puerto Rico, said Kareem was a fast learner and demonstrated proficiency with repairing fiber optic cables.**

# Just One of the Guys: 1-124th Cav women warriors stand guard in Iraq

Story by Staff Sgt. Mark Burrell  
MND-B PAO

**BAGHDAD** – Prior to their deployment to Iraq and on a hot, summer afternoon at Fort Stewart, Ga., Texas National Guard Soldiers from the 1st Squadron, 124th Cavalry Regiment, 56th Infantry Brigade Combat, 36th Infantry Division, donned heavy rucksacks, wore uncomfortable body armor and carried M-4 rifles for a grueling pre-mobilization road march.

“Most of the people fell out, but I finished it,” said Spc. Janice Parisi, an intelligence analyst assigned to Apache Troop,

*“My brother and step-brother taught me to be tough by beating me up all the time and picking on me and not letting me get away with stuff just ‘cause I’m a girl,”*

*– Spc. Tiffany Frenchwood, a logistical specialist assigned to Apache Troop*

1st Sqdn., 124th Cav. Regt. “Most of the people said they would have [fallen] out if a girl wasn’t in it ahead of them.”

Historically, cavalry units, much like infantry units, don’t have many women Soldiers, but the women warriors of Apache Troop have proven themselves worthy.

“I came from a support unit and they told us we were going to the cav and I was



Photo by Staff Sgt. Mark Burrell, MND-B PAO

**In a tower at an entry control point at Victory Base Complex here, May 14, Spc. Janice Parisi, an intelligence analyst assigned to Apache Troop, 1st Squadron, 124th Cavalry Regiment, keeps traffic flowing through her ECP by giving commands from a loud speaker. Parisi, from Fort Wayne, Ind., whose husband is deployed to Afghanistan with the Army, keeps VBC safe by constantly monitoring her lanes and checking people’s badges daily.**

a little unsure,” admitted Spc. Heather Ketter, a light-wheeled vehicle mechanic from Wylie, Texas, also assigned to Apache Troop. “But it’s been great so far!” Ketter was raised by her brothers and that mentally prepared her for working with cavalry Soldiers and the demands of manning a guard tower at Victory



Photo by Staff Sgt. Mark Burrell, MND-B PAO

**Spc. Tiffany Frenchwood, a logistical specialist assigned to Apache Troop, 1st Squadron, 124th Cavalry Regiment, is the first line of security at Victory Base Complex here as she checks ID cards at an entry control point, May 14. Frenchwood is one of a handful of women who are assigned to the Texas National Guard cavalry unit here. “We’ve been with these guys almost 10 months now and have gotten used to them,” said Frenchwood. According to Frenchwood, most of the people she deals with are very nice, but she can’t let her guard down.**

Base Complex here.

“[My brothers and I] got to get in our fights and hang around with their friends,” remarked a petite, blond-haired and smiling Ketter. “It helps a lot when you have to deal with the guys.”

“My brother and step-brother taught me to be tough by beating me up all the time and picking on me and not letting me get away with stuff just ‘cause I’m a girl,” added Spc. Tiffany French-

wood, a logistical specialist assigned to Apache Troop, as a vehicle pulls up to her checkpoint and an out-stretched arm hands her a yellow gardenia. After checking their IDs, Frenchwood smiles and waves them through the gate.

“I give people chances, but out here you can’t be so nice because people will take that kindness for a weakness,” said Frenchwood, from Texas City, Texas.

“They [people entering VBC] think they can bring me flowers and be nice, but it’s very serious out here and I got my battle buddies on VBC sleeping, so I gotta be tough... I can’t let people in without a badge.”

Though these Soldiers all have different military occupational specialties, they are all infantrymen first in this cavalry regiment and stand guard against insurgents trying to breach VBCs defenses.

“Out here, it’s like gender doesn’t matter anymore,” explained a rosy-cheeked Parisi from Fort Wayne, Ind., from behind a .50 cal machine gun. “There’s no air-conditioning and I have to wear body armor, but I feel like I have a purpose out here.”

“We need to make sure the right people get on base,” said Ketter. “[Local nationals] have jobs here and we need them, but we also have to make sure the wrong people don’t get on.”

Working daily for the past 10 months with the other cavalry Soldiers has been a positive experience for these Soldiers and they have earned each other’s respect, added Ketter.

“I can’t explain it,” recollected Ketter as sweat dripped down from beneath her camouflaged Kevlar helmet. “But you can pretty much say I’m one of the guys.” ✂



Photo by Staff Sgt. Mark Burrell, MND-B PAO

**Spc. Janice Parisi, an intelligence analyst assigned to Apache Troop, 1st Squadron, 124th Cavalry Regiment, uses binoculars from her guard tower at Victory Base Complex here to get a closer look at what’s happening at her entry control point, May 14.**

# JSS Loyalty expands base for Iraqi counterparts



By Staff Sgt. James Selesnick,  
982nd Combat Camera Co. (ABN)

**BAGHDAD** – Spc. William Thomason, of Roanoke, Va., assigned to the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, helps guide a concrete barrier into position during an expansion mission of the Iraqi controlled portion of the joint compound May 17 at Joint Security Station Loyalty, located in eastern Baghdad. The expansion of the base will allow more Iraqi Security Forces personnel to work out of the compound.



Spc. Calob Backes, of Hayden, Colo., assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, stands atop a concrete barrier preparing to hook up cables used to lift the barrier to a new position May 17 at Joint Security Station Loyalty, located in eastern Baghdad. U.S. Paratroopers are moving concrete barriers in order to expand the Iraqi portion of Joint Security Station Loyalty. The repositioning will allow more Iraqi Security Forces personnel to work out of the compound.



Paratroopers assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, guide a concrete barrier into position May 17 at Joint Security Station Loyalty, located in eastern Baghdad. Paratroopers are moving the concrete barriers in order to expand the Iraqi portion of the joint compound.

## CASTLE

### Soldier in Focus- Spc. Robert Barber

Story by 1st Lt. Janeene Yarber

46th ECB (H) PAO, 225th Eng. Bde., MND-B

**BAGHDAD** - It takes great skill to be a good mechanic. It takes patience, attention to detail, and the desire to continually increase knowledge to be a great mechanic.

Medford, Wis. native, Spc. Robert Barber, a mechanic for the 46th Engineer Combat Battalion (Heavy), 225th Eng. Brigade, always gets the job done right the first time. The mechanics in his section seek him out when they have questions - knowing he has the answers. His willingness to share his extensive knowledge of keeping equipment and vehicles mission-ready, knowledge which extends beyond his current rank, is the reason he was chosen for today's "Soldier in Focus."

**When did you join the Army and what did your family think about your decision?**

I joined July 10, 2006. I have been married five years. My wife and kids (Haylee, 4, and Naomi, 5) were very proud of me.

**How has your family shown their support for you while deployed in Iraq?**

My family has been very supportive. They send me [care] packages every two weeks.

**Did you get Girl Scout cookies? If so, what's your favorite?**

No, I'm not big on sweets. Every once in a while I'll have something, but mainly it's just rice cakes and rice chips.

**When did you get your start as a mechanic?**

I grew up on a farm and my parents didn't have a lot of money so, we had to fix our own farm equipment and cars. It's just something I've been doing my whole life."

**What is the most useful tool that you use as a mechanic and why do you think it's so important?**

Knowledge. There is never too much to learn as a mechanic and you will always use everything you learn."

**What is a challenge you face in your job?**

I never know what hours I'm going to work. If something comes in and it's a priority, then I'm going to work on it and fix it. It's a good feeling to know my job makes everyone's life better.

**What was the most surprising thing about deploying to Iraq? What was something you weren't expecting?**

"Out of all the companies in my battalion, we are the smallest Maintenance section. The other companies have more people in their platoons than us.....there's usually only three of us in there on both shifts."

**What activities do you enjoy in your free time and what helps you to relax?**

"I build tables. I enjoy talking to my wife and kids on the phone also. I enjoy work too, that makes me happy."

**If you could have lunch with any person in history (alive or dead), who would it be and why?**

"My grandfather who passed away in 1998. I would like for him to see me now, he'd be so proud of me and how my life is going. He was very patriotic. He wasn't in the military or anything, but was a farmer and a preacher. He helped raise me and I miss him dearly." ✂



Photo by 1st Lt. Janeene Yarber, 46th ECB (H) PAO, 225th Eng. Bde., MND-B

Medford, Wis., native Spc. Robert Barber, a mechanic for the 46th Engineer Combat Battalion, 225th Engineer Brigade, works on a vehicle in the motor pool on Camp Liberty.

# Stallion Soldiers, ISF deliver aid to outlying village

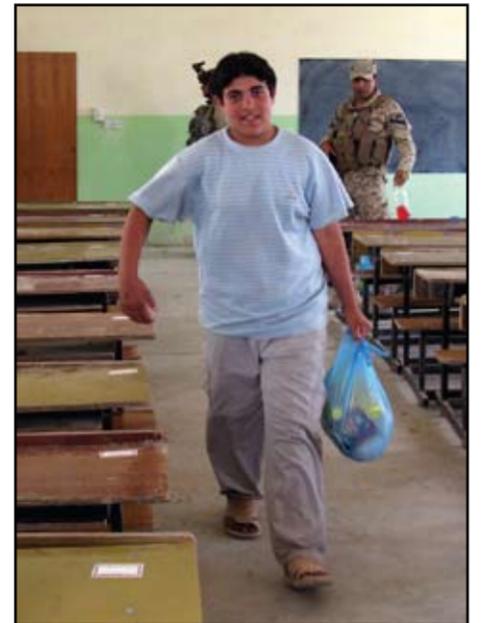
By 2nd Bn., 8th Cav. Regt., 2nd HBCT, 1st Inf. Div, MND-B



**BAGHDAD –** Members of the 1st Battalion, 24th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division pass out humanitarian aid to the citizens of the Fira Shia area west of Baghdad May 17. Soldiers from the 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, operationally attached to the 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad accompanied the Iraqi Soldiers on the mission, which took place at a local secondary school and provided over 100 bags of food to needy families in the area.



An Iraqi Soldier from the 1st Battalion, 24th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division passes out humanitarian aid to a citizen of the Fira Shia area west of Baghdad at the al-Todook Secondary School May 17. Over 100 bags of food were distributed to the citizens by Iraqi and Coalition Soldiers.



A smiling citizen walks out with a bag of humanitarian aid. The U.S. Soldiers partnered with the 1st Battalion, 24th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division to deliver over 100 bags of aid to the citizens May 17 at the al-Todook School.

## CASTLE

# IA route clearance teams receive medical training

Story and photos by Scott Flenner  
225th Eng. Bde. PAO, MND-B

**BAGHDAD –** Soldiers from the 225th Engineer Brigade, Multi-National Division – Baghdad gave medical training to the Iraqi Army route clearance team members of the 11th IA Engineer Regiment located in the northeastern Baghdad district of Adhamiyah, May 13.

Thanks to training provided by the ‘Castle’ engineers, what to do in the aftermath of a fellow soldier becoming injured is no longer a fear or cause for concern for the IA Soldiers.

“The mission today was to reinforce basic life saving skills, basic first aid, and show them new methods and new ways they can improve upon rendering medical care to each other,” said 225th combat medic, Sgt. Mark Jackson, who hails from Alexandria, La.

There are many skills that a Soldier must master to become proficient in medical first aid, but none being more important than controlling bleeding.

“You have to control the bleeding,” said Jackson.

To control bleeding in a combat zone usually means the application of a tourniquet, a device that constricts blood vessels to slow the bleeding; and being able to apply that tourniquet can be the difference between life and death for a Soldier.

“We showed the IA how to apply improvised and CAT II tourniquets, going in depth with the improvised,” said Staff Sgt. Adam Sanchez of the 225th Eng. Bde., who is a native Pineville, La.

“An improvised tourniquet is not a commercial tourniquet. It is a tourniquet that is using the available materials that you may have with you such as rags,

sticks, and such,” he continued.

The Soldiers from the 11th IA quickly took note of the training and began practicing putting bandage wraps and the all important tourniquets on each other’s arms and legs to practice what was just taught.

As the lead instructor Sanchez noted, “They were very excited to learn and I was surprised at the amount of knowledge (first-aid) that the IA Soldiers already had. Even some of the senior guys there were former med students.”

The combat medics of the 225th Eng. Bde., will continue to provide instruction to its Iraqi Army partners for many months to come. ✂



Alexandria, La., native Sgt. Mark Jackson, a member of the 225th Engineer Brigade instructs an 11th Iraqi Army Engineer Regiment Soldier how to properly apply an improvised tourniquet on a leg wound, May 13.



Staff Sgt. Adam Sanchez of the 225th Engineer Brigade, who hails from Pineville, La. shows the students from the 11th Iraqi Army Engineer Regiment how to properly put on a dressing using the leg of one of his students.



Alexandria, La., native, Sgt. Mark Jackson applies a tourniquet to Maj. Frederick Hall who hails from Lafayette, La., to show the proper technique of how to stop the bleeding of a severe extremity wound.



Staff Sgt. Adam Sanchez from Pineville, La., has a member of the 11th Iraqi Army Engineer Regiment apply an improvised tourniquet during first aid training, May 13.

# ARMED FORCES DAY

Monday, May 25, 2009



## Freedom Is Not Free

*By Kelly Strong*

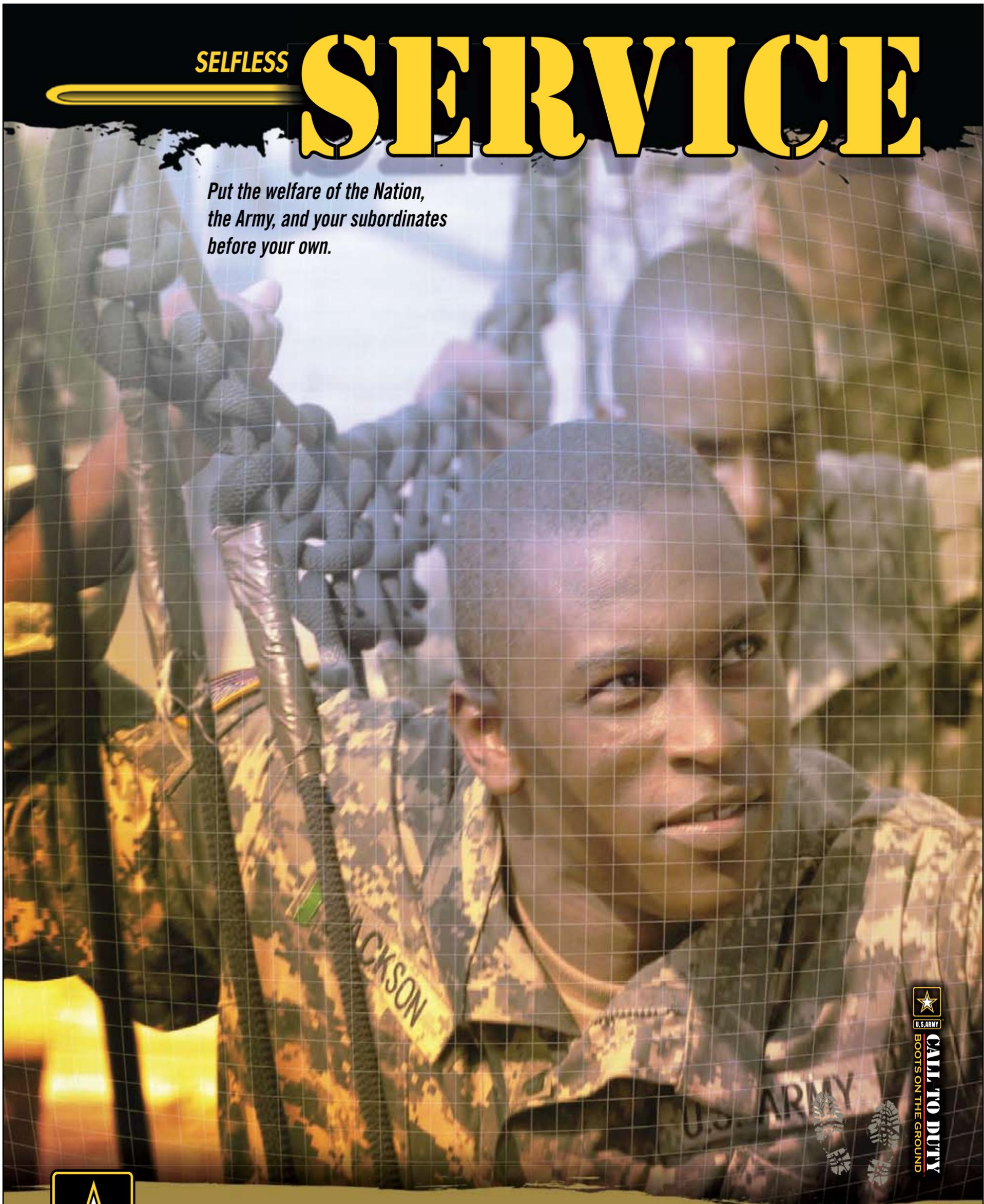
I watched the flag pass by one day.  
It fluttered in the breeze.  
A young Marine saluted it,  
and then he stood at ease.  
I looked at him in uniform  
So young, so tall, so proud,  
He'd stand out in any crowd.  
I thought how many men like him  
Had fallen through the years.  
How many died on foreign soil?  
How many mothers' tears?  
How many pilots' planes shot down?  
How many died at sea?  
How many foxholes were soldiers' graves?  
No, freedom isn't free.

I heard the sound of TAPS one night,  
When everything was still  
I listened to the bugler play  
And felt a sudden chill.  
I wondered just how many times  
That TAPS had meant "Amen,"  
When a flag had draped a coffin  
Of a brother or a friend.  
I thought of all the children,  
Of the mothers and the wives,  
Of fathers, sons and husbands  
With interrupted lives.  
I thought about a graveyard  
At the bottom of the sea  
Of unmarked graves in Arlington.  
No, freedom isn't free.

**SELFLESS**

# SERVICE

*Put the welfare of the Nation,  
the Army, and your subordinates  
before your own.*



  
U.S. ARMY  
**CALL TO DUTY**  
BOOTS ON THE GROUND



**ARMY STRONG.**<sup>SM</sup>

# ARMY VALUES