

Crossed Sabers

www.cavcountry.net

VOLUME 1 ~ ISSUE 8

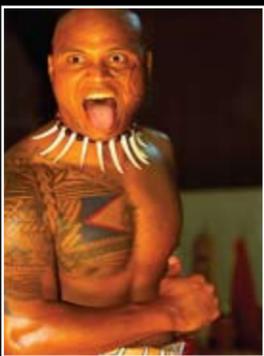
MULTI-NATIONAL DIVISION-BAGHDAD

JUNE 8, 2009

In this Issue



Guardsmen, IA Soldiers on the hunt in Abu Ghraib, Pg. 5



Soldiers celebrate Asian Pacific American Heritage Month, Pg. 8



Old Hickory Soldiers honored for service, lives Pg. 14



1st ACB readies to run missions in Iraq, Pg. 20



Preparing IA for JSS Sadr City transfer, Pg. 24

448th Civil Affairs Soldiers, Iraqis help rehab Sadr City

Story by Staff Sgt. Mark Burrell
MND-B PAO

BAGHDAD – Children squeal and giggle with glee on freshly painted red, purple, orange and yellow swings as American Soldiers push them higher and higher into the air, June 1. This could be a park anywhere in the world, except it's not. It's a recently completed Coalition forces funded playground in Sadr City, here.

"This is a tangible way for people to see normalcy," said Master Sgt. Robert LaTour, a civil affairs team leader from Tacoma, Wash., assigned to Company B, 448th Civil Affairs Battalion, attached to 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division. "To have a park next door that people see each and every day is a reminder that things are getting back to normal."

The park, tentatively named Mu-halla 518 Family Park, was built by Iraqi contractors and workers from the local community, said LaTour. The project cost \$237,000 and took close collaboration between U.S. troops and local government officials to complete it in about a month and a half.

"This is one of the first projects that Coalition forces and local government got together and decided on the location and what it would look like," said LaTour. "It was a really big step in a cooperative effort between the Iraqi Government and Coalition forces in Sadr City."

According to LaTour, these types of projects show that the GoI and CF really care about the community and the people of Iraq.

"It gives [Iraqi children] a safe place to play with secure gates so parents can let their kids run free inside without having to worry about them," said LaTour, as children ran from swings to slides to



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

"It makes my day when I see a smile on a kids face," said Spc. Edward Suarez, a tanker from Phelan, Calif., assigned to Company B, 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, as he shares a smile with an Iraqi child while on a CF funded playground assessment in Sadr City, here, May 31. "It helps kids when they see us building stuff for them," added Suarez. "It helps them see that they shouldn't be afraid of us."



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

merry-go-rounds.

"It also shows that CF is working with their government," said LaTour. "If [Iraqis] hear someone on the street bad-mouthing Coalition forces or the Iraqi Government, they have something tangible to see and might say, 'They don't seem that bad to me.'"

The Coalition-funded park, right off a main thoroughfare, also brought money

See ~ **SADR CITY** Pg. 3

Master Sgt. Robert LaTour, a civil affairs team leader from Tacoma, Wash., assigned to Company B, 448th Civil Affairs Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, takes notes and asks questions from local community members about a Coalition forces funded playground behind him in Sadr City, May 31.

Prayers from Baghdad

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

Traveling outside the wire is never easy, always an adventure. Those of us who are often passengers in convoys of Humvees and MRAPs, moving from COP to JSS, owe our lives many times over to the training and professionalism of the Personal Security Detachments. This is their prayer.

Prayer of the PSD

Hey God,

You got your eye on us up there?

Just wondering,...

I don't think we are supposed to be on Rt. Pluto right now.

Did you see if we took a wrong turn?

I hope my Pax don't notice,

But hey, with Blue Force Tracker and your help

We'll still reach the destination.

You know how hard we have trained,

We are ready for anything.

[Well, anything but sitting around like a Fob-bit doing nothing!]

A little excitement in our lives,

that's why we want this mission.

So give us a chance to chase down some bad guys

And kick in a few doors.

We'll be happy.

Oh, and keep those kids off the road, please.

I really don't want to hurt one of them.

And I could do without an EOF incident,

Or flat tire from some stupid piece of pipe in the ground.

So okay, God, here's the deal,
You keep my Turret Gunner safe,
Help me convince the CG not to HALO into W. Rashid,

And don't let me drop the F-Bomb
when the chaplain is listening on the headphones,

And I promise, next time we have a Sunday off,
I will make it to chapel.

[if I wake up in time, and the playoffs are over]

Thanks for understanding.

And most of all,

Thanks for being there.

Amen.



Questions, comments, story ideas? Contact the Crossed Sabers at 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. (P) 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, 1st Infantry Division Public Affairs Office/ 56th Infantry Brigade Combat Team Public Affairs Office/ 56th Striker Brigade Combat Team Public Affairs Office/ 3rd Brigade Combat Team 82nd Airborne Division Division Public Affairs Office/ and the 982nd Combat Camera Co. (ABN).

SADR CITY ~ From Pg. 1

into the community, as the Iraqi contractor hired men from the local neighborhood; building a sense of ownership and community pride, added LaTour.

“If you own something, if you believe it’s yours, you’re going to treat it better,” said LaTour. “On projects like this in the community, the goal is for them to take ownership in the community and not let the extremists come in.”

Projects like this have a direct connection with the security situation here, added Staff Sgt. Matthew Bissell, a civil affairs team sergeant also assigned to Co. B, 448th CA Bn., 1st BCT, 1st Cav. Div.

“As security improves, [Iraqis] also want to see other things improve in their daily life,” said Bissell, a native of Seattle, while children climb all over him as he kneels in the playground. “The kids seem really happy because the park was unlocked and they could swing on their swings.”

According to Bissell, he gets a lot of satisfaction from his job and completing projects like these because he can possibly affect the future of Iraqis.

“I think the younger generation in Iraq is going to have a different view,” added Bissell. “The average American Soldier treats the kids with respect. They have fun with them and the kids like us.”

The official opening ceremony for this project will be sometime in early June when the Iraqis will get to name the park. As for the future of this playground, it lies in the hands of the local government maintaining it for generations to come. ✂



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

Iraqi Army Pvt. Abass Fadal Juwad, an infantryman assigned to 3rd Battalion, 44th Brigade, 11th Iraqi Army Division, takes a moment to play with some Iraqi children while on patrol with Soldiers of 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, at a Coalition forces-funded playground in Sadr City, here, May 31. The official opening of the park, which took about a month and half to complete, is scheduled for sometime in early June.

Camp Taji depot to supply Iraqi Army

Story by Sgt. Doug Roles

56th SBCT

CAMP TAJI, Iraq—A refurbished supply depot at Camp Taji, north of Baghdad, will serve as the Iraqi Army’s new central distribution point for everything from vehicles to clothing.

A partnership between U.S. Army Soldiers and their Iraqi Army counterparts, here, has not only renovated warehouses at the Taji National Supply Depot but has brought the latest inventory control techniques to the Iraqi military.

“This is their national level logistics center,” Col. Tim Fucik said. “We’re helping to build their capacity.”

Fucik, an Army Reservist from Indianapolis, Ind., the senior commander for Joint Depot Team, serves with the 3rd Joint Headquarters Army Assistance Training Team. Fucik’s team of fewer than 20 U.S. Army Reserve Soldiers, who specialize in logistics, has spent the past year working to renovate the massive storage and distribution site at Camp Taji. The team celebrated the grand opening of a new depot headquarters building, May 30. The headquarters was established in what had been one of the complex’s many badly-deteriorated 1940s-era warehouses.

Fucik said the depot is nearing self-suf-

ficiency with IA Soldiers taking the reins of the day-to-day operation.

“We’re buying a lot of equipment for them. We’ve invested a lot. It’s basically finished now,” Fucik said. “We’re here to help bring processes and procedures.”

Fucik said opening the new Depot Distribution Center is probably the biggest accomplishment of his unit’s year-long tour. He added that the unit has also developed a five-year plan for more efficient warehousing.

The mission of the depot is to pre-stage supplies that are to be picked up by IA units. Soldiers working at the depot have inventoried supplies and streamlined the offloading of materials arriving by convoy. 1st Sgt. Robert Griffith, of Luray, Va., is the unit’s heavy material and vehicle adviser to the IA. He said the receiving process of heavy materials has progressed to the point where he now answers questions from his IA counterparts by saying, “How would you do it?”; encouraging Iraqis to further take control.

Griffith said when a convoy of new vehicles rolls into the depot, the IA Soldiers are ready for them and work until all the vehicles have been offloaded and staged. JHAATT Soldiers said other than dealing with the language barrier, the biggest challenge has been to make it clear to IA Soldiers that they won’t learn a new

method of doing logistics overnight.

“It took the Army 234 years to get where we’re at,” said Staff Sgt. Robert Reinhart, of Butler County, Pa. “They’re in year four.”

Still, Reinhart agreed that the depot’s IA Soldiers have gotten their program in place to the point where, “Now they’re doing most of it and we’re just advising them,” he said.

Reinhart’s first mission when he arrived at the depot in August was to set up a Central Receiving and Shipping Point yard. Reinhart, normally with the 412th Engineering Command, based in Kittanning, Pa., said that the three-week CRSP task was the precursor to other supply work as all supplies come through the CRSP yard.

Sgt. Oscar Anderson, a reservist from Corpus Christi, Texas, agreed that the IA Soldiers running warehouses at the depot are “more on the same page now.” Anderson, the non-commissioned officer in charge of weapon supplies, said the IA colonel in charge of his section loves the way things are going and doesn’t want the current American unit to leave. But Anderson said the IA Soldiers involved are ready to stand on their own.

“If we were to pull out today, [the weapon supply section] would be ready to go,” Anderson said.

Perhaps none of the JHAATT Soldiers appreciates the critical role the Taji depot will play in the Iraqi Army’s future more than Lt. Col. Willy Turner. Turner, of Atlanta, Ga., is General Depot Command’s deputy senior adviser and is responsible for the day-to-day operation of the depot. Turner reported nearly \$50 million has been spent renovating warehouses and improving the depot facility.

“We’re setting them up for the future,” Turner said. “We’re actually rebuilding the structures from the ground up. They’ll be used to store various classes of supplies.”

Turner explained that the depot is one of the first stops for new IA units. After units complete their basic training and advanced individual training, those Soldiers come to the depot to receive the equipment related to their mission.

“When a unit completes its training we then marry them up with their equipment in a unit set fielding,” Turner said.

Turner said 3,000 vehicles have come through the CRSP yard with another 5,000 on the way. Those vehicles include tow trucks and transport trucks as well as ambulances. To put the depot’s size into perspective, Turner noted that the facility includes 35 warehouses just for tools.

Turner said his Soldiers were fortunate to work at JHAAT during this exciting phase of the rebuilding and noted that several of those Soldiers have extended their tours to complete projects. ✂



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.



Freedom Radio Baghdad



104.1 and 107.3 FM

IA, Pennsylvania Guard clear Nassir factory

Story by Capt. Maggie White

56th SBCT PAO, MND-B

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – Soldiers from the 56th Stryker Brigade Combat Team conducted a large-scale joint operation, May 24 with members of the Iraqi Army to clear a factory of possible enemy insurgent activity.

Independence Soldiers, along with elements of the 36th and 37th Battalions of the Iraqi Army, conducted a massive sweep of the Nassir factory and Kem village in order to upset enemy activity.

The Nassir factory, located about 2 miles north of Camp Taji, has historically been an area of insurgent action in the northern Baghdad belt. This was the first joint operation of this size the Pennsylvania National Guard troops had conducted with the Iraqi Army. It included two companies each from 56th SBCT and the Iraqi Army.

“This is an important mission to disrupt insurgent activities,” said Col. Marc Ferraro, 56th SBCT commander. “We want to work with our Iraqi counterparts to make this a success.”

Iraqi and American Soldiers worked their way through the Nassir factory, walking building to building to clear the massive complex. The premises were swept for weapon caches, bombs, and personnel with outstanding warrants. Soldiers also patrolled through the village of Kem, located directly north of the factory.

Second Lt. Dustin Wolfgang, of Company B, 1st Battalion, 112th Infantry Regiment, led his platoon through the area with a squad of Iraqi Soldiers. He worked with his Iraqi counterparts every step of the way, watching as both groups of Soldiers inspected the warehouses and facilities.

“I’m glad to see the Iraqi Army take the lead,” Wolfgang said. “The Iraqi people see that the U.S. and Iraqi Soldiers are working hand-in-hand to make their country safer”.

Staff Sgt. Paul Hanson (left) and Spec. Adam Ortiz, both of Erie, Pa, prepare to enter a building at the Nassir factory complex north of Camp Taji on May 24. Both Soldiers are from Company B, 1st Battalion, 112th Infantry Regiment, 56th Stryker Brigade Combat Team.



Photo by Capt. Maggie White, 56th SBCT PAO, MND-B

Soldiers from 56th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, conduct a joint patrol with Soldiers from the Iraqi Army in the Nassir factory on May 24.



Photo by Capt. Maggie White, 56th SBCT PAO, MND-B

Soldiers from Company B, 1st Battalion, 112th Infantry Regiment, 56th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, provide over watch from a cistern at the Nassir factory complex north of Camp Taji on May 24.



Photo by Capt. Maggie White, 56th SBCT PAO, MND-B

Operation Asfah Ramlyah yields results

Photos by Sgt. 1st Class Alex Licea, 3rd BCT PAO, 82nd Abn. Div., MND-B



BAGHDAD – Lt. Col. Louis Zeisman (left), of Fayetteville, N.C., along with Iraqi Brig. Gen. Ali Ibraheem Dabown (center), commander of the 8th National Police Brigade, 2nd NP Division, and Col. Timothy McGuire (right), of Alamo, Calif., commander of the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, Multi-National Division—Baghdad, walk down a neighborhood street May 28 in the neighborhood of Sumer al-Ghadier, located in the 9 Nissan district of eastern Baghdad. Zeisman, who commands the brigade’s 2nd Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, and his Paratroopers conducted a combined clearance operation with their Iraqi partners in order to check on the area’s security.



Iraqi Brig. Gen. Ali Ibraheem Dabown (right), commander of the 8th National Police Brigade, 2nd NP Division, gives an Iraqi girl a stuffed animal during Operation Asfah Ramlyah, a combined clearance operation, May 28, in the neighborhood of Sumer al-Ghadier, located in the 9 Nissan district of eastern Baghdad. NPs, along with Paratroopers assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, Multi-National Division—Baghdad, conducted the operation to disrupt insurgent activity and check the area for improvised explosive devices.



Spc. Matthew Collins, of Hinesville, Ga., assigned to the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, Multi-National Division—Baghdad, looks back to check his surroundings during Operation Asfah Ramlyah, a combined clearance operation May 28 in the neighborhood of Sumer al-Ghadier, located in the 9 Nissan district of eastern Baghdad. The combined forces teamed up to confiscate several weapons during the operation and disrupt insurgent activity in the region.

Guardsmen, IA Soldiers on the hunt in Abu Ghraib

Story by Sgt. Doug Roles

56th SBCT

BAGHDAD – Pennsylvania Army National Guard Soldiers from 2nd Battalion, 112th Infantry Regiment, 56th Stryker Brigade Combat Team partnered with Iraqi Army Soldiers, May 19, to search several locations in the Abu Ghraib area for explosives. The joint patrol was part of an ongoing joint effort to lessen the threat of vehicle borne IED's in Abu Ghraib by searching for components used in making car bombs.

Soldiers from Company B, 2-112th said the continued patrols with the Iraqis serve as a deterrent to would-be insurgents.

“The VBIED is one of the greatest threats. We were actively patrolling to mitigate that threat,” said Capt. Jason Hoffman, commander of Co. B. “We maintain a near constant presence.”

Hoffman said Soldiers of the 2-112th face “a big challenge” in Abu Ghraib, at one time one of the more volatile areas of Iraq, but said he is proud of the way his Soldiers have met that challenge and have represented both the Pennsylvania Army National Guard and the U.S. Army. Hoffman said the civilian experience teachers, corrections officers and emergency medical technicians bring to Iraq as Soldiers is invaluable. He said his Soldiers are involved in “full spectrum operations” that range from combat patrols to assisting with civil affairs missions.

“We’ve done a lot of great things here,” said 1st Lt. Michael Keckler, of Bel Air, Md., a platoon leader with Co. B.

Keckler’s platoon was in charge of securing a landing zone during the operation, in the event that medical evacuation by air was needed. He echoed Hoffman, saying, his platoon maintains a near constant presence in sector. He said that level of activity pays off with locals providing more tips on insurgent activity.

“The civilians are stepping up. They’re a little less scared, because we’re out there all the time,” he said. “They’re less scared to come and talk to us.”



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

1st Sgt. Harry Buchanan (left), of Altoona, Pa., the first sergeant of Company B, 2nd Battalion, 112th Infantry Regiment, 56th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, looks over a courtyard in Abu Ghraib, May 19, as Iraqi Army Soldiers prepare to use a metal detector.



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



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



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

Spc. John Hill, of Eighty Four, Pa., and Spc. Matthew Strittmater, of Cresson, Pa., both with Company B, 2nd Battalion, 112th Infantry Regiment, 56th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, move along a building in Abu Ghraib during a search for vehicle-borne IED-making materials May 19.



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

Using an interpreter (left), 1st Lt. Joshua Shearn (center), of Mount Union, Pa., with Company B, 2nd Battalion, 112th Infantry Regiment, 56th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, talks with an Iraqi Army battalion commander, May 19, during a search for explosives in Abu Ghraib, near Baghdad.

Spc. John Hill, of Eighty Four, Pa., and Spc. Matthew Strittmater, of Cresson, Pa., both with Company B, 2nd Battalion, 112th Infantry Regiment, 56th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, move along a building in Abu Ghraib during a search for vehicle-borne IED-making materials May 19.

A U.S. military working dog and handler move through a courtyard in Abu Ghraib, May 19, with Pennsylvania National Guard Soldiers from Company B, 2nd Battalion, 112th Infantry Regiment, 56th Stryker Brigade Combat Team. The 2-112th, headquartered in Lewistown, Pa., is attached to the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division.

FC Unity games bring

Photos by Staff Sgt. James Selesnick, 3rd BCT, 82nd Abn. Div., MND-B



BAGHDAD – Paratroopers assigned to the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, hand out soccer equipment to Iraqi children at Shaab Stadium, May 22, in the Rusafa district of eastern Baghdad. Paratroopers greeted the children and handed out soccer jerseys and other equipment during the FC Unity tournament.



National Police officers compete in a soccer match at Shaab Stadium May 22 in the Rusafa district of eastern Baghdad. Four of the matches were mixed U.S. – Iraqi teams pitting them in competition against each other. The teams were assembled by the districts in which they work in.

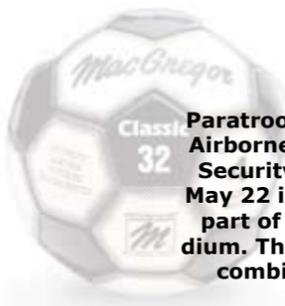
Baghdad residents, combined forces together



National Police officers cheer following a goal during a game a FC Unity soccer game at Shaab Stadium May 22 in the Rusafa district of eastern Baghdad. Four combined U.S. – Iraqi forces matches were played during the tournament in which mixed U.S. – Iraqi teams competed against each other. The teams were assembled by the districts in which they work in. A total of 36 games are being played during the weekend tournament.



The Combined forces honor guard presents the national colors of Iraq and the United States as participants stand in formation during the playing of the national anthems for both nations during the opening ceremony of the FC Unity tournament at Shaab Stadium, May 22, in the Rusafa district of eastern Baghdad. FC Unity, a London-based organization, promotes the development of unity through soccer-based programs. Paratroopers from 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, Multi-National Division—Baghdad, along with Iraqi officials and FC Unity, planned and organized the weekend festivities.



Paratroopers assigned to the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, Multi-National Division—Baghdad and Iraqi Security Forces compete in a soccer match at Shaab Stadium May 22 in the Rusafa district of eastern Baghdad. The game is part of the FC Unity tournament being held in the famed stadium. Thirty-six soccer games—32 community games and four combined U.S.-Iraqi forces games will be played during the tournament.



Spartans build community relations in Abu Ghraib

Story by Staff Sgt. Peter Ford

MND-B PAO

BAGHDAD - As conditions improve day by day in Iraq, Soldiers of the 591st Military Police Company "Spartans," 93rd MP Battalion, 8th MP Brigade, are building better relations within small communities by donating shoes, clothes and school supplies to children in



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

Sgt. George Talkington, a native of Las Cruces, N.M., a military policeman assigned to the 591st Military Police Company, 93rd MP Battalion, 8th MP Brigade, takes a box of muffins to a chicken farmer who asked for assistance in the Abu Ghraib district, here, May 20.

the Abu Ghraib district while on patrol, here, May 20.

"Back in 2003, when I was first here, kids were not allowed to wave or even be around us. Now they are much more receptive," said Sgt. George Talkington, a native of Las Cruces, N.M., a military policeman assigned to the 591st MP Co. "I think they are more receptive because of the things we do here in the community."

According to Talkington, the Spartans play soccer with children at local schools and pass out candy, pens and pencils when on dismounted patrols. The Spartans show they genuinely care for the community by helping them as much as they can

"Just last week, a family of chicken farmers came to us saying all their chickens died and they had no money and couldn't pay their bills," Talkington said. "So we gave them our rations so they would at least have something to eat; it wasn't much but it was all we could do at the time."

Sometimes little things can mean a whole lot, Talkington added. Little acts of kindness can develop a lasting rapport with the community.

"Building strong relationships is exactly what we are trying to teach the Iraqi Police," said Staff Sgt. Jonathan Romero, a native of San Antonio, with the 591st MP Co. "Strong relationships can be instrumental in preventing criminal activities and terrorist attacks in the community."



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

Cpl. David Medlin, a native of Buchanan, Mich., a military policeman assigned to the 591st Military Police Company, 93rd MP Battalion, 8th MP Brigade, arm wrestles with a little boy after giving some of the neighborhood children shoes, May 20. "I love playing with the kids," said Medlin.

When community relations are built, people are more trusting and when trust is established, people are more willing to speak about different things in the community, added Talkington.

The Spartans try to set examples of building friendships for the IP to follow by the community services that they provide. They try to show the IP how responsive the people in the community can be when connections built on trust are made by sharing with the people, said Talkington.

"We sometimes give cookies, candy and sodas to the IPs to disseminate to the community so they can see the effects kindness can have on the community," said Talkington, as he shook hands with a local child.

Little acts of kindness by the Spartans and IPs have developed a bond with the people of Abu Ghraib and in turn have created a more peaceful community. ✂



Texas Guardsman receives second CIB

Photos by Staff Sgt. Jason Kendrick, 56th IBCT PAO, 36th Inf. Div., MND-B



CAMP VICTORY, Iraq - Lt. Col. John Butler (left), brigade executive officer for the 56th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, Multi-National Division-Baghdad, awards the Combat Infantryman Badge, with star, to Master Sgt. Ralph Amaya, master gunner for the 56th IBCT, during an award ceremony, May 23. This award of the CIB was the second for Amaya, a married father from Killeen, Texas.

The Combat Infantryman Badge, with star, is pinned on to the uniform of Master Sgt. Ralph Amaya, of Killeen, Texas during an award ceremony held on May 23 at Camp Victory. Amaya, the brigade's master gunner for the 56th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, Multi-National Division-Baghdad, was awarded his second CIB for combat actions in southern Iraq. Amaya's first award came during Operation Desert Storm and Desert Shield when he was with 1st Squadron 5th Cavalry of the 1st Cav. Div.

Soldiers celebrate Asian Pacific American Heritage Month in Iraq

Story by Sgt. Joshua Risner

MND-B PAO

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq—For Army Soldiers, the month of May is Asian-Pacific American Heritage Month.

According to Sgt. 1st Class Tamatha Denton, an equal opportunity advisor from New York, with the Division Special Troops Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division, Army leaders chose May in order to commemorate two significant events; the first immigration of Japanese to the United States on May 7, 1843; and the completion of the transcontinental railroad, which was built with a large contribution by Chinese immigrants, May 10, 1869. Asian-Pacific American Heritage Month was originally designated as the first 10 days of May in 1977, but was later expanded to a whole month in 1990.

“We celebrate Asian-Pacific American Heritage Month to commemorate the many contributions that Asian and Pacific Islanders have made to the United States,” Denton said. “Such contributions are noted in the areas of science, math, education, literature, sports and, of course, our armed forces.”

Asian Americans have served with distinction in the U.S. armed forces in the following wars: Civil War, World War I, World War II, Korean War, Vietnam War, Gulf War, and the Global War on Terrorism, Denton explained. “They have earned 28 Medals of Honor, 22 of which were awarded six decades after their heroic service during World War II.”

For Sgt. Tasha Samuelu, from Pago Pago, American Samoa, assigned to Company A, DSTB, 1st Cav. Div., the month is a chance to teach people about her homeland.

“It’s a great learning experience for people,” she said. “It shows people our culture. A lot of people don’t even know where American Samoa is or that it even exists.”

To commemorate Asian Pacific American Heritage

“It’s a great learning experience for people,” she said. “It shows people our culture. A lot of people don’t even know where American Samoa is or that it even exists.”

-- Sgt. Tasha Samuelu, from Pago Pago, American Samoa, Company A, DSTB, 1st Cav. Div.



Photo by Sgt. Joshua Risner, MND-B PAO

Command Sgt. Maj. Rory Malloy, senior enlisted advisor, Multi-National Division—Baghdad and the 1st Cavalry Division, samples some ethnic cuisine at an Asian-Pacific American Heritage Month celebration here, May 22. The spread contained various dishes from Asia and the Pacific Islands.

Month a celebration was held here, May 22.

The turnout for the event topped everyone’s expectations, according to Sgt. 1st Glenn Trinidad, from Honolulu, assigned to Co. A, DSTB, 1st Cav. Div.

“We had planned for maybe 100 people,” he said. “Then all of a sudden the place was overflowing. But that’s how it is when we throw parties: we invite our cousins and they invite their cousins and so on.”

Multi-National Division—Baghdad and Multi-National Corps—Iraq Soldiers, forming the dance troupe “Toa O Samoa”, stole the show with their performance. Toa O Samoa wowed the crowd with their syncopated rhythms and highly coordinated moves.

“We did a mix of traditional and modern dances,” said Trinidad. “It’s pretty technical, fast-paced and very exhausting going from one dance to another.”

Long hours of hard work were required to achieve such coordination, Trinidad added.

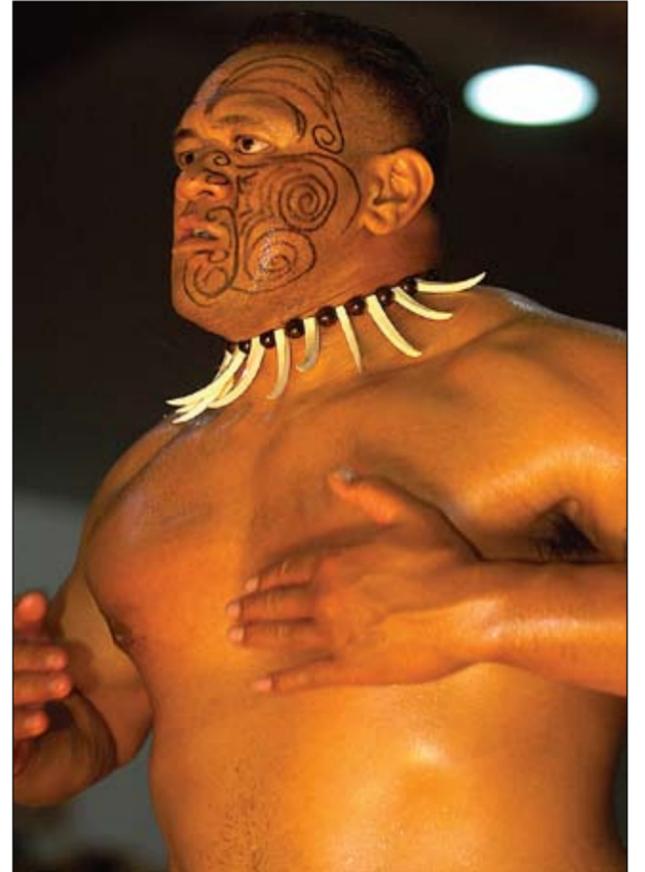


Photo by Spc. Phillip Turner, MND-B PAO

Air Force Staff Sgt. Salofi Leasiolagi, from Pago Pago, American Samoa, assigned to 447th Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron, 447th Air Expeditionary Group, performs a Samoan slap dance at an Asian-Pacific American Heritage Month celebration here, May 22. The Samoans performed a variety of traditional and modern dances.

“We started working on it in mid April and a couple of weeks ago, we started doing it every day to make sure we got it right,” he said. “It was a lot of work but it paid off.”

For more than 100 years, Asian-Pacific Americans have contributed to the events that shaped America. For Asian-Pacific Americans currently serving in the armed forces, they are continuing this tradition by carrying the torch of freedom and keeping the country safe. ✂



Photo by Sgt. Joshua Risner, MND-B PAO

First Lt. Kimberly Osorio-Torres (center), from Honolulu, assigned to 317th Maintenance Company, 553rd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 10th Sustainment Brigade, performs a traditional Samoan dance at an Asian Pacific American Heritage Month celebration here, May 22. Osorio-Torres, along with other Multi-National Division—Baghdad and Multi-National Corps—Iraq Soldiers, formed the dance troupe Toa O Samoa for the event.

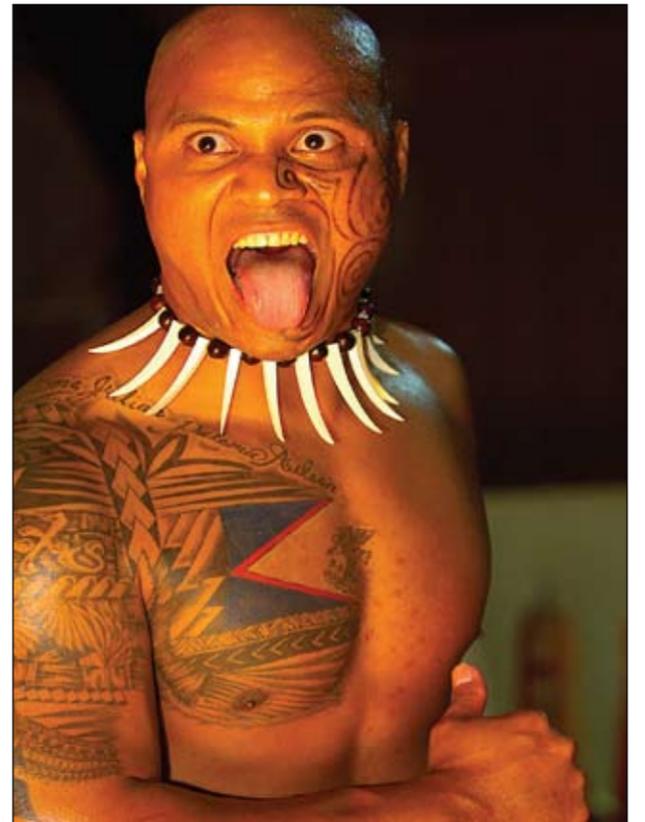


Photo by Spc. Phillip Turner, MND-B PAO

Staff Sgt. Sinapao Roberts, of Asu, American Samoa, assigned to Company A, Corps Special Troops Battalion, 1st Corps, Multi-National Corps—Iraq, performs a haka war dance, a traditional Polynesian dance performed by warriors before battle. Roberts, along with other Multi-National Division—Baghdad and MNC-I Soldiers, formed the dance troupe Toa O Samoa and performed a variety of traditional and modern dances here, May 22.

THE 234th UNITED STATES ARMY BIRTHDAY

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

June 2009

I send my heartfelt greetings to all who are celebrating the 234th birthday of the United States Army.

Over two centuries ago, patriots volunteered to take up arms in protection of their country, placing the safety of others above their own lives. On June 14, 1775, they banded together and committed themselves to creating a new era of liberty and self-government.

As men and women of the United States Army, you are part of the greatest military force the world has ever known. Excellence is your standard. As we honor your service, we also recognize the devotion of your loved ones who support and pray for you as you are deployed across the globe.

This exceptional spirit of sacrifice is the mark of the men and women of the Armed Forces and their families, and your selflessness is the reason we enjoy the freedoms we have today. You have provided the opportunity for all Americans to live in peace and prosperity, and your dedication to our country is acknowledged and appreciated by all.

Again, on behalf of a grateful Nation, I thank you for your service.




Celebrating the 234th Birthday of America's Army

"As we consider the role that unfolds before us, we remember with humble gratitude those brave Americans who at this very hour patrol far-off deserts and distant mountains. They have something to tell us, just as the fallen heroes who lie in Arlington whisper through the ages. We honor them not only because they are guardians of our liberty, but because they embody the spirit of service — a willingness to find meaning in something greater than themselves. And yet at this moment, a moment that will define a generation, it is precisely this spirit that must inhabit us all."

— President Barack Obama, January 20, 2009

On June 14, 1775, the Continental Congress created a volunteer Continental Army to defend our fledgling republic. Spurred to defend the noble ideals of liberty and freedom, the first American Citizen-Soldiers found meaning in something greater than themselves. In securing our Nation's independence, they embodied a spirit of service. As we observe our Army's 234th birthday, we reflect on the sacrifices of our predecessors, celebrate their service, and honor the brave men and women serving in our ranks today.

Since 1775, our Army has always stood ready to serve. This service and commitment on behalf of the American people has left an indelible mark on history. Just as we have defended liberty and freedom in the past, we remain steadfast in protecting our Nation's ideals today. American Soldiers — supported by their Families and Army Civilians — continue to serve and sacrifice to meet the challenges of the 21st Century.

We are proud of you — an Army Family that reflects the diversity of today's America. We will continue to develop culturally-astute, agile, and adaptive leaders who are prepared to lead this Nation through an era of persistent conflict. And as we recognize 2009 as the Year of the Noncommissioned Officer, we pay particular tribute to our Corporals and Sergeants leading from the front and serving as the glue that holds our force together.



Kenneth O. Preston
Sergeant Major of the Army

George W. Casey, Jr.
General, United States Army
Chief of Staff

Pete Geren
Secretary of the Army

Two hundred and thirty-four years ago, the United States Army was established to defend our Nation. From the Revolutionary War to the Global War on Terror, our Soldiers remain Army Strong with a deep commitment to our core values and beliefs. This 234th birthday commemorates America's Army – Soldiers, Families and Civilians – who are achieving a level of excellence that is truly Army Strong both here and abroad. Their willingness to sacrifice to build a better future for others and to preserve our way of life is without a doubt, the Strength of our Nation.



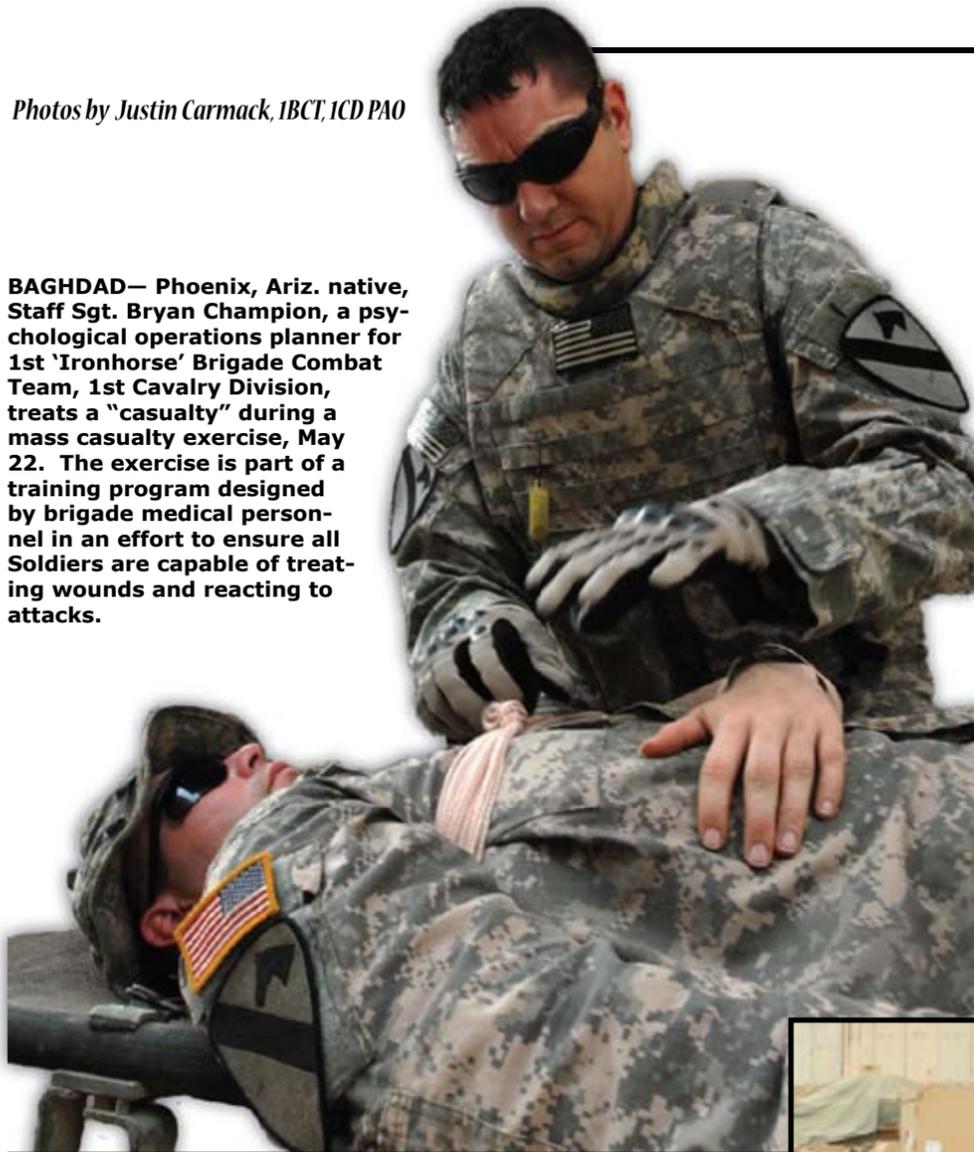
June 14

IRONHORSE TROOPERS REACT, LEARN DURING MASCAL



Photos by Justin Carmack, 1BCT, ICD PAO

BAGHDAD— Phoenix, Ariz. native, Staff Sgt. Bryan Champion, a psychological operations planner for 1st 'Ironhorse' Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, treats a "casualty" during a mass casualty exercise, May 22. The exercise is part of a training program designed by brigade medical personnel in an effort to ensure all Soldiers are capable of treating wounds and reacting to attacks.



Phoenix, Ariz. native, Staff Sgt. Bryan Champion, a psychological operations planner for 1st 'Ironhorse' Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, discusses injuries the player suffered during a mass casualty training exercise held May 22. The exercise tested Soldiers' training and reaction time in the event they receive an attack.



Spc. Amanda Pavao, a medic with 115th Brigade Support Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, applies a bandage to a player during a mass casualty training exercise May 22. The exercise assisted medical professionals in evaluating the strengths and shortcomings that may present problems in the event of an attack.



Columbia, S.C. native, Cpl. Jose Guzman (right), a medic for 115th Brigade Support Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, evaluates a "casualty" during a mass casualty training exercise May 22. The exercise is part of the brigade's ongoing effort to train and evaluate medics and Soldiers in the event of an attack.

War Eagle Soldiers inspect explosion site

Photos by Ray McNulty, 8th MP Bde. PAO, MND-B



BAGHDAD – First Lt. Brian Celatka (left), the Karkh Iraqi Police Patrol Directorate Police Transition Team officer-in-charge, 93rd Military Police “War Eagle” Battalion, 8th MP Brigade, Multi-National Division—Baghdad, inspects the damage at the Ma’moon Local Police Station. The station was damaged from an improvised explosive device detonation May 21.

A Ma’moon Iraqi Policeman and the officer-in-charge of the crime scene briefs Coalition force partner, Lt. Col. Thomas Byrd, commander of 93rd Military Police “War Eagle” Battalion, 8th MP Brigade, Multi-National Division—Baghdad on the point of detonation at the Ma’moon Local Police Station May 21.

300th MP Co. medic gets ‘hands on’

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



Iraqi Police Capt. Hussein Howaish Salume, the training officer assigned to Adamiyah IP Station, receives first aid for a minor wound at Joint Security Station Shuleik, here, May 21, from Spc. Megan Bender (right), a combat medic from Rapids City, S.D., assigned to the 300th Military Police Company, 91st MP Battalion, 8th MP Brigade. “I’ve always wanted to do something in the medical field,” said Bender who has been in Iraq for 12 months.



BAGHDAD – Spc. Megan Bender, a combat medic assigned to the 300th Military Police Company, 91st MP Battalion, 8th MP Brigade, cleans a wound on the arm of Iraqi Police Capt. Hussein Howaish Salume, the training officer assigned to Adamiyah IP Station, during a range qualification at Joint Security Station Shuleik, here, May 21. Bender, a native of Rapids City, S.D., cleaned the minor cut and bandaged it to prevent further infection.

“I love my job and I love helping people out whether they’re Americans or Iraqis,” said Rapids City, S.D., native Spc. Megan Bender, a combat medic assigned to the 300th Military Police Company, 91st MP Battalion, 8th MP Brigade, as she treats a minor wound on an Iraqi policeman at Joint Security Station Shuleik, here, May 21. Bender and her fellow MPs are on a 15-month tour to Iraq.

300th MP Co. Soldiers mentor district Iraqi Police

Story by Scott Flenner

225th Eng. Bde. PAO, MND-B

BAGHDAD – The Adamiyah District Iraqi Police Station here has the task of overseeing six IP stations in its district. In a combat zone, this can be a daunting job, but the Soldiers of the 300th Military Police Company, 91st MP Battalion, 8th MP Brigade are here to lend a helping hand.

Soldiers of the 300th MP Co. have worked with these IPs for the last 12 months; earning the trust of their Iraqi counterparts, said Sgt. Jordan Talbert, a police transition team leader from Washington, Ind., assigned to the 300th MP Co.

When the MPs make a suggestion, as little as it might be, the IPs listen.

“It’s little things, like wearing their uniform on duty and tucking it in. Also, having the proper weapon and ammo and wearing the proper [personal protective equipment] while on patrol,” said Talbert, as a fellow MP points at an IP walking by and tells him to tuck in his powder blue IP shirt.

The practical methods the MPs are teaching the policemen of the Adamiyah District IP Station are also being filtered down to its six other lower echelon stations.

“They [the IPs] are getting a lot better at helping each other out,” said Cpl. Brian Shipway, a military police team leader from Keyser, W. Va., attached to the 300th MP Co. “Instead of just me, me, me, you can see the IPs teaching each other at the stations.”

To facilitate the training, the MP Soldiers suggest different, more efficient ways of doing things to the district-level IPs, such as tracking gasoline and ammunition through a supply officer.

“This helps alleviate the misplacement of supplies. Now we have a monthly inventory that lets them track where bullets are going,” added Talbert. “They see how well we operate and want to be more like us. They take what we suggest and adopt it with their own methods.”

According to Zuher Abdulwahab Habib, the Adamiyah District operations commissioner, one of the most practical procedures the Soldiers of the 300th MP Co. have passed on is how to track criminal activities in their area. Using a district map on the wall of the operations center, the IPs employ color-coded push-pins to track murders, rapes, improvised explosive devices, burglaries and other crimes.

“We track with this map where significant things happen so we can send more IPs to areas that are more dangerous,” said Zuher, who gets most of his intelligence from the Americans. “We work together as a team and set up a patrol distribution system.”

As joint patrols are becoming less and less frequent because of the handover of responsibility, the MPs focus more on helping the community trust the IPs, added Shipway. On patrol, they give the IPs lessons in how to interact with the community they protect.

“Most of the community keeps telling us we are doing a good job,” said Zuher, who has been a policeman for over 30 years. “They know we are here to help.”

The MPs reinforce the importance of talking with locals and passing out literature and tip cards detailing what to do and who to call if local citizens find themselves in trouble.

“We let them know that the IPs aren’t bad people, corrupt people, that they can go to them whenever they have a problem, just like law enforcement back in the States,” added Shipway.

After working with and coaching the IPs for almost a year, they have a lot of trust and faith in the MPs to teach them the right things, continued Shipway.

“I feel that I came over here and did my job to my fullest potential,” Shipway said. “I go out every day and give it what I can. If I teach them one thing, it’s a success in my book.”

It will be a success in the history books if the IPs can continue to build upon the foothold that the Soldiers of the 300th MP Co. have given them, helping shape the way the Iraqi Police stations function from the top down.



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

Sgt. Jordan Talbert, a Washington, Ind., native and a military policeman team leader assigned to the 300th MP Company, 91st MP Battalion, 8th MP Brigade, peeks around a tree while providing security during a joint patrol at Kessler “White Rose” Market here, May 20. “They see how well we operate and want to be more like us,” said Talbert. “They take what we suggest and adopt it with their own methods.”



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

Staff Sgt. Ryan McCarthy, a military policeman and a squad leader from Wildwood, N.J., assigned to the 300th MP Company, 91st MP Battalion, 8th MP Brigade, shakes hands with an Iraqi teenager during a joint patrol at Kessler “White Rose” Market here, May 20. The 300th MP Co. Soldiers have taken an over-watch role as more and more responsibility is passed to the IPs. “When we first got here, we’ve been here for 11 months, we taught them how to move out in formation,” said McCarthy.



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

Sgt. 1st Class Joseph Bischof, a military policeman and platoon sergeant from Louisville, Ky., assigned to the 300th MP Company, 91st MP Battalion, 8th MP Brigade, stands guard while his Iraqi Police counterpart talks with the locals in order to provide security and reassurance during a joint patrol at Kessler “White Rose” Market here, May 20. The Adamiyah District IPs passed out literature and tip cards to improve trust in the local neighborhoods.

Old Hickory Brigade takes command at FOB Falcon

Story by Pfc. Kelly LeCompte

30th HBCT PAO, MND-B

FORWARD OPERATION BASE FALCON, Iraq – Authority at Forward Operating Base Falcon, located at the southern edge of Baghdad, transferred from the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, to the 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team, during a ceremony, May 26.

This is the Old Hickory Brigade's second deployment to Iraq. It is the first National Guard brigade to twice deploy with its own area of operations.

"Soldiers and members of Old Hickory, our journeys to this point and place have been long and diverse," said Col. Gregory Lusk, commander of the 30th HBCT. "We are ready for what lays ahead. We are here for a reason; we are the right people, at the right place, and the right time."

The ceremony began with honors to the nations. The Iraqi national anthem was played, then Spc. Brian Taylor, of the 30th HBCT sang "The Star-Spangled Banner".

Following the anthems, Col. Pat White, commander of the 2nd BCT, addressed the crowd, which included Soldiers of Old Hickory, the Iron Brigade, local Iraqi leaders, security forces and citizens.

White spoke of the ceremony's significance and how it reflects the successes of his Soldiers and their partnerships with the Iraqi Army, National Police and local leaders; all of whom played a large part in the brigade's success.

"Over the past years, we have conducted these ceremonies to symbolize the changing of the guard for Coalition forces, as well as our continued commitment to peace and stability," said White. "Since April 2008, Soldiers of the Iron Brigade have accomplished every assigned mission I'd like to think we have helped make a difference."

He also spoke of his confidence in the ability of the 30th HBCT troops to continue the mission.

"Over the past three weeks we have endeavored to share our knowledge and experience with Old Hickory," White said. "Secure in knowing that they will do better and more, through partnership with the citizens of southern Baghdad."

White then thanked Maj. Gen. Daniel Bolger, Multi-National Division—Baghdad commander; Brig. Gen. Fred Rudesheim, deputy commanding general for support of MND-B; and Command Sgt. Maj. Rory Malloy, senior enlisted advisor for MND-B, for their support.

White and Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Eyer encased the Iron Brigade's colors following the speech. Lusk and Command Sgt. Maj. John Swart uncased Old Hickory's colors immediately after, signifying the transfer of authority from the Iron Brigade to Old Hickory.

Encasing is a procedure of rolling the brigade's flag and placing it in a sleeve. Old Hickory will display its uncased colors above the command post throughout the deployment.

Lusk then congratulated the Soldiers of the Iron Brigade for their support while Old Hickory Soldiers began operations.

"I cannot adequately express the gratitude to you and your Soldiers for the tremendous support and effort during this relief in place," Lusk said. "Your brigade combat team has set the conditions for Old Hickory to continue the mission and be successful."

Lusk also spoke directly to Bolger.

"We are ready to assume the mission," Lusk said. "We have prepared long and hard for this moment. We are honored to serve with and be a part of the 'First Team.'"

Addressing the Iraqi guests in attendance, Lusk assured them that the progress made so far will continue.

"The 30th Brigade will commit to working side-by-side, in partnership with you, in securing your families and continuing the progress you have started for your future generations," Lusk said. "It is vital that we commit to each other to do whatever hard work is necessary in ensuring that the sacrifices of so many lives will not have been in vain."

Lusk concluded his speech with a message to the brigade: "Soldiers of Old Hickory, it is now time to go in and execute." ✂



Photo by Sgt. Mary Phillips, 30th HBCT PAO, MND-B

Soldiers in from the 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team; 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, and the 17th Iraqi Army, display their colors during the transfer of authority ceremony at Forward Operating Base Falcon. The May 26 ceremony marked the official relief of the 2nd by the 30th.



Photo by Sgt. Mary Phillips, 30th HBCT PAO, MND-B

Col. Gregory Lusk (left) and Command Sgt. Maj. John Swart (right), both of 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team, Multi-Nation Division—Baghdad, unroll the brigade colors during the transfer of authority ceremony at Forward Operating Base Falcon, May 26. The 30th took over for the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division.

Brigade commander Col. Pat White (left) and Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Eyer, roll up their brigade's colors during the transfer of authority ceremony at forward operating base falcon, May 26. White and Eyer are both of 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division.



Photo by Sgt. Mary Phillips, 30th HBCT PAO, MND-B

OLD HICKORY SOLDIERS

BAGHDAD - The three Soldiers were from diverse backgrounds and from different parts of the country, but they came together for their Army, their country, and for the idea of making Iraq a better place.

Army Reserve Maj. Jason George, North Carolina National Guardsman 1st Lt. Leevi Barnard, and Missouri National Guardsman Sgt. Paul Brooks were remembered during a memorial service at Forward Operating Base Falcon on the southern edge of Baghdad, May 29.

The Soldiers, with the 252nd Combined Arms Battalion, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team, were killed by an improvised explosive device in the city's Rasheed district, May 21.

George was the battalion's civil-military officer, Barnard was his assistant, and Brooks was the team's medic. The team serves as a liaison between Army and Iraqi officials for ongoing and future reconstruction projects in the battalion's operating area.

"They joined together in a common purpose," said Lt. Col. Dean Davis, commander, 252nd Bn., to the hundreds of Soldiers gathered for the service. "This future will allow the population to raise their families with a better life and in a safe community environment."

George, 38, from Tehachapi, Calif., was a 1994 graduate of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, N.Y. He was recalled from individual ready reserve status to deploy with the brigade.

Brooks, 34, a father of eight from Joplin, Mo., volunteered for this, his second tour in Iraq, as a medic. He was with the battalion less than week before his death.

Barnard, 28, of Ararat, Va., was a former enlisted National Guardsman who earned his commission through the University of North Carolina's Reserve Officer Training Corps program in Charlotte.

"I know more than most how wonderful these Soldiers were," said Capt. Jeffrey Cashion, the Headquarters and Headquarters Company commander. "Not often in our short lives on earth do we have the opportunity to walk beside truly great men.

"By any measure, or definition you choose, Jason George, Leevi Barnard, and Paul Brooks were truly great men that blessed our country, our Army, and each of us with their presence," Cashion said.

George was the battalion's civil-military officer, Barnard was his assistant, and Brooks was the team's medic. The team serves as a liaison between Army and Iraqi officials for reconstruction projects in the battalion's operating area.

The three were killed, along with a number of Iraqi civilians, as they made their way to a meeting with local officials.

"Sgt. Brooks was always first to volunteer for a mission," said fellow medic Spc. Jose Perez. "His love of the military was so evident that even in civilian life he chose to serve as a paramedic at Ft. Leonard Wood, Mo."

Barnard was remembered as a Soldier's Soldier: he rose from the enlisted ranks to earn his commission as an artillery officer.

"It was a privilege to have Leevi as a friend," recalled Sgt. 1st Class Michael Street. "All the things that made him a good officer made him an even better friend.

"Whatever we did together was a healthy competition and an opportunity for us to bond," Street said. "The truth of the matter (is) he was the best spades partner I ever had and the best damn lieutenant I ever had."

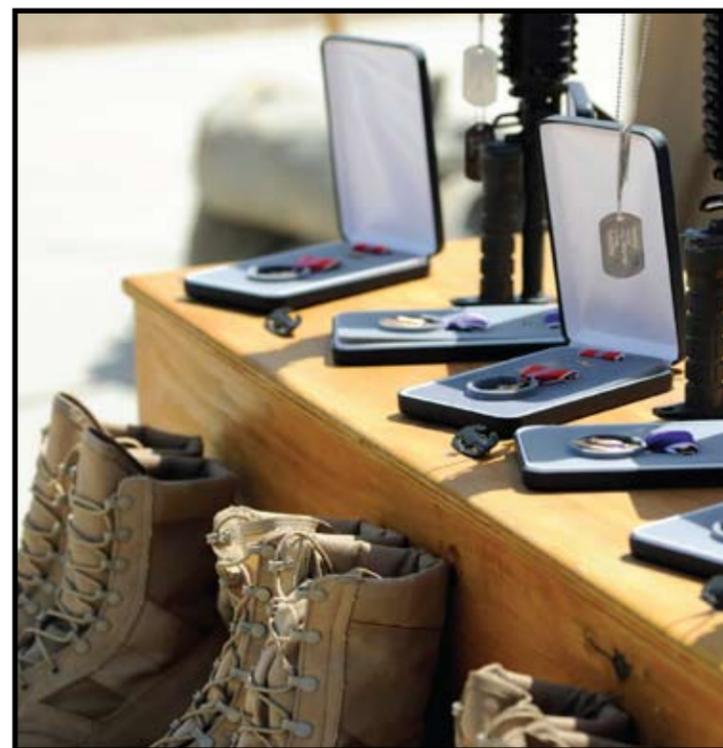
George was remembered as someone who believed he could change the world, one small piece at a time.

"He wanted to improve the present in order to impact history," said Capt. Kyle Carone. "He was successfully able to adapt to any environment. He had the uncanny ability to discuss, understand and develop actionable items to enhance the economic, political and sociological issues impacting Iraq."

Each Soldier was posthumously presented with the Army's Combat Action Badge, a Purple Heart and the Bronze Star.

"Although we are saying goodbye to our Soldiers today, I know we will not forget them, because one day, we will see them again," Cashion said. "Today, although I am sad, I am also proud to have been a part of their lives. These Soldiers are, and always will be, heroes." 

FOR SERVICE



Helmets, rifles and dog tags stand in memorial for three Soldiers from the 252nd Combined Arms Battalion, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team, who were remembered during a memorial service, May 29, at Forward Operating Base Falcon on the southern edge of Baghdad. The three were posthumously presented with the Army's Combat Action Badge, a Purple Heart and the Bronze Star. Hundreds of Soldiers from throughout the brigade attended the afternoon service.

SOLDIERS HONORED FOR SERVICE, LIVES

Story by Jason Chudy
30th HBCT PAO, MND-B



Photo by Sgt. Mary Phillips, 30th HBCT PAO

“ Although we are saying goodbye to our Soldiers today, I know we will not forget them, because one day, we will see them again, ”

-- Capt. Jeffrey Cashion, Headquarters and Headquarters Company commander, 30th HBCT

Three Soldiers from the 252nd Combined Arms Battalion, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team, were remembered during a memorial service, May 29, at Forward Operating Base Falcon, on the southern edge of Baghdad. Army Reserve Maj. Jason George, North Carolina National Guardsman 1st Lt. Leevi Barnard, and Missouri National Guardsman Sgt. Paul Brooks, all of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, were killed May 21 by a bomb in southern Baghdad. The three were posthumously presented with the Bronze Star, Purple Heart and Army Combat Action Badge, which are displayed with their M-4 rifles, boots, dog tags and helmets. Hundreds of Soldiers from throughout the brigade attended the afternoon service.

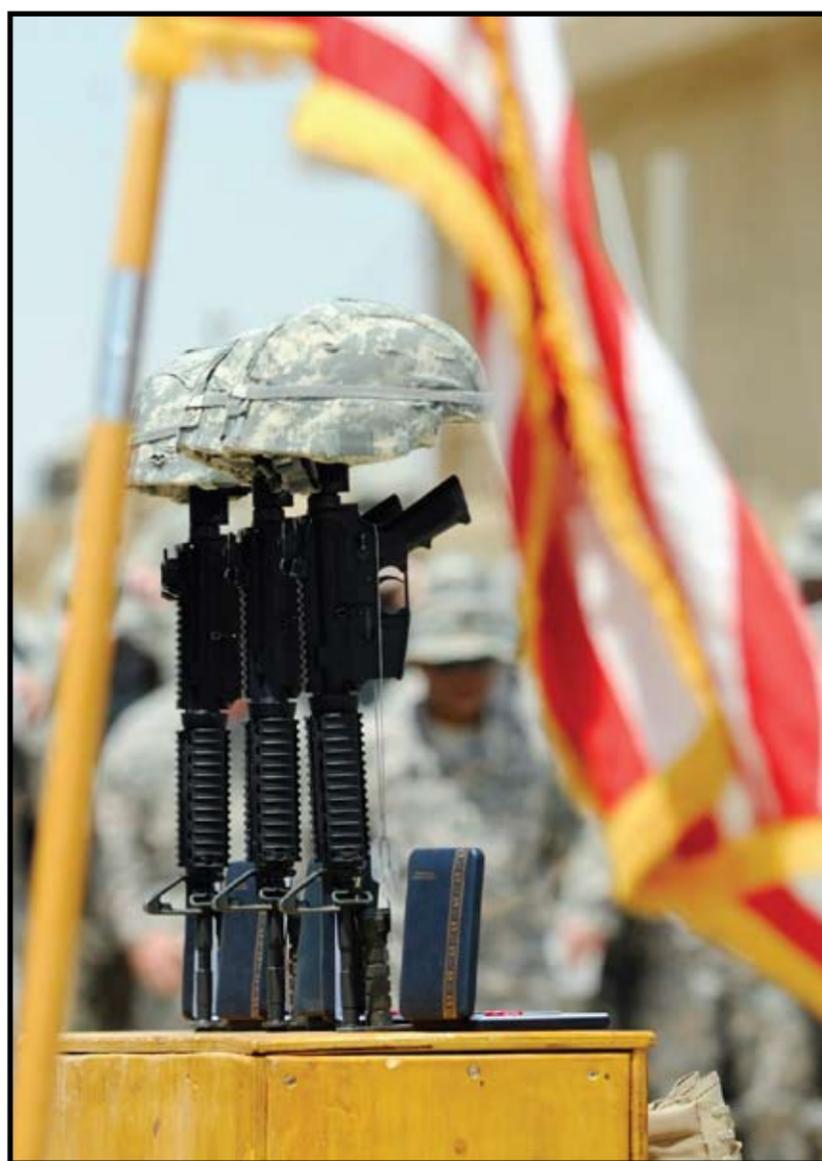


Photo by Sgt. Mary Phillips, 30th HBCT PAO



Photo by Sgt. Waine Haley, 30th HBCT PAO

Hundreds of Soldiers from the 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team attended a memorial service, May 29, for Army Reserve Maj. Jason George, North Carolina National Guardsman 1st Lt. Leevi Barnard, and Missouri National Guardsman Sgt. Paul Brooks, all of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 252nd Combined Arms Battalion. The three were killed May 21 by a bomb in southern Baghdad.

The time-honored memorial of helmet, rifle, dog tags and boots stands for three Soldiers from the 252nd Combined Arms Battalion, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team, during a memorial service, May 29, at Forward Operating Base Falcon on the southern edge of Baghdad. Army Reserve Maj. Jason George, North Carolina National Guardsman 1st Lt. Leevi Barnard, and Missouri National Guardsman Sgt. Paul Brooks, all of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, were killed May 21 by a bomb in southern Baghdad.



Photo by Sgt. Mary Phillips, 30th HBCT PAO

Heavy Brigade Combat Team, who Baghdad. Army Reserve Maj. Jason Brooks, all of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, were killed May 21 by a bomb in southern Baghdad.



Photo by Sgt. Mary Phillips, 30th HBCT PAO

Maj. Toby Clifton, of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team, kneels in front of a memorial to three brigade Soldiers killed by a bomb, May 21. The May 29 memorial service, at Forward Operating Base Falcon, at the southern edge of Baghdad, for Army Reserve Maj. Jason George, North Carolina National Guardsman 1st Lt. Leevi Barnard, and Missouri National Guardsman Sgt. Paul Brooks, all of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 252nd Combined Arms Battalion, drew hundreds of Soldiers from throughout the brigade.

JSS BABIL, TURNED OVER TO ISF DURING TRANSFER CEREMONY

Photos by Sgt. 1st Class Alex Licea, 3rd BCT PAO, 82nd Abn. Div., MND-B



BAGHDAD – A National Police officer assigned to the 3rd Regiment, 1st NP Brigade, 1st NP Division, renders a salute during the playing of the Iraqi national anthem as he and his fellow NPs stand in formation during the transfer ceremony of Joint Security Station Babil, May 26, in the al-Karradah district of eastern Baghdad. The transfer falls under the terms of the U.S.-Iraqi security agreement in which all U.S. combat forces must leave Iraqi urban areas by June 30.



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.

(Left) Capt. Andy Hercik, commander of Battery A, 1st Battalion, 319th Airborne Field Artillery Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, Multi-National Division—Baghdad, signs a handover document as his Iraqi counterpart watches during the transfer ceremony of Joint Security Station Babil, May 26, in the al-Karradah district of eastern Baghdad. The JSS was officially transferred to the Iraqi Security Forces under the terms of the U.S.-Iraqi security agreement, which took effect Jan 1 of this year, in which all U.S. combat troops must leave Iraqi urban areas by June 30.

82nd Airborne commander visits Paratroopers in Iraq

Photos by Sgt. 1st Class Alex Licea, 3rd BCT PAO, 82nd Abn. Div., MND-B



BAGHDAD – Maj. Gen. Scararrotti (right), commander of the 82nd Airborne Division, speaks with Staff Sgt. Matt Howard, of Cincinnati, Ohio, at the dining facility, May 21, at Joint Security Station Zafaraniya, located in the Karradah district of eastern Baghdad. Scararrotti, along with Command Sgt. Maj. Thomas Capel, senior enlisted leader of the division, stopped to visit the Panther brigade paratroopers deployed to Iraq. Howard is assigned to Battery A, 1st Battalion, 319th Airborne Field Artillery Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Abn. Div., Multi-National Division – Baghdad.



Command Sgt. Maj. Thomas Capel, senior enlisted leader of the 82nd Airborne Division, talks to Paratroopers assigned 5th Squadron, 73rd Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Abn. Div., Multi-National Division – Baghdad, May 21, at Joint Security Station Loyalty, located in the 9 Nissan district of eastern Baghdad. Capel, along with Maj. Gen. Scararrotti, commander of the 82nd Abn. Div., thanked the Paratroopers for their service.

Re-enlistments, promotions mark Memorial Day

Story by Sgt. Doug Roles

56th SBCT PAO

TAJI, Iraq –Soldiers from a 56th Stryker Brigade Combat Team unit took time, May 24, to recognize peers who have reenlisted while mobilized. The unit also welcomed newly-promoted sergeants into the noncommissioned officer ranks.

Dual morning ceremonies honored outstanding service and commitment before Soldiers of the 328th Brigade Support Battalion, based out of Lancaster, Pa., launched into an afternoon of Memorial Day weekend fun that included a cookout and softball and basketball games.

Twenty-three recently-promoted sergeants signed the NCO charge and read the Creed of the NCO in front of a battalion formation. Sixty-two Soldiers, who recently reenlisted, then walked the stage at the front of the pavilion to receive a U.S. flag and a certificate verifying the flag was flown in theatre.

“For everyone who reenlisted since the mobilization, we flew a flag for that Soldier, over the battalion TOC [tactical operations center] and presented it to them,” said BSB Command Sgt. Maj. Thomas Buck, of Myerstown, Pa.

Before the recognition of individual Soldiers, Lt. Col. Michael Curran, 328th BSB commander, from Pine Grove, Pa., praised the Soldiers for their work in Iraq.

“‘Outstanding.’ ‘Superb.’ ‘Magnificent.’ These are some of the things others are saying about you,” Curran said. “I couldn’t be happier. I couldn’t be more proud.”

Curran credited the battalion’s Soldiers with outstanding service, noting that Company B has posted a 99 percent equipment readiness rate while Soldiers with the battalion’s medical company are running a Level 1 care clinic serving 20,000 Soldiers. He said Guard Soldiers are staying in the service, getting promoted and passing

on their experience to younger Soldiers.

“I can’t tell you how many eyes you guys are opening,” Curran said. “It’s because of maturity, the maturity in the ranks. This is the life blood of our battalion. It’s the enlisted folks who are carrying us through this.”

The procession of new NCO’s formed on the stage for the reading of the Creed of the NCO. When they left the stage they joined a formation of the battalions NCO’s.

“This is the threshold. This symbolizes their leaving the enlisted corps and joining the time-honored NCO corps,” said 1st Sgt. Ed Cunningham, of Lancaster Pa.

Spc. Brandon Ober, a Lititz, Pa. resident, was among those who recently reenlisted. He has been in the Pennsylvania Guard for nearly six years.

“I’m just proud of my country. I love wearing the uniform and serving our flag,” he said. “What better place to reenlist.”

“It gives you a good feeling,” said Staff Sgt. William Flagg, of Philadelphia, a 26-year veteran, of re-upping in country.

“It was great we got to reenlist here. It means more to do it here,” said Master Sgt. Jeff Barrick, of Carlisle, Pa., while Sgt. Misti Ott, of Kutztown, Pa., said the deployment changed her mind about serving.

“I was not planning to reenlist,” Ott said, adding that she is now considering deploying again.

Curran told his Soldiers they are coming down the homestretch of their year-long mobilization.

“We have three more months to go. Make sure you keep an eye on your buddy,” Curran said.

The BSB’s mission is to supply the 56th Brigade with everything from fuel to food to medical care.

Mobilized in September 2008, the 56th has been in Iraq since late January. The brigade is scheduled to return to Pennsylvania in September. ✂



Photo by Sgt. Doug Roles, 56th SBCT PAO

With a salute, 1st Sgt. Randall Pritts (left), of Meyersdale, Pa., welcomes Sgt. Bronson Cass, of Lancaster, Pa., to the noncommissioned officer corps. Twenty-three recently promoted sergeants, such as Cass, were recognized by Soldiers of the 328th Brigade Support Battalion, 56th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, during a ceremony, May 24, in which 62 BSB Soldiers were also honored for reenlisting during their mobilization.

Don't Lose CONTROL

HMMWV / UAH ROLLOVER PREVENTION IS ALL ABOUT CONTROL:

- Crew Coordination.** Driver, senior occupant, gunner and passengers know their responsibilities; remain vigilant; identify and communicate potential hazards.
- Observe your surroundings.** Be aware of bridge limitations, low hanging power lines, soft-shouldered roads, and the presence of culverts, canals, and ditches.
- Never drive the vehicle beyond its limitations.** Avoid abrupt steering, excessive acceleration, and panic braking.
- Training.** Conduct mission briefings, rollover drills, and crew coordination refreshers prior to every mission.
- Reduce speed** in turns and on wet or unimproved surfaces.
- Organize all equipment.** Ensure everything is securely stored and tied-down to avoid projectile hazards in the event of an accident or rollover.
- Leaders** ensure only properly trained, qualified, and licensed personnel operate vehicles and equipment! Insist that all personnel wear seatbelts / gunner restraints.

ENGAGED LEADERS MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

ARMY SAFE IS ARMY STRONG

<https://crc.army.mil>

Field artillerymen practice putting rounds on target

Story by Sgt. Robert Jordan

30th HBCT PAO, MND-B

BAGHDAD—Soldiers of Battery A, 113th Field Artillery Battalion, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team, Multi-National Division—Baghdad, man an M109 Paladin self-propelled howitzer 24 hours a day at Forward Operating Base Mahmudiyah.

The cannon is ready to support U.S. and Iraqi Soldiers by destroying the enemy with explosives, firing smoke to mask advances and illumination rounds that light up several square blocks at a time.

“Fire mission, fire mission, fire mission”, announces the radio as Soldiers rush aboard the 32-ton howitzer.

The crew takes their stations inside the nearly eight-foot diameter turret of the vehicle, which is dominated by the breech of the several-ton cannon suspended in the center. Instantly the Soldiers begin preparing to fire.

Staff Sgt. Aaron Goodwin, of Lincolnton, N.C., the gun chief, confirms the mission and calls out the type of round and number bags of explosive powder needed to fire the shell to the target.

Pfc. David Laws, of Statesville, N.C., manhandles a nearly 100-pound high explosive shell into the back of the cannon from a rack bolted to the side of the turret.

Spc. Jason Wenzel, of Lincolnton, places bags of powder by hand behind the shell and closes the breech.

Goodwin enters the coordinates of the target into the onboard computer and turret and cannon move in unison, aiming the weapon.

The driver, Pfc. Michael Thomas of Belmont, N.C., of revs the engine, providing the power needed for the tons of steel that are moving into aiming position.

“Prime,” says Goodwin over the engine noise.

Laws takes the finger length primer used to ignite the powder behind the shell. He sets the primer in a small hole at the back of the cannon.

The crew braces against the walls, clear of the path of the cannon’s recoil.

“Fire,” Laws pulls the lanyard, turning his body away from the cannon.

Flames shoot out the front of the cannon as the round flies to its target many miles down range.

Everything moves, the cannon recoils three feet back inside the turret, the vehicle rolls several feet backwards. The crew is shaken and anything not bolted down is thrown about the turret in a haze of smoke and dust.

“End of mission,” Goodwin says. ✂



Photo by Sgt. Robert Jordan, 30th HBCT PAO, MND-B

Pfc. David Laws, of Battery A, 113th Field Artillery Battalion, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team, loads a high explosive 155 mm artillery round during a registration fire mission at Forward Operating Base Mahmudiyah, Iraq May 19. Laws is from Statesville, N.C.

30th HBCT Soldiers use unorthodox training regimen to build endurance

Story by Spc. Ruth McClary

30th HBCT PAO, MND-B

BAGHDAD—Seven Soldiers of Company A, 120th Combined Arms Battalion, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team, grunt and moan as they lift humvee shock springs and tires to build strength and endurance for upcoming missions.

The 20-minute high intensity workout is called the Tabata, a variation of the fitness training the platoon performs three days a week.

The workout, established in 1996, is named for its creator, Dr. Izumi Tabata, of Tokyo. It incorporates timed, maximum intensity exercise in short bursts, followed by a resting period.

“This is good combat training,” said Sgt. Gavin Hutchins, a squad leader in 2nd platoon, of Jacksonville, N.C. “We are building up our bodies to carry ammunition cans and heavy supplies when we go out on missions.”

In this workout, the Soldiers perform an exercise rotation for 20 seconds, and then rest for 20 seconds. They complete a five-exercise rotation at eight sets each.

Not only does the regimen prepare troops for the rigors of combat, as it mimics the movements of knocking down doors and removing debris during a mission, it’s helping one Soldier become healthier.

“I came into this unit with high blood pressure,” said Spc. Ronald Gardner, an infantry driver from Salisbury, N.C. “It was (at a high of) 154 ... now it’s 115 over 70, so this workout is saving my life.” Gardner has lost 40 pounds using this workout.

The rotation exercises include carrying the springs, lifting and holding the larger springs, hitting a humvee tire with a sledge hammer, pulling the tire with straps and variations of push-ups.

The Soldiers said the humvee shock springs range from 30 to 45 pounds, and the tires weigh about 300 pounds each.

“The tires were given to us by the supply sergeant, and the rest of the stuff we got from the dump,” said

Hutchins.

The Soldiers began cross fitness training in Kuwait. A certified instructor there told them about the Tabata program and then trained them to push it to the limit.

“If you got anything left after this workout, you are wrong,” said Spc. Daniel Beck, the platoon sergeant’s radio operator, of Elkins, N.C.

The Soldiers exercise on the basketball court at 3 p.m. The temperature is more than 100 degrees, with no covering or shade to help block the sun. A hint of breeze blows, but not enough to dry the sweat that drenches all of them. The dirt from the springs migrates to the Soldiers hands, arms, and clothing. Yet, they keep holding on.

Hutchins said the platoon has lost 100 pounds as a group since they began working out in Kuwait, about a month ago.

“These guys are going to be strong in a short period of time,” said Hutchins.

As the sweat pours down his face he shouts, “Cross fit or die!” ✂



Photo by Sgt. Robert Jordan, 30th HBCT PAO, MND-B

Spc. Daniel Beck, a radio operator with Company A, 120th Combined Arms Battalion, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team, Multi-National Division—Baghdad, lifts two 45-pound humvee springs as part of the Tabata cross fitness training program at Forward Operating Base Mahmudiyah, Iraq May 17. The Elkin, N.C. native prefers the Tabata workout in the sun to lifting in the gym.



Photo by Sgt. Robert Jordan, 30th HBCT PAO, MND-B

First Lt. Jason Hobson, of Arlington, Va., platoon leader with Company A, 120th Combined Arms Battalion, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team, Multi-National Division—Baghdad, strikes a 300-pound tire with a sledgehammer as part of a 20-minute Tabata cross fitness training program at Forward Operating Base Mahmudiyah, Iraq May 17. The workout simulates combat movements of sprinting, lifting ammo or other heavy weights and moving sections of walls or other debris during a mission.

Economic concerns overshadow security gains in Ghazaliyah

Story by Staff Sgt. Peter Ford
MND-B PAO

BAGHDAD – Ghazaliyah, once known as one of the most dangerous areas in Baghdad, had many local citizens concerned about security. Recently, Ghazaliyah has become much safer, due in part to the security efforts of the Coalition and Iraqi Security forces.

“Over the next month, Coalition forces will be moving from the cities, leaving the responsibility of security totally to the Iraqi Security Forces,” said Lt. Col. John Richardson, a native of Tallahassee, Fla., commander of 5th Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division. “Although the transition has not technically transpired, I must say the Iraqi Security Forces are performing admirably.”

Since security is no longer the primary concern of the local residents of Ghazaliyah, the people are now more concerned with a better quality of life.

“I don’t hear people of Ghazaliyah express much concern about security anymore, they are more concerned with the economy,” said Richardson. “That means we are taking another step in the right direction to help build a better Iraq.”

Over the past seven months, U.S. troops have teamed up with the Government of Iraq, local officials and the ISF to make some much needed improvements to the community. Through fierce determination and an unselfish effort to improve the Ghazaliyah district, many improvements have already been made.

“The Coalition forces have been instrumental in many of the improvements in the area. They have provided the community with solar lights along the streets and four pump stations for sewer,” said Sheik Razak, a local leader of Ghazaliyah. “They have done more than help make improvements to the area, they have provided over 450 people with jobs,” he added.

These jobs allow workers to provide for their families and to further stimulate local businesses. With the development of new businesses, improvements will continue to be made in Ghazaliyah.

“We are not just fixing the broken infrastructure, we are implementing real sustainable improvements and helping the GoI to build its capacity to support the population,” said Richardson. “As the GoI continues to build capacity to support the local population, the CF will step aside and the GoI will take full responsibility for the population.” ✂



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

Col. Joseph Martin, from Dearborn, Mich., commander of 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, greets local leaders before the Ghazaliyah improvement ceremony, May 20. Martin attended the ceremony to honor the improvements made by the Iraqis in the community of Ghazaliyah.



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

Lt. Col. John Richardson, of Tallahassee, Fla., commander of the 5th Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, gives a speech during a Ghazaliyah improvement ceremony, May 20. “Today we honor the efforts of the leaders of Iraq for improving their community,” said Richardson.

NEWS

Iraqi Soldiers, Longknife Troopers discover weapons, make arrest

Multi-National Division – Baghdad PAO

BAGHDAD – Iraqi Security Forces and Multi-National Division—Baghdad Soldiers arrested an individual and discovered a weapons cache, May 25, in the Mansour district of northwest Baghdad due to a tip from an Iraqi civilian.

At approximately 2:30 a.m., Iraqi Soldiers serving with the 4th Battalion, 54th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division, working on a tip of weapons trafficking, partnered with Troopers serving with Company A, 5th Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad to search the area and found three mortar rounds, two rockets and one bag of ball bearings.

The Soldiers arrested an individual who was at the house at the time and transported him to a secure location for further questioning.

An Iraqi Army explosive ordinance disposal team arrived on site to properly dispose of the weapons.

The incident is under investigation.

ISF, MND-B arrest seven during Baghdad operations

Multi-National Division – Baghdad PAO

BAGHDAD – Iraqi Security Forces and Coalition Forces Soldiers arrested 7 criminals in three different operations in northwest Baghdad and Abu Ghraib May 30 – June 1.

At approximately 11:00 p.m., May 30, Soldiers serving with the 2nd Stryker Battalion, 112th Infantry Regiment, attached to the 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, Multi-National Division—Baghdad, arrested four individuals while conducting combined patrol operations with Iraqi Security Forces in the Abu Ghraib district west of Baghdad.

During the patrol, the Soldiers noticed two suspicious males and as the convoy approached their position, the individuals fled to a house.

The Soldiers followed the individuals to the house and arrested the males and two females who were with them after three of the individuals tested positive for handling bomb making material.

At approximately 10:30 a.m. May 31 Soldiers serving with the 5th Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd HBCT, 1st Inf. Div., MND-B and Iraqi police serving with the Sayafinah National Police arrested a wanted criminal with a warrant in the Ghazaliya neighborhood of northwest Baghdad.

The individual is believed to be responsible for an explosively formed projectile attack on Coalition forces.

At approximately 5:30 a.m. Longknife Troopers, working with Iraqi soldiers serving with the 4th Battalion, 22nd Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division and Iraqi Police Officers serving with the Safaya National Police, arrested two wanted individuals with warrants in Ghazaliya.

The Soldiers and Police Officers found 29 AK-47 assault rifles and one SKS assault rifle in the individuals’ possession and confiscated the weapons.

The arrested individuals were moved to secure locations for further questioning.

The incidents are under investigation.

1st Air Cavalry Soldiers arrive at Camp Taji

Photos by Sgt. Travis Zielinski and Spc. Alun Thomas, 1st ACB, 1st Cav. Div. PAO



CAMP TAJI, Iraq—Under the cover of night, Soldiers from the 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, Multi-National Division—Baghdad, arrive at Camp Taji, Iraq, May 20, for their year-long deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Soldiers flew in on a CH-47F Chinook helicopter from Company B, 2nd Battalion, 4th Aviation Regiment, Combat Aviation Brigade, 4th Infantry Division.



A group of Soldiers from the 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, Multi-National Division—Baghdad, prepare to guide newly arrived comrades off a CH-47F Chinook helicopter which transported them to Camp Taji, May 20 – their final destination – as they begin their year-long deployment conducting aviation operations in support of MND-B.

1st ACB readies to run missions in Iraq

Story by Sgt. Travis Zielinski

1st ACB, 1st Cav. Div. PAO

CAMP TAJI, Iraq—A great amount of knowledge of the surrounding area and operational success is gained by a unit when it is deployed to Iraq for a year.

Before the transfer of authority between the incoming and outgoing units takes place, there is a short time period where this critical information and lessons learned are exchanged. This time period is known as relief in place, or RIP.

For the 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, Multi-National Division—Baghdad, the amount of information being passed along from the 4th Combat Aviation Brigade, 4th Infantry Division, is a large amount, given the size of the air space 4th CAB covered around Baghdad.

“I think it is important for the [1st ACB] guys to get with our pilots that are flying on a daily basis so they can learn the hot spots of the area, some of the things we see as risks ... and see how we have (ran) this mission for the past year. We have been very successful,” said Captain Erin Braswell, from Houston, the commander for Company C “Medevac,” 2nd Battalion, 4th CAB.

Until the transfer of authority takes place, 4th CAB still has control of the mission in MND—B.

Our main focus, as aviators, is to draw from the pool of knowledge 4th CAB has gained from their deployment over the last year, said Capt. Alec Finley, from Pensacola, Fla., commander of Co. C “Medevac,” 2nd Bn., 1st ACB.

Because the pace of combat has slowed down quite considerably since our last deployment, veterans that are returning to Taji don’t really know what to expect, said Finley.

But 4th CAB has been here for the last 12 months and it is their knowledge that will get 1st ACB through the transition.

“After TOA, if there are improvements that we think need to be made on certain things, we will change them, but I think the main point right now (is to understand) that 4th CAB has been doing it this way for a reason and they have been at it for a year now,” said Finley. “I think they have a pretty good thing going.”

Along with the information the 4th CAB will be sharing, they are also transferring aircraft to the 1st ACB during the RIP.

“It is important for the Technical Inspectors from each unit to work together to get the aircraft transferred,” said Staff Sgt. Marvin Christy, from Dayton, Texas, a T.I. in Co. D, 1st Bn., 4th CAB.

Technical inspectors ensure the quality of work being done on the aircraft and are custodians of the extensive paperwork that shows the airworthiness of the helicopters.

“We work together to go through the entire airframe to see if any faults on the aircraft are on the books, to see if there are any critical issues and any flight issues,” said Christy.

“Once we are finished on the aircraft, we will go back to the office and go through the historical records to make sure all of the paper work is correct there,” he said. “This is a necessary step for continuity before we hand over the aircraft.”

For the 1st ACB, it is important to get a good idea of problems that could arise with the aircraft.

“Finding any deficiencies with the aircraft and getting them fixed before the aircraft transfer is important,” said Staff Sgt. Dunstin Kamrowski, from Galesburg Mich., a T.I. in Co. D, 4th Bn., 1st ACB.

“The aircraft are in pretty good shape for being out here as long as they have, the hours they have flown and the mission that they had,” said Kamrowski.

For the 4th CAB, it has been a long year and now going home is just around the corner.

“We are excited to see the Cav. guys coming in with such enthusiasm and chomping at the bit to do this mission,” said Braswell.

However, it is bitter sweet giving up the mission after spending a year ironing out the kinks and doing it successfully, but it was nice to see 1st Cav. patches come in, she said.

With a tenacity to do their job, the Soldiers of the 1st Air Cavalry Brigade are just waiting for their chance to run operations.

“I am absolutely looking forward to grabbing the reigns and taking over, I live for this,” said Kamrowski. ✂

(Below) Chief Warrant Officer 4 Charlie Dodd (left), from Little Rock, Ark., an AH-64D Apache attack helicopter pilot in the 4th Combat Aviation Brigade, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division—Baghdad, conducts a final walk around of the aircraft as Chief Warrant Officer 3 Mike Leipold (right), from Holidays Berg, Pa., an Apache pilot in Company B, 4th Battalion, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, MND-B, sets up the front seat before a local area orientation, at Camp Taji, Iraq, May 23. For aviators of the 1st ACB, a local area orientation is required, as part of the relief in place, before they can replace the 4th CAB.



Photo by Sgt. Travis Zielinski, 1st ACB, 1st Cav. Div. PAO

Technical inspectors from both the 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, Multi-National Division—Baghdad, and 4th Combat Aviation Brigade, 4th Infantry Division, complete a joint inspection of an AH-64D Apache attack helicopter, at Camp Taji, Iraq, May 22. The inspection is a necessary process for the aircraft to be transferred from 4th CAB to 1st ACB.



Photo by Sgt. Travis Zielinski, 1st ACB, 1st Cav. Div. PAO

Private 1st Class Jonathan Chai, from Cape Girardeau, Mo., an AH-64D Apache attack helicopter crew chief in Company D, 1st Battalion, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, Multi-National Division—Baghdad, and Spc. Ray Bilodeau, from West Palm, Fla., an Apache crew chief in Company D, 1st Battalion, 4th Combat Aviation Brigade, 4th Infantry Division, MND—B, work together on a main rotor head of an Apache, at Camp Taji, Iraq, May 22.



Photo by Sgt. Travis Zielinski, 1st ACB, 1st Cav. Div. PAO

Cav Soldiers help Firra Shia villagers during food drop

Story by Sgt. Jon Soles

MND-B PAO

BAGHDAD—The Annihilators of Company A, 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, attached to the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, did their part to help local villagers here during a humanitarian food drop with the Iraqi Army in the village of Firra Shia, west of Baghdad, on May 17.

The humanitarian food drop followed days of planning by the Soldiers of Co. A, and their Iraqi Army partners, both at Joint Security Station Aqur Quf west of Baghdad. The mission highlighted the ability to utilize military assets, both American and Iraqi, to meet needs in the community where the Soldiers live and work.

1st Lt. Michael Neel of Glendale, Calif., an armor officer assigned to Co. A 2nd Bn., 8th Cav. Regt., said humanitarian missions show the many facets of the American and Iraqi Soldiers ability to improve life for Iraqis. It is also key to overcoming past skepticism Iraqi citizens may have felt toward the ISF, Neel said. The lieutenant said some Iraqis had a fear of their military, dating from the Saddam Hussein era.

“I think it’s important for the community to see that the IA and the government of Iraq care just as much about them as we do,” Neel said. “In the past, they did not trust the IA, but now they trust them and see they can trust them as much as us.”

The Annihilators and the IA arrived at a school in Firra Shia with a truckload of food. The food bags consisted of rice, beans, cooking oil and tomato paste. Iraqi citizens who were identified to receive aid arrived, ready to claim their food. Men, women and children smiled as they accepted their bags from the back of an IA pickup truck. Neel said the Soldiers of Co. A and the IA worked to make the food drop a success through coordination. While distribution of the food was coordinated by the IA, the Annihilators took up defensive positions around the school to keep security.

“The most important thing is coordination – the language barrier and culture barrier,” Neel said. “You have to be aware of it at all times, but you have to be tactically aware at all times too.”

The mission’s purpose was more than just to help eliminate hunger, according to Neel. It was a way to maintain a good relationship between the Iraqi people, the ISF and American Soldiers.

“We go out on patrols and we talk to them. You get an understanding of the town or village area,” Neel said. “From a security standpoint, it increases our profile in the village itself.”

Even though a good relationship with the Iraqis is helpful, the Annihilators also want to let the ISF take the lead in humanitarian missions, according to Neel.

Staff Sgt. Valentin Arreola, an infantryman from Los Angeles, said he was pleased with the mission, and also noted that it was the ISF who handed out the bags of food.

“It went pretty well, nobody got hurt and everybody got their rations,” Arreola said. “We want the Iraqi people taking care of the Iraqis to get them to rely on them instead of us.”

The Soldiers of A Co. and their weapons can do much more than fight the enemy, and winning the peace often involves warriors taking on the role of the humanitarian. The Soldiers of Co. A lived up to their “Annihilator” nickname, helping annihilate hunger and improving the lives of Iraqi citizens. ✂



Photo by Sgt. Jon Soles, MND-B PAO

An Iraqi Soldier based at Joint Security Station Aqur Quf hands out a bag of food to an Iraqi woman at a school in the village of Firra Shia west of Baghdad. “I think it’s important for the community to see that the IA and the government of Iraq care just as much about them as we do,” said 1st Lt. Michael Neel of Glendale, Calif., an armor officer assigned to Co. A, 2nd Bn., 8th Cav. Regt.



Photo by Sgt. Jon Soles, MND-B PAO

1st Lt. Michael Neel of Glendale, Calif., an armor officer assigned to Co. A, 2nd Bn., 8th Cav. Regt., speaks to Sheikh Saad Turkey Hassan (left) and Kadhum Noman (center), a linguistics teacher, during a humanitarian food drop.

‘Steel Spike’ engineers complete work on FOB Justice

Story by 2nd Lt. Jessica Mayerovitch

46th ECB (H), 225 Eng. Bde.

BAGHDAD—The engineers of Equipment Platoon, Headquarters and Support Company, 46th Engineer Combat Battalion (Heavy), 225th Engineer Brigade, wrapped up several crucial upgrades at Forward Operating Base Justice in central Baghdad, May 25.

For three weeks, the engineers worked to reconstruct four firing ranges, build a helicopter landing zone and to rebuild an ammunition holding area (AHA) to provide a separate area for explosives in order to increase mission readiness for U.S. and Iraqi Forces.

“These are critical areas for the FOB,” stated Staff Sgt. Eddie Fortenberry, the non-commissioned officer-in-charge of the reconstruction efforts, from Columbia, Miss. “We need to get them up and running and in good working condition as quickly as possible.”

Rebuilding the ranges was very important to ensure that they were safe to use

for both Iraqi and Coalition Forces. One range was so badly damaged it had to be completely removed, while the other three required extensive repairs.

“By building up the ranges, we were able to ensure that no Iraqi civilians would ever be in danger,” said Spc. Colby Rees, of Hartford, S.D., NCOIC of the range project, 46th ECB (H).

With a time crunch to have the upgrades completed quickly, the engineers completed the demolition, upgrades and rebuild in under a week. This allowed the Soldiers at the FOB to continue training with very little interruption.

The helicopter landing zone was the largest undertaking, requiring the destruction of an old range, clearing of debris and leveling out so helicopters could land. The newly-completed area will allow units at FOB Justice the ability to use helicopters for medical evacuations and logistics.

The final stage of the upgrades was the rebuilding of the AHA. The main focus was to separate the area which held ammunition from the explosives to increase safety. ✂



Photo by Staff Sgt. Eddie Fortenberry, 46th ECB (H), 225th Eng. Bde

A heavy equipment operator from Equipment Platoon, 46th Engineer Combat Battalion (Heavy), serving with the 225th Engineer Brigade, uses a grader to spread sand and dirt from old Hescos barriers. The sand was used to level out the ground at the Helicopter Landing Zone.

Chief wants Army on long-term rotational schedule

Story by Elizabeth M. Collins

Army News Service

WASHINGTON - The Army could benefit from a permanent rotational schedule, similar to the Navy and Marine Corps, with four force groups of the Army in varying stages of operational readiness, the chief of staff of the Army said Thursday.

Gen. George W. Casey Jr. made the remarks at a military strategy forum hosted by the Center for Strategic and International Studies, explaining that the cycle would always have one group either deployed or available for deployments and a second acting as an operational reserve that could quickly respond to emergencies. The other two would be training or resetting from a deployment, with the goal of three years at home for every year of deployment.

"I define hybrid threats as diverse combinations of irregular, conventional, terrorist and criminal elements that are employed asymmetrically to go against our strength and weaknesses to allow the enemy to achieve their goals," Casey said. "So we are shaping ourselves to deal with those kinds of threats. All told, what we're trying to build is a versatile mix of (customizable) organizations that are organized on a rotational cycle to generate a sustained flow of forces for full-spectrum operations and to hedge against uncertainties, and to do that at a deployment ratio sustainable for an all-volunteer force."

To respond to such hybrid threats, the chief said that each rotation would include a diverse mix of heavy, Stryker and light forces. The Army could also generate one operational headquarters, four tactical headquarters, 14-15 brigade combat teams and about 75,000 enablers in artillery, engineering, civil affairs and psychological operations in each of the four segments. This would give commanders a range of options on the battlefield, and would include National Guard and Reserve Soldiers as well as active-duty troops.

This is crucial because Casey said that when he considers the future of war, he not only looks at Iraq and Afghanistan, but especially at Israel's confrontation with Hezbollah in Lebanon in 2006. In that case, a nonstate actor with state support used not only improvised explosive devices, but conventional and high-tech weapons such as anti-tank guided missiles, surface-to-air missiles, cruise missiles, unmanned aerial vehicles and secure cell phones and computers. He said the Israeli after-action report indicated that they had been so focused on counter-insurgency, they lost the combined arms skills and the ability to integrate air, fires and artillery they needed in this situation.

"That is a much more complex and difficult type of warfare and more and more I see the character of conflict in the 21st century as more like that than what we've been preparing to do all of these years," Casey said.

"The one thing we know about the future is that we're never going to get it quite right, so you have to be able to put together packages of forces that meet the reality that really presents itself, not the one you designed it to do. We believe the way we're organizing the Army will allow us to do that," he continued.

He believes America is engaged in a long-term ideological struggle that will only be exacerbated by globalization, technology, population growth - leading to competition for resources - weapons of mass destruction and countries and regions that are safe havens for terrorists.

As a result, Casey said that the military will probably need about 10 Army brigades and Marine Corps regiments for the next decade for actions in Iraq, Afghanistan and places we don't know about yet. That doesn't mean, he cautioned, that the Army has plans to stay in Iraq past the 2011 deadline to withdraw combat forces, only that the Army is prepared for an uncertain future.

"We have to prevail in protracted anti-insurgency campaigns and we have to win the wars we're in," he said. "We have to be prepared to help other countries build a capacity to deny their countries to terrorists. And it's not just us training military forces. It may be us helping train police forces. It may be us helping build rule of law institutions and a range of other things."

Casey said that acceptance of this rotation schedule is the most significant thing that could come from the upcoming Quadrennial Defense Review. ✂

Army fields new MRAP rollover trainers

Story by Sgt. Alex Snyder

3d Sustainment Command Expeditionary Public Affairs

CAMP BUEHRING, Kuwait - The U.S. military is fielding a new vehicle rollover simulator to troops in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The simulator is the Mine-Resistant Ambush-Protected Egress Trainer, or MET, and is the military's latest initiative to prepare troops how to react in the event of a rollover.

According to Army statistics, there were 121 non-hostile-related MRAP rollover incidents in the military between Nov. 1, 2007 and Mar. 31, 2009. Since April 2007, the military has fielded approximately 12,000 MRAPs.

"The training was definitely beneficial," said Sgt. 1st Class Marlon L. Williamson, first sergeant with Headquarters Company, 49th Movement Control Battalion, after going through the training. "Hopefully all Soldiers will be able to go through this so they experience what it feels like to go through a rollover just in case they do become a part of one."

The MET consists of a vehicle cab mounted to two rotating wheels on a raised platform, and is based on an earlier humvee rollover trainer.

Unlike its predecessor, however, the MET comes in five variants for different MRAP models currently fielded by the military - the RG-33, RG-31, MaxxPro, Caiman and Cougar.

Although the MET system currently exists at only three locations - Camp Buehring and two camps in Afghanistan - this will soon change.

By the end of June, MET systems will spread to 20 locations, including 13 camps in Iraq and six in Afghanistan, said Bill Huggins, the project manager for Program Executive Office for Simulation, Training, and Instrumentation in Southwest Asia.

PEO-STRI is an Army agency responsible for developing and fielding new equipment.

Huggins said approximately half of the MET systems will be delivered to the 3d Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) in Iraq.

Future production models will be built with the ability to change out cabs to meet the training needs of troops at a given camp, Huggins said.

"Initially each site will only have a MaxxPro cab," Huggins said. "As the ... priorities from theater are determined, those follow on cabs will be built and shipped later."

A single MET costs approximately \$500,000, and each additional cab is about \$200,000, said Kristen Dooley McCullough, the public affairs officer for PEO STRI.

Because Buehring has three MET systems and three civilian trainers, it is capable of training up to 300 troops per day; at sites where only one system is available that number will be between 100 and 120, Huggins said.

Camp Buehring was selected as the location for three of the five initial trainers because it serves as the gateway to the Iraq theater and "touches every unit that deploys to Iraq," said Capt. Anthony A. Wheeler, an operations training officer for United States Army Central G3 (Forward) Training.

While many troops have applauded the prototype MET systems at Buehring, they have not been without some hiccups, training officials said. Recently, during one training session an escape hatch broke off its hinges when a Soldier attempted to climb out of a vehicle.

Huggins said it's not uncommon to encounter issues when equipment is fielded quickly because it hasn't undergone the usual two years of extensive testing.

"The bigger interest is getting training capability to the warfighters," Huggins said, noting these issues will be corrected on the "production" models fielded in coming weeks. ✂

ATTENTION! ATTENTION!

Mitigation of HVAC repairs

1. As a Mayor Cell we have the responsibility to our tenants to ensure that all living CHU's, Unit TOC's, CO CP's and other buildings on East Liberty LSA, have proper cooling and heating during times of intense heat and cold. The hot summer months provide an extremely challenging time and it is our responsibility to ensure that repairs are made in a timely fashion.

2. With the effective date above the following mitigation plan will take effect:

- P-1. All Living CHU's, TMC. In addition this will also pertain to TOC's, and CO CP's that have only one HVAC per room. These SOR's have a two (2) hour KBR response time and will be repaired/replaced within 4 hours. If there is more than one HVAC per room those SOR's will be treated as P-2's and will be repaired/replaced as below.
- P-2. AB units, TOC's, CO. CP's with more than one HVAC per room, DFAC, all other buildings not mentioned here or above. These SOR's have a 24 hour response time and a 72 hour repair/replace time. In most cases repair time will be prior to 72 hours.

3. In addition, if KBR personnel attempt to repair/replace any HVAC unit and are denied entry into a facility, then the Soldier/civilian will be advised that the SOR will be cancelled and another SOR will need to be completed. KBR personnel will report non-admittance to facilities to the Mayor Cell.

East LSA Mayor



Dragons hold joint humvee training for National Police

Story by Spc. Vincent Sottosanti

1BCT, 1CD PAO

BAGHDAD – Soldiers from 1st ‘Dragon’ Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, conducted joint driver and mechanic training at Combat Outpost Cashe South as part of an ongoing effort to strengthen Iraq’s security capabilities.

Their National Police brigade counterparts recently purchased 75 new humvees in order to phase-out pick-up trucks previously used for operations throughout the brigade’s sector of Baghdad. The new vehicles are now the primary service and patrol vehicle for the brigade, but operating and maintaining the machines could have been a major issue without adequate training.

The Dragons troopers held two training courses for master mechanics to share their skills with the NPs. The first course was a one-day drivers training course repeated over a four-day period and the second was a four-day course geared towards training maintenance techniques and procedures.

Soldiers designed the drivers training course to familiarize NPs with the capabilities and limitations of the humvees. NPs navigated the trucks through a slalom course fashioned out of orange pylons in a gravel parking lot as Dragon Soldiers served as a passenger and coach for each student; giving advice and encouragement to the Iraqi driver.

Police officers practiced mounting and dismounting the humvees in a simulated combat environment as they waited to navigate the driver’s course. The groups dismounted and quickly set-up a defensive perimeter time-after-time in order to perfect tactics. In another exercise NPs simulated a vehicle rollover.

Master mechanic Staff Sgt. Robert Mills, spearheaded the mechanics course geared at keeping the new humvees mission capable. Officer Shakree, an NP with over 20 years experience in driving and maintaining diesel trucks and three years with humvees, served as an assistant instructor.

“He is very knowledgeable and makes my job a lot easier,” explained Mills.

A short classroom section was presented at the start of the course, but within hours the officers found themselves working on vehicles in the motor pool. Humvees in need of maintenance served as a real-world mission as well as a joint training opportunity.

“I decided the best way for them to learn about the humvees was to dive right in with my guys and start fixing them,” said Mills.

Spc. Olon Forrest, of Reno, Nev., was one of the first Dragon mechanics awarded the opportunity to work with the NPs.

“It was great working with them,” said Forrest. “The Iraqis surprised me with their work ethic and mechanical knowledge.”

Dragon mechanics were able to offer advice and tips, not learned through manuals, but through years of training and experience with the trucks.

“My men are experienced mechanics, but the humvee is new for us,” explained Shakree, “This is a great way for us to familiarize ourselves with the humvee.” ✂



Photo by Spc. Vincent Sottosanti, 1BCT PAO, 1st Cav. Div., MND-B

Staff Sgt. Robert Mills (center), a mechanic with 1st Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, works with Iraqi National Police during a humvee maintenance course held as part of an ongoing effort to train Iraqi Security Forces. The 3rd Brigade, 1st Iraqi National Police Division purchased 75 new humvees to replace pick-up trucks used as service vehicles in their sector of Baghdad.



Photo by Spc. Vincent Sottosanti, 1BCT PAO, 1st Cav. Div., MND-B

Spc. Olon Forrest (left), a mechanic for 1st “Dragon” Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, explains the workings of the humvee suspension system during a maintenance course hosted by the battalion. The course is part of an ongoing effort to strengthen the security capabilities of Iraqi Security Forces.



2009



The Year of the Noncommissioned Officer

WANTED
TROOPERS FOR

FIRST CAVALRY DIVISION
RIDE INTO HISTORY WITH
"AMERICA'S FIRST TEAM"
REENLIST AND STAY CAV!
SEE YOUR CAREER COUNSELOR TODAY

All MND-B products (print stories, radio updates, and video products) can be viewed and downloaded at

dvids
www.dvidshub.net

MNC-I Commander tours Abu Ghraib market



BAGHDAD – Lt. Col. Christopher Beckett (second from left), a native of Madison, Conn., deputy commander, 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, Multi-National Division—Baghdad, speaks with Lt. Gen. Charles Jacoby (center), commander, Multi-National Corps – Iraq, during a May 28 walk-through of the Abu Ghraib Market west of Baghdad. The visit was also to highlight the recently opened Abu Ghraib Fire Station.

Col. Joseph Martin (right), a native of Dearborn, Mich., commander, 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, Multi-National Division—Baghdad, walks with Lt. Gen. Charles Jacoby (left), commander, Multi-National Corps – Iraq in a visit to the Abu Ghraib Market, May 28. The market was recently opened in a ceremony as a gift to the people of Abu Ghraib.



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

I.A.M. STRONG
INTERVENE * ACT * MOTIVATE

Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Prevention

INTERVENE
When I recognize a threat to my fellow Soldiers, I will have the personal courage to **INTERVENE** and prevent Sexual Assault. I will condemn acts of Sexual Harassment. I will not abide obscene gestures, language or behavior. I am a Warrior and a member of a team. I will **INTERVENE**.

ACT
You are my brother, my sister, my fellow Soldier. It is my duty to stand up for you, no matter the time or place. I will take **ACTION**. I will do what's right. I will prevent Sexual Harassment and Assault. I will not tolerate sexually offensive behavior. I will **ACT**.

MOTIVATE
We are American Soldiers, **MOTIVATED** to keep our fellow Soldiers safe. It is our mission to prevent Sexual Harassment and Assault. We will denounce sexual misconduct. As Soldiers, we are all **MOTIVATED** to take action. We are strongest...together.

www.preventsexualassault.army.mil
Military OneSource • 1-800-342-9647

Courage in combat earns medic valor award

Story by Sgt. 1st Class Alex Licea

3rd BCT PAO, 82nd Abn. Div., MND-B

BAGHDAD – For Sgt. James Carter, his Iraq experience this time around is shaped by his experiences during his first tour in 2006.

As a line medic, the 33-year-old from Company B, 2nd Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, Multi-National Division—Baghdad, was credited for saving the lives of his fellow Paratroopers during combat missions during one of the most violate times in Iraq during his last tour.

Now, as a non-commissioned officer, the St. Robert, Mo. native takes pride in teaching junior medics the responsibilities of the job. It is a change he welcomes.

“As an NCO, my role has changed in that now I am the teacher, and I try to incorporate realistic, tough training to prepare our medics for the great responsibility of being ‘Doc,’” he said.

It was that realistic training that gave Carter the skills he needed during an escort mission on July 17, 2007.

While serving as a platoon medic with Company D, 2nd Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, the company was conducting an explosive ordnance disposal escort mission along a major supply route in Samarra, Iraq.

During this patrol, a massive improvised explosive

device detonated inside a culvert, causing a catastrophic effect under a U.S. Navy EOD vehicle. The enormous explosion threw the vehicle high into the air, causing it to land on its side; trapping the three Navy EOD personnel inside.

Carter risked his life by entering the burning vehicle in order to extract the trapped personnel. As a result of the attack, two of the EOD members were killed in action, however Sgt. Carter’s was able to save one member of the team in an act of true bravery.

For his actions in Samarra, Carter was presented the Bronze Star Medal with valor device, May 22, by the 82nd Airborne Division commander, Maj. Gen. Curtis Scaparrotti, while visiting troops deployed to Baghdad.

Carter credits his fellow Paratroopers for allowing him to do his job under the most stressful of situations.

“They were right there with me pulling security while I worked to save lives,” he said. “I own a lot to them because I couldn’t have done it on my own.”

“Sgt. Carter represents the very best of the 2nd Panther Team and the Army. He displayed selfless-service by entering the burning vehicle multiple times embodying the spirit of the Army Values,” said Lt. Col. Louis Zeisman, commander of the 2nd Bn., 505th Parachute Inf. Regt., of Fayetteville, N.C. “Sgt. Carter’s actions truly define the meaning of a hero.”

Life in uniform is nothing new in Carter’s family. His father served in the Marine Corps and then the Army. Carter’s father also served two tours during the Vietnam



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Alex Licea, 3rd BCT PAO, 82nd Abn. Div., MND-B

Maj. Gen. Curtis Scaparrotti (left), commander of the 82nd Airborne Division, awards the Bronze Start Medal with Valor to Sgt. James. Carter Jr., of St. Robert, Mo., assigned to Company B, 2nd Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Abn. Div., Multi-National Division – Baghdad, May 22, at Joint Security Station Loyalty, located in the 9 Nissan district of eastern Baghdad. Scaparrotti awarded Carter for his actions in combat following an improvised explosive device attack on his convoy on July 17, 2007 in Samarra, Iraq.

conflict.

Along with his valorous award, Carter was recently selected as the 3rd Brigade Combat Team’s Medic of the Year during a board held in Baghdad. 

CASTLE

Soldier in Focus - Sgt. Jason Peura

Story by 1st Lt. Janeene Yarber

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

BAGHDAD - During Sgt. Jason Peura’s seven year career in the Army, the Soldier with the 46th Engineer Combat Battalion (Heavy), 225th Engineer Brigade, Soldier has certainly embraced the Engineer mantra: “Essayons!” or “Let us Try!”

With more than 50 pieces of rolling stock in the company’s war-tested fleet and only seven mechanics to maintain them, Peura, a light-wheeled mechanic from Montgomery, Ill., has kept a frenzied pace to sustain the operational readiness rates required to support construction missions over the past 12 months.

“He is one the strongest mechanics in the battalion; he has to be, there are only like five mechanics down there,” stated 1st Lt. Michael Cirillo, executive officer, Company A, 46th ECB (H).

In the last three months, Sgt. Peura provided combat maintenance support on over 15 movements across Baghdad. Due to the harsh conditions like extreme heat and sandstorms, maintaining heavy equipment in itself is a challenge. The dust wreaks havoc on hydraulic cylinders and the air conditioners require regular charging. In one of the most harrowing missions, he assisted with changing a blown trailer tire after midnight in a particularly precarious neighborhood.

Another time, Peura recovered a Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicle that had become entrenched in the mire after the road collapsed underneath it. He humbly shrugged off praise of his extraordinary personal effort to keep missions rolling as, “just doing his job.”

A former high school baseball and football standout, Sgt. Peura relies heavily on the lessons he learned from playing sports.

“You have to know how to work as a team,” Peura wisely summarized.

When he re-enlisted earlier this month, Sgt. Peura smiled faintly when he was referred to as the future of the non-commissioned officer corps.



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

Sgt. Jason Peura (center), of Montgomery, Ill., a light-wheeled mechanic, 46th Engineer Combat Battalion (Heavy), 225th Engineer Brigade, uses skill, adhesives and his ingenuity to fix a broken brake line. “You have to know how to work as a team,” Peura said about completing missions.



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

Sgt. Jason Peura, light-wheeled mechanic, 46th Engineer Combat Battalion (Heavy), 225th Engineer Brigade, prepares a crane to be tied down to a trailer after fixing the trailer’s brakes. As one of only seven mechanics in the company, Peura has stayed particularly busy during the 12 month deployment maintaining mission essential equipment.



**Catch the
NBA Finals
and the
Stanley Cup
Finals on**



Hot, tired and dirty: Teamwork makes it tolerable

Story by Sgt. Rebekah Malone

225th Eng. Bde. PAO, MND-B

BAGHDAD – The oppressive desert heat bore down on Soldiers hitting nails into smoldering plywood, persistent flies swarmed around their heads; cold water was in the far off distance, so they drank the hot water nearby.

With almost 12 month's boots-on-ground, Soldiers from Company B, 46th Engineer Combat Battalion (Heavy), 225th Engineer Brigade have completed hundreds of projects throughout Multi-National Division—Baghdad, including 15 B-Huts they are currently working on at Combat Outpost Carver in the south-eastern outskirts of Baghdad, May 18.

In the miserable working conditions, the last thing one would expect to hear is laughter or see easy smiles as friends, more than coworkers, endure the grueling heat of their second summer far from home, together.

For one Soldier, the team is the reason why.

Spc. Jason Rhodes, of San Bernardino, Calif., says working with his team makes the difficult working conditions tolerable.

"This is definitely a very good bonding experience!" Rhodes laughed. "You quickly learn everyone's likes and dislikes. You can't help but become close."

As Rhodes spoke, friends passed by laughing; calling out jokes and calling out nicknames to tease the 25 year old Soldier.

"With so many personalities, you have to adjust at first, but you learn boundaries," he said.

The engineers have worked exhausting hours building the wood units that

will provide housing for Soldiers moving out of Baghdad as the June 30 timeline nears. Each day provides the opportunity to construct another B-Hut that will bring comfort to the Soldiers moving in.

"We're not infantry Soldiers," Rhodes said, "but we're a necessary piece. Without us, Soldiers would be in living in tents in 100 plus degree heat. We are providing a comfortable living area."

Each B-Hut is built by a team headed by a junior enlisted Soldier in an effort to give experience and empower the younger Soldiers; this team must work in conjunction with the platoon as a whole.

On a broader scale, the 'team' mindset is ever present as the engineers work to give fellow Soldiers better housing accommodations.

"I get satisfaction out of our mission. Everyday we have infantry Soldiers check the B-Huts out and ask, 'when will they be ready?' or say, 'I can't wait to move in,'" Rhodes said. "It definitely helps boost their morale."

Staff Sgt. Ryan Peltier, of Brusly, La., the noncommissioned officer in charge of the construction project, said the camaraderie of the squad is second to none.

"We have probably the closest knit group of guys I've ever seen or heard of," Peltier said.

The team atmosphere is undeniable at the construction site; the old adage of "Together, everyone achieves more" is evident in the manner in which the Soldiers work. Rank holds no privilege as each Soldier drops what they are doing and runs to help hold a wall steady as it is hammered in place.

Without even realizing it, Rhodes swats at yet another pesky fly as he calls out to his friend and gets back to work. ✂



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

Spc. Jason Rhodes laughs with a fellow Company B, 46th Engineer Combat Battalion (Heavy), 225th Engineer Brigade Soldier while helping his team hold a wall in place, May 18. "This is definitely a very good bonding experience," Rhodes laughed. "You quickly learn everyone's likes and dislikes. You can't help but become close."

225th Engineers conduct joint concrete training

Story by 2nd Lt. Jessica Mayerovitch

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

BAGHDAD – Limestone, clay, sand and gravel. These may not seem like riveting discussion topics to some. For Iraqi engineers at Muthana Airfield, in central Baghdad, the components of concrete are their keys to the future of their country.

Sgt. James Jones, a concrete squad leader, 46th Engineer Combat Battalion (Heavy), 225th Engineer Brigade, and his squad spent the morning, May 15, training 6th Iraqi Army Engineers on how to conduct concrete missions and use the XM5 2600 concrete module, a mobile concrete factory. The training will give the IA engineers the necessary skills to conduct concrete construction missions and make road repairs.

"The Iraqi Army Soldiers seemed eager to learn, despite the language barrier," stated Sgt. Jones. "By the end of the morning I felt confident that they had all mastered the basics. They learned quickly."

The Iraqi Soldiers were quick to step up when the opportunity arose to get hands-on experience. They took turns operating the controls, getting on top of the concrete module to push the sand and gravel, and smoothing out the concrete in the holes.

"The Iraqis were really motivated to learn how we do things," stated Pvt. Ryan Doak, a concrete and asphalt specialist, 46th ECB (H), from Eugene, Ore. "After the first couple holes they were pretty much running the show."

Once the initial training was completed, the equipment platoon of Headquarters and Support Company, 46th ECB (H), worked alongside the Iraqi Army Engineers to set twenty-four bases for solar light poles on the road outside the gate to the airfield. They worked in the blazing heat, and managed to finish them all in one day.

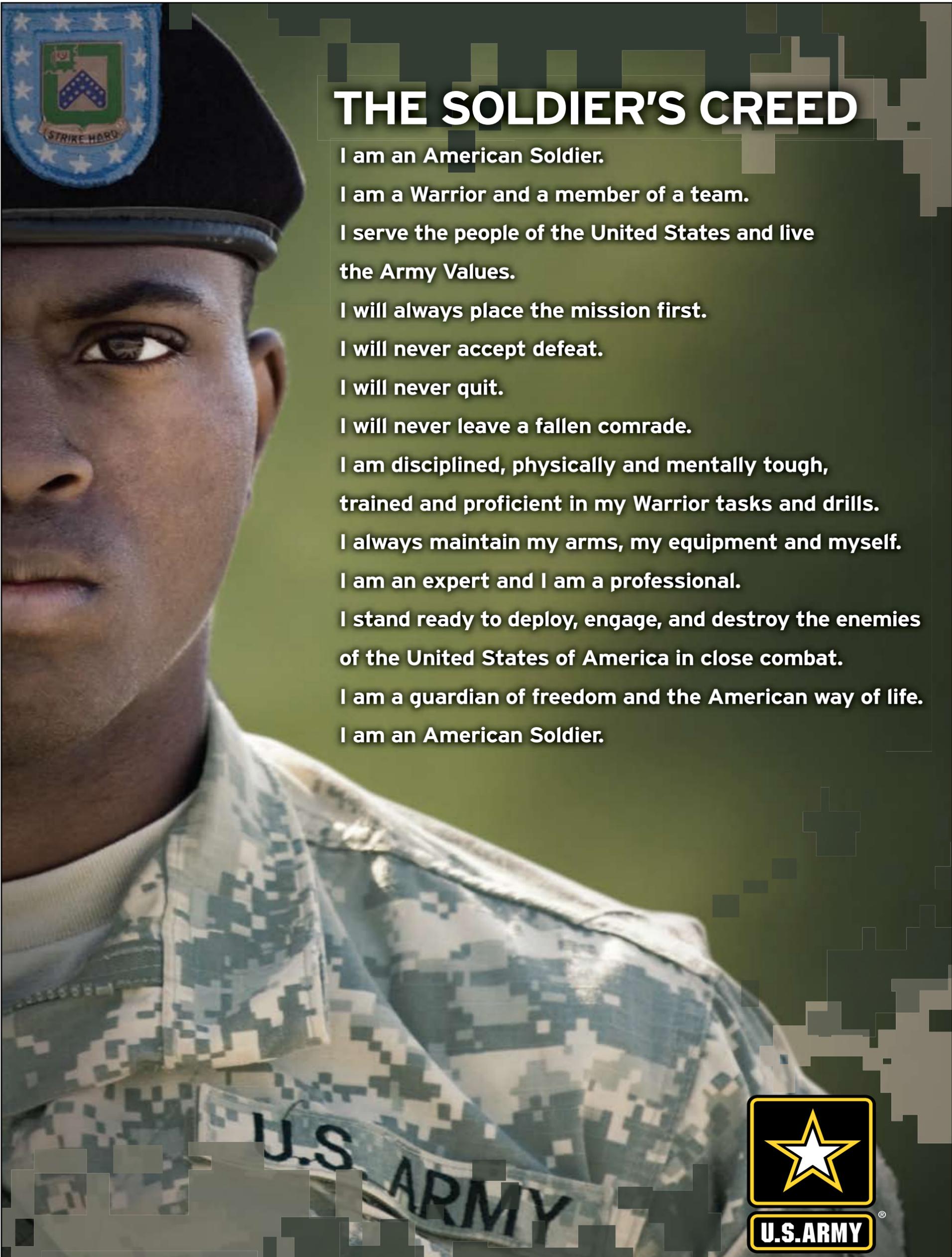
After completing the training and solar light mission, the Iraqi Soldiers invited the U.S. engineers to lunch, to enjoy fellowship with their new comrades. The Iraqi engineers prepared a curry chicken and rice dish that was a new experience for many of the American Soldiers.

"It was nice to experience the local culture," stated Pvt. Doak. "I was impressed by their hospitality." ✂



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

Cameron, Mo., native, Spc. Brooks Bolinger (left), a concrete and asphalt specialist, 46th Engineer Combat Battalion (Heavy), 225th Engineer Brigade, shows an Iraqi engineer how to pour concrete from the concrete module and spread it evenly during training, May 15, at Muthana Airfield. Once the initial training was completed, Iraqi Army engineers and "Steel Spike" Soldiers worked together to set twenty-four bases for solar light poles on the road outside the gate to the airfield. The Iraqi Soldiers were quick to step up when the opportunity arose to get hands-on experience. They were operating the controls, getting on top of the concrete module to push the sand and gravel, and smoothing out the concrete in the holes.



THE SOLDIER'S CREED

I am an American Soldier.

I am a Warrior and a member of a team.

I serve the people of the United States and live the Army Values.

I will always place the mission first.

I will never accept defeat.

I will never quit.

I will never leave a fallen comrade.

I am disciplined, physically and mentally tough, trained and proficient in my Warrior tasks and drills.

I always maintain my arms, my equipment and myself.

I am an expert and I am a professional.

I stand ready to deploy, engage, and destroy the enemies of the United States of America in close combat.

I am a guardian of freedom and the American way of life.

I am an American Soldier.



ARMY STRONG.™

goarmy.com

©2006. Paid for by the United States Army. All rights reserved.

Preparing IA for JSS Sadr City transfer

Story by Staff Sgt. Mark Burrell
MND-B PAO

BAGHDAD – As U.S. forces prepare Joint Security Station Sadr City to transition back to the Government of Iraq next month, security is vital as the Iraqi Army takes on more responsibility in the once volatile Jamilla neighborhood of Sadr City, here.

On patrol, May 27, the “Barbarians” of Company B, 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, aren’t concerned about the neighborhood’s reputation, but about accomplishing their mission.

“Where we’re moving to, it’s not very far,” said Pfc. Daniel Owen, a radio telephone operator and infantryman from Eaton Rapids, Mich., assigned to B Co. “We’re going to keep coming back here every mission day and we’re still going to interact with the local people and eventually turn it over to the Iraqi Army.”

In conjunction with the Iraqi Army, the Barbarians’ emphasis is on cooperating with the local population, securing their area of Sadr City and preparing to handover their area of operations back to the Government of Iraq, explained Owen.

“It’s not going to be a problem when they move out of JSS Sadr City,” added Maj. Abdulrahman Jabar Muhsen, 2nd Company commander assigned to 3rd Battalion, 4th Brigade, 11th Iraqi Army Division, who works daily with Coalition forces. “It’s the right thing to do, giving the government more responsibility.”

In order to transfer control of joint security stations like JSS Sadr City, there has to be communication and confidence on both sides that the area will be in good hands.

“It’s very good here,” said Abdulrahman with a businesslike squint. “The



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

Pvt. Justin Smith, a combat medic from Raeford, N.C., assigned to Company B, 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, takes a knee and pulls security with an Iraqi boy while on patrol in Sadr City, here, May 27. Smith and his fellow Soldiers go on two or three patrols per day.

security situation has improved because of the cooperation with the Iraqi Army and Coalition forces.”

“We’re trying to make a good relationship with the United States and the Iraqi Army,” added Owen. “If people in the community see that, then they think we’re doing good here, which we are.”

According to Owen, the Soldiers of Company B routinely go on joint patrols with their IA counterparts to meet with the people in the community and try to address their needs and concerns as much as possible.

“If we can talk to people and intervene somehow,” continued Owen. “Then maybe we can help them not do anymore bad things and help them take a positive role in their community. That’s our whole focus – to get the community working together.”

With the JSS handover quickly approaching, the cavalry troopers have stepped up patrols and increased efforts to reach out to the IA, explained Owen.



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

Sgt. Joseph Thompson, an infantryman squad leader from Killeen, Texas, assigned to Company B, 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, makes sure his squad is in the right place after looking at a map here in Sadr City, May 27. “The area is kinda grey,” explained Thompson, who is on his fourth deployment to Iraq. “They aren’t hostile, but they are a little standoffish. Although, a lot of people like us here, they want us here to continue to improve Iraq.”

his fellow Soldiers are placing more and more responsibility on the shoulders of their Iraqi Army partners, preparing for a smooth transition.

“It’s getting to the point where they want to do it on their own,” Thompson said. “The IA is getting to the point where they can function without us, so I say, you know, let them take the lead.”

With more and more joint security stations being transitioned back to the GoI, success hinges on Soldiers like that of Company B who have prepared their ISF partners for success in communities across Baghdad. ✂

“The IA have improved leaps and bounds,” said Sgt. Joseph Thompson, an infantryman squad leader from Killeen, Texas, also assigned to B Co. “They’ve transitioned into an army their country can be proud of... they’re really transitioning into a solid, steady work force.”

A testament to the cooperation among the U.S. Soldiers, IA and the local community is the active approach they are taking toward security, thus making Sadr City the safest it’s been in years, added Thompson, who is on his fourth tour to Iraq.

“Every major route has an Iraqi checkpoint,” continued Thompson. “The Iraqis are out searching vehicles, talking to people; they’re interacting and basically restricting what [insurgents] can do. If they can’t move, they can’t emplace [improvised explosive devices].”

According to Thompson, every day

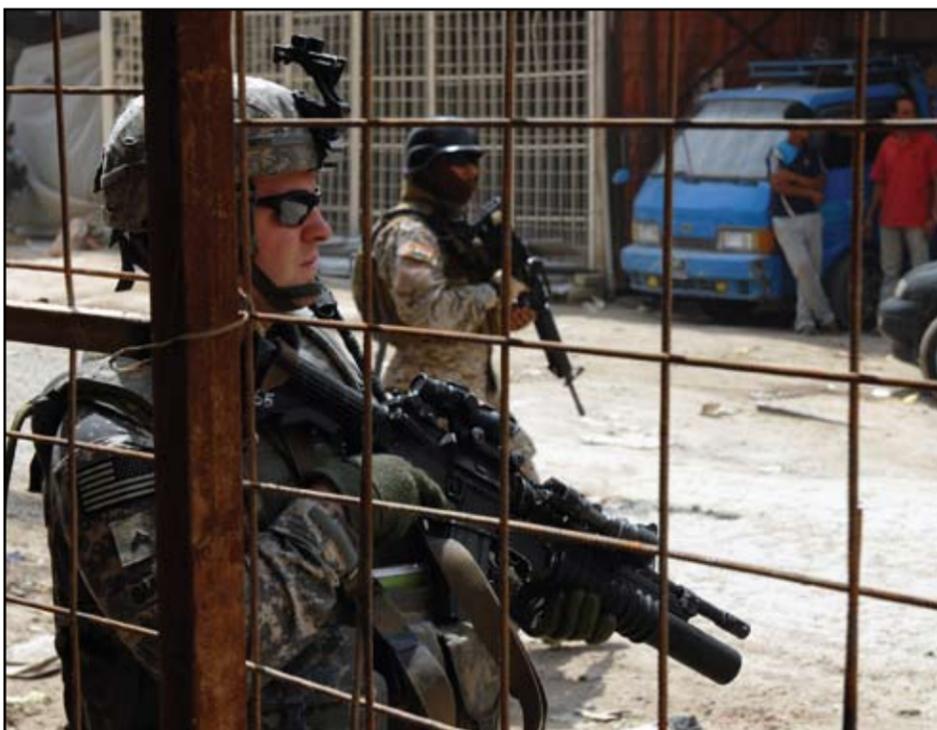


Photo by Staff Sgt. Mark Burrell, MND-B PAO

Cpl. Shane Smith, an infantryman team leader from Worcester, Mass., assigned to Company B, 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, secures the area as an Iraqi Army Soldier also keeps watch in an alley in Sadr City, here, May 27. Smith and his fellow Soldiers go on two or three patrols per day.



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

A taxi cab driver looks on as Pfc. Daniel Owen, an infantryman and radio telephone operator from Eaton Rapids, Mich., assigned to Co Company B, 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, takes a look at his map while on patrol in Sadr City, here May 27. “It’s better for the relationship,” said Owen about stopping and talking to local nationals while on patrol. “If you can actually go and talk face-to-face with them it means more. Over here, people like talking face-to-face.” The Soldiers are constantly patrolling their area of responsibility in order to disrupt insurgent movement and activity.