

Crossed Sabers

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MULTI-NATIONAL DIVISION-BAGHDAD

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What's Inside



Stryker infantry, engineers support Iraqi Army-led search for weapons caches, Pg. 7



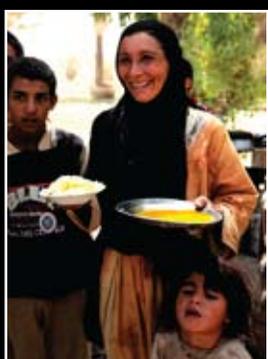
8th MP Soldiers, IP spread goodwill in Ameriyah, Pg. 13



Air Cav Medevac: On Call and Ready Pg. 14



Paratroopers, NP distribute wheelchairs in 9 Nissan, Pg. 20



New program looks to increase dairy production, Pg. 25

Dagger Soldiers, IA search sand, swamp for weapons

Story by Sgt. Jon Soles
MND-B PAO

BAGHDAD – The sight of a platoon of American Soldiers and their Iraqi Army partners in the desert with metal detectors and shovels may look like a treasure hunt, but was, in reality, a search for weapons caches reported to be hidden in the area.

In the ongoing effort to deny insurgents weapons, the Soldiers of Company D, 1st Combined Arms Battalion, 63rd Armor Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, dug into sand and swamp near the village of Khadir in Abu Ghraib, here, June 23.

The “Death Dealers” of Co. D, took a rugged dirt path to reach the sand dune, overlooking the nearby village of Khadir. While some Soldiers pulled security, others used metal detectors to look for buried objects that could be weapons or explosives. Capt. Jake Turner, an infantry officer who commands Co. D, said there was good reason to search the dune.

“We did a joint combat patrol in order to search for caches. There has been a previous history of caches in the area,” said Turner, a native of Millinocket, Maine, assigned to Co. D, 1st CAB, 63rd Armor Regt., 2nd BCT, 1st Inf. Div. “Beforehand, I talked with an [Iraqi Army] lieutenant about possible locations and we came up with a game plan.”

Spc. Thomas Marcello of Honolulu and Pfc. Daniel Parker of Jacksonville, Fla., both infantrymen assigned to Co. D, 1st CAB, 63rd Armor Regt., 2nd BCT, 1st Inf. Div., slowly walked through the sand and along gullies with metal detectors, which emitted an electronic whine. The Soldiers were listening for sustained beeps that are the tell-tale signs of buried metallic objects.

“If it’s a small piece, it will be a little beep, but if it’s something large, it will be a big beep,” said Marcello.

A few times, the detectors gave off beeps and IA soldiers from the 3rd Company, 4th Battalion, 24th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division, turned the sand with shovels. Only small pieces of rusted metal that appeared to be garbage were found. The Soldiers also searched a swampy area near the Euphrates River, but did not find any weapons caches. However, Turner said he was not discouraged, as the mission gave the Americans and the IA a chance to apply their training.

“Unfortunately, nothing was found,”



Photo by Sgt. Jon Soles, MND-B PAO

Pfc. Daniel Parker of Jacksonville, Fla., an infantryman assigned to Company D, 1st Combined Arms Battalion, 63rd Armored Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, endures the hot summer sun on a sand dune while searching for weapons caches with a metal detector near the village of Khadir, in the Abu Ghraib area, here, June 23. Despite the triple-digit temperatures, a light breeze swept over the elevation of the sand dune.

Turner said. “A lot of the times I measure success not by results, but by the continued improvement of the IA.”

Turner said the non-commissioned officers of Co. D, have done a good job of training the IA, and the training showed during the cache search.

“I am very proud of the NCO-led instruction in this company,” Turner said. “The NCOs have done a good job coach-

ing, teaching and mentoring for the IA.”

Turner also noted that the IA took up security positions on the summit of the sand dune, providing 360-degree security in all directions.

“I was very impressed that the IA instinctively went to the high ground without being told,” Turner said. “Today we got to see how the ISF training works in the real

See ~ **DAGGER** Pg. 3

Prayers from Baghdad

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

Prayer for a Hot Desert Afternoon

“When the sun rose, God provided a scorching east wind, and the sun blazed on Jonah’s head so that he grew faint. He wanted to die, and said, “It would be better for me to die than to live.” (Jonah 4:8)

My God, my God,
How can I survive this heat?
My strength pours out
Like water on the desert sand.
I am exhausted, yet must continue the mission.

And so I stand, scanning the landscape
from my guard tower.

Hoping for any distraction from the
sweat,

T-shirt soaked in sweat,

IOTV salt-stained with sweat.

Please send...

Ice for my cooler

And a breeze through the bunker
where I read.

Deliver me, Lord, from this agony.

Is it air conditioned in heaven?

I’m on my way!

Or, maybe, I’ll just stop by the DFAC
for a long lunch.

With Your help, O Lord,

I will survive one more afternoon

Until the setting sun

Brings blessed coolness once again.

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.

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DAGGER ~ From Pg. 1

world.”

In the real world, insurgents often use the natural cover of palm trees, swamps and sand dunes to hide weapons, but the continued efforts of American Soldiers and the IA working to uncover caches will keep insurgents on the run. ✂



Photo by Sgt. Jon Soles, MND-B PAO

After Pfc. Daniel Parker’s metal detector alerted to a buried metallic object, an Iraqi soldier from the 3rd Company, 4th Battalion, 24th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division, used a shovel to dig up the object. Parker, a native of Jacksonville, Fla., is an infantryman assigned to Company D, 1st Combined Arms Battalion, 63rd Armor Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division.



Photo by Sgt. Jon Soles, MND-B PAO



Photo by Sgt. Jon Soles, MND-B PAO

Staff Sgt. Jeff Paluso (right) of Chapman, Kan., and Staff Sgt. Maurice Jones of New Brockton, Ala., pull security from the summit of a sand dune while their fellow Soldiers and the IA conduct a cache search of the sandy area below outside the village of Khadir, in the Abu Ghraib area, here, June 23. Jones said the dune afforded the Soldiers the chance to take a position where they could see from all directions while providing security. “We are not usually in a place where we can see everything around,” said Jones. “It’s an excellent vantage point.” Paluso and Jones are both infantrymen assigned to Company D, 1st Combined Arms Battalion, 63rd Armor Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division. The “Death Dealers” of Co. D searched two areas near the village of Khadir in the Abu Ghraib area, here, June 23.

(Left) Pfc. Daniel Parker of Jacksonville, Fla., and Spc. Thomas Marcello of Honolulu, both infantrymen assigned to Company D, 1st Combined Arms Battalion, 63rd Armor Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, use metal detectors to search a large sand dune near the village of Khadir, in the Abu Ghraib area, here, June 23, during a weapons cache search with Iraqi Army soldiers. The cache search was conducted on a tip that insurgents were trying to hide weapons in the area.

First Iraqi NPs graduate from engineer academy

Story by Lt. Col. Pat Simon
225th Eng. Bde. PAO, MND-B

BAGHDAD – Playing with video game remote controls that power motorized robots may seem like a fun way to start the day.

For ten Iraqi National Police officers, this arcade experience is a critical part of training at a new engineer training academy at Camp Liberty, Iraq.

Members of 1st Mechanized Brigade, 2nd National Police wrapped up three days of training on clearing routes of improvised explosive devices, medical operations, and robotics at the Task Force Iron Claw Academy, 24 June.

The class, sponsored by the 225th Engineer Brigade, is the first time Iraqi National Police learned important engineer tactics at the academy.

Staff Sgt. Joseph Ray, from Baton Rouge, La., an instructor at the academy, said the NP officers were very attentive

because of what is at stake for Iraq’s future— security.

“The National Police conduct route clearance operations now. They see the threats now,” said Ray. “They will be able to take this experience back to their units and run their operations more effectively.”

Ray said the robotics portion of the training may have been a popular way to end the course, but his students understood the serious nature of using robots to track down killer IEDs.

“They can stand up on their own and perform independent security missions,” Ray said.

Iraqi Maj. Hussein, commander of the 1st Mech. Bde., 2nd NP agreed. Hussein said the Iraqi National Police appreciate this training because they are a visible force that provides security for the Iraqi people and for themselves.

“Now it gives us a lot of responsibility,” Hussein said. “We have to prove

our capability to protect the Iraqi population.”

Hussein is also very cognizant of the June 30 deadline for Coalition combat forces to leave the major cities. He said engineer training will give his officers added confidence and give the people of Iraq a sense of comfort.

“This is a historic event,” said Hussein. “The Iraqi people are confident in our ability to provide security. We are ready for the transition.”

At the end of the course, each NP officer received a certificate of course completion and congratulations from the commander of the 225th Eng. Bde., Brig. Gen. Owen Monconduit.

“Look to the left and right of you. You see a more capable National Police through a strong partnership,” said Monconduit in his speech to the graduates. “We look forward to more training as you improve your skills ... and strengthen your capabilities to further protect the people of Iraq.”



Photo by Lt. Col. Pat Simon, 225 Eng. Bde. PAO, MND-B

Staff Sgt. Joseph Ray (center), of Baton Rouge, La., watches as his students, members of the 1st Mechanized Brigade, 2nd National Police officers, operate the Talon robot during their training, June 24. The class was part of a three-day course on route clearance taught at the 225th Engineer Brigade’s Task Force Iron Claw Academy at Camp Liberty. Ray said the NP officers were very attentive because of what is at stake for Iraq’s future— security. “They will be able to take this experience back to their units and run their operations more effectively,” he said.



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150th Armored Reconnaissance Squadron troops train Daughters of Iraq

Story by Spc. Ruth McClary

30th HBCT PAO, MND-B

BAGHDAD – Loud chatter filled the room as ten women from the Daughters of Iraq gathered at an old high school in Yusifiyah, south of Baghdad, June 12, to train new hires, update information in the U.S forces database and discuss present conditions with officers of 150th Armored Reconnaissance Squadron, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team.

The female security program, an unarmed spin-off of the Sons of Iraq, started in October 2008 to work with Iraqi police to search women at check points in an attempt to reduce female suicide bombers and the threat of male bombers who may dress up like women in the area.

“This is one step in the process to help eliminate suicide bombers,” said Capt. Walter Hatfield, of Charleston, W. Va., about the Daughters of Iraq. “They do not carry weapons; their weapon is intuition.”

Female Soldiers of the 150th ARS served as training aids for the women to practice search techniques; three DOI new hires practiced those techniques with Sgt. Frankie Hibberd, from Charleston, W. Va., of Company D, 230th Brigade Support Battalion.

“Tell them, remember when they came in, I searched them,” said Hibberd to the interpreter. “Tell them to practice on me.”

Communication during the class was more visual than vocal as Hibberd used animated facial expressions and hand gestures to break language barriers when the interpreter was busy.

The women were entertained as she drew a question mark in the air to explain questioning suspects with large sums of money and the women gasped when Hibberd pulled out a small knife that a trainee missed during her



Photo by Spc. Ruth McClary, 30th HBCT PAO, MND-B

Sgt. Frankie Hibberd, of 150th Armored Reconnaissance Squadron, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team, stands in as a teaching aid, June 12, as a Daughters of Iraq practices search techniques. Hozei Jasim, a widow with five children, enjoys searching Hibberd, but was totally shocked when Hibberd pulled out a small knife after she completed the search.

mock search.

Hadia Hamwed Alwan, a DOI widow whose husband was killed by an insurgent bomb, smiled at Hibberd and said in English, “I love her, I love her!”

After the class, the women discussed their cur-

rent status with Hatfield and Capt. Jason Bowen, of Shady Springs, W. Va., from B Troop, 150th ARS. Hatfield and Bowen are negotiating with the Iraqi police to extend the DOI’s contract from June 30 to December.

“Although the program is well appreciated, these women have been working for three months and want to know when they will be paid,” said Entasar Yosif Yakoub, the manager of the 55 DOI workers in that area.

According to Hatfield, the change of command and misplaced paperwork is the cause of the pay issues for the women. Most of them are divorced or widows with children and are the sole providers for their households.

The women’s workday is from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m., three days a week, 15 days a month and they are paid about \$250 a month. Yet, most of them have not received any pay since they started, said Yakoub.

It’s a great concern officials are working on. Another concern is what will happen to the women after their DOI employment.

Hatfield asked Yakoub to attend the weekly community meetings and push for women’s rights, giving the women another course of action after DOI.

“Start attending the weekly community meetings now to push women’s rights, discuss medical needs and education so the women can get into these fields once DOI comes to an end,” said Hatfield.

At the end of the day, the DOI expressed their concerns to listening ears. Just a few years ago these women walked behind their men carrying loads, now as DOI, they stand behind their country seizing weapons and helping their streets become safer.

“You are helping to protect your community and families, this is a good thing you all are doing here in Yusifiyah,” Hatfield said as he addressed the women.

“I joined the DOI to support my kids and to help all of Iraq become safer,” said Hozei Jasim, one of the new trainees. ✂

Hurriyah clinic converts to solar power

Story by Sgt. Dustin Roberts

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

BAGHDAD – Another health clinic in northwest Baghdad was converted to a solar-powered facility.

The new and improved Dahkel Clinic was unveiled in a ceremony in the Hurriyah neighborhood of northwest Baghdad June 17.

As the main health clinic in the neighborhood, the clinic provides health care to about 500,000 Iraqi citizens.



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

Dr. Abbas, the deputy director general of the Iraqi Ministry of Health, speaks at the reopening ceremony of the Dahkel Clinic in the Hurriyah neighborhood of northwest Baghdad June 17. The clinic recently was fixed with solar panels on its roof, allowing the clinic to operate 24 hours per-day.

Before the panels were installed on the roof, it could only be powered for about six hours per-day.

Now it can run for up to 24 hours per-day.

“By using solar power we have rejuvenated this clinic,” said Col. Joseph Martin, who hails from Dearborn, Mich., commander, 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team “Dagger,” 1st Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad.

The Dagger Brigade worked with the Ministry of Health in the project to improve the clinic, which started in February.

“Now the Dahkel Clinic has the increased capacity to preserve medicine through the use of vaccine refrigerators, incubators for newborns and other medical devices,” said Martin.

Because of frequent power outages while running on Iraq’s power grid, surgical procedures were interrupted, vaccines were ruined due to the lack of refrigeration and the limited supply of fuel had to send patients home without proper health care.

“The green energy power supply eliminates all need for generators,” said Mahdi Jonny,” bilingual and bicultural advisor, 2nd HBCT. “With this great accomplishment we will give services for generations to come.”

The idea for the project came after the success of the Ameriyah Clinic in northwest Baghdad, which reopened with solar-powered capabilities earlier this year.

The brigade has also worked with the Government of Iraq to install solar-powered street lights throughout northwest Baghdad and Abu Ghraib County just west of the city.

“The improvements being highlighted here are an



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

Maj. Andrew Attar, a native of Bristol, Conn., joint project management officer, 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, inspects the newly installed solar panels on the roof of the Dahkel Clinic in the Hurriyah neighborhood of northwest Baghdad June 17. As the main health clinic in Hurriyah, the solar panels will keep the clinic powered longer, providing more service to 500,000 Iraqis.

example of Coalition forces’ ongoing partnership with the local government to provide essential services, specifically the Ministry of Health, in order to improve local health care capacity in Hurriyah,” said Martin. “We want to continue to chose projects that we can work together with the Government of Iraq, the district councils and the local neighborhood councils to complete, which are beneficial to the people of Baghdad.” ✂

JSS Oubaidy transfers to ISF

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



BAGHDAD – Lt. Col. Louis Zeisman (right), of Fayetteville, N.C., commander of the 2nd Battalion, 505 Parachute Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, Multi-National Division—Baghdad, signs a document along with a Iraqi Interior Ministry official during the transfer ceremony of Joint Security Station Oubaidy, June 20, in the 9 Nissan district of eastern Baghdad. The JSS was officially transferred to the Iraqi government 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.

An Iraqi Soldier looks on during the transfer ceremony at Joint Security Station Oubaidy, June 20, in the 9 Nissan district of eastern Baghdad. The JSS was officially to the Iraqi Security Forces during the ceremony. 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.



National Police officers assigned to the 8th NP Brigade, 2nd NP Division, and Paratroopers assigned to A Company, 2nd Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, Multi-National Division—Baghdad, stand in formation during the transfer ceremony of Joint Security Station Oubaidy, June 20, in the 9 Nissan district of eastern Baghdad. The JSS was officially transferred to the Iraqi Security Forces during the ceremony.

30th HBCT Soldiers teach Iraqis vehicle maintenance

Story by Staff Sgt. Mark Burrell

MND-B PAO

BAGHDAD – Some things are not learned just by reading a book, especially if that book is in another language. The Iraqis of 1st Company, 3rd Battalion, 7th Brigade, 2nd National Police Division know exactly what that's like.

Soldiers from Company A, 252nd Combined Arms Battalion, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team taught their Iraqi counterparts how to properly perform a preventive maintenance, checks and services (PMCS) inspection on their humvees June 12 in Doura here.

"Most of the stuff on the humvees is written in English," said Sgt. Adam Mahaffey, the PMCS instructor for the day, assigned to Co. A, 252nd CAB, 30th HBCT. "And they don't have the [training manuals], so they have a lot of questions."

According to Mahaffey, this is the first class they have given their NP partners and the Iraqis were enthusiastic and grateful for the tips from the Americans.

"The tips I got about how to use the cables to start my humvee when the battery goes out were great," added Sgt. Saef Fadhel Nassir, the commander's driver assigned to 1st Co., 3rd Bn., 7th Bde., 2nd NP Div. "Also, I didn't know it was important to clean the fans out in the back of the humvee, so now I'll do that more often."

Before, whenever a problem arose, the NPs brought their humvees to their higher headquarters, explained Saef. Now, with the hands-on training that the Americans helped the inquisitive NPs perform, they might be able to prevent vehicle breakdowns, he added.

"Everything I showed them, I wanted them to also do instead of just talking to them about it," said Mahaffey, a broad-shouldered infantryman from North Wilkesboro, N.C. "You can't learn if you've never been in a vehicle. The only way to do that is to get your butt in a seat."

The NPs are using their vehicles on a daily basis and the proactive North Carolina National Guard Soldiers asked them if they had a maintenance schedule. The NPs said they really didn't have one, explained 2nd Lt. Charles Kratochvil, an infantry platoon leader also assigned to Co. A, 252nd CAB, 30th HBCT.

"So this is something we'll do periodically to check and see if they're doing maintenance and make sure their vehicles are serviceable," continued Kratochvil, who is from Paterson, N.J. "It shows that we do care for them and it's one of many different things we do to help them out."

"The more we interact with them and help them out, the more willing they are going to be to help us out," said Mahaffey. "We want to build a relation-



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

Capt. Moaed Qasin Mohammed (left), a company commander and his driver, Sgt. Saef Fadhel Nassir (center), both assigned to 1st Company, 3rd Battalion, 7th Brigade, 2nd National Police Division, take a look under the hood of a humvee as Sgt. Adam Mahaffey (right), an infantryman assigned to Co. A, 252nd Combined Arms Bn., 30th Heavy Bde. Combat Team, supervises a vehicle maintenance class at an NP company headquarters in Doura, here, June 12. "I think they retain quite a bit," added Mahaffey from North Wilkesboro, N.C. "They've had the vehicles for a little while, so they knew a bit about them already."

ship with the Iraqis and show them how to maintain their vehicles so they can continue patrolling with us and hopefully take over."

At the end of the class, the NPs and the U.S. Soldiers shook hands and patted each

other on the shoulders and communicated things that didn't need to be translated.

"When we do things," said Saef. "We like to do them with Americans because it shows the community that we are strong together." ✂

Tarmiyah welcomes graduates of electrical course

Story by Capt. Maggie White

56th SBCT, MND-B PAO

TARMIYAH, Iraq – The Ministry of Electricity celebrated the addition of 20 new linesmen to help restore much-needed electrical services to a rural area north of Baghdad.

The Tarmiyah Electrical Line Repair Team School held its graduation ceremony in the city of Tarmiyah, June 18. The event culminated six months of training for area citizens to gain the skills necessary to work for the ministry and help improve the electrical service in the area.

The class included three weeks of classroom instruction followed by 23 weeks of on-the-job-training. First Lt. Richard Weber, assistant engineer for 56th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, Multi-national Division—Baghdad, has been working with the ministry to oversee the progress of the course.

"The classes are entirely Iraqi-run and taught," said Weber, from Harrisburg, Pa. "The U.S. Government helps fund the classes by providing supplies

such as the vehicles and tools to conduct training. At the end of the course, they have learned valuable skills for the Ministry of Electricity to work on their local networks."

According to Weber, after graduation,

the students will go on to work in teams for the MoE. Tarmiyah is a rural area about 18 miles north of Baghdad. The graduates will be responsible for helping to restore the electrical infrastructure for much of the Tarmiyah region.

Engineer Hasham

Kareem, the engineer director for the Tarmiyah and Taji areas, spoke at the graduation ceremony. Kareem helped run the course for the new graduates.

"This celebrates the end of training. This graduation is good for Iraq, the Tarmiyah [area], and the city," Kareem said. "This program is a success because of the cooperation between the U.S. and Iraqi government, and we hope the U.S. will continue to back us in the future."

"The lessons we learn can be used to fix and troubleshoot all types of electrical problems. This is a way to serve the people of Iraq and the Ministry of Electricity"

-- Ali Jassim, 26, a new graduate of the ELRT course



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

Two graduates of the Electrical Line Refurbishment Team course proudly show off their diplomas. Twenty students graduated the six-week class which gave them skills needed to work on electrical infrastructure repairs in the Tarmiyah area for the Ministry of Electricity. The event culminated six months of training for area citizens to gain the skills necessary to work for the ministry and help improve the electrical service in the area.

The ELRT program brings attention to the rural provinces of Baghdad. The students have already proven their work to the ministry by the end of the course, so they can expect to continue working in their areas to improve the electricity situation.

"This class has been a good experience," said Ali Jassim, 26, a new graduate of the ELRT course. "The lessons we learn can be used to fix and troubleshoot all types of electrical problems. This is a way to serve the people of Iraq and the Ministry of Electricity." ✂

Stryker infantry, engineers support Iraqi Army-led search for weapons caches

Story by Sgt. Doug Roles

56th SBCT PAO, MND-B

NUBAI, Iraq - A platoon of Pennsylvania Army National Guard Soldiers played a support role in an Iraqi Army-led, battalion-level search for weapons caches near Nubai, north of Baghdad, June 16. The search of several areas discovered no caches but achieved another level of success for the 56th Stryker Brigade Combat Team's 1st Battalion, 111th Infantry Regiment and the unit's IA partners.

"This is actually the first time the Iraqi Army as a brigade has planned a mission and executed on a battalion level," said Capt. John Mance of Norristown, Pa., commander of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1-111th. "This is a first for their division and their brigade."

Soldiers from the 56th SBCT's 856th Engineer Company joined the HHC, 1-111th for the mission. Engineers and IA Soldiers together swept several large areas with metal detectors as a military working dog and handler zig-zagged across fields and along canals.

The 56th SBCT Soldiers linked up with the IA unit near Nubai, northwest of Camp Taji, in the early morning hours. IA Soldiers had already begun searching a field adjacent an IA checkpoint as the HHC Soldiers rolled up in their Strykers.

"It's a clearing operation. They are in the lead," Mance said. "Our mission is follow and support the 2-36th [2nd Battalion, 36th Brigade] IA in that clearance operation."

Mance said the purpose of the operation was to "erode insurgent resources." One Soldier said the brigades' work of searching miles of terrain day after day pays off by depriving insurgents of explosives.

"Personally I think finding weapons caches is why we haven't been messed with; we've hardly been hit," Pfc. Harry Gill, Doylestown, with the 856th, said. "I think



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

An Iraqi Army Soldier uses a metal detector to search a pile of loose straw June 16 during an IA-led effort to search for weapons caches near Nubai, north of Baghdad. Pennsylvania Army National Guard Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 111th Infantry Regiment, and 856 Engineer Company, 56th Stryker Brigade Combat Team supported the effort to clear a number of areas.

what we're doing is really critical."

Gill, who works as a stone mason in Pennsylvania, said he also believes efforts to examine improvised explosive devices when they're found and to use Handheld Interagency Identity Detection Equipment, for tracking a person's biometric information, has improved security.

Staff Sgt. Joshua Bentley of York, a squad leader with the 856th said engineers routinely link up with the brigade's infantry units to provide sensitive metal detectors for searches – a job Soldiers refer to as "sweeping the floor."

Bentley, a communications and sign language interpretation major at Bloomsburg University, deployed to Iraq with the 28th Infantry Division's Taskforce Dragoon in 2004-2005. In that tour he was attached to a Pa. Guard infantry company as an engineer to assist with route clearance operations and mortar firing. This time around, he's showing younger Soldiers the importance of conducting searches for caches despite most searches turning up no explosives.

"It's a lot quieter now. With all the new agreements, it's different," Bentley said of months of decreased violence and a partnership with an improving Iraqi security force. ✂



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

An Iraqi Army Soldier digs through some loose dirt June 16 during an IA-led effort to search for weapons caches near Nubai, north of Baghdad. Pennsylvania Army National Guard Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 111th Infantry Regiment, and 856 Engineer Company, 56th Stryker Brigade Combat Team supported the effort to clear a number of areas.



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

Soldiers from Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 111th Infantry Regiment, and 856th Engineer Company, 56th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, enter a quarry near Nubai, north of Baghdad, June 16 during a search for weapons caches.

'Charlie Med' Soldiers take care of Camp Taji

Story by Sgt. Doug Roles

56th SBCT PAO, MND-B

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – Pennsylvania Army National Guard Soldiers staffing Camp Taji's main medical clinic are prepared to treat the worst of battlefield injuries but hope the bulk of their cases continues to be sprained ankles and upset stomachs. Soldiers of Company C "Charlie Med," 328th Brigade Support Battalion, 56th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, operate the facility which provides basic healthcare to the thousands of Soldiers and civilians on the post which is located north of Baghdad.

"All walks of life come in here, said Sgt. 1st Class Jeremy Strathmeyer of Lititz, Pa., the clinic's noncommissioned officer in charge. "We treat anything from a Hesco barrier getting dropped on someone's foot to gunshot wounds. We've got the only Guard [facility] and we're the highest level of care on the FOB [forward operating base]."

The clinic's lab workers can do urine analysis and blood counts. Tests that can't be performed at the clinic are sent to a combat support hospital in Baghdad. The medical clinic supports about 10,000 Soldiers and up to another 12,000 civilians at Taji.

Strathmeyer, a medic who has been with Co. C for 10 years, said there are "a lot of different working pieces" to the facility. He explained that the level-two care clinic operates out of three buildings and provides dental care, radiology, pharmacy and physical therapy. Level one care is medical attention provided in the field and at battalion aid stations. The level two clinic here can be thought of as the step between field care and the Combat Support Hospital.

"We run a full pharmacy. We've written over 9,000 prescriptions since February," Strathmeyer said.

The 56th SBCT arrived in Iraq in late January and will be deployed through

late summer. The BSB's Company C is headquartered in Lancaster, Pa.

Strathmeyer, a York, Pa. police officer who deployed to Ramadi, Iraq in 2004 with the Pennsylvania Guard's 2nd Brigade, 28th Infantry Division, said this tour marks the first time Co. C has deployed as an entire unit. He said his Soldiers have met the challenges of deployment and said that many of the unit's Soldiers are in the healthcare field as civilians – as emergency medical technicians or emergency room nurses.

"We have a lot of civilian experience that came with us," Strathmeyer said. "That's a level of talent that the active component normally doesn't have."

About 50 Soldiers work at the facility. The staff includes six registered nurses.

Sgt. Christopher Walker of York, Pa., a healthcare specialist, said it's "ankles, knees and wrists, sports injuries" that he sees most often when it comes to injuries. On the sickness side, he said gastrointestinal issues and dehydration are most common.

Besides seeing patients at the clinic, Walker serves as the company's training coordinator to the Iraqi Army, Walker also works with his Iraqi counterparts on the other side of post.

"We're married up with the level two [clinic] on the Iraqi side," Walker said.

Part of the routine for Walker and other Soldiers is to check supplies and equipment at the start of each of the clinic's three shifts.

"Especially the trauma stuff. That's the equipment that if we need it, we need it," Walker said.

Back in Pennsylvania, Walker runs emergency medical service calls with York's White Rose Ambulance and he volunteers with his local fire company. He said his civilian experiences aid his mission here.

Walker said Soldiers of the unit were glad to get to their job of "taking care of soldiers" after months of train-up in the

U.S. He summed up the job as keeping Soldiers in the fight and taking care of the civilians who support Soldiers at Taji, be it working in the dining hall, doing laundry or maintaining housing.

Sgt. Angela Horst of Silver Springs, Md., a physical therapy technician with Company C, helps get and keep Soldiers ready for missions when they're dealing with injuries. Horst, who as a civilian is a physical therapy technician at Walter Reed hospital in Washington D.C., said she has treated Soldiers who would've had to "tough it out" or go home if it weren't for physical therapy being available at the clinic.

"I think we've been very effective," she said.

Horst said much of her job is explaining to patients what they have to do to help themselves. In some cases, she has to tell a patient what he or she needs to stop doing to recover.

"A lot of them don't want to stop doing what's been hurting them," she said of Soldiers who are used to challenging runs or workouts in the weight room.

"It's been very educational. All in all I think this has been a good experience," Horst said of her deployment.

While the mission of the Charlie Med Soldiers is to care for others, Strathmeyer said he advises his Soldiers to care for themselves too. He attempts to give each of his Soldiers a day off each week.

"Mental and physical health are really important, especially in the medical field," he said.

Strathmeyer said it's a pretty close-knit crew that works at the "Charlie Med." Soldiers there often take part in recreation activities together and try to stay positive on the job.

"We try to keep it as upbeat in here as we can because we do deal with the sick and injured 24/7," he said. ✂

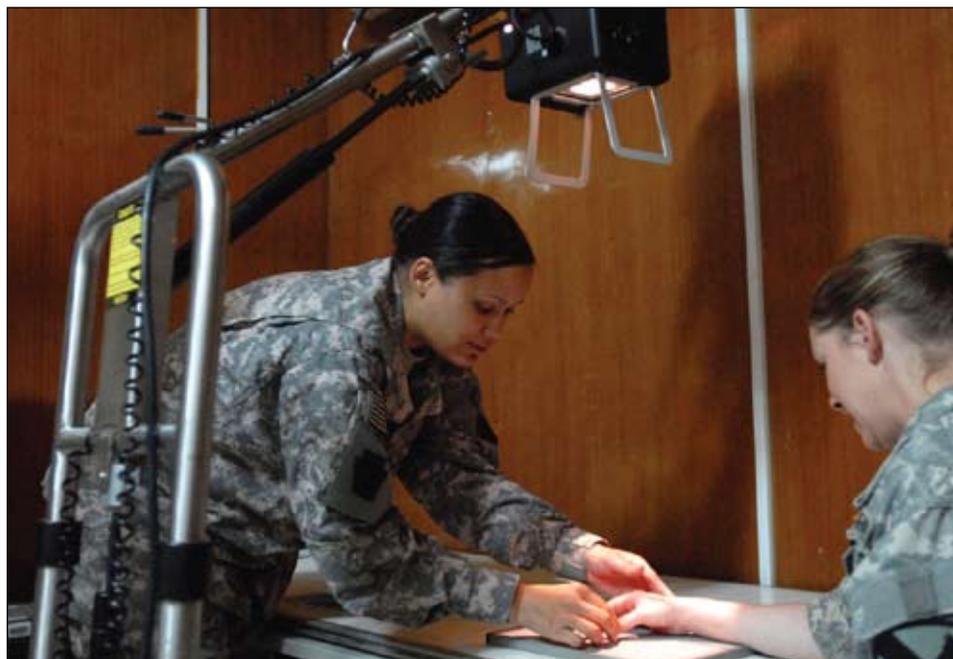


Photo by Sgt. Doug Roles, 56th SBCT PAO, MND-B

Spc. Beatriz Graveley (left), of Washington D.C., a radiology specialist, with Company C "Charlie Med," 328th Brigade Support Battalion, 56th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, positions a patient's wrist for an X-ray June 13 at Camp Taji, Iraq, a base camp north of Baghdad. The 56th SBCT arrived in Iraq in late January and will be deployed through late summer. The BSB's Company C is headquartered in Lancaster, Pa.



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

Sgt. Kolleen Zimmerman, of Yukon, Pa., a medical lab technician, with Company C "Charlie Med," 328th Brigade Support Battalion, 56th Stryker Brigade Combat Team begins a blood draw from a patient June 13 at Camp Taji, Iraq, north of Baghdad. The clinic's lab workers can do urine analysis and blood counts. Tests that can't be performed at the clinic are sent to a combat support hospital in Baghdad. The medical clinic supports about 10,000 Soldiers and up to another 12,000 civilians at Taji.

Aviation medical director works from the field

Story by Sgt. Travis Zielinski

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

CAMP TAJI, Iraq—Playing a vital role in Army aviation, flight surgeons help keep aviators healthy and air-worthy.

Having the director of aviation medicine readily available at the unit's side is a great source of knowledge and a valuable asset for the 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division medics as they conducts aviation operations in Iraq.

It is a mutual benefit for both parties involved, said Col. Stephen Burnstein, from Enterprise, Ala.

Burnstein, a leading expert in aerospace medicine attached to the 1st ACB, has an opportunity to get away from his office where he writes regulations, sets policy and deals with new medicines, but rarely gets out.

"I like being here because I get to see more patients. In the states I don't get many opportunities to see patients, so I am having a blast taking care of folks out here," said Bernstein. "I enjoy trying to get the patients to improve their life styles and health, not just for the Army's needs, but really just for themselves. I want these Soldiers to be able to move on and live healthy lives."

With Burnstein's 20 years of experience in medicine, he gives the medics of the 1st ACB a great deal to gain from lessons learned.

"He is very knowledgeable and has been in the medical field for a long time; it is nice to have somebody with that many years or professional experience on hand," said Staff Sgt. Matthew Kolkowski, the brigade surgeon noncommissioned officer in charge for the 1st ACB. "A lot of people go to him for his extensive knowledge base, for the daily applications that he practices, so he is very useful."

Burnstein is very willing to pass along the knowledge he has learned over the years of practicing medicine.

"I have seen a lot of patients over the years, I am a family practitioner first and an aerospace medicine specialist second," said Bernstein. "Hopefully I bring that level of experience, knowledge and support with mentoring and teaching to the medics,"

"I want these guys to ask questions; it is a great way of learning and passing along knowledge, not only do they learn from me, but I will pick up things from them as well," he added.

The choice for Burnstein to deploy with the 1st ACB was not a difficult decision for him to make, especially since his boss, Col. Joe McKeon, the aerospace medicine consultant to the surgeon general of the Army, came with Air Cav last time it deployed.

"As we looked at what flight surgeons were available in the inventory that had not been with line units yet, and my name being on that list, it is kind of hard to pass your own name up, so that is how I made it out here," said Bernstein.

"It was not hard for me to decide that I wanted to come play with the Air Cav. — especially when the person I was working with came out with [the 1st ACB] last time.

Burnstein has a large amount of responsibilities as the director of aviation medicine and now, because he is deployed, extra challenges are added to his duties.

"Through the consultants for the surgeon general, we work to set the [policies], guidance, standards, regulations and training [for aviation medicine] and have impact in all those areas as well as fielding and staffing of personnel," said Bernstein.

"The challenge with being out here is I can't be as easily engaged because I am not even in the same time zone or the state, so I have to rely on my partner-in-crime to help work some of the issues," he said.

Communication and internet access are one of the major factors that hinder the director of aviation medicine's ability to smoothly complete his job.

"Being out here, a lot of my responsibilities lie in answering emails, whether it comes from the active side, reserve side or guard side. Any chance I could ask for more bandwidth and a better phone service?" Bernstein asked jokingly.

Burnstein will be deployed with the 1st ACB until his replacement finishes training. Until that time, he has no problem staying with the Air Cav Bde., which is far away from the office-space environment he is used to.

Spending his time dealing strictly with the medical side of Army aviation, it is a good learning experience to be out here and see how an aviation unit actually operates, said Bernstein.

"... the brigade has been fantastic, so I am having fun," he said. ✂



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

Col. Stephen Burnstein, from Enterprise, Ala., director of aviation medicine, attached to the 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, conducts an examination on Pvt. Robert Warner, from Pocattelo, Idaho, a cook in Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 615th Aviation Support Battalion, 1st ACB, Camp Taji, Iraq, June 20.

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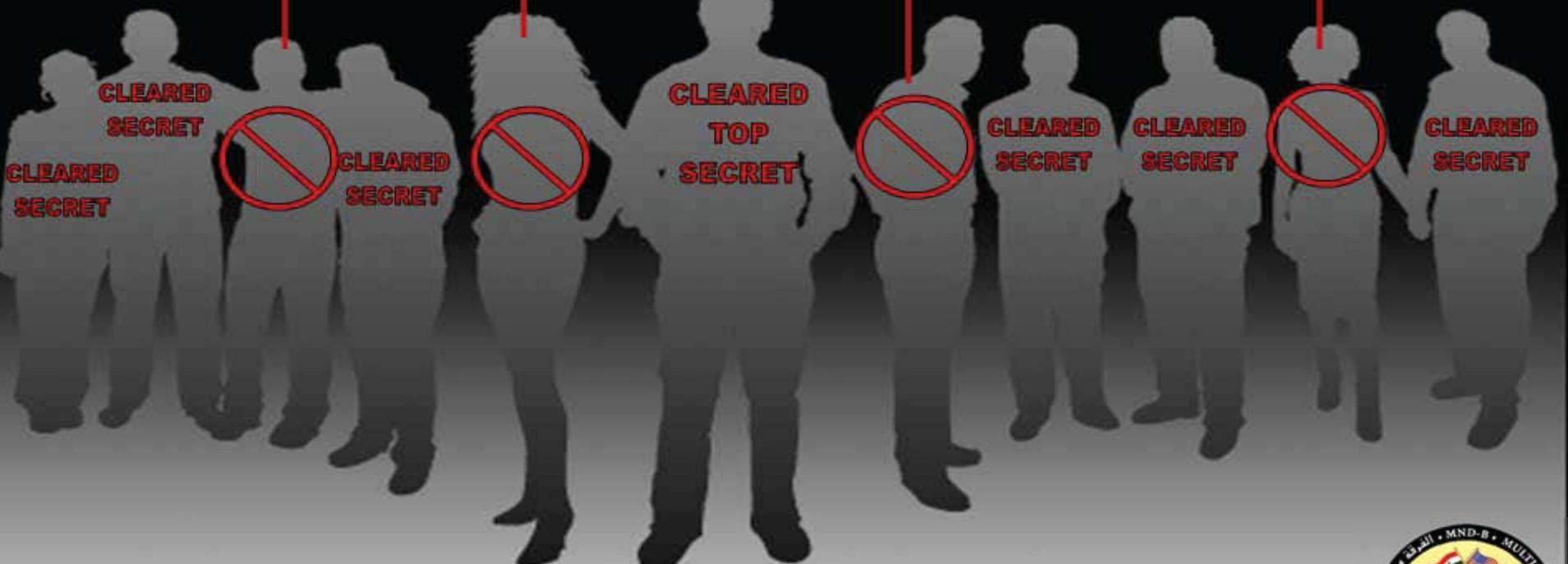
Photos by Staff Sgt. Mark Burrell, MND-B PAO



Nero, a German Sheppard military working dog, and his handler, Castle Dale, Utah native, Air Force Staff Sgt. Christopher Ebeling, a military working dog handler assigned to Camp Victory Provost Marshall's Office, lead a group of Soldiers from Company A, 252nd Combined Arms Battalion, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team, through a thick palm grove searching for weapons or explosives in Doura, here, June 13. Only a few months ago, Ebeling and Nero were in South Dakota with much cooler temperatures, but Ebeling said that one of the best things about German Sheppards is their ability to adapt quickly.

BAGHDAD – On only their second mission this deployment, Lasso, a German Sheppard military working dog and his dog handler, York Haven, Pa., native, Staff Sgt. Marcelo Figueroa, assigned to the Camp Victory Provost Marshall's Office, patrol along the side of a road on their way to search a palm grove in Doura, here, June 13. Lasso is on his third deployment to Iraq and is trained to smell weapons caches and explosives, according to Figueroa.

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“Black Knights”, Iraqis welcome summer with a splash

Story by Pfc. Bailey Jester

1 BCT 1 CD PAO, MND-B

BAGHDAD – Iraqi children in northeast Baghdad now have a fun place to cool off from the triple digit temperatures of summer.

Thanks to Soldiers of Company E, 1st “Black Knights” Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, attached to the 1st “Ironhorse” Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division Soldiers, and representatives from the Qaim Maqam and the District Advisory Council (DAC) that attended the grand opening of the Sha’ab pool, June 17, the event marks the end of a joint project in repairing the run-down aquatic center located here.

“The pool was designed to provide the families of Sha’ab a safe place for summertime recreation,” said Capt. William Murphy, a civil affairs team leader from Waltham, Mass.

Originally built in the early 1980s as the premier recreation facility of the area, the Sha’ab pool needed renovation work after more than 20 years of hard use by area kids and the demanding Baghdad environment, said San Antonio, Texas native, Capt. Brent Kinney, Co. E commander.

“After numerous times of asking and being denied any support from the Government of Iraq, Coalition forces and the United States military supported us,” said Ali Muften, the Adhamiyah DAC chairman.

The Sha’ab Neighborhood Advisory Council (NAC), with assistance from the Qaim Maqam, Ministry of Youth and Sport and Coalition Forces developed this renovation project for the area’s residents.

The \$450,000 project, funded by the Commander’s Emergency Response Program, renovated the swimming pool by replacing broken tiles, painting the pools’ surface, landscaping, reconstructing the shower and changing rooms and installing new pipe networks for the circulation system. Workers replaced the underground filter system that was corroded and filled with roots and debris from the lack of use for many years.



Photo by Pfc. Bailey A. Jester, 1BCT PAO, 1st Cav. Div., MND-B

A young girl stands at the top of a slide that leads into the children pool after the grand opening ceremony of the Sha’ab pool on June 17. “The pool is designed to provide the families of Sha’ab a safe place for summertime recreation,” said Waltham, Mass. native, Capt. William Murphy, a civil affairs team leader for the 1st “Black Knights” Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, attached to the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division.



Photo by Pfc. Bailey A. Jester, 1BCT PAO, 1st Cav. Div., MND-B

Mr. Hadi Hasan, the Adhamiyah Qaim Maqam, speaks at the grand opening ceremony of an aquatic center in Sha’ab, June 17. The Sha’ab Neighborhood Advisory Council (NAC), with assistance from the Qaim Maqam, Ministry of Youth and Sport and Coalition Forces developed this renovation project for the area’s residents.

“Because there were no written plans of the pool, finding the underground filter system was a bit difficult,” said Murphy. “Luckily, that was the only real problem we had. The pool will be self-sustaining so no major problems for the pool are foreseen.”

“The pool will be run very similar to an American YMCA pool,” Murphy added. “There will be a small entrance fee, lifeguards and access to showers and changing rooms.”

An entrance fee, of about 50 American cents, will cover expenses such as landscaping, maintenance and security.

“The hope is to see the neighborhood children use the facility as a way to have fun, without getting into trouble,” said Ali Muften. ✂



Photo by Pfc. Bailey A. Jester, 1BCT PAO, 1st Cav. Div., MND-B

Mr. Hadi Hasan, the Qaim Maqam (left) and the District Advisory Council chairman cut the rope at the grand opening ceremony of the Sha’ab pool on June 17. Ali Muften (right) stated that he hopes that the neighborhood children will use the pool as a form of summer recreation to keep themselves out of trouble.

8th MP Soldiers, IP spread goodwill in Ameriyah

Story by Sgt. Jon Soles

MND-B PAO

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – An Iraqi Police officer clutches his weapon in one hand and a black garbage bag in the other hand, with eyes fixed ahead, scanning every corner and open window in the Ameriyah neighborhood during a joint patrol, here, June 17.

American Soldiers, walking behind the IP, offer support and more sets of eyes. Suddenly, an IP produces something colorful and furry from the bag, handing the stuffed animal to an Iraqi child.

Soldiers said a good way to earn the trust of the Iraqi people is to show them by their actions that they want to help.

The “Demons” of the 463rd Military Police Company, 93rd Military Police Battalion, 8th Military Police Brigade, established a good rapport with the people of Ameriyah through constant foot patrols, according to Staff Sgt. Preston, a military policeman assigned to the 463rd MP Co.

“We are pretty much known for our dismounts,” O’Neal said. “We usually help the Iraqis. We go and listen to the people.”

Some of the help provided by the Soldiers have included repairing equipment and distributing toys and school supplies. O’Neal, a native of Dixon, Mo., said he likes to work with his hands and is eager to use his skills to help the Iraqis. On this patrol, he helped an Iraqi install brakes on his car in front of a mechanic’s shop.

“Just last week we helped fix a generator,” O’Neal said. “I like to work on things. It shows them we’re people too and we’re here to help.”

The children who met the Soldiers on patrol received stuffed animals from the IP. The toys were donated to deployed troops with the purpose of delivering the toys to children.

“I feel proud because [the children] were happy. We kind of want to reflect to the civilians that we are good,”



Photo by Sgt. Jon Soles, MND-B PAO

An Iraqi girl receives a stuffed animal from an Iraqi policeman during a joint patrol with Soldiers of the 463rd Military Police Company, 93rd Military Police Battalion, 8th Military Police Brigade, in the Ameriyah neighborhood, here, June 17. The stuffed animals were donated to deployed Soldiers and were delivered to the IP by the “Demon” Soldiers of the 463rd MP Co.



Photo by Sgt. Jon Soles, MND-B PAO

Staff Sgt. Preston O’Neal, a military policeman assigned to 463rd Military Police Company, 93rd Military Police Battalion, 8th Military Police Brigade, takes time to use his mechanical skills to help an Iraqi identify a problem with the brakes on his car during a joint patrol with the IP in the Ameriyah neighborhood, here, June 17. O’Neal, a native of Dixon, Mo., said he works on his own cars at home and likes to help Iraqis he sees on patrol in Baghdad.

said Bakar Saad Najin, a policeman with the Ameriyah Iraqi Police station.

“It feels good because they’re not very privileged,” added Pfc. Joel Cantu, a military policeman assigned to 463rd MP Co.

When Soldiers first arrived, children were standoffish,

according to Cantu, a native of Bakersfield, Calif., but now they greet the Soldiers and IPs.

“When we first got here, we gave out 100 soccer balls and they liked that.”

O’Neal said the goodwill shown toward the Iraqis and their children will hopefully reap continued security gains in the future, when the Iraqi Security Forces are fully responsible for keeping Ameriyah safe.

“If they are comfortable with the IPs, and know they are here to help, they will most likely give information,” O’Neal said. “It helps people maybe get them to trust the IPs more.”

The simple act of handing out stuffed animals to children can make a difference in building new bridges of trust between the community and the ISF. Children who know they can trust the IP appointed to protect them can grow up upholding the law of their land and strengthening the peace. ✂



Photo by Sgt. Jon Soles, MND-B PAO

Pfc. Joel Cantu, a military policeman assigned to 463rd Military Police Company, 93rd Military Police Battalion, 8th Military Police Brigade, pulls security on a street in the Ameriyah neighborhood, here, June 17, during a patrol with the Iraqi Police. Cantu, a Bakersfield, Calif., native, said he has seen a positive change in the neighborhood during his time with the 463rd “Demon” MP Co. and IP.



Photo by Sgt. Jon Soles, MND-B PAO

Two Iraqi boys smile after receiving stuffed animals from Iraqi Police in the Ameriyah neighborhood during a joint patrol with the IP and Soldiers of the 463rd Military Police Company, 93rd Military Police Battalion, 8th Military Police Brigade, here, June 17. The stuffed animals were donated to deployed Soldiers to be distributed to Iraqi children. “It helps with the perception that the IPs are good, they are here to help,” said Staff Sgt. Preston O’Neal, a military policeman from Dixon, Mo. “The locals get the sense that the IPs care.”



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

BAGHDAD — As the phone rings, silence fills the room, all eyes and ears become focused on the Soldier answering. The word “urgent” is uttered and the sequence begins...

“Mission!” is yelled throughout the hallway and aircrews scramble. A once quiet building is now filled with the commotion of a well-organized and practiced procedure.

Depending on the type of call, the aircrews of C Company “Medevac,” 2nd Battalion, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, have time limits from when they receive the call to when they leave the ground and are en route to the point of injury.

During an urgent call, the aircrews have just minutes to leave the ground.

“Once the nine-line medevac [request] is received, the crew chief and a pilot will grab their gear, head out to the aircraft and prep it up to the point of engine start,” said Capt. Alek Finley, medevac detachment officer in charge for the Co. C, 1st ACB, from Pensacola, Fla.

“During that process, the pilot-in-command is checking the grid coordinates and plans the route to the pick-up; while the medic gets any follow up information from the unit about the patient,” said Finley.

“As soon as the pilot-in-command hits the seat, the engines are started and the aircraft taxis out,” said Finley. “If it is an urgent medevac, we will let the tower know and they will pretty much clear up all the airspace for us.”

The short time period before take-off is critical for the medics to gain as much knowledge about the situation as possible.

“Right of the bat I go into [operations] and find out where we are going, what the unit’s call sign is, what the nature of the injury is and any additional equipment that we need to bring with us,” said Sgt. Karen Henson, from Fredericksburg, Va., a flight medic in Co. C, 1st ACB.

Being a medic in a flight company, it is important to make the most of the time you have. With the short flight time between areas, medics have to be prepared to deal with whatever situation comes their way.

“When we get three to four minutes out I will give them a call; one, to let them know that we are inbound so they can get the Soldier packaged, just so we can spend the least amount of time on the ground, and two, to get a patient update,” said Henson.

“With this one, all I knew it was urgent and he had taken shrapnel to the hands and legs,” said Henson. “So getting on update on this one gets me in the mindset of what I need to be prepared for and I waste the least amount of time possible once the patient is in my care.”

The Medevac pilots have a great deal of experience and their role in the mission is never taken lightly.

“Once we are minute in-bound, all the talking and all the chatter stops, it is like game-time – it’s time to focus on what’s going on,” said Finley.

“Typically, you do some type of recon; you will fly over the [landing zone], especially if it is someplace you have never been to before,” said Finley. “It is just to try and give everyone as much situational awareness that you can and then you commit to the landing.”

Their patient had received an initial treatment for his injuries at a troop medical clinic before coming into the care of the 1st ACB’s medevac, where he would then be transported to the 10th Combat Support Hospital in Baghdad.

“It is important to constantly check the wounds, vitals and the alertness level of the injured Soldier to ensure his condition does not degrade,” said Henson.

When a Soldier receives any type of serious injury incurred by combat, time is an extremely valuable commodity and medevac personnel are not ones to waste it.

According to Henson, it took his medevac crew less than half an hour to transport their patient from the troop medical clinic to the hospital; including the time spent on the ground.

The medevac aircrew’s mission is complete once the patient and all of the critical information is handed over to the new provider.

“After that we either head back home or sometimes we can get a follow-on mission and the whole process starts all over again,” said Finley. “This is probably the most rewarding job I could think of in the Army. Typically, (ground guys) don’t leave the wire unless they know we are flying.”

“[They] think about us whenever they do missions. One of the questions they check the box on during planning is, ‘Hey is medevac up?’” said Finley. “It is a pretty important piece to the puzzle for the ground commanders.”

The pilots, crew chiefs and medics of Co. C, have a great sense of pride knowing they are helping Soldiers get through life-threatening situations.

“Being a medic you can go to sleep at night knowing that you made a difference, knowing that this guy will be able to go home and see his mother, his wife, his sister and continue to live his life,” said Henson. “It gives you a warm and fuzzy feeling.” ✂

AIR C ON CA

(Left) During the initial run up, before taking over the day’s from Rio Grande City, Texas, a flight medic in C Company “M Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, sits in a UH-60 Black aviators conduct daily checks on the aircraft, June 22. The ir to save the medevac crew time if they have an emergency ca



Watching vigilantly out of the window for the landing site, S a flight medic in Company C “Medevac,” 2nd Battalion, 1st A puts on her surgical gloves as the UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter The medevacs were called to transport a Soldier wounded by

1ST CAVALRY MEDIEVAC: ALL HANDS READY

Story by Sgt. Travis Zielinski
1st ACB, 1st Cav. Div. PAO, MND-B

mission, Sgt. Randy Sanchez, medevac," 2nd Battalion, 1st Black Hawk helicopter while the initial run-ups are conducted all.



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

Sgt. Karen Henson, from Fredericksburg, Va., a flight medic in Company C, 2nd Battalion, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, constantly monitors the patient during the short flight on a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter, June 22. "It is important to constantly check the wounds, vitals and the alertness level of the injured Soldier to ensure his condition does not degrade," said Henson.



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

A crew chief, medic and two aviators service a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter, June 22, from C Company "Medevac," 2nd Battalion, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, to ensure every thing is working properly before assuming duty for the day. The pilots, crew chiefs and medics of Co. C, have a great sense of pride knowing they are helping Soldiers get through life-threatening situations.



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

While transporting a Soldier injured by a grenade attack, Sgt. Karen Henson, from Fredericksburg, Va., a flight medic in Company C, 2nd Battalion, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, constantly monitors the patient during the short flight on a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter, June 22. "It is important to constantly check the wounds, vitals and the alertness level of the injured Soldier to ensure his condition does not degrade," said Henson.

Old Hickory Soldiers balance warfare, diplomacy on Baghdad's streets

Story by Pfc. Kelly LeCompte

30th HBCT, PAO, MND-B

BAGHDAD – They're called grunts and ground pounders, but modern war fighters must be able to serve as warriors, mediators, instructors and even diplomats as they embark on operations that change not only daily, but sometimes even mid-mission.

It's a constant balancing act, but infantrymen of Company B, 252nd Combined Arms Battalion, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team, are doing just that.

A recent night mission in southern Baghdad's Saydiyah neighborhood began as a joint patrol with Iraqi Army Soldiers of 2nd Commando. Although the aim was to let the Iraqis practice taking the lead on such missions, the neighborhood residents focused their spotlight on the Americans.

As they walked the streets, U.S. Soldiers were greeted by Iraqi civilians like celebrities. Children ran to shake their hands and give them high fives, and people waved and smiled as the patrol moved through.

Company B Soldiers said they get that reaction a lot.

"There was one kid following me the other night," said Sgt. Dustin Butcher of Wilson, N.C. "Then there were three, then five, then a whole crowd. It was exponential."

"Kids especially will flock to you in a skinny minute if you're not careful," said Sgt. 1st Class Christopher Mooring, of Pine Level, N.C., a platoon sergeant with B Co.

Even though the Soldiers had to remain sharply guarded and ready to respond in a flash, they smiled and greeted the citizens. They're ready to be warriors, but had to act the part of public figures.

Only a few minutes into the patrol, however, the Soldiers got a call on the radio to change the mission.

A report of an explosive cache had come in, and the Soldiers had to pick up the brigade's explosives ordnance disposal team and take them to investigate.

"Coalition activity takes precedence," said Sgt. Olin Wilkinson, of Greenville, N.C. "If we're doing anything else and we get a call to support them, we go."

National Police found the cache and Iraqi Gen. Fasil had requested American support to document the find and brag about his policemen's work.

Company Soldiers changed gears from patrolling the streets to sharing dinner and investing in a little face time with Fasil and his policemen, an important part in maintaining a strong working relationship with the Iraqis.

"Anywhere, we are ready," Fasil said to the Soldiers. "We are family."

The next morning, a different group of Company B Soldiers went out on another joint patrol with the Iraqis to verify completion of a Coalition-funded street



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

Pfc. Nathan LeCompte, of B Company, 252nd Combined Arms Battalion, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team, guards a marketplace in the Saydiyah district of southern Baghdad, as Iraqi Police and fellow U.S. Soldiers patrol, June 9. LeCompte is from Greenville, N.C. Modern warfare sometimes requires Soldiers to be warriors and diplomats all at once, but also always be ready to respond in an ever-changing front.

light project.

The American Soldiers usually put Iraqis in the lead.

"We'll follow," said Staff Sgt. Michael Gallagher, of Holly Springs, N.C. "We'll let them take the lead and we'll be their muscle."

But since it was the first time the U.S. Soldiers had worked with this particular group of IPs, the Americans led the patrol instead.

This mission revolved less around diplomacy and making friends, and more around providing security and training the Iraqi policemen.

"IPs haven't realized yet that they can take the lead," said Mooring. "They want to do it and once they see you've got security, they get confident and will start working."

Mooring said missions with the Iraqis help build the locals' respect for the police.

The Soldiers patrolled through a marketplace in the Saydiyah district. Though maintaining security was their primary concern, they balanced protection and politeness with market goers; remaining watchful but seeming relaxed.

Mooring said the locals pay attention to the Soldiers' behavior, and sometimes even try to reassure them if the Soldiers seem too guarded.

"If they see you with your weapon up

too much, they'll come ask you, 'Do you feel safe?'" Mooring said.

Mooring also said Soldiers must be able to read the people.

"We can tell from the people if it's a bad neighborhood," Mooring said. "It's a tell-tale sign when the locals aren't nearly as friendly towards us."

First Lt. Bruce Riggins, a platoon leader in B Co., said his Soldiers have to be sharp and able to think on their feet.

"The battle field is ever changing," said Riggins, of King, N.C. "The enemy is smart. Soldiers have to pay attention and look at everything around them and process everything at once." ✂



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

Soldiers of B Company, 252nd Combined Arms Battalion, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team patrol through a market place in the Saydiyah district of southern Baghdad, June 9. During a patrol, Soldiers must balance security with politeness while approaching Iraqi civilians in an attempt to gain information about the area.

Dagger Soldiers help pave new roads in Nasir Wa Salam

Story by Staff Sgt. Peter Ford

MND-B PAO

BAGHDAD – To improve conditions in Iraq, Soldiers of the 2nd “Dagger” Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division continue finding new ways to help reconstruct the communities in their area.

One recent project, a new two-story fire station in Nasir Wa Salam, was unveiled as part of reconstruction efforts designed to improve the quality of life while creating jobs for local Iraqis. Now, Coalition forces are paving new roads to make more improvements in the community by funding an asphalt and road paving equipment operator apprenticeship program to improve the streets of Baghdad.

“The new road project not only improves the infrastructure but it provides jobs to the Sons of Iraq,” said 1st Lt. Justin Casey, a native of Ogdensburg, N.Y., and contracting officer representative assigned to Special Troops Battalion, 2nd BCT, 1st Inf. Div. “This project takes former militiamen of Iraq and gives them a skill to provide for their families.”

The SoI were Iraqi citizens who took up arms to protect their families and property from anyone who came into their community to cause any destruction, added Casey. With improved security in Iraq, Coalition forces realized a better use for these motivated Iraqis and introduced programs aimed at providing them life skills.

“It is things like the asphalt and road paving equipment operator apprenticeship program that will help build a better Iraq,” said Casey. “This program can lead the students to more permanent jobs to better support their families.”

The students receive classroom training and heavy equipment familiarization that teaches the fundamentals of performing maintenance on streets and highways, according to Casey. Students that successfully complete the course will receive a journeyman’s certificate according to the skill level at which they have been taught.

The CF have funded an apprenticeship program to give the SoI an opportunity to put down their weapons and learn new skills to benefit their community, and help improve the infrastructure, rebuilding Iraq one road at a time.



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

First Lt. Justin Casey, a native of Ogdensburg, N.Y., and contracting officer representative assigned to Special Troops Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division and Dr. Ibrahim Al-Nedawi walk along an unpaved road discussing the asphalt and road paving equipment operator apprenticeship program in Nasir Wa Salam, here June 16. “It is things like the asphalt and road paving equipment operator apprenticeship program that will help build a better Iraq,” said Casey.

Local clinic re-opens, rejuvenates disabled Iraqis

Story by Staff Sgt. Mark Burrell

MND-B PAO

BAGHDAD – The al-Hamza Center for the Disabled re-opened in Yarmouk, here, June 15, to the Iraqi public with the help of Coalition force’s funding, elevating access to healthcare for a demographic that was once largely ignored by Saddam Hussein.

Dedicated CF Soldiers and Iraqi contractors spent about three months and \$192,000 to help renovate the building, which also serves as dentistry, pharmacy and radiology clinics, said the project manager for the clinic, Capt. Mandi Breyman, assigned to the 46th Engineer Battalion, attached to 5th Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division.

“You couldn’t recognize this facility three months ago,” said the Republic, Ohio native, referring to the facility’s state of disrepair.

The building was completely overhauled by hiring an Iraqi contractor to fix shattered windows, broken doors, busted water pipes and electrical wiring among other things, she added.

According to Breyman, the CF and Government of Iraq teamed up to hire local labor. Involving locals boosted the economy and provided the neighborhood with a sense of ownership of the clinic.

“Today we turn the facility over to the Ministry of Health. Iraqis have done everything here and it’s theirs, we want them to take control over this facility,” Breyman added before a large crowd of Iraqi doctors, patients and neighbors. “Iraqis own this project, now they need to keep it up. Take it as a gift, but take care of it.”

One of the Iraqis, Nadia Ali Abulkarim, who will benefit from this gift, sat quietly by nodding her head from her wheelchair next to her daughter.

“I hope that this center will come to serve all disabled people and help all people like me,” said Nadia after the ceremony. She also praised the humility of the American effort in recognizing the need for projects such as this.

“This is one of the best ways to help the handicapped,” added Nadia, who is also a wheelchair fencing enthusiast. “Giving us the proper medicine, supplies and a clinic like this serves the whole Yarmouk area.”

According to Nadia, before the fall of Saddam, the Iraqi Government wasn’t very interested in taking care

of its disabled population, so this is a step in the right direction.

“It improves relations with the community,” said Lt. Col. Todd Auld, a civil military operations officer from Little Rock, Ark., assigned to 2nd BCT, 1st Inf. Div. “And these types of projects fill a gap in health care that is needed.”

Not only will this clinic improve community relations, boost the Ministry of Health’s resources and increase trust for the GoI, but it also makes Iraq safer for

Soldiers in the area, added Auld.

“When you fill these essential services for a community, you isolate the enemy,” said Auld after touring the large outpatient clinic with doctors. “People that might be sitting on the fence could be swayed either way and that improves the security situation down on the ground.”

After the ceremony, CF, doctors, Iraqi Security Forces and local Iraqis enjoyed mingling together in a jovial atmosphere while a celebratory feast of local cuisine was provided inside one of the newly-renovated white tiled rooms.

As the crowd began to disperse and the doctors went back to work, Auld explained, “If you improve the overall quality of life, it improves security, increases services and makes them less likely to support the insurgents and more likely to support their government.”

The simple renovation of a clinic can have an immediate impact on Iraqis such as Nadia, but can leave a lasting impression on all of Iraq by restoring faith in the government that supports and protects them.



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

Lt. Col. Todd Auld, a civil military operations officer assigned to the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, inspects a new medical device during a tour of the recently renovated al-Hamza Center for the Disabled clinic in Yarmouk, here, June 15. “It improves relations with the community,” said Auld, from Little Rock, Ark. “And these types of projects fill a gap in health care that is needed.”



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

An Iraqi doctor reads a prayer from the Quran to begin the re-opening ceremony of the al-Hamza Center for the Disabled in Yarmouk, here, June 15. The building renovation was funded by Coalition forces and took an Iraqi contractor about three months to complete. “Today we turn the facility over to the Ministry of Health. Iraqis have done everything here and it’s theirs, we want them to take control over this facility,” said Capt. Mandi Breyman, a Republic, Ohio native, and project manager assigned to the 46th Engineer Battalion, attached to 5th Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division.

NEWS

Tip leads ISF, MND-B Soldiers to cache in Aqur Quf

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

BAGHDAD – After receiving a tip from a concerned Iraqi citizen, June 17, Iraqi Security Forces and Multi-National Division—Baghdad Soldiers seized a cache in the Aqur Quf area west of Baghdad.

During a morning patrol, members of the Aqur Quf Police force and Soldiers from the 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, operationally attached to the 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, recovered a cache containing seven rocket propelled grenade warheads, nine 82mm mortar rounds, four 70mm rockets and 500 rounds of various small arms ammunition.

An explosive ordinance disposal team was called to the site to conduct a controlled detonation of the weapons.



Photo courtesy of the 2nd Bn. 8th Cav. Regt., 2nd HBCT, 1st Inf. Div., MND-B

After receiving a tip from an Iraqi citizen, Iraqi and Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers discovered a cache in the Aqur Quf area west of Baghdad, June 17.

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WWW.CAVCOUNTRY.NET



'Dawg medic' lives up to his call sign

Story by Sgt. Mary Phillips

30th HBCT PAO, MND-B

BAGHDAD – Sgt. Laurence Cameron was given the radio call sign “Dawg Medic” by other Soldiers during this deployment, but it wasn’t until a recent mission that the Rock Hill, S.C., native actually lived up to the nickname.

Cameron, a combat medic with B “Dawg” Battery, 113th Field Artillery, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team, patrolled with two military working dogs, June 20, when one of the dogs became overheated.

Military dog handler, Sgt. James Harrington, of the 1st Cavalry Division Provost Marshals Office, called for the Cameron.

“The handlers are all trained in dog first aid, but I show the medics how to do it, too,” said Harrington, of New Orleans. “That way they can take care of the dogs if one of the handlers goes down.”

Cameron immediately got to work on giving the dog, named Ryky, intravenous fluids.

“The dog handler explained how to do it and I went about doing the procedure,” said Cameron, “and when it comes to an IV there is not that much difference between a dog and a human.”

Although Cameron did not expect to have to give an IV to a canine, he knew it was a possibility.

“When I was at training in Wisconsin, I had a drill sergeant that had been a dog handler and he taught us a little bit about working with the dogs,” said Cameron, “It was interesting to actually get to do it.”

This is only the third I.V. the “Dawg Medic” has given to anyone – or anything – for overheating since the beginning of this deployment. Overheating is a problem in Iraq because of high temperatures, and Soldiers, even the furry kind, must be wary of it.

“We monitor the dog’s temperature throughout the patrol,” said Staff Sgt. Christopher Jasper, one of the other dog handlers on patrol. “Once their temperature gets over 102 degrees we have to start looking at ways to cool them down, and once it gets to 103 or 104, we have to get them an IV.”

Because of his call sign some of Cameron’s fellow Soldiers also refer to him as the “Veterinarian.”

“Everyone thought it was funny that I actually worked



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

Medic Sgt. Laurence Cameron, of Battery B, 113th Field Artillery, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team, has been known as “Dawg Medic,” since the beginning of his deployment. While on patrol south of Baghdad, June 20, Cameron of Rock Hill, S.C. lived up to his name when he gave an I.V. to one of the military working dogs on the mission.

on a dog because of me being called ‘Dawg Medic’ and ‘Veterinarian.’”

Cameron was happy to be able to help what he called “a fellow soldier.”

“It was cool to be able to help out a dog that is there to help us by detecting explosives,” he said. “It’s part of the Army’s battle buddy system. They are Soldiers like us, they just have four legs.” ✂



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

Sgt. Laurence Cameron (left), a medic with Battery B, 113th Field Artillery, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team, checks an I.V. on military working dog while Sgt. James Harrington, assigned to 1st Cavalry Division, Provost Marshal’s Office, helps. Cameron, of Rock Hill, S.C., who is known as “Dawg Medic” in his unit, lived up to the nickname when he had to give the military working dog an I.V.

Joint efforts provides wheelchairs for needful children in Beladiyat

Story by Sgt. Rebekah Malone

225th Eng. Bde. PAO, MND-B

BAGHDAD – Providing wheelchairs for Iraq's disabled children is a huge undertaking.

Recently, Wheelchairs for Iraqi Kids, Iraqi National Police officers from the 8th NP Brigade, 2nd NP Division and U.S. Soldiers from the 225th Engineer Brigade and 2nd Battalion, 505 Parachute Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division worked together to provide 30 wheelchairs for disabled children, June 20, at Joint Security Station Beladiyat in the 9 Nissan district of eastern Baghdad.

First Lt. Trimeka Rivers, of Shreveport, La., has spent countless hours picking up wheelchairs shipped in from the U.S. and transporting them to units ready to distribute them.

Speaking with her, one would think it was an easy task. "It wasn't hard," she smiled. "A lot of Soldiers we don't see [at the distribution site] have put a lot of time into it ... all volunteered to put the chairs together and make the adjustments."

As a former combat medic and now the brigade medical plans officer, Rivers said the chance for the children to participate in society is in itself an improvement to their mental capacity which will only improve as their physical condition is stabilized.

"The wheelchair will give them a sense of normalcy. They will be able to eat sitting up, instead of lying down," she explained. "They will be able to move around, play with other kids, instead of being toted around."

Wheelchairs for Iraqi Kids was started by Brad Blausier to help an estimated 500,000 disabled children needing the gift of freedom of movement given to them by the use of a wheelchair; for most, the wheelchair they received was the first they had ever owned.

Rivers said she cannot help but do what she can for the cause after meeting Blausier.



Photo by Sgt. Rebekah Malone, 225 Eng. Bde, 1st Cav. Div., MND-B

Thirteen year old Saife holds his 3-year old brother Ali as Soldiers from the 225th Engineer Brigade adjust the wheelchair intended for the disabled Ali. Saife said the young boy has never had a wheelchair and it will greatly help him.



Photo by Sgt. Rebekah Malone, 225 Eng. Bde, 1st Cav. Div., MND-B

1st Lt. Trimeka Rivers, of Shreveport, La., assigned to the 225th Engineer Brigade, unloads a child's wheelchair with the help of Iraqi National Police officers at Joint Security Station Beladiyat in the 9 Nissan district of eastern Baghdad, June 20.

"Brad is awesome! He is working with all the military branches and he's really working to get Iraq to make the chairs," she said. "Because of his passion for it, I do my best to help in any way I can."

Plans have been made for an existing Iraqi factory to make the wheelchairs that would provide 50,000 to 75,000 chairs over five years; a significant injection of capital into an economy plagued by unemployment, but red tape and lack of funding has the hope of the project seriously in doubt.

"We found a factory in Mahmudiyah, the National Medal Bicycle Company. At one time they employed up to 1500 people and were the largest factory in the Middle East. Currently they only employ 75 people," Blausier said. "They built a prototype off of pictures and drawings and did a great job. They're ready to go, we just need funds to help them finalize production details and purchase wheelchairs from them."

Working jointly on a mission can be difficult with language barriers between the Iraqi National Police and the U.S. Soldiers, but the desire to give relief to the disabled children provided the common thread needed to make the mission a success.

"I love children. Children make me smile, period," Rivers explained with a smile. "The NP I was working with was really excited about it. He was making sure the chairs were adjusted probably. It was a good feeling working with somebody who is excited and passionate about children as me."

Rivers has worked on humanitarian missions in Haiti, with the Red Cross after Hurricane Gustav and as a medic with the National Guard during Hurricane Katrina. For her, the day's distribution was just another opportunity to continue to give her time for worthy causes.

"The wheelchair distribution has been the highlight of the deployment for me," said Rivers.

For more information about how you can help, please go to Brad Blausier's website at: www.Wheelchairs-ForIraqiKids.com/.

NEWS

Major weapons cache seized north of Baghdad

56th SBCT PAO, MND-B

TAJI – Iraqi Security Forces and Soldiers from Multi-National Division – Baghdad discovered a massive weapons cache, June 23, near Tarmiyah, Iraq.

Soldiers from 4th Battalion 36th Iraqi Army Brigade and U.S. troops with 1st Battalion, 111th Infantry Regiment, 56th Stryker Brigade Combat Team seized the cache while conducting clearance operations in the vicinity of the village approximately 18 miles north of Baghdad.

The cache included 26 grenades, 35 RPGs, five IEDs with detonation devices, 2 anti-personnel mines, 1 suicide vest, one hundred rocket and mortar rounds, and a mix of other ammunition including thousands of rounds for small arms.

Iraqi and U.S. Soldiers also recovered base elements used to produce explosives, including military grade plastic explosives, and the mechanisms for triggering them.

Coalition forces explosive ordinance explosive technicians safely conducted a controlled detonation to dispose of the cache.



U.S. Army photo

Iraqi and U.S. Soldiers lay out items recovered from the cache found near Tarmiyah, June 23. The items included a hundred different rockets and mortars, thousands of rounds of ammunition and materials for bomb making.

ISF, MND-B Soldiers detain suspected criminal in west of Baghdad

Multi-National Division – Baghdad PAO

BAGHDAD – Iraqi Security Forces and Multi-National Division -- Baghdad Soldiers conducting a joint operation detained a suspected criminal on a warrant June 17 west of Baghdad.

At approximately 2:30 p.m., Iraqi Soldiers from the 4th Battalion, 24th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division and Soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 63rd Armored Regiment, 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, MND-B arrested a warranted individual suspected of participating in a recent grenade attack against Coalition forces.

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

coordinate and conduct operations to provide security for the area. They are a top notch unit."

The individuals were safely transported to a nearby headquarters for further questioning.

PARATROOPERS, NP



BAGHDAD – Spc. William Edwards, of Mansfield, Mass., helps an Iraqi man place his handicapped son in a new wheelchair donated by the “Wheelchairs for Iraqi Kids” organization during a humanitarian effort, June 20, at Joint Security Station Beladiyat, located in the 9 Nissan district of eastern Baghdad. Edwards, along with his fellow Paratroopers assigned to the HHC, 2nd Battalion, 505 Parachute Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, Multi-National Division-Baghdad, partnered with their Iraqi counterparts to hand out more than 30 wheelchairs to physically disabled children and adults in the area.



Iraq Brig. Gen. Ali Ibraheem Dabown, commander of the 8th National Police Brigade, 2nd NP Division, pushes a wheelchair after helping a handicapped boy be placed in his new adjustable wheelchair, June 20, at Joint Security Station Beladiyat, located in the 9 Nissan district of eastern Baghdad. NPs, along with Paratroopers assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 505 PIR, 3rd BCT, 82nd Airborne Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, participated in a humanitarian event to hand out more than 30 wheelchairs donated by the “Wheelchairs for Iraqi Kids” organization to disability children and adults. Each wheelchair is valued at \$3,700 and is adjustable in order to adapt with growing children.

DISTRIBUTE WHEELCHAIRS IN 9 NISSAN

Paratroopers assigned to the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 505 Parachute Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, Multi-National Division-Baghdad, adjust a wheelchair in order to ensure it is suitable for a handicapped Iraqi boy to sit comfortably in during a humanitarian event, here, June 20.

Lt. Col. Louis Zeisman, of Fayetteville, N.C., greets a handicapped Iraqi boy during a humanitarian event, June 20, at Joint Security Station Beladiyat, located in the 9 Nissan district of eastern Baghdad. Paratroopers assigned to the 2nd Bn., 505 PIR, 3rd BCT, 82nd Airborne Division, Multi-National Division-Baghdad, partnered with National Police officers assigned to the 8th NP Bde., 2nd NP Div. to hand out more than 30 wheelchairs donated by the “Wheelchairs for Iraqi Kids” organization. Each wheelchair is valued at \$3,700 and is adjustable in order to adapt with growing children. Zeisman commands the 2nd Bn., 505 PIR, based out of Fort Bragg, N.C.



Brad Blauser (right), of Dallas, Texas, founder of Wheelchairs for Iraqi Kids, along with Iraq Brig. Gen. Ali Ibraheem Dabown, show parents of handicapped children how to adjust the wheelchairs they are about to receive during a humanitarian event, June 20, at Joint Security Station Beladiyat, located in the 9 Nissan district of eastern Baghdad. Blauser teamed up with Paratroopers assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 505 PIR, 3rd BCT, 82nd Airborne Division, Multi-National Division-Baghdad and National Police officers assigned to the 8th NP Bde., 2nd NP Div. to hand out more than 30 wheelchairs donated by his organization.

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

Dagger Brigade, Ministry of Education celebrate renovations to Baghdad School of Art for Girls

Story by Sgt. Brian Tierce

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

BAGHDAD—Over the past eight months Soldiers of the 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad have partnered with the Iraqi Ministry of Education (MoE) to further educational opportunities for the children of Baghdad.

A recent event designed to do just that highlighted each organization’s commitment to not only the children of Baghdad but specifically to young Iraqi females who have an interest in fine arts.

The Baghdad School of Arts for Girls celebrated a renovation ceremony June 23 in the Mansour district, which was made possible by efforts of Dagger Soldiers and the MoE.

“Today’s event is under the slogan art can talk,” said Kareema Hashim, head mistress of the school of art for girls. “We look forward to the increased production of the students, thanks to the generosity of our friends in supporting this art school.”

According to Hashim the school opened its doors in 1935 and has graduated many famous Iraqi artists over the years.

In recent years the degraded security led to the school not being able to maintain operations. During this time, the equipment the students used was either outdated or unserviceable.

After discovering the school in their area of operations, Soldiers from the 5th Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd HBCT, kick-started an effort with support from the Ministry of Education to provide the school with much needed equipment to

help further the art students’ talents.

With help from Dr. Nihad Abbas Shihad al-Juburi, the deputy Minister of Education, a contract was established to provide the students with the tools they need to develop their abilities.

“Through projects like this Dr. Nihad is fulfilling his vision for educating Iraq’s young women in the best possible artistic techniques,” said Lt. Col. Christopher Beckert, a Madison, Conn., native, deputy commander, 2nd HBCT. “I wish all of you the best of luck in the coming school year using the equipment in the great institute and I ask that you accept it as a gift from the American people.”

Through projects like this Dr. Nihad is fulfilling his vision for educating Iraq’s young women in the best possible artistic techniques,

-- Lt. Col. Christopher Beckert, deputy commander, 2nd HBCT

The chance to refurbish the school was made possible by the improved security in the area.

For the contractor who performed the upgrades the situation has seen a marked

improvement since he began working with Coalition forces.

“I have worked with the American Army for four years; I have worked over 50 contracts and through many difficult times,” said Dr. Abbas al-Maliki. “Thanks to security improvements made by the presence of the Iraqi Army, Iraqi Police and the Sons of Iraq, the neighborhood is no longer safe for the enemies of Iraq.”

With a learning environment safe from the worries of external dangers it is the hope of the Dagger Brigade and the MoE that the school can help foster an artistic renaissance in Baghdad with the assistance of the faculty and staff of the school.

“I thank the teachers and the professors here at the institute for their dedication and their love of the arts and for transferring that love of art to their students,” said Beckert. ✂



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

Dr. Nihad Abbas Shihad al-Juburi (center), deputy Minister of Education, applauds a musical performance during a renovation ceremony at the Baghdad School of Arts for Girls in the Mansour District of northwest Baghdad June 23. “Dr. Nihad’s tremendous support to this school is helping fulfill his vision for educating Iraq’s young women in the best possible artistic techniques,” said Lt. Col. Christopher Beckert, deputy commander, 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad.



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

Lt. Col Christopher Beckert, a native of Madison, Conn., deputy commander, 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad looks at works of art created by students of the Baghdad School of Arts for Girls June 23 in the Mansour district of northwest Baghdad. Through efforts of Coalition forces and the Ministry of Education, the art school has received equipment to help further the students’ abilities in the school.

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Camp Liberty clinic keeps service members smiling

Story by Sgt. 1st Class Ron Burke

MND-B PAO

BAGHDAD – The tools and weapons Soldiers use to accomplish their missions are well-known. A rifle, bayonet, body armor, helmet, uniform and boots make up the basic issue. While on their mission, Soldiers may forget about another set of weapons that are essential during a deployment: a toothbrush and dental floss. Oral hygiene sometimes falls under the ‘not too important’ category for Soldiers who are on a forward operating base.

The Camp Liberty Dental Clinic on Victory Base Complex, staffed by Soldiers from the 464th Medical Company (DS), is fully capable of handling just about any dental issue that may arise. The 464th is attached to the 421st Multifunctional Medical Battalion, 44th Medical Command of Landstuhl, Germany, and the clinic here supports the Soldiers of Multi-National Division-Baghdad and surrounding FOBs.

“Our mission is to perform dentistry services in theater to all servicemembers and Department of Defense civilians,”

said Sgt. 1st Class Ralph Hewgley, the noncommissioned officer in charge of the clinic, who is from San Antonio. “From fillings and cleanings, to oral surgery, we have a seven chair office, digital X-ray capability, and a fully operational lab that can handle just about any Class I or Class II situation and we also do crowns which is Class III dental work,” he said.

“Every year, you have to have a dental exam or you’ll be dropped to a Category IV,” said Lt. Col. Jeffery Callin, the division surgeon for the 1st Cavalry Division. Callin explained that a Category IV rating requires extensive dental procedures but it also means that you haven’t had a dental exam that year.

“Every brigade support battalion has Level II capability and Soldiers can go there for a Category IV exam and it doesn’t take long,” added Callin who is from Belton, Texas.

In the operating area of the clinic, the proof was in the smile as Spc. Christopher White of Company A, 628th Area Support Battalion, 28th Combat Aviation Brigade, slowly stretched his mouth into a small smile to get a feel for his new teeth. White, who is from State College, Pa., was medi-



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Ron Burke, MND-B PAO

Sgt. David Dickinson, who hails from Salt Lake City, assigned to the 464th Medical Company (DS), 421st Multifunctional Medical Battalion, 44th Medical Command, MND-B, heats up a tool that gathers and molds wax to hold in a partial denture, June 24 at Camp Liberty. “Stay away from sugar, tobacco, and brush at least once a day,” said Dickinson, a dental lab technician. “We even supply toothbrushes, floss sticks, and dental floss for free.”

cally evacuated from the dental facility in Talil, Iraq, after it was determined that the clinic there could not help him.

“This clinic has been a big help since Maj. Beilhardt referred me here for treatment,” the National Guardsman said as the high-pitched sounds of dental drills and suction tubes filled the office. “I didn’t want to miss work so I didn’t go to the dentist when I needed to and now I’m here,” he continued. White had surgery to replace his front teeth with an upper denture.

Maj. Ralph Beilhardt, who is from Jonesboro, Ark., and officer in charge of the clinic has worked in dentistry since 1997. “Talil didn’t have the materials and lab to handle Spc. White’s situation, so I referred him here,” he said.

The Camp Liberty dental clinic is one of five here in Iraq, all staffed with Soldiers from the 464th Med. Co. (DS). Soldiers who come to the clinic are not only able to benefit from dental services and cleanings, but they can also have mouth guards and partial or full dental inserts created within a very short time thanks to the two-person dental laboratory.

Here, the lab supports all the dental clinics in Iraq. “This lab is non-stop,” said Spc. Bruce Williams, a dental lab technician from Chicago, as he mixed a gooey substance that will end up as a mold for a mouth guard. “We can make partials and bridges that are sent via Federal Express to Fort Gordon, Ga., and Germany that get back to the Soldiers very quickly,” he added.

“Having the clinic here is a huge asset and helps keep Soldiers ready to fight,” said Callin. “Look at it like a preventative maintenance checks and service (PMCS). You have to PMCS your vehicles and you should to do the same with your body.”

The clinic is open Monday through Saturday and the sick call hours are from 8:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. each day. Appointments are booked for the afternoons. Since January 2009, the dental clinic here has seen more than 31,000 patients and the work the Soldiers of the 464th has performed has saved their patients more than \$13 million worth of dental services.

“If you take good care of your teeth by brushing and flossing, it cuts down on plaque buildup which lets you preserve what you have longer and your yearly cleanings won’t be traumatic,” said Callin.

It’s recommended that Soldiers take the time to exercise good dental hygiene while deployed and make sure they get a dental exam while in theater. It keeps records current and prevents complications later when Soldiers redeploy.

That toothbrush and dental floss may seem like cheap plastic but they can save you what can amount to thousands of dollars in dental care if used every day. ✂



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Ron Burke, MND-B PAO

Capt. George Hoggan, a dentist with the 464th Medical Company (DS), 421st Multifunctional Medical Battalion, 44th Medical Command, Multi-National Division-Baghdad, works to build up a Soldier’s dental core in preparation for a crown at Camp Liberty here, June 24. Hoggan, who is from Denver, heads back to Landstuhl, Germany, in July.



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Ron Burke, MND-B PAO

As a high-pitched cacophony of dental drills buzz on the other side of the office, Spc. Lindsay Deters, a dental assistant with the 464th Med. Co. (DS), 421st Multifunctional Med. Bn., 44th Med. Cmd., MND-B, meticulously sets up the tools for another dental procedure at the Camp Liberty Dental Clinic. This is the first deployment for the Monroe, Mich. native.

Ironhorse returns JSS Sadr City to Iraqi Army

Story by Sgt. Shejal Pulivarti

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

BAGHDAD – A common sense of triumph and accomplishment drifted in the air during the transfer ceremony in Sadr City in northeast Baghdad June 20.

The 1st “Ironhorse” Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division successfully returned Joint Security Station Sadr City to the 1st Battalion, 44th Brigade, 11th Iraqi Army Division to better facilitate the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) taking over security, in accordance with the security agreement between the U.S. and Iraq.

“This is the most important, most iconic of all our JSSs. Sadr City is viewed as sacred ground for both us and the Iraqis,” stated Boulder, Colo. native Maj. Geoffrey

Norman, the executive officer for the “Ironhorse” Brigade.

JSS Sadr City was established in 2007 and has housed four U.S. Army units through the years. In this period, the U.S. had approximately 130 servicemembers killed or wounded and the ISF endured approximately 190 in this area. “This JSS has a very significant meaning... we share a bond of sacrifice,” Norman reverently shared.

Now entering a new phase, the 1st Bn., 44th Bde., 11th IA Div. assumes responsibility of securing the area surrounding JSS Sadr City and providing a safe, secure and stable community for the people of Iraq.

“They will make the most out of the facility, as we did. This installation remains very important to ISF. It serves as a visible reminder to the local population that there is a strong security force presence,” said Norman.

The “Lancers” worked with their counterparts to determine the equipment the IA needed left at the installation in order to function efficiently. “We have to set the Iraqis up for success when we transfer the facilities. We take care of them so they can be triumphant,” stated

Poolesville, Md. native Maj. Sean Davis, logistical officer for the “Ironhorse” Brigade.

Coalition forces’ combat troops withdrawing from the cities, facilitates the first phase of ISF taking the lead. The plan, according to Iraq’s Ministry of the Interior, is for IA to assume full responsibility of security as the initial phase for the people of Iraq to regain control of their country.

The IA unit will have easy access to their counter-

parts who have moved to JSS War Eagle or JSS Ur for assistance as needed. “The locations that the various companies have moved to are not disruptive to daily life but close enough to provide support to their IA counterparts when requested,” stated Norman.

JSS Sadr City is one of the eight installations the “Ironhorse” Brigade has turned over to the Government of Iraq (GoI). It is the largest in size to date that they have returned. ✂



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

Harker Heights, Texas native, Lt. Col. Timothy Karcher, commander, 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division presents Sameer al Haddad, a representative from the Office of the Prime Minister of Iraq, a symbolic key signifying the transfer of responsibility of Joint Security Station Sadr City in northeast Baghdad during the official ceremony June 20.

DAGGER

Dagger Lifeline: Moving through Iraq’s dark streets

Story by Staff Sgt. Peter Ford

MND-B PAO

BAGHDAD - Much like blood that flows through the human body, Soldiers of the 299th Brigade Support Battalion “Lifeline”, 2nd Brigade, 1st Infantry Division move through streets of Iraq in the silence of night to support forward operating bases throughout the Baghdad area.

“Missions are done at night because there is less traffic,” said 1st Lt. Harris Malik, a native of Strongsville, Ohio, and convoy commander for A Company, 299th BSB. “Coalition forces are less visible at night and chances of having an accident are much smaller,” he added.

Lifeline troops quietly transport vital equipment to FOBs every night; protected by Soldiers who provide security to ensure requested items arrive at their destinations. The U.S. troops weave through the streets of Baghdad with the satisfaction of knowing they are making a major contribution to each mission on the FOBs.

“I like to use the analogy of a football team when it comes to my Soldiers,” said Command Sgt. Maj. Julia Kelly, a Pryor, Mont., native and ammunition specialist assigned to the 299th BSB. “We are like the line and the combat Soldiers are the quarterbacks, running backs

and wide receiver, who get all the glory, but the line of the football team knows the star players can’t score without the blocking in the trenches.”

The lifeline quietly moves food, water and parts to supply FOBs with the necessary equipment that will enable Soldiers to be self-sufficient and to complete their missions.

“This week we had the task of supplying FOB Justice with water and ice because they had water issue with the Iraqi water supply,” said Malik. “Thanks to the dedication of the lifeline, Justice never had to worry about drinking water, or water for personal hygiene.”

The greatest reward the Soldiers of the 299th BSB say they can receive is the appreciation of their comrades in arms for the contribution they have made to support them over the years, continued Malik.

“I feel really good when the contributions to the mission are appreciated,” he said.

Under the cover of darkness, dedicated Lifeline Soldiers of the 299th BSB continue to drive the streets of Baghdad to provide vital equipment and supplies to keep the organizations of the Coalition forces fully functional. ✂

Sgt. Andrew Lane, a transportation specialist from Mansfield, La., assigned to Company A, 299th Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, performs radio checks with the battalion tactical operation center prior to the convoy briefing at Camp Liberty, June 22.



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

Construction near completion on IA/U.S. operations center

Story by 1st Lt. Kewanda Tate

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

CAMP TAJI, Iraq—U.S. engineers are completing construction of a Joint Operations Center for both Iraqi and Coalition forces.

Soldiers from Company A, 46th Engineer Combat Battalion (Heavy), 225th Engineer Brigade, attached to Multi-National Division—Baghdad, are nearly finished with work on the centralized workspace for Soldiers of the 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment and the 11th Iraqi Army Headquarters.

“In order to be more hands-on, we must share everything including workspace,” stated Maj. Kevin Wallace, battalion executive officer. “Our workspace will mirror their workspace, even down to how many desks are in each office.”

Since the Security Agreement calls for closing of smaller combat outposts and joint security stations throughout Baghdad, engineers have been diligently working to create work and living spaces outside the city.

Constructed in an abandoned warehouse hangar, the 4,300 square foot JOC will provide ample workspace for both staff sections that currently exist in two small offices. It will have 10 secured offices, a tiered conference room with computer workstations, and a combined working area for battle tracking.

“Every day the Iraqi General comes over asking if we need any help,” said Staff Sgt. Gary Butler, 46th ECB (H), a native of Dallas, the construction project non-commissioned officer in charge. “He even let us borrow his pressure washer and a few of his Soldiers to help clear the surface of debris and dirt before we began construction.”

Once completed, the facility will increase operational capabilities and integration with the Iraqi Army partners. Joint facilities such as these are critical as the Iraqi Security Forces take the lead in securing peace and stability in Baghdad. The construction project should be completed June 19. ✂



Photo by Staff Sgt. Gary Butler, 46th ECB (H), 225th Eng. Bde. PAO, MND-B

Spc. Robert Shoults, carpentry/masonry specialist from Berkeley, Mo., 46th Engineer Combat Battalion (Heavy), 225th Engineer Brigade, uses a miter saw while constructing the Joint Operations Center at Joint Security Station Shield. Since the Security Agreement calls for closing of smaller combat outposts and joint security stations throughout Baghdad, engineers have been diligently working to create work and living spaces outside the city.

Route clearance mission ends for mobile engineers

Story by Scott Flenner

225th Eng. Bde. PAO, MND-B

BAGHDAD—Clearing roads of dangerous IEDs is a difficult job for engineer units.

Any route clearance Soldier will tell you that after travelling the same routes day in and day out, they know exactly what looks out of place; it's this knowledge that helps keep these guys safe.

For the Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., Soldiers from the 515th Engineer Company (Sapper), attached to the 225th Engineer Brigade, learning the routes changed a remarkable four times during the course of their 15 month deployment.

From northern to southern Iraq, the engineers cleared 84,854 kilometers of road on more than 688 missions. As the “Outlaws” moved from one base to another as their mission changed to help their fellow Soldiers, they ended up clearing roads in nine out of the 18 provinces in Iraq.

“We just went where route clearance was needed the most,” said Capt. Andrew Hutchinson, executive officer for the 515th Eng. Co., from Kate, Texas. “We have got to see pretty much everything, from Basra to Balad.”

Being in constant shuffle does come with its share of disadvantages for a route clearance team, explained Sgt Evan Hutson.

“The difficulty of moving around, especially for a leader, is when you are not able to travel down the same roads day

after day and study them,” Hutson said.

“You are not able to become familiar with what should be there and what may be a possible IED.”

Although as Hutson also explained, it does help fight one of Soldiers worst enemies--complacency.

“Every day when you are traveling down a road going 10Km an hour, especially if you are going down a route that you have been on before and nothing really is happening, you get complacent,” said Hutson, from Indianapolis, Ind. “But when you are constantly moved around all over this theater in Iraq, like we were, it makes it really hard to become complacent.”

It is hard to become complacent, but even harder to become comfortable.

At one point during the Outlaw's tour, the Soldiers had to sleep in their trucks and eat MREs for a week straight. By the end, the same Soldiers were moved to “Shangri-La,” also known as Victory Base Complex in Baghdad, where they stayed in air-conditioned trailers, enjoyed prepared food at the dining facility and complained that their internet connection was too slow.

But whether they were sleeping in their trucks, surfing the internet, or moving to yet another base camp, Hutchinson said one thing remained the same.

“As a unit, we have grown close, we are pretty tight knit; we all support each other.”

Summing up their mission Hutchinson said, “This deployment has been interesting.” ✂



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

A member of the 515th Engineer Company (Sapper), attached to the 225th Engineer Brigade, operates the ferret arm of the specialized route clearance vehicle, known as the “Buffalo,” during route clearance operations in the Wasit province. The 515th Eng. Co. cleared 84,854 kilometers of road on more than 688 missions during their 15 month deployment which took them on route clearance missions in nine of the 18 provinces in Iraq.

As seen from the rearview mirror, the 515th Engineer Company (Sapper), attached to the 225th Eng. Bde., moves through the Maysan province conducting route clearance operations. The 515th Eng. Co. cleared 84,854 kilometers of road on more than 688 missions during their 15 month deployment which took them on route clearance missions in 9 of the 18 provinces in Iraq.



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

Troopers run fiber optic at Joint Security Station Ur

Photos by Sgt. Jon Soles, MND-B PAO



Staff Sgt. Jose Gallego, from Bogota, Colombia, drills holes in a wall to install a fiber termination box at Joint Security Station Ur, here, June 19. Gallego, a computer systems repairer assigned to C Company, Division Special Troops Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division, helps install fiber optic cables at JSS Ur to upgrade communications capabilities. Gallego said the Soldiers completed a site survey and then examined diagrams of JSS Ur before installing the cables. "We found a route that was better for the fiber optic cable that will minimize troubleshooting," Gallego said.



(Right) Spc. Nick Anderson, of Hanover, Minn., a radio operator assigned to C Company, Division Special Troops Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division, prepares a fiber optic cable for installation in a building at Joint Security Station Ur, here, June 19. Chief Warrant Officer Scott Broten, a signal systems support technician from Harker Heights, Texas, said the cables allow signals to travel for several kilometers as opposed to 100 meters for Ethernet cables. "What we are doing is part of the process of units moving out of the city," Anderson said. "We are running fiber optic cables between areas that are too far apart for regular cables."



OLD HICKORY

New program looks to increase dairy production

Story by Sgt. Mary Phillips

30th HBCT PAO, MND-B

MAHMUDIYAH, Iraq - Soldiers with the 120th Combined Arms Battalion, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team, and a family of Iraqi dairy farmers are spearheading a pilot program designed to increase milk and cheese production in the Mahmudiyah area, south of Baghdad.

This is the first dairy initiative that the North Carolina Army National Guard Soldiers have started with the Iraqis.

Capt. Sara Woods, Civil Affairs Team 31, said the intent is to revitalize the area's dairy industry.

Using micro grants, the pilot farm will be used to build a well and buy cheese-making equipment. The farmers' part of the program begins with them logging their dairy production.

"This will help them generate better milk and dairy products, which is going to improve the entire dairy process throughout the area," said Woods.

While Soldiers searched for a suitable pilot farm, the battalion commander, Lt. Col. Jack Mellott, of Fayetteville, N.C., actually noticed this farm while on patrol.

"Our mission was to stop and to talk with everyone who had cows," said Spc. Justin Gay, of Panama City, Fla., who was part of Mellott's patrol. "We hit the nail on the head when we stopped at that farm because they had the most cows, and the best operation going on."

This particular farm is a perfect candidate for the new program, said Woods, because of the large number of milking cows on the farm.

As well as having a large number of cows, the family farm also has a large workforce: 70 family members ranging from infants to elderly.

While the program is kicking off on this one farm, the results will eventually be used to assist farms

throughout the area.

"We want to start small and figure out how well the programs work," said Woods, of Janesville, Minn. "We need to figure out how to do the micro grants, and how to work with the farmers to see what they need to increase their dairy, without just telling them what to do." ✂



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

Sgt. Kenneth Steinbronn, 120th Combined Arms Battalion, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team, hands a stuffed toy to an infant at a dairy farm near Mahmudiyah, June 23. Steinbronn, of Dorchester, N.C., and other members of the North Carolina Army National Guard brigade are working with a family of Iraqi dairy farmers to spearhead a pilot program to increase milk and cheese production in the Mahmudiyah area.



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

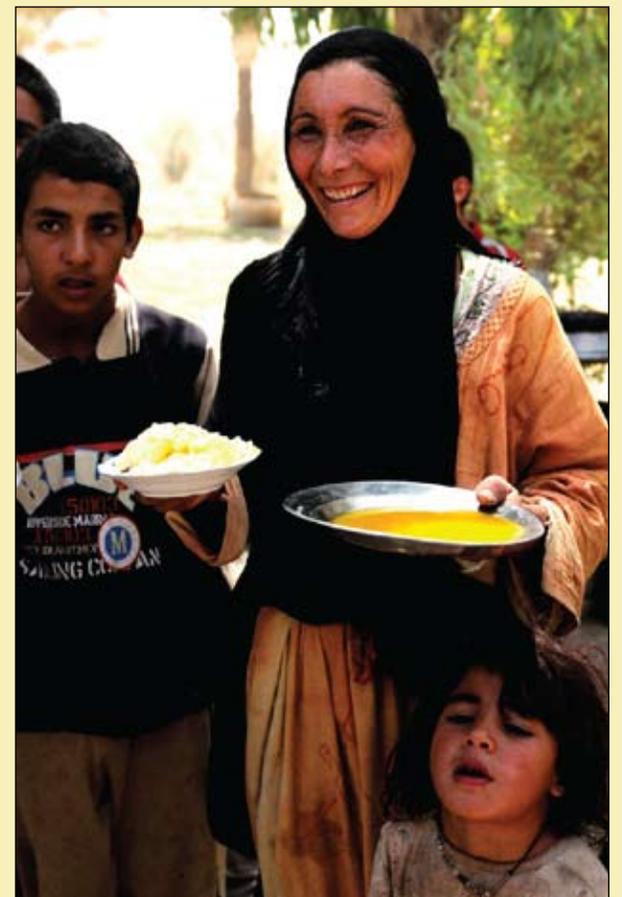


Photo by Sgt. Mary Phillips, 30th HBCT PAO, MND-B

An Iraqi woman shows off the butter that was made on her family's farm near Mahmudiyah, June 23. Soldiers with the 120th Combined Arms Battalion, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team, and a family of Iraqi dairy farmers are spearheading a pilot program designed to increase milk and cheese production in the area south of Baghdad.

Iraqi family members gather near the entrance to their house as members of the 120th Combined Arms Battalion, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team visit, June 23.

Dagger Brigade Soldiers discuss security with villagers

Photos by Sgt. Jon Soles, MND-B PAO



BAGHDAD – Sgt. Brandt Faus accepts homemade bread from an Iraqi man in the village of al-Fallujean in the Abu Ghraib area here, June 24. Faus, an infantryman assigned to Company A, 1st Combined Arms Battalion, 63rd Armored Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, said the interaction with Iraqi citizens is a highlight of dismounted patrols. “It feels good when they like you,” said Faus, a Phoenix native. “It’s cool when you see them smile at you.” The Soldiers of Company A walked through Al-Fallujean on a joint combat patrol with the 1st Company, 4th Battalion, 24th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division.

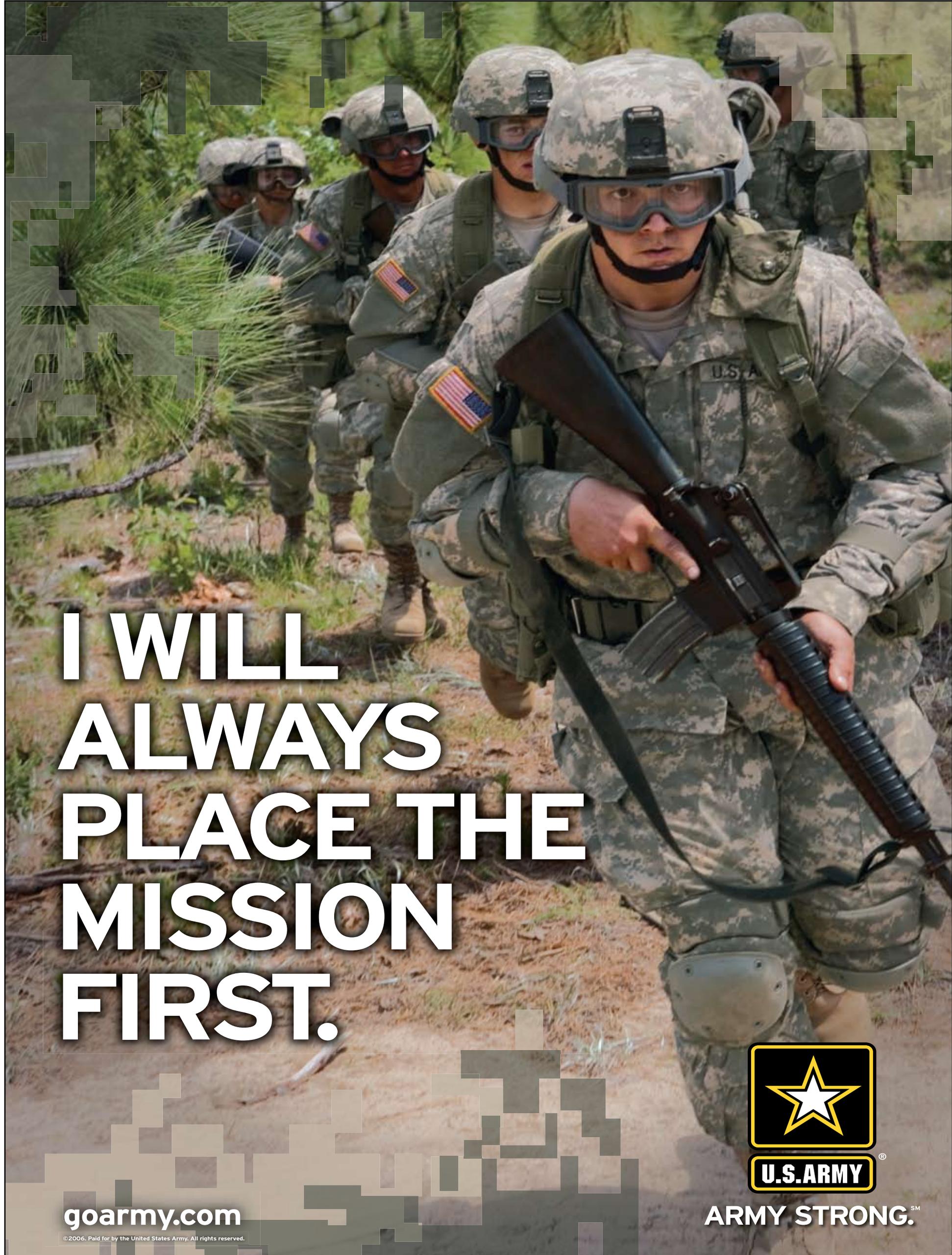
(Left) Spc. Jon Morris of Lakewood, Ohio, a medic assigned to Company A, 1st Combined Arms Battalion, 63rd Armored Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, stands with an Iraqi soldier during a joint combat patrol of al-Fallujean in the Abu Ghraib area here, June 24.

The Co. A Soldiers and Iraqi soldiers of 1st Company, 4th Battalion, 24th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division walked through the village, meeting with locals and discussing security concerns.



Staff Sgt. Ramon Esparaza-Reyes (left) of Yuma, Ariz., and Spc. Michael Thornton of Dallas share a piece of bread given to them by an Iraqi man in the village of al-Fallujean in the Abu Ghraib area here, June 24. Both Soldiers are infantrymen assigned to Company A, 1st Combined Arms Battalion, 63rd Armored Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division. The Soldiers were on a joint combat patrol with Iraqi soldiers of 1st Company, 4th Battalion, 24th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division.

Sgt. 1st Class Sesilio Astorga, a platoon sergeant assigned to Company A, 1st Combined Arms Battalion, 63rd Armored Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, takes down notes while discussing security and infrastructure concerns with Ali Matar Hussein in the village of al-Fallujean in the Abu Ghraib area here, June 24. Astorga, a native of Rexburg, Idaho, said he gained valuable insight in his first meeting with Hussein. “It was good meeting him [Ali Matar Hussein] because of the hospitality he showed,” Astorga said. “He voiced his opinion and let me know the people are able to work with us and the Iraqi Army.”



**I WILL
ALWAYS
PLACE THE
MISSION
FIRST.**

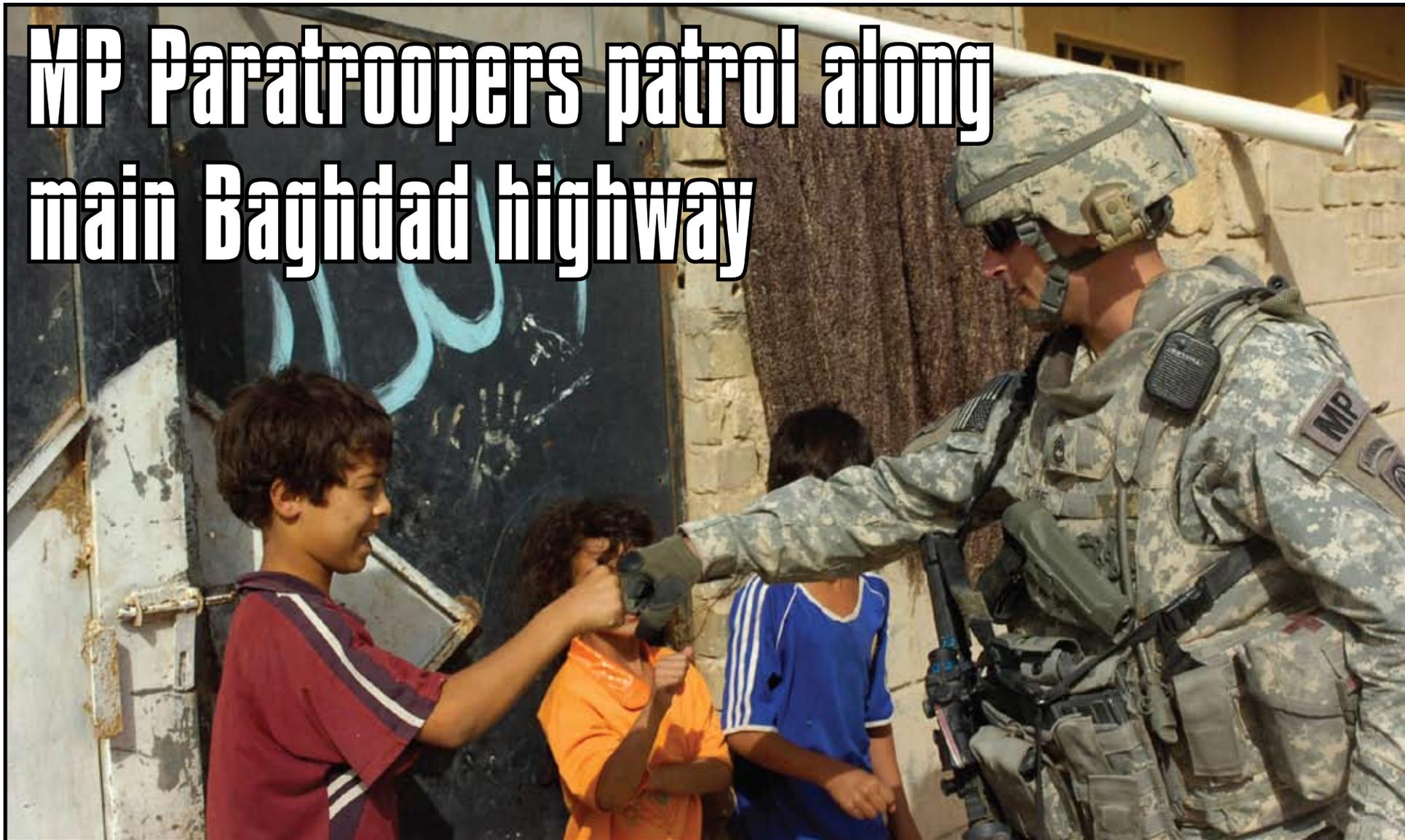


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MP Paratroopers patrol along main Baghdad highway



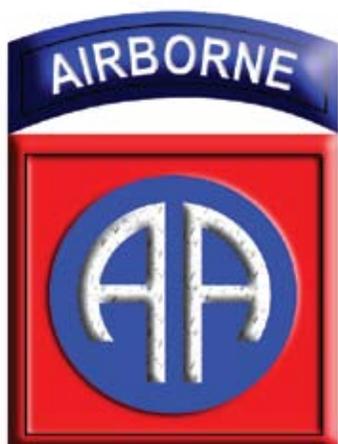
BAGHDAD – Sgt. 1st Class James Volpe, of Hopewell, N.J., gives some Iraqi children a fist pump greeting during a foot patrol June 13 along a major highway in the 9 Nissan district of eastern Baghdad. Volpe, a platoon sergeant with the Military Police Platoon, Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, participated in the patrol in order to disrupt any enemy activity along the highway.



Sgt. Richard Sheetz, of Galloway, N.J., keeps an eye for any suspicious activity during a foot patrol June 13 along a major highway in the 9 Nissan district of eastern Baghdad. Sheetz, a team leader, and Paratroopers assigned to the Military Police Platoon, Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, conducted the clearance operation on the frequently traveled highway in Baghdad to ensure the area was free of enemy activity.



Pfc. Leigh Matchison, of Fort Thomas, Ky., talks to some Iraqi children during a foot patrol June 13 along a major highway in the 9 Nissan district of eastern Baghdad.



Sgt. 1st Class James Volpe, of Hopewell, N.J., talks to a local shop owner in order to assess security along a major eastern Baghdad highway during a foot patrol in the 9 Nissan district of eastern Baghdad, June 13. Volpe, a platoon sergeant with the Military Police Platoon, Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, patrols in the area in order to disrupt enemy activity along the highway.

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

