

Crossed Sabers

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1st ACB Soldiers pull no punches

Story by Sgt. Nathan Hoskins
1st ACB PAO, 1st Cav. Div., MND-B

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – THUD! The sound a strike makes when it's delivered to the body.

This sound reverberates throughout the room as onlookers' faces wince in empathetic pain for the punished.

It's followed by the barely audible grunt from the Soldier on the ground, giving the striker mild satisfaction. They're both exhausted at this point.

His name is Bond, Sgt. Jeremiah Bond, and he is beating the life-giving oxygen out of his fellow Soldier – this is good.

The sights, sounds and smells of sweating Soldiers grappling, punching and kicking each other are the status quo for combatives training with Team Highlander of Headquarters Support Company, 615th Aviation Support Battalion, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad.

"If you let your opponent strike you across the chin, you're going to go from [high definition] to black and white. It doesn't matter if it's an open-palmed slap," said Sgt. Sherman McCaskey, a radio communications security repairer and combatives instructor/team leader for HSC, 615th ASB.

McCaskey addressed his six-man team during a lull in training, his voice fused with cool, calm confidence.

"Humans are just like other animals that can smell fear or see it in its prey's eyes. You have to be confident," said the Thomasville, La., native as he paced the mat.

McCaskey, along with Staff Sgt. Nathaniel Landis, the battalion motor pool sergeant for 615th ASB, has been training his team for a month now; ever since he received an email informing him of a combatives tournament hosted by the 10th Sustainment Brigade on Camp Taji.

"The team is looking real good. Actually, in a month's time, they've learned a lot," said McCaskey, a level three certified combatives instructor.

"I'm kind of a hard trainer and I yell a lot because I want them to succeed and I want to win – I like to win," said McCaskey with a grin.

Doing an exercise for blocking, Spc. Andre Doute, from Fayetteville, N.C., a construction equipment repairer, in Headquarters Support Company, 615th Aviation Support Battalion, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, readies himself for a combatives tournament being held on Aug. 29.



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

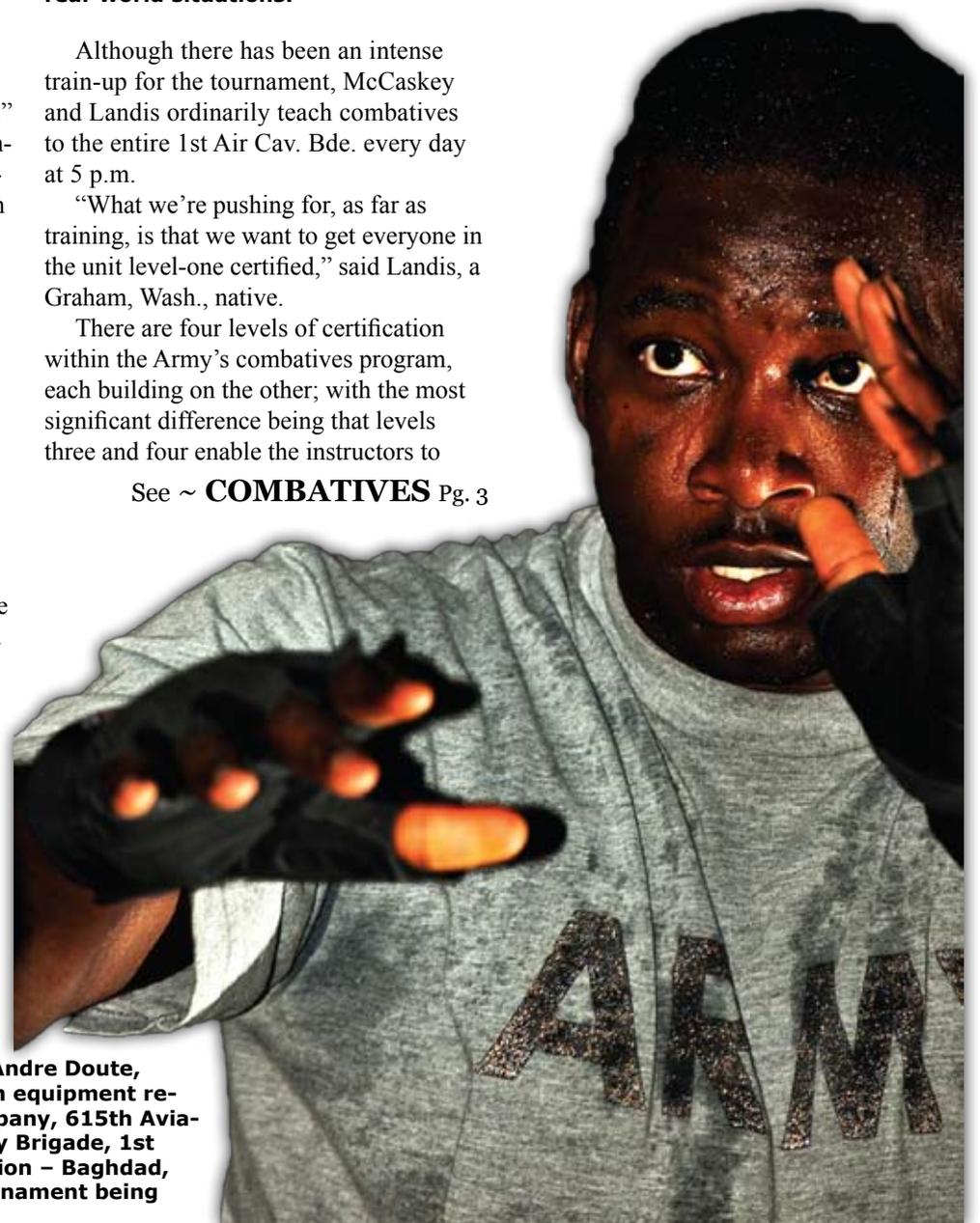
Working on reaction and striking, Spc. Andre Doute, (left), from Fayetteville, N.C., a construction equipment repairer, in Headquarters Support Company, 615th Aviation Support Battalion, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, dodges the swings thrown by Sgt. Sherman McCaskey (right), from Thomasville, Ala., a radio repairer and a level three combatives instructor, in HSC, 615th ASB, Camp Taji, Iraq, Aug. 20. McCaskey said he trains his Soldier hard so that they are able to win in the ring and in real-world situations.

Although there has been an intense train-up for the tournament, McCaskey and Landis ordinarily teach combatives to the entire 1st Air Cav. Bde. every day at 5 p.m.

"What we're pushing for, as far as training, is that we want to get everyone in the unit level-one certified," said Landis, a Graham, Wash., native.

There are four levels of certification within the Army's combatives program, each building on the other; with the most significant difference being that levels three and four enable the instructors to

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Prayers from Baghdad

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

When is the statue of a horse not just a lifeless, plastic figurine? When it is the mascot of the First Team, carried time and again into combat to remind troops of the rich heritage of the 1st Cavalry Division. Trigger has truly "been there, done that," and if he could talk, what might he say? If he were to pray, how might that prayer sound? I think it might be something like this:

Trigger's Prayer

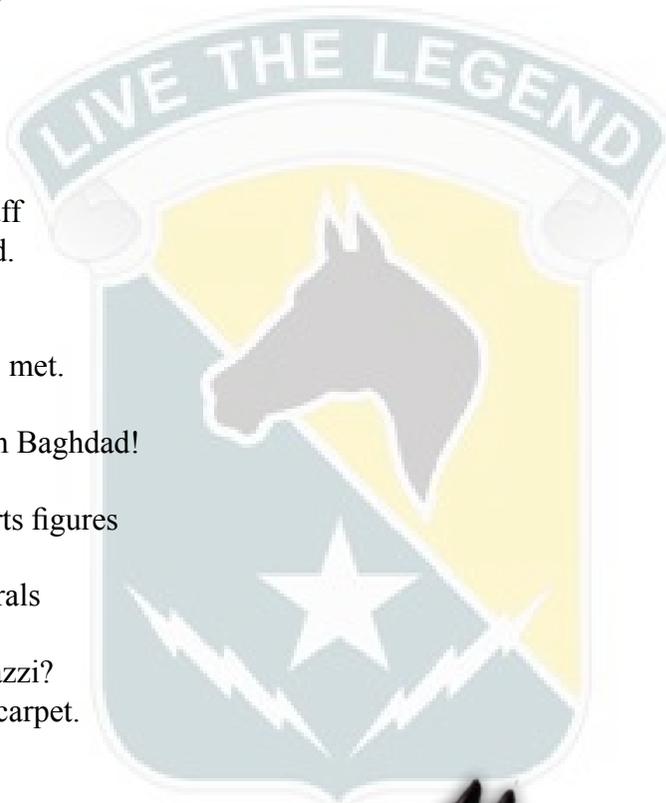
Lord,
It's quiet now.

The night shift is on duty,
and the constant stream of staff
ascending the stairs has ended.
This is my favorite time,
a time to reflect on days past
and the parade of VIPs I have met.

I must be the biggest celebrity in Baghdad!

How many movie stars and sports figures
have stroked my neck?
How many politicians and generals
have held my reins
and smiled for the paparazzi?
Everyone wants to walk on my carpet.

But oh, what do I want, Lord?



I long to stand proudly by a trooper
as he accepts a valorous award,
and whisper in his ear, "Well done."

I want to knicker quietly
as the CG strolls by late at night,
returning safely from battlefield circulation.

And most of all, I long to go home.
Take me home, Lord, I have seen enough.

I deployed for Desert Storm,
prepared to endure a grueling ground campaign,
yet it was over in a matter of days.

I returned for a second shot at Saddam,
A war that was certain to be quick...
yet it's a war that has lasted 6 years.

My view of the wall of heroes
is a constant reminder
of the fallen warriors
who will no longer stand by my side.

It's enough, Lord.
More than enough.

So instead of comics and country singers,
Please send me a diligent trooper
to buff my car-wax coat
and wipe the dust from my saddle.

Then, when my team hands off the mission,
gently pack me in the CONEX
and ship me home.

And let history show...
I have proudly served the First Team.
I have Lived the Legend.

Amen.



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certify skill levels one and two, said McCaskey.

But being able to toss an opponent physically is not the only benefit to the combatives program, said McCaskey.

“As a Soldier in the United States Army, we’re always going to be in some sort of fight,” he said. You’ve got to have that willingness to be able to go into combat to accomplish the mission – combatives instills that.”

Landis, who will be competing in the tournament, is a level-two certified Soldier who’s been practicing Jiu-Jitsu and Muay-Thai kickboxing on and off for about 12 years.

Although two opponents go into the ring with the intentions of hurting each other, they come out with a different outlook – win or lose, he said.

“You can never have hard feelings when you go in there. You have to go in to it with a humble point of view,” said Landis. “You have to know going in there knowing that (the) guy you’re engaging in some kind of combat ... is actually going to be your friend in the end.”

One of the novice competitors, Sgt. Jeremiah Bond, from Anacoco, La., a light-wheeled vehicle mechanic for HSC, 615th ASB, is excited, albeit a bit anxious, at the prospect of coming out victorious in his first tournament.

“I feel like I’m going to be pretty good at it. I’ve learned quite a lot; Sgt. McCaskey is a good instructor,” said Bond. “I’m nervous because it’s the first tournament I’ve ever been in. It’s going to be an experience and I’m going to enjoy it.”

Bond, a welterweight who will strike his opponent mercilessly, prefers taking his fights to the ground.

“I’ve learned quite a bit of submissions. I like being on the ground better than standing up and (McCaskey) has taught me a lot of stuff on the ground,” said Bond.

Both McCaskey and Landis feel their team is ready for Aug. 29.

“The team is going to do really well. I see a lot of confidence in the team, a lot of good training, a lot of good movements; they’ll do well,” said Landis.

This type of confidence is contagious



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

Training for an up coming combatives competition, Staff Sgt. Nathaniel Landis (on top), from Graham, Wash., the battalion motor pool sergeant and a level two combatives instructor in Headquarters Support Company, 615th Aviation Support Battalion, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, works for a more dominate position with Pfc. Malcom Knox, from New York City, a unit supply specialist in 615th ASB, Camp Taji, Iraq, Aug. 20.

within the room where Soldiers walk in with faces of stern determination and limp out with smiles of accomplishment.

They tend to their bruised bodies, but with a heightened sense of readiness for both the upcoming tournament and anything the world throws at them. ✂



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

Training for a combatives tournament, Sgt. Jeremiah Bond (left), from Anacoco, La., a light wheeled vehicle mechanic in, Headquarters Support Company, 615th Aviation Support Battalion, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, launches out with a kick that Pfc. Malcom Knox, from New York City, a unit supply specialist in HSC, 615th ASB, effectively checks during a training session, here, Aug. 20. Both part of Team Highlander, they’ll compete in a combatives tournament to be held Aug. 29.



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



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'All American' troopers pass on tools in Cold Steel Academy

Story by Staff Sgt. Mark Burrell

MND-B PAO

BAGHDAD—After a strenuous five-day course, 23 Iraqi Army Soldiers stood tall for graduation from the Maad'in 'Cold Steel' Academy, at Combat Outpost Carver, here, Aug. 12.

The paratroopers of 1st Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division who teach the academy, aren't just training Iraqis from the 1st and 2nd Battalions, 45th IA Brigade, 11th IA Division—they're also training comrades and the future generation of security in Iraq.

"We see the same guys outside the wire and at checkpoints," said Staff Sgt. Jamaal Kennedy, an infantry squad leader from Worcester, Mass., assigned to 1st Bn., 505th PIR. "The more guys that go through the class, the more we recognize out there. The same guys that we go on mission with are the same guys we teach."

To begin each day, the Iraqi Soldiers join the paratroopers for early morning physical fitness training. On day one, they learn classes on counter-insurgency, troop leading procedures, operational orders and patrolling.

Most of the information the paratroopers gave to the IA Soldiers was refresher training, said 2nd Lt. Ali Safi Lehebi, a platoon leader from 2nd Bn., 45th IA Bde., 11th IA Div.

"This information added to the information we already have and will make us better Soldiers."

After another early morning of sweating and yelling, day two continued with improvised explosive devices and basic rifle marksmanship training. Both classes are imperative to know as a Soldier.

"Its life or death – you get hit by an IED or ambushed, you're going to need to know what to do," said Pfc. Brian Gallagher, an infantry machine gunner from Newburgh, N.Y., assigned to 1st Bn., 505th PIR. "Everyone needs to know it because anyone could get hit."

The training is definitely sinking in, added Kennedy, who noted this is the fifth iteration of Cold Steel Academy.

"When we go to their headquarters, before they used to hold their weapons sideways and whatever way they wanted," Kennedy explained. "Now they pay attention to muzzle awareness and do what they're supposed to do."

Under the camouflage canopy on the firing range, day three brought excited Iraqi Soldiers eager to compare shot groupings and qualification targets with one another. Occasionally, the Iraqi Soldiers would get the U.S. paratroopers to join them in clapping or mimicking a song to help pass the hot day.

"We try to be quiet professionals, but also try not to be robots," said Kennedy with a faint smile. "What helps is trying to joke around with them, but when it's time to work, it's time to work. They sense that in us – we take our job pretty seriously."

Foam-insulated tents provided protection from the relentless sun for the most part of the fourth day of training. The reflexive fire and cordon and search classes were taught inside before being put to the test out on the range.

"I like the classroom instruction, then being able to practice it outside," said Ali, agreeing with the tempo of the academy.

In the sand outside, the paratroopers set up an outline of a room to be assaulted and cleared and demonstrated the method for the Iraqis.

"Don't run! Slow is smooth; smooth is fast," yelled a paratrooper from the side.

On the fifth day, the Iraqis wore clean uniforms in preparation for their graduation, unknowingly to be soaked in sweat and soiled before they could receive their certificates.

The final day began with a checkpoint exercise, then first aid training and concluded with a practical exercise putting everything together as a team.

"This training adds tools to their toolkit," said Spc. Cesar Lopez, a combat medic from Miami assigned to the 1st Bn., 505th PIR. "The medic portion benefits them greatly because injuries and casualties are a part of combat."

One of the most important gains is the unit cohesion and the chance to work with the Iraqis on a personal basis, Lopez added.

"We build a relationship teaching the classes," agreed Kennedy. "And then when they see us outside the wire they get excited...and they have no problem helping us out and pulling security."

"I see them at checkpoints now and they have much more awareness on what to look out for now and possible threats," added Lopez. "Any training that makes them better Soldiers and better prepared is good for the community."

Lopez also noticed that the confidence in the Iraqi Army is being built up because they are being trained by his fellow paratroopers.

"We see these guys on a regular basis," explained Lopez. "On the streets when we dismount and see a tourniquet on their uniform, we know they know how to use it and it makes us feel good."

"These classes are great to teach us and we like working together with the Americans," said Ali. "When we ask them questions, they give us the perfect answers."

"They're all about it. They come to Cold Steel to learn," said Lopez, the main instructor for the medical portion. "I give them an opportunity to stay after and ask me a few questions and they usually do."

After successfully going on a mock patrol, taking fire and caring for their wounded comrades, the sweaty and dusty Iraqi Army Soldiers brushed themselves off, drank water and chatted cheerfully in preparation for their graduation.

With a new "All-American" combat patch, a diploma and renewed sense of pride, 23 graduates proudly stood for their national anthem with the newly-acquired knowledge on the fresh in their minds.

"This is one of our main missions here," said Lopez, who's been a combat medic for three years. "It's definitely a priority to teach these classes. It's nice to see positive



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

"I lead them into what the next steps should be, asking what's next," explained Pfc. Brian Gallagher (background), an infantry machine gunner from Newburgh, N.Y., assigned to 1st Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, looking on while an Iraqi Army Soldier uses the head-tilt chin-lift method to open the airways of his wounded comrade during a portion of Cold Steel Academy at COP Carver, here, Aug. 13.

results from our efforts – I haven't been disappointed yet."

With the new knowledge that the IA Soldiers bring back and pass on to their battalions, they will continue to yield positive results for the "All-American" paratroopers and the rest of Iraq. ✂



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

Cpl. Michael Douglas (center), an infantry machine gunner from Boulder, Colo., assigned to 1st Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, teaches an Iraqi Army Soldier from 2nd Battalion, 45th IA Brigade, 11th IA Division, the proper stance and techniques for reflexive fire training during Cold Steel Academy at Combat Outpost Carver, here, Aug. 12.

“Garryowen” continues Federal Police training

Story by Pfc. Bailey Anne Jester

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

BAGHDAD – Soldiers from Troop C, 1st “Garryowen” Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment, 1st “Ironhorse” Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, continue training the 2nd Federal Police Brigade during the month-long Wolf Academy at Joint Security Station Istiqlaal.

“The training is for them to have a better understanding of how we perform operations here in Iraq,” said Temple, Texas native Staff Sgt. Nicholas Jansen, instructor for the Wolf Academy.

The course includes classes on how to react during a vehicle rollover, casualty evacuation from vehicles, mounted and dismounted movement techniques, sector of fire, sensitive site exploitation and cordon and searches.

“All of the Iraqi Forces are learning to operate as one, and are being trained the same way

so there is no conflict on any training events,” said Jansen.

“We are trying to teach the policemen skills that the U.S. Soldiers use, so that when an emergency does arise, they will know what to do,” said Rootstown, Ohio native, Spc. Nathan Huhn.

The day begins with the Federal Policemen in formation dressed in full gear: gloves, safety vests, helmet and their weapons. The 2nd Federal Police Brigade commander then conducts an inspection to make sure that their uniform and hair are within regulation.

“We try to break it down to a simple yet effective way of learning, so that it is easy to remember and they can take what is learned with them out into the fight,” said

Huhn.

Learning the lessons and drills isn’t just to satisfy the instructors; the policemen need to remember the tactics and methods of the drills because it may potentially save the life of a fellow FP, stated Huhn.

“The [Federal police officers] listen well; they have many similar characteristics of U.S. Soldiers when it comes to sitting in one place for a period of time. But overall they do well,” said Huhn.

To help ingrain the concepts of what is being taught, the students actually perform skills taught in class.

To put a better perspective on what’s being taught, the FP’s provided two humvees to practice the techniques for exiting the vehicle during a rollover. With the humvee sitting stationary, the instructors and policemen practice techniques used in a rollover situation.

Fireman carries, a method to move an injured person from one point to another in a quick and effective way, were also learned.

“I won’t lie, it was funny to watch,” laughed Huhn. “They did well and did everything correct, so we know they know how.”

To help motivate Soldiers in complying with rules and regulations there are incentives and rewards for doing the right thing.

“Every day there will be an inspection like there was today,” Jansen said to his students. “If you do well and look good, you will get a mark. At the end of the course the Soldier with the most marks will be the honor student and get an award.”

The policemen are learning and can only continue to keep learning, that’s the goal and objective of this training, said Huhn. ✂

“We try to break it down to a simple yet effective way of learning, so that it is easy to remember and they can take what is learned with them out into the fight,”

**-- Spc. Nathan Huhn, Troop C,
1st Sqdn., 7th Cav. Regt., 1st
BCT, 1st Cav. Div.**



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

The 2nd Federal Police Brigade commander (left) examines each Federal Policemen individually to ensure they are within the uniform regulation as part of the Wolf Academy at Joint Security Station Istiqlaal Aug. 12. Soldiers from Troop C, 1st “Garryowen” Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment, 1st “Ironhorse” Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, held courses on safety techniques during a vehicle rollover for the the 1st and 2nd Battalion, 2nd Federal Police Brigade.



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

Federal Policemen, from the 1st and 2nd Battalions, 2nd Federal Police Brigade, “brace” themselves during a rollover drill at Joint Security Station Istiqlaal Aug. 12. Soldiers from Troop C, 1st “Garryowen” Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment, 1st “Ironhorse” Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, held classes teaching proper procedure during a vehicle rollover and casualty evacuation methods during the Wolf Academy.



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

Federal Policemen from the 1st and 2nd Battalions, 2nd Federal Police Brigade practice a fireman carry during the Wolf Academy at Joint Security Station Istiqlaal Aug. 12. Soldiers assigned to Troop C, 1st “Garryowen” Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment, 1st “Ironhorse” Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, held the class, to teach them emergency evacuation procedures.

Micro grants help southern Baghdad communities

Story by Spc. Ruth McClary

30th HBCT PAO, MND-B

BAGHDAD – Local Iraqi business owners are receiving micro grants ranging from \$2,000 to \$5,000 from the civil affairs team of 150th Armored Reconnaissance Squadron, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team, to stimulate the local economy.

Nine business owners from the al-Zaydon, Yusifiyah, and al-Radwaniyah areas south of Baghdad have been approved for grants and 18 more are awaiting approval.

“[Micro-grants] are a tool the commander can use to affect the local economy,” said Capt. Tim O’Neil, the Civil Affairs Team Three leader. “This is a rapid response to get money flowing into the economy to help businesses, create jobs in the community and in turn get them to help us.”

The money comes from the Commander’s Emergency Relief Fund, with the West Virginia Army National Guard squadron earmarking \$100,000 to distribute through grants in their area of operations. The application process takes about 15 days.

While many types of businesses will benefit from the grants, local farmers will likely receive most of the grants, as the area is heavily agricultural. Crop yields, however, are small as irrigation water is scarce or hard to transport.

“The commander has made water the number one priority,” said Troop C executive officer, 1st Lt. Adam Penfold, of Salem, W. Va. “These people have lived without electricity for a long time but no way can they live without water.”

Several grants will fund drip irrigation projects, the digging of small wells, and purchase of water pumps and filters, all

of which are expected to give each of the recipients about 250 gallons of water per day.

“One of the interpreters is an engineer by trade,” said Penfold. “He worked with a local contractor to fund the irrigation projects for \$5,000 each. We are not only funding business owners, we also purchase supplies from the locals, feeding the economy from both aspects.”

These grants, officials say, are like tiny seeds that will help the economy grow and eventually flourish.

“We are submitting an additional nine applications this week,” said Penfold.

Other businesses getting micro grants this week are a grocery store that received \$3,500; two tire stores receiving \$3,000 and \$4,000 respectively; and a veterinarian shop that received \$5,000 for medicines and supplies to supplement the health of local farm animals.

Dairy farmer Abdullah Muhammed Hawaf Hamood al-Zobai received a \$5,000 grant to build a larger stable, get animals vaccinated and to purchase more livestock.

A grant was also given to al-Radwaniyah fish farmer Deyaa Hameed Hamad Salman who will expand his business by adding a generator, feeder building and another pond for silver carp.

“He said it’s been passed down through generations, from his grandfather to him,” said Wooten about the fish farm. ✂

Second Lt. Andy Zaidi (right), of Oakland, Calif., sits with Iraqi veterinarian Majied Abed Ahmead and a translator after presenting Ahmead with a \$5,000 grant to upgrade his business with medical supplies for farm animals, Aug. 5. Ahmead is one of the al-Zaydon marketplace business owners who received grants during the week of Aug. 1 to 8.



U.S. Army Photo courtesy of 150th ARS

First Sergeant Elmo Harmon (right), of Troop A, 150th Armored Reconnaissance Squadron, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team, shows Abdullah Muhammed Hawaf Hamood al-Zobai where to sign for a micro grant for upgrades to his dairy farm, Aug. 8. Al-Zobai said he will use the money to vaccinate animals, purchase more livestock and build a larger stable.



U.S. Army Photo courtesy of 150th ARS

Joint Security Station Zubaida returned to Iraqi owners

Story by Spc. Ruth McClary

30th HBCT PAO, MND-B

BAGHDAD – The U.S. portion of Joint Security Station Zubaida was turned over to its original Iraqi landowners Aug. 10 during a ceremony at the small base south of Baghdad.

Capt. Brian Grey, commander of Battery B, 1st Battalion, 113th Field Artillery Regiment, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team, and Samir al-Hadad, the chief of staff from the office of the Iraqi prime minister, signed transfer documents releasing the few acres from the Government of Iraq back to the land owners.

Two homes and the surrounding property have been used by U.S. forces for at least a year, with the battery taking over operations at the base in late May 2009. The Iraqi part of the station will remain under government control.

The Soldiers of Battery B have spent the past few weeks, taking down barriers, removing trailers and cleaning up the house in preparation for its return.

“This is both a good day and a sad day for us,” said Grey. “This symbolizes that security in this area is very good, and that the Iraqi Army, as a professional force, is capable of providing for this area.

“It is a sad day because we’ve become brothers with the Iraqi Army and we’ve been living on this base side by side with them,” he said.

Grey went on to say that although they are pulling back to their base in Adwaniyah, Soldiers will still come by on a regular basis to train and patrol with the Iraqis.

Many of the battery’s Soldiers, including Sgt. 1st Class Harold Tyson, also expressed that they will miss their Iraqi neighbors, but have confidence in the Iraqi Army’s capabilities.

“This is a bittersweet moment for me as I made a lot of friends with my IA counterparts,” said Tyson of Monroe, N.C., “but I feel comfortable that they’ve got everything under control.”

Al-Hadad, the chief of staff from the office of the prime minister, was also at the ceremony. He agreed that this shows that the IA

can handle security in the area now, and the importance of giving the people of Iraq their property back.

“Today is a special one,” said al-Hadad, “because we have the owner of the house here who is really happy to have his house back.” ✂



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

Samir al-Hadad, (left), chief of staff from the office of the Iraqi prime minister, and Capt. Brian Grey, Battery B commander, 1st Battalion, 113th Field Artillery Regiment, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team, sign transfer documents releasing the land and house that was once the American side of JSS Zubaida, back to the landowner Aug. 10.

MND-B Soldiers check up on solar project

Story by Sgt. Joshua Risner

MND-B PAO

BAGHDAD – The roof of the New Iraq Health Clinic in the Gazaliyah district, here, looks a little different from the buildings surrounding it. Two rows of solar panels, collecting the bountiful Mesopotamian sunlight, now provide power for the clinic.

The addition is part of an ongoing effort from the Joint Projects Management Office of 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, according to Maj. Andrew Attar, from Bristol, Conn., the JPMO chief.

“The solar panel project started in April, but like most of the clinics in Baghdad, various American funding sources have gone into it over the years,” said Attar. “The solar panels help to augment the electrical grid which is improving every day but still not consistent enough for a medical facility.”

Solar power has greatly improved operations inside the clinic, which services the local area, according to Attar.

“It pretty much powers the entire clinic,” he said. “We’ve had to reduce the number of refrigerated air conditioning units, but in their place we put air units that have less energy needs and still provide cool air.”

The JPMO inspected the solar power system to ensure that it was working efficiently and correctly, Attar explained.

“We inspected the [solar] panels but more importantly we inspected the internal wiring within the clinic to make sure the loads are properly segregated,” he said. “Some rooms require a lot of energy, some rooms require very little energy, so that is one of the finishing touches - if it’s not done right, it’s a problem. We’re making sure that a room requiring a lot of energy has the proper wiring so it can handle the load.”

Attar added that the quality assurance/quality control aspect of the project is an important one.

“Our job is to make sure that the money that the American tax payers are spending is used in accordance with the statement of work agreed upon by us and the contractors,” he said. “We don’t pay until the work’s done right.”

The New Iraq Health Clinic is the third clinic in West Baghdad that has received cutting-edge solar powered battery systems, according to Attar. ✂

Mahdi Jonny, an electrical engineer with the joint projects management office, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, checks the wiring on a series of solar panels on the roof of the New Iraq Health Clinic in Gazaliyah, here, Aug. 12. The solar panels are the primary source of power for the hospital, which provides care for the local population.



Photo by Sgt. Joshua Risner, MND-B PAO

30th HBCT Soldiers bring clean water to rural Iraqis

Story by Sgt. Jon Soles

MND-B PAO

BAGHDAD – Capt. Sara Woods calls it “sweet water;” the clean, potable ground water that hides under the dusty farmland at a depth of about 20 meters. That sweet water is the key to helping rural Iraqis enjoy greater health and more productive livestock.

Woods is the chief of Civil Affairs Team 31, currently attached to the North Carolina National Guard’s 1st Battalion, 120th Infantry Regiment, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team, and her job is to help Iraqis help themselves by setting up wells and teaching them how to operate them.

The civil affairs team, and a platoon of infantrymen providing security, visited well sites near Mahmudiyah, here, Aug. 9, to check on their condition and level of use by local farm families.

“What [a well] does is provide everyone with clean drinking water, for people and animals; for an entire cluster of farm families,” said Woods, a native of Janesville, Minn. “From the well, all the families can come in and get good drinking water.”

Woods said the alternative to the well water is canal water, or water from wells that are too shallow.

“Right now most of them are pretty much drinking straight canal water. It’s dirty, it’s contaminated and it’s salty,” said Woods. “People get sick, the kids are sick and babies are born with birth defects; it’s absolutely terrible.”

This well in Mahmudiyah was built by the civil affairs team and an embedded Provincial Reconstruction Team. When the Soldiers came to check on it, they found the well in good working order and utilized by about 15 families and cattle. The North Carolina National Guardsmen have plans to build more wells capable of providing water for dozens of families, according to Woods.

“The larger-scale concept that the 120th [Inf. Regt.] is looking at puts out 1,500 liters an hour and would service about 30 to 50 families,” said Woods. “It’s ideal for out in these rural areas where you’re not going to get a city network running to you.”

Beside the well, a milk cow and her calf stood under a shade tree. Woods pointed out that the cow and her calf



Photo by Sgt. Jon Soles, MND-B PAO

Sgt. David Howell (left), of Elizabethtown, N.C., and Sgt. Michael Stanley of Burgaw, N.C., pull security while a civil affairs team checks on a well in a farmer’s field near Mahmudiyah, here, Aug. 9. Both North Carolina National Guard Soldiers are tankers assigned to Company B, 1st Battalion, 120th Infantry Regiment, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team.

looked much healthier since they started drinking clean water from the new well. Cows drinking the dirty water often have shrunken udders that do not produce much milk.

“She can’t even stand up straight she’s got so much milk in her udders and that comes from drinking good water and not that really nasty salty water,” said Woods. “That cow is going to produce phenomenal amounts of milk for the family.”

In order for the wells to work properly, they need to be deep enough to tap into clean water, said Woods. Filters clean remaining contaminants or salt from the water.

“That 20-meter aquifer we have to hit is ideal because it’s got the lowest salt content and the least amount of contaminants,” said Woods. “There are two other aquifers at 6 and 12 meters and they [Iraqis] stop there because they think it’s good, when all they’ve got to do is put in a little more elbow grease and hit that 20 meter aquifer.”

Something as simple as a new well helps the community and builds self-sufficiency in many different ways, according to Woods.

“You’re decreasing illnesses and the problems the kids



Photo by Sgt. Jon Soles, MND-B PAO

Capt. Sara Woods, chief of Civil Affairs Team 31, unscrews a lid to check a water pump filter in a sunflower field near Mahmudiyah, here, Aug. 9. Woods, of Janesville, Minn., is attached to Company B, 1st Battalion, 120th Infantry Regiment, 30th Brigade Combat Team.

and the families have from drinking polluted canal water,” said Woods. “And you are giving it to the milk cows, which means the farmers have more milk to take to the market to make products and it builds the dairy industry up and it provides for the folks in the area.”

As the Soldiers of the 1st Bn., 120th Inf. Regt., continue to pursue the well project that provide clean drinking water, they can help Iraqi families extract better health and economic prosperity from the dry, dusty farmland. ✂

Air Cav Chinooks play large role in mission support

Story by Sgt. Travis Zielinski

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

BAGHDAD – Since the Vietnam War, Army aviation has increased the efficiency of logistics – keeping supplies and Soldiers off the dangerous roads below.

The safer and more efficiently this supply line works, the more effective the war machine becomes.

The aircrews and the CH-47F Chinook helicopters that make up B Company, 2nd Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, are a

key link for logistics operations in the Baghdad area.

Operations range from internal and external supply runs to passenger movement and air assaults.

Planning of these operations is completed by a higher element and then the request is made for the Chinooks to support these elements – an involved process, said Chief Warrant Officer 3 Roberto Torres, from Salinas, Puerto Rico, a Chinook pilot in Co. B, 2-227th, 1st ACB.

“There is a certain specification of how personnel and equipment are moved around Baghdad to meet requirements for future missions,” he said.

Co. B supports all branches within the United States military – including special

operation forces – through combat service support missions.

We are basically here to support the troopers on the ground; they call us for support and we help them complete their mission, said Torres.

The Chinook crews of Co. B are responsible for covering the most populated area in Iraq – the MND-B area of operations.

“We reach out; we go to areas like Kirkuk, areas like Balad, a lot of the smaller FOBs [Forward Operating Bases], and move a large amount of personnel and equipment in the... hours that we fly,” said Torres. “So what we do is very important.”

The service Co. B troopers provide is an intricate part of the overall mission in Iraq, said Torres.

“It’s my personal opinion that 90 percent of the missions that get accomplished (by U.S. forces) on a daily basis in Iraq are

because of the air assets. The air assets are the ones moving the parts and pieces,” said Torres. “You don’t see these things being done on the ground because it is more dangerous.”

Using the Chinooks to keep the supply line off of the ground adds a certain safety aspect of reducing the threat from the insurgents.

“It is a good feeling knowing that we are helping out, we are keeping people off the roads,” said Sgt. Eric Grass, from Gilbert Ariz., a Chinook flight engineer in Co. B, 2-227th.

“IEDs [improvised explosive devices] are still a big deal, even though they don’t hit as many people as they used to. Every person we can get off the road and move by air helps out a lot,” said Grass.

The crew chiefs are responsible for the cargo and personnel the aircraft will be carrying during transportation. The passengers also look to the crew chiefs for their safety.

“Regardless of how smart a person is, when they get on the aircraft they seem to get really confused. So a big part of our job is to make sure they sit where they are supposed to sit, there muzzles are pointing downwards and making sure that all the cargo is secure,” said Grass “All of this is done so that in the event of a crash we don’t have people and bags flying around the cabin.”

During flight, the crew chiefs are responsible for scanning the airspace for other aircraft and watching for towers and cables. They are also manning the guns in case they come under fire, so they have the means to return fire on the enemy, said Grass.

The aircrews of Co. B, know the role that they play in combat operations of Iraq and have a great sense of pride and accomplishment providing their services to the U.S. military forces.

The Chinooks and their crews are a key part of logistics to the support of missions in MND-B, Torres said emphatically.

“It is a good feeling knowing that we are helping out, we are keeping people off the roads,”

-- Sgt. Eric Grass, a Chinook flight engineer in Co. B, 2-227th Aviation Regt., 1st Air Cav.



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

During the aircraft run-up, Pfc. Kelvio Gomes, from Chicago, a CH-47F Chinook helicopter door gunner in Company B, 2nd Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, monitors aircraft components to ensure proper conditions are maintained, Aug. 8. The crew chiefs and door gunners are responsible for the safety of the passengers and the equipment in the aircraft during flight. They also are responsible for the aircraft’s physical security – ready to defend against enemy attackers.



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

Before flight, Chief Warrant Officer 3 Roberto Torres, from Salinas, Puerto Rico, a CH-47F Chinook helicopter pilot in Company B, 2nd Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, conducts his required system checks, prior to flight, Aug. 8. The aircrews will quickly and safely move personnel and supplies around the Baghdad area.



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

Once cargo is loaded, Pfc. Kelvio Gomes, from Chicago, a CH-47F Chinook helicopter door gunner in Company B, 2nd Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, straps down the load as a safety precaution. The crews move personnel and equipment around the Baghdad area.



SEP 03

The American Revolution

On this day in American Military History

The Stars and Stripes flies

The American flag was flown in battle for the first time on this day in 1777, during a Revolutionary War skirmish at Cooch's Bridge, Delaware. Patriot General William Maxwell ordered the "Stars and Stripes" banner raised as a detachment of his infantry and cavalry met an advance guard of British and Hessian troops. The rebels were defeated and forced to retreat to Brandywine Creek in Pennsylvania, where they joined General George Washington's main force.

Three months earlier, on June 14, the Continental Congress had adopted a resolution stating that "the flag of the United States be thirteen alternate stripes red and white" and that "the Union be thirteen stars, white in a blue field, representing a new Constellation." The national flag, which became known as the Stars and Stripes, was based on the Grand Union flag, a banner carried by the Continental Army in 1776 that also consisted of 13 red and white stripes. According to legend, Philadelphia seamstress Betsy Ross designed the new canton, which consisted of a circle of 13 stars on a blue background, at the request of General George Washington. Historians have been unable to conclusively prove or disprove this legend.

With the entrance of new states into the Union after independence, new stripes and stars were added to represent the new additions. In 1818, however, Congress enacted a law stipulating that the 13 original stripes be restored and that only stars be added to represent new states.

On June 14, 1877, the first Flag Day observance was held on the 100th anniversary of the adoption of the flag. As instructed by Congress, the U.S. flag was flown from all public buildings across the country. In the years after the first Flag Day, several states continued to observe the anniversary, and, in 1949, Congress officially designated June 14 as Flag Day, a national day of observance.

1777

A day with the Shadows

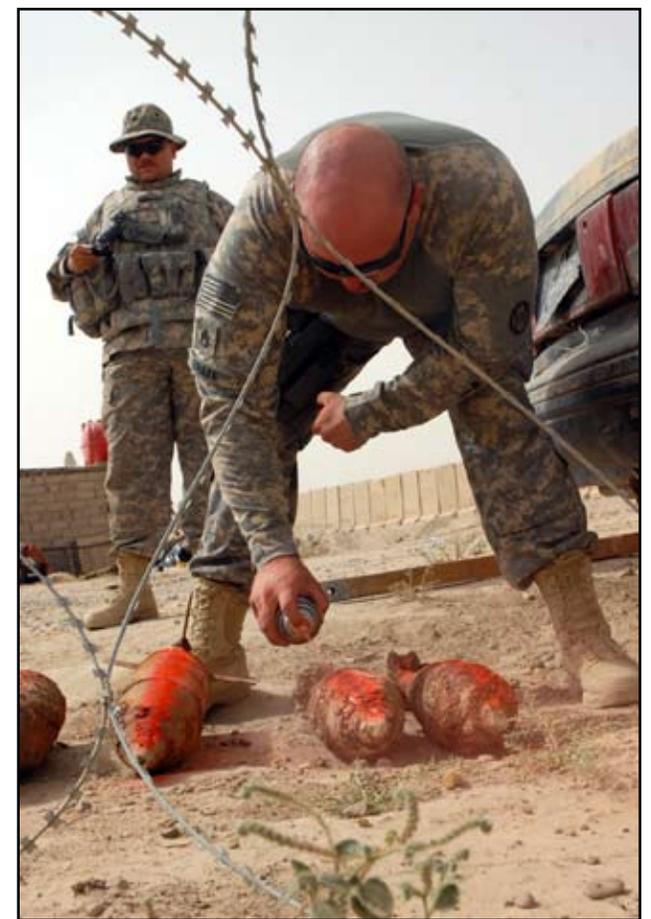


BAGHDAD – Staff Sgt. Paul Meadows, a cavalry scout section sergeant from Summersville, W. Va., shakes an Iraqi boy's hand after giving him a soccer ball during a patrol in southwestern Baghdad, Aug. 10. Meadows, assigned to Troop C, 150th Armored Reconnaissance Squadron, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team.

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



Spc. Aaron Fox, a cavalry scout from assigned to Troop C, 150th Armored Reconnaissance Squadron, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team, uses the Handheld Interagency Identification Equipment (HIIDE) system to register an Iraqi man during a routine patrol in southwestern Baghdad, Aug. 10. "The HIIDEs helps us know the people we're helping," said the native of Yorktown Heights, N.Y. "It's for accountability and we're going to pass it on to the Government of Iraq...its kinda like a census back in the States."



Danville, W. Va. native, Staff Sgt. Brian Brake (foreground), a cavalry scout platoon sergeant, paints artillery shells discovered by their Iraqi police counterparts at an Iraqi Police compound in southwestern Baghdad, Aug. 10, to make sure they are not turned in again. Staff Sgt. Paul Meadows (background), a cavalry scout section sergeant from Summersville, W. Va., watches. Both Soldiers are assigned to the Shadow Platoon, Troop C, 150th Armored Reconnaissance Squadron, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team.

(Left) An Iraqi boy speaks to Spc. Thomas Pickering, a cavalry scout from Benwood, W. Va., assigned to Troop C, 150th Armored Reconnaissance Squadron, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team, during a routine patrol in southwestern Baghdad, Aug. 10. Pickering, who works as a correctional officer in West Virginia, was a military police officer before a 14-year break in service.



An Iraqi boy waters plants while Staff Sgt. Paul Meadows (left), a cavalry scout section sergeant from Summersville, W. Va., and Spc. Clinton Elg, a combat medic from Bluemont, Va., both assigned to Troop C, 150th Armored Reconnaissance Squadron, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team, pull security at a residence in southwestern Baghdad, Aug. 10. "The kids are a lot less obnoxious when you learn a few words of Arabic and play with them," said Elg, who has also been deployed to Afghanistan.

MRAP training increases survivability

Story by Sgt. Rebekah Malone
225th Eng. Bde. PAO, MND-B

BAGHDAD – The addition of the heavily armored family of mine resistant ambush protected vehicles to the military arsenal has increased survivability for U.S. forces considerably.

Soldiers continually train on the massive trucks for almost any situation; including roll over due to terrain, roadside bombs or operator error.

The MRAP Egress Trainer teaches Soldiers what a roll over is like and increases their chances for getting out quickly and safely. Using a remote controlled MRAP Maxx Pro suspended by device that literally flips the entire vehicle 360 degrees, Soldiers receive a realistic training experience in the event of a roll over.

Senior MRAP Egress Trainer, Stacey Hines of Cairo, GA, credits the training with an 80 percent drop in MRAP roll-overs since June.

Soldiers are taught to think ahead and plan out the steps they would take.

“Just keep in mind your load plan,” Hines told members the 225th Engineer Brigade. “When you are going through water, think, ‘What are your actions?’”

“You can talk it over in your head a thousand times, but until you are upside down, you don’t know how you’ll react,” Sgt. Charles Williams of Bush, La., explained. “It feels like a roller coaster ride except you get stuck at the top – and you have to get out.”

Sgt. Kyle Clark, a driver from Baton Rouge, La., found himself in an odd position while trying to unbuckle his safety belt and exit the vehicle.

“I found myself pinned,” he explained. “My head and feet were both hitting the ceiling [at the same time]. My body made a pyramid. It was an awkward position!”

There are ten training modules located throughout Iraq for any Soldier, with three in the Baghdad area. It is now mandatory Soldiers receive the training in Kuwait before moving forward into Iraq. ✂



Photo by Sgt. Rebekah Malone, 225th Eng. Bde. PAO, MND-B

A Mine-Resistant Ambush-Protected MAXX Pro egress training simulator gives Soldiers a ride they won’t soon forget on Camp Liberty, Iraq. There are ten simulators located throughout Iraq, with three in the Baghdad area. All Soldiers are encouraged to complete the training.



Photo by Sgt. Rebekah Malone, 225th Eng. Bde. PAO, MND-B

Capt. Jackie Manton (left), of Baton Rouge, La., holds on to the gunner, Capt. Steven Belford, of Pineville, La., as the mine resistant ambush protected MAXX Pro egress training simulator begins to flip up-side down. The training helps prepare Soldiers mentally to increase their chances of survivability in the event of a roll over.



Photo by Sgt. Rebekah Malone, 225th Eng. Bde. PAO, MND-B

Sgt. Victor Beaudoin of Pineville, La., exits the mine resistant ambush protected MAXX Pro Aug. 8. The simulator flips the entire vehicle 180 degrees; Soldiers must then unbuckle and exit the vehicle as quickly and safely as possible. Nearly 30 Soldiers from the 225th Engineer Brigade received the instruction on the module located on Camp Liberty, Iraq. This was the second class since the trainer was installed in May to complete the training.

MRAP ROLLOVER PREVENTION IS ALL ABOUT CONTROL:

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

ENGAGED LEADERS MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

Paratroopers along for the ride on Operation Zelig Teftish

Story by Staff Sgt. Mark Burrell

MND-B PAO

BAGHDAD – During the pre-dawn hours on Aug. 15, in an Iraqi Army base on the southern outskirts of Baghdad, paratroopers from C Company, 1st Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, huddled with Iraqi Army commanders from 1st Battalion, 45th Iraqi Army Brigade 11th Iraqi Army Division to discuss a clearing operation in the town of Zelig.

The briefing set the tone for Operation Zelig Teftish, and portrayed the shift of power U.S. forces are trying to implement.

“Instead of us giving them our plan, I said, ‘Hold on, let’s let them brief us,’” explained 2nd Lt. Will Freakley, a platoon leader from Woodstock, Va. “They gave us their plan and we made some suggestions.”

According to Freakley, the mission had two objectives. First, to eliminate the capabilities of the enemy to move arms from outside of Baghdad into the city, and second, to establish the Iraqi Army in the area and have them take the lead.

As dawn started to break, the Iraqis led the sweep of the neighborhood by moving methodically from house to house as the American paratroopers took up blocking positions and acted as a quick reaction force and outer layer of protection.

“We are trying to eliminate the excess amounts of illegal weapons in these hous-

es,” said Staff Sgt. Ryan Meyer, a forward observer from Springfield, Mass. “This area has been reported as a weapons trafficking area. If we eliminate the weapons, we eliminate the attacks on Iraqi Security Forces and U.S. forces.”

Lt. Col. Ali Jasim Laefh, the deputy commander for 1st Bn., 45th IA Bde., 11th IA Div., agreed with the assessment.

“All the weapons come in from the farms and the outlying areas of Baghdad and it’s important to secure these farmlands,” he said. “Whenever we can control the outskirts, then we will be safe and successful.”

The show of force in the area sent a message to the insurgents as well as the local community.

“It’s not just a reactionary thing, it’s a proactive approach to try to search out the bad guys,” added Freakley. “Hopefully they know it’s not safe to hide here and the insurgents don’t have a haven in our operating environment.”

“I have searched different areas in the area and the citizens feel safe when they see U.S. and IA working together,” said Ali. “It helps when I can call for help from U.S. forces if I need it.”

As the community began to come alive and people started out of their homes to begin the day’s activities, they were greeted by IA and U.S. Soldiers working together.

“This lets them know that the IAs are running the show around here and they don’t have to worry about security,” said



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

Annandale, Va. native, 1st Lt. James Murrett, the executive officer for C Company, 1st Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, listens as an Iraqi man explains where he’s coming from during joint Operation Zelig Teftish, in the outskirts of southern Baghdad, Aug. 15.

Meyer from inside of a Mine-Resistant Ambush-Protected vehicle at the corner of a street overlooking IAs on the ground.

According to Ali, his Soldiers searched about 400 houses and discovered 14 AK-47s. Though the weapons were all registered to Sons of Iraq members, it was a good experience for the Iraqi Soldiers.

“It shows they’re not jumping to conclusions and they’re vetting who they’re talking to,” said Freakley. “By talking to the SoI leaders to find out if they’re on the

level...not simply strong-arming anyone and taking what’s legally theirs.”

After a long morning of searching, the Iraqis called an end to the operation. The Iraqis had a clear plan and followed it successfully, added Freakley, pointing out that it’s a sure sign of growth.

“We’re at the point where they’re able to run the mission,” continued Freakley. “They still want our support and expertise, but they’re at a point where they want to be in the driver’s seat.” ✂



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

Staff Sgt. Ryan Meyer (left), a forward observer from Springfield, Mass., pulls security as Lt. Col. Ali Jasim Laefh (middle), the deputy commander for 1st Battalion, 45th Brigade, 11th IA Division, points out a probable site for hiding weapons or improvised explosive devices to 1st Lt. James Murrett (right), the executive officer for C Company, 1st Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division. The paratroopers provided guidance and over watch for the Iraqi Army Soldiers during Operation Zelig Teftish, in southern Baghdad, Aug. 15.

Stryker Troopers earn combat spurs

Story by Sgt. Doug Roles

56th SBCT PAO, MND-B

TAJI, Iraq – Troopers with the 2nd Squadron, 104th Cavalry Regiment, 56th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, are leaving Iraq with new spurs jangling from their combat boots.

In keeping with cavalry tradition, troop commanders conducted award ceremonies, here, at the “Fiddler’s Green” rest area of the squadron’s footprint. The area is the namesake of a poem about the final resting place of all cavalry Soldiers.

“When a Cav Soldier dies, he goes to a place called Fiddler’s Green,” 1st Lt. Duncan MacQueen, unit public affairs representative for the 2-104th said. “It’s a place for the spirits of Cav Soldiers.”

Maj. Guy Smith, information officer for the 2-104th, explained that in peace time, troopers can earn their silver spurs through a challenging process known as a spur ride. It tests physical endurance and Soldier skills, including land navigation, rifle marksmanship and a road march.

“The spur ride is what’s done in peace time to earn them,” Smith said. “It’s usually pretty physically demanding.”

Troopers of the 2-104th have earned their gold combat spurs with months of sweat and courage.

Presiding over spur ceremonies, troop commanders “knight” Soldiers with cavalry sabers, granting them the right to wear the spurs. Overall, commanders presented spurs to almost 800 troopers.

“All who are assigned to cavalry [unit] for a combat tour receive gilded spurs,” Smith explained. It’s our entire squadron and then those who served with us.” ✂



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

Capt. Nathaniel Lantz (left) of Bound Brooke, N.J., commander of Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 2nd Squadron, 104th Cavalry, pins the Iraq Campaign Medal and the Army Achievement Medal on Spc. Andrew Kline of Reading, Pa. Aug. 12.



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



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

Capt. Nathaniel Lantz (left) of Bound Brooke, N.J., commander of Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 2nd Squadron, 104th Cavalry, presents the Army Commendation Medal and the Iraq Campaign Medal to Spc. Ed Hurley of Hanover, Pa. Aug. 12.

(Left) Lt. Col. Sean Reger (right), of Palmyra, Pa. commander of 2nd Squadron, 104th Cavalry, knights Maj. Lane Marshall, of Lebanon, Pa., the squadron’s executive officer, Aug. 12. All of 2nd Squadron’s Soldiers were knighted in recent troop-level awards ceremonies conducted as the unit prepares to complete its deployment in Iraq as part of the 56th Stryker Brigade Combat Team.

PANTHER

Crossroads in life leads Hoosier to serve

Story by Pvt. Jared Gehmann

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

BAGHDAD – After high school many young men and women wonder what to do with their lives and where to go next. This was the scenario Shelbyville, Ind., native, Spc. Corey Daniel, faced.

Daniel, an infantryman with D Company, 1st Battalion,



Photo by Pvt. Jared Gehmann, 3rd BCT PAO, 82nd Abn. Div., MND-B

505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, said that shortly after graduating high school he felt conflicted because he didn’t want to go straight to college and he wasn’t sure what he wanted to do for a career.

However, a few weeks after receiving his diploma he visited an Army recruiter and his mind was made up about his future.

The initial reaction from his parents, however, was one of worry and concern, considering the nation is still engaged in conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan.

“At first, my parents were against me joining because of the danger and long periods of time away from home,” said Daniel.

Despite what his parents and most of the people around him thought, he decided to join the Army anyway as an

Spc. Corey Daniel, of Shelbyville, Ind., takes a knee as he pulls security while his Iraqi Army partners search a nearby building during a recent air assault mission in the small town of Shakkat, Iraq, located in the Ma’dain region of eastern Baghdad. Daniel is assigned to Company D, 1st Battalion 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, and is currently serving in his first deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

airborne infantryman at the age of 18. Daniel said his parents have come around to the idea of him being a Soldier now.

“Now that I have been in the Army for two years, my parents couldn’t be more proud of me,” said Daniel.

Being a paratrooper is something Daniel wanted to do in order to get the full military experience.

“I just wanted some more excitement in my life and wanted to experience something more than what a common Soldier experiences,” said Daniel.

Daniel said this is his first deployment with the 82nd Airborne Division and so far it has been full of excitement, hard work, and unforgettable experiences. He also said that the only downside to being deployed is missing out on time with his family, friends, and girlfriend. However despite being away from home, Daniel is proud of his service in Iraq.

After his deployment, Daniel hopes to pursue a full career in a Special Forces group. ✂



AIRBORNE ARTILLERYMEN

Story by Pvt. Jared Gehmann,
3rd BCT PAO, 82nd Abn. Div., MND-B

FORWARD OPERATING BASE HAMMER, Iraq – Artillery Paratroopers are getting the chance to stand behind the big guns and return to the job they enlisted for during artillery training, here, on the far eastern edge of Baghdad, Aug. 22.

Since deploying last December, Paratroopers assigned to the 1st Battalion, 319th Field Artillery Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, Multi-National Division-Baghdad, have performed as infantrymen in the urban environment of Baghdad's al-Karradah district.

However, with Iraqi Security Forces now clearly in charge of security in the city, the artillerymen now have time to go out to the deserts outside east Baghdad and work on their signature skill set.

"We have spent most of the deployment patrolling the streets and doing more of the duties an infantryman would do, such as clearing buildings and learning basic tactical maneuvers," said Sgt. Ryan Buchan, of Steenville, Mich., a cannon crew member assigned to the regiment's Battery A. "I'm glad that I'm back to my familiar way of life. I didn't mind the combat patrols but it's nice to get back to the howitzers."

From set-up and sight training, to several mobility exercises on the howitzers, the artillerymen alternate their training exercises each week in order to maintain their combat readiness.

"We are improving every day but we still have a long way to go," said Sgt. Josh Smith, of Dentin, Texas, a cannon crew member with Battery A. "Some of these guys have been in the Army for more than a year and this is the first howitzer training they have received since their initial training when they joined the Army. This is because they have been in the field focusing on other things."

Even with all the grueling work, and heat of the desert, the Paratroopers are determined, and optimistic to get back to the level of a seasoned artilleryman in opens of one day getting to fire off some real rounds.

"The harder we work, and the more time we spend training, the better we will be, it's as simple as that," said Smith.



Photo by Pvt. Jared Gehmann, 3rd BCT PAO, 82nd Abn. Div., MND-B

(Right) Sgt. Josh Smith (right), gives his crewmember some pointers while training on the M198 howitzer, Aug. 22, at Forward Operating Base Hammer, Iraq, located outside eastern Baghdad. Smith is a cannon crew member assigned to Battery A, 1st Battalion, 319th Field Artillery Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, Multi-National Division-Baghdad.



Photo by Pvt. Jared Gehmann, 3rd BCT PAO, 82nd Abn. Div.

EN GET BACK TO BASICS



Photo by Pvt. Jared Gehmann, 3rd BCT PAO, 82nd Abn. Div., MND-B



Photo by Pvt. Jared Gehmann, 3rd BCT PAO, 82nd Abn. Div., MND-B

Artillery crewmen strain to lift the Howitzer onto its platform, Aug. 22 at Forward Operating Base Hammer, Iraq, located outside eastern Baghdad. Despite being artillerymen these Paratroopers conducted infantry-type missions such as foot patrols and clearance operations in Baghdad's al-Karradah district. The artillerymen are assigned to Battery A, 1st Battalion, 319th Field Artillery Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, Multi-National Division-Baghdad.

(Left) Artillery crewmen take aim on a M198 howitzer during training, Aug. 22, here, outside eastern Baghdad. The large platform under the wheels helps to rotate the gun easily in any direction. The artillerymen are assigned to Battery A, 1st Battalion, 319th Field Artillery Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, Multi-National Division-Baghdad.



Photo by Pvt. Jared Gehmann, 3rd BCT PAO, 82nd Abn. Div., MND-B

(Right) Sgt. Yensi Gonzalez, of San Pablo, Calif., takes aim through the sites of a M198 howitzer during an artillery training exercise, Aug. 22. For most of the deployment they have been doing patrols and acting more like an infantry regiment. Gonzalez is a cannon crew member assigned to Battery A, 1st Battalion, 319th Field Artillery Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, MND-B.



Task Force Iron Claw trains First Army trainers

Story by Lt. Col. Pat Simon

225th Eng. Bde. PAO, MND-B

BAGHDAD – Training the trainers took on a significant new meaning, Aug. 16, as Louisiana National Guard engineers put Soldiers with the First Army to the test during a simulated explosives lanes drill.

The main goal of the 225th Engineer Brigade Task Force Iron Claw Academy's intensive week long training course was to pass along the latest battlefield information to leaders who are responsible for mobilizing and enhancing the combat readiness of thousands of Reserve Component Soldiers and units at throughout the U.S.

"I think it's extremely important because there are a lot of guys that haven't been here since 2004," said Sgt. 1st Class Jerry Silva, from Concord, Calif., one of the students attending the academy. "Things have changed and the Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen need to know what's going on to get a true picture of what to expect here."

About 20 Soldiers with the First Army, who deployed to Iraq solely for this training, learned everything from the latest improvised explosive device detection and destruction techniques, but they also conducted 'real world' hands-on training with scenarios right out of recent battlefield operations.

"Usually you're get a lag of information at best six months of what's going on in theater versus what's being trained on," said Capt. Darby Boudreaux, from Baton Rouge, La., who is TF Iron Claw's officer

in charge. "A lot of the techniques that the insurgents use are cyclical. What works today might not work tomorrow, but it might work again next week and they'll try it."

Boudreaux said top commanders throughout Iraq found out about the successes of the academy and wanted to make sure deployment training stations back in the states could take advantage of it.

"They found out that we're teaching what's going on on the streets [of Baghdad] right now and they thought it would be very applicable for the guys that are teaching this information back at home and I totally agree with that," said Boudreaux.

The course culminated with the rumbling of Mine-Resistant Ambush-Protected vehicles down a lane laced with simulated explosive devices. First Army teams took turns reacting to and "detonating" these devices.

"What I liked about this training is that they focused on these indicators like disturbed earth... a bottle hanging from telephone wire... you have to keep your eyes open, stay alert, and pay attention to what you're doing," said Capt. Paul Headley, a First Army student from Ft. Dix, N.J. "It's important that we can go back and tell these deploying Soldiers, 'Hey, I just came back from theater, I know what's happening.' The instructors standing in front of you have good, realistic scenarios."

First Army plans to send another group of trainers to the Task Force Iron Claw Academy later this year.

"It's going to prepare them better for the current fight on the battlefield," said Boudreaux. ✂



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

Staff Sgt. Joseph Ray, from Baton Rouge, La., a 225th Engineer Brigade Task Force Iron Claw instructor, emplaces a simulated improvised explosive device along the route of training lanes, here, Aug. 16. First Army Soldiers successfully completed the week long training and will take home real world experience to pass along to thousands of deploying Soldiers.



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

A simulated road side bomb waits for Soldiers with the First Army's mobilization training team during the 225th Engineer Brigade's Task Force Iron Claw Academy training lanes, Aug. 16. The group of 20 top trainers deployed to Iraq solely for this week-long training to receive real time information about enemy threats in Iraq.



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

Sgt. 1st Class Shay Smith, an observer controller mobilization trainer from Camp Shelby, Miss., employs the Talon robot during training at the 225th Engineer Brigade's Task Force Iron Claw Academy, Aug. 16. Smith is part of the team of 20 trainers from the First Army to attend the weeklong training course on improvised explosive device detection and detonation.



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

Mobilization trainers with the First Army mobilization training team maneuver a Talon robot toward the direction of a simulated improvised explosive device buried on the side of the road during the 225th Engineer Brigade's Task Force Iron Claw Academy training lanes, Aug. 16.

1st Air Cav provides support in sling load training



CAMP TAJI, Iraq—As dusk settles in the west, two Soldiers from the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, standby to hook up sling load cables to a CH-47F Chinook helicopter, Aug. 15. 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cav. Div., MND – B, provided instruction, along with two Chinook helicopters, to support the 1st BCT slingload and rigging training.

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



The massive hook from a CH-47F Chinook helicopter looms in the foreground as Soldiers from the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, receive a class on hooking lines up to the aircraft for sling loading from air crews of Company B, 2nd Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cav. Div., MND – B, Aug. 15.



Discussing safety during sling load operations, Chief Warrant Officer 2 Stephen Wells (right), from University Place, Wash., a CH-47F Chinook pilot in B Co., 2nd Bn., 227th Aviation Regt., 1st Air Cav. Bde., 1st Cav. Div., MND-B, and 1st Lt. Michael Siddall (left), from Dallas, a quartermaster executive officer in 1st BCT, 1st Cav. Div., MND – B, look over the rigging and lines attached to equipment being lifted for training purposes, Aug. 15.



Guided by two Soldiers from 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, air crews from B Company, 2nd Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cav. Div., MND – B, maneuver a CH-47F over equipment that will be sling loaded, for training purposes, to a different location, Aug. 15. The training was being conducted for 1st BCT soldiers to become more familiar with working around aircraft.

30th HBCT Soldiers on patrol

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



MAHMUDIYAH, Iraq – Second Lt. Matthew Haggerty (left), a platoon leader from Greenville N.C., Sgt. 1st Class Robbie Irwin, a platoon sergeant from Tabor City, N.C., and Spc. Joey Hucks, a team leader from Lumberton, N.C., all members of B Company, 120th Combined Arms Battalion, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team, ask a local farmer about recent enemy activity in the area.



Staff Sgt. Kyle Mc-Millan, of El Paso, Texas, a squad leader with B Company, 120th Combined Arms Battalion, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team, headquartered in Whiteville, N.C. clears his weapon after a patrol.

For the children

Photos by Sgt. Joshua Risner, MND-B PAO



BAGHDAD – Iraqi children clamor for toys, school supplies, and other assorted items during a humanitarian aid drop by Soldiers of B Troop, 1st Battalion, 150th Armor Reconnaissance Squadron in Yusifiyah, here, Aug. 17. In addition to distributing items they received in the mail, B Troop Soldiers also spared snack foods from their dining facility to give out to the children.



(Upper left) 1st Lt. Will Hargis, from Huntington, W.V., assigned to B Troop, 1st Battalion, 150th Armor Reconnaissance Squadron, scans a crowd of Iraqi children for someone who will fit into the shoes he holds.

(Left) 1st Sgt. Steve DeWeese (right), the senior enlisted advisor for B Troop, 1st Battalion, 150th Armor Reconnaissance Squadron, hands a stuffed animal to an Iraqi child during a humanitarian aid drop in Yusifiyah, here, Aug. 17. The mission is intended to foster goodwill with the children of Iraq, who are its future, said DeWeese, from Scott Depot, W.V.



1st Sgt. Steve DeWeese, a native of Scott Depot, W.V., hands out toys to Iraqi children during a humanitarian aid drop in Yusifiyah, here, Aug. 17. "We gather together stuff we get sent to us, along with whatever we can spare from the chow hall, and we come hand it out to the kids," said DeWeese from B Troop, 1st Battalion, 150th Armor Reconnaissance Squadron. "We're trying to foster goodwill and trust."

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Air Cav leadership provides education opportunities

Story by Sgt. Travis Zielinski

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

TAJI, Iraq – Many things are less accessible to Soldiers deployed in Iraq, but getting a better education is not one of them.

At least that is the goal of the leadership of Company D, 4th Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, Multi-National Division Baghdad.

They had an opportunity to provide computer access for college and correspondence courses for their Soldiers on the hanger floor and took it.

Before the 1st Air Cav. Bde. deployed, the pieces were already coming into place to provide the tools for a better education.

“We came up with the idea back at Fort Hood, we got some new computers in which gave us some excess computers,” said 1st Sgt. Lloyd Ankrum, from Salmon, Idaho, Co. D, 4-227th, 1 ACB. “Having the excess computers allowed us to set this whole project up.”

“The switches for internet access that we were given had extra lines available, so two lines were ran into each shop – armament, maintenance and the airframe shop,” said Ankrum.

Everything is working out well for the education-at-work idea according to Sgt. Bismark Miolin, from Edison, N.J., an armament specialist on AH-64D Apache attack helicopters, in Co. D.

“It is pretty cool that the chain of command is helping us like this,” said Miolin. “I can prepare for my future outside of the military while I am in Iraq doing my job as a Soldier.”

“Even before we left Kuwait the commander wanted the Soldiers to start enrolling in college, he signed off on anyone that wanted to take part of it,” said Miolin.

Deployed Soldiers have a variety of places they can go to further their education, but most of these facilities are away from their primary place of duty. With a mission-first mindset, having access to computers at the airfield gives Soldiers a greater opportunity to get school work done without trailing far from where the mission is.



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

Working on a computer provided by his chain of command, Spc. John Harmon, from Clayton, Ga., an aircraft structural repair specialist in Company D, 4th Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, Multi-National Division Baghdad, works on military educational courses, Aug., 17.

“Having the computers down at the area where we work makes it really convenient, when we have down time between tasks I am able to go to the computers and work on my schooling,” said Miolin. “I don’t have to make arrangements with my supervisor to leave and go to a college class, having that accessibility makes it easy for all of us.”

The chain of command is not forcing Soldiers to participate, but it strongly encourages that they do not waste a good opportunity.

“The response from the Soldiers is awesome, there are 15 Soldiers actively in college and four or five others working on correspondence courses for military education,” said Ankrum.

“One of my things was, I wanted all of our junior Soldiers to knock out as much of their military education as they could for promotions,” said Ankrum.

The program is not only helping those Soldiers who choose to take advantage of it, but also those who put it all together.

“It is good to have the ability to provide for the Soldiers, it is a good feeling knowing that we can do this,” said Ankrum. ✂



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

Sgt. Bismark Miolin, from Edison, N.J., an armament specialist on AH-64D Apache attack helicopters in Company D, 4th Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, attends online classes, Aug. 17, as he works towards getting a degree in engineering.

1st Cav ‘Tetris guys’ defeat the enemy

Story by Sgt. Shejal Pulivarti, 1BCT PAO, 1CD, MND-B

BAGHDAD – Known as the “Tetris guys” to many, the electronic warfare officers of the 1st “Ironhorse” Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division cultivate an air of mystery.

Designated down to the company level, they provide electronic attack assets to defeat remote controlled improvised explosive device attacks while Soldiers conduct operations in sector.

“I provide a means of protection for Soldiers that go outside the wire,” said Rio Rancho, N.M. native, Chief Warrant Officer Michael McMurray, EWO for the “Ironhorse” Brigade.

“Taking care of business, is what they say I do,” said West Point, Ind. native Sgt. Matthew Morris, EWO for the 2nd “Lancer” Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, 1st BCT, 1st Cav. Div.

With classified gizmos and gadgets, these hand-picked Soldiers ensure the Counter-RCIED Electronic Warfare systems, installed in each tactical vehicle, function properly.

“I’ve never been a technical person. This is different; this stuff really matters,” Morris said.

Emerging as a career field in the Army, the brigade EWO attends a six-week course at Fort Sill, Okla. and the battalion representatives go to a condensed three-week course at Ft. Huachuca, Ariz., to learn the technical skills to become proficient in their new positions.

“Initially it was supposed to be an additional duty, but this is a fulltime, all-day job,” McMurray said lightheartedly.

These hidden Soldiers guarantee every vehicle that conducts operations has a CREW system installed. They also make sure it’s functioning properly, schedule upgrades and coordinate with maintenance shops to get routine checks. They also physically check each ground system before every mission to guarantee the systems are transmitting and receiving effectively.

“I appreciate the need to have CREW systems in today’s Army,” said McMurray. Since Operation Iraqi Freedom began, the weapons used against the U.S. forces have increased in their lethality, forcing the U.S. Army to counteract the threat with equipment and systems to provide more protection to the Soldiers.

McMurray said, over the years, the CREW systems have improved, proving to be quite beneficial to our Soldiers that go outside the wire and complete the mission.

“I find the job very rewarding; I love it,” McMurray added. ✂



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

West Point, Ind. native, Sgt. Matthew Morris, the electronic warfare officer for 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, checks the Counter Remote-Controlled Improvised Explosive Device Electronic Warfare system inside of a Mine-Resistant Ambush-Protected vehicle, Aug. 7, to ensure all systems function properly.

Safe driving: It's everyone's responsibility

Story by Sgt. 1st Class Ron Burke

MND-B PAO

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq - Getting deployed to a foreign country may be an interesting experience.

Driving around the sprawling compounds that make up Victory Base Complex could enhance that experience. Historic structures, palaces and icons abound here and beyond the confines of the base.

The rules of the road don't apply here right? Wrong. Safe driving is paramount here, especially while deployed. Whether driving a Mine Resistant Armor-Protected [MRAP] vehicle, a humvee, or a non-tactical vehicle, the rules of the road and safety guidelines are in place here to ensure everyone gets from point A to point B safely.

"We're lucky because of the size of VBC," said Staff Sgt. Michael James, a military police officer and traffic supervisor with the 143rd Military Police Detachment, Multi-National Corps-Iraq. "Major accidents don't happen often here. There are usually about six or seven minor accidents a week," said James, a Montana National Guardsman who is from Glendive, Mont.

The presence patrols that the MPs do around VBC

also factor in the amount of vehicle accidents that occur, according to James.

"The down-sizing of forces in the area can change all that," James added. "There could be a spike in safety violations or accidents as more Soldiers come in from outposts that have closed."

Safety doesn't just happen. The MPs also conduct traffic surveys to determine the safety of the roads and make driving around VBC safer. The VBC Provost Marshall's office circulates safety reports that are intended to remind drivers and bicyclists about the rules of the road and safety guidelines that need to be followed. Ensuring that your vehicle is safe to drive by conducting preventative maintenance checks and services [PMCS] before and after also helps.

Safety, however, begins with the Soldier on that bike or behind the wheel of the vehicle, not with the MPs patrolling the roads. Large commercial trucks, hulking MRAPs, convoys of humvees, and the endless number of non-tactical sport utility vehicles navigate the network of roads each day. Potholes, dust and gravel can sometimes make for a treacherous commute.

"Soldiers and civilians need to have situational awareness when they are driving or riding their bikes," said James. "They need to ensure they have enough time to get

to their destination and be aware of what other drivers are doing." According to James, the majority of traffic violations are due to speeding.

"What Soldiers practice here in Iraq is what they'll do back home," said Command Sgt. Maj. Rory Malloy, 1st Cavalry Division and Multi-National Division-Baghdad. "Being careless here can take one more person off the battlefield when each Soldier is critical during the down-sizing," said the Campbellsburg, Ind. native.

Driving around VBC is a privilege that can be taken away. With the point system that the MPs use, you could be arrested and your vehicle impounded after amassing six points in violations while driving. Ensure that you're aware of the conditions of the roads and be vigilant about what's happening around you.

"It's really selfish of a person to behave carelessly and without discipline and not make it home because they were driving recklessly and we're losing more Soldiers through accident-related events than in combat," said Malloy.

Safety is everyone's responsibility here on base and the rules of the road and the safety guidelines that the MPs enforce are there to ensure that everyone serving here gets back home safely. ✂

150th ARS Soldiers assist in security efforts

Story by Sgt. Joshua Risner

MND-B PAO

BAGHDAD - Night was a dark shroud as Soldiers of B Troop, 1st Battalion, 150th Armor Reconnaissance Squadron, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team, assisted by Iraqi Army Soldiers, set up a traffic control point on the outskirts of Yusifiyah, here, Aug. 16.

As U.S. Soldiers waited for traffic to appear, illumina-

tion rounds from artillery cast orange light over a neighborhood some two miles down the road.

The illumination rounds were intended to funnel potential insurgents through the checkpoint as they fled from the illuminated area, according to, assigned to B Troop.

"The primary goal of the blocking position was to put everybody that tried to go through the checkpoint into HIIDES [Handheld Interagency Identity Detection Equipment System]," said Staff Sgt. Charles Hubbard, a native of Pittsburgh.

As vehicles made their way to the checkpoint, they were greeted with a hasty search by one contingent of B Troop Soldiers and guided through to the next station, where IA Soldiers would take it from there.

"The IA with us would do a more thorough search

of the people and the vehicle and we'd assist them of course," said Hubbard. "Then we'd line them up and load them into HIIDES."

As the people were scanned, B Troop Soldiers made a conscious effort to be polite and courteous. They used an interpreter to relay messages of thanks to the people for their patience and understanding.

For Hubbard, a little kindness when dealing with the Iraqis is just common courtesy. "We try to look at it as if it was ourselves going through a checkpoint," he said. "We were hoping to pick people up and the HIIDES would do that work, so we just worked on the assumption that everybody was trying to go home."

The mission was just another step toward making Iraq a safer place for its citizens by deterring insurgent activity. ✂



Photo by Sgt. Joshua Risner, MND-B PAO

Staff Sgt. Charles Hubbard, from Pittsburgh (left), and Spc. Aaron Mongold, from Charleston, W.V., await oncoming traffic during a checkpoint mission on the outskirts of Yusifiyah, here, Aug. 16. Both Soldiers are assigned to B Troop, 1st Battalion, 150th Armor Reconnaissance Squadron, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team.



Photo by Sgt. Joshua Risner, MND-B PAO

Parkersburg, W.V. native Sgt. Eric Baum, assigned to B Troop, 1st Battalion, 150th Armor Reconnaissance Squadron, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team, takes a retinal scan of an Iraqi using the Handheld Interagency Identity Detection Equipment System (HIIDES). Soldiers of B Troop scanned Iraqis coming through the checkpoint in order to identify possible insurgents.

Airborne metal men armor ISF trucks

Story by Pvt. Jared Gehmann

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

BAGHDAD – As security continues to improve in Iraq, the presence of U.S. forces patrolling the streets continues to diminish, but behind the scenes, U.S. Paratroopers are supporting their Iraqi partners in other ways in the deserts outside east Baghdad.

While tactical improvements are evident, some Iraqi Security Force units still lack the sufficient protection needed during mounted movements in Baghdad's sometimes unpredictable and dangerous streets.

In an effort to support the combat strength of the ISF, Paratroopers assigned to Company B, 82nd Brigade Support Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad are applying steel armor to ISF pickup trucks at Forward Operating Base Hammer, Iraq, about 30 miles east of Baghdad.

The program, which began last March at the unit's metal shop, has a target goal of armoring 30 trucks.

Upon completion, the trucks are given back to Iraqi Army and Federal Police personnel in order to provide them protection during operations and transportation through Baghdad.

"When we add the armor to the trucks, we mainly focus on the bed and the passenger cab because that's where the Iraqi soldiers will be riding," said

Spc. Dustin Petty, of Nashville, Tenn., a metalworker assigned to Company B. "We also added three mounts in the truck bed, one towards the front and two in the back in order for them to place machine guns like the M240 Bravo," said Petty.

Petty said the upgrades on the trucks have been a lot of hard, physical labor. He said one of the problems the team ran into was adding armor on the doors.

"At first, we wanted to put thicker steel plates lining the doors but then realized that they would weigh too much, so we ended up using a lighter steel plate," said Petty.

The program also allowed members of Company B to mentor and cross train with those who are not traditional welders. This cross training has allowed the company to accomplish the mission more efficiently and help Paratroopers pick up a new and useful skill.

Spc. Danell Williams, of Leamington, N.C., light-wheel mechanic assigned to Company B, is trying his skill at metal work on this project.

"I had never done any welding, grinding, or metalwork before, but once we started this project one of the guys taught me to weld and I got the hang of it really quick, now it's what I do every day."

So far the team has completed 23 trucks at the pace of about one a week.

"I am very proud of myself and the team for all the hard work they have put into this project," said Williams. "This is my first deployment and I have never worked so hard in my life, I can't wait to see the ISF put these trucks to good use." ✂



Photo by Pvt. Jared Gehmann, 3rd BCT PAO, 82nd Abn. Div., MND-B

Spc. Danell Williams, of Leamington, N.C., welds a steel plate to the inside bed of a pickup truck Aug. 18 at Forward Operating Base Hammer, Iraq, located in the Ma'dain region outside of east Baghdad. Despite being a light-wheel mechanic, Williams was taught how to weld by his fellow Paratroopers. Williams is assigned to Company B, 82nd Brigade Support Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad.

"At first, we wanted to put thicker steel plates lining the doors but then realized that they would weigh too much, so we ended up using a lighter steel plate."

-- Spc. Dustin Petty, of Nashville, Tenn., a metalworker assigned to Company B



Photo by Pvt. Jared Gehmann, 3rd BCT PAO, 82nd Abn. Div., MND-B

Spc. Dustin Petty, of Nashville, Tenn., hammers out a chunk of metal while working on steel upgrades for an Iraqi pick-up truck Aug. 18 at Forward Operating Base Hammer, Iraq, located in the Ma'dain region outside of east Baghdad. Thirty pick-up trucks are being up-armored in order to give Iraqi Army and Federal Police commanders more protection while driving through the capital. Petty is a metal worker assigned to Company B, 82nd Brigade Support Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, MND-B.



Photo by Pvt. Jared Gehmann, 3rd BCT PAO, 82nd Abn. Div., MND-B

Spc. Dustin Petty, of Nashville, Tenn., uses a torch to slice through a metal plate Aug. 18 at Forward Operating Base Hammer, Iraq, located in the Ma'dain region outside of east Baghdad. Petty said it usually takes about a week to complete the upgrades on one truck with labor from two teams working day and night shifts. Petty is a metal worker assigned to Company B, 82nd Brigade Support Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad.

Air Cav continues to support Iraqi training

Story by Sgt. Travis Zielinski

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

TAJI, Iraq – American forces continue to support the Iraqi Army using the same training methods available to U.S. military forces.

Crawl, walk and run; starting off with the basic steps and procedures and building up to a professional standard.

The 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, teamed up with 150th Armed Reconnaissance Squadron, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team, MND – B, to train Iraqi soldiers from the 17th Iraqi Army Division in procedures dealing with helicopters for air assaults.

For the 17th IA, “this is the very beginning of this aspect of training. They’ve done a lot of ground training, cordon searches, (traffic control points) and this is a new type of training that we are starting today,” said Capt. Mark Houck from Mullens, W. Va., a troop commander in 150th ARS.

The Soldiers of 17th IA Division are more than welcoming the new and applicable training – wanting to skip the crawl and walk phases and go straight for the run.

“They have a lot of motivation, they are extremely excited to come down here and do all types of training – especially the air integration training with the helicopters,” said Houck.

“I am very pleased to see the Air Cav. coming in and supporting our training, I really believe the Iraqis will take a lot from this training and put it to good use,” he added.

The 1st ACB provided two UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters for the IA, and the crew chiefs gave them a course of instruction on maneuvering around aircraft.

“We have to give them a detailed passenger brief and then we go through the static load training,” said Spc. Kristopher Wheeler from Zachary, La., a Black Hawk crew chief in Company B, 3rd Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, 1st ACB.

Static load training is the movement of personnel in and out of the aircraft with the power off. It is a safe environment for any Soldiers who do not normally work around helicopters.

“We have to give them a dry run, basically showing them how to get in and out

Giving a brief to Iraqi Soldiers, Maj. Jim Tenpenny (center and pointing), from Platte City, Mo., the operations officer in charge for 3rd Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, points out which direction the weapons should be facing while on the aircraft, Aug. 18, Baghdad, Iraq. “We want to incorporate the Iraqi Army with the Iraqi Air force to conduct their own air assaults; that is the end state of this training,” said Tenpenny. The training was an effort to get the IA Soldiers familiar with aircraft so they can conduct air assault missions.

of the helicopter safely without getting in the way of our weapons or any other obstacles,” said Wheeler.

The training went on without a hitch regardless of the anticipated communication issues – which were nearly non-existent.

“The interpreter did a great job translating, we were expecting some problems with the language barrier, but the Iraqi Soldiers did exactly what we told them to do. They were pretty much professionals,” said Wheeler.

This training was also vital to building stronger bonds between these said professionals and the U.S. Soldiers.

“A key focus is the relationships, not only our relationship with the [30th] HBCT, but with the relationships we are building with the Iraqis,” said Maj. Jim Tenpenny from Platte City, Mo., the operations officer in charge for 3-227th, 1st ACB. “That is really a key message that we are trying to send; the trust and confidence in each other.”

Although the training exercise builds confidence and bonds between the two forces, the ultimate goal is yet to come.

“We want to incorporate the Iraqi Army with the Iraqi Air force to conduct their own air assaults; that is the end state of this training,” said Tenpenny. ✂

(Right) Rushing out of a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter, Iraqi Soldiers hit the ground and take up security positions during a training exercise Aug. 18, Baghdad, Iraq. The Black Hawks and training were provided by Company B, 3rd Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, to help build the IA skills during air assault missions.



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



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

Old Hickory Soldiers maintain relationships with IA

Story by Sgt. Jon Soles

MND-B PAO

BAGHDAD – Soldiers of the North Carolina National Guard are helping bring clean water to Iraqi citizens in the form of water filters, but it's the coordination that goes along with such a project that is fostering a good working relationship with the Iraqi Army.

Soldiers of Company B, 1st Battalion, 120th Infantry Regiment, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team met with Iraqi Army officers near Forward Operating Base Mahmudiyah, here, Aug. 11, to discuss the placement of two solar-powered water filters.

The Soldiers may be able to provide the water filters, but it's up to the Iraqis to decide who takes responsibility for them, said platoon leader, 1st Lt. Matthew Mason, of Garner, N.C. At the meeting with 1st Company, 3rd Battalion, 25th Brigade, 17th Iraqi Army Division, it was decided that two sheikhs, one Sunni and one Shi'a, would be in charge of the water filters.

"This helps support the Government of Iraq and they will be an impartial distributor of water, people who won't think of their own benefit, but of the greater good of the people," said Mason. "It [the meeting] went really well; we got a lot accomplished."

It was a simple meeting, but the coordination of the water filter project was just another building block in the relationship with the Iraqi Security Forces, said Mason, an infantry officer.

"Personally, I know we have a good working relationship and we share information and intelligence," Mason said. "Like every relationship, it takes time and commitment."



Photo by Sgt. Jon Soles, MND-B PAO

1st Lt. Matthew Mason (center) shares a light moment with Iraqi Army 1st Lt. Munther Hassan Mubarak during a key leader engagement meeting at an IA station near Forward Operating Base Mahmudiyah, here, Aug. 11. Mason, an infantry officer from Garner, N.C., is a platoon leader in Company B, 1st Battalion, 120th Infantry Regiment, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team, North Carolina National Guard. Also pictured is Spc. Ronald Chavis, an infantryman from Rowland, N.C., also assigned to Co. B, 1st Bn., 120th Inf. Regt., 30th HBCT.

The IA knows the area and is receiving support from the local population, according to Mason.

"They're extremely proficient and know their area and they've got a real lockdown on everything that goes on," Mason said. "The people know they can trust the IA."

The water filter project is in the works, but the overall relationship with the IA will continue to pay dividends on future peace and stability.

"You feel like you're accomplishing something, showing support for the IA, still showing that [U.S. forces] are present in rural areas," Mason said. ✂



Photo by Sgt. Jon Soles, MND-B PAO

Sgt. Jack Whitley, of Greensboro, N.C., motions for traffic to pass on a highway outside an Iraqi Army station near Forward Operating Base Mahmudiyah, here, Aug. 11. Whitley is an infantryman assigned to Company B, 1st Battalion, 120th Infantry Regiment, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team.

PANTHER

Paratroopers take advisory role

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



BAGHDAD – Sgt. Daniel Curtis, an infantry team leader from Missoula, Mont., assigned to C Company, 1st Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, talks security with his Iraqi Army counterpart at a checkpoint in Salman Pak, here, Aug. 15. The Kesra Arch in the background is believed to be one of the world's oldest arches.

(Upper right) Iraqis play soccer under the setting sun as 1st Lt. Chris Timmerman, a platoon leader from Russia, Ohio, assigned to C Company, 1st Battalion, 505th PIR, 3rd BCT, 82nd Airborne Division, talks with his IA counterpart in Salman Pak. "We're probably one of the last units that are going to have direct contact with all levels of IA down to the lowest private," said Timmerman. "Our role is switching to an advisory role...we're trying to set up the next unit that comes into the area for success."

(Right) Missoula, Mont. native, Sgt. Daniel Curtis, an infantry team leader assigned to C Co., 1st Battalion, 505th PIR, 3rd BCT, 82nd Airborne Division, gives some friendly advice to an IA Soldier during a joint patrol in Salman Pak.



Engineers beat the dust at JSS Aqur Quf

Story by 2nd Lt. Jessica Mayerovitch and
1st Lt. Janeene Yarber

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

BAGHDAD – In Iraq, Soldiers are not only threatened by enemy forces, but by the forces of the harsh desert environment.

Multi-National Division –Baghdad pilots are constantly having to battle the pesky fine sand and dust, referred to as “moon dust”; especially at many unimproved helicopter landing zones in the Baghdad area of operations.

“Moon dust can brown-out a helicopter trying to land and make it where [pilots] can’t see the ground when they start their descent,” said Capt. Jeremy Ray, commander of Joint Security Station Aqur Quf.

The massive amounts of swirling sand and dust not only can cause accidents in the air, but on the ground as well, according to Capt. Chuck Dickhart, a pilot for the 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cav. Div.

“As the aircraft makes its approach to a landing zone, the rotor downwash hits the surface and kicks up obscuring, reducing the number of visual references an aviator uses to land,” stated Dickhart. “It also reduces the ability to see any potential hazards to the aircraft in the [landing zone].”

Engineers from Equipment Platoon,

Headquarters and Support Company, 46th Engineer Combat Battalion (Heavy), serving with the 225th Engineer Brigade, spent a week working to prevent future brown-outs from occurring at the Aqur Quf helicopter landing zone, using a chemical treatment christened by the engineers as “Rhino snot.”

The solution looks exactly as its name sounds, it’s a sticky, gray substance that bonds the rock and the dust together and prevents the moon dust from getting blown into the air.

The engineers prepared the area by removing the layer of moon dust that had already settled on the ground. Using a water distributor and vibratory roller, they compacted the ground to create the most stable base possible.

Staff Sgt. Eddie Fortenberry, a native of Columbia, Miss., led the squad which completed the HLZ project.

The squad had to overcome several obstacles in laying down the chemical adhesive as the material had a tendency to clog up the distribution system.

Engineers used a modified fuel truck to distribute the mixture of water and Rhino Snot, however the sticky material kept settling at the bottom of the tank instead of staying mixed with the water.

“It was a learning experience with the material and the truck,” said Fortenberry.



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

A heavy equipment operator with Equipment Platoon, 46th Engineer Combat Battalion (Heavy), 225th Engineer Brigade, guides the “Rhino Snot” mixture into the water distributor. The sticky, grey material bonds sand and dust to keep it from flying into the air and disrupting helicopter maneuvers.

“In the end, the Soldiers’ ingenuity made up for this. We successfully put down 16,000 gallons of Rhino Snot and water. My team loved helping their fellow Soldiers.”

Thanks to the 46th ECB (H) engineers, the

HLZ at Aqur Quf is once again up and running.

Now, landing and taking off at the isolated base will be much safer for the pilots and they can focus on their missions, with fewer disruptions from Mother Nature. ✂

OLD HICKORY

Daughter’s of Iraq support 12th Imam Pilgrimage

Story by Spc. Ruth McClary

30th HBCT PAO, MND-B

YUSIFIYAH, Iraq – Forty female members of the Daughters of Iraq security detail provided support to the Iraqi Army during the recent 12th Imam pilgrimage to Karbala.

Hired by the 150th Armored Reconnaissance Squadron, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team, the women reduced the threat of female suicide bombers during the pilgrimage, which started Aug. 1 and ended Aug. 10.

Shiite Muslims take the annual pilgrimage to Karbala, 50 miles south of Baghdad, to commemorate the birth anniversary of the 12th Imam, Mohammed al-Mahdi.

“The order came down from the brigade commander, Col. Gregory Lusk, to contract the Daughters of Iraq so that [women] could be searched to help reduce violent attempts during the pilgrimage,” said Capt. Walter Hatfield, one of the squadron’s DOI liaison officers. “There were no incidents in our area of operations.”

The DOI was formed in October 2008 to provide an extra layer of security at military checkpoints. It is against Iraqi cultural norms for men to search women, so DOI security members play a vital role for Iraqi and U.S. forces.

Most of the women are widows with children, and are the sole providers for their households; others have husbands who are



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

Capt. Walter Hatfield, of 150th Armored Reconnaissance Squadron, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team, shows Entasar Yosif Yakoub, the manager of the Daughters of Iraq, where to sign to receive payment for work the female security detail completed at the start of the month, Aug. 11.

unemployed or disabled.

The work was important to the women, as they haven’t been paid for a contract



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

Forty members of the Daughters of Iraq, an unarmed female security detail, wait in line to get paid for contractual work with the 150th Armored Reconnaissance Squadron, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team, Aug. 11. The group worked Aug. 1 to 10, searching women at check points along the 12th Imam Pilgrimage route.

earlier this year. The squadron is working to get other short-term contracts for the women as a stopgap until the pay issues are resolved and are working with the Government in Iraq to get the DOI further contracts.

“This was one way to get money into the women hands while back pay issues are being worked,” said Hatfield, a Charleston, W. Va. native. “We made strides today in the right direction showing that we fulfilled our end of the bargain.”

“The women were extremely elated to work those ten days and were proud to do their part as Iraqi citizens, keeping their communities safe from potential terrorists,” he said.

“Receiving this money gives us a renewed hope that we will receive money that is owed to us,” said Entasar Yosif Yakoub, the manager of the 56 DOI workers in the area. “Capt. Hatfield has been very helpful, working with us to get a new contract and the payments that are due.” ✂

Laser systems are potentially hazardous to something you value highly: *your vision*. While the dangers of firearms and explosives are obvious, the possibility that a beam of light, can cause *instant, severe and irreversible damage* to vision, may not be obvious.



DAZZLERS

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- Laser operators must be trained and know restrictions on use.
- Ensure laser operators know the Nominal Ocular Hazard Distance (NOHD) of the laser they have been issued.
- Handle laser with same care and respect as a loaded weapon.
- Know Rules of Engagement (ROE).
 - Never intentionally point the laser at someone's face if they are closer than the NOHD.
 - Do Not Aim Laser at Reflective Surfaces within the NOHD
 - Know restrictions/ROE/Escalation of Force (EOF) procedures.
- Keep laser clean, dry, remove batteries after mission.
- Properly secure lasers when not in use.
- Do not remove warning labels from laser.
- Never leave an operable laser unattended.
- Check the security of mounting hardware.

Incident Response

- Suspected Laser eye injuries - Immediately evacuate personnel to nearest medical facility (OTSG Policy, 11 April 1994). Laser eye injuries require immediate specialized care.
- Medical personnel should obtain medical guidance for Laser injuries from the Tri-Service Laser Incident Hotline, (800) 473-3549, DSN 240-4784, 210-536-4784 (during non-duty hours call 210-536-3278).
- Submit incident and accident reports through DoD Component channels to the Laser Accident and Incident Registry (LAIR)

Walter Reed Army Institute of Research). These reports do not replace established safety investigation procedures or other Service-specific notification procedures.

Laser Eye Protection (LEP)

- LEP that protects against the green optical spectrum will not provide sufficient visibility at night.
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L a s e r	NOHD (meters) Potential for Eye Injury
GBD III (not for use as a warning device)	2.2 km
GBD III with diffuser	20 m
GBD IIIC (Navy/USMC)	65 m
GHOST	25 m
Mini-Green Model 532-M (Glare MOUT)	30 m
Photonic Disruptor/Green (PD/G)-IO5	215 m
BTG-25 (Z-Bolt)	65 m
BTG-IO (Z-Bolt)	65 m

If you do not have information on the laser system you are currently using, contact USACHPPM Laser/Optical Radiation Protection (LORP) branch for information on the system: DSN 584-3932/2331, Commercial (410) 436-3932/2331

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ARMY SAFE IS ARMY STRONG



Pa. Guard unit recognized for EW fight

Story by Sgt. Doug Roles

56th SBCT PAO, MND-B

BAGHDAD – An electronic warfare association has named a 56th Stryker Brigade Combat Team battalion as the Army unit to best make use of EW assets and training in the past year. The selection comes at a time when Soldiers in Iraq are relying on EW capabilities to defeat IEDs.

The 1st Battalion, 111th Infantry Regiment, headquartered in Plymouth Meeting, Pa., is the recipient of the “Association of Old Crows Outstanding U.S. Army Electronic Warfare Unit for 2009” honor. The Pennsylvania Army National Guard unit, currently deployed in Iraq with the 56th SBCT, garnered the Army-wide honor for its extensive use of lifesaving EW capabilities in day-to-day operations in country.

“This award demonstrates that the Pa. National Guard is in the forefront of emerging technologies,” Capt. Melvin Benson of Abington, Pa., 56th SBCT electronic warfare officer, said. “All of our battalions have made good use of electronic warfare. The 1-111th made the greatest use of joint assets.”

Benson, a school teacher at Council Rock School District, Newtown, Pa., nominated the battalion in early July. The AOC, a non-profit association of military and civilian electronic warfare professionals, informed the Benson of the honor Aug. 15.

The AOC and the Army Electronic Warfare Division lauded the 1-111th, saying the unit clearly demonstrated ability to master EW and said the units “superlative training and combat record” earned the unit the award.

“This award is appropriate as the 1-111th was founded as the ‘Associators’ in 1748, by Benjamin Franklin,” Benson added. “The 1-111 is the living link from Franklin’s kite and lightning rod to our modern airborne EW assets.”

Benson explained that Soldiers are protected by their vehicle-borne EW equipment but also have use of man-portable and airborne EW assets. He said an Army-wide focus on EW has cut battlefield losses from.

“We know of three incidents where, we believe, EW saved Soldiers’ lives or at least saved damage to vehicles,” Benson said.

During full spectrum operations, the 1-111th made extensive use of corps-level airborne EW assets, averaging 15 requests per month. The battalion also incorporated use of vehicle and manpack EW equipment into every mission.

First Lt. Alon Margolin of Philadelphia, 1-111th EW officer, has the job of sourcing EW assets to battalion units and training battalion Soldiers on the equipment. Margolin said becoming an EW officer and using EW in a combat theatre has been an “eye opening” experience. He said the battalion used EW extensively because Soldiers understood its importance.

“The numbers probably stand out the most,” he said of

winning the AOC award. “We did request and source the most EW assets out of the brigade.”

Capt. Dan Gershey of Lake Ariel, Pa., 1-111th assistant operations officer, said during mission planning he looks for ways to integrate electronic warfare into operations. Gershey said EW was “pretty much non-existent” on his previous two tours in Iraq. He too said integrating EW into missions on this deployment was not difficult because Soldiers understand the value of the asset.

“They know electronic warfare equals safety, equals them coming home,” said Gershey.

According to the association’s Web site, the term “crows” stems from the code name “raven” given to World War II Allied electronic countermeasures officers. At the end of the war, a group of those officers were tasked to begin an electronic counter measure course at McGuire Air Force Base, N.J. Students of the course changed the name from “raven” to “crow.”

Small reunions of Strategic Air Command ECM officers in the post-war years formed the groundwork for what became the non-profit association in the mid-1960s. The association is headquartered in Alexandria, Va.

The 56th SBCT mobilized for deployment in September 2008. The brigade is in the process of redeploying to Fort Dix, N.J. Centered around the highly mobile, technologically advanced Stryker vehicle, the 56th SBCT is the only Stryker brigade in the National Guard or Army Reserves and just one of seven such brigades in the Army. ✂

PANTHER

Big Dawgs search for answers, find friends

Story by Staff Sgt. Mark Burrell

MND-B PAO

BAGHDAD – Recently, paratroopers of Company D, 1st Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, were attacked by an improvised explosive device outside of Joint Security Station Cleary in southeastern Baghdad. According to 1st Lt. Steven Kelly, a platoon leader in the unit, it was the first time anything like this happened to them in more than nine months in Iraq.

On Aug. 18, the paratroopers and their Iraqi Army counterparts donned their armor, loaded their weapons and went on patrol looking to make some contacts, secure the streets and find some answers.

“Nobody wants to mess with the big dog with sharp teeth,” said Kelly, from Marion, Ind., assigned to the Dawgs of Co. D.

As the morning began, Iraqi Army Soldiers led the way into a local market as vendors prepared for the day; splashing water in front of their shops, hanging legs of lamb and arranging fresh produce.

“It’s very important to keep a presence for security,” explained Capt. Sa’ad Muawzy Lafta, commander of 1st Company, 4th Battalion, 34th Brigade, 11th IA Division. “This kind of patrol is important to talk to people and show that we are here in the neighborhood.”

An Iraqi man, standing in front of his shop in the shade of an awning, greeted the joint patrol with a wave and a smile. Tires wrapped in blue, orange and red paper were prominently on display next to hubcaps and salvaged car electronics. The patrol briefly stopped to ask the shop owner if he knew anything about the blast from the other day before moving on.

“This patrol lets whoever’s trying to blow us up know that we’re here; it lets them know that we’re still kicking,” said a stern-faced Staff Sgt. Kevin Foxworth, an infantry section leader assigned to Co. D. “Hopefully it deters them from trying to hit us again.”

Staff Sgt. Omar Jackson, also an infantry section leader, added that when the paratroopers patrol with the Iraqis, it builds confidence in the community and keeps both the coun-

try’s Soldiers sharp.

“We’re supposed to be one team,” said Foxworth, a native of Boston. “And to me, it looked like the IAs have better situational awareness out here today.”

As Foxworth took up a position behind a used refrigerator for sale, his Iraqi counterpart mimicked him; taking a knee and scanning his area for danger. Chickens flapped their wings creating a flurry of feathers and noise a few feet away from them as Kelly and Sa’ad spoke with other shop owners.

“When we patrol with the IA like this, it shows the community that their tax dollars and whatever they pay is being put to good use,” added Foxworth. “The IAs aren’t just stopping cars at checkpoints, but actively patrolling the areas.”

As the vendors started to get situated for the day, more and more shoppers came into the market picking out the day’s groceries.

“To me, it looks like they’re getting back to their way of life by getting out and shopping in the market,” said Foxworth while still scanning the crowd for threats. “When I was here before, you didn’t see that many people out because you never knew what was going to happen.”

The Soldiers eyes widened as they viewed the array of fruits and vegetables - mounds of eggplants, heaps of apples, a cornucopia of citrus fruits and large piles of watermelons. Some paratroopers stopped to bargain with a teenaged vendor for one of the oversized watermelons as the rest pulled security.

“It reminds me of home. Interacting with the people puts a good face on what we’re doing here, and it also helps putting a little money in their hands,” continued Jackson, from Newark, N.J. “It also shows security is improving; if that wasn’t the case, you sure couldn’t go out and buy watermelon.”

Kelley added, “It shows that we care about them and are worried about their well-being and economy.”

The excited troopers hauled their watermelon back to their humvee and rolled out with the IA. The paratroopers made some contacts, had some questions answered and secured the area.

Even though the IED was the first incident the paratroopers encountered, their reactions displayed that they haven’t become complacent and the Dawgs are still on the prowl; their teeth still sharp. ✂



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

An Iraqi boy rolls a tire behind Staff Sgt. Kevin Foxworth, an infantry section leader from Boston assigned to Company D, 1st Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, during a joint patrol with Iraqi Army Soldiers in a market in southeastern Baghdad, Aug. 18.



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

“It also shows security is improving; if that wasn’t the case, you sure couldn’t go out and buy watermelon,” said Staff Sgt. Omar Jackson (left), an infantry section leader from Newark, N.J., as he holds a watermelon and Staff Sgt. Stephen Graham, a platoon sergeant from Greenville, S.C., pays an Iraqi teenager for the fruit during a joint patrol in a market in southeastern Baghdad, Aug. 18. Both paratroopers are assigned to Co. D, 1st Bn., 505th PIR, 3rd BCT, 82nd Airborne Div.

Dedicated cooks prepare meals for Ironhorse troops

Story by Pfc. Bailey Anne Jester

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

BAGHDAD – Cooks from the 1st “Ironhorse” Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division work in the dining facility at Joint Security Station War Eagle to create satisfying and high quality meals for Soldiers.

“Our goal is to give the highest quality meals to Soldiers who come and eat at JSS War Eagle,” said Worcester, Mass. native, Staff Sgt. Lorne Robbins, the dining facility manager assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 115th Brigade Support Battalion, 1st BCT, 1st Cav. Div.

To ensure that products keep their serviceable quality, cooks receive food deliveries about once every four days. Robbins has been very pleased with how well the supplier works with them.

“They can’t always have everything we need,” said Robbins, “but they do really well in trying to get it for us.”

Providing enough food is only part of the job.

“Outside of making sure that there is enough food for all the Soldiers and trying to keep our job from growing tedious,” said Robbins, “I enjoy working at the chow hall, and getting to see the smiling faces every day. I also get to work on making better food for our Soldiers.”

Robbins isn’t the only person who enjoys working in the dining facility and seeing the smiling faces of Soldiers as they enjoy their food.

“I really enjoy what I do,” said Newport, R.I. native, Pfc. Andre Barrett, a cook assigned to the 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, attached to the “Ironhorse” Brigade. “I lived in the Caribbean for awhile, so I like cooking an Army standard meal with a Caribbean flair.”

The cooks make meals better by preparing high quality food for Soldiers as well as providing a slice of home for the troops, especially around holidays.

“On major holidays, like Christmas, we’ll come in earlier and peel potatoes for homemade mashed potatoes instead of instant. We will also cook huge turkeys for the Soldiers. It’s the little things that we are trying to do for them,” said Robbins.

Not only do the cooks use holidays to try and make the dining hall a better place, they are combining ideas and investing in new ‘trinkets’ for Soldiers to enjoy. A Panini grill, slush machine and condiment rack have already been purchased and set up, the next plan is to have an ice cream bar on the weekends.

“There is always room for improvement, no matter what you are doing,” said Barrett. “This is the reason we keep looking for ways to improve the dining hall.”

Formulating new and creative ways to improve the dining hall is not the only objective for the cooks. The staff considers what they are going to serve for each meal by using an initial menu created by senior food operators located at Camp Taji.



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

Newport, R.I. native, Pfc. Andre Barrett, cook assigned to 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, attached to the 1st “Ironhorse” Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, pours water over eggs to boil them for breakfast, Aug. 18, at Joint Security Station War Eagle. The cooks at the “Ironhorse” Brigade dining facility try to create high quality meals with a homemade feel, said Barrett.

“If a Soldier asks about having their favorite meal, we can easily comply with their request as long as we have all the right ingredients and supplies,” said Robbins. “All they have to do is say something.”

Requesting a favorite meal isn’t the only reason a Soldier should talk to the cooks. For instance, if a Soldier has a food allergy, he should immediately inform the cooks. The cooks know what is in each product, and can help the Soldier prevent any reactions.

“We are here for the Soldiers,” said Robbins, “and here to serve only the best quality food to the best Soldiers.” ✂



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

Collinsville, Ill. native Pfc. Nicholas Hilboldt, a cook for 2nd “Lancers” Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, 1st “Ironhorse” Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, places breakfast burritos into a pan to serve to Soldiers Aug. 18 at Joint Security Station WarEagle. The cooks are working to create high quality meals for Soldiers at JSS WarEagle.



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

West Small Beach, Fla. native Pfc. Kebar Miller (right), cook assigned to 1st “Centurions” Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 1st “Ironhorse” Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, pours grits into a pan in preparation to serve at breakfast Aug. 18 at Joint Security Station WarEagle. The cooks at the “Ironhorse” dining facility are working to create high quality meals for Soldiers at JSS WarEagle.

Blackhawk crews conduct aerial training

CAMP TAJI, Iraq—A burst of flames leaves the muzzle of a 240B machine gun as Spc. Brandon Perryman, a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter crew chief in Company B, 3rd Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, conducts a test fire from the moving aircraft, on the outskirts of Baghdad, Iraq, Aug. 18.

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



During an early morning start, an orange glow from the sun fills the sky as a team of UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters from Company B, 3rd Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, depart Camp Taji Airfield, Iraq, Aug. 18. The aircrews are flying to a training area where they will be conducting training with Iraqi Army Soldiers.



(Right) As another UH-60 Black Hawk rides the horizon, Spc. Kevin Hood, a Black Hawk crew chief in Company B, 3rd Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, MND-B, mans a 240B machine as he scans the terrain for possible hazards to his Black Hawk. Hood, his aircraft and his sister aircraft are headed to a training area near Baghdad, Iraq, Aug. 18. The Soldiers of 3-227th primarily conduct air assaults the U.S. ground forces, but also train Iraqi Army Soldiers on how to effectively move in and out of an aircraft.

