

Crossed Sabers

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U.S., Iraqi forces spread goodwill



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

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

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – U.S. Paratroopers worked alongside their Iraqi army counterparts to deliver needed school supplies to two elementary schools during a combined humanitarian assistance mission in the town of Salman Pak, Iraq, Sept 13.

Paratroopers assigned to Company B, 1st Battalion 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, Multi-National Division-Baghdad and their Iraqi partners handed out pencils, backpacks, and books to dozens of school girls during the mission.

Along with the giveaways, several brigade medics assisted Iraqi medical personnel evaluate several local Iraqi women during a free medical screening. This mission was an outreach by both U.S. and Iraqi security forces to revive the spirit of local residents. With the ISF in charge of its nation security, U.S. forces have

Spc. Ikram Mansori, of San Francisco, Calif., greets a group of Iraqi girls after giving them toys during a combined humanitarian assistance mission at the Gulgamesh Elementary School, Sept. 13, in the town of Salman Pak, Iraq, located 30 miles southeast of Baghdad. Iraqi Soldiers and Paratroopers assigned to Company B, 1st Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, Multi-National Division-Baghdad teamed up to provided much-needed supplies such as backpacks, pencils, personal hygiene products and books to the school's children. Mansori, who speaks fluent Arabic, is assigned to 3rd BCT's Headquarters and Headquarters Company.

been able to focus more on helping the local populace on a more civil level even as the U.S. military continues its timeline to pullout of Iraq by the end of 2011.

"Although we are leaving, we really want to show them [Iraqis] that we haven't forgotten about them," said 1st Lt. Shannon Martin, of Louisville, Ky., a medic assigned to Company C. "The children are really excited about this and have seemed to appreciate everything we are doing today; the adults seem to be enjoying themselves too."

Another goal during the mission was to increase the Iraqi army's involvement in their own community and to build a lasting relationship with the local people.

"We want the Iraqi army to eventually take

over missions such as this one and help out their country without our assistance," said Martin.

The day's fun-filled atmosphere continued to grow as Paratroopers looked on and saw their Iraqi partners take charge of the mission as it went on.

"These are my absolute favorite missions because the Iraqi Army is so involved with the kids and the mission, everyone is in such an upbeat mood," said Spc. Nicholas King, of Nolensville, Tenn., an infantryman assigned to Company B.

"It's all about the next generation," said King. "It's up to us to show them that they matter and that they are the key to the

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Vice President visits troops in Baghdad, pg. 20



Air Cav offers Apache flight experience, pg. 10



MND-B hosts 10/5K run/walk honoring Hispanic-Americans



Photos by Sgt.
Tracy Knowles,
101st Eng. Bn. PAO,
225th Eng. Bde.,
MND-B



BAGHDAD – Service members from all branches of the armed services participated in a 10K Run/5k Walk in honor of Hispanic Heritage Month on Sept. 19 at Victory Base Complex. Soldiers of the Multi-National Division—Baghdad Equal Opportunity Office and volunteers wanted to honor Hispanic-Americans for their contributions to the armed forces.

From left to right, husband and wife Elijah and April Mota, of Manchester, N.H., walk in a 10K Run/5K Walk held at Victory Base Complex on Sept. 19. The Run/Walk is to honor Hispanic-American Soldiers within the United States armed forces for their sacrifices in service to the nation.

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GOODWILL ~ From Pg. 1

future success of this country.”

King also said that it’s important for the children to have good role models and he thinks that the Iraqi Army is the perfect answer to that need.

Many of the items handed out were

donated by the family members of Company B in order for the Paratroopers to spread goodwill to the citizens of Salman Pak. The combined forces hope to have several more events like this in the near future. ✂



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

(Left) 1st Lt. Jeffrey Wismann, (left) of Louisville, Ky., and an Iraqi Army Soldier organize a bag full of backpacks before handing them out to a group of Iraqi girls during a combined humanitarian assistance mission at the Gulgamesh Elementary School, Sept. 13, in the town of Salman Pak, Iraq, located 30 miles southeast of Baghdad. Wismann is assigned to Company B, 1st Battalion, 505th PIR, 3rd BCT, 82nd Abn. Div.

Spc. Amanda Carter, of Lamoni, Iowa, hands out bracelets to a classroom full of Iraqi girls during a combined humanitarian assistance mission at the Gulgamesh Elementary School Sept 13 in the town of Salman Pak, Iraq. Medics were also on hand to assist Iraqi medical personnel during a free medical screening to several local women in the area. Carter is a medic assigned to Co. C, 82nd BSB, 3rd BCT, 82nd Abn. Div., MND-B.



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

A young Iraqi girl grimaces as Spc. Jessica Velasquez, of Gardena, Calif., uses an alcohol pad to disinfect the girl’s deeply cut finger during a combined humanitarian assistance mission at the Gulgamesh Elementary School Sept 13 in the town of Salman Pak, Iraq, located 30 miles southeast of Baghdad. Along with handing out much-needed school supplies, six U.S. medics were on hand to assist an Iraqi medical specialist and held a free medical screening in order to assess any ailments by several local women in the area and plan a future combined medical evaluation. Velasquez is a medic assigned to Company C, 82nd Brigade Support Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, Multi-National Division-Baghdad.



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Freedom Radio Baghdad 104.1 and 107.3 FM

Warrior Academy helps Iraqis improve battle skills

Story by Sgt. Jon Soles

MND-B PAO

BAGHDAD – Soldiers of Company A, 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, are the instructors of the Warrior Academy at Joint Security Station Ur – a 3-day academy designed to train Iraqis in everything from rifle marksmanship to first aid.

The academy's first day focus is BRM – the acronym well-known to all American Soldiers as basic rifle marksmanship. According to Staff Sgt. Benito Santos, an infantry platoon sergeant, the academy's lead instructor, BRM is often neglected among Iraqi Soldiers because of scarce ammunition. But at Warrior Academy, the Iraqis fired over 800 rounds at JSS Ur's firing range.

"The course is three days so we compress everything into those three days," said Santos, a native of Kagman-3, Saipan.

Santos also points out that the Iraqi Soldiers do not properly clean their weapons and sometimes use techniques that are harmful to the weapon.

"They use diesel fuel to clean their weapons, it makes the bolt sticky and makes dust stick to it and it becomes like sludge," said Santos, who is assigned to A Co. "We looked through the barrels of these weapons and you couldn't see through them."

To test the theory that a clean weapon is a functional weapon, Santos said the Iraqis were allowed to fire their weapons before cleaning them. The result was a malfunction rate of about 80 percent, proving the academy's technologies on weapons' maintenance works.

Another day of class focuses on squad movement tactics and recognizing improvised explosive devices.

"This class helps them understand why it's important to be in certain formations when in the city," said Santos. "They kind of understand that now."

The anti-IED portion of the class involves slideshows and parts of actual IEDs found by American Soldiers. Sharing the knowledge helps the Iraqis become more able to pick out a deadly IED, added Santos.

On the final day of instruction, the Iraqis lead a patrol in the surrounding Sadr City area to show their Warrior Academy instructors what they've learned. Then a graduation ceremony is held in which the Iraqi soldiers are given certificates by an Iraqi Army officer.

Capt. John Ulsamer, commander of A Co., 2nd Bn., 5th Cav. Regt., 1st BCT, 1st Cav. Div., said the academy is already showing it worth in the IA.

"We're seeing a lot of success from it," said Ulsamer, an infantry officer from Staten Island, N.Y. "The Iraqi Army has detained eight times more people this month than last month."

Ulsamer said his goal is for the Iraqis to eventually take the reins of the Warrior Academy.

"We're trying to get the Iraqis to train and we just provide the facility," Ulsamer said. "We've got a range and classrooms and we can have it so Iraqis could conduct their own training."

As American Soldiers continue to let the Iraqis take the lead in securing their country, the knowledge gained at the Warrior Academy is sure to help the Iraqis become more confident and competent. ✂

Sgt. Heriberto Fuentes (right), of Bradenton, Fla., shows an Iraqi Soldier how much dirt and debris is in his weapon during a weapons cleaning session at Warrior Academy, here, Sept. 16. Fuentes is an infantryman assigned to the Company A, 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division. Basic rifle marksmanship and weapons maintenance are key blocks of instruction at the academy for Iraqi Soldiers.



Photo by Sgt. Jon Soles, MND-B PAO

Spc. Carl Treen, of Northville, Mich., shows Iraqi Soldiers ways to apply dressing to a head wound during the first aid block of instruction of the Warrior Academy, here, Sept. 16. Treen, a medic assigned to Company A, 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, helped teach the Iraqi Soldiers at the academy about first aid.

Spc. Carl Treen, of Northville, Mich., gives an Iraqi Soldier tips on applying a bandage to a leg wound at the Warrior Academy, here, Sept. 16. Treen is a medic assigned to Company A, 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division.



Photo by Sgt. Jon Soles, MND-B PAO

To test the theory that a clean weapon is a functional weapon, Santos said the Iraqis were allowed to fire their weapons before cleaning them. The result was a malfunction rate of about 80 percent, proving the academy's technologies on weapons' maintenance works.



Photo by Sgt. Jon Soles, MND-B PAO

Engineers speak different language, share same skills

Story by Spc. Brian Johnson

101st Eng. Bn. PAO, 225th Eng. Bde., MND-B

BAGHDAD – As the U.S. military prepares to draw down in Iraq, Soldiers of the Grayling, Mich. based 1434th Engineer Company, 101st Eng. Battalion, 225th Eng. Brigade, are working alongside the 6th Iraqi Army Engineer Regiment to build a new operations center.

The Soldiers of both armies are working hand in hand to not only build a new operation center at al-Muthana Airfield in the Karkh district of Baghdad, but are establishing rapport between the two cultures. The old airfield, which is now being converted into a new Iraqi Army base, is a prime example of many successful joint American-Iraqi engineering missions.

Sgt. 1st Class Ted Blanford, of Toledo, Ohio, said that this mission is extremely

important on many levels.

“Doing a project like this helps the Soldiers of the Iraqi Army feel that they have a personal hand in the reconstruction of their country. A mission such as this helps to ensure that we are leaving the Iraqi Army Soldiers [with the] proper training in construction techniques ... to help reconstruct their communities.”

Spc. Jeff Rochefort, from Munising, Mich., noted that working with the friendly Soldiers of the Iraqi Army has gone really well.

“Their English is not the greatest so it’s hard to understand everything, however, for the most part, they have taught us some simple terms in their language,” Rochefort explained.

Rochefort mentioned that while they require some instruction on basic construction techniques Iraqi Soldiers are quick to complete any task to standard.

Though culturally different, this mis-

sion has brought not just Soldiers but people from two separate backgrounds together. Soldiers from the 1434th Eng. Co. and the 6th IA Eng. Reg. are perfect examples of how to maintain friendly international relations.

“They have shown all of us the upmost respect. The Soldiers that we have been working with here are great guys and would probably give you their shirt off their back,” said Rochefort.

The project at al-Muthana is expected to be complete by late October. ✂

Pvt. Chris Troyer (left), from Wyoming, Mich., and Sgt. Charles Craig, of Millington, Mich., mark locations along the framework, Sept. 14. The Soldiers are part of the 1434th Engineer Company (V), 101st Engineer Battalion, 225th Engineer Brigade, and work side by side with Iraqi Army engineers to complete the project at al-Muthana Airfield, in the Karkh District of Baghdad.



Photo by 1st Lt. Michael Lind, 101st Eng. Bn. PAO, 225th Eng. Bde., MND-B



Photo by 1st Lt. Michael Lind, 101st Eng. Bn. PAO, 225th Eng. Bde., MND-B

Command Sgt. Maj. Peter Chase of Derry, N.H. (left) and Lt. Col. Charles Cody (center left), of Braintree, Mass., the command team from the 101st Engineer Battalion, 225th Engineer Brigade, enjoy refreshments and conversation with Col. Ahmed Saddam Khalifa, commander of the 6th Iraqi Army Engineer Regiment on Sept. 14. The “Nation’s Oldest” engineer battalion is responsible for the overall construction of a new Iraqi Army operations center at al-Muthana Airfield in the Karkh district of central Baghdad.



Photo by 1st Lt. Michael Lind, 101st Eng. Bn. PAO, 225th Eng. Bde., MND-B

Staff Sgt. Darrell Brossette (right), of Alexandria, La., and a 6th Iraqi Army Engineer Regiment Soldier move lumber during construction of a new Iraqi Army operations center at al-Muthana Airfield in the Karkh district of Baghdad on Sept. 14. The U.S. engineers are mentoring the Iraqi engineers on vertical construction skills that the Soldiers will put to good use on the next project. The project at al-Muthana is expected to be complete by late October.

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- Remind your buddy to drink. Refill your canteens at every opportunity.
- Look at your urine. If it is dark or if you have not urinated, you need to drink more.
- Eat meals to replace salts. Drinking too much water and not eating enough salt (hyponatremia) may be fatal.
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U.S. partnership aids Iraqi dairy farmers

Story by Sgt. Jon Soles

MND-B PAO

BAGHDAD – Good nutrition is one of the building blocks of a healthy nation, and many Iraqi farmers are taking advantage of the Iraq Ministry of Agriculture's bovine artificial insemination program to breed better dairy cows.

A team of civil affairs Soldiers and veterinarian experts from the U.S. Department of Agriculture visited the University of Baghdad's College of Agriculture, Sept. 13 to assess a bovine artificial insemination facility and advise the Iraqi technicians responsible for helping breed the nation's dairy cows.

Maj. Marshall Kohr, a civil affairs officer assigned to the 414th Civil Affairs Battalion, Multi-National Division-Baghdad, said the facility takes semen from 25 Holstein bulls,

freezes it and then distributes it to farmers through six stations in Baghdad. Kohr and the USDA advisors assessed the facility to determine how they can best help the artificial insemination program.

"They are producing the semen and they are distributing it and they're doing a good job with that," said Kohr, a native of Gillette, Wyo. "Right now they need more training of artificial insemination technicians in the field."

The Holstein bulls, a breed known for

their dairy production, were donated by the government of Australia in 2004. Fifty-five people are employed at the facility – ranging from technicians in white coats to farm workers in rubber boots that feed and take care of the animals. But the jobs provided by the Iraq Ministry of Agriculture are only a small benefit for the Iraqi people, according to Kohr.

"Indirectly, this benefits the whole country," said Kohr. "This is your source of milk for the whole nation. Milk is an extremely important source of protein, especially for a young country."

Once the semen is extracted, it is brought to the laboratory where it is put into straws and frozen. The semen is then taken to the six stations in the area where farmers bring their female cows for artificial insemination.

"You need to have calves to get milk and you need to get your cows pregnant,"

said Kohr. "What they're asking the farmer to do is when the cow is ready to breed, asking the farmer to bring the cow to one of these stations, at which time the artificial insemination technicians will inseminate the cow and get her pregnant."

But what the College of Agriculture needs more than bulls or equipment is training for its technicians, according to Jessica McCoy, a veterinarian who is the Ministry Advisor for Animal Health & Food Safety, U.S. Department of Agriculture. McCoy also met with top college officials to discuss the facility's needs.

"I told them 'We are not here to give you equipment, we're not here to buy you stuff, we are here to help provide training,'" said McCoy. "They were quite pleased with that and they wanted to have some people go from the training facility to the United States, perhaps, to become trainers for future dairy inseminators or future people to work in the artificial insemination facility."

Helping to train the Iraqi technicians, who in turn can help educate farmers about breeding good dairy cows, is the core mission of the USDA and the civil affairs team, said McCoy.

"One of the things we want to assist them to do is to develop training programs for the people they work with and also for the farmers to promote the utility and the economic advantage of having a good breeding program," said McCoy, a native of Wellesley, Mass. "You don't just want semen from bulls whose parents had good dairy production. You may want good feet, good back confirmation or a broad chest."

By assisting Iraqi farmers breed cows with better milk-producing traits, U.S. forces and the USDA are helping produce more protein nourishment, which in turn will help build a stronger, healthier Iraq.

"One of the things we want to assist them to do is to develop training programs for the people they work with and also for the farmers to promote the utility and the economic advantage of having a good breeding program,"

-- Jessica McCoy, a veterinarian and Ministry Advisor for Animal Health & Food Safety, U.S. Department of Agriculture



Photo by Sgt. Jon Soles, MND-B PAO

Maj. Marshall Kohr, a civil affairs officer assigned to the 414th Civil Affairs Battalion, based in Southfield, Mich., peers into a freezer used for storing bovine semen at the University of Baghdad's College of Agriculture, Sept. 13. Kohr and four members of the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture's Foreign Agricultural Service visited the college's artificial insemination facility as part of an initial assessment. Semen collected from bulls at the facility is distributed to Iraqi farmers who want to breed good dairy cows.

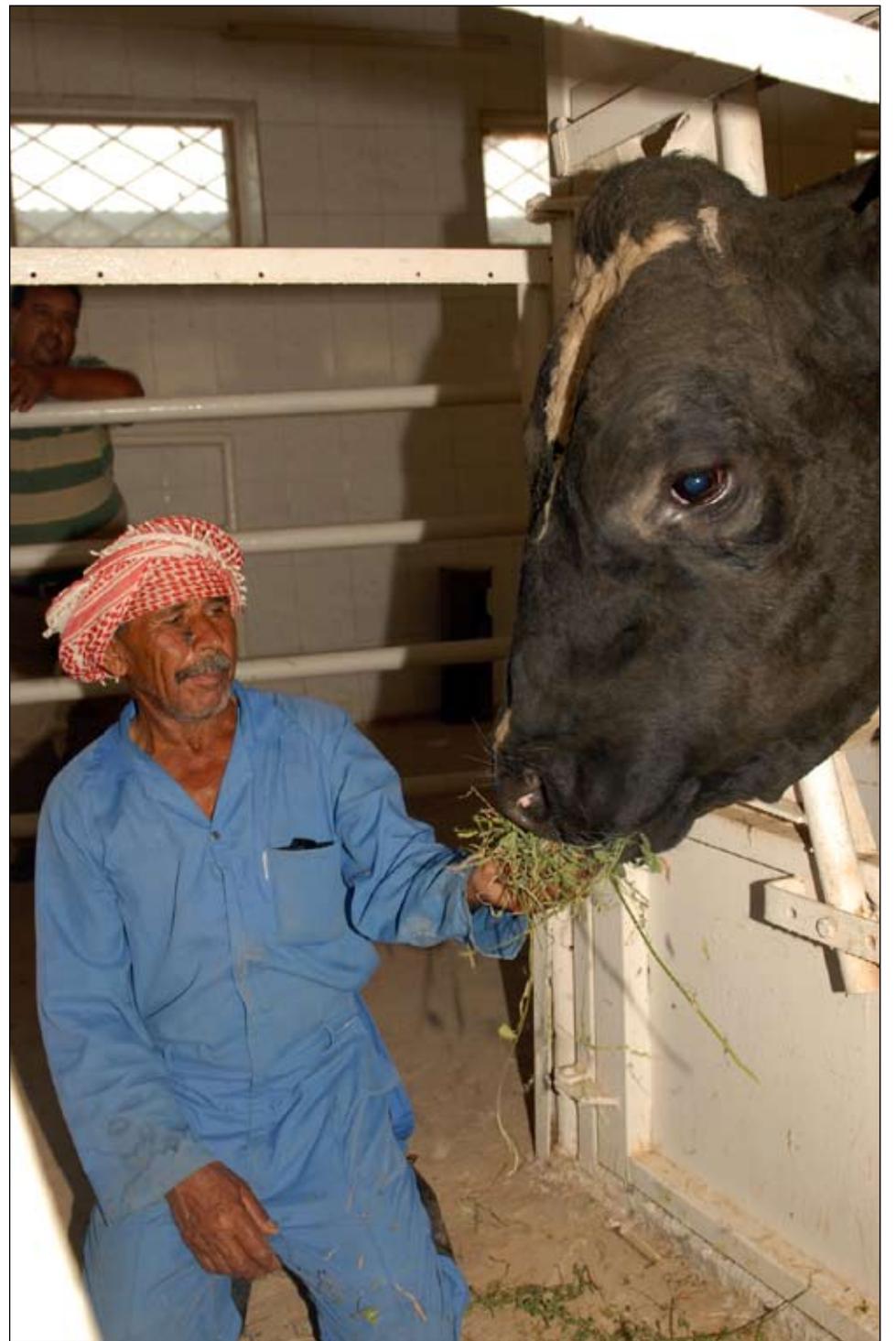


Photo by Sgt. Jon Soles, MND-B PAO

An Iraqi employee of the University of Baghdad's College of Agriculture feeds alfalfa to a Holstein bull. Australia donated the 30 Holstein bulls to the university in 2004 to provide Iraqi farmers with a source of semen to help breed cows with good milk-producing qualities.



Photo by Sgt. Jon Soles, MND-B PAO

A Holstein bull munches on alfalfa at the University of Baghdad's College of Agriculture, Sept. 13. The bull is one of 30 Holsteins donated to the college by Australia in 2004 with the purpose of helping Iraqi farmers breed better dairy cows. Semen taken from the cows are frozen at the college laboratory and then distributed to Iraqi farmers who want to breed cows.

Clinic catches sun's rays for power

Story by Sgt. Dustin Roberts

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

BAGHDAD – The sun has been known to work overtime in Iraq by creating dry, hot summers and long, sun-drenched days.

In order to help the Iraqi Ministry of Health provide for the citizens of the Ghazaliyah neighborhood, located in northwest Baghdad, the 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team “Dagger,” 1st Infantry Division, Multi-National Division—Baghdad decided to take advantage of the sun’s rays.

The solar-powered New Iraqi clinic in northern Ghazaliyah, which provides for about 300 people a day, was reopened in a ceremony, Sept. 16.

The clinic, which used to receive an average of two hours of power per day because of the strain on the national power grid, gets its energy from the sun and receives power all day and all night.

“It’s important because this system that we’ve installed will power this clinic continuously whether or not the national grid is working,” said Bristol, Conn. native, Maj. Andrew Attar, joint project management officer, 2nd HBCT. “It gives the community here that utilizes this clinic healthcare 24/7.”

The clinic is the third and final solar-powered clinic project for the Dagger Brigade, which is scheduled to redeploy to Fort Riley, Kan. this month.

“It actually started well over a year ago when the brigade that preceded us ended up trying to put a power clinic in Ameriyah, a location that was isolated. It was a great clinic there but it needed consistent power,” said Col. Joseph Martin, commander of the Dagger Brigade. “From that we have learned and placed two separate systems in the Dahkel Clinic in Hurriyah and this one, the New Iraq Clinic in Ghazaliyah.”

Because the clinic is totally powered by the sun, vaccines can stay refrigerated and the air conditioner can take away some of the stress of the heat while patients are waiting to be treated.

“Even if it’s cloudy for the next three days, the system that we have emplaced here will still allow this clinic to have power 24 hours a day,” Martin said. “It allows the doctors to focus on their patients instead of focusing on



Photo by Pfc. Kimberly A. Hackbarth, 4th SBCT PAO, 2nd Inf. Div., MND-B

Brig. Gen. Frederick Rudesheim, deputy commanding general for support, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, hands out gifts to Iraqi children, Sept. 16, during the opening of a solar-powered clinic in Ghazaliyah. Rudesheim, along with Soldiers with 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, out of Fort Riley, Kansas attended the event and helped provide security.

what is supporting them in the system.”

Because the solar-powered clinics were well-received by the people, the Dagger Brigade placed solar-powered street lights in northwest Baghdad and Abu Ghraib to keep markets opened longer and are working on a solar-powered courthouse in Abu Ghraib.

Attar said there has been much success with the solar-powered streetlights.

“The street lights we’ve found to be extremely effective. It keeps families and people out at night shopping, socializing and it promotes safe neighborhoods,” he said. “When you have light at night the change is remarkable. People are out eating out at restaurants, they’re out shopping at night; kids are out playing in the streets. It makes

the streets safer.”

As the Government of Iraq continues to build a more efficient relationship with the people of Baghdad, solar-powered technology remains as an advantageous way to do business.

“The people of Baghdad have benefited greatly from our learning with this technology,” said Martin. “This allows them to have a continuous amount of power throughout the day or night.” ✂



Photo by Pfc. Kimberly A. Hackbarth, 4th SBCT PAO, 2nd Inf. Div., MND-B

A medical provider at Ghazaliyah’s recently-opened solar-powered clinic treats a child, Sept. 16, during the opening of the clinic.



Photo by Pfc. Kimberly A. Hackbarth, 4th SBCT PAO, 2nd Inf. Div., MND-B

A dentist working at the New Iraq Solar Clinic sits in front of his new dentist’s chair, Sept. 16, in northwest Baghdad. Along with helping to provide the clinic with solar power, the 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad donated the brand-new chair to the clinic.

Paratroopers enter elite NCO Club

Story by Sgt. 1st Class Alex Licea

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

BAGHDAD – Following months of preparation, studying and a demanding two-day competition, 11 noncommissioned officers saw the fruit of their hard work pay off when they were inducted into the Sergeant Audie Murphy Club, here, Sept. 12.

The NCOs from 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad were honored during an official ceremony commemorating their induction into the club.

The SAMC was established to recognize NCOs who demonstrate high leadership qualities, professionalism and care for their Soldiers' welfare.

The SAMC is named after the most decorated Soldier in U.S. history, Audie Murphy. Despite being denied entry into the Marines and the Paratroopers for his height, the 5 ft., 5 in., Texas native earned every medal for valor including the military's highest award, the Medal of Honor, during World War II.

During the ceremony, Command Sgt. Maj. Steven Payton, of Grenada, Miss., with 1st Battalion, 319th Field Artillery Regiment, told the newest members of the club that they displayed perseverance, determination and resilience during the competition and their service to their country. He said these qualities are the same as those demonstrated by Audie Murphy.

Payton also said that the ceremony



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

The 11 newest members of the Sergeant Audie Murphy Club stand together and recite the Non-commissioned officer creed, Sept. 12, during the SAMC ceremony held Forward Operating Base Hammer, Iraq, located outside eastern Baghdad. The NCOs earned the right to join the elite club after competing in a two-day event last spring.

represents the legacy of Audie Murphy and recognizes the great leaders in the NCO ranks of the 3rd BCT, 82nd Abn. Div and the Army. He added that the event was fitting in honor of the Army's year-long theme "Year of the Non-Commissioned Officer."

"These NCOs are battle-tested and cannot be discouraged by any obstacle," he said. "I'm proud to stand beside you all. You are all great leaders, professionals and lead from the front."

In order to be bestowed the honor of

being called a member of the SAMC, Paratroopers had to pass a series of events such as a physical fitness test, a hands-on evaluation on the functions of several crew-served weapons, proper first-aid procedures and a leadership board where the NCOs were asked a series of leadership-based situational questions.

For Staff Sgt. Nicholas McNair, of Richmond, Va., assigned to A Company, 1st Bn., 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, this has been a long time in the



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

Command Sgt. Maj. Steven Payton (right), of Grenada, Miss., 1st Battalion, 319th Field Artillery Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, places the Sergeant Audie Murphy Club medallion around the neck of Staff Sgt. Timothy Glass, of Bedford, Iowa, here, Sept. 12. The medallion signifies the rite of passage into the respected SAMC which contains thousands of NCOs who have displayed professionalism and leadership qualities throughout their careers. Glass is assigned to C Company, 1st Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment.

making.

"I have been preparing for this since I joined the Army," he said. "It feels really good to earn this honor." ✂

Former MLB vets visit the desert



FORWARD OPERATING BASE HAMMER, Iraq – Ex-MLB players are presented an 82nd Airborne Division plaque during a visit to Forward Operating Base, Iraq, Sept. 18, as part of the "Heroes of the Diamond" Tour. Former baseball players included Trot Nixon, Jeff Nelson, and Andy Ashby, thanked service members assigned to the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, for their service during the two-hour visit. The purpose of the tour is to reach out to Soldiers all across Iraq in order to improve Soldier's morale.

Photos by Spc. Mitch Taylor,
3rd BCT PAO, 82nd Abn. Div., MND-B



Ex-baseball players Andy Ashby, Trot Nixon, and Jeff Nelson receive thanks from Paratroopers assigned to the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division during a visit to Forward Operating Base, Iraq, Sept. 18, as part of the "Heroes of the Diamond" Tour. The retired MLB players signed autographs and spoke with the Paratroopers during the two-hour visit about their experiences playing Major League Baseball.



Jeff Nelson (left), a retired Major League Baseball player, signs an autograph for a Paratrooper during an autograph session, Sept. 18, at Forward Operating Base Hammer, Iraq. Nelson was accompanied by two other Major League players, Trot Nixon and Andy Ashby during a tour of Iraq dubbed "Heroes of the Diamond". The players thanked service members assigned to the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, for their service during the two-hour visit. The purpose of the tour is to reach out to Soldiers all across Iraq in order to improve Soldier's morale.



World War I

On this day in American Military History

Corporal Alvin York kills 25 and captures 132

During World War I, U.S. Corporal Alvin C. York is credited with single-handedly killing 25 German soldiers and capturing 132 in the Argonne Forest of France. The action saved York's small detachment from annihilation by a German machine-gun nest and won the reluctant warrior from Tennessee the Congressional Medal of Honor.

Born in a log cabin in rural Tennessee in 1887, Alvin Cullum York supplemented his family's subsistence farming by hunting and, like his father, was soon an expert marksman. He also earned a reputation as a hell-raiser, and few imagined he would amount to anything but trouble. Around 1915, however, York experienced a religious conversion after a friend was killed in a bar brawl. He joined the fundamentalist Church of Christ in Christian Union and served as song leader and Sunday school teacher at the local church.

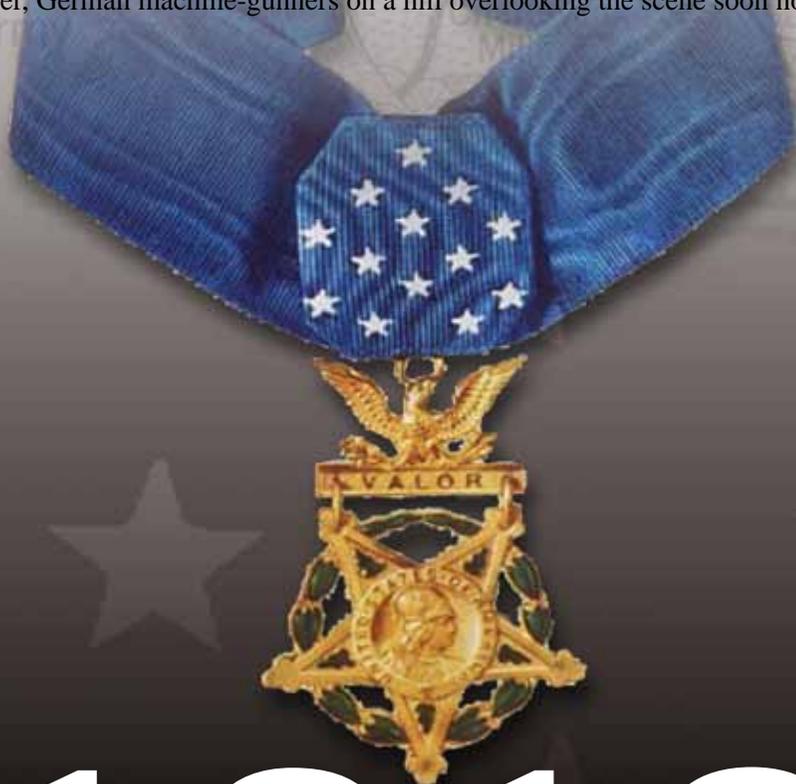
Two months after the United States declared war on Germany in 1917, York received his draft notice. Because his church opposed war, he asked for conscientious objector status but was denied at both the state and local level because the small Church of Christ in Christian Union was not recognized as a legitimate Christian sect. Enlisting in the 82nd Infantry Division, he was offered noncombat duty but eventually agreed to fight after being convinced by a superior that America's cause was just.

On October 8, 1918, York and 15 other soldiers under the command of Sergeant Bernard Early were dispatched to seize a German-held rail point during the Allies' Meuse-Argonne Offensive. The Americans lost their way and soon found themselves behind enemy lines. A brief firefight ensued with a superior German force, and in the confusion a group of Germans surrendered. However, German machine-gunners on a hill overlooking the scene soon noticed

the small size of Early's patrol. Yelling in German for their comrades to take cover, the machine gunners opened fire on the Americans, cutting down half the detachment, including Sergeant Early.

York immediately returned fire and with his marksman eye began picking off the German gunners. He then fearlessly charged the machine-gun nest. Several of the other surviving Americans followed his lead and probably contributed to the final total of 25 enemy killed. With his automatic pistol, York shot down six German soldiers sent out of the trench to intercept him. The German commander, thinking he had underestimated the size of the American force, surrendered as York reached the machine-gun nest. York and the other seven survivors took custody of some 90 Germans and on the way back to the Allied lines encountered 40 or so other enemy troops, who were coerced to surrender by the German major that the Americans had in their custody. The final tally was 132 prisoners.

York was promoted to the rank of sergeant and hailed as the greatest civilian soldier of the war by several Allied leaders. He was given a hero's welcome upon his return to the United States in 1919 and was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor, the nation's highest military decoration. In the 1920s, he used his fame to raise funds for the York Industrial Institute (now Alvin C. York Institute), a school for underprivileged children in rural Tennessee. He later opened a Bible school. Sergeant York, the 1941 film starring Gary Cooper, was based on his life. York died in 1964.



1918

AIR CAV OFFERS APACHE FLIGHT EXPERIENCE

Photos by Sgt. Seandale Jackson,
1st ACB, 1st Cav. Div. PAO, MND-B



CAMP TAJI, Iraq—Sgt. Marilyn C. Ortega (left), from Houston, the aviation life support equipment noncommissioned officer in charge for 1st Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, assists Maj. Gen. James Hunt (right), deputy commanding general, Multi-National Corps – Iraq, with his flight gear just prior to his tour of "First Attack's" area of operation and his very first flight in an AH64-D Apache attack helicopter. The flight is meant to give Hunt a pilot's point-of-view to help him better understand the capabilities of the aircraft – an important part of the 1st ACB's mission.



Lt. Col. Charles Dalcourt (left), from Baton Rouge, La., commander, 1st Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, shares with Maj. Gen. James Hunt (right), deputy commanding general, Multi-National Corps – Iraq, the details of his Tactical Operations Center and the capabilities "First Attack" has for monitoring and communicating with their aircraft. Shortly after, Hunt moved to the flight line for a tour of 1-227th's area of operations and his very first flight in an AH64-D Apache attack helicopter, Sept. 11.



Maj. Gen. James Hunt, deputy commanding general, Multi-National Corps – Iraq, prepares for his first flight in an AH-64D Apache attack helicopter during his visit to 1st Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, Sept. 11. Col. Douglas Gagram, from Cleveland, Ohio, commander, 1st ACB, wanted Hunt to get a better idea of an attack weapons team's capabilities by giving him hands-on experience from the air.

Operation Exhale brings sigh of relief

Story by Staff Sgt. Mark Burrell
MND-B PAO

BAGHDAD – Oxygen tanks are necessary for any hospital and they are vital for performing surgery.

“Sometimes we stop doing these surgeries because we have to wait for oxygen,” said Mohammed Mamoud Ahmed, an electrical engineer for Abu Ghraib Hospital. “It has happened a couple of times and when it gets critical, we have to get it from other hospitals.”

To prevent this incident from happening again, the Soldiers of 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment and 442nd Civil Affairs Bn., dropped off an industrial oxygen generator at the hospital, Sept. 12, here.

“One of our biggest problems is the oxygen supply,” said Mohammed. “With the winter coming, that’s the peak season for colds and illnesses when we need oxygen here the most.”

The staff at the hospital waited patiently for a long time for an answer to this problem and were excited when U.S. troops offered a solution, explained Mohammed.

“We used to suffer too much because we would bring oxygen from as far away as Ramadi,” explained Mohammed. “That’s about 100 kilometers away.”

He also said that the community is grateful to have a good connection with U.S. forces and have a chance to have their concerns really listened to and understood.

“This project has tangible benefits...It actually keeps people safe and that’s an important perk,” said 1st Lt. Noah Webster, project manager and native of Austin, Texas, assigned to HHC, 2nd Bn., 8th Cav. Regt., attached to 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division.

The new oxygen machine will provide the over-capacity hospital with a necessary tool to help the people of Iraq, added Webster.

“It gives the hospital more independence and it helps the local people,” said Mohammed. “The poor and underprivileged people will benefit the most from this machine.”

According to the administration, the hospital needs



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

“Hopefully this equipment will help the people of Iraq,” said Lt. Col. Mark Solomons (right), from Honolulu, Hawaii, the commander of 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, as he watches Mohammed Mamoud Ahmed, an electrical engineer at Abu Ghraib Hospital, ceremoniously cut the wrapping of a brand-new oxygen generator delivered to the people of Iraq, Sept. 12, here.

about 50 bottles of oxygen a day for patients. The new oxygen generator running at maximum capacity will be able to provide 75 bottles per day, explained Webster.

It wasn’t easy for U.S. forces to coordinate getting the generator to its new home. The hulking machine came from New York to Chicago and then overseas to Dubai and eventually Baghdad, but Webster said the bottom-line was good cross-unit coordination.

After moving the machine into place with a large forklift at a congested Abu Ghraib Hospital, the Soldiers held

a small ceremony to complete the event.

“We’re really not here anymore to fight in a kinetic capacity, but more in a civil capacity,” explained Webster. “The locals see us getting this huge piece of equipment off the back of a flatbed truck and they may not know what it is, but they know we’re here to help.”

With a sigh of relief, the Soldiers graciously accepted thanks from the staff of the hospital and agreed that Operation Exhale brought a breath of fresh air to a hopeful community. ✂

“Nation’s Oldest” earns combat patch

Story by First Lt. Michael Lind
101st Eng. Bn. PAO, 225th Eng. Bde., MND-B

BAGHDAD – Having spent nearly a month in Iraq, Soldiers of the “Nation’s Oldest” engineer brigade, the 101st Engineer Battalion, 225th Engineer Brigade, were awarded the “Yankee Division” Patch during a combat patch ceremony, Sept. 11, at Camp Liberty in Baghdad.

The combat patch is a long-standing Army tradition that recognizes a Soldier for service during war, and indicates the unit command the Soldier fell under.

“The patch is meant to instill pride in you, your service, and your unit,” said Lt. Col. Charles Cody, of Braintree, Mass., commander of the 101st Eng. Bn.

Though Sept. 11 is a somber day of remembrance for those killed in the World Trade Center and Pentagon attacks, the men and women of the 101st can feel uplifted to know they qualify to wear a new patch on their right shoulder.

“This is the first time since World War II that a battalion sized unit is awarded the YD (Yankee Division patch) for former wartime service,” said Command Sgt. Maj. Peter Chase, of Derry, N.H.

The story of the YD patch dates back to the creation of the 26th Infantry Division. The unit’s design

YANKEE DIVISION

comes from its nickname the “Yankee Division”, originally comprised of National Guard units from Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont. Established in 1917, the division took part in major operations such as Aisne-Marne, Champagne-Marne and Meuse-Argonne during World War I.

Following the war, the 26th was deactivated and would have to wait over two decades before being activated for World War II.

In January 1941, the Yankee Div. was reactivated and sent to Europe to fight in World War II. Throughout 1944 and 1945, the unit engaged in operations within Northern France, Central Europe, the Ardennes and the Rhineland. Coincidentally, the 101st Eng. Bn. fought under the 26th Inf. Div. during the war. By the end of 1945, the division was inactivated and would permanently be a structure within the National Guard.

By 1993, the 26th Inf. Div. was deactivated, and the patch retired. In 2006, as part of the restructuring of the Army, the YD patch was brought out of retirement and awarded to the 26th Brigade Combat Team. In September 2008, the unit was reorganized into the 26th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade, and in doing so brought the 101st Eng. Bn. officially under its control.

For Soldiers like Master Sgt. Alan Cyr, of Upton, Mass., the day is a personally historic day. He now be-



Photo by Sgt. Tracy Knowles, 101st Eng. Bn. PAO, 225th Eng. Bde., MND-B

Master Sgt. Alan Cyr, of Upton, Mass., with Headquarters Support Company, 101st Engineer Battalion, 225th Engineer Brigade, becomes the third generation in his family to be awarded the Yankee Division combat patch; his grandfather served in WWI, his father in WWII. Cyr received the patch during a combat patch ceremony at Camp Liberty, Iraq, Sept. 11.

comes the third generation in his family to serve and earn the YD patch.

“My grandfather was in the Yankee Div. and earned a Purple Heart with them, but didn’t leave France until 1919 due to his wounds,” Cyr said. “[Two decades later] my father joined at the end of World War II ... and was with the 26th (that) was part of Patton’s Third Army.”

“I’m really proud of having earned [the patch]; it’s a great source of personal pride for me.” ✂

Soldiers break Ramadan fasting with locals

Story by Sgt. Joshua Risner

MND-B PAO

BAGHDAD – Handshakes and chai were had all around at an Iftar dinner, which breaks the daily fast of Ramadan, outside Combat Outpost Cashe South, here, Sept. 18.

The dinner, hosted by Iraqi Federal Police of 3rd Brigade, 1st FP Division, featured Sheikhs from the surrounding area and U.S. Soldiers.

The theme for the dinner was reconciliation, according to Lt. Col. Bruce Hoover, assigned to Human Transition Team IZ-8, 3rd Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division.

“It’s reconciliation for anything and everything,” said the Decatur, Ill. native. “This is about bringing together people from different backgrounds, religions, government agencies, so we can basically get together and talk.”

Soldiers at the dinner got the chance to sample traditional cuisine.

“It was good but it’s a little different eating with my hands,” said Spc. Zachary Barrett, from Hawkins, Texas, assigned to Company B, Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 3rd Bde., 82nd Abn. Div. “I work with [unmanned aerial vehicles] so I don’t usually get outside much. This is my first real mission outside the wire and it’s great to get out and see the sights.”

Food aside, the dinner was more about brotherhood and togetherness, according to Hoover.

“We sat down with Sheikh Ali Hussein and talked,” he said. “We just made small talk about our families; about the schools



Photo by Sgt. Joshua Risner, MND-B PAO

Col. Timothy McGuire (right), commander of 3rd Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division, accepts a glass of tea at an Iftar dinner, here, Sept. 18. Americans and Iraqis gathered together to break the daily fast of Ramadan and come together in brotherhood.

our children were going to – he told us his kids would like to go to college in the U.S.”

As festivities started to die down, Americans and Iraqis parted ways with smiles, kind words and handshakes. They left in the same spirit that they entered – the spirit of togetherness. ✂



Photo by Sgt. Joshua Risner, MND-B PAO



Photo by Sgt. Joshua Risner, MND-B PAO

(Left) Lt. Col. Bruce Hoover (second from right), from Decatur Ill., assigned to Human Transition Team IZ-8, 3rd Bde. 82nd Abn. Div., talks with Sheikh Ali Hussein (second from left) at an Iftar dinner, here, Sept. 18. Hoover is assisted by Spc. Ikram Mansuri, assigned to HHC, 3rd Bde., 82nd Abn. Div. “I’m a truck driver but I know the language, so I serve as a linguist a lot,” said Manson, who hails from San Francisco.

(Above) Spc. Zachary Barrett (left), from Hawkins, Texas, assigned to Company B, Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 3rd Bde., 82nd Airborne Division, and Staff Sgt. Dwayne Jarrett, from Brooklyn, N.Y., assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Co., 2nd Bn., 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 3rd Bde., 82nd Abn. Div., enjoy some traditional Iraqi cuisine at an Iftar dinner here, Sept. 18.



2009

The Year of the Noncommissioned Officer



Paratroopers, ISF assess security in Salman Pak



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

SALMAN PAK, Iraq – Paratroopers assigned to Company B, 1st Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, Multi-National Division-Baghdad, inspect an abandoned car along side a neighborhood road during a combined foot patrol, Sept. 13, in the town of Salman Pak, Iraq, located 30 miles southeast of Baghdad. Paratroopers and their Iraqi counterparts conducted the routine patrol in order to assess any concerns local residents had and check on the area's security.



(Right) Capt. Dallas Cheatham, of Fayetteville, N.C. says farewell as he shakes hands with a community leader during a combined foot patrol, Sept. 13, in the town of Salman Pak, Iraq, located 30 miles southeast of Baghdad. Cheatham serves as the commander of Company B, 1st Bn., 505th PIR, 3rd BCT, 82nd Airborne Div., MND-B.



Spc. Nicholas King, of Nolensville, Tenn., looks down a neighborhood road during a combined foot patrol, Sept. 13, in the town of Salman Pak, Iraq, located 30 miles southeast of Baghdad. King is an infantryman assigned to the Company B.



1st Lt. Jeffrey Wismann, of Louisville, Ky., speaks to an Iraqi boy during a combined foot patrol, Sept. 13, in the town of Salman Pak, Iraq, located 30 miles southeast of Baghdad. Iraq army soldiers and Paratroopers assigned to Company B, 1st Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, Multi-National Division-Baghdad conducted the routine patrol in one of the town's neighborhoods in order to assess any concerns local residents had and to check on the area's security.



An Iraqi Army Soldier uses a fire extinguisher to put out a fire after a local resident alerted the combined forces of an electrical fire in an unoccupied home during a combined foot patrol, Sept. 13, in the town of Salman Pak, Iraq, located 30 miles southeast of Baghdad. The fire was contained and no one was injured. The homeowners were not inside when the fire sparked.



Spc. Jonathan "Tito" Taylor, of Los Angeles, leans against a rock wall as an Iraqi girl overlooks his shoulder during a combined foot patrol, Sept. 13, in the town of Salman Pak, Iraq, located 30 miles southeast of Baghdad. Taylor is a infantryman assigned to Company B.

Cache search yields

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



BAGHDAD – In order to get to a suspected weapons cache site, 1st Lt. Will Hargis (foreground), a platoon leader and Huntington, W. Va., native, tentatively crosses over a water-filled canal on a two-foot wide pipe while Staff Sgt. Jason Ellis (background), a cavalry scout from Hurricane, W. Va., pulls security in southwestern Baghdad, Sept. 19. “I was a little nervous [about crossing the canal]. I’ve done this before, but not with all this equipment on,” explained Ellis about the moment before walking on the pipe. Both Soldiers are assigned to Troop B, 1st Battalion, 150th Armored Reconnaissance Squadron, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team.



(Left) After receiving a call about a suspected weapons cache, 1st Lt. Will Hargis (right), a platoon leader from Huntington, W. Va., and Staff Sgt. Daniel Smith (left), a cavalry scout from Baltimore, Md., check grid coordinates outside of their vehicles before starting on the search in southwestern Baghdad, Sept. 19. Both Soldiers are assigned to Troop B, 1st Battalion, 150th Armored Reconnaissance Squadron, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team.

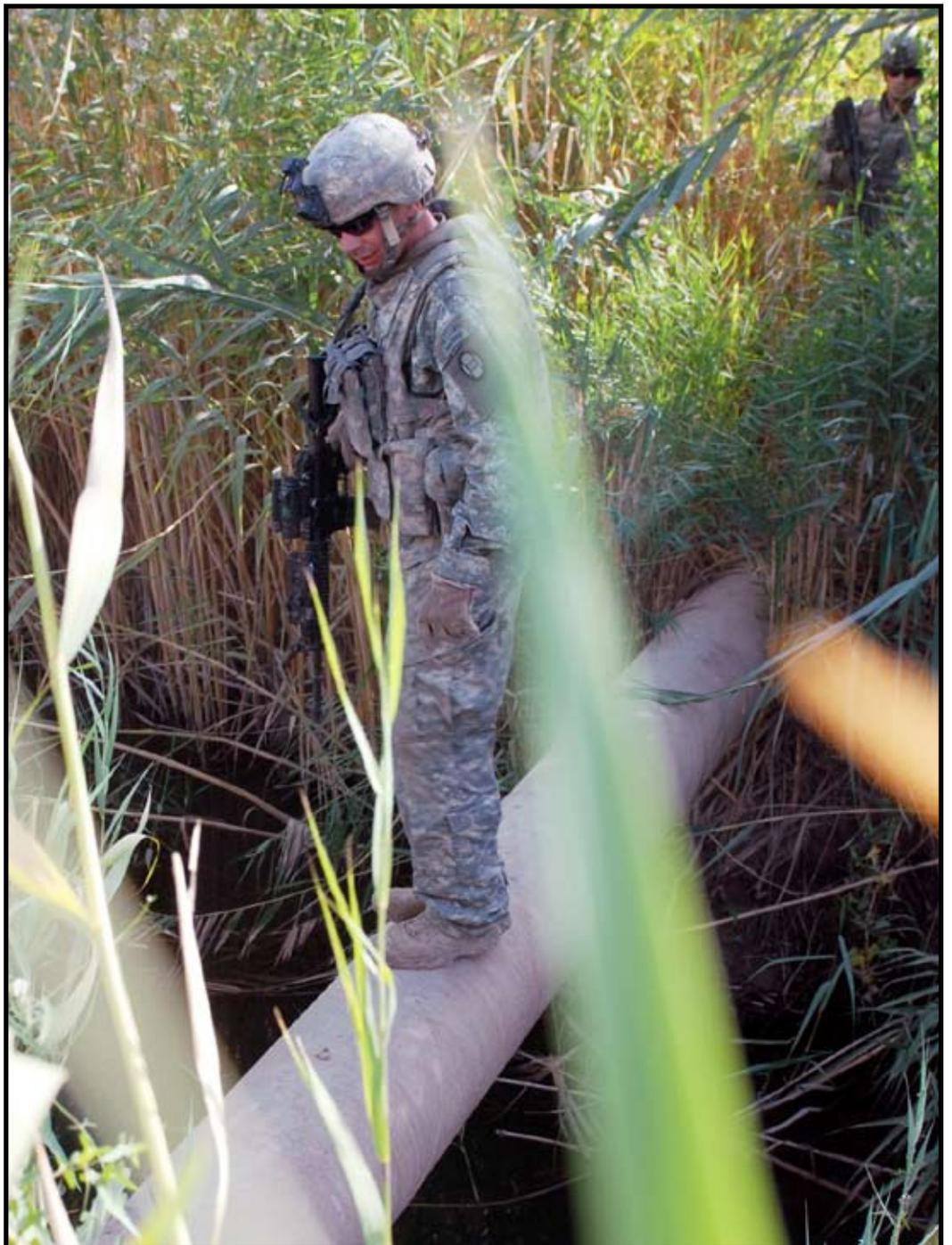


SWEAT, EXPERIENCE



(Left) Staff Sgt. Daniel Smith (left), a cavalry scout who hails from Baltimore, Md., crosses a canal as Washington, D.C., native, Staff Sgt. Godmund Schick (right), a cavalry scout, pulls security during a weapons cache search in southwestern Baghdad, Sept. 19. Both Soldiers are assigned to Troop B, 1st Battalion, 150th Armored Reconnaissance Squadron, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team.

(Left) Staff Sgt. Daniel Smith (left), a cavalry scout from Baltimore, Md., is followed by Staff Sgt. Godmund Schick, also a cavalry scout and other Soldiers assigned to Troop B, 1st Battalion, 150th Armored Reconnaissance Squadron, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team during a weapons cache search in southwestern Baghdad, Sept. 19. "Even if we didn't find anything, it was still good training," said Schick, a native of Washington, D.C.



(Left) Huntington, W. Va., native, 1st Lt. Will Hargis (right), a platoon leader, and other Soldiers assigned to Troop B, 1st Battalion, 150th Armored Reconnaissance Squadron, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team, prepare to jump a ditch while searching for signs of insurgents and weapon caches in southwestern Baghdad, Sept. 19.



Staff Sgt. Daniel Smith (left), a cavalry scout who hails from Baltimore, Md., crosses a canal as Washington, D.C., native, Staff Sgt. Godmund Schick (right), a cavalry scout, pulls security during a weapons cache search in southwestern Baghdad, Sept. 19. Both Soldiers are assigned to Troop B, 1st Battalion, 150th Armored Reconnaissance Squadron, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team.

Dagger NCOs close out tour with induction into Audie Murphy Club

Story by Spc. Howard Alperin
MND-B PAO

VICTORY BASE COMPLEX, Iraq – The Sergeant Audie Murphy Club, dedicated to excellence in leadership, has become synonymous with the highest principles in the Army. The club is based on the dedication and unassuming nature of the most highly decorated Army Soldier of World War II— Audie Murphy.

A ceremony was held here, Sept. 12, to welcome eight new members into the club; non-commissioned officers who earned the prestigious honor of becoming an SAMC member by proving themselves as great leaders.

Receiving the honor at the end of a deployment to Iraq makes it that much more special, said one of the inductees.

“It’s definitely a culminating event for this tour,” said Sgt. 1st Class William Collins, a personal security detachment platoon sergeant from Baltimore, assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division. “Soldiers have been going hard for more than 11 months. Receiving this honor is for all the Soldiers.”

The NCOs prepped for months for the chance to be selected.

“I got together with another NCO and we used our time to maximize our chances,” said Staff Sgt. Brett Harper, a personal security detachment platoon sergeant, Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 5th Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment. Induction to the SAMC is based mostly on how Soldiers handle themselves in a leadership role.

“A lot of the preparation was thinking about situational questions, like escalation of force, we spent a lot of time studying and thinking of vignettes,” said Harper.

The whole spectrum of NCO duties and responsibilities, including weapons certification, first aid and physical training are taken into consideration, but they are only part of the selection process. It’s about knowing how to apply the regulations and the policies, said Command Sgt. Maj. Rory Malloy, Multi-National Division-Baghdad, from Campbellsburg, Ind., the guest speaker at the ceremony.

For these NCOs, this deployment was about having the character to face challenges on the battlefield and remain resilient through it all. Becoming an Audie Murphy member is much more than just appearing before a board of senior sergeants, added Malloy.

He also compared the values put forth

by the newly inducted NCOs with the values of Audie Murphy, who fought courageously for his fellow Soldiers and for his country.

“These NCOs have demonstrated excellence by showing a commitment to our Soldiers and to our Army throughout the year,” Malloy continued. “They have demonstrated outstanding dedication and duty in leading our Soldiers.”

Malloy reminded all the Soldiers in attendance of Audie Murphy’s triumphs of courage in the face of insurmountable odds. For his combat action during World War II, Audie Murphy received the Medal of Honor and 32 additional U.S. decorations. He was also awarded medals and citations for valor from France and Belgium.

“You are Audie Murphy’s legacy, you will walk in his footsteps, and you will live up to his image from this day forward,” Malloy conveyed.

Malloy also addressed the expectations that come with being a part of the elite SAMC.

“They will be expected to live up to a much higher standard than that of their peers.” Malloy continued, “They are the standard-bearers.” And many of the Audie Murphy members become sergeants major, he added.

He praised the current group of NCOs being inducted and recognized the entire Dagger BCT for their outstanding service.

“Your presence and support speaks for itself. You have been recognized by [U.S. forces] and by the Iraqi people,” said Malloy. “You have lived up to the great history of the Dagger Brigade and you are now a storied part of its history.”

The feeling of becoming a member of SAMC was an indescribable moment in time for one of the NCOs.

“There’s no way to explain it. To be recognized as that top percent of NCOs and join the Audie Murphy club is a great feeling,” said Staff Sgt. Alejandro Pulido, a tanker, from Orange County, Calif., assigned to 1st Battalion, 63rd Armored Regiment, 2nd BCT, 1st Inf. Div.

Each of the newly inducted NCOs were awarded an MND-B command sergeant major coin of excellence, a brigade command sergeant major coin of excellence, an Audie Murphy medallion, a certificate of initiation and an Army commendation medal.

These NCOs are keeping the Audie Murphy legend alive to be passed on to future generations of Soldiers. The recognition of their achievement comes at the end of one journey and the beginning of another, as they prepare to return to their home duty station. ✂



Photo by Spc. Howard Alperin, MND-B PAO

Staff Sgt. Alejandro Pulido, a tanker, from Orange County, Calif., assigned to 1st Battalion, 63rd Armored Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, accepts his certificate of initiation for the Sergeant Audie Murphy Club, here, Sept. 12, from Command Sgt. Maj. Rory Malloy, Multi-National Division-Baghdad.

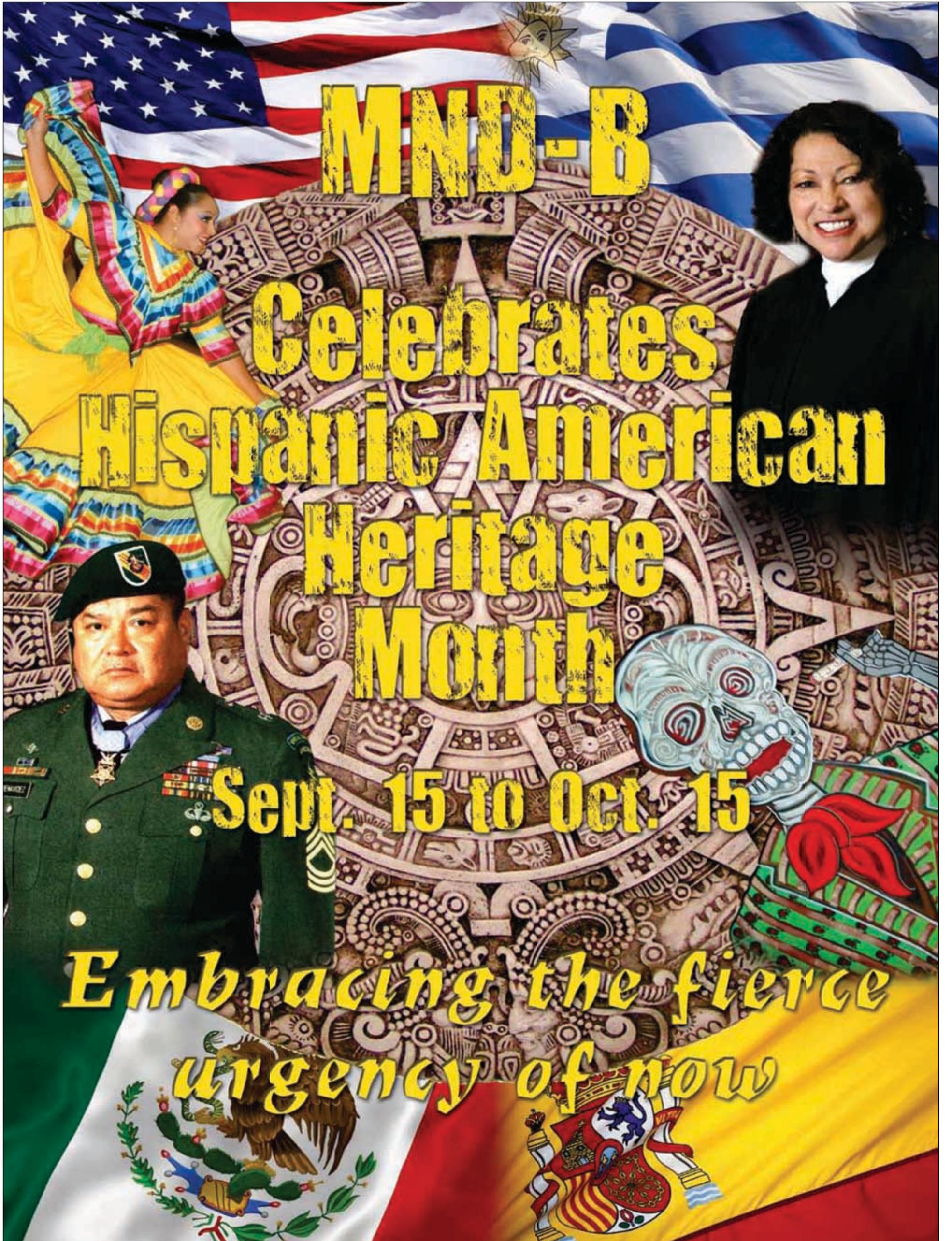
Facts about the SGT Audie Murphy Club

The original club was started at Fort Hood, Texas early in 1986. There were several key people at Fort Hood - officer, enlisted, civil service, and a Killeen civilian - who were instrumental in getting this club up and running.

When a soldier is inducted into the Sergeant Audie Murphy Club, he/she is given the medallion above which is approximately 2 inches in diameter. The medallion is suspended by a broad powder-blue ribbon representing the traditional color of the infantry. The medallion is worn around the neck on the outside of the Class A or Dress Blue uniform for official functions such as military balls or Sergeant Audie Murphy Club meetings.

Motto

“You lead from the front.”
... Audie Murphy



Gifts from home

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



BAGHDAD – Spc. Geisha Sanchez, from Reading, Pa., an administration specialist with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team, is all smiles after opening an 'Any Soldier' gift box at Forward Operating Base Falcon, Sept. 16. The boxes, shipped by anysoldier.com, are filled with gifts from individuals and companies for Soldiers who sign up. The idea is for recipients to then distribute the care packages to their fellow Soldiers.

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**ARE YOU
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1st Cav medics train Iraqi first responders

Story by Sgt. Jon Soles

MND-B PAO

BAGHDAD – Iraqi Security Forces are on the front lines when it comes to defending the Iraqi people, but the first responders – firefighters and emergency medical technicians – are on the front lines of public safety.

Medics from the 1st Cavalry Division are training Iraq's first responders to become better lifesavers through medical training courses held at Joint Security Station Ur in Sadr City.

"This course is designed to improve their quality of care for their future patients and improve their lifesaving skills," said Staff Sgt. Chris Howell, a medic assigned to Company A, 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, who taught a round of first aid classes in April. "They were receptive and wanted to continue the training. I've been teaching the last three weeks on American EMT skills."

About a dozen Iraqi firefighters and EMTs, all dressed in navy blue jumpsuits, formed a semicircle around Howell, here, Sept. 17, as the Copperas Cove, Texas, native gave a course in lifesaving techniques for infants and small children. No CPR (cardio pulmonary resuscitation) dummy was available so the Iraqis brought a baby doll about the size of a real infant.

Howell cradled the doll and showed the Iraqis how to check and clear the airways of a choking infant. His movements were made with gentleness and finesse, in proportion to a tiny patient. After going over techniques for checking respiratory distress and clearing airway obstructions, it was the Iraqis' turn. The Iraqis took turns demonstrating the same techniques with the doll. Howell, as well as the other Iraqi EMTs, gave critiques to each other.

"You guys have to know it by heart. Remember, children die quicker than adults," Howell said to the Iraqis, highlighting the sense of urgency in saving a life.

According to Howell, the Iraqi first responders are good pupils who have accepted the training as a means to make themselves better lifesavers.



Photo by Sgt. Jon Soles, MND-B PAO

Staff Sgt. Chris Howell observes an Iraqi emergency medical technician demonstrate checking and clearing the airway of a small child in respiratory distress, using a baby doll, at a first aid class at Joint Security Station Ur, here, Sept. 17. Howell, a medic assigned to Company A, 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division. "This is one of the things they need to know," said Howell, a native of Copperas Cove, Texas. "It may be the difference between saving the child and not."

"They're highly motivated, very intelligent and very eager to learn," Howell said. "When I teach these guys they stop me and ask 'why' or 'explain this.'"

Howell said the training went beyond simple lifesaving techniques. As an instructor, he said he is also trying to teach the Iraqis a different way to treat emergencies.

"The medical system of their society is to put the patient in a truck and take them to the hospital with no form of triage or management," said Howell. "They do not distinguish between an emergency and a non-emergency."

Howell said he hopes to instill in the Iraqis the American mindset that first responders provide immediate care and help determine the level of the patient emergency. Howell emphasized practice and rehearsal will improve lifesaving skills.

"It's just going to take repetition, repetition, repetition until they master the skills," said Howell. "It's not for us, it's for the benefit of the people."

Howell's training was interrupted, however, when the Iraqi rescue commander received a call to a real emergency in Sadr City – a fire at a gas station. With the training ISF first responders they are receiving from the American medics, the Iraqis are working to be better equipped to handle emergencies, ensuring a more stable future for Iraq.

Staff Sgt. Chris Howell, a medic assigned to Company A, 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, uses a baby doll to show Iraqi emergency medical technicians the proper way to check airways in a small child. No CPR (cardio pulmonary resuscitation) dummies were available so the Iraqis brought a baby doll to the class at Joint Security Station Ur, here, Sept. 17. Howell, a native of Copperas Cove, Texas, has been in the Army nine years and is on his fourth deployment.



Photo by Sgt. Jon Soles, MND-B PAO

The Mechanic's Corner: Closing outside vents keeps vehicle cooler

Story by Spc. Howard Alperin
MND-B PAO

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – Leaving the outside air vents open of a humvee can cause a lot of problems for a vehicle's air conditioner. The inside of the air conditioning unit gets clogged up and no air flow is generated.

"Have you ever turned your humvee on? You turn the AC on high and nothing is coming out, that's why," said Sgt. Michael Clark, the quality control and assurance shop foreman, from Arlington, Texas, assigned to Division Special Troops Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division.

For the M1114 Humvee, closing the outside air vents is an easy situation to manage. The humvee has a knob to the right of the steering wheel labeled, 'Air' and the words, 'Pull To Shut Off Outside Air.' The knob must be pulled out from the panel to activate the damper that closes the vents.

If you leave the air vent open to allow outside air in, condensation from the radiator unit inside of the air conditioner mixes with dust and dirty air, said Clark. The mixture becomes a harder substance and sticks to the fins of the radiator, blocking air from coming through, he said.

Mechanics of the DSTB encourage all humvee and Mine-Resistant Ambush-Protected vehicle users to consult maintenance on how to keep the outside vents closed and to make sure the vents are functioning properly. The cable that runs from the knob to the flap that closes the vent must be attached correctly, said Sgt. 1st Class Alonzo Taylor, battalion motor sergeant, from San Antonio, Texas, DSTB, 1st Cav. Div.

Fixing the problem is not an easy chore.

"It's really hard to do maintenance, you have to take the unit [radiator] apart and take a pressure washer to it," said Clark. Additional problems may include work with the motor of the air conditioner, which requires tearing armor off to get the part out, he added.

Closing the vents eliminates a lot of work, making more time available for the mechanics to take care of other issues.

"A vehicle without air conditioning is an automatic



Photo by Spc. Howard Alperin, MND-B PAO

Sgt. Michael Clark, the quality control quality assurance shop foreman, from Arlington, Texas, assigned to Division Special Troops Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division, demonstrates where the knob is located on an M1114 Humvee in order to close the outside air vents. If you leave the air vent open to outside air, condensation from the radiator unit inside of the air conditioner mixes with dust and dirty air, said Clark. The mixture becomes a harder substance and sticks to the fins of the radiator, blocking air from coming through.

deadline, meaning it's inoperable," said Sgt. Joseph Martin, division main shop foreman from Watervliet, Mich., assigned to DSTB, 1st Cav. Div. "Closing the outside vents would save a lot of time and money and make things more efficient."

Recycling the air by using the air from inside the vehicle keeps things cooler.

"You're not taking hot air from outside trying to make it colder. You're taking room temperature air and making it colder," said Clark.

Keeping the outside vents closed also effects temperature inside the vehicle. With the vents shut, the temperature can drop down to 60 degrees, said Martin. It gets more comfortable inside more quickly, he added.

Though the nights are getting cooler in Iraq, the days remain warm. "At noon time, you're going to get hot, AC is still a big deal," said Clark.

Soldiers can avoid doing damage to the air conditioning unit of their humvee or MRAP by closing the outside vents and keeping them closed. It's as easy as pulling a knob. 

"Crazy Horse" Soldiers receive recognition

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



BAGHDAD - Killeen, Texas native, Spc. Hunter Cole (right), a dismount infantryman assigned to Company C "Crazy Horse", 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, shakes the hand of Lt. Gen. Charles Jacoby Jr. (left), the commanding general of Multi-National Corps – Iraq, while receiving a coin at JSS Shield, Sept. 18. Cole served as the rear security for the dismount section while engaging in a small arms fire fight during a dismounted patrol Sept. 15.



Reading, Penn. Native, Pfc. Alexander Castro (right), a radio transmitter operator assigned to Co. C, 2nd Bn., 5th Cav. Regt., 1st BCT, 1st Cav. Div., salutes Lt. Gen. Charles Jacoby Jr. (left), the commanding general of MNC-I, at JSS Shield Sept. 18. Castro served as his platoon leader's RTO. He maneuvered with his platoon leader and provided security and communication with higher headquarters so that leadership could concentrate on the platoon.



Gainesville, Texas native, Pfc. Marc Hacker (left), a dismount infantryman assigned to Co. C "Crazy Horse", 2nd Bn., 5th Cav. Regt., 1st BCT, 1st Cav. Div., receives a coin from Lt. Gen. Charles Jacoby Jr. (right), the commanding general for MNC-I, at JSS Shield, Sept. 18.

ASV 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.
- Train:** 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.
- Load:** 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!

Don't Lose CONTROL

ARMY SAFE IS ARMY STRONG

Vice President visits troops in Baghdad

Photos by Spc. Phillip Turner. MND-B PAO



Vice President Joe Biden renders a salute to Army commanders waiting to greet him outside the Pegasus Dining Facility on Camp Liberty, in Baghdad Sept. 17.



Vice President Joe Biden took time during an unscheduled visit to Camp Liberty's, Pegasus Dining Facility, Sept. 17, to visit with Soldiers, Airmen, Sailors, and Marines deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.



Vice President Joe Biden Offers a winning smile to troops as he makes an unscheduled visit to Camp Liberty's Pegasus Dining Facility, in Baghdad, Sept. 17.



Vice President Joe Biden took time during an unscheduled visit to Camp Liberty's, Pegasus Dining Facility, Sept. 17, to visit with Soldiers, Airmen, Sailors, and Marines deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.



Spc. Tonya Nichols, a shift leader at the Pegasus Dining Facility on Camp Liberty, with Headquarters Support Company, Division Special Troops Battalion, Multi National Division-Baghdad, who hails from Killeen, Texas, greets Vice President Joe Biden as he makes a surprise visit to military personnel Sept. 17.

1st ACB troopers partner with MiTT, IA missions

Story by Sgt. Alun Thomas

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

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – Helping assist the Iraqi Army achieve independence and the ability to provide an atmosphere of stability is one of the main missions facing the U.S. Army as it gradually draws down its presence in Iraq.

To achieve such results, troopers of Company F, 3rd Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, is working with a U.S. Military Transition Team to ensure the Iraqi's are in a constant state of willingness to take over the missions ahead.

This readiness was tested as both the Co. F "Felons" and the MiTT visited two water treatment facilities assigned to the 34th IA Brigade outside Camp Taji, Sept. 16, to check on security improvements that had been recommended by the MiTT members on an earlier visit.

The last visit was a month and a half ago, said Lt. Col. William Bohman, from Cincinnati, MiTT commander, which gave the Iraqi's time to fix their problems, that included implementing new security measures

"They needed to improve security at their access points," Bohman said. "They didn't have any screening, so someone in the street could look right in and observe what was happening inside the guard points."

There were also no barriers or walls put up to prevent outsiders from getting into areas they are protecting, Bohman said.

"They are securing water access points which are part of the irrigation system," Bohman said. "They are stationed along the pipeline which pumps water out of the Tigris River."

There were improvements to the previous problems, but work is still needed to be done, Bohman said.

"They are on the right azimuth at this point," Bohman said. "They've made the improvements at the entrance way for one

access point but not the other access point, so we have to keep working with them."

The relationship with the Iraqi's is good, Bohman said, the MiTT Soldiers attached to the 34th IA Bde. are also helping them increase their proficiency with basic military skills.

"We're working with them now on dismounted patrols outside, using night vision goggles and battery re-supply for that," Bohman said.

The MiTT team is also assigned to the 1st ACB, who kept a close eye on the ground patrol with their aircraft, which pleased Bohman.

"The ACB is partnered with the 34th [IA] Brigade, so I am part of the ACB's partnership efforts, Bohman said. "Today we heard their aerial weapons team on the radios. It's not every MiTT team that has on call [an air weapons team] support like that."

Joining Bohman on the patrol was 1st Sgt. Derrick Allard, from Charleston, S.C., Co. F, 3rd Bn., 1st ACB, who said his company supplies the MiTT members with

select personnel for their missions, such as this one.

"This was our company's first mission so I wanted to get a firm grasp on what we were doing and how we were incorporated into the MiTT team," Allard said. "My guys were the drivers and VC's (vehicle commanders) for the MRAP's and that's the role we play."

Allard said he will be rotating Soldiers from Co. F every 30 days to go on missions with the MiTT in order to augment combat strength.

While no patrol is routine due to the dangers outside the wire, Allard said, there was nothing complicated about the task at hand.

"It was a standard mission, checking on the Iraqi's facilities and making sure everything is in operating order," Allard said. "We were also making sure they were doing the right thing."

"Supporting the Iraqi brigade commander is one of the MiTT team's main missions," Allard added. "We're here to support them in that." 



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

Second Lt. Sean Williams (front), from Eatontown, N.J., the officer in charge of a personal security detail for a military transition team, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, stands guard during a water treatment plant inspection, Sept. 16. The PSD Soldiers from Company F, 3rd Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, 1 ACB, escorts the MiTT members during inspections of living conditions and operation standards of the 34th Iraqi Army Brigade.



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

First Sgt. Derrick Allard, from Charleston, S.C., Company F, 3rd Battalion, 227th Aviation Regt., 1st Air Cav. Bde., 1st Cavalry Div., MND-B, observes his Soldiers who are part of a personal security detail assigned to a military transition team working with the 34th Iraqi Army Brigade, here, Sept. 16.



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

During an inspection of a water treatment facility guarded by the 34th Iraqi Army Brigade, Lt. Col. William Bohman (right), from Cincinnati, the officer in charge of a military transition team assigned to the 34th IA Bde., checks equipment used by the IA, here, Sept. 16. The MiTT team, escorted by Soldiers from Co. F, 3rd Bn., 227th Avn. Regt., 1st Air Cav. Bde., 1st Cavalry Division, is helping the IA to improve its operations and living conditions.

Soldier to Sergeant, a rite of passage in Iraq

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

BAGHDAD – Forty-three newly promoted noncommissioned officers of the 150th Armored Reconnaissance Squadron, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team were inducted into the NCO Corps during a ceremony luncheon at Camp Stryker, south of Baghdad, Sept. 18.

The NCO Corps, known as the backbone of the Army, embodies those who instill discipline and order within a unit. The ceremony dates back to the 18th century with the Army of Frederick the Great and commemorates the passing of a Soldier from the junior enlisted ranks to the corps noncommissioned officers.

“The NCO ceremony is hosted by NCOs for NCOs, said Squadron Command Sgt. Maj. James Allen, of Paden City, W. Va. “It recognizes new inductees, letting them know there is more to it than just pinning on rank; more responsibility should encompass something more.”

The guest speaker, Brigade Command Sgt. Maj. John Swart, of Fuquay-Varina, N.C. gave new inductees leadership guidance before they passed through the archway symbolizing a rite of passage and an acceptance of more responsibility as Army leaders.

“Becoming an NCO is a tough job, but it’s a rewarding job; be tough but remain compassionate,” said Swart.

New inductees recited the NCO creed; a guiding document for noncommissioned officers with the major paragraphs beginning with the letters N, C, and O. Inductees then passed through the

crossed sabers arch as the official party presented them with the NCO Guide and Creed.

“I’m very surprised at all the attention it received,” said Christian referring to the archway. “It’s the first time the arch is being used and now it’s part of our legacy.”

Allen, the first official greeter to welcome inductees into the elite corps, handed out the guides as Swart followed with congratulations.

First sergeants of the squadron’s four troops and one company spoke a few words of wisdom to the Soldiers under their command as they handed them a copy of the NCO Creed.

Sergeants James and Michael Lowry, brothers serving in Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, who were promoted July 20, were amongst the first to walk under the archway that is a permanent fixture in future squadron NCO ceremonies.

“It’s a good tradition,” said James Lowry, of Elkview, W. Va. “The ceremony opened my eyes to the NCO heritage.”

“I enjoyed being part of the ceremony for the NCO’s that will be our future leaders,” said Sgt. 1st Class Mike Street, of Indian Trail, N.C. “It’s our job to mold new NCO’s into those leaders.”

Sgt. Deforest Talbert, who died in combat July 2004 during the squadron’s last deployment, was remembered during the ceremony.

“We also serve to honor the memory of those men and women of the NCO Corps who have served with pride and distinction,” said Street during the ceremony. “Today, we remember one of our own whose courage should not go unremembered.” ✂



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

First Sgt. Stephen Deweese (left), of Troop B, 150th Armored Reconnaissance Squadron, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team, welcomes Sgt. Jacques Bridges, of Charlotte, N.C., into the elite noncommissioned officers corps during a ceremony at Camp Stryker, Sept. 18. Deweese, of Scott Depot, W. Va., spoke words of wisdom to each of the eight inductees under his command. Troop B is based out of Eleanor, W. Va.

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Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Prevention

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

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

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

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Partnered patrol in Salman Pak

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

SALMAN PAK, Iraq – Pfc. Juan Ramirez, of Los Angeles, checks his surroundings during a combined foot patrol inside a market, Sept. 16, in the small village of Kersa, located in the town of Salman Pak, Iraq. Ramirez and his fellow Paratroopers conducted the presence patrol in order to check on the area's security and deter any suspicious activity. The patrol also saw Paratroopers and their Iraqi partners spread goodwill to many of the local children by handing out toys and backpacks at a nearby school. Ramirez is an infantryman assigned to Company B, 1st Battalion, 505th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad.

(Right) Staff Sgt. Timothy Bridge, of San Antonio, Texas, receives a "low-five" from an Iraqi boy during a combined foot patrol inside a market, Sept. 16, in the small village of Kersa, located 30 miles southeast of Baghdad. Bridge and his fellow Paratroopers conducted the presence patrol in order to check on the area's security and deter any suspicious activity. Bridge serves as a squad leader assigned to Company B, 1st Battalion, 505th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, MND-B.



(Left) First Lt. John Cross (near right), of Kansas City, Kan., and 1st Lt. Andrew Osborn, of Fayetteville, N.C., check their surroundings during a combined foot patrol, Sept. 16, in Salman Pak, Iraq, located 30 miles southeast of Baghdad. Cross and Osborn are both infantry officers assigned to Company B, 1st Battalion, 505th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad.



An Iraqi Soldier hands out toys to Iraqi children during a combined foot patrol, Sept. 16, in the town of Salman Pak, Iraq, located 30 miles southeast of Baghdad. Iraq Army Soldiers and Paratroopers assigned to Company B, 1st Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, Multi-National Division-Baghdad teamed up to assess security in the area and hand out toys and backpacks.

Iraqi kids watch in amusement as Staff Sgt. Floyd Smith, of Florence S.C., rides an Iraqi boy's bike after the boy asks him to try it out for himself during a combined foot patrol Sept 16 in Salmon Pak, Iraq, located 30 miles southeast of Baghdad. Smith, along with several of his fellow Paratroopers talked to residents during the presence patrol in order to build relationship with the local community. Floyd serves as an infantry squad leader assigned to Company B, 1st Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad.

Former detainees reintegrated on eve of holiday

Story by Staff Sgt. Mark Burrell
MND-B PAO

BAGHDAD – On the eve of Eid ul-Fitr, Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 150th Armored Reconnaissance Squadron along with Iraqi Army Soldiers reintegrated ten former detainees back to their families after a small ceremony in southwestern Baghdad, Sept. 19.

Eid ul-Fitr is a Muslim holiday that celebrates the end of fasting for the Islamic month of Ramadan with festivities, friends and family.

“Right at the end of Ramadan, releasing these guys is a good, gracious thing for Americans to do,” said Sgt. 1st Class Robert Kennett, a platoon leader assigned

to Troop B, 1st Bn., 150th ARS, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team. “At the end of their fasting, they have a holiday, so it’s just worked out.”

“It’s an indescribable feeling, I can’t put it into words,” said a former detainee. “It is very good timing with the celebration for Eid coming.”

The men wore new clothes, with creases in their shirts and pants, as they signed paperwork titled, “Promise to Maintain Peace.” An official from the Government of Iraq, an Iraqi Army officer and the local sheikh also had to sign and fingerprint the paperwork to vouch for these men.

“We’re going to trust these sheikhs to do what they say they’re going to do,” explained Kennett, a native of Radford, Va. “It puts the responsibility back on the leaders of the community to help us move in the same direction.”

In accordance with the U.S. drawdown of troops in Iraq, that direction is putting more responsibility on the Iraqi Security Forces and community leaders.

“We’re handing over [former] detainees and we’re handing over responsibility,” said Spc. Jeremy Dodson from New Castle, Pa. “These guys are no longer in

During an Iraqi detainee reintegration ceremony held by Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 150th Armored Reconnaissance Squadron, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team, Sept. 19 in southwestern Baghdad, former detainees wait to be released after they sign “Promise to Maintain Peace” paperwork. An official from the Government of Iraq, an Iraqi Army officer and the local sheikh also had to sign and fingerprint the paperwork to vouch for these men.



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

Spc. Jeremy Dodson, a forward observer from New Castle, Pa., assigned to Troop A, 1st Bn., 150th ARS, 30th HBCT, helps fill out paperwork for an Iraqi man about to be reintegrated as the local sheikh sits in the background Sept. 19, here.

U.S. detention facilities and if they get picked up again, then they go straight to Iraqi jails.”

By handing over more control of detainees and the prison system, U.S. forces are giving Iraqis more control over their areas, explained Dodson, a forward observer assigned to Troop A, 1st Bn., 150th ARS, 30th HBCT.

After much deliberation and paperwork being checked and rechecked, the Iraqi Army officers agreed to release the men back to their families.

“I don’t think they want to let these guys be released and let them fall through

the cracks because of a paperwork glitch,” said Kennett about waiting for two hours. “It shows a lot of progress on the IA side.”

The released men shared tears and hugs with their families after the ceremony and were ready to begin their lives again.

“I want to get back to driving a taxi,” said one of the released Iraqis with a smile on his face. “But I am first thinking about how my kids are doing. I will see them first.”

“I believe in second chances,” added Dodson after the crowd dispersed. “I hoped they changed their ways, or else we’ll be right there to pick them back up again.” ✂



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

NFL Week four matchups: Oct 4-5





FOD may appear to be trivial ...
IT ISN'T

If an engine has FOD, it can become nothing more than a useless collection of nuts, bolts, gears and nicked compressor blades.



PREVENT FOREIGN OBJECT DEBRIS (FOD)

- Conduct regular FOD walks.
- Perform FOD sweeps with ground equipment.
- Make sure the FOD cans are readily available.
- Maintain clean and orderly work areas to ensure a safe and FOD-free environment.
- Be aware of what is on the ground around you at all times when the aircraft rotors are turning.
- Remember to make your FOD program visible and keep the emphasis on training, involvement and teamwork.



ARMY SAFE IS ARMY STRONG



Together again almost two decades later

Story by Lt. Col. Pat Simon

225th Eng. Bde. PAO, MND-B

BAGHDAD – “Based on the first deployment we had, life is great,” reflected Sgt. Maj. James Reppond, of Monroe, La., while huddled with four other Desert Storm veterans from the Louisiana National Guard’s 225th Engineer Brigade on Sept. 18.

Like the first Gulf War, all five engineer Soldiers deployed together from the same unit; something unique to the National Guard.

“It’s almost like a second family,” said Master Sgt. Glen Stafford, from Farmerville, La., a quality assurance engineer for the 225th Eng. Bde. “It’s our way of surviving a deployment together.”

Their mission environment this time around is quite different. For starters, living conditions and laundry service were unheard of back then.

“You’ve got to remember, we went from tents with no flooring, no air conditioning; miserable lifestyles to [today] basically just living in mobile homes,” reminisced Chief Warrant Officer Four Wilson Quebedeaux, of Marksville, La., the senior maintenance technician for the engineer brigade.

“Some folks had cement mixers they would do their laundry in. We had big trash cans with heaters in them to heat the water,” volunteered Reppond. “Throw in detergent and clothes; stir it around with a stick. That’s all you could do.”

“We had to take bathes out of a gallon and a half tub of water until we constructed our own showers,” added Stafford.

During Desert Storm, all five remember an enemy threat, but not anywhere close to the urban warfare that today’s Soldiers still face on the outskirts of Iraqi cities, like the threats of improvised explosive devices. It’s a whole different battlefield.

“During Desert Storm ... movement was freer,” chimed in Master Sgt. Joseph Cole, Deville, La., the brigade’s tactical operations non-commissioned officer. “You really didn’t have to worry (back then) about IEDs or anything like that when you go and move and do your jobs.”

“It’s 100 percent heads up all of the time [now],” echoed Stafford.

There is nearly 150 years of experience accumulated between the five Soldiers who were convinced they would see the battlefield again all these years later.

“Saddam was still in power and as long as he was in power, things weren’t going to be right and eventually we would be back here,” said Sgt. 1st Class Darrell Rabalais of Plaquemine, La., who conducts oversight of contracted engineer projects with Iraqi civilians.

And no matter how times have changed and communication with families has improved, the distance away from families and the wait to return home is still the hardest part.

“When we were in Desert Storm, we would travel 10, 12, 15 miles to get to a phone and maybe get a chance to talk to them once or twice a month,” remembered Cole.

“I couldn’t begin to describe how hard it is on the spouses,” said Reppond. “Most of us back home were the decision makers ... and now the wives have to make all of the decisions. It’s pretty tough. I wouldn’t want to



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

Chief Warrant Officer Four Wilson Quebedeaux, of Marksville, La., (left) and Sgt. 1st Class Darrell Rabalais of Plaquemine, La., enjoy time together while fishing near al-Faw Palace on Camp Victory, Sept. 19. The two 225th Engineer Brigade Soldiers deployed together to Desert Storm and are back for Operation Iraqi Freedom.

go through it.”

“In some ways it’s easier here now because of the technology,” added Rabalais. “We get to call home and get to make those day to day decisions with our spouse, where as Desert Storm, you would only talk to them every couple of weeks.”

For all five, this may be their last deployment, a last chance to defend their homeland away from home, and like the first war here together, their ultimate mission is very clear.

“We keep fighting for what we think it right,” said Quebedeaux. “The reason we’re here is to keep the battle here and not on our home grounds. We will keep our families safe.” ✂



GOT BLOG?



REMEMBER OPSEC WHEN YOU POST

Do not POST:

Photos of Battle Damage
Photos of Casualties
Photos of Base Defenses
Photos of Key Military Facilities
Photos of Key Personnel

...or any information that could be used by the enemy for Planning or Propaganda.

GET SMART.

Think about it before you post.

Soldiers travel to VBC to celebrate the Jewish New Year

Story by Spc. Howard Alperin
MND-B PAO

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – As the years add up on the 21st century, another calendar is more than 3000 years ahead of today.

The Jewish calendar, which has been around since the creation of The Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve, is now in the year 5770.

Soldiers traveled from forward operating bases and combat outposts throughout

Multi-National Division-Baghdad to come together, Sept. 18, for a traditional service at Victory Base Complex to celebrate Rosh Hashanah, which means Jewish New Year in Hebrew.

Jewish people from around the world celebrate this High Holy Day when they gather with family and friends to celebrate with prayer and many of the traditional customs that go along with bringing in a new year.

“It’s nice to be here to celebrate the New Year with Jewish people from the Army,” said Spc. Elibah Franklin, a supply specialist, from Beersheba, Israel, attached to Brigade Support Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division,



Photo by Spc. Howard Alperin, MND-B PAO

Col. Steven Bernstein, from St. Louis, Mo. sounds the ram’s horn, also known as a shofar in Hebrew, after a Rosh Hashanah service here, Sept. 20. The shofar was sounded two days after the celebration of Rosh Hashanah, as the horn is not sounded on the Sabbath. “It brings back memories with my orthodox grandfather who first taught me how to blow shofar,” said Bernstein, a flight surgeon, assigned to the 227th Attack Reconnaissance Battalion, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade. Celebrating the Jewish New Year has been a good opportunity to remember the important things and think more profoundly about life, spirituality, friends and health, he said.

who flew in from FOB Hammer. “It’s good knowing I’m not alone and that there are others who know different customs. I have more people to relate to.”

The experience of coming to the service gave some Soldiers the feeling of getting reacquainted with their faith.

“I’m here to learn, I’m here to regain some of what I’ve lost. I’ve lost traditions with the Jewish faith. My father taught me a lot and he died when I was young,” said Spc. Lourival Ledo, a supply specialist, from Charlotte, N.C., attached to the 113th

Field Artillery Battalion, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team. “The Army has allowed me to take part in the important holidays of my religion. I’m very thankful for that.”

Rosh Hashanah is a time for reflection and for making resolutions.

Soldiers appreciate the new beginning and what it represents personally and professionally.

“I want to become one again with my fiancée and my family, also, it is a new era for Iraq and I want to help with its progress,” said Ledo, a native of Recife, Brazil, who convoyed in from COP Meade.

Typically, most of the movement between FOBs is mission-oriented, to move supplies or maintain logistics. Soldiers are not usually traveling between FOBs for religious purposes. Command mission essential requirements come first, said Spc. Guillermo Osorio, a sup-



Photo by Spc. Howard Alperin, MND-B PAO

Spc. Lourival Ledo, a supply specialist, from Charlotte, N.C., attached to the 113th Field Artillery Battalion, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team, prays with the traditional tallit, the Jewish prayer shawl, and yamakah head cover during a service here, Sept. 18, to celebrate Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year. “I was taught by my father this way of wearing the the tallit. It’s the way I learned,” said Ledo.

ply specialist, from Mansfield, Ohio, attached to the 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 3rd BCT, 82nd Abn. Div., who convoyed in from COP Carver. Osorio added that the chaplain made the arrangements because he saw how important Rosh Hashanah is and how few [Jews] are in the battalion.

Soldiers participated with traditional songs and food after the service. Soldiers clapped hands, sang ‘Hava Nagila’ and dipped apples into honey, symbolizing sweetness to the start of a new year.

“I’m really grateful that I had a chance to participate, it did a lot for me on this deployment, it uplifted my spirits,” said Franklin. “It’s been hard out here away from family and home, there’s no family to turn to when things get you down, being here amongst Jewish people, doing the same things you’ve been brought up doing, is a relief.”

Rosh Hashanah was ushered in with enthusiasm and enlightenment. It didn’t matter that it took a convoy or air movement request to get here, as long as Soldiers appreciated the unique environment a High Holy Day brings in Baghdad.



Photo by Spc. Howard Alperin, MND-B PAO

Spc. Guillermo Osorio, a supply specialist, from Mansfield, Ohio, attached to the 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, prays during a service here, Sept. 18, to celebrate Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year. Soldiers participated with traditional songs and food after the service.



Photo by Spc. Howard Alperin, MND-B PAO

Spc. Lourival Ledo, a supply specialist, from Charlotte, N.C., attached to the 113th Field Artillery Battalion, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team, prays with the traditional tallit, the Jewish prayer shawl, and yamakah head cover during a service here, Sept. 18, to celebrate Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year. “I was taught by my father this way of wearing the the tallit. It’s the way I learned,” said Ledo.

Old Hickory Soldiers distribute school supplies

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



ZWAYNAT, Iraq – Capt. Mike Allen (left) of 150th Armored Reconnaissance Squadron, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team, shows Mohammad Ahmed pre-packaged book-bags full of school supplies to distribute to the children of his village, Sept. 16. Allen, of Parkersberg, W. Va., is the squadron's chaplain and the official overseer of care packages sent from the states. The National Guard squadron is based in Glen Jean, W.



Iraqi children of the Zwaynou tribe are captivated by Sgt. Jonathan Lamie, of Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 150th Armored Reconnaissance Squadron, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team, as he gave them a little undivided attention during a visit to the village southwest of Baghdad, Sept. 16. Lamie, of Bluefield, W. Va., accompanied the squadron's chaplain and platoon sergeant to deliver school supplies for the children who will be returning to school in October. Troop C is based in Glen Jean, W. Va.



(Left) Staff Sgt. Travers Brake, of Troop C, 150th Armored Reconnaissance Squadron, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team, thanked Mohammad Ahmed, one of the elders of the Zwaynat village southwest of Baghdad, for meeting with him, Sept. 16. Brake, of Elkins, W. Va., met with Ahmed to check on the well-being of the villagers since explosives were found in that area a week earlier.



Spc. Justin Friend, of Troop C, 150th Armored Reconnaissance Squadron, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team, befriends a local girl of the Zwaynou tribe during a visit to the village southwest of Baghdad, Sept. 16. She approached him with an extended hand and he politely accepted it. Friend, of Canvas, W. Va., patrolled the village as the squadron's chaplain and Troop C platoon sergeant met with the elders of the village. Troop C is based in Glen Jean, W. Va.



(Left) Capt. Mike Allen (right) of Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 150th Armored Reconnaissance Squadron, 30th Heavy brigade Combat Team, distribute school supplies during a visit to the Zwaynou tribe, southwest of Baghdad, Sept. 16. Allen, of Parkersberg, W. Va., is the squadron's chaplain and the official overseer of care packages sent from the states to Soldiers or Iraqi children. He left the supplies in the hands of Mohammad Ahmed (far left), an elder of the tribe, to distribute to the children of the village. The National Guard squadron is based out of Bluefield, W. Va.