

Crossed Sabers

www.hood.army.mil/1stcavdiv

VOLUME 1 ~ ISSUE 17

MULTI-NATIONAL DIVISION-BAGHDAD

OCTOBER 12, 2009

What's Inside



Joint mission uproots, disrupts insurgent activities, Pg. 5



Phase maintenance ensures aircraft remain battle ready, Pg. 8



Combat training in Iraq takes skills to the next level, Pg. 14



Paratroopers hone trademark skills, Pg. 23



Armament crews keep Apaches ready for fight, Pg. 25



Photo by Sgt. Jon Soles, MND-B PAO

Chief Warrant Officer 3 Rusty Burch, of Killeen, Texas, and Chief Warrant Officer 2 David Elder, of Pittsburg, Kan., bring an AH-64D Apache in for landing, here, Oct. 1. Elder said he joined the Army three years ago to fly. "I always had an interest in flying, but never had an opportunity to do it and the Army provided me that opportunity." Both pilots are assigned to Company B, 4th Attack Reconnaissance Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division.

Apaches provide over watch, firepower to ground forces

Story by Sgt. Jon Soles
MND-B PAO

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – The pilots who fly the AH-64D Apache helicopter generally agree that if the attack helicopter was a car, it would be a sports car.

Its sleek profile, speed, agility and lethal firepower make it stand out on the flight line.

But despite its looks, pilots of the 1st Air Cavalry Brigade say the Apache's best features are its ability to provide close air support for ground troops, while at the same time intimidating insurgents.

"The aircraft provides a direct fire capability and it can react quickly and get

where the guys on the ground need it," said Chief Warrant Officer 2 Eric Pope, an Apache pilot assigned to Company A, 4th Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment. "It has a psychological effect as well because if bad guys hear an aircraft above, they are less likely to initiate an engagement."

Pope, a former tanker turned helicopter pilot, said the Apache is a good tool to protect infantrymen on the ground because it can respond faster than a quick reaction force or a call for artillery fire.

"The aircraft provides a direct fire capability that is able to remain on station for a long period," said Pope, a native of Houston. "Keeping those guys on the ground safe is job number one."

With Hellfire missiles, rockets and a 30 mm area weapons system, the Apache is a lethal machine, capable of heaping copious amounts of firepower upon the enemy with deadly accuracy. But the Apache can easily accomplish its mission of protecting ground troops without firing a shot, said Pope. He gave an example of such a mission in which infantrymen were looking for a high-value target while he flew above in an Apache.

"There was definitely an insurgent presence there, but they were able to walk through the town without a shot being fired," said Pope.

Capt. Ben Ramos, an Apache pilot from Brownsville, Texas, said the attack helicopter has a fearsome and well-earned

See ~ **FIREPOWER** Pg. 3

Cav trooper survives Sadr City sniper attack pg. 10

Cav troopers offer expertise, techniques to Iraqi Army pg. 17

Joint military medical conference fosters idea exchange, networking

Story by Staff Sgt. Mark Burrell

MND-B PAO

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – For the first time at al-Muthana Military Hospital, the only Iraqi military hospital in Baghdad, U.S. and Iraqi Army doctors gathered for a joint medical conference to share knowledge and experience, Sept. 30.

“We hope to keep these medical lectures going,” said Lt. Col. Jeff Callin, the Multi-National Division – Baghdad surgeon. “We’re focusing on programs over projects...because in the long run you’ve educated a generation, instead of built a brick and mortar building.”

Callin, a native of Belton, Texas, emphasized the importance of doctors with different backgrounds and areas of expertise coming together to educate each other.

“We’re trying to get these guys doing what doctors do— go to medical conferences and talk to other doctors,” said Callin. “We’re trying to get referral networks going. Lots of people don’t know there are specialists out here that are available.”

One specialist attending the conference was Maj. Gen. Samir Abdullah Hassan, the director of Iraqi military medical services.

“This is a very important conference,” he said. “Definitely everyone has experience out in the field and they come together here because Iraqi Army and American doctors can exchange ideas.”

Military doctors provided pertinent case-studies on civilians and Soldiers from around the area. An Iraqi Army doctor lectured about the effects of diabetes on a shoulder condition known as ‘frozen shoulder,’ and a U.S. Army doctor lectured on trauma airway management.

Samir added that the case studies were applicable because Iraqi Army doctors don’t always have the same tools to treat patients the same way U.S. Army doctors



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

Omaha, Neb. native, Lt. Col. Daniel Barnes (left), an MND-B medical operations officer, shares information prior to the start of a medical lecture with Iraqi Army Maj. Qaisar Abdul al-Shami (right), a rheumatologist, during a joint medical conference at al-Muthana Military Hospital, Sept. 30.

can.

“We’ve learned a lot from U.S. forces,” Samir said to the audience of military and civilian doctors. “Like how to give equal treatment to everybody – terrorists and innocents. The Americans have taught us to treat all patients like people.”

Though there were a variety of doctors attending, the military doctors were at the forefront of the training process rather than an afterthought, added Callin.

“This used to be the place in the Middle East to come for medical care,” Callin explained

about Iraq before the 1990s. “Hope-

fully, it becomes that way again...It takes some guts. As soon as you stand up around here, you have a target on you.”

According to Callin, the conference was geared for high-level, experienced military doctors that will hopefully bring their newfound knowledge back to their troops.

Samir said that he has high hopes for the future, eventually turning the conference into an international military conference inviting other Arab and European countries. But, he added, this first conference is the most important step. ✂

“We hope to keep these medical lectures going. We’re focusing on programs over projects...because in the long run you’ve educated a generation, instead of built a brick and mortar building.”

-- Lt. Col. Jeff Callin



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

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

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

Contributing Writers & Photographers:

The 211th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment/ 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division Public Affairs Office/ 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division/ 4th Striker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division Public Affairs Office/ 225th Engineer Brigade Public Affairs Office/ 101st Engineer Battalion Public Affairs Office/ 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division Public Affairs Office/ and the 3rd Brigade Combat Team 82nd Airborne Division Division Public Affairs Office.

FIREPOWER~ From Pg. 1

reputation among insurgents.

“This helicopter strikes fear because they remember what happened to the last guy who tried to take one on,” said Ramos. “I believe it scares them.”

The Apache’s sophisticated equipment is also used for reconnaissance and the overhead view provides eyes from the sky for ground troops. When

not engaged in combat operations, the Apache also helps with route clearance and convoy security.

“These guys are on the ground knocking on doors and what we’re doing is protecting them,” said Ramos. “We have that bird’s eye view and we can see more and we can get there faster with more firepower.”

Besides its combat and reconnaissance abilities, the Apache also seems

to exude a mystique that pilots say they appreciate.

“I think what people are in awe about is the mystery about it [Apache],” said Ramos. “I think the enemy knows more about the Apache than the average American.”

Even though they may not meet in person, Apache pilots say they do their job for the Soldiers on the ground below them.

“As pilots, we have a deep respect for guys on the ground,” said Ramos. “The

infantrymen, military policemen, truck drivers; everybody conducting movement on the ground, we have a deep respect for them.”

Between the earth and sky, this team of pilots and ground troops are winning the peace in Iraq. The Apache is an integral part of that team, and as long as its rotors buzz overhead, Soldiers are better protected and insurgents are discouraged. ✂

MND-B Soldiers line up for shot in the arm

Photos by Spc. Howard Alperin, MND-B PAO



BAGHDAD – Sgt. Janelle Graham, a health care specialist from Sacramento, Calif., fills a syringe with flu vaccination at the Battalion Aid Station, on Camp Liberty, Oct. 1. The vaccination is an inactive virus, said Graham, with Headquarters Support Company, Division Special Troops Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division. Antibodies within the human body see the inactive virus, recognize it, and then seek a way to overcome it. “The antibodies...are able to identify the infection in the future in order to attack it more efficiently,” she said.



Staff Sgt. Renatta Draper (right), from Bemidji, Minn., winces as Sgt. Danielle Dubose, a health care non-commissioned officer, from Detroit, gives her the annual flu shot at the Battalion Aid Station, on Camp Liberty, Oct. 1. All personnel from Division Special Troops Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division receive the annual flu vaccination. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, on average, more than 200,000 people are hospitalized from flu-related complications and 36,000 people die from flu-related causes each year.



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



MND-B print and broadcast products can be found on the PAO Portal, including the **Cav Roundup** and **The 1st Team Update**. All 1st Cavalry products can be found at www.hood.army.mil/1stcavdiv.



Freedom Radio
Baghdad 104.1
and 107.3 FM

U.S., IA troops training the trainer

Story by Pfc. Bailey Jester

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

BAGHDAD – The role of U.S. combat troops in Iraq has evolved from the frontlines to the classroom, with efforts focused on training Iraqi Security Forces.

Soldiers from Company C, 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division took that evolution one step further by providing a noncommissioned officer leadership course designed to teach Iraqi NCOs to confidently train their own troops.

“It isn’t always about what you are teaching that is important,” said St. Louis, Miss., native Staff Sgt. Joseph Willet, an instructor for the 10-day NCO leadership course. “This course is designed to increase the confidence in these NCO’s to teach their own Soldiers.”

“I believe this course is really important to me and the other NCO’s that are involved,” said Sgt. Hussein, a student in the leadership course assigned to the 43rd Iraqi Army Brigade in Baghdad. “Being in charge of the checkpoints makes me responsible for Soldiers, and it is my job to know how to properly teach them to do their job.”

“The students respond very well during the lessons,” said Willet. “They are answering questions when they are asked and volunteer to participate in front of the class to help the instructors demonstrate.”

“I see this course being very successful,” said Atlanta, Texas, native, Staff Sgt. Avery Washington, the primary instructor for the NCO leadership course. “When the class first started it was difficult to get them up there to participate, but once they got started, they really got into it and

loved it.”

The course includes topics such as basic rifle marksmanship, weapon safety and tactical movements. It is important to know the basics, but the main focus is to increase the confidence of the NCOs to teach their students.

“If they don’t have confidence in themselves how can they have confidence in their Soldiers?” asked Willet.

To help boost their confidence, instructors formulated a curriculum to get the students to participate.

“I do. We do. They do,” Willet explained. “First the instructor goes through the lesson to show them and give them a little more confidence. After finishing the lesson we go through the lecture with a volunteer by our side and we do it together. Finally, we hand it over to our volunteer and they provide the class to their peers on their own. It’s a ‘teaching the trainer’ curriculum.”

The course has not officially been named, but the intent is for the class to mold into a class similar to the Warriors Leaders Course used for American Soldiers, stated Willet.

“This course helps me practice my leadership and teaching skills,” said Hussein. “The instructors are great and it helps not only me, but the other NCO’s that are here.”

NCO’s that are self-confident in their abilities easily rub off onto their Soldiers providing a better chance of a successful outcome, said Willet. ✂

Atlanta, Texas, native, Staff Sgt. Avery Washington (left), the primary instructor for the noncommissioned officer leadership course assigned to Company C, 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, assists Sgt. Hussein, a checkpoint NCO in charge, assigned to the 43rd Iraqi Army Bde., in clearing his weapon at Joint Security Station Shield, Sept. 19.



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

MiTT, Iraqi Army patrol north Taji

Photos by Pfc. Adam Halleck, 1st BCT PAO, 1st Cav. Div., MND-B



TAJI, Iraq - Iraqi officers, both assigned to the 37th Brigade, 9th Iraqi Army Division, discuss a plan to search a former weapons cache site, Oct. 2, in a village north of Taji. U.S. Soldiers live and work with Iraqi troops assigned to the 37th Bde., 9th IA Div.



San Antonio native, Capt. Michael Martinez (left), the operations officer assigned to 37-9 Military Transition Team, provides guidance to an Iraqi Army lieutenant, Oct. 2, during a mission to determine if a former weapons cache site in a village north of Taji is still being used to harbor weapons. U.S. Soldiers of the 37-9 MiTT work and live alongside Iraqi Soldiers of the 37th Brigade, 9th Iraqi Army Division, providing guidance and assistance to the Iraqi troops.

Joint mission uproots, disrupts suspected insurgent activities

Story by Staff Sgt. Mark Burrell

MND-B PAO

BAGHDAD – As part of an ongoing mission, U.S. and Iraqi Army Soldiers searched farmlands on the southwestern outskirts of Baghdad, Sept. 21, with metal detectors, grit and determination.

“We may not work directly with Iraqi Security Forces in the city, but we’re still in the rural areas trying to keep the weapons out of Baghdad,” explained 1st Lt. Will Hargis, a platoon leader assigned to B Troop, 1st Battalion, 150th Armored Reconnaissance Squadron, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team.

To keep arms and ordnance out of enemy hands in Baghdad, the Soldiers patrolled over the bubbling canals and green pastures with children tending to cows, although it hasn’t always been this way.

In the past, insurgents have used this area as a place to store weapons caches, said Hargis, from Huntington, W. Va.

“[These types of searches] help because if we actually find anything, then it takes bombs and explosives out of the hands of the enemy and that helps our buddies out,” said Sgt. Jacob Facemyre, a cavalry scout from Charleston, W. Va., also assigned to B Troop. “I want to make a difference here and these patrols make it safer for us.”

After splitting up into groups with a mixture of Iraqi and U.S. Soldiers, the troops spread out searching different plots of land.

“We try to do all our missions joint for two reasons,” said Hargis. “One, it shows the local people the IA is out here trying to keep them safe...and two, they know the terrain better than us and they’re a great asset to have.”

First Lt. Mohammed Adel Jassim, agreed.

“When the farmers see the IA escorting the U.S., then they feel good seeing the IA in the lead,” said Mohammed, the commander of 3rd Company, 1st Bn., 23rd Brigade, 17th IA Division.

Since the security agreement on June 30, all the training the U.S. forces have provided for IA Soldiers has paid off because they are expected to take on more of a leadership role in their communities’ security, added Mohammed.

“It has to progress this way because the U.S. Army cannot be here forever, so we have to step up, like today,” Mohammed said, as his troops were quick to be the first to start digging in piles of dirt when the metal detector beeped.

“If we have a suspicious area and then we search it, it is no longer suspicious,” explained Mohammed who has worked with U.S. Forces for more than four years. “We are just like one army; same mission, same targets.”

After digging up many suspected sites, the combined force unearthed only a metal cap to an expended illumination round.

“Yeah, we came back empty-handed, but people still see us out there looking for weapons and they know we’re still out there



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

Iraqi Army 1st Lt. Mohammed Adel Jassim (left), commander of 3rd Company, 1st Battalion, 23rd Brigade, 17th IA Division, gets on his hands and knees to dig in a dirt mound where a metal detector used by Staff Sgt. Dan Fisher (right), a cavalry scout from Cross Lanes, W. Va., assigned to B Troop, 1st Battalion, 150th Armored Reconnaissance Squadron, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team, indicated a possible weapons cache site. “I tried to show that we are doing the best to secure the area,” said Mohammed. “Even though I am the commander, I got a blister for digging in the dirt.”

trying to find the enemy and keep the locals safe,” said an upbeat Hargis. “Though we didn’t catch them today, we may have disrupted the enemy because now that’s one place they know we’re searching.”

Keeping the pressure on the enemy and

not allowing insurgents to move freely is the main idea behind this ongoing operation.

“We didn’t get lucky, but, hey, maybe next time we’ll find something, but we’ll keep looking,” said Hargis with a dirt-stained and sweat-soaked uniform.

This is the first time that B Troop and IA Soldiers participated in the ongoing brigade mission to root out suspected cache sites in the area, but will not be the last time they share sweat and dirt together to protect the local population. ✂

U.S. mechanics help IA keep vehicles running

Story by Sgt. Joshua Risner

MND-B PAO

BAGHDAD – Iraqi mechanics are getting the chance to work and train alongside their U.S. counterparts during a humvee maintenance course at Camp Stryker, here, Sept. 23.

The course is run by Soldiers of D Troop, 1st Battalion, 150th Armored Reconnaissance Squadron, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team, and has thus far trained five Iraqi Army units, according to Sgt. Frank Smith, assigned to D Troop.

“They usually only work on their vehicles when they break down,” said Smith, a native of St. Augustine, Fla. “We’re teaching them scheduled maintenance which will hopefully further the life of their vehicles.”

The two-week course teaches the Iraqi mechanics the ins and outs of maintenance for the humvee, which includes primary maintenance and service checks, wiring schematics and troubleshooting problems, said Smith.

“We set up faults in our vehicles and have them find and repair them,” he said. “We also go through service checks on their own vehicles and we’ll help them repair any safety issues that we find.”

For the Iraqis, a chance to work with the American mechanics is a valuable educational experience, according to 1st Sgt. Mohammed Hamza, of 2nd Battalion, 23rd Brigade, 17th Iraqi Army Division.

“I’m learning things I didn’t know about fixing humvees,” he said. “These new things I am learning I will teach



Photo by Sgt. Joshua Risner, MND-B PAO

to my crew when I get back to them so when we encounter problems, we can fix them.”

In addition to training, the Iraqi mechanics are given copies of the U.S. humvee maintenance manuals, written in Arabic for them to distribute back at their units.

“Now, the American Soldiers can show

Spc. Stephen Smith (right), from Pineville, W.V., assigned to D Troop, 1st Battalion, 150th Armored Reconnaissance Squadron, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team, observes as an Iraqi mechanic with 2nd Battalion, 23rd Brigade, 17th Iraqi Army Division, performs hub service on a humvee, here, Sept. 23.

me something in their manual and I can find it in mine,” said Mohammed.

All in all, the Iraqi mechanics received a new way of looking at maintenance and

repair for their vehicles. The Americans may not speak Arabic, the Iraqis may not speak English, but they both know how to speak machine. ✂

Remain alert! Never assume a vehicle can or will stop in time!

**Walk Aware
& Walk Away**
Alert Today, Alive Tomorrow!

**Crossing Safely is Your Responsibility:
Are you visible to the driver?**



ARMY SAFE
IS ARMY STRONG



Nine micro-grants help jumpstart economy

Story by Spc. Ruth McClary

30th HBCT PAO, MND-B

BAGHDAD – Nine Iraqi businessmen in southern Baghdad gave broad smiles and many thanks as they received micro-grant payouts, Sept. 21, from Soldiers of A Troop, 150th Armored Reconnaissance Squadron, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team, that improve economic conditions in their communities.

Funding allocated through the brigade commander's Emergency Relief Fund was distributed to the businesses in the al-Radwanayah, Mufargi and Fetoah marketplaces, about 15 miles southwest of Baghdad.

"This was my first time giving out micro-grants," said Sgt. 1st Class Daniel Jack, of Seth, W. Va. "I usually work with micro-rewards, which are pay-outs for tips to stop terrorist activity; it works like crime-stoppers in the U.S."

Nearly \$43,000 in payouts were given to upgrade four grocery stores, a restaurant, an auto repair shop, a butcher shop, a general store and a hardware store.

"Opening a butcher shop in this area would decrease the travel time for transporting fresh meats to this area," said Ahmad Abdullah Husen al Azouy, of the Abu Amur marketplace. "Local herders can bring their livestock to the market for butcher or sell them to me."

"My store provides common products like blankets, mattresses and clocks," said Sarmad Samey Mahmoud al Mufargi, a general store owner in the Murfargi village. "The grant will help me expand to include a repair shop."

Each business caters to at least 150 customers in its local area, and they also double as community communication hubs; providing people with information that can affect the entire area. All of the owner's expansion plans will create more jobs and stimulate the economy.

Samy Yahyaa Aheya Jaabir al-Janabi, a Mufargi falafel restaurant owner, wants to add a grill and expand his area to house more supplies. Majid Dafak Saiel, an al-Rad-



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

Majid Aubied Sahail al Azouy (right), owner of a hardware store, signs a micro-grant receipt as Sgt. 1st Class Daniel Jack watches, Sept 21. Al Azouy plans to provide more electrical supplies to the local villagers. A Troop, based out of Williamson, W. Va., issued nine grants in one day to help stimulate the economy in its area of operations.

waniyah grocery store owner, threw up his hands, thanking Allah for the grant. He plans to upgrade his store and increase supplies.

The squadron has submitted nearly 40 grant applications with 20 payouts to date that include a fish and dairy farm expansion and an internet and phone center. Grant approval is based on the overall impact the improvements

will have in the community. Recipients from these payouts submitted applications back in July.

"I was really glad to finally have follow through on the micro-grant project after many months of waiting," said 1st Lt. Timbur Nersesov, of Los Angeles. "It is an opportunity for U.S. forces and the government of Iraq to impact our relationship with the locals." ✂

Throwing sparks

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



Sgt. Joe Minoie, of Braintree, Mass., a mechanic with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team located in Clinton, N.C, welds a security door at Forward Operating Base Falcon, Sept. 19.

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



and online at

WWW.HOOD.ARMY.MIL/1STCAVDIV



Phase maintenance ensures aircraft remain battle ready

Story by Sgt. Alun Thomas

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

BAGHDAD – While maintaining a constant presence in the skies to keep the local population safe from the threat of attacks from insurgents and criminals, aircraft of the 1st Air Cavalry Brigade become well worn in the process.

To ensure aircraft remain in appropriate condition to continue their tireless missions, conducting phase maintenance is essential to make sure every part of the aircraft is in working order, a job which can be time consuming and strenuous.

This mission is an essential task for Soldiers of Company B, 615th Aviation Support Battalion, 1st ACB, 1st Cavalry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, who recently began 500 hour phase maintenance of an AH-64D Apache helicopter to help put the aircraft where it belongs – back in the skies.

The maintenance begins when the aircraft is received from the owning unit, who briefs Co. B on any major components on the aircraft that require an overhaul or replacement, said Sgt. Jona Cacdac, from Merced, Calif., phase team leader, Co. B, 615th ASB, 1st ACB.

“They give us a list of maintenance faults we need to complete and then the aircraft usually comes in the next day,” Cacdac said. “The owning unit should prep the aircraft for us, wash it and do inventories on their property.”

Once the aircraft is received, technical inspectors perform checks to determine any other faults which may not have been picked up by the owning unit, Cacdac said.

“My guys (Co. B) would then start our tear down and take off all the panels and major components,” Cacdac said. “The bird is then going to basically be stripped bare.”

Every action taken during the maintenance must be accounted for, Cacdac said, with a log book kept to document them.

“I have to fix the books for our workstations so we can do our write-ups and let armament know that we removed the black boxes, the turret and all the display units,” Cacdac added.

It takes two weeks for the aircraft to be stripped, inspected and worked on until it is ready to be moved outside again, Cacdac said.

“Once it’s outside we slap on the blades and check the engine and tail rotor rigs to make sure they are properly working,” Cacdac said. “We then phase the blades, do an angle check and look at the aircraft again. Our [technical inspectors] then go over it for any minor discrepancies.”

The maintenance is extremely time consuming but with two crews working days and nights, the job is always done, Cacdac said.

Helping get the job done is Spc. Son Le, from Tomball, Texas, an Apache Longbow mechanic, 615th ASB, 1st ACB, who

said the job his team does is more demanding than most people realize.

“A lot of people don’t know how stressful it can get sometimes because you’re dealing with a lot of moving parts,” Le said. “People are moving up and down the aircraft all at one time.”

The phase team undergoes a myriad of tasks to keep the aircraft in top condition, Le said.

“We remove the transmission, change out all the filters and make sure there are no cracks or overheating,” Le said.

There are the odd problems the team runs into on a consistent basis, Le said.

“Sometimes there are a lot of showstoppers, like parts not being readily available and things like that,” Le said. “The mission we are working on right now has been smooth and going pretty good.”

It requires a team effort to complete the 500 hour maintenance, Le said, and it isn’t one person who makes the difference.

“We have a lot of people working on this,” Le said. “There’s always someone to back you up with anything you need.” ✂

Taping off controls and buttons, Spc Zack Taylor, from Stockton, Calif., an AH-64D Apache attack helicopter mechanic in Company B, 615th Aviation Support Battalion, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, prepares the crewstation of an Apache to be painted during a 500 hour phase maintenance inspection, Sept. 21.



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



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

Spc. Son Le, from Tomball, Texas, an AH-64D Apache attack helicopter mechanic in Company B, 615th Aviation Support Battalion, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, secures the mounts of the main transmission on an Apache as part of a 500 hour phase maintenance inspection, Sept. 21.

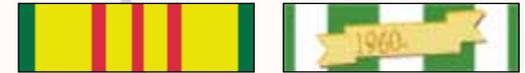


OCT 23

Vietnam War

On this day in American Military History

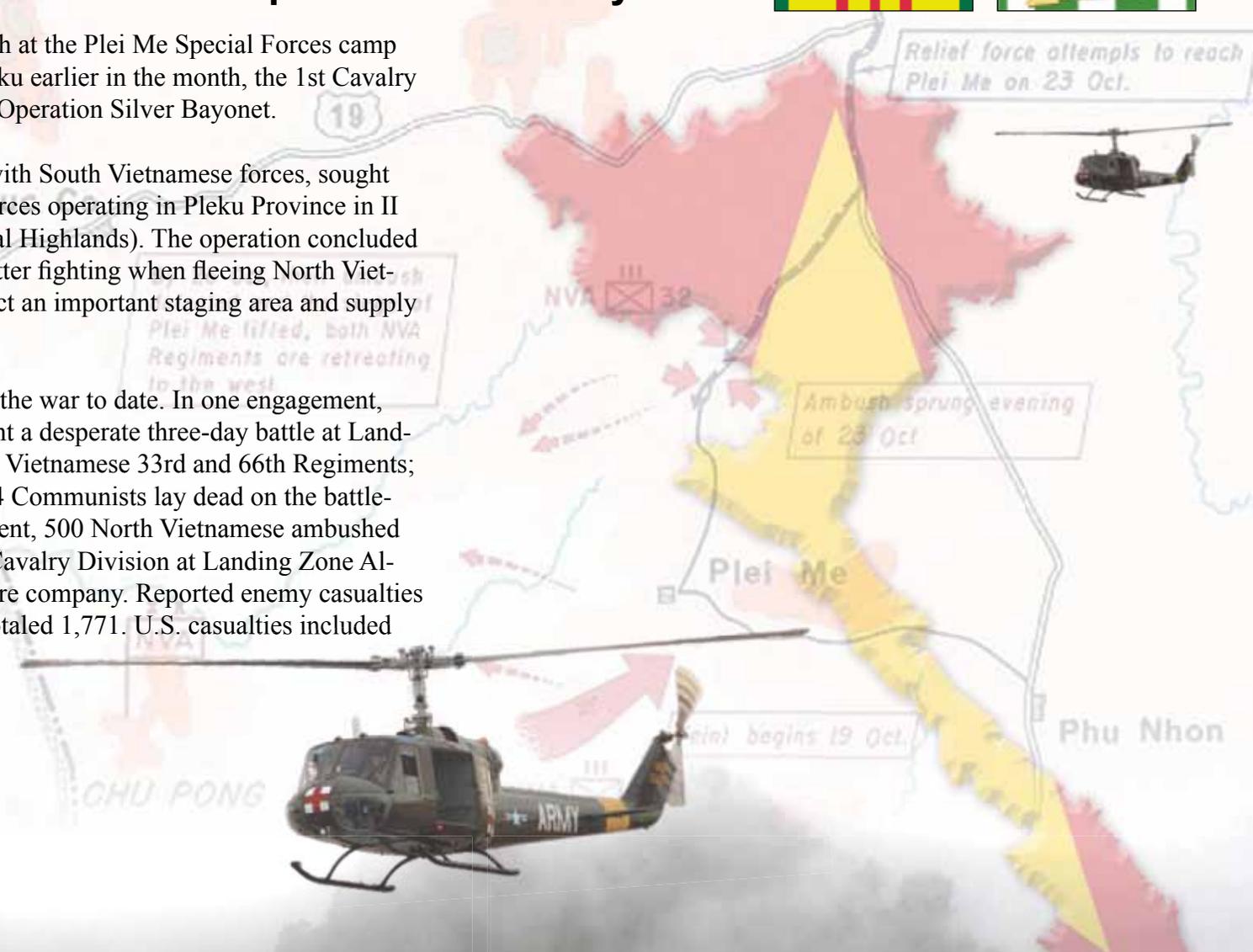
1st Cavalry Division launches Operation Silver Bayonet



In action following the clash at the Plei Me Special Forces camp 30 miles southwest of Pleiku earlier in the month, the 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile) launches Operation Silver Bayonet.

U.S. troops, in conjunction with South Vietnamese forces, sought to destroy North Vietnamese forces operating in Pleiku Province in II Corps Tactical Zone (the Central Highlands). The operation concluded in November with a week of bitter fighting when fleeing North Vietnamese troops decided to protect an important staging area and supply base in the Ia Drang Valley.

It was the bloodiest battle of the war to date. In one engagement, 1st Battalion, 7th Cavalry fought a desperate three-day battle at Landing Zone X-Ray with the North Vietnamese 33rd and 66th Regiments; when the fighting was over, 834 Communists lay dead on the battlefield. In an associated engagement, 500 North Vietnamese ambushed another battalion from the 1st Cavalry Division at Landing Zone Albany, wiping out almost an entire company. Reported enemy casualties for Operation Silver Bayonet totaled 1,771. U.S. casualties included 240 killed in action.



1965



Cav trooper survives Sadr City sniper

Story by Sgt. Jon Soles

MND-B PAO

BAGHDAD – Pfc. James Freed was pulling security by a brand-new soccer field near Sadr City on June 5, 2009. Like on other missions, his eyes were constantly darting from the streets to the buildings, the rooftops and the corners. And then it happened so fast he didn't hear the shot.

"I was down on a knee and I had just been scanning the rooftops and something caught my eye," said Freed, a tanker assigned to Company A, 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division. "Right when I turned my head, that's when it hit me. It felt like someone [rifle] butt stroked me."

At first, Freed thought one of his fellow Soldiers had slapped the back of his helmet as some kind of juvenile prank. But the orange flash he saw above his left eye and the ringing in his ears indicated it was no prank.

"I turned around and there was nobody behind me and that's when I realized I had been shot," Freed said. "I dropped and found cover. I knew I had to get as low as I could."

Suddenly, everything seemed to be in slow motion. Freed's training kicked in and as he sought cover, an incredulous thought went through his head.

"When I dropped down and started low crawling, I could feel the blood coming down everywhere," Freed said. "I asked, 'Am I crawling with a bullet in my head?'"

A medic rushed to Freed's aid and stopped the bleeding with a bandage, while Freed's comrades – a mixture of infantrymen and tankers – scrambled to provide security.

Freed was rushed back to Joint Security Station Ur. The prognosis was good. The bullet that tore through Freed's helmet mowed down a path of flesh from his scalp, but did not cause any serious injury.

"They kept me up [at the first-aid station] overnight to make sure [the bullet] did not hit my skull," said Freed, a native of Odon, Ind. "They looked it over and said it took the flesh off, but it never hit the skull."

Freed only spent two weeks on the mend, during which time he was frustrated that he was not on patrol with his comrades in Co. A.

"I didn't feel right, just sitting around while everybody else was working," said Freed, who is on his first deployment. "I was ready to go back out as soon as possible."

An early morning finds Pfc. James Freed (left) pulling security while on patrol in Sadr City, here, Sept. 18.

Things returned to normal, as Freed got back into his routine of going out on patrols, helping to keep the Sadr City area safe and secure. But he hasn't forgotten that day in June, and the spot where he was standing, which he often passes on patrols.

"I do know God had a hand in it that day," Freed said. "I was looking up and then I turned and looked down at the same time as if the angel said, 'Hey, look here.'"

Freed is due to receive the Purple Heart and Combat Action Badge for that day, but medals don't mean much. Rather, his gauge of accomplishment is getting back on patrol, completing the mission. Freed also said the sniper attack has not spooked him.

"It doesn't really bother me," he said, standing by the red, purple and yellow painted bleachers of the soccer stadium where the attack happened.

"I actually feel proud to go back there and stand."

The sniper got away that day, but Freed said if he ever had a chance to meet the insurgent who tried to kill him, he would have just two words for him.

"It would be a fun thing for me to meet the guy who took the shot, face to face, and say, 'You missed.'"

Pfc. James Freed, of Odon, Ind., points to the exit hole a bullet made through his helmet when a sniper attacked him while on patrol in the Sadr City area in June.



Photo by Sgt. Jon Soles, MND-B PAO

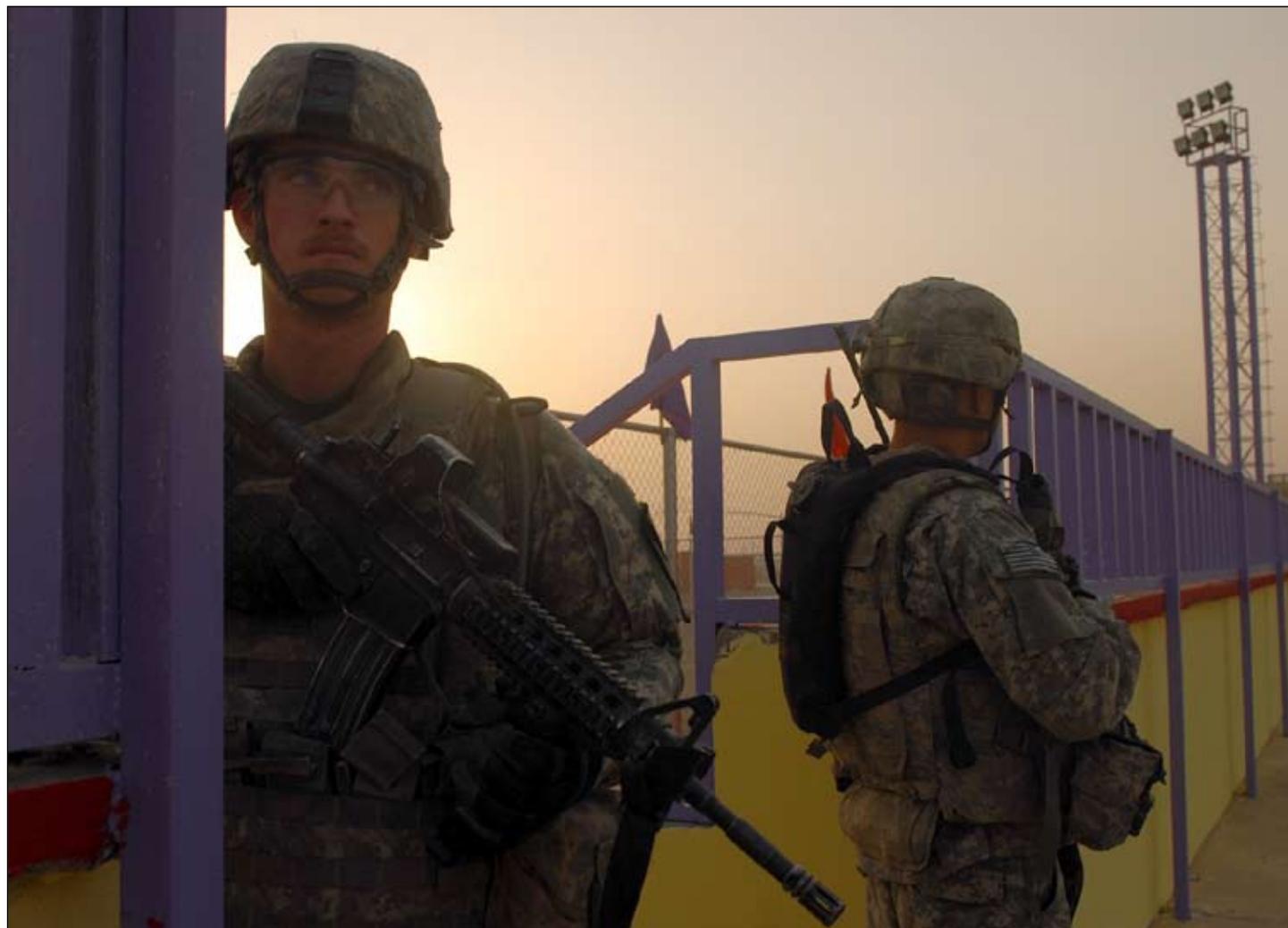


Photo by Sgt. Jon Soles, MND-B PAO

Airborne medic proud to serve, help others

Story by Pvt. Jared Gehmann

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

BAGHDAD—During the months of September and October, the U.S. military honors the thousands of Hispanic military personnel that serve in uniform in order to protect the American way of life.

As a daughter to an Ecuadorian mother and a Columbian father, Spc. Jessica Velasquez left her home in Gardena, Calif. to join the Army in order to serve her country and hone her skills in her dream profession of becoming a nurse.

Today, Velasquez is deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and serves as a medic assigned to Company C, 82nd Brigade Support Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, Multi-National Division- Baghdad. For the 24-year-old Paratrooper, joining the military had always been in the back of her mind.

“I was in Junior Recruit Officer Training School in high school and had always thought about joining the Army, but never had the guts to actually do it,” said Velasquez.

After high school, Velasquez wanted to go to college, pursue a degree in nursing and go straight into the career field. But after three years of school and completing all of her basic undergraduate classes the then 21-year-old, decided she wanted something more.

One day while shopping in Hollywood, Calif., with a friend, Velasquez said she finally mustered the bravery to walk into a nearby military recruiting office where she was offered benefits that were too good to refuse.

“It all worked out perfectly,” said Velasquez. “I needed a way to pay for college so I could get my nursing degree and the Army would provide that. I chose to be a medic so I could carry some of the experience and training I received in the Army back over to my career field.”

Even with all the benefits and guarantees the Army offered her for a chance at a promising future, she said her

family wasn't as supportive as she had hoped they would be.

“At first they tried to discourage me because they were afraid for my safety, but eventually they gave in and now that I have been in [U.S. Army] for over two years they are very supportive and proud of me,” she said.

Velasquez has been in the “Panther” brigade for more than a year now and has been deployed to Iraq since December 2008. As a medic, Velasquez can serve in a number of different roles. Whether it's serving as a line medic during a combat logistics patrol in east Baghdad or working at a health clinic inside her operating base, Velasquez is always ready to provide medical assistance to her fellow Paratroopers.

When not helping her fellow service members, Velasquez is assisting the citizens of Iraq. During a recent combined humanitarian mission in the Baghdad suburb of Salman Pak, Iraq, Velasquez was one of six female medics who visited an all-girl elementary school where they gave out several school supplies and assisted Iraqi medical personnel conducting medical screenings.

“The humanitarian mission was my favorite experience in Iraq so far because we got to help out the young girls, and it felt like we were making such a huge difference. It surprised me how friendly the Iraqi people were toward us,” said Velasquez. “The news always shows bombings and attacks that are happening in Iraq. You never see the good things we are doing here,” she added.

During her spare time Velasquez likes to work out at the gym, watch movies, keep in touch with her family and boyfriend, and cross-stitch.

With her current deployment winding down and the 3rd BCT preparing to head home to Fort Bragg, N.C., Velasquez said her service in Iraq has been fulfilling.

“The whole experience has been surreal. The deployment has moved by much faster than I expected and I'm excited to go home,” she said.

Velasquez hopes to finish college and one day find a job in the medical field doing what she has always loved to do, which is to help people. ✂



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

Spc. Jessica Velasquez, of Gardena, Calif., makes a balloon animal out of a surgical glove and hands it off to a group of excited Iraqi girls at an elementary school during a recent combined humanitarian assistance mission in the town of Salman Pak, Iraq, located 30 miles southeast of Baghdad.

Top Army engineer visits solution-driven Soldiers

Story by Lt. Col. Pat Simon

225th Eng. Bde. PAO, MND-B

BAGHDAD— Iraq may be thousands of miles from Disney World, but the Army's top engineer Soldier spent time with troops from the 225th Engineer Brigade during an informal gathering at Camp Liberty, Sept. 22, comparing their roles to their civilian counterparts at the house that Mickey built.

“In Disney, their engineers are called ‘Imagineers,’” said Lt. Gen. Robert Van Antwerp, chief of engineers and commander of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. “In the Army, I think of you as ‘solutioneers’ because we are always called upon to find solutions.”

Van Antwerp told the 100 attentive Soldiers that he is proud of their service and their courage in the current fight, and then he broke into a story about a tradition his family enjoys every Christmas holiday; solving jigsaw puzzles, and how that tradition illustrated the impact engineers make on the battlefield.

“While we worked on the 10,000 piece

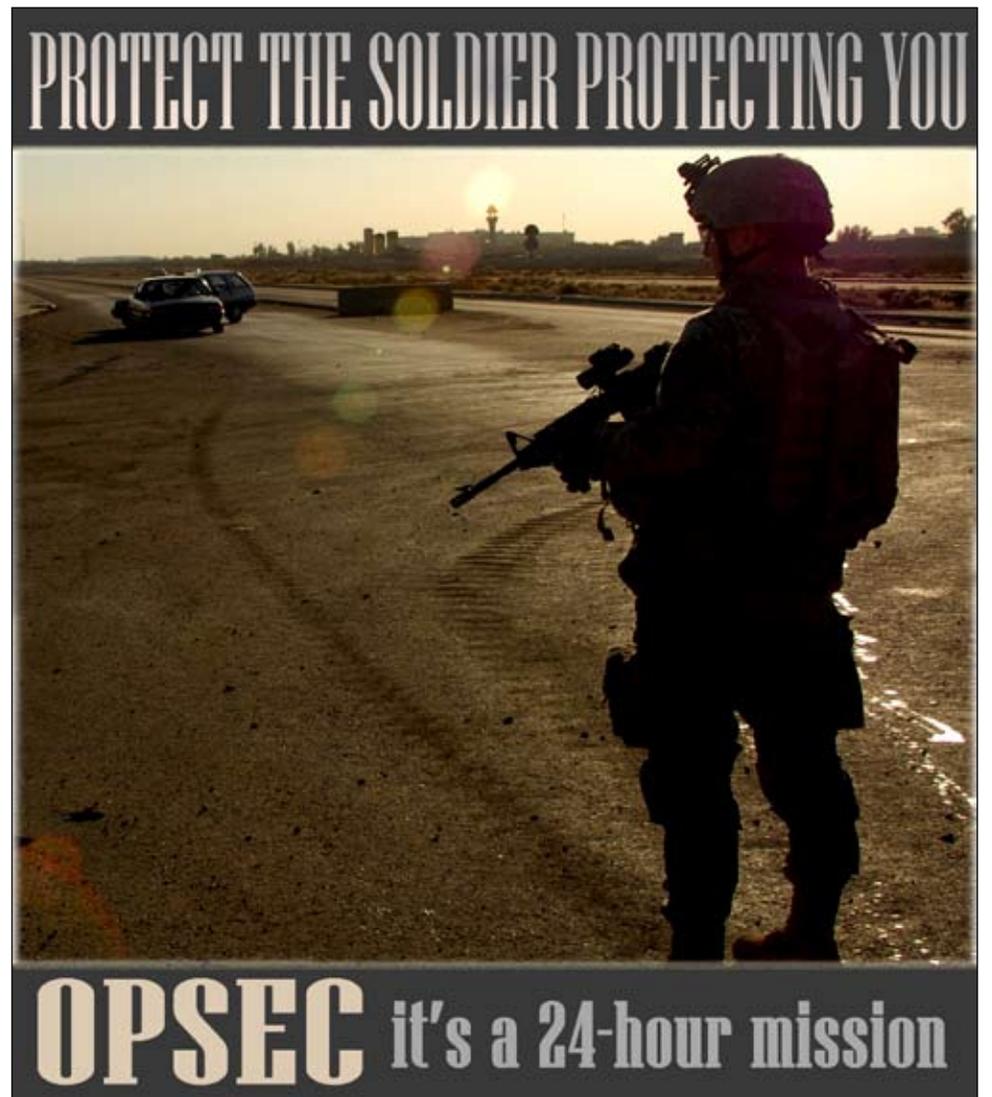
puzzle, we had lots of children running around and they would take pieces while we didn't notice,” said Antwerp jokingly. “That was the most difficult part at the end of the puzzle when about five to 10 pieces were missing.

“You are like pieces of a puzzle,” he told the Soldiers. “The picture doesn't look right until all of you do your part.”

For their part in Iraq, engineers have spent countless hours training and partnering with Iraqi engineers on projects from building B-huts, dining facilities, morale and recreation sites, roads, bridges and even taken on the more dangerous missions of clearing routes of improvised explosive devices and cleaning debris along roadside.

Van Antwerp, a Desert Storm veteran, also urged engineer Soldiers to keep up the good work of designing the changing needs of the military and remain vigilant on the constantly changing battlefield.

“It's different today than previous deployments,” he said. “And it will be different for Soldiers coming in on the next deployment.” ✂



Junior enlisted Soldier fills leadership void

Story by Spc. Ruth McClary

30th HBCT PAO, MND-B

BAGHDAD – Being an executive has its privileges, but when a junior enlisted Soldier assumes the position of a military executive officer for a month, that privilege equates to more responsibility and less sleep.

Spc. John Provins, of Troop C, 150th Armored Reconnaissance Squadron, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team, volunteered to assume the responsibilities of the troop's executive officer at Camp Stryker, despite the position being well above his pay grade.

An Army specialist is considered a junior enlisted Soldier, with most leadership responsibility starting with a sergeant. Provins got to jump directly into the shoes of a first lieutenant; do not pass "Go," do not collect \$200.

"When the troop's executive officer, 1st Lt. Adam Penfold, took his allotted leave, the void had to be filled by a motivated individual willing to take on a great deal of additional duties," said Capt. Thomas Mills, Troop C commander.

"Due to a shortage of available personnel, Provins stepped up to the plate, volunteering to accept the responsibility," he added.

"Last year for National Guard annual training I worked as acting executive officer," said Provins. "Sometimes you butt heads over rank issues but generally it's not a problem."

Provins, of Fairmont, W. Va., usually works in the tactical operations center tracking patrols, monitoring radios and vehicle tracking devices. In the executive officers position, he is in charge of troop logistics operations.

"Spc. Provins has accomplished his assigned tasks with surprising efficiency and competence while maintaining a great attitude," said Mills, of Winfield, W. Va. "He has earned praise from the squadron battle captain for attention to detail with required reports and dissemination of information."

Provins was a cadet in the Reserve Officers' Training Corps of West Virginia University in Morgantown before coming on this deployment. The program gives future Army leaders experience as platoon leaders before transitioning into the actual position.

"I would have been a second lieutenant by now," said Provins. "I worked with the ROTC to get released from the program for this deployment. A contracted cadet is non-deployable even if you are a member of a National Guard unit that is scheduled to deploy."

The acting executive officer has been very busy this month managing supplies, filing daily tracker reports, transferring equipment needed by other units and turning in vehicles in preparation for re-deployment.

"Provins had some pretty big shoes to fill," said 1st Lt. Shawn McGlothlin, of Bluefield, W. Va. "There haven't been any challenges to his position and everything has worked out fine."

This ex-cadet walked off the training field onto the battlefield; assumed the task, accepted the challenges and volunteered to serve in the role that ROTC equipped him for – leadership.

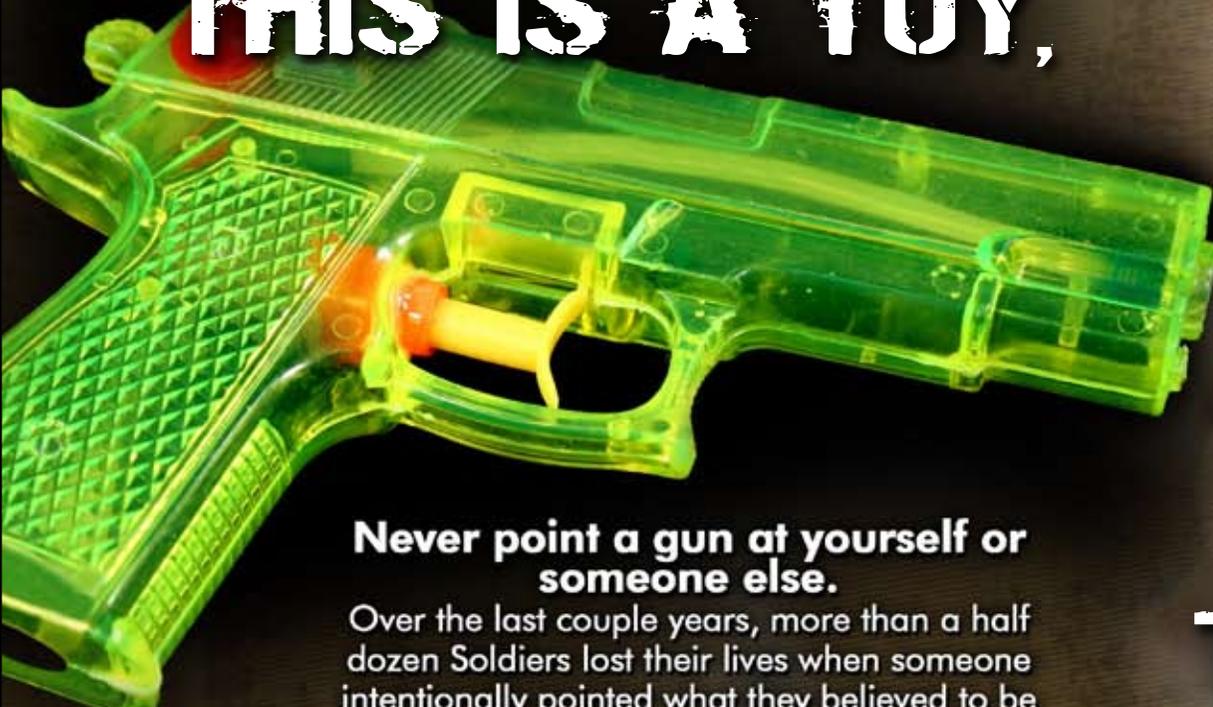
"When the executive officer returns, the troop commander is scheduled to take his leave," said Provins. "First Lt. Penfold will become acting commander and I will continue on as acting executive officer." ✂



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

Spc. Johnny Provins, of Troop C, 150th Armored Reconnaissance Squadron, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team, assumes the troop's executive officers responsibilities during the month of Sept. Provins, of Fairmont, W. Va., continued his normal duties, adding on managing and tracking the movement of the troop's supplies. Troop C is based out of Glen Jean, W. Va.

THIS IS A TOY,



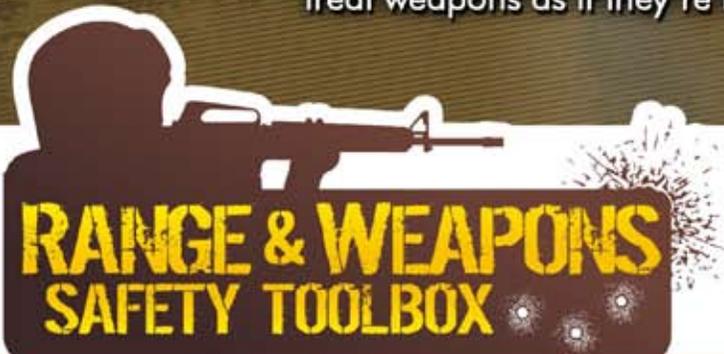
Never point a gun at yourself or someone else.

Over the last couple years, more than a half dozen Soldiers lost their lives when someone intentionally pointed what they believed to be an unloaded weapon at themselves or someone else and pulled the trigger. Always treat weapons as if they're loaded.



THIS ISN'T.

CHECK IT OUT TODAY!



RANGE & WEAPONS
SAFETY TOOLBOX

ARMY STRONG



U.S. ARMY



U.S. ARMY COMBAT READINESS SAFETY CENTER

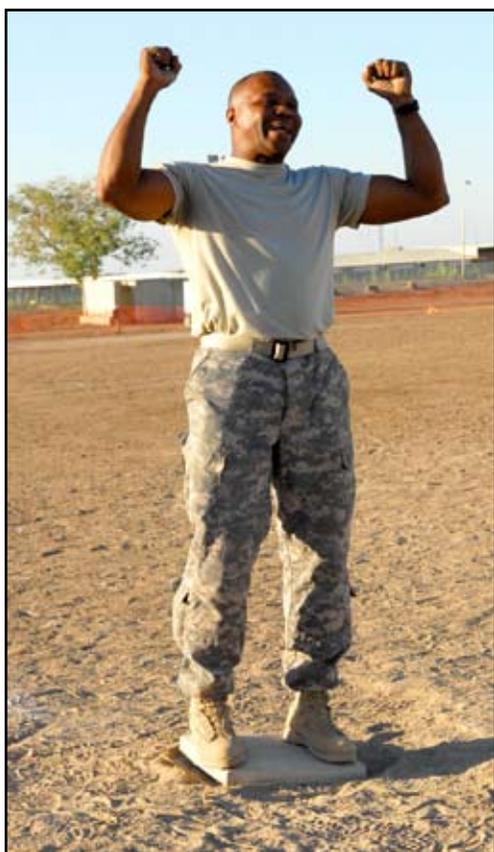
ARMY SAFE
IS ARMY STRONG



A BAND OF BROTHERS
& SISTERS

<https://safety.army.mil/rangeweaponssafety>

Softball game highlights Hispanic Heritage Month



Photos by Spc. Howard Alperin, MND-B PAO



BAGHDAD – Staff Sgt. Bryant Walker, a legal service specialist, from New York City, cheers on a teammate at a softball tournament celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month, here, Sept. 24. “It’s good to celebrate diversity in the military,” said Walker, assigned to Alpha Company, Division Special Troops Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division. “It’s good for camaraderie and cohesion.”



Second Lt. Stuart Redus, a platoon leader, from San Antonio, congratulates players at a softball tournament celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month, Sept. 24. Though his team lost, he enjoyed his time on the field. “It really breaks up the monotony,” said Redus, an Army Reservist with the 277th Engineer Company, a U.S. Reserve unit based out of San Antonio, assigned to the 225th Eng. Brigade.



Sgt. John Horton, an air movement request non-commissioned officer from Zephyr Hills, Fla., makes a play in the outfield, Sept. 24, as part of a Hispanic Heritage Month softball tournament.



Sgt. Alberto Najera, an aviation operations specialist, from Long Beach, Calif., scores a run during a softball tournament celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month, Sept. 24. “It [the celebration] makes me feel good as a Hispanic; it’s good the Army supports and recognizes different heritages,” said Najera, who is assigned to Alpha Company, Division Special Troops Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division. “[The softball tournament] has been good downtime from 12 hour days, seven days a week, it gets your mind off work and theater.”



Spc. Jesse Noble, a communications security custodian, from Manteca, Calif., watches the ball after sending it to center field, Sept. 24, as part of a softball tournament celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month. His wife is from Mexico, so the month of recognition for Hispanics has a special significance for him, said Noble, who is assigned to Charlie Company, Division Special Troops Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division.

COMBAT TRAINING SKILLS TO THE NEXT



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

Story by Staff Sgt. Mark Burrell

MND-B PAO

(Left) After popping a smoke grenade to signal where medevac helicopters should land, Sgt. James Wendling, a team leader from Mansfield, Ohio, assigned to D Troop, Division Special Troops Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division, runs to re-assure a simulated casualty during training at Camp Slayer, here, Sept. 22. The DSTB Soldiers, who are frequently outside the wire, were offered an opportunity to hone their skills by running through two different combat scenarios with their squads.

BAGHDAD – Simulated machine gun fire blares over loudspeakers, Soldiers yell out commands and the opposition force attacks with RKG-3 grenades and small-arms fire.

Confusion reigns on the lanes at Camp Slayer, here, where instructors recreated a chaotic battlefield for Division Special Troops Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division Soldiers to train on different combat scenarios, Sept. 19-22, during a three-day exercise.

“There are many things that can happen on the battlefield and that can be perplexing for any leader,” said Maj. Don Bottorff, the battalion operations officer who organized the training. “There’s going to be hesitancy and some mistakes, but that’s what this training is for.”

Two different scenarios were created for the exercise. One simulated an explosively formed projectile attack and the other combined an RKG-3 grenade attack with an ambush.

“It becomes muscle memory reflex when you do something over and over again; it becomes second nature,” added Bottorff. “Those precious few minutes [after the initial attack] could actually save Soldiers lives...If they’re trained to do something then they’re more apt to fight fluidly.”

For Soldiers like Staff Sgt. Graham Rooney, a squad leader assigned to Battery E, 3rd Bn., 4th Air Defense Artillery Regiment, DSTB, 1st Cav. Div., the training is

about being able to control initial reactions.

“The biggest thing is to take a breath and calm down,” said Rooney, a native of West Palm Beach, Fla. “That’s the hardest thing to train on – calming down and taking it one step at a time.”

Though these Soldiers frequently travel the roads of Baghdad providing personal security escorts, they aren’t engaged in combat every time, explained Rooney.

“It’s not something that happens every day,” said Rooney. “Doing operations and taking fire builds on our framework, which helps our proficiency.”

Experiencing a complex attack from an insurgent force is something that these Soldiers have to be prepared for every time they leave the wire, said Sgt. Adam Nelson, a personal security detail member from Lansing, Mich., assigned to D Troop, DSTB, 1st Cav. Div.

“This training helps mental preparation for real-world events,” added Nelson. “Confusion does set in for a minute. You gotta mentally prepare yourself before missions.”

In preparation for every mission, Soldiers run through battle drills ensuring every member knows the location of the closest hospital, who is providing air security and what are the different radio frequencies of quick reaction forces in the area.

“When something goes down, it’s kind of confusing,” admitted Nelson. “I set a priority list...Security is number one and then I just go down my list.”

“Tasks are multi-layered and there’s a flow to them to get safely in and out of the kill zone,” agreed Bottorff. “If mistakes are made in training, they can do it over again... before it becomes a crisis on the battlefield.”

The concept behind putting more than 90 Soldiers through the training who have already been running combat missions in Iraq for more than six months is to take their abilities to the next level, added Bottorff.

“You have core individual skills and team skills that all come together in this training,” said Bottorff, commenting on the teamwork and flexibility necessary to stay alive in dangerous circumstances.

“You’re always adapting to the situation and tweaking things, you know, exchanging notes and seeing what works and what doesn’t,” said Rooney after he successfully navigated his convoy through an unfriendly mob of Soldiers posing as Iraqis.

After each scenario, the observers and controllers administered an after-action review of what went well and what could be improved.

“There are definitely things I’ll take out of this training that I’ll refine,” said Nelson. “I’ll take this training and go back and talk to my team leaders about what we can improve.”

Most of the Soldiers agreed that the training succeeded in recreating chaos inherent in combat and that the experience helped them take their skills to the next level. ✂

Staff
Regin
simul

“You
you k
does

-- S

Capt.
an af
Troop
traini
22, h

IG IN IRAQ TAKES EXT LEVEL



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

Sgt. Graham Rooney, a squad leader assigned to Battery E, 3rd Battalion, 4th Air Defense Artillery Regiment, Division Special Troops Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division, calls for a medevac helicopter after a simulated explosion during a training exercise at Camp Slayer, Sept. 22, here.



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

Sgt. John Dishuk, an air defense tactical operations center operator from Staten Island, N.Y., grimaces as he pulls a pin out of a tow bar before preparing to tow away a simulated broken Mine-Resistant Ambush-Protected vehicle during a training exercise at Camp Slayer, here, Sept. 22.

're always adapting to the situation and tweaking things, know, exchanging notes and seeing what works and what doesn't,"

Staff Sgt. Graham Rooney



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

William Lavender (yellow belt), a deputy operations officer, leads an after-action review with Soldiers assigned to D Troop, Division Special Troops Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division, after the Soldiers completed a training scenario that involved a complex attack at Camp Slayer, Sept. 22, here.



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

Spc. Steven Wilson (left), an air and missile defense crewmember, from Tonkawa, Okla., and Spc. Ryan Oxford, a combat medic from Cape Coral, Fla., prepare to secure the landing zone for a medevac helicopter during a training exercise at Camp Slayer, here, Sept. 22. Both Soldiers are assigned to Battery E, 3rd Battalion, 4th Air Defense Artillery Regiment, Division Special Troops Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division.

Multitude of vehicles, environment keep motor pool busy

Story by Sgt. Alun Thomas

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

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – In the farthest recesses of this sprawling base there is an area where, night and day, the sound of hammers smashing metal mix with the deafening tones of engines revving.

Throw in the heat, grease, oil and sweat and you have a typical day at the motor pool.

For Soldiers of Company E, 4th Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, this environment is what they call home, as they constantly repair damaged vehicles in order for the battalion's aviation mission to move forward.

The mission of the motor pool, however, is to support the aircraft and subsequent vehicles used to help keep the 'birds' in the air, said Staff Sgt. Erica Raby, from Brooklyn, N.Y., shop foreman with Co. E.

"It's usually very busy here, we're working a lot on Polaris, Gators and generators, things that run 24-hour ops," she said. "Some of the things we work on like the Polaris are outside of our [Military Occupational Specialty] and it's usually little things, like broken tires and engines we're fixing."

Raby said the motor pool is still fixing some of the equipment left by the previous unit five months ago, which has been time consuming.

"The old unit left some stuff which was messed up and we're still trying to get through all that before we can move to our own vehicles," Raby said.

A lot of the damage to the vehicles repaired in the motor pool is usually due to operator error, Raby said.

"Usually the damage is minor and we fix a lot of vehicles that have been in accidents," Raby said. "But

mostly it's due to operator error."

Spc. Charles Booth, from Long Branch, N.J., a quartermaster and chemical equipment repairer, said his main job is working on the Polaris, used primarily for transportation around the airfield.

"The Polaris brings equipment to and from the aircraft on the flight line to the pilots," he said. "They also help bridge the communication and distance between the battalions."

Some of the main problems with the Polaris are screws in the tires from the flight line and those which are in need of regular service.

"Today we have a Polaris that we're changing the half-shaft on because the u-joint was worn," Booth said. "That's a common problem with these vehicles."

Most problems with the Polaris can be attributed to general wear and tear.

"It's mainly because of the heat and environment and the amount of abuse they get," Booth said. "That makes it easier for them to break down."

Other types of vehicles are bought to the motor pool in larger numbers than the Polaris.

"Vehicles like re-fueling trucks require a lot more attention than a Polaris which usually just needs servicing," Booth said. "Usually it's not that bad, just a lot of problems with shifting."

But one thing is certain; there is never a shortage of vehicles waiting to be repaired.

"It's not very often that there'll be nothing in the bay to work on," Booth said. "It's a rare occasion indeed." ✂



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

After replacing a half shaft, Spc. Brian Frye, from Fredericksburg, Va., a light wheel mechanic in Company E, 4th Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, begins a tire change on a Polaris, here, Sept. 28.



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

To ensure the injectors are adjusted correctly on a new engine, Spc. Lee Benjamin, from Batson, Texas, a light wheeled vehicle mechanic in Company E, 4th Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, checks the adjustment of the injectors on the old engine, here, Sept. 28.

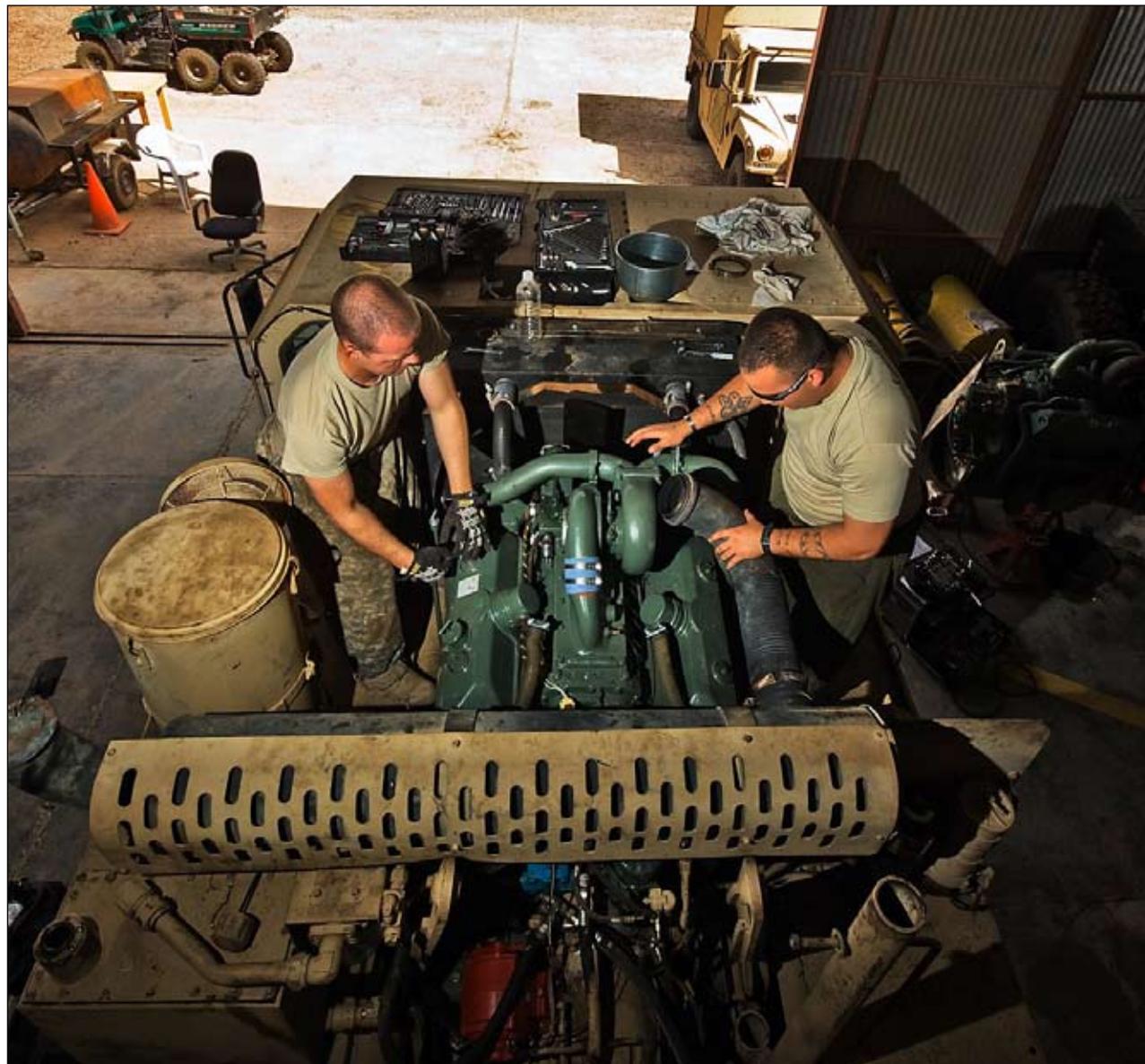


Photo by Sgt. Travis Zielinski, 1st ACB PAO, 1st Cav. Div. MND-B

Before removing an engine from a fuel truck, Spc. Austin Hunt (left), from Odessa, Texas, and Spc. Paul Aragon (right), from El Paso, Texas, both light wheeled mechanics in Company E, 4th Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, clear components out of the way so the engine can clear the vehicle, here, Sept. 28.

Cav. troopers offer expertise, techniques to IA

Photos by Sgt. Joshua Risner, MND-B PAO



Iraqi Soldiers, with the 6th IA Division, familiarize themselves with their targets and prepare for a PKC machine gun range at Combat Outpost 402, here, Sept. 28. In addition to marksmanship, the IAs also trained on room clearing and movement under fire as part of a larger training program conducted by Soldiers of D Troop, Division Special Troops Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division.

BAGHDAD – An Iraqi Soldier shots orders during a movement under fire exercise at Combat Outpost 402, here, Sept. 28. Soldiers of D Troop, Division Special Troops Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division, trained the IAs on room clearing and machine gun marksmanship in addition to movement under fire to further improve their skill set.

(Below) Spc. Adam Lowe (center), from Oklahoma City, Okla., with D Troop, Division Special Troops Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division, gives pointers about room clearing to Soldiers of the 6th Iraqi Army Division at Combat Outpost 402, here, Sept. 28. The IAs drilled to improve their skills as part of a larger training mission designed to give the IAs a strengthened skill set which they can impart to their fellow Soldiers.



Engineers train to combat IEDs

Photos by Sgt. Joshua Risner
MND-B PAO



BAGHDAD – Capt. Darby Boudreaux, from St. Martinville, La., assigned to 225th Engineer Brigade, simulates the mechanical interrogating arm of a Mine-Resistant Ambush-Protected vehicle investigating an improvised explosive device during a training lane at Camp Slayer, here, Sept. 26. Boudreaux and his fellow engineers are training Soldiers of 38th Engineer Company, 223rd Infantry Battalion, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Inf. Division, on the ins and outs of route clearance.



Soldiers of 38th Engineer Company, 223rd Infantry Battalion, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Inf. Division, use a robot to investigate a possible improvised explosive device during training at Camp Slayer, here, Sept. 26.

Check out the Major League Baseball Playoffs on



Engineer call comes with a spicy twist

Story by Sgt. Tracy Knowles

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

BAGHDAD – Tears, the strong aroma of chili peppers, music, laughter and heat. Lots and lots of heat. These were just a few ingredients added to craft the 225th Engineer Brigade's Engineer Call Chili Cook-Off, here, Sept. 26.

Every month brings a new theme to the social gathering for the engineers of Multi-National Division—Baghdad, and this month's theme was a tailgate party and chili competition.

The chili cook off was a near epic battle between seven teams, representing Louisiana, Tennessee, Massachusetts and Michigan, that included members from sergeants major with over 100 years of cooking experience to three specialists with over 1000 minutes of cooking experience.

Capt. Steven Belford, of Pineville, La., explained that the International Chili Society, sponsors of this month's theme, all started with Lt. Col. Vincent Tallo, of 225th Eng. Bde., from Ball, La.

The International Chili Society, who wanted to sponsor a chili cook off for troops in Iraq, contacted his wife, a member of a nonprofit organization called "Soldiers Angels". Both groups partnered together and worked with folks from around the country, to include California, Washington, D.C., and Texas.

Each team received a box of supplies from the International Chili Society. The supplies included aprons, decorations, recipes and hints for making each team's chili the best that it could be.

Participants were asked to vote for their favorite chili based on color, aroma, consistency, taste, and aftertaste. The 1st Cavalry Division Band's "Tuff Box and the Baghdad Horns" provided the day's acoustical after burn.

The surprise upset of the night went to Team XXX Chili, from Michigan, winner of the chili cook-off. Spc. Steven Plesko, of Hale, Mich., Spc. Pete Bice, of Big



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

Capt. Michael McDevitt, of Sutton Mass., with the 101st Engineer Battalion, shows off the secret ingredient to his team's chili. McDevitt, along with teammates Staff Sgt. Paulo Bagahna, of North Dighton, Mass., and 1st Lt. Ben Smith, of Mashpee, Mass., placed 2nd in the chili cook-off sponsored by the Soldiers Angels and the International Chili Society during the Engineer Call, here, Sept. 26.

Rapids, Mich., and Spc. Steve Rich, from Mancelona, Mich., all part of the 1434th Engineer Company, 101st Eng. Battalion, said their secret to winning had more to do with ingredients outside of the pot.

"We have the voice, looks, and brains. What more do we need?" Rich explained. ✂



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

Team XXX Chili, from left to right, Spc. Steve Pleske of Hale, Mich., Spc. Pete Bice of Big Rapids, Mich., and Spc. Steve Rich of Mancelona, Mich., all Soldiers from the 1434th Engineer Company, 101st Eng. Battalion, take home the win during the 225th Eng. Brigade's Engineer Call Chili Cook-Off, here, Sept. 26. The chili contest was sponsored by the Soldiers Angels and the International Chili Society.

The Mechanic's Corner: Keeping visibility high during rainy season

Story by Spc. Howard Alperin
MND-B PAO

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – A priority for mounted patrols is the ability to see clearly from inside a humvee and spot potential safety and security threats. Any obstruction to visibility is a hazard.

“Sight is very important, you’re trying to spot IEDs [improvised explosive devices] as you’re going down the side of the road. You need the glass to be clean,” said Spc. Edric Ashley, a light-wheel vehicle mechanic, from Houston. “There are lines and wires to look for, if it’s dirty, you can’t see.”

As the weather begins to change, clean windshields become a bigger issue. “Rainy season is coming; it’s going to get muddy. Vehicles in a convoy are going to be kicking up mud on the windshield. Make sure the wipers are good, the blades are good, and make sure to use windshield washer fluid,” said Sgt. Michael Clark, quality control and assurance shop foreman, from Arlington, Texas, assigned to Division Special Troops Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division. “Water can create more mud sometimes. Windshield wiper fluid has an ammonia agent that cuts the mud and dissolves the dirt.”

A vehicle without wipers that function properly or without fluid is a safety issue. All kinds of things can go wrong and accidents can happen, said Clark. Windshield wipers and filling fluids should be dealt with daily by Soldiers using preventative maintenance checks and services, he added.

Clark also emphasized the importance of closing the front hood correctly without cutting the two hoses that lead to the nozzles that spray fluid onto the windshield. It’s an alignment issue, he said. The front hood, when closing, can extend itself and rub up against these hoses. Clark said he has seen 20 percent of humvees with these hoses disengaged.

If PMCS is not done correctly and fluids are not maintained properly, mechanics may have to order parts to replace ones that have become dysfunctional due to improper use. One example is the motor for the windshield wiper.



Photo by Spc. Howard Alperin, MND-B PAO

Spc. Edric Ashley, a light-wheel vehicle mechanic, from Houston, assigned to quality control and assurance, Division Special Troops Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division, demonstrates where a tube intersects a sprayer for fluid to exit onto the windshield. The tube runs from the reservoir of windshield wiper fluid under the hood on the driver’s side.

“Using water instead of wiper fluid can rust the motor, windshield wiper fluid has rust inhibitor in it that stops the motor from rusting,” said Ashley, assigned to quality control, DSTB, 1st Cavalry Div. “Prior to a mission, to clean the windshields, [Soldiers] will drain the fluid from the reservoir and they drain it too low. If there is no fluid to pull, the motor is only sucking air. This damages the motor because it is made to pull fluid and not air,” he said.

Replacing a part means Soldiers have to come back to the mechanics again for service. But without a motor pumping fluid to the windshield wipers, the bigger issue is visibility while on patrol.

“It’s an inconvenience and a safety issue. I remember when I was on a mission and there was a dust storm; I needed it and I didn’t have it,” said Ashley.

Soldiers should be proactive in keeping windshield wipers functioning and the washer fluids full. It is also a good idea for Soldiers to carry reserve wiper washer fluid with them in their humvees. Extra fluid can be obtained through their mechanics shop. ✂



Photo by Spc. Howard Alperin, MND-B PAO

Spc. Edric Ashley, a light-wheel vehicle mechanic, assigned to quality control and assurance, Division Special Troops Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division, indicates where the switch that activates the windshield wipers is found while sitting in the driver’s seat inside a humvee, here, Sept. 22. This switch is placed in the same spot for all humvees.

Engineers work to keep Soldiers comfortable

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

BAGHDAD – At Joint Security Station Four-Corners, sunrise cast shadows on half-built structures that had little to no shape in the new light.

During the daytime, Sept. 24, engineer Soldiers are hard at work with one thing in mind; fellow Soldiers.

At the expanding JSS Four-Corners, the project to build more B-huts is right on schedule despite limited tools and only one generator. The Soldiers from the 1434th Engineer Company, 101st Engineer Battalion, have already constructed five B-huts along with three foundations in less than two weeks. Some structures are being used for living quarters while others are to become supply and command posts.

“Less than a week ‘till done,” boasted Sgt. Les Meyette, of Fremont Mich., an engineer with the 1434th Eng. Co., 101st Eng. Bn.

Often called a “hooch”, the B-hut usually houses up to eight personnel. Made of plywood and built with local materials, these structures are adaptable and movable.

Since the typical Soldier serves a year’s duty at any given location, there is plenty of time to customize the 50 square feet space per Soldier to give it a homely feel. Inside, walls may offer visual privacy, but sometimes they are built to be open bays.

“We lost power and internet and we were running on generators but it’s nice to be able to do our jobs and not be sitting back at base camp,” said Pfc. Willie James, of Escanaba, Mich., also with the 1434th Eng. Co., 101st Eng. Bn.

“The troops on the ground have been working from dawn to dusk every day,” said Spc. Brian Long, of Benzonia, Mich., of the 1434th Eng. Co. “Morale is up and... I have really enjoyed doing my job.” ✂



Photo by Spc. Ezekiel Earle, 621st Survey & Design Team, 101st Eng. Bn., 225th Eng. Bde., MND-B

Using a skill saw to make precise cuts, Sgt. Jerry Justice, of Cheboygan, Mich., 1434th Engineer Company, 101st Eng. Battalion, 225th Eng. Brigade, supports the B-hut mission to house U.S. military transition team Soldiers at al-Rasheed on Sept. 24. The B-huts will provide housing for 10-man teams who will train Iraqi Soldiers.

The new season of the

UFC

“HEAVYWEIGHTS”

is on



1st Air Cav conducts presence patrol

Photos by Sgt. Travis Zielinski, 1stACB PAO and Capt. Dave Puzzo, 3-227th AHB PAO, 1st Cav. Div., MND-B



TAJI, Iraq—Loading on Black Hawk helicopters, Soldiers of Company F, 3rd Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, 1st Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, prepare to fly to a nearby town and conduct a presence patrol, Sept. 18.



Making a radio call to higher up, Capt. Dave Puzzo, from East Hampton, Conn., a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter pilot and commander of Company F, 3rd Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, gets an update on the arrival time of two Black Hawks that will be transporting Co. F Soldiers to nearby towns to conduct a presence patrol, Sept. 18. Co. F Soldiers will pair up with the 34th Iraqi Bde. to conduct the presence patrol to let the local population know who they are.



Spc. Elmountassir Mohamed (right), from Boston, a linguist/translator in Company F, 3rd Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, 1st Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, and Spc. Brian Rogers (left), from Clermont, Fla., a grenadier, also of Co. F, conduct a presence patrol of a small town near Camp Taji, Iraq, Sept. 18.



Staff Sgt. Ty Vincent, from Hackberry, La., a squad leader in Company F, 3rd Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, 1st Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, watches over his Soldiers as they conduct a presence patrol of a small town near Camp Taji, Iraq, Sept. 18.

School brings hope to Qarguli neighborhood

Story by Staff Sgt. Mark Burrell

MND-B PAO

BAGHDAD – At Thugger al-Iraq primary and secondary school in the Qarguli neighborhood of Baghdad, the 300 to 400 students have something to look forward to this year thanks to the efforts of West Virginia National Guardsmen.

A \$467,000 project to overhaul the school and add four new buildings began Aug. 28, according to Capt. James Bowen, commander of Troop B, 1st Battalion, 150th Armored Reconnaissance Squadron, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team.

The project, which should finish a few weeks into the school year, is scheduled to take a hundred days to complete, added Bowen, a native of Daniels, W. Va.

The dilapidated school was chosen with help of the local area council and sheikh, according to Bowen.

On Sept. 20, Soldiers from Troop B, visited the construction site to talk with a local sheikh and check the progress of the renovations.

“The school was built in 1958 and nobody has fixed it until now,” said Younis Husain Ali, a security guard for the project. Younis attended the school in the 1980s with his siblings and now his three children attend the school.

“The U.S. forces make life easier and much better for us,” added Younis. “When the Americans say they’re going to do something, they do it.”

After undertaking the project and entertaining three different bids by Iraqi contractors, one was chosen that provided jobs for more than 100 local area workers, explained Bowen.

“It makes a tremendous impact on the community,” Bowen added. “This project has put our Troop in better light in the eyes of the community...they realize we are here to help the community instead of just walking around with guns and asking questions.”

Bowen understands that his Soldiers have to fight this perception and, as a father of two, he also understands the value of schooling.

“I understand the importance of educating the youth, these are the people that will eventually lead Iraq,” continued Bowen. “Previously the school didn’t have electricity or air conditioning all the time, which makes it harder to learn when it’s 120 degrees out.”

Staff Sgt. Daniel Smith, a cavalry scout with a 14-year-old daughter, agreed.

“This project gives them some hope for the future, a chance to better themselves,” said the Baltimore, Md., native also assigned to Troop B. “Every kid has hopes and dreams.”

Smith added that American parents want the best for their children, so the Soldiers of Troop B are trying to help Iraqi children by giving them a better opportunity to learn.

“You can’t put a price on a child’s education,” explained Smith.

The project wasn’t just about money and getting the funding approved, it was



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

Capt. James Bowen (right), from Daniels, W. Va., commander of Troop B, shakes hands with a local sheikh during a visit Sept. 20, to a U.S. forces funded reconstruction project of Thugger al-Iraq primary and secondary school in Qarguli, here.



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

(Right) Iraqi children wave as Sgt. Charles March, a cavalry scout from Beckley, W. Va., assigned to Troop B, 1st Battalion, 150th Armored Reconnaissance Squadron, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team, walks by after a visit to a primary and secondary school that U.S. forces have funded to be rebuilt by Iraqi contractors.

also about bridging the gap between Sunni and Shi’a.

According to Bowen, members of the Government of Iraq, and members from both the Sunni and Shi’a parts of town assembled for a meeting at the school before the project began.

“They understand they have to get past sectarianism to make things better,” explained Bowen. “They understand they have to work together to make things better.”

Being able to communicate and work toward a common goal of improved infrastructure in the area is an important lesson for the youth, explained Bowen.

“To show the kids that we are able to get Sunni and Shi’a to work together is a big step,” Bowen said.

Setting an example for the future leaders of Iraq and working together to rebuild the Thugger al-Iraq school gives the community something they haven’t had for a

long time.

“I have much hope for my children,” said Younis, just before the Soldiers left. “It’s a good feeling because if they study hard here, then they have a chance to become a doctor or an officer.”

Helping to rebuild a local school takes determination, but accomplishing the nearly impossible task of giving hope to generations of Iraqis is all in a day’s work for these Soldiers. ✂

Mavericks utilize video technology to simulate combat environment

Story by Sgt. Jon Soles

MND-B PAO

BAGHDAD – Soldiers assigned to personal security details don't wait until they are in a convoy to think about how to respond to an enemy attack.

Soldiers of Company A, Division Special Troops Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division who are assigned to the Division Operations PSD spent the morning, here, Sept. 25, rehearsing combat scenarios in the Engagement Skills Trainer to keep their combat skills sharp.

There are some advantages to using the EST as opposed to going to a live fire range, according to Staff Sgt. Robert Zulch, an infantryman assigned to Co. A.

"You don't have to spend all day at the range when you can do it in a couple of hours in the EST," said Zulch. "The range is, hands down, the ideal situation, but this is the closest thing to it."

What the range can't do is provide interactive scenarios based on actual combat situations that give Soldiers a chance to engage the enemy – on a giant video screen. But this is no game, argues Zulch.

"The scenarios were great. It shows my guys how to look for hostile intent, when to engage, when not to engage," said the native of Dickinson, Texas. "It shows how angry and how loud the crowd can get."

In most scenarios, the Soldiers faced a video screen filled with civilians and insurgents. In one scenario, an angry mob began throwing rocks at the Soldiers while snipers from nearby windows unleashed a volley of fire. The Soldiers had to instantly identify the insurgent gunmen and neutralize the threat without hurting the civilians. In each scenario, Zulch and his



Photo by Sgt. Jon Soles, MND-B PAO

Staff Sgt. Robert Zulch, of Dickinson, Texas, yells directions to his fellow Soldiers during a combat scenario in the Engagement Skills Trainer at Camp Liberty, here, Sept. 25. Zulch is an infantryman assigned to Company A, Division Special Troops Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division. He is a member of the Division Operations' personal security detail.

team "killed" the threats without harming a single civilian.

"It just shows the guys this is what you do when you make contact," said Zulch. "This shows what to look for when walking into a building."

The training is taken seriously by the Soldiers, as they shout status reports to each other and warn of any danger as they roll through the scenarios on the screen.

Spc. Adam Stewart, an infantryman assigned to Co. A, DSTB, 1st Cav. Div., said

the scenarios presented at the EST were realistic and accurate of similar situations he has seen while on PSD.

"When we go out, we are always dealing with crowds," said Stewart, a native of Mt. Pleasant, Iowa.

Following the training in the EST, the PSD Soldiers supplemented their weapons training with other useful training skill—surviving vehicle rollovers.

The Soldiers trained in the Humvee Egress Assistance Trainer (HEAT) and the

Mine-Resistant Ambush-Protected Vehicle Egress Trainer (MET). Zulch said the marksmanship and rollover training was all accomplished in one day.

"We had a day of PSD training, HEAT and MRAP rollover training all before noon," said Zulch.

Though no actual rounds are fired, and no vehicles have actually rolled over, the PSD Soldiers continue to rehearse and prepare themselves for anything that may happen on their next mission. ✂

IRONHORSE

Ironhorse medics adapt, never rest

Story by Pfc. Bailey Jester

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

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – Adapting to new environments can be part of a Soldier's everyday life—especially when deployed to Iraq.

Medics from Company C, 115th Brigade Support Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, have finally settled into the Hale Koa Medical Facility, here, after relocating from Joint Security Station War Eagle in August.

"Our responsibility has doubled since we arrived to Taji," said Columbia, S.C. native, Spc. José Guzman, a medic assigned to Co. C. "There are more people in our [area of operations] and we also take care of other JSS's and camps that don't have access to some of the equipment that

we do."

The Hale Koa Medical Facility is very different when compared to the small aid station at JSS War Eagle. The medics at Camp Taji have access to trauma rooms, a helipad, and a laboratory; with a dental clinic located across the street.

The accommodations allow the staff to provide Soldiers with more service than any other clinic in the area.

"I like knowing that we have all the assets together in one place," said Guzman. "We have trauma and evacuation together which we didn't have at JSS War Eagle. We don't have to send them some-

where else – saving time and possibly a life."

The facility is the largest in the "Ironhorse" Brigade's area. Access to advanced equipment means the Co. C medics see more severe injuries—those that can't be treated at smaller clinics. Besides illnesses

Besides illnesses and injuries, the Co. C medics are also responsible for the health of the 8,000 people that call Camp Taji home during their deployments.

and injuries, the Co. C medics are also responsible for the health of the 8,000 people that call Camp Taji home during their deployments.

While at JSS War Eagle, medics typically treated two to five patients per day, most of which were sick call patients. However, at Taji the number has increased to 14 to 25 people per day. Most of the visitors are still seen for sick call, but due to the

number of cases that the medics see, a larger variety of ailments are treated, said Conroe, Texas, native Spc. Anna Hatfield.

"There is a pretty good flow of people that come through here every day," said Guzman. "We expected it to be busier and we prepared for it before we left War Eagle."

The increased flow of patients has created new responsibilities for most of the medics. By using their skills more frequently and treating symptoms they may not have otherwise seen, the medics are capitalizing on the opportunity to hone their skills.

The move to Taji has heightened the responsibility of everyone in the aid station, and the move has been successful.

"I love working here," Guzman said enthusiastically. "I like how I can work on different aspects of being a medic, and learn something new every day." ✂

Paratroopers hone trademark skills

Story by Pfc. Jared Gehmann

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

BAGHDAD – U.S. Paratroopers honed their skills and remained battle ready during a mortar training exercise north of Forward Operating Base Hammer, Iraq, Sept 30.

For several indirect fire infantrymen assigned to 2nd Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, this exercise allowed them the opportunity to train and fire 60mm, 80mm, and 120mm mortar rounds downrange.

“This is the first time since December that most of us have fired mortars and I’m glad to be getting back to it,” said Spc. Zach Smith, of Saltsburg, Pa., an indirect fire infantryman assigned to Company B.

As the Iraqi Security Forces secure Iraq’s capital, and the U.S. military’s role in shifts to one of assisting and advising their ISF partners, many U.S. servicemembers in the “Panther” brigade have had the chance to sharpen up on their primary duties.

During this exercise, Paratroopers fired at targets, which ranged from 500 to 700 meters away, while simultaneously attempting to increase their ability to work together as a group.

“The purpose of this exercise is to get the guys familiar with the equipment and teach them the fundamentals of teamwork while preparing them for the mortar range qualification,” said Smith.

The indirect fire infantryman plays a key role in most combat operations, especially where fast-paced, supportive fire is imperative.

“In combat, we fire rounds over the heads of our own guys placing suppressive fire on the enemy [allowing] our infantrymen to push forward and gain ground,” said Smith.

Because they are transportable and can be set up and sighted in just a few minutes, having mortars on the battlefield serves as a key tool in defeating the enemy.

“The most difficult part of setting the mortars up is sighting them. We can jump into combat with the disassembled pieces on our backs and quickly put them together once we land. During training, we ruck march with



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

Pfc. Gregory Conway (left), of Central Square, N.Y., prepares to drop a mortar into the tube during a live-fire training event, Sept. 30, at a range several miles north of Forward Operating Base Hammer, Iraq. Conway is an indirect fire infantryman assigned to Company C, 2nd Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad. Conway said it’s important that he drops the mortar into the tube correctly because one faulty move and everyone within 30 meters of the mortar could end up injured or dead.

the pieces on our backs,” he said.

As the troopers began to fire, leaders and range safety officers stressed the importance of safety as the infantrymen handled these deadly rounds. For many on the firing line, this message did not fall on deaf ears.

“It’s important we understand how to set up and fire

these mortars properly,” said Pfc. Matt Miller, of Heyburn, Id., an indirect fire infantryman assigned Company C. “These 60mm mortars are the small ones and have a casualty radius of 30-35 meters, but they don’t know the difference between friends and enemies. It’s our job to direct them to their destination.” ✂

U.S. ARMY

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

Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Prevention

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

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

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

www.preventsexualassault.army.mil

“Dragons” support Taji market clinic

Photos by Pfc. Adam Halleck, 1st BCT PAO, 1st Cav. Div., MND-B



TAJI, Iraq— Norfolk, Va. native, 1st Lt. Alton Royster, the medical officer for the 1st Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, watches as hospital staff interact with patients during a visit to the Taji Market Clinic, Sept. 27. The small clinic supports Taji and the immediate area with medical care. “The staff members were very enthusiastic and sincere in caring for their patients and also expressed their desire to increase their hours of operation to ensure that more Iraqis receive medical attention,” said Royster.



(Right) Camden, N.J. native, Spc. Sesily Aponte, a civil affairs team member attached to 1st Bn., 82nd FA Regt., 1st BCT, 1st Cav. Div., takes notes on the services offered at the medical facility that is in the heart of Taji Market, Sept. 27. “The clinic was better than I expected it to be. It seemed to be successful and doing well,” said Aponte.



(Right) Staff Sgt. Carlos Madden (right), a native of Cambridge, Mass., and a civil affairs team leader attached to the 1st Bn., 82nd FA Regt., 1st BCT, 1st Cav. Div., and Little Rock, Ark. native, Capt. Alex Aquino (middle), commander of Battery B, speak to Dr. Mohammed (left), the manager of the Taji Market Clinic during a visit, Sept. 27. The “Dragons” visited the clinic to see if they could help provide any supplies and support to the clinic.



(Left) Capt. Alex Aquino, a Little Rock, Ark. native, and commander of Battery B, 1st Bn., 82nd FA Regt., 1st BCT, 1st Cav. Div., and Hamamiyat Federal Police Station commander, Maj. Thimir, listen as the clinic manager explains the changes the clinic underwent in the past couple of years during a visit to the Taji Market Clinic, Sept. 27. The clinic now supports Taji and immediate areas as the primary medical facility in the area.

NCAA Week six matchups: Oct 16-17



Armament crews keep Apaches ready for fight

Story by Sgt. Jon Soles

MND-B PAO

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – When it comes to today’s current fight, the AH-64D Apache helicopter’s technology allows it to have sharp eyes on the ground and capable of unleashing deadly accurate fire from its weapons systems.

But the Apache’s effectiveness is only possible through the preparations by hard-working armament crews.

Soldiers of Company D, 1st Attack Reconnaissance Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, keep the Apaches armed and ready for the fight at all times. It’s a job that requires care and competence, according to the leaders in charge of Apache armament.

The Soldiers based here spend their days in hangars on the flight line maintaining the Apaches’ weapons systems and electronics. The two-man crews who fly the attack helicopter depend on the armament electrical avionics repairers to keep their weapons systems properly loaded and always ready to engage.

“The big thing is, [armament crews] know every time they touch [an Apache], they have two lives in their hands,” said Sgt. 1st Class Michael Hunter, an Apache armament senior non-commissioned officer from Waldorf, Md. “We take care of the pilots and they take care of the guys on the ground.”

To provide close air support, the Apache’s weapons array includes Hellfire missiles, rockets, flares and a 30 mm cannon.

While arming the Apache, Soldiers must be aware of safety issues ranging from static electricity to proper handling of live missiles, said Hunter.

“You have to reiterate [safety] because people get complacent. As a leader you’ve got to reiterate it and make sure they’re doing it the right way.”

Loading an Apache with rockets or missiles is not simply putting rounds in the chamber. The electrical weapon systems require diligent maintenance and upkeep.

“Anything with a wire on it is basically ours,” said Hunter. “The Apache is basically a big computer and everything is done electronically.”

When Apaches return from missions, the Soldiers of Co. D carefully examine the helicopters and check on the electronic boxes and weapon systems. Staff Sgt. Daniel Schremser, an armament maintenance supervisor from Warsaw, Mo., described the Apache as a “flying tank.” He said together, the armament crews and mechanics keep the Apache flying and ready for combat.

“Without us and the mechanics, the aircraft is not going to fly. If one of us doesn’t do our job, then the aircraft doesn’t fly,” said Schremser.

Hunter, who joined the Army in 1992, said his current armament platoon has been together for multiple deployments and praised their commitment.

“A lot of them are on their third or fourth deployment. The shop has been



together for three or four years,” said Hunter. “These guys have been doing this a long time together and a lot of them are like family.”

Though they have been doing this for a long time, the helicopter’s technology is continually evolving, he added. The Apache’s systems are constantly being improved, and the armament crews attend classes to learn more about the helicopter.

“This job challenges you. I’ve been

working in this field since 1997 and I still haven’t seen everything,” said Hunter. “You’ve got to keep learning the aircraft and you’ve got to be a sharp person to work in our [job].”

Being ready for the fight requires the efforts of Soldiers on the ground and Apaches in the air. The meticulous work of the armament crews make sure that attack aviation teams can provide close air support to Soldiers on the ground. ✂

Spc. Scott Shaver, of Austin, Texas (left) and Spc. Bret Gibson, of Wichita, Kan., haul a Hellfire missile to load onto the mounting bracket of an AH-64D Apache helicopter, Oct. 1.



Pfc. Gregory Conway (left), of Central Square, N.Y., prepares to drop a mortar into the tube during a live-fire training event, Sept. 30.

Photo by Sgt. Jon Soles, MND-B PAO

“Raiders” take over west of Baghdad

Story by Pfc. Kimberly Hackbarth

4th SBCT PAO, 2nd Inf. Div., MND-B

BAGHDAD – Col. John Norris took the reins from Col. Joseph Martin in a transfer of authority ceremony, Sept. 28, at the Camp Liberty Field House, here.

Soldiers of the 4th Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division, arrived in Iraq earlier this month and, following the transfer of authority ceremony, assumed responsibility for operations in the country to include providing security and strengthening the Iraqi government and its security forces.

In his outgoing speech, Col. Martin, commander of 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, thanked his Soldiers for their dedication and hard work and ended with his confidence in the abilities of the incoming troops based out of Fort Lewis, Wash.

“The “Raiders” of the 4th Brigade will serve with distinction and achieve great progress while deployed in Baghdad,” he said.

Norris, along with Command Sgt. Maj. Jeffrey Huggins, uncased the brigade colors, symbolizing their units’ assumption of responsibility for the area of operations.

In his remarks following the uncasing of the brigades colors, Norris thanked Martin and said his brigade set the standard.

“This ceremony serves to herald the arrival of the Raider Stryker Brigade Soldiers, here to assist in setting the successful conditions and continuing the trend of



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

Col. John Norris (left), and Command Sgt. Maj. Jeffrey Huggins, both with 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, uncased the “Raider” Brigade colors, Sept. 28, at a transfer of authority ceremony. Norris and Huggins take over where troops of the 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division left off.

irreversible momentum already created by the cooperative efforts between the Dagger Brigade and the Iraqi leaders in and around Baghdad,” Norris said.

He also spoke on the brigade’s mission during its deployment.

“We have returned with one purpose in mind; to support the Iraqi people, the Iraqi Government, and the Iraqi Army and police in every way we can,” Norris said.

Addressing Gen. Karim, of the 6th Iraqi Army Division, Norris assured him that

they shared the same visions for the area.

“I look forward to working together in order to ensure the success of this great country. Together at all levels, we will provide security and improve essential services to the great people of this land.” ✂

COMMUNITY

MND-B Soldiers tour infamous palaces of old regime

Story by Spc. Howard Alperin

MND-B PAO

VICTORY BASE COMPLEX, Iraq – In March of 2003, by command of President George W. Bush, U.S. Forces bombed what was then known as the Abu Ghraib Presidential Grounds. These grounds, constructed during Saddam Hussein’s regime, served as a place of retreat for Hussein and his political allies.

The area which includes, man-made lakes, palaces and a Baathist party meeting center, is presently known as Camp Slayer.

Now known as Camp Slayer, the Morale, Welfare and Recreation department offers Soldiers tours of this historic area to see up close and personal the damage sustained to the buildings here and to learn more about the history behind those structures.

For Soldiers of the 1st Cavalry Division Band who took the tour, Sept. 26, the tour was an eye-popping view to that history.

“Everything’s out in the open as to how Saddam was living and how he was treating his people, you see the excess of him and his political party,” said Staff Sgt. John Addington, from Akron, Ohio, assigned to the 1st Cavalry Division Band, Division Special Troops Battalion, 1st Cav. Div. “It was something very immoral that was going on.”

In contrast to the many impressive monuments seen around Baghdad, some of which are thousands of years old, the sights and structures on the former presidential grounds were only built in the last 25 years.

“This was cheap showmanship, not much in substance. It’s a bunch of decorations,” said Sgt. 1st Class Corey Dawson, from Mandan, N.D., assigned to 1st Cav. Div. Band.

“Saddam was very into himself... there was a lot of work to make everything look expensive, like chandeliers painted gold with plastic beads attached,” said Spc. David Sturch, from Durant, Okla.

Soldiers saw first-hand how Saddam Hussein adorned his name and image throughout the buildings, including placing himself into a prayer blessing from the Quran posted outside the entrance to the Victory over Iran Palace.

“I didn’t know there were still murals up of Saddam and I thought it was interesting

seeing how Saddam put his initials into everything,” said Sgt. Patrick Sullivan, from San Antonio.

Throughout the tour, a guide pointed out interesting details and highlights about specific rooms and their uses that helped Soldiers on the tour understand what they were seeing.

“It made it easier to know things and to know the history. But, I liked it best when they said go explore, and there was time for us to go and see what we wanted to see,” said Sullivan.

After climbing up the ruins of the bombed out Victory over Iran Palace, Sgt. Sullivan took in a view of the Baghdad International airport, where he worked on his last deployment.

“I’d recommend this tour for any soldier,” said Staff Sgt. John Buchanan, from Phoenix City, Ala. “It gets you out of your immediate area of operations, your day to day activities, and gives you a chance to see things you normally wouldn’t see,” he said.

“Most of the people that join the Army now have only heard of these places. To stand in the Ba’ath party house, to walk through what’s left of Uday’s house, gives more perspective, it’s like walking through the footsteps of infamy,” continued Buchanan. “I didn’t know pools were built for executions and not for swimming,” he noted with a serious tone.

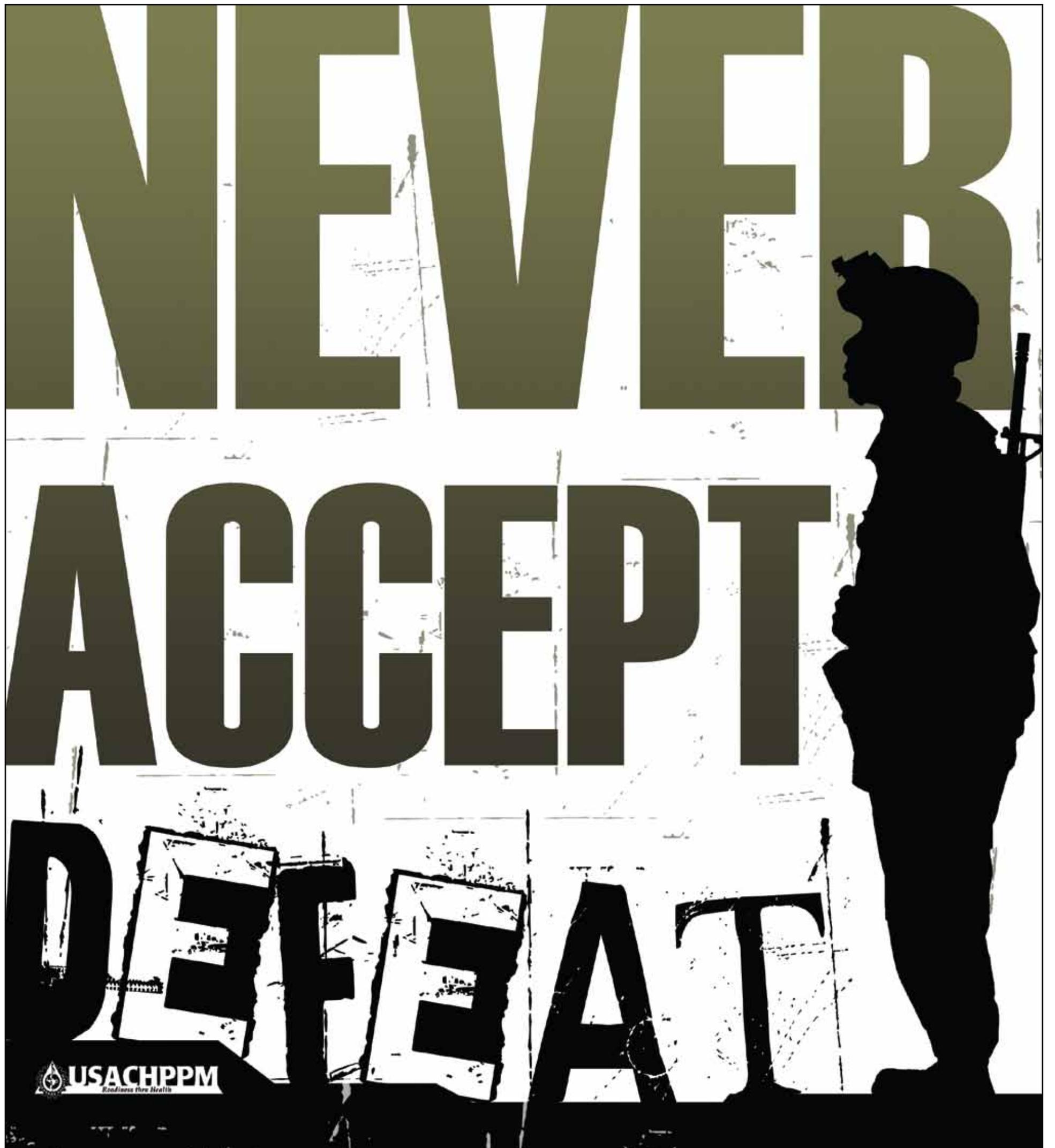
Since the initial days of the war, things have come a long way. Touring the sites at Camp Slayer reminds Soldiers of the bigger picture and their own personal role in rebuilding Iraq.

“It reminded me of how we’re the good guys and the work we do is not typical of what most militaries do,” said Dawson. “We’ve helped to defeat a great evil in Saddam.”

One Soldier summed up the events of the day by commenting on the unlikelihood of returning to Iraq once the deployment is over.

“I’m glad I did [the tour] because I know I’m not going to see that again, I don’t plan on coming back. I’m not planning any vacations here for the future,” said Sturch.

Tours are conducted each Sunday at 12:45 at Camp Slayer and are open for all Soldiers to experience. For more information or to schedule a group tour for a different time, email: madison.garey@iraq.centcom.mil. ✂



Admitting a Need for Help is Not a Character Flaw.

Suicide Can be Prevented. Get Help.

Talk to your Chaplain or a Behavioral Health Professional or Call Military OneSource **1-800-342-9647**

www.militaryonesource.com

TA-062-0107

1st ACB preps for flight



CAMP TAJI, Iraq—As part of a preflight inspection, Chief Warrant Officer 4 Terry Polwort (left), from Enid, Okla., an AH-64D Apache attack helicopter instructor pilot in Company A, 4th Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, and Chief Warrant Officer 3 Edgar Lovitt (right), from Ashland, Ky., also an Apache pilot in Co. A, inspect the main rotor head components for any faults, here, Sept. 24.



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

Under the morning sun, a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter crew chief from 3rd Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, starts to remove the fly away gear from a helicopter during a preflight inspection, here, Sept. 24.

Chief Warrant Officer 4, Terry Polwort, from Enid, Okla., an AH-64D Apache attack helicopter instructor pilot in Company A, 4th Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, reads through his checklist during a preflight inspection of an Apache, here, Sept. 24.