

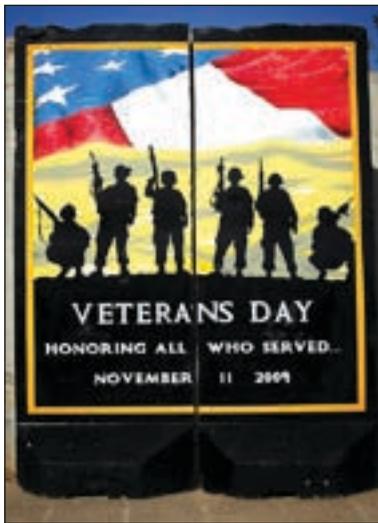
# EXPEDITIONARY TIMES

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Vol. 2 Issue 46

## Honoring Heroes



JBB observes Veterans Day

Page 5

## Convoy Ops



Soldiers run the gauntlet

Page 12-13

## Ziggurat



Soldiers view ancient ruins

Page 14

# Adder memorial honors New Mexican Soldier lost to heart-related death

STORY AND PHOTO BY  
SPC. CORY GROGAN  
41ST IBCT

CAMP ADDER, Iraq – The 720th Convoy Security Company said goodbye to Spc. Joseph Gallegos, 39, Nov. 3 in Iraq, who died of suspected heart complications Oct. 28.

The exact cause of his death is under investigation.

Maj. Thomas Gonzales, the 720th CSC commander, said, “Gallegos put his life on the line in his civilian career where he served as a pump-truck operator and hot-shot firefighter, earning a valor award from the United States Forest Service in 2007 for saving a man’s life by pulling him out of a burning vehicle that was overturned and later burst into flames.”

In Iraq, Gallegos, a Questa, N.M. native, completed 18 missions, traveled more than 8,000 miles and earned a combat action badge for receiving indirect fire on a mission.

“Like many people from Northern New Mexico, Gallegos



The 720th Convoy Security Company held a memorial Nov. 3 here at Camp Adder, Iraq, following the death of Spc. Joseph Gallegos, 39, a Questa, N.M., native, who died of suspected heart complications Oct. 28.

had a strong belief in family and fighting for what is right,” Gonzales said.

Lt. Samuel Bailon said Gallegos loved hunting, fishing, the outdoors and was an avid Seattle Seahawks fan.

Lt. Mario Tafoya, Gallego’s platoon leader, said, “He was the kind of friend that would stand by you when you needed someone. Spc. Gallegos once told me that his whole purpose here was to make people laugh.

“He was well loved and he did so many things here on earth, and I am sure he will do much more in Heaven.”

Gallegos was received by his brother, 1st Sgt. Ronald Gallegos, and escorted home.

# Deployed Soldiers worry about Family at home

STORY BY  
SGT. MATTHEW C. COOLEY  
15TH SUST. BDE.

CONTINGENCY OPERATING LOCATION Q-WEST, Iraq – It was nearly 11:00 p.m. Nov. 5 at Contingency Operating Location Q-West, Iraq, when 15th Sustainment Brigade Soldiers began hearing about a shooting at their home station in central Texas, and began trying to contact friends and loved ones there.

According to a press release, a shooter killed 12 Soldiers and one civilian, and wounded 30 others at the Soldier Readiness

Processing Center at Fort Hood, Texas.

Although no 15th Sust. Bde. Soldiers were directly involved, many of their families and friends live and work on Fort Hood.

Capt. Nicole Harrell, a 15th Sust. Bde. support operations planner and Los Angeles native, was studying for an online course when someone told her there was an incident on Fort Hood and she should call home. Harrell’s husband, also a Soldier, their 11-year-old daughter, and 2-year-old twin boys live on base.

“At first it was scary because I didn’t immediately get in touch (with my family),” she said. “You’re here in a warzone,

but the war was back home. Being a military family, you’re always more concerned about the person deployed.”

Harrell’s family was not near the site of the shooting and she spoke to them again Nov. 7 using video conferencing provided by the 15th Special Troops Battalion, 15th Sust. Bde.

Other 15th Sust. Bde. Soldiers, including Capt. Diane Boor, physician’s assistant and a Linwood, Mich., native, and Sgt. Justin Mosier, brigade supply sergeant and a Dothan, Ala., native, did the same.

“Does it still feel awkward to go outside?” Justin Mosier asked his wife, Lydia Mosier, as he leaned toward the VTC’s screen in a room at Q-West.

“Not as bad as yesterday,” she said, from Fort Hood.

Greg Worden, their 5-year-old son, interrupted, telling his father about the situation at his on-post school Nov. 5.

“The windows were all closed and an alarm went off,” he said, while his little sister fidgeted in his mother’s lap.

Mosier later said his family lives no more than three miles from the site of the shootings. He learned about the shootings from his wife, through an online instant messaging program, he said.

“I told her to lock the doors and windows, close the blinds and go upstairs,” said Mosier.

SEE WORRY ON PAGE 4

## Shout-Outs!



TO: Spc. Alexander Mateo

"Dear Daddy, You are our hero. We love you and miss you very much. We can't wait to be with you. We are praying for your safe return. Love and blessings from Princess Skylar and Baby Gabi," - Beverly Mateo



TO: Maj. Erik Enyart

"I love you and you are missed dearly at home! No worries, we are fine and will be until we see your sweet face again. R&R will be sweet, but nothing will be sweeter than the end of your deployment. We are always here for you and support not only you but every soldier deployed. You are our heros. I love you!!" - Always, Belinda Enyart

## Corrections

The Expeditionary Times regrets these errors:

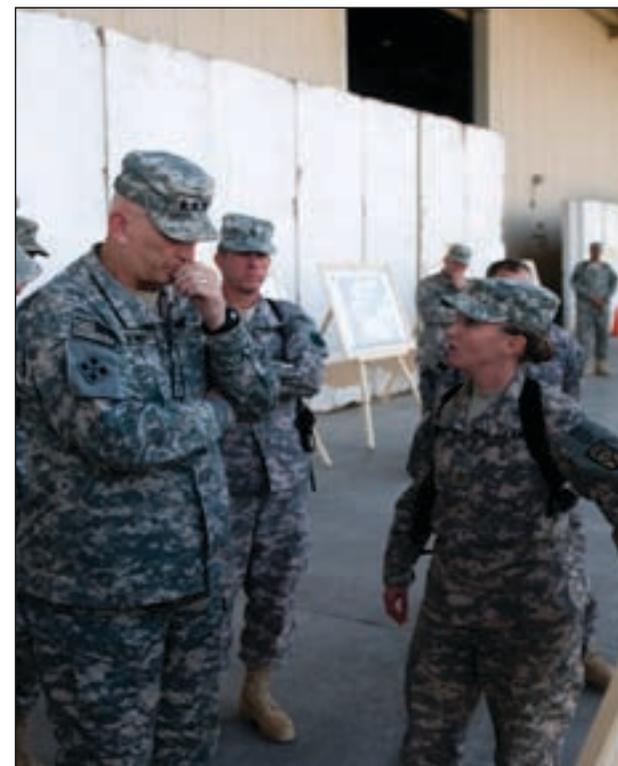
- In the Nov. 11 edition, the article, "US Army advises Iraqi Army Soldiers" should have said, "The Ur Logistics and Technical Advisory Team with the 36th Sustainment Brigade out of Temple, Texas, works with Iraqi Soldiers at the Ur Iraqi Army Medium Workshop."
- In the Nov. 4 edition, the article, "Speicher preps for Operation Clean Sweep" referred to the 264th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, not the 267th.

## Gen. Odierno visits Balad

PHOTOS BY SGT. KEITH S. VANKLOMPENBERG  
EXPEDITIONARY TIMES STAFF



Gen. Ray Odierno, commander of Multi-National Force-Iraq, gives coins to Soldiers with the 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) Nov. 11.



Maj. Michelle Donahue, the support operations officer with the 80th Ordnance Battalion and a Washington native, briefs Gen. Ray Odierno, commander of Multi-National Force-Iraq, on Operation Clean Sweep, during his Nov. 11 visit to Joint Base Balad, Iraq.



Gen. Ray Odierno, commander of Multi-National Force-Iraq, spoke to the 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) during his Nov. 11 visit to Joint Base Balad, Iraq. "We're asking you to help us with the redeployment, while continuing sustainment operations with the mission ahead because it never stops," he said.

## EXPEDITIONARY TIMES

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15th Sustainment Brigade  
36th Sustainment Brigade  
90th Sustainment Brigade  
96th Sustainment Brigade  
41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team  
155th Heavy Brigade Combat Team  
332nd Air Expeditionary Wing  
194th Engineer Brigade

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**Mission Statement:** The Expeditionary Times staff publishes a weekly newspaper with the primary mission of providing command information to all service members, partners and Families of the 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) team, with a secondary mission of providing a means for units at Joint Base Balad to disseminate command information to their audiences.

# Brain reacts to combat stress

By CAPT. STEVE BRASINGTON  
COMBAT STRESS CONTROL PSYCHIATRIST



How can mental health professionals tell if a person actually has post-traumatic stress disorder?

Higher-order human thought is processed in the frontal lobes in structures called the frontal cortex. Brain work that is reflexive and fast takes place below the cortex in deep areas of the brain. The circuitry involved in the fear response resides in the sub-cortical zone, meaning it takes place in areas of the brain lying underneath the outer layers of the brain. The prefrontal areas filter and organize signals to help the frontal lobes work properly.

Australian medical researchers, in an article published in the November 2009 issue of *Psychiatry Research*, concluded that the activation of a fear response involved interactions between the amygdala, involved in assessing danger, and the medial prefrontal cortex. Using Magnetic Resonance Imaging, they were able to see the activation of brain circuitry in patients with PTSD and compare to normal subjects. The brains of PTSD patients processed fear differently. In particular, the medial prefrontal cortex showed low activation.

Intuitively, a system that is bombarded with very intense stimulation will try to dampen the amplitude of the signal to perform better.

When the PTSD patient is in danger,

the prefrontal area shows low levels of arousal. For the patient, this change in brain performance means the person in danger focuses on a specific threat.

Potentially overwhelmed by the situation, the person tunes everything out but the threat itself. This gives the person a sensation of an altered perception.

In this altered response to danger, the warning siren from the amygdala is muted so the person can focus. In this zone of intense focus, the person is calm and unafraid.

The fear reaction is delayed and often comes later.

Following repeated exposure to trauma, the brain adapts to give the person a survival edge. However, this adaptation can come at a cost. Instead of integrating your emotions with events

all around you, you react automatically with a kind of slow motion tunnel vision.

For example, the combat veteran walking down the street responds to an engine backfire by pulling a companion onto the ground and covering her with his body on a city sidewalk.

The context has been lost.

You are trained professionals, proficient in your warrior tasks and skills.

In Combat Stress we are no less proficient in the healing arts. We are guardians of your mental well being. Stay sharp and stay mentally tough. When you need us, we are deployed with you – ready to assist. Stay tuned for next week's article on one treatment approach to PTSD called cognitive behavioral therapy.

## The Weekly Standard

**Joint Base Balad:** DSN 433-2125  
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(Command Inspector General)  
Maj. Scott Peters (Deputy)  
Master Sgt. Roy Thacker (NCOIC)  
Sgt. 1st Class Danilo Egudin  
Sgt. 1st Class Javier Cruz

### Q-West (15th SB):

DSN 827-6115

Lt. Col. Kyle Peterson

### Taji (96th SB/ 155 BCT):

DSN 834-3079

Lt. Col. Timothy Norton/

Lt. Col. Paul Bird

### Adder/Tallil (36th SB/ 41 BCT):

DSN 833-1710

Lt. Col. Melanie Meier/

Maj. Jeffrey Copek

### Al Asad (96th SB):

DSN 440-7049

Sgt. 1st Class Tamera Wynn

By LT. COL. MELANIE MEIER  
13TH ESC DETAILED INSPECTOR GENERAL



We all know that to complain without fear of reprisal is the right of any Soldier, civilian or family member seeking help from the

inspector general.

However, some complaints are not appropriate for the IG to look into because the Army has programs and methods of redress specifically for them.

One example is the equal opportunity complaint. While the IG will take the information if you do come in with an EO complaint, we will most likely pass it to EO channels to handle.

Today's Army EO program addresses not only the long-term and sometimes inherent problems of discrimination, but also attempts to clarify and provide guidance to commanders on other issues related to religious accommodations, affirmative

actions, unit cohesion, team building and fair treatment.

The EO program has strict timelines that it follows to ensure complaints are handled quickly and efficiently.

It also requires an assessment after each formal complaint to determine the effectiveness of any corrective actions taken and to detect and deter any incidents of reprisal.

The bottom line is the Army's EO program covers the unlawful discrimination of five protected categories: race, religion, gender, color and ethnicity.

If your complaint hinges upon any of these factors, you should go to the EO for the most timely and effective results.

Call your installation EO hotline to clarify whether an incident or behavior qualifies as sexual harassment or discrimination. You can contact the 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) equal opportunity adviser at 433-2527 or the local inspector general's office.

## Sexual Assault Response Coordinator

The Deployed Sexual Assault Response ensures victims of sexual assault receive appropriate care. They are the single point of contact to coordinate sexual assault victim care.

The Unit Victim Advocate provides essential support and care to the victim, including providing non-clinical information on available options and resources to assist the victim in making informed decisions as they progress through resolution and healing. The UVA maintains communications and contact with victims as needed for continued victim support.

If you need a SARC or UVA, call the Joint Base Balad Sexual Assault Response Coordinator at 443-7272 or contact the SARC via pager at 443-9001, pager 159 for help. Soldiers should seek assistance with their Unit Victim Advocate or DSARC. Soldiers may also call 433-7272 or dial 443-9001, pager 122/135 for assistance.

## Chaplain's Corner: catch it for yourself

By LT. COL. GARREY LOSEY  
90TH SUST. BDE. CHAPLAIN



Sometimes, especially when we are far from home and family, we find it hard to find reasons to be thankful and yet, if we

look hard enough, we can find reasons every day.

Paul in his letter to the Philippians 4: 4-7 said, "Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about any-

thing, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

I look at my life and find great peace and joy thinking of the people that have crossed my life's path. I will be honest that they have not always been positive experiences, and there have been growing experiences for me in these personal relationships.

I have come to learn it is not about how many perfect moments you have had; it is about how you make the

choice to grow in all the moments that come into your life.

I have also found that happiness and joy do not come in the form of possessions that we acquire.

Preacher Charles Spurgeon once said, "You say, 'If I had a little more, I should be very satisfied.' You make a mistake. If you are not content with what you have, you would not be satisfied if it were doubled."

It is not about the amount or value of our possessions that ultimately brings happiness. It is about the adequacy of our blessings.

After 56 years of life, I have lived

wondering if I would be able to meet my bills and I have been blessed beyond my bills.

But I will tell you the greatest joy is the blessing of loving people who have surrounded me every step of the way through my life. I have found the reasons for being thankful in the abundance of loving family and friends.

As we come to this Thanksgiving season let's count our blessings. If you look at all the good friends who have crossed your path and the abundance of blessings in your life you will as the text says, "Find peace in your life that transcends all understanding."

# Shooting at Fort Hood leaves Soldiers nervous

## WORRY FROM PAGE 1

“(We) talked pretty much all night – (I) couldn’t sleep not knowing if there was still someone running around,” he said.

Through the VTC, one of Boor’s twin sons, Benjamin Boor, 6, described his experience at an organized football game he was playing at the time of the shooting.

“The police said they wanted to get all the bad guys, that’s why they quit- ted it,” he told his mother.

Boor said she was still unsure as to whether or not she knew any of the medical personnel shot in the Thurs- day afternoon attack, but it was still comforting to see her family.

“(I) have that picture in my mind that they are doing well, acting like they normally do,” she said.

Capt. Brent Crosswhite, 15th Sust. Bde. chaplain and a Blanchard, Okla., native, said it was a morale booster for Soldiers to see their families through VTC or online video messaging ser- vices.

“Sometimes seeing is believing,” he said, shortly after speaking to his own family via VTC. “The next best thing would be if you could reach through the screen.”

Other Soldiers agreed.

“Getting to see the kids, see the family after that kind of thing is reas- suring,” said Spc. Justin Heath, a 15th Sust. Bde. communications specialist and a Lake Charles, La., native.

The 15th Sust. Bde. deployed in mid- September, and processed through the SRPC, leaving the site of the shooting

fresh in their minds.

“I spent two weeks there trying to get ready to deploy,” Harrell said. “I can picture those Soldiers sitting there, getting ready to leave.”

Harrell said he was confident the damage done to the Fort Hood com- munity was only temporary. He said Soldiers and the community come to- gether during times of tragedy.

“It’s going to go back to being the ‘Great Place,’” she said, referring to the base’s nickname. “We’ll suffer together and overcome it.”

# Adder Soldiers sharpen weapons skills

STORY AND PHOTOS BY  
SPC. LISA COPE  
EXPEDITIONARY TIME STAFF

CONTINGENCY OPERATING LOCATION ADDER, Iraq – Soldiers with the 36th Sustainment Brigade out of Temple, Texas, fired their weapons Nov. 9 through Nov. 10, at Lightning Memorial Range at Contingency Operating Location Adder, Iraq, to qualify and zero their weapons.

Capt. Michael J. Ford, commander of Headquar- ters and Headquarters Company with the 36th Sust. Bde., said the company qualified as a whole with its weapons prior to deployment, but regularly qualify- ing is a way to fight complacency within the unit.

Going to the range reminds Soldiers to keep up with weapons maintenance, he said.

“Being stationed in theater here, especially in Iraq, with the elements, the dirt, the sand, and wind, that is a very important aspect of maintaining your weapon, keeping it clean, serviceable, so if you have to react or have to engage the enemy it is in working (condition),” said Ford, a Paris, Texas, native.

He said, “Going to the range enables you to gauge how often or how much you need to keep your weap- on clean. The range is one way to get to know your weapon a little bit better.”

Staff Sgt. Mario A. Bonilla, a training noncom- missioned officer with the 36th Sust. Bde. HHC, was a range safety officer both days, and said he spent roughly three months planning and organizing the unit’s trip to the range.

Although the range was optional, roughly 90 Soldiers from the unit qualified on either the Beretta M9 9 mm pistol or the M4 5.56 mm car- bine, he said. Bonilla said the unit plans to conduct range training quarterly.

He hopes to be able to facilitate qualifications on the M249 5.56 mm squad automatic weapon during the Soldiers’ next trip, which is scheduled for January. He said his main focus on the range was the safety of the Sol- diers.

“(The goal was) safe- ty, to make sure that everyone went out there and had a good time, got comfortable with their weapon, and no one got hurt,” said Bonilla, a Long Island, N.Y., native.

Sgt. First Class Alfonso L. Brown, the orderly room noncommissioned officer in charge with the 36th, was the officer in charge of the range for the training. Brown, a Fort Worth, Texas, native, said some of the Soldiers had never used the Aimpoint M68 Close Combat Optic used with the M4, and the range gave them a chance to familiarize themselves with their equipment.



Range safety officers watch as Soldiers with the 36th Sustainment Brigade out of Temple, Texas, fire their weapons during a weapon qualification training exercise Nov. 10 at Lightning Memorial Range at Contingency Operating Location Adder, Iraq.

“We are the National Guard, so some of this, the optics and stuff, a lot of these Soldiers just started using them right before we deployed,” he said.

Brown said weapons training is important to him because he believes it helps him to be a better Sol- dier.

“You continue to do it to perfect it, to familiarize yourself with the procedures, the technique, because at the end of the day, all of us are riflemen,” he said.



Staff Sgt. Michael S. Walker, a supply assistant with the 36th Sustainment Brigade out of Temple, Texas, and a Houston native, fires during a weapon quali- fication training exercise Nov. 10 at Lightning Memorial Range at Contingency Operating Location Adder, Iraq.



US Army Photo by Capt. Ralph Dempsey, 90th Sustainment Brigade, 13th ESC

STORY BY  
SPC. NAVEED ALI SHAH  
EXPEDITIONARY TIMES STAFF

JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq – Throughout the United States’ storied history, millions of citizens have risen to answer her call to duty in times of tranquility and turmoil, war and peace.



Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines and Coast Guardsmen gathered at the Morale, Welfare and Recreation east gym to honor Veterans, both past and present, in a Veteran’s Day observance Nov. 11 at Joint Base Balad, Iraq.

The ceremony began with the presentation of the colors by the multi-service color guard team, followed by a rendition of the National Anthem by Staff Sgt. Anthony Sadler, an ammunition specialist with the 90th Sustainment Brigade, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary).

“I love it,” said Sadler, a White Lake, Mich., native, of the chance to be a part of the ceremony.

Unlike other ceremonies, the invocation and benediction were given by the chaplain assistants rather

than the chaplains.

“My grandfather was in the Army, my uncle was in the Army, and my dad was in the Navy,” said Master Sgt. Michael Bair, the noncommissioned officer in charge of chaplain assistants with 13th ESC and a Fredericksburg, Va., native, who gave the invocation. “So doing this was a way to pay tribute to them.”

The benediction was given by Air Force Senior Master Sgt. Dale McGavran, chaplain superintendent with the 332nd Air Expeditionary Wing.

“It’s a privilege and an honor to do this,” said McGavran, a Omaha, Neb., native.

The presentation also featured a rendition of “America the Beautiful,” by Sgt. Denise Spencer and Spc. Jamal Wesley with the 159th Seaport Operations Company, 80th Ordnance Battalion, 90th Sust. Bde., 13th ESC.

“I was nervous at first, but it’s a privilege to do this on Veteran’s Day,” said Spencer, an American Samoa native.

Two retired senior noncommissioned officers now working as contractors for the military here at JBB were invited to be the guest speakers.

Retired Sgt. Maj. Greg Miller, a field service engineer for Tapestry Solutions, remarked on the impor-

tance of celebrating Veteran’s Day while deployed.

Retired Master Chief Petty Officer Learline Taylor, a security specialist with the 402nd Army Field Support Battalion, Army Materiel Command, spoke of her service and its everlasting effect on her.

Senior Master Sgt. Al Garver, the senior historian with the 332nd Air Expeditionary Wing was the final guest speaker. Garver related the story of a World War II hero whose parents declined a personal invitation to the Whitehouse by then President Franklin D. Roosevelt, because they thought the trip would be frivolous. They wrote a letter to the president stating the money they would spend on the trip should be used to help fund the war effort instead.

Garver equated this to the Families of Soldiers today and the sacrifices they make.

The ceremony concluded with remarks from Brig. Gen. Paul L. Wentz, commanding general of the 13th ESC.

“This was a truly inspiring ceremony,” said Wentz.

“The color guard, the singers and the speakers did an outstanding job, as did the (service members) who put this event together. It’s important to keep in mind the sacrifices of all those who came before us and thank them for their service.”



US Air Force Photo by Tech. Sgt. Brian Shumaker, 332nd Expeditionary Aircraft Maintenance



US Army Photo by Spc. Naveed Ali Shah, 13th ESC Public Affairs

From left, Navy Petty Officer 3rd Class Richard Kinnison, land based phalanx weapon system technician, with 33rd Air Defense Artillery, Senior Airman Valerie Vasquez, diet therapy journeyman, with 332nd Expeditionary Medical Group, and Coast Guard Petty Officer 1st Class Ryan Price, a gunners mate with the Redeployment Assistance and Inspection Detachment, post the colors with the rest of the honor guard during the Veteran’s Day Observance Nov. 11 here at Joint Base Balad.

# Marez preps Iraq for drawdown

STORY BY  
SGT. RYAN L. TWIST  
EXPEDITIONARY TIMES STAFF

CONTINGENCY OPERATION LOCATION MAREZ, Mosul, Iraq – As the responsible drawdown of U.S. troops and equipment from Iraq continues, the Central Receiving and Shipping Point at Contingency Operating Location Marez in Mosul, Iraq, will be instrumental in managing the movement of both equipment and personnel.

Sgt. Xavier T. Salone, the noncommissioned officer in charge of the CRSP with the 359th Inland Cargo Transport Company out of Fort Eustis, Va., said when units arrive in country, their mission-essential equipment comes through the CRSP yard. If the Soldiers at the CRSP do not do their job, then the units here will not succeed in their mission, he said.

“The mission with the CRSP yard is to make sure units get the equipment that they require to do their jobs,” said 1st Lt. Michael A. Miller, detachment commander with the 359th ICTC, 515th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), and a Newport News, Va., native.

Miller said the CRSP will store containers, equipment and vehicles for units until a convoy can take the shipment to its destination.

“My guys are doing a real good job keeping accountability,” he said.

Pfc. Timon R. Howlett, a transportation management coordinator with the 359th and a Mount Airy, N.C., native, said his job at the CRSP yard is to keep an accurate account of all incoming and outgoing cargo.

“I have to keep an inventory,” said Howlett. “When a customer comes in, I have to verify their (transportation movement request) with our paper-

work, make sure that it is their equipment.”

During a particularly busy week, the yard had 120 pieces constantly going in and out, he said.

“A busy day would be 25 to 50 containers or vehicles,” said Howlett. “The average would be 150 vehicles or containers (per week).”

The yard is generally busiest when units are redeploying or arriving in country, said Howlett.

“Without organization, a job like this is not possible,” he said.

Salone, a Shreveport, La., native, said a majority of his Soldiers were fresh out of Advanced Individual Training. He said he cross-trains them and sets up scenarios to help improve their skills.

These Soldiers learned to triple stack containers and how to pick up items from different angles, said Salone. The CRSP yard Soldiers operate or handle every piece of equipment that comes through the yard, he said.

“If it is too difficult for the Soldiers, then I come out there and offer my expertise,” said Salone, “but for the most part the Soldiers do the work.”

They get a lot of hands-on training, he said.

“I put them in different situations that they normally wouldn’t do back in the states,” said Salone.

He said the training the Soldiers receive here can help them get jobs outside of the military, making them stronger trainers and better-prepared employees.

Howlett said the Iraqis have started to help move the equipment at the CRSP yard instead of relying on Soldiers. This participation is an example of the transition of responsibilities from U.S. forces to the people of Iraq, he said.

“They now kind of have an idea of what they’re doing, so they go right where they need to go and wait for instructions,” said Howlett. “We’re teaching them the right way to do it.”

## Governors visit Soldiers, Airmen at Joint Base Balad

STORY AND PHOTOS BY  
SGT. JOHN STIMAC  
EXPEDITIONARY TIMES STAFF

JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq – Governors from Georgia, Mississippi, Oregon and Wyoming visited Soldiers and Airmen Nov. 11 at the Morale, Welfare and Recreation Center east at Joint Base Balad, Iraq.

Wyoming Gov. David D. Freudenthal said this trip was organized by the U.S. government.

“This gives us a chance to meet with military personnel of our states, with a primary emphasis on meeting with the National Guard troops from our state,” he said.

Freudenthal said he was here once before, in 2005.

“This is the largest deployment of Soldiers we have had from Wyoming since the onset of the war,” he said. “This is a chance to see people that are important to us at home. We want to make sure they know that on behalf of the citizens of my state.”

People back home are concerned for them and their well being, said Freudenthal.

“Wyoming is a small state, it is more like a community,” he said. “I want to relay the fact that people back home care about them.”

After a meet and greet, the governors held a town-hall style meeting with the service members of their state.

Oregon Gov. Ted Kulongoski spoke to service members about the state’s unemployment rate and the new health care bill passed by the House and how it would affect the state.

Kulongoski also spoke about the state’s education system.

“Oregon has the most students enrolled in post-secondary schools in all of the state’s history,” he said.

He also said he hoped to have a baseball team in the future.



Georgia Gov. Sonny Perdue meets with Georgia service members.



“Right now Portland is the largest media market that does not have a baseball team,” said Kulongoski, who is in his second term as governor.

Sgt. 1st Class Christopher G. McIntosh, battalion liaison noncommissioned officer in charge with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 186th Infantry Regiment, 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team, said he appreciated the opportunity to meet the governor.

“It’s not often I get to see the governor in person and get to have a conversation with him,” he said.

McIntosh, a Monmouth, Ore., native, said the meeting helped shed light on two issues that were important to himself and his family.

“The highest priorities for me, deal with health care and education,” he said. “To find out what the state of Oregon is doing with those issues is very important, especially when we come back home and have to get our feet wet again.”

McIntosh said he could have discussed Oregon’s issues with the governor all day.

He said, “When you get a chance to talk to the person that runs the state, a person that really has a finger on the pulse of what’s going on, you come away more educated.”

Oregon Gov. Ted Kulongoski meets with Oregon service members Nov. 11 at Joint Base Balad, Iraq. Four governors visited with their respective states’ Soldiers and Airmen to discuss issues and lend support.

# Finance Soldiers build deck, gift to future units

STORY AND PHOTO BY  
SPC. ELIZABETH CABRERA  
208TH FINANCE CO.

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – Soldiers with the 208th Financial Management Company began work on a new deck as their deployment comes to an end, but this gift to future units is not the work of engineers and construction workers. Two everyday Soldiers took up the task.

Sgt. Patrick Mierta, a supply technician from Jackson, N.J., and Staff Sgt. Antwain Stokes, a noncommissioned officer in charge of supply and a Miami native, both with the 208th FMC, 96th Special Troops Battalion, 96th Sustainment Brigade out of Mannheim, Germany, began constructing the deck in early October.

Stokes and Mierta have come to be known in the unit as the all-around handymen because of their craftsmanship, said Sgt. Kayla Snyder, information management officer and a Hudson, N.Y., native.

“Thanks to Sgt. Mierta and Staff Sgt. Stokes, the Soldiers will have a great place to host their barbecues and relax as a group after work hours,” said Sgt. 1st Class Joseph Pecorella, a detachment sergeant and a Brooklyn, N.Y., native. “They are truly raising the unit morale by taking their free time to construct something that can be used by everyone.”

Pecorella said talks of constructing a deck had been in the air for several months, but



**Staff Sgt. Antwain Stokes, a noncommissioned officer in charge of supply and a Miami native, and Sgt. Patrick Mierta, a supply technician and a Jackson, N.J., native, work with other members of the 208th Financial Management Company, 96th Special Troops Battalion, 96th Sustainment Brigade, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) to build the unit's new deck in Camp Liberty, Iraq. When construction is complete, the deck will wrap around the side and entire back of the building.**

due to logistical issues, construction was delayed. After finally getting through all the red tape, the 208th ordered the materials for the project.

The engineering unit who had agreed to construct the deck earlier in the year was redeploying. Their replacements were booked with countless missions upon arrival, said Stokes. This left the new engineering unit no time to construct the deck for the 208th.

With only only a couple of months left before the 208th redeployed, Stokes and Mierta said they decided to build the new deck.

“We already had the materials sitting at the unit and all the necessary tools, so it was too easy for us to look at this and decide to do it ourselves” said Mierta.

The deck will be finished in time for their replacement's arrival, he said.

“The unit before us built a recreation trailer for the soldiers about a month before they left Iraq,” said Spc. Denetra Johnson, an operations clerk from Oklahoma City.

“They built it knowing that they would only use it for a short period and handed us the keys when they left. We enjoyed using that trailer throughout our entire deployment and now we're doing the same thing with our replacements. We are going to leave them a great deck that they will be able to enjoy for their entire time in Iraq. I think it's really neat that we get to do this as kind of a welcome gift.”

# Tiny Team performs Army-wide mission

STORY AND PHOTO BY  
SPC. JASON EVERETT  
541ST CSSB

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – Soldiers with the 3666th Maintenance Company took control of the empty container collection point Sept. 23 at Camp Taji, Iraq.

Sgt. Lindsey Ainslie, the noncommissioned officer in charge of the ECCP, leads the five Soldiers with the 3666th Maint. Co., out of Phoenix, 541st Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 96th Sustainment Brigade, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary).

“I really feel we are accomplishing something great,” said Ainslie, a Waterford, Miss., native. “Every container that gets shipped out of here puts us one step closer towards accomplishing the Army's overall logistical mission. I could not ask for a better team. The Soldiers here have really thrown them-

selves into their work.”

The primary mission of the ECCP is to collect and assess used or damaged containers that need to be repaired and redistributed.

Soldiers at the ECCP repair damages that can be serviced with tools and methods within the resources of Camp Taji, called level one damage.

“A dent, for instance, is something we can handle rather simply,” said Pfc. David Dekowski, a wheeled vehicle mechanic with the ECCP and a Tempo, Ariz., native. “If the damage is above our level or resources, we process the container for shipping to Joint Base Balad for more extensive work.”

The containers that are already serviceable or have been repaired get shipped back to Kuwait empty or full of retrograde materials. They are then put on a ship and sent back to the United States to assist units in moving equipment, personal and sensitive items.

“Our work is starting to get noticed out here and people have actually started



**Soldiers with the 3666th Maintenance Company, out of Phoenix, 541st Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 96th Sustainment Brigade, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) operate the empty container collection point at Camp Taji, Iraq.**

to ask us to look at their containers that are still in use,” Dekowski said. “This shows us that people understand the importance of what we do.”

Lt. Col. Paul Dismer, commander of the 541st and a Morgan City, La., native, said he was pleased with the Soldiers' work.

“When you work with such a great team, morale tends to stay high, regardless of the challenges we see on a daily basis,” said Ainslie.

# Liaison officers track convoys, commodities

STORY AND PHOTO BY  
SGT. 1ST CLASS TAD BROWNING  
36TH SUST. BDE.

JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq – Liaisons with the 36th Sustainment Brigade track convoys and commodities at Joint Base Balad, Iraq, ensuring the flow of accurate information between units.

Maj. Charles Lanfear, a Texas National Guard liaison officer with the 36th Sust. Bde., said he ensures his Soldiers communicate between elements to accomplish the mission.

“Basically, we are the eyes and ears of the 36th Sust. Bde. to the higher headquarters,” said Lanfear. “Our daily mission is to keep the 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) informed of our actions in (Multi-National Division) South.”

The liaisons are in charge of managing and coordinating the distribution of commodities from their source to the customer, he said.

Master Sgt. Mark Busch, a 36th Sust. Bde. liaison officer and a Killeen, Texas, native, tracks the flow of information to make sure high-visibility movements and commodities reach their destination successfully.



Texas National Guardsman Maj. Charles Lanfear, a 36th Sustainment Brigade liaison officer, inputs data to track commodities and convoy movements Oct. 22 at Joint Base Balad, Iraq.

“We keep up with convoys from the point of origin to the point of destination and ensure that everything goes smoothly,” he said. “Commodities and convoys are our bread and butter here.”

Liaison officers are responsible for

locating and fixing missing information sent to the 13th ESC, said Busch. This job will be even more important during the coming months, as the responsible drawdown of equipment and personnel continues.

Lanfear said their challenges will be

identifying unneeded equipment, determining whether or not it is serviceable and turning it in to the appropriate element so it can be retrograded to Kuwait and eventually back to the U.S. or Afghanistan.

“With technology the way it is, the communication is much easier than it has been in years past; with phones, computers, we have real-time communication back and forth,” said Lanfear.

In addition to tracking convoys and commodities, 36th Sust. Bde. liaison officer, Staff Sgt. Diana Wilbert, manages other tasks necessary to accomplish the mission.

“I’m the one that gets to do all of the running around,” said Wilbert. “I take care of visitor management, billeting arrangements, help them get flights in and out if they have problems. Additionally, I pick up parts for both our units and any other down-trace units if they need something. If they can’t get it, I go pick it up and ship it to them.”

Lanfear said shortly after the unit departs, roughly 50,000 Soldiers will remain in Iraq.

“With that in mind, we need equipment that can support those 50,000 Soldiers, instead of the equipment that we have which will support almost 300,000 Soldiers,” he said.

# Warfighters clash in ‘dance off,’ Wii tennis

STORY AND PHOTO BY  
SGT. JOHN STIMAC  
EXPEDITIONARY TIMES STAFF

JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq – Leaders in all branches of service took time to meet with one another Nov. 7 at the Joint Base Balad, Iraq, professional mixer in an effort for E-8s and above to interact in a social setting.

Team building exercises involving all service members, card games and video game stations were set up in Mirage, dining facility two, for the evening.

Air Force Capt. Markyves J. Valentin, quality assurance representative with the Defense Contract Management Agency, said the idea came about because Army and Air Force do not normally get to interact with one another.

“This is a chance for them to relax, mingle and do some networking,” said Valentin, a Los Angeles native. “Everyone looks like they are having fun here and that is the main purpose.”

Valentin said the mixer was an opportunity for service members to talk about permanent change of station moves and share information about their previous duty stations with service members who are headed to those locations.

The evening began with a team building exercise in which service members performed a line dance for their units while generals scored their efforts.

The 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) narrowly prevailed in the contest, after a “dance off.”



Second Lt. Matthew D. Hall, budget officer with the 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) and a Phoenix native, plays tennis on Nintendo Wii with Warrant Officer Yann R. Jugeat, maintenance chief with the 699th Maintenance Company and a Fort Lauderdale, Fla., native. This was one of several events at a professional mixer Nov. 7 at Joint Base Balad, Iraq.

Col. Knowles Y. Atchison, deputy commander with the 13th ESC and a participant in the line dance, said this was a great opportunity to bring the base together so everybody could know who they are passing when they walk down the street.

“Everyone needs balance in their life and everyone needs to laugh,” said Atchison. “What greater person to laugh at than yourself first?”

Atchison said the mixer was a great morale booster for all service members deployed here.

“Most people are working 16 to 18 hour days here,”

he said. “It’s good to balance everything out with a few laughs now and then. This is a healthy environment and actually improves combat readiness, although we may look a little ridiculous as we’re clowning around.”

Pam Avery, a program analyst with the 49th Transportation Battalion and a New York native, said this mixer was planned in just two weeks.

Avery, who was one of the coordinators, said the event really took off.

“It exploded into something much bigger than we ever expected,” she said. “We are also planning something for the holidays.”

Avery urged people to respond to the invite the next time around.

“Some people did not respond to the e-mail and we have more people than we expected, so next time when people get the invite, please respond so we can plan accordingly,” she said.

Valentin said the goal is to have a mixer every month and soon have events like these for enlisted members below the rank of E-8 as well.

Capt. Kristin S. Speers, liaison officer with the 593rd Sustainment Brigade out of Fort Lewis, Wash., said it was great to see so many people come out and participate in this event.

Speers, a coordinator of the event and Scottsboro, Ala., native, said this was truly a joint effort that had everybody working well together.

“We had tremendous support for the amount of stuff we had to do to plan and the amount of time we had to do it in,” she said. “Everybody came together to make this event very successful and we would like to thank everybody for all their support.”

# After long struggle, Haitian Soldier gains citizenship

STORY AND PHOTO BY  
1ST LT. GILBERT DRAUGHON  
699TH SMC

JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq – In 1991, the year of a violent military takeover of the Haitian government, Spc. Wilkens Valme's family fled Haiti.

The coup left Gen. Raoul Cédras in charge of a republic that, in the previous 20 years, had experienced an AIDS outbreak, wide-scale poverty, an African swine fever virus epidemic, a failed dictatorship, failed provisional governments and lastly, a 1990 election that put Roman Catholic priest Jean-Bertrand Aristide in power.

Valme was six and spoke no English when his family settled in Florida.

In the course of the next 13 years, he jumped from school to school, fighting students who teased him because of his elementary English, he said.

He grew up fast, caring for his three siblings and his cousins, who moved in with his family when their mother died, he said.

In 2005, he ran into trouble with the law on two separate occasions, he said. The first incident resulted in his expulsion from high school early

in the year; the second resulted in his arrest and incarceration for three months, he said.

"I had to leave behind a pregnant fiancé and everything I owned while I was incarcerated for three months," he said. "It was the hardest thing that I ever had to go through."

During his incarceration he found God and made a promise to himself, said Valme, a light wheel vehicle mechanic with the 699th Maintenance Company, 80th Ordnance Battalion, out of Fort Irwin, Calif.

"I decided to join the Army after watching a commercial on television one day," he said. "I decided to change my life and improve myself for the sake of my daughter."

Valme soon obtained his general education diploma and shipped for basic combat training in January of 2007.

Sgt. Robert Rodriguez, Valme's squad leader and a Spring Valley, Calif., native, said Valme found success in the Army.

"When the other Soldiers get down and frustrated, Spc. Valme does what he can to help boost morale by cracking jokes, and brings life to the workplace with his comedic acts," said Rodriguez. "He is a good Soldier."

During this deployment, Valme has twice received awards for his work as a mechanic, he said.

"Anytime, if someone needs help, he is there for them," said Rodriguez. "As far as his self-improvement goal is coming along, he is doing quite well."

In August 2009, Valme received a certificate of appreciation from his company commander, for taking the initiative to help lead his team in the absence of an NCO. This past September, he also received a coin of excellence from Multi-National Force – Iraq Command Sgt. Maj. Lawrence Wilson.

Valme's section is one of three units in Iraq performing five-year services on heavy equipment transporter semi-trailers.

His work and dedication to the mission earned him the respect of Spc. Jessica Gemmell, a light wheel vehicle mechanic and an Alamogordo, N.M., native.

"Valme is a Soldier who helps fellow comrades to accomplish their task so that the team can finish together ... a Soldier who will volunteer to start the mission off and see it through to the end," Gemmell said.

The twenty-four-year old father and Soldier said he knows he came a long way and plans to continue excelling in the future.

Valme said one of his major goals was to become an American citizen – which happened Nov. 6 during a naturalization ceremony at Camp

Victory, Iraq.

In addition to his military duties, he is attending school to get a bachelor's degree in criminal justice.

"This will entitle me to a better job and the ability to move my family into a safer neighborhood than the one we currently reside in," he said.

He said he hopes to become a corrections officer and then attend the police academy. His ultimate dream is to become the police commissioner of Homestead, Fla., he said.

Since joining the Army, Valme said he has seen more places and met more friends than he ever imagined. He said he has vowed to stay out of trouble and live his life for God and his daughter.

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# Sustainers advise Iraqis at Al Shaiba

STORY AND PHOTO BY  
MAJ. TIMOTHY OHLHAVER  
36TH SUST. BDE.

AL SHAIBA, Iraq – *Editor’s note: For the safety of the Iraqi sources in this story, their names have been withheld.*

Chief Warrant Officer 4 George Rymer, officer in charge of the logistics training and advisory team, watched as the Iraqi Army Maintenance Program equipment was delivered Oct. 24 to the Middle Maintenance Factory at Al Shaiba, Iraq.

LTAT sections are groups of U.S. military advisers who guide the Iraqi military toward being self-sufficient, said Rymer. He said this mission can encompass, but is not limited to, teaching management to leaders, physical plant layout, parts acquisition, parts storage and vehicle maintenance.

The Iraqi chief mechanical officer, a lieutenant, said he has been with the Iraqi Army for roughly one year. He said he served in this same duty position in Saddam’s Army.

One of his jobs is to ensure his Soldiers are trained to fix all types of vehicles and to see that this is done in a timely manner, he said. Some varieties of vehicle frames his shop maintains are the Humvee, Ford F-350, Chevrolet 3500 pickup trucks, Russian-built Lada Niva off-road vehicles and large trucks.

“Comparing my past experience to my present experience, overall support



The Iraqi Army chief mechanical officer at the Al Shaiba Middle Maintenance Factory inspects the engine compartment of a Humvee Oct. 24.

for me accomplishing my job has improved dramatically with the new Iraqi Army,” the lieutenant said.

The factory is a third-level workshop, meaning the mechanics not only replace bad parts, but also perform more complex jobs such as brake realigning, radiator repair and rebuilding engines, said Rymer.

“They are in a lot of ways very self sufficient,” he said. “They have taken basically a waste dump with a lot of bombed out buildings and turned it into an operational maintenance unit. They have built overhead cover, out of their own funds, that is sufficient to work on vehicles.”

With the implementation of the IAMP system, Iraq has adopted a new way of getting the job done.

“The LTAT’s present project is installing and implementing the IAMP system,” said Rymer.

“This will provide parts ordering, work order tracking, and warehouse inventory in a computerized system, and will replace the pencil and paper system they are using now. All of these functions will be available online.”

The Iraqi communications and technology officer, a lieutenant with the Middle Maintenance Factory, said IAMP will reduce the time it takes to order parts.

“Under the old manual system it took two months or longer from ordering the part to receiving the part,” he said. “IAMP will bring that time down to about two weeks.”

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# Q-West reopens education center

STORY AND PHOTO BY  
SGT. MATTHEW COOLEY  
15TH SUST. BDE.

CONTINGENCY OPERATING LOCATION Q-WEST, Iraq – After two weeks of cleanup and preparation, the 15th Sustainment Brigade Wagonmasters officially reopened the education center Nov. 5 at Contingency Operating Location Q-West, Iraq.

The Q-West education center was previously opened with only limited use and was in a state of disrepair.

Command Sgt. Maj. Nathaniel Bartee, the 15th Sust. Bde.'s senior noncommissioned officer, said if one Soldier benefitted from the education center, all of the work to fix it up would be worth it.

"There were no computer systems here, it was muddy, there was nothing ... and Soldiers were actually here taking (Functional Academic Skills Training) classes in those conditions," said Staff Sgt. Bridget Savage, the new noncommissioned officer in charge of the education center with the 15th and a Princeville, N.C., native.

The revamped center has four classrooms, 20 Internet-enabled computers for student use, a printer and phones.

"They can do everything out of this building right here," Bartee said.

An education counselor visits the center weekly but a permanent one is scheduled to work here in December, Savage said. A university professor is expected to teach one traditional class at the center in December as well, she said.

Interested students can take a Functional Academic Skills Training class, the Defense Language Aptitude Battery, Army correspondence courses, proctored exams and college courses through GoArmyEd. Savage said she is capable of handling most issues with GoArmyEd.

"If I can't do it myself, I have contacts on Speicher and Balad," she said.

Not only are Soldiers working together to make the center better, but Airmen volunteered to teach and help run the front desk when needed as well, she said.

Spc. Kenneth Hagtrom, education center specialist and a San Bernardino, Calif., native, said he plans to take the Functional Academic Skills Training class and correspondence courses.



Airforce 1st Lt. Augusta Fehn, defense contract manager and a Las Vegas native, helps a Functional Academic Skills Training student with a math problem at the newly reopened education center Nov. 5 at Contingency Operating Location Q-West, Iraq.

"Last time I was deployed, we couldn't even do correspondence classes," he said of his 2005 deployment. "Now it's '09 and you can take actual college classes? That's great."

The Q-West education center is located on the corner of Main Street and Idaho Street.

It is open daily from 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.

# Task Force 38 Soldiers experience day of firsts

STORY AND PHOTO BY  
SPC. BETH GORENC  
TASK FORCE 38

JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq, - While stationed at Joint Base Balad, Iraq, Task Force 38 Soldiers visited the Multinational Force – Iraq headquarters and learned about a piece of Iraq's history.

To do so, Spc. Andrew Isfalt and Spc. Joshua Drake, both TF 38 health-care specialists, took their first UH-60 Black Hawk flight over Iraq and visited Al-Faw Palace, Saddam Hussein's former retreat center and one of many palaces built by the former dictator.

"It was nice to get out and go to a different place for a few hours," said Isfalt. "The trip there was a lot smoother than I thought it would be."

Once they arrived at Camp Victory, Iraq, the two Soldiers met with Maj. Michael Minnick, a Task Force 38 liaison officer stationed there, who accompanied them to the palace and around the military base.

"As an LNO, it's a responsibility to help Soldiers get to

where they are going and act as an area expert," said Minnick. "I enjoy doing it and helping other people."

The medics said they were happy to have a familiar face to help them on their first trip to an unfamiliar area.

"It was great an LNO was able to help us; otherwise we would have been stuck at the helicopter pad," said Isfalt. "It was also good to have someone familiar there to ensure we had a fun visit."

When the Soldiers first walked into Al-Faw, a large U.S. flag, spanning from ceiling to floor, greeted them.

"It was kind of cool to walk into the palace and see the behemoth American flag hanging behind Saddam's big chandelier," said Isfalt.

The former palace is decorated with Arabic writings from the Quran and writings about Hussein above each large wooden door, hand-painted ceilings, marble floors and walls, elaborate chandeliers and Hussein's old throne.

During their visit to the palace, the medics took a guided tour of the building, which was converted into offices for Multinational Force – Iraq and operational aspects of



An American flag decorates the foyer of Al-Faw Palace, which once served as Saddam Hussein's personal retreat. It now acts as an office building for the Multinational Force – Iraq headquarters and U.S. Army Soldiers deployed in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

and plastic instead of gold and crystal."

The tour also revealed that the exterior foundation of the palace was filled with foam packing and the palace, which once signified such power, was sinking into its watery surroundings.

After taking the tour and getting pictures in Hussein's former throne, both Task Force 38 Soldiers agreed their favorite part of their palace visit was sitting on one of the private balconies overlooking the lake that surrounds the palace.

"It was nice sitting outside on the balcony, listening to the quiet," said Drake.

Drake said the trip was worthwhile and other Task Force 38 Soldiers should experience it.

"It's a good release to take a day trip, and the palace is a good piece of history, of the war and Iraq," he said.

Operation Iraqi Freedom.

"It looked nice on the inside, but after the tour details, it wasn't as nice as I

thought it would be," said Isfalt. "The ceiling was made of plaster and the chandeliers were gold-painted aluminum

# Armor Soldiers drive gun

STORY AND PHOTO BY  
CAPT. MURRAY SHUGARS  
2/198TH CAB

CONTINGENCY OPERATING LOCATION Q-WEST, Iraq – Mississippi Guardsmen overcame setbacks during a round-trip convoy security mission Oct. 28 and Oct. 29, between Contingency Operating Location Q-West and Contingency Operating Location Warrior, Iraq.

Members of 1st Platoon, C Company, 2nd Battalion, 198th Combined Arms, an armor unit from Oxford, Miss., experienced a weapons malfunction, a possible improvised explosive device, a vehicle breakdown and a civilian tractor-trailer accident – all during intermittent thunderstorms.

Staff Sgt. Michael D. Hammons, convoy commander and a Bolivar, Tenn., native, directed the convoy through one challenge after another during the mission. After arriving at Warrior, however, he said he had a sleepless night.

“When we finally got in our tents and everyone was mostly asleep, we had a hell of a storm,” said Hammons. “The rain and wind shook the tent all night. I kept thinking, ‘Here I am, eight to 10 days from taking leave to see my child born, and I might die in a tent at the (COL) Warrior Convoy Support Center.’ I couldn’t sleep.”

Hammons recounted the numerous setbacks during the mission: First, a machine gun malfunctioned before the convoy left, requiring maintenance. On the return trip, a gun truck broke down and had to be towed.

Then, with lights of Q-West on the

horizon, as Soldiers began talking of hot showers and warm beds, a civilian truck driver fell asleep at the wheel, barreling his semi-tractor trailer 500 meters into the desert. No one was injured, but the accident did cause another delay while the platoon secured the area and winched the truck from axle-deep mud.

The incident that tested the Soldiers’ training most, however, happened on the way to Warrior, when the platoon encountered what appeared to be an IED near a small, riverside village, said 2nd Lt. Thomas McLeskey, first platoon leader and an Oxford, Miss., native.

Just after the scouts – whose job is to clear the route ahead of the convoy’s main body – crossed a bridge, all the village lights went out, said Staff Sgt. Daniel L. Ramseur, a scout truck commander. While blackouts are common with Iraq’s unreliable power grid, Ramseur said it was an unsettling coincidence.

“The blackout could have been a sign of enemy activity,” said Ramseur, an Independence, Miss., native. “Also, we didn’t see any people and that was our first time through there without seeing anyone. When we spotted a concrete mound beside the road, we halted the convoy to investigate.”

All signs pointed to it being an IED, he said. There was the small town within walking distance, a traffic signpost that could be used as a marker, foot paths leading off into the desert and what looked like an “ant trail” where someone might have covered a wire with dirt, said Ramseur. Viewing it with thermal sights, the scouts verified that the cement mound radiated heat, another sign of an explosive device, he said.

After marking the site with chemical

lights, the platoon secured the area and radioed battalion headquarters at Q-West to request an explosives ordnance disposal team, said McLeskey.

The EOD team arrived to investigate the site, concluding that there was no IED threat and that the concrete mound was the base of a traffic sign recently removed, he said.

“Even though this turned out to be a false alarm, the scouts and convoy commander made the right decisions,” said McLeskey. “They dealt with a possible IED exactly as they were trained and they showed good tactical patience.”

The platoon has honed its battle drills during missions taking them through much of northern Iraq.

They have convoyed to Habur Gate on the Turkish border, and other bases such as Taji, Sykes, Spiecher, Victory, Nespa, Sinjar and Marez, said Sgt. Kyle R. Stegall, a vehicle commander from Sugarland, Texas.

“A big challenge is making sure that the civilian drivers, especially the (third-country nationals) who don’t speak English, understand what they’re supposed to do,” he said.

Another challenge for the platoon is that vehicle crews constantly change because of the absence of Soldiers rotating home on leave, said Staff Sgt. Tim Mooney, assistant convoy commander. To accommodate this, the platoon has adjusted its staffing and training procedures, he said.

“We cross-train gunners and drivers so

we have more flexibility in filling crews,” said Mooney, a Huntsville, Ala., native. “We never have a problem filling crews because we get so many volunteers. In fact, we have to turn people away. Going on missions breaks the monotony of being at Q-West.”

Among those eager for missions is Sgt. Ryan Lee, with C Co. 2nd Bn., 198th CAB, a scout vehicle commander from Independence, Miss.

“I love this,” he said. “I’m one of those people who say I’m the best at what I do, and what I do is command a scout vehicle.”

Lee’s gunner, Spc. Robert A. Reeves, said he, too, enjoyed the missions. The Cabot, Ark., native said he had a 10-year break in service and reenlisted just for the deployment. Formerly serving with the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment, Reeves said he joined C Co., 2/198th CAB, because it was the closest tank unit to his home.

“I wanted to do my part, and one day I might actually get back on a tank,” he said. “Even so, I’ve had a lot of fun and enjoyed myself thoroughly since we deployed. This has been a great adventure and I’ve lost 35 pounds.”

Capt. Amy Noble (standing), chaplain at the Q-West Convoy Readiness Center, shares a devotional message with members of 1st Platoon, C Company, 2nd Battalion, 198th Combined Arms, a Mississippi Army National Guard armor unit out of Oxford, Miss., Oct. 28. The Mississippians are preparing to depart on a convoy security mission to Contingency Operating Location Warrior, Iraq.



Sgt. Ryan Lee, a scout truck commander with 1st Platoon, C Co., 2nd Bn., 198th CAB, stands behind the Self-Protection Adaptive Roller Kit of his scout truck during a convoy security mission Oct. 29 back to the Contingency Operating Location Warrior, Iraq, after the gun truck that broke down.

# trucks, secure convoys

Another first platoon Soldier who said he looks forward to missions is Spc. Michael A. Pettit, a gunner from Horn Lake, Miss.

“Going on missions is better than being stuck on the base,” said Pettit. “You can get out and see the country, see what life’s like on other bases.”

The leave policy also affects the availability of noncommissioned officers qualified to be convoy and assistant convoy commanders, McLeskey said. Therefore, the NCOs rotate in these positions as well, he said.

“We have a tracker of whose turn it is to be CC or ACC,” said McLeskey. “I brief them on the mission, tell them to pick their crews, but I don’t micromanage them. They’ve mastered the process.”

Mastering that process began during pre-deployment training, said McLeskey.

“When we were at Camp Shelby, we trained a lot at night,” he said. “We set up training lanes and had our own opposing forces attack. We practiced procedures for evacuating wounded and reporting unexploded ordnance. We also practiced self-recovery methods. Hook-

ing up a tow-bar in the dark is totally different from doing it during the day.”

Most of the Soldiers prefer to run convoy security missions at night because they encounter fewer vehicles and people, said Mooney.

The gun trucks operate at night with an array of lights, creating unique challenges, especially for the gunner who maintains all-around surveillance, said Reeves.

“Running missions at night, you work in a bubble of light that you can’t see beyond,” he said. “You have to deal with what enters the bubble. You learn to assess and react quickly.”

The longstanding catch-phrase – stay alert, stay alive – is more than a cliché to these Soldiers.

“You’ve got to be alert and look for anything unusual,” said Sgt. Bradley D. Thomas, a truck commander and turret gunner and a Noxapater, Miss., native. “It’s tiring, but I love gunning because you get to see a lot more.”

Sgt. Anthony Porter, a gunner from Greenwood, Miss., echoed this sentiment.

“When I’m up there in the gun turret, I’m always thinking about my situ-

ation,” he said. “I’m always alert because I’m the eyes of the vehicle.”

Spc. Brian E. Price said as a driver, he must remain focused, especially when his Mine-Resistant Ambush-Protected vehicle is equipped with the Self-Protection Adaptive Roller Kit. The SPARKs is a set of roller banks attached to the truck’s front, absorbing the damage of IEDs and shielding the vehicle and crew, he said.

“When I get behind the wheel, I have a lot to think about, the crew, the mission,” said Price. “I got a lot on my mind, so I always try to get enough rest between missions. I can’t mess around when I’m driving, especially when I’m rolling with SPARKs.”

The platoon operates three variants of the MRAP vehicle – the MaxxPro, the Caiman and the bus-like RG-33, said McLeskey.

“Most of us prefer the Caiman,” said McLeskey. “It has such a smooth ride, we call it the Cadillac. The roughest ride is the MaxxPro, which is my vehicle. It’s rugged, but when it hits rough terrain it’ll jar your teeth.”

Another standard vehicle during missions is the repair truck, a 5-ton medium tactical vehicle. The Soldiers call it the “tire truck,” because it carries extra tires, spare parts, oil, tools and other maintenance items that assist the convoy with self-recovery, said Sgt. Roy G. Chapman, commander of a tire truck.

“Some people don’t want to be in the tire truck because it’s not protected as well as the MRAP,” said Chapman, a Batesville, Miss., native. “I don’t think about comfort or protection when I get my truck. I think of all the vehicles as the same vehicle, going in the same direction. Somebody has to do it and anyway, all the

vehicles protect each other.”

Lee and Ramseur said they learned the definition of discipline from the same high school history teacher.

“I’ll never forget my history teacher at Independence High School, Mr. Ronnie Cusher, making us memorize the definition of discipline,” said Lee.

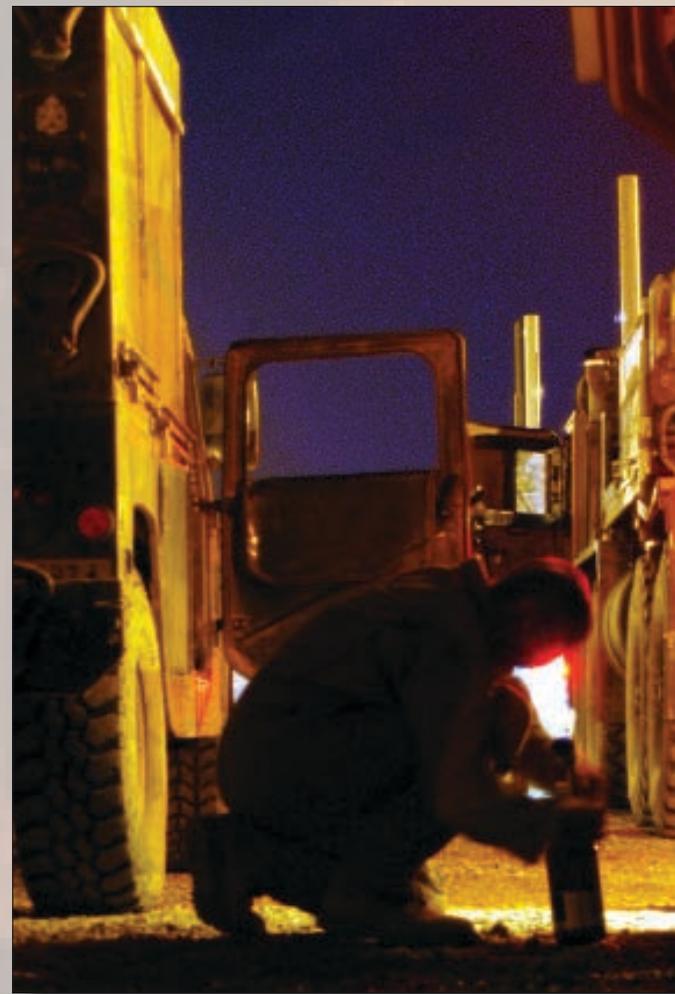
“He wrote it on the board, but not all at once. He wrote a little each week and, throughout the semester, we memorized it a little at a time.”

Lee recited it, but to fact-check his recitation he radioed Ramseur in the second scout truck.

“You want to know what?” said Ramseur.

“The definition of discipline,” said Lee.

“That’s easy,” said Ramseur. “Learn to do what you have to do, when you have to do it, whether you like it or not, whether you have time or not, without being told.”



Sgt. Travis Carne, a turret gunner with 1st Platoon, C Company, 2nd Battalion, 198th Combined Arms, an armor unit from Oxford, Miss., checks a fire extinguisher in the Contingency Operating Location Q-West, Iraq, Convoy Readiness Center yard before a convoy security mission Oct. 28 to COL Warrior.



Company, 2nd Battalion, 198th Combined Arms out of Oxford, Miss., and an Independence, Miss., Caiman version of the Mine-Resistant Ambush-Protected vehicle, preparing to warn off on the platoon’s home base, Contingency Operating Location Q-West. The convoy halted to tow a

# Providers visit historical ruins of Ur



Soldiers with the 121st Brigade Support Battalion walk through an archway in the archaeological remains of Ur Nov. 12 near Contingency Operating Location Adder, Iraq.



Soldiers with the 121st Brigade Support Battalion take pictures and walk down the stairs to see the tomb of Shulgi and Amur-Sin.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY  
SPC. LISA COPE  
EXPEDITIONARY TIMES STAFF

UR, Iraq – More than 230 Soldiers with the 121st Brigade Support Battalion visited the archaeological remains of Ur, Nov. 12, near Contingency Operating Location Adder, Iraq.

Lt. Col. Gene G. Henke, the chaplain with the 732nd Combat Service Support Battalion, out of Tomah, Wis., said while the ziggurat is the most visible landmark in the area, the real treasure for several different religious cultures is the birthplace of the biblical figure Abraham in the remains of Ur, referred to in biblical times as Ur of the Chaldeans.

Henke, a Brookfield, Wis., native, said the story of Abraham can be found in the Bible in Genesis 12-25, and he is mentioned throughout the Bible. Abraham is recognized as the father of Judaism and an important figure in Islam and Christianity, he said.

The tour offers Soldiers an opportunity to learn more about the culture of the area in which they are deployed, said Henke.

“It is a once in a lifetime opportunity, one of those opportunities that would not be afforded us without the military,” he said. “It is really one of the unspoken benefits or blessings that the military provides. We are ... able to encourage and provide support for the establishment of freedom and democracy ... and at the same time it takes us to a corner of the world ... I would never have the opportunity to go to.”

First Lt. Aaron R. Hrabovsky, the officer in charge of intelligence with the 121st BSB, went on the tour of Ur with his unit. He also said he believed going to the sight



Soldiers with the 121st Brigade Support Battalion gather around their tour guid to learn more about the country in which they are deployed in the archaeological remains of Ur, the birthplace of the biblical figure Abraham, Nov. 12 near Contingency Operating Location Adder, Iraq.

gave his Soldiers the chance to learn about the area in which they are deployed.

“We walk to work every day and see it and I know people talk all the time about wanting to be able to make a trip over there,” he said. “While you are here ... you are never going to get that opportunity again.”

Learning more about the history of the area also gives Soldiers an appreciation for the local nationals, said Hrabovsky.

“I know it helps me, seeing where they came from, knowing where the Iraqi culture started and how it got its roots,” he said. “For the young Soldiers, hopefully it does help them to see where they came from, that, yes, this culture is capable of great things, and hopefully we can get them back on track to that again.”



Soldiers with the 121st Brigade Support Battalion walk toward the ziggurat after their tour Nov. 12 at the archaeological remains of Ur near Contingency Operating Location Adder, Iraq.

## SHOUT OUT!!!

Contact the Expeditionary Times for more information.

E-mail: [expeditionarytimes@iraq.centcom.mil](mailto:expeditionarytimes@iraq.centcom.mil)

# Airman uses civilian medic skills as volunteer

STORY BY AIR FORCE  
STAFF SGT. JAKE RICHMOND  
332ND AEW PUBLIC AFFAIRS

JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq  
— For Staff Sgt. Christopher Hipsher, “Service Before Self” does not quite seem to cover it.

A native of Hilo, Hawaii, Hipsher’s home unit is the 291st Combat Communications Squadron, Hawaii Air National Guard. Here at JBB, he is nearing the end of a deployment with the 332nd Expeditionary Communications Squadron as a small computer repair technician.

On the one day a week he is not dealing with information technology equipment, he volunteers at the Air Force Theater Hospital. Tech. Sgt. Mary Chapman, noncommissioned officer in charge of the emergency department, said Hipsher is one of the best volunteers they have.

“He’s been like a regular staff member, willing to do anything for the patients,” she said.

Back home, he serves Hawaii County as a firefighter and emergency medical technician,

he said. So, when he arrived here, he said he figured he might as well put his skills to good use.

“I had a friend who’s been (to Balad) prior to me, and he told me there’s a volunteer program here at the hospital,” Hipsher said. “I decided to sign up ... Any small contribution that you can make – it actually makes a huge difference. It’s very gratifying to know that when people come in here, you can help them.”

With more than 100 volunteer hours logged at the hospital, he became one of the most proficient individuals in responding to incoming trauma patients, Chapman said.

“A lot of it is knowing where the supplies are and being familiar with our machines,” Chapman said. “During the last trauma call we had, he was one of our first choices (to assist). When I saw him (waiting) in the group, I told him, ‘You need to make your way to the front.’”

For Hipsher, spending those long days gaining experience at the hospital was just another way to enjoy his downtime.

“It’s something I like to do,” he said. “The past few weeks I’ve been here, I’ve started to

feel a little bit exhausted. So, I decided to cut back my hours, rather than (take a week off). I think if I cut it out completely, I would feel disappointed in myself.

“Part of it is that I want to make sure I keep my skills fresh. But I think the bigger part of it is I actually want to help. When our troops come in from the field and they’re injured, I want to be the one who can help them.”

He said he realized that health care has become a real passion for him. His EMT experience, combined with training at a hospital in Hawaii and his volunteering here, solidified his goals to become a bona fide medical professional, he said. He said he plans to go to nursing school when he gets back home.

“I didn’t realize how much the nurses did at the time when I started,” he said. “It really opened my eyes.”

Hipsher also grew to appreciate the longer-term care that hospital staff can render, he said.

“As an EMT, a lot of times you don’t get to see the full effect of your care,” he said. “When I was in the (emergency room), I was able to track the patients along, see how they’re

doing and see how the care affected them in a positive way. It was very cool to see.”

He said the hospital here is similar in that regard; he’d sometimes hear about how doctors were able to avoid amputation on one of the patients he helped, or how an Iraqi child slowly made a recovery from severe burns.

Now, nearing the end of his time in Iraq, he can look back at his volunteer service with pride and count it as one piece of what he hopes will be a career in medicine.

“It’s very rewarding,” he

said. “I feel good when I come in here. I like to help people, and I feel like I can make a positive contribution. Helping somebody out there who is



**Staff Sgt. Christopher Hipsher, 332nd Expeditionary Communications Squadron small computer technician, practices endotracheal intubation techniques on a training dummy at the Air Force Theater Hospital Oct. 22 at Joint Base Balad, Iraq. Hipsher is an emergency medical technician volunteer and is certified in Hawaii.**

doing probably a much tougher job than me makes me feel better about being here and makes me feel like I’m contributing more.”

# Renovation shop offers free uniform repairs

STORY AND PHOTO BY  
SGT. RYAN L. TWIST  
EXPEDITIONARY TIMES STAFF

CONTINGENCY OPERATION LOCATION MAREZ, Mosul, Iraq – Soldiers flow into the renovation shop with uniforms in hand, preparing to hand them to the 506th Quartermaster Company for repairs.

Sgt. Kevin D. Westberry, the noncommissioned officer in charge of the renovation shops with the 506th QM Co. out of Fort Lee, Va., said the renovation shops repair uniforms, tents, dog uniforms, Hawaiian shirts, aprons, book covers and flag covers.

“It’s not just (Army Combat Uniforms) that we do,” said Capt. Dwight O. Smith, the commander of the 506th QM Co. “Lots of times people will come in and say ‘Hey, can you do this?’ If we can make the machine do it, we’ll do it.”

Smith, a San Francisco native, said they have two locations at Marez.

The biggest benefit to Soldiers is that the service is free and done within 72 hours, he said.

“Soldiers automatically assume

they have to take them to KBR, (Inc.) or vendors,” said Smith.

Westberry, a Willacoochee, Ga., native, said the majority of the work that comes through the shop is done on the spot on a first come, first served basis.

The Soldiers offer emergency work done as well, for Soldiers coming in from outside the COL, he said.

Smith said the renovation shop allows Soldiers to worry about one less item they have to pay for.

“I think we alleviate some of that by our clothing repair mission,” he said.

Spc. Patricia A. Mathis, renovation shop east worker with the 506th and a Philadelphia native, said Soldiers care about their appearance, and bring in their uniforms to make sure they are fit for proper wear.

“They can still look good while they continue their mission,” she said.

“We get Soldiers and Department of Defense

civilians that come in the shop with clothing that needs to be repaired.

“I feel proud to see them every day,” said Mathis. “(I like) meeting new people when they come into the shop and I love to see the smile on their faces when they come and get their clothes back and see how they have been repaired.”

Westberry said the reactions they get when service members have their

items returned is part of their reward. That gratitude brings smiles to the Soldiers who work at the renovation shops, he said.

First Sgt. Joseph T. Walden, with the 506th and a Hammond, Ind., native, said Soldiers at the renovation shops had many obstacles to overcome. He said many did not know how to use the equipment or had never sewn before.

Many had to train hands-on until they had a grasp on the equipment, he said.

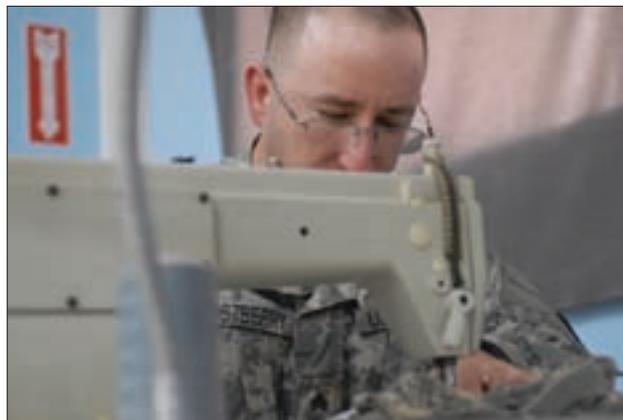
Westberry said he had never touched a sewing machine prior to this deployment, only a needle and thread. He said he had learned a lot since arriving in country and dealt with each mission as it came along.

“It’s one of the most enjoyable jobs I’ve had so far in Iraq,” he said. “I do it in my spare time. I enjoy doing it. It helps Soldiers and anybody else that wants something done.”

Westberry said he made a bag for a Soldier’s daughter when he was preparing to go home for leave.

He does what he can to make the Soldiers stay motivated or feel at home, he said.

“The mission here is being utilized very effectively,” said Smith.



**Sgt. Kevin D. Westberry, the noncommissioned officer in charge of the renovation shops with the 506th Quartermaster Company, a Willacoochee, Ga., native, repairs a uniform at the renovation shop Oct. 3 at Contingency Operating Location Marez, Mosul, Iraq.**

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**R** RESTRICTED

# Joint Base Balad gathers for Veterans Day 5K

STORY AND PHOTOS BY  
SGT. KEITH S. VAN KLOMPENBERG  
EXPEDITIONARY TIMES STAFF

JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq – More than 600 service members and civilians took part in the Veteran's Day 5K race Nov. 11, at Joint Base Balad, Iraq, paying tribute to the Veterans of past and present by running with Old Glory.



The Apollo Flag company in Totowa, N.J., donated an 18 foot by 12 foot American flag, as well as 600 miniature American flags and a flag commemorating Sept. 11, 2001 for the early-morning event.

Spc. Mauricio Jones, a transportation movement coordinator with the 840th Transportation Battalion and a Red Bank, N.J., native, said the donation was a lucky accident.

"I was tasked by our first sergeant to find a flag for the event and I remembered a company that I used to drive by on my way to work back home," he said. "When I called to price a flag, they offered to donate one."

Sgt. 1st Class Christopher Galbusieri, the detachment first sergeant with the 840 Trans. Bn. and a Fort Lauderdale, Fla., native, said the donation of flags was a big deal to him and other Warfighters at JBB.

"The (service members) got to see that there are people out there that appreciate what they're doing,"

he said.

Galbusieri said his unit organized the event to honor the Veterans of today's contingency operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, and to allow those still here to honor the Veterans from previous generations and conflicts.

"It's a way for them to feel proud of what they do, and to know what people before them were doing and what people after them will do," he said.

Maj. Lawrence W. Bittner, executive officer for the 840th Trans. Bn. and a Tacoma, Wash., native, said it was a good day for those spending their first Veteran's Day as Veterans themselves.

"They're getting a new appreciation for Veterans past and present. That it comes with the sacrifice of both (service members) and their families," Bittner said.

Before the runners crossed under Old Glory to start the race, Jones handed the Sept. 11 flag to another



A Soldier carries a Sept. 11, 2001 remembrance flag, donated by the Apollo Flag company in Totowa, N.J., during the Veterans Day 5K race Nov. 11 at Joint Base Balad, Iraq.

Soldier who held it high as he ran. Jones said this was especially important to him.

"That's the main reason I joined the Army," he said. "I was working in New York at the time of the attacks. We'll never forget."

## Soldiers advance career

STORY BY  
2ND LT. NICHOLAS A. SWAB  
47TH TRANS. CO.

AL ASAD AIRBASE, Iraq – Soldiers with the 47th Transportation Company are one step closer to reaching their career and educational goals, courtesy of courses designed to improve their Army



test scores.

General technical improvement courses allowed Spc. Dustin Bradford, a heavy wheeled vehicle operator with the 47th Trans. Co., 751st Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 96th Sustainment Brigade, out of Ft. Bliss, Texas, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), to improve his GT score during his deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

"My intention in taking the course is to increase my score and further my career by achieving the score needed to submit a Green to Gold packet," said Bradford, a Lewes, Del., native. "I never thought I would have an opportunity to do something like that while being de-

ployed."

Spc. Daisy McMahon, a heavy wheeled vehicle operator and orderly room clerk with the 47th Trans. Co. and an El Paso, Texas, native, said she welcomed the opportunity to expand her educational and career opportunities from Iraq.

"It's something you wouldn't expect while being deployed," McMahon said. "The instructors were very helpful and knowledgeable. They helped me increase my scores. If they didn't have the answer they would find out and get back with me."

Cpl. David Laboy, a heavy wheeled vehicle operator and a Chicago native, is enrolled in the course and said he welcomes the career opportunities it offers.

"My GT score is a 95 right now and I wanted to take the course to open my opportunities and re-enlistment options in the communications field," Laboy said. "I'm three weeks into a four week course and I'm right where I need to be as far as my score. My last deployment was kind of rushed, but this one has allowed me the opportunity to further my career and still support the mission."



US Army Photo by Staff Sgt. Kimberly Calkin, 96th Sust. Bde.

Five Soldiers of the 138th Quartermaster Support Co., 751st Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 96th Sustainment Brigade, from Brazil, Ind., competed with more than 300 other participants, in the Marine Corps Marathon Oct. 25 held at Al Asad, Iraq. This was the first marathon for each of the 138th Soldiers. Pictured (front row) Spc. James Thomas, Joint Distribution Center documenter and an Indianapolis, Ind., native; Sgt. Keenan Smith, the class III noncommissioned officer in charge, from Logansport, Ind.; (back row) Spc. Aaron Smith, a material handler equipment operator a Logansport, Ind., native; Spc. Helen Corne, who assists in the Iwo Jima Gym, and is a Terre Haute, Ind. native; 751st CSSB Command Sgt. Maj. Chet Welch, from Eastover, S.C.; and Spc. Brian Pedro, who assists in the Iwo Jima Gym, from Middleton, Ind.

# Check out the 15th Sust. Bde. online

See the Web site at:

[www.supporttheaction.net](http://www.supporttheaction.net)



# Soldiers prepare to be sergeants

STORY AND PHOTO BY  
SGT. KORY SMITH  
260TH CSSB

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – A course developed in honor of a fallen Warfighter was designed to teach Soldiers with the 260th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion from Hunter Army Airfield, Ga., the meaning of leadership, integrity and duty.

The William J. Bearsley Pre-Warrior Leaders Course was founded by Command Sgt. Maj. Dwight H. Williams, the senior enlisted adviser with the 260th CSSB and a Baltimore native. Williams has offered this course since his 2007 deployment, during which Staff Sgt. William J. Bearsley lost his life.

“This course was named after a great Soldier,” said Williams. “If these young leaders turn out like Staff Sgt. Bearsley, I think the Army will be in good hands.”

Each class has 15 to 20 students from different companies throughout the battalion. The course lasts for seven days, with the typical class day starting at 6 p.m. and ending at 7 a.m.

Four noncommissioned officers in the battalion teach the classes, in addition to their full time jobs.

The cadre members are Staff Sgt. Brandon Carrington, a career counselor and an Oklahoma City native, Sgt. Bernard Villa, a personnel security detail squad leader and an Oxnard, Calif., native, Sgt. Anthony DiMauro, a communications specialist and a Cape Cod, Md., native, and Sgt. Sarah Christenson, a member of the PSD and a Jefferson, S.D., native.

“I really love working with the Soldiers because they motivate me everyday to be a better NCO,” said Villa.

The curriculum includes 16 classes, with subjects ranging from sexual assault prevention to leadership principles, physical fitness to weapons, with an emphasis on teamwork and taking care of Soldiers.

“The course is very demanding because we are asked to come in at 6 p.m. and the class does not end till 7 a.m.,” said Spc. Sha-leene Phillips, an Austin, Texas, native, with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 260th CSSB.

Spc. Cedric Jackson, a transportation specialist with the 296th Transportation Co., an Army Reserve unit out of Brookhaven, Miss., said the training challenged him in unanticipated ways.

“The tactical movement was the most difficult for me,” said Jackson, a Hattiesburg, Miss., native. “The scenarios did not play out as we planned, so we had to improvise a lot. But I think it was a good training exercise.”

A graduation ceremony marked the end of the course.



Soldiers participating in the 260th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion Pre-Warrior Leaders Course practice the proper techniques for close quarter combat.

“We just want to give our troops a taste of the Warrior Leadership Course,” said Williams. “This course gives them a head start on their peers. Hopefully, the Soldiers will take the things they have learned back to their units and strive to be the best leaders they can be.”

## Airmen prepare, sustain in-theater rescue missions

STORY BY AIR FORCE  
SENIOR AIRMAN

ANDRIA J. ALLMOND  
332ND AEW PUBLIC AFFAIRS

JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq – Roughly 80 Airmen with the 41st Rescue Squadron at Moody Air Force Base, Ga., are assigned to the 64th Expeditionary Helicopter Maintenance Unit and charged with the upkeep of the helicopters used in combat search

and rescue missions here in Iraq.

“Our job is to ensure the aircraft is ready to fly at all times,” said Staff Sgt. Sean Hamilton, 64th EHMU crew chief. “And when it’s not ready, we fix it as quickly as possible. If the aircrew goes up, we want to make sure they come back.”

Senior Airman Skyler Callender, 64th EHMU aircraft hydraulics specialist, said the overall mission of the maintenance unit is to augment the combat search and rescue team members.

The combat search and rescue team members primary mission is recovery and medical treatment of friendly forces in need.

“Whether it be Iraqis or our own service members out there, it’s very satisfying to know you helped save a life,” said Callender, a Big Rapids, Mich., native. “Even though we don’t fly these things, we maintain them every day so our aircrew members can go out there and save lives.”

The unit is broken down into 15 specialty areas, ranging from electronic coun-

termeasures to quality assurance. Each specialized component works collectively to ensure every HH-60G Pave Hawk undergoes routine pre-flight inspections, hit, hover and hoist inspections – called “H3s” – and repair work. Crew chiefs review the work of the 14 other areas of expertise.

“Basically, they are the backbone of what I do,” Hamilton said, referring to the Airmen whose work he assesses. “They are the ones out there on the aircraft all the time, making sure inspections are completed, gassing the aircraft when it comes down, and (conducting) launch and recovery.”

The team works to preserve the aircraft’s alert status by employing cross-utilization.

“My specific role is to maintain the aircraft’s hydraulics system,” said Callender. “It’s not too complicated, so oftentimes I give a helping hand to

the crew chiefs and other career fields on the aircraft.”

While the retractable in-flight refueling probes and hoists, capable of lifting a 600-pound load, make the Pave Hawk well-suited for combat-zone operations, it is useful in non-combat scenarios as well. Last year, the helicopters were dispatched for the retrieval of Cuban refugees in the Gulf of Mexico. Also, in 2005, the rescue aircraft was called upon in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

“Back at home station, our work makes the aircraft function for humanitarian relief, natural disasters and homeland security missions,” said Staff Sgt. Birdeal Ferguson, 64th EHMU crew chief.

Master Sgt. Matt Comp-ton, the unit’s production superintendent, said no matter what capacity they need to fulfill, the Airmen of the 64th EHMU bring dedication to their mission.

“Even if we’re sitting alert and there’s not much going on, we still have guys finding things to do,” he said. “Even as (operations are) drawing down, we’re still hacking a mission – making sure people come home.”

Airman 1st Class Micheal Griggs, 64th Expeditionary Helicopter Maintenance Unit weapons team member, torques a module into place on an HH-60G Pave Hawk as part of a maintenance check Oct. 27. The HH-60G Pave Hawk is maintained by Airmen with various specialties that include communications, navigation, engines, hydraulics, electronics, weapons systems and electronic counter warfare.



U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Christopher Hubenthal

# Sudoku

The objective is to fill the 9x9 grid so each column, each row and each of the nine 3x3 boxes contains the digits from 1 to 9 only one time each.

Last week's answers

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Level: Hard

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
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|   |   |   |   | 8 | 7 |   | 1 |   |

# TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

1. What U.S. military base was won in the last major battle against Japan?
2. Who founded the Coca Cola company?
3. What was Malcom X's last name?
4. Which president is depicted on a \$100,000 bill?
5. What is the skin condition tinea pedis better known as?
6. What martial artist warbles the theme song for Walker, Texas Ranger?

1. Okinawa 2. Asa Chandler 3. Little 4. Woodrow Wilson 5. Athlete's Foot 6. Chuck Norris

## JB BALAD WORSHIP SERVICES

### TRADITIONAL - Sunday

0200 Air Force Hospital Chapel 0930 Provider Chapel  
 1030 Freedom Chapel (West side) 1100 Castle Heights (Bldg. 7562)  
 1400 Air Force Hospital Chapel 1730 Gilbert Memorial Chapel (H-6)  
 2000 Air Force Hospital Chapel

### GOSPEL - Sunday

1100 MWR East Building 1200 Freedom Chapel (West Side)  
 1230 Gilbert Memorial Chapel (H-6)

### CONTEMPORARY - Sunday

0900 Chapel- Next Iraq/MWR East  
 1030 Gilbert Memorial Chapel (H-6)  
 1400 Castle Heights (Bldg. 7562) 1900 Freedom Chapel (West Side)

### Wednesday

2000 Gilbert Memorial Chapel

### LITURGICAL (Episcopal, Anglican, Presbyterian) - Sunday

1700 Provider Chapel

### SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST - Saturday

1000 Provider Chapel

### CHURCH OF CHRIST - Sunday

1530 Castle Heights (Bldg. 7562)

### LATTER DAY SAINTS (MORMON)- Sunday

1300 Provider Chapel 1530 Freedom Chapel (West side)  
 1900 Gilbert Memorial Chapel (H-6)

### MASS - Saturday

1700 Gilbert Memorial Chapel (H-6)  
 2000 Freedom Chapel (West Side)  
**Sunday** 0830 Gilbert Memorial Chapel (H-6)

### Thursday

1100 Air Force Hospital

### Mon., Wed., Fri.

1700 Gilbert Memorial Chapel (H-6)

### Monday-Friday

1130 555th Engineer Bde. (Bldg. 7200)

### JEWISH SHABBAT SERVICES- Friday

1700 Gilbert Memorial Chapel (H-6)

### Saturday

0930 Gilbert Memorial Chapel (H-6)

### ISLAMIC PRAYER - Friday

1230 Provider Chapel

### PAGAN/WICCAN FELLOWSHIP - Thursday

1900 The Shack

### Saturday

1900 The Shack

### GREEK ORTHODOX - Sunday

0900 Provider Annex

### FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CALL:

Gilbert Chapel: 443-7703

Provider Chapel: 433-2430

Freedom Chapel: 443-6303

## JB BALAD ACTIVITIES

|   |  |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| <b>INDOOR POOL</b><br>Swim Lessons:<br>Mon., Wed.- 6 p.m.<br>Tue., Thu., Sat.- 6:30 p.m.<br>Aqua Training:<br>Tue., Thu.- 7:30 p.m., 8:30 p.m.                  | a.m., 5-6 p.m.<br>Edge Weapons & Stick Fighting<br>Training:<br>Tue., Thur., Sat.- 8-10 p.m. | p.m.<br>Caribbean Night:<br>Friday- 8 p.m.<br>Chess & Dominoes Tourney:<br>Friday- 8 p.m.<br>Salsa Class:<br>Saturday- 8:30 p.m.<br>Poker:<br>Saturday- 7:30 p.m.   | CC Cross Fit:<br>Monday- Saturday- 10:30 p.m.<br>Cross Fit:<br>Mon., Wed., Fri.- 5:45 a.m., 7 a.m., 3 p.m., 6 p.m.<br>Tue., Thu.- 7 a.m., 3 p.m.<br>Sunday- 5:45 a.m., 3 p.m.<br>P90x:<br>Monday- Saturday- 4:30 a.m., 4 p.m., 10 p.m.<br>Soccer:<br>Tue., Thu.- 8 p.m.<br>Wednesday- 8 p.m.<br>MACP Level 1:<br>Friday- 8 p.m.<br>5 on 5 Basketball:<br>Saturday- 8 p.m. | Hold'em:<br>Mon., Fri.- 2 p.m., 8:30 p.m.<br>Tuesday- 2 a.m., 8:30 p.m.<br>Ping-pong tourney:<br>Tuesday- 8:30 p.m.<br>Spades:<br>Wednesday- 2 a.m., 8:30 p.m.<br>Salsa:<br>Wednesday- 8:30 p.m.<br>9-ball:<br>Thursday- 2 a.m., 8:30 p.m.<br>Karaoke:<br>Thursday- 8:30 p.m.<br>Dart:<br>Saturday- 8:30 p.m. | Ping-pong tourney:<br>Tuesday- 8 p.m.<br>Foosball tourney:<br>Tuesday- 8 p.m.<br>Jam Session:<br>Tuesday- 7:30 p.m.<br>8-ball tourney:<br>Wednesday- 8 p.m.<br>Guitar Lessons:<br>Thursday- 7:30 p.m.<br>Game tourney:<br>Thursday- 1 p.m., 8 p.m.<br>Enlisted Poker:<br>Friday- 1 p.m., 8 p.m.<br>Officer Poker:<br>Saturday- 1 p.m., 8 p.m.<br>Squat Competition:<br>Saturday- 8 p.m. | Friday- 7 p.m.<br>Aerobics:<br>Monday, Wednesday, Friday- 7 p.m.<br>Body by Midget Toning Class:<br>Tue., Thu., - 7 p.m.<br>Dodge ball Game:<br>Tuesday- 7:30 p.m.<br>Furman's Martial Arts:<br>Mon., Wed., Sun., - 1 p.m.<br>Gaston's Self-Defense Class:<br>Fri., Sat.- 7 p.m.<br>Open court basketball:<br>Thursday- 7 p.m.<br>Open court soccer:<br>Mon., Wed., - 7 p.m.<br>Zingano Brazilian Jui Jitsu:<br>Tue., Thu., - 8:30 p.m. |
| <b>EAST FIT-NESS CENTER</b><br>Open Court Volleyball:<br>Sunday- 6 p.m.<br>Aerobics:<br>Mon., Wed., Fri.- 5:30-6:30 a.m.<br>Yoga Class:<br>Mon., Fri.- 6-7 a.m. | 8-10 p.m.  | <b>EAST RECREATION CENTER</b><br>4-ball tourney:<br>Sunday- 8 p.m.<br>Karaoke:<br>Monday- 8 p.m.<br>Swing Class:<br>Tuesday- 8 p.m.<br>Table Tennis:<br>Tuesday- 8 p.m.<br>Plastic Models Club:<br>Wednesday 7 p.m.<br>9-ball tourney:<br>Wednesday- 8 p.m.<br>Dungeons & Dragons:<br>Thursday- 7:30 p.m.<br>Poetry Night:<br>Thursday- 8 p.m.<br>6-ball tourney:<br>Thursday- 8 p.m. | <b>H6 FITNESS CENTER</b><br>Spin:<br>Sunday- 9 a.m.<br>Monday, Wed., Fri.- 2 a.m., 8 a.m. 2 p.m., 7 p.m.<br>Tue., Thu., - 5:45 a.m., 9 a.m., 8:30 p.m.<br>Saturday- 9 a.m., 7 p.m.<br>Boxing:<br>Sunday- 4 p.m.<br>Tue., Thu., - 2 p.m.<br>Boot Camp:<br>Sunday- 8:45 a.m.<br>Tue., Thu., - 7 p.m.<br>Power Abs:<br>Mon., Tue., Thu., - 8 p.m.<br>Friday- 9 p.m.          | Monday- Saturday- 4:30 a.m., 4 p.m., 10 p.m.<br>Tuesday- 8:30 p.m.<br>Wednesday- 8:30 p.m.<br>Thursday- 2 a.m., 8:30 p.m.<br>Friday- 8 p.m.<br>Saturday- 8 p.m.<br>MACP Level 1:<br>Friday- 8 p.m.<br>Saturday- 8 p.m.<br><b>H6 RECREATION CENTER</b><br>Bingo:<br>Sunday- 8 p.m.<br>Texas                    | Wednesday- 2 a.m., 8:30 p.m.<br>Thursday- 2 a.m., 8:30 p.m.<br>Friday- 8 p.m.<br>Saturday- 8 p.m.<br>Sunday- 8:30 p.m.<br><b>WEST RECREATION CENTER</b><br>Green Bean Karaoke:<br>Sun., Wed., - 7:30pm<br>9-ball tourney:<br>Monday- 8 p.m.   | Monday, Wednesday, Friday- 7 p.m.<br>Tuesday- 8 p.m.<br>Wednesday- 8 p.m.<br>Thursday- 7:30 p.m.<br>Friday- 1 p.m., 8 p.m.<br>Saturday- 8 p.m.<br>Sunday- 7:30 p.m.<br>Monday, Wednesday, Friday, - 8:10 p.m.   |

## UPCOMING SPORTS ON AFN



### Wednesday 11/18/09

- College Men's Basketball: Gonzaga @ Michigan State, Live 4:00 a.m. AFN|sports
- NHL: Washington Capitals @ New York Rangers, Live 3 a.m. AFN|xtra
- NBA: Detroit Pistons @ Los Angeles Lakers, Live 6:30 a.m. AFN|xtra

### Thursday 11/19/09

- NBA Wednesday: Cleveland Cavaliers @ Washington Wizards, Live 3 a.m. AFN|sports
- San Antonio Spurs @ Dallas Mavericks Live 5:30 a.m. AFN|sports
- Miami Heat @ Atlanta Hawks, Live 7 p.m. AFN|sports

### Friday 11/20/09

- ESPN2 College Football Primetime: Colorado @ Oklahoma State, Live 3:30 a.m. AFN|xtra
- Thursday Night Football: Miami Dolphins @ Carolina Panthers, Live 4 a.m. AFN|sports
- NBA on TNT: Chicago Bulls @ Los Angeles Lakers, Live 6:30 a.m. AFN|xtra

### Saturday 11/21/09

- NBA Friday: Orlando Magic @ Boston Celtics, Live 4 a.m. AFN|sports
- NBA Friday: Denver Nuggets @ Los Angeles Clippers, Live 6:30 a.m. AFN|sports
- ESPN2 College Football Primetime: Boise State @ Utah State, Live 5:30 a.m. AFN|xtra

### Sunday 11/22/09

- College Football: "The Big Game": California @ Stanford, Live 3:30 a.m. AFN|prime atlantic
- UFC 106: Ortiz vs Griffin 2 (Mandalay Bay Events Center; Las Vegas, NV) Live 6 a.m. AFN|xtra
- Fox NFL Sunday Teams TBD 8 p.m. AFN|xtra
- The NFL Today Teams TBD 9 p.m. AFN|xtra
- NFL Teams TBD 9 p.m. AFN|sports

### Monday 11/23/09

- NFL Teams TBD 12 a.m. AFN|sports
- Sunday Night Football: Philadelphia Eagles @ Chicago Bears, Live 4:15 a.m. AFN|sports
- MLS Cup 2009: Teams TBD Live 4:30 a.m. AFN|xtra
- 2009-2010 PBA Tour: PBA Chameleon Championship, Tape Delayed 5:30 a.m. AFN|prime atlantic

### Tuesday 11/24/09

- Monday Night Football: Tennessee Titans @ Houston Texans, Live 4:30 a.m. AFN|sports
- College Basketball Semifinal #2: Texas vs. Iowa, 6 a.m. AFN|xtra
- NHL Tampa Bay Lightning @ Phoenix Coyotes, Live 5:30 a.m. AFN|xtra

# Arts & Entertainment

## Take a dose of 'Medicine for Melancholy'

BY SGT. KEITH S. VAN KLOMPENBERG  
EXPEDITIONARY TIMES STAFF



I recently picked up this DVD while browsing the new releases at the Army and Air Force Exchange Service Post Exchange. It's always refreshing to see independent and festival films amongst the action flicks and straight-to-DVD teen movies that canvass that back wall. It's a real rarity here at Joint Base Balad to find a good independent film, and a serious film with a black cast that's not made by Tyler Perry.

I remember hearing about "Medicine for Melancholy" a while back and recalled it featuring some fixed-gear cycling, a sport very close to my heart. That, and the fact

that it starred The Daily Show's Wyatt Cenac, was reason enough to give it a try.

The story isn't really anything new. Two 20-somethings wake up the morning after a party and one-night stand and split an awkward cab ride to their respective homes. When Micah, played by Cenac, arrives home, he realizes Joanne, played by the beautiful Tracey Heggins, forgot her purse in the car. He tracks her down to return the purse and pursue some sort of follow-up to the night before, only to discover she has a live-in boyfriend, who is out of town. Joanne is hesitant but Micah's sweetness and gentle brand of humor eventually breaks through her barriers and they spend a day together exploring San Francisco.

I found the first 15 minutes of the film a bit slow and the dialogue almost too

awkward to feel natural. Eventually, as the characters get comfortable, so does the movie and it becomes very enjoyable.

The cinematography is stunning, flowing freely from black and white to desaturated color and back again as the mood changes. San Francisco almost becomes a character itself and I really felt like I got an intimate knowledge some of what the city has to offer through the characters explorations.

If you're looking for any amount of action, look elsewhere.

Despite a lack of action, this movie builds some real, albeit subtle, suspense. I was anxious to find out what would happen next and if these two would become a couple, stay friends or ever speak to each other again.

If you enjoyed "Before Sunrise" or bet-

ter yet the sequel, "Before Sunset," this is the film for you.

The movie thrives on dialogue and the conversations the characters have regarding everything from music to race and the rapid gentrification of their city.

How can one be both black and indie? Why does interracial dating only seem to happen between blacks and whites? How can a city push out life-long citizens to make historic neighborhoods trendy? Sometimes the movie can get pretty heavy, but other times it's funny and easygoing.

This movie isn't perfect by any means, but the performances are strong, the music and cinematography are fantastic, and the themes are important. If you've got the energy and the attention span for a dialogue-driven film without any explosions, definitely pick up "Medicine for Melancholy."

## Gamer: an interesting take on technology

BY STAFF SGT. JOEL F. GIBSON  
EXPEDITIONARY TIMES STAFF



In the not so distant future, the United States prison system, bursting at its seams, threatens to bankrupt the federal government when a savior appears in the form of a pay per view form of combat between inmates controlled remotely by the next generation of hardcore video gamers.

The idea of condemned prisoners killing one another for a shot at freedom is old as cinema itself. "Gamer" adds a modern twist by incorporating Internet gaming.

The process by which humans are made into appropriate vessels for gam-

ers in the combat game "Slayer," and the tamer game within the movie called "Society," is vague enough to allow suspension of disbelief.

The "Society" scenes in which gamers control people who inhabit a decadent urban area free of the inhibitions of consequence seem as though they were crow barred into the movie for the sake of gratuitous nudity. Perhaps it was more of a commentary on the mentalities of multiplayer video game players who partition themselves off from the real world.

The primary reason to go see this movie is for the great action scenes. I mean, it's a real life video game with guns, and guys who are incapable of being afraid, so it has to be awesome right?

Wrong, the gritty filters used for the action would create some cool effects if I could ever tell what was going on. In the tradition of nausea-inducing shaky cam, pioneered by "Any Given Sunday," "Gamer" attempts to portray the frenetic first-person battles in a way that's nearly impossible to follow.

I really thought the movie could have gotten more into the gamer community aspect of the movie world. Instead, it briefly touches upon the gamer controlling the main character, never any of the other controllers, and the technology of the world is portrayed in the strikingly ridiculous way flying cars and dehydrated pizza are shown in "Back to the Future Part II."

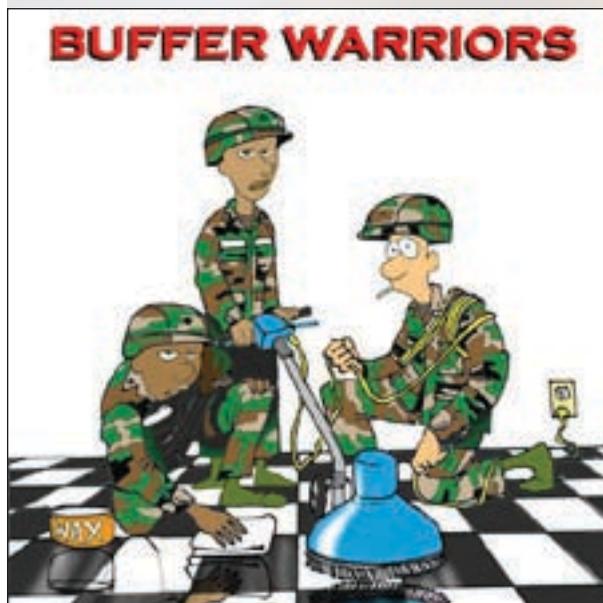
The scene that put me over the edge as far as suspension of disbelief goes is

one in which the main character inexplicably gets drunk before a match, but it was all part of his master plan to vomit into a gas tank of a vehicle he could steal and thus use to escape. Come again?

Most vodka, which is what the bottle our main character drank from was labeled, is 80 proof, or 40 percent alcohol. A beverage must be at least 50 percent alcohol in order to burn, and that's before factoring in the dilution of spit and bile. Besides, if the vodka were 100 proof, just how far could a vehicle drive on a couple of mouthfuls anyway?

As far as re-watch ability goes, I can't imagine sitting through it again for at least five years, so it definitely loses some points there. I give "Gamer" a 4.5 out of 10. It was enjoyable as long as I didn't try to over analyze it.

## CLASSIC PVT. MURPHY



### Sustainer Reel Time Theater

#### Wednesday, Nov. 18

5 p.m. A Christmas Carol  
8 p.m. Zombieland

#### Sunday, Nov. 22

2 p.m. 2012  
5 p.m. Jennifer's Body  
8 p.m. The Invention of Lying

#### Thursday, Nov. 19

5 p.m. Love Happens  
8 p.m. A Christmas Carol

#### Monday, Nov. 23

5 p.m. Fame  
8 p.m. 2012

#### Friday, Nov. 20

2 p.m. Jennifer's Body  
5 p.m. Fame  
8:30 p.m. 2012

#### Tuesday, Nov. 24

5 p.m. 2012  
8 p.m. Fame

#### Saturday, Nov. 21

2 p.m. The Invention of Lying  
5 p.m. 2012  
8 p.m. Fame

#### Wednesday, Nov. 25

5 p.m. The Invention of Lying  
8 p.m. 2012



# PHOTOS AROUND IRAQ

U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Steven King



U.S. Soldiers attached to Destroyer Company, 28th Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, talk with Iraqi soldiers at the Sandiya Bridge checkpoint in the in the Hatamyia region of Balad, Iraq, Oct. 31, 2009. The Soldiers inspected the bridge, a link between the Salah ad Din and Diyala Provinces for safety issues.



U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Carmichael Yopez

An Iraqi Federal Police officer keeps guard, while U.S. Soldiers, assigned to 3rd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, and the 3rd Federal Police Transition Team, work with Iraqi Federal Police officers Nov. 5 during a cordon and search mission at a farm on the outskirts of Mosul, Iraq.



U.S. Army photo by Spc. David M. Sharp

U.S. Soldiers with 5th Battalion, 20th Infantry Regiment, get an unexpected eyes drop-per while meeting with the mayor of Al Araba, to find out the problems facing his community Nov. 4 in the DIALYALA Province of Iraq.



U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Chrissy Best

A young boy peeks out his door as U.S. Soldiers with 1314th Civil Affairs Company, 17th Fires Brigade, conduct joint mounted and foot patrols with Iraqi Soldiers, to the Institute of Fine Arts for Boys and the Five-Mile Market Primary School for Girls, to conduct school assessments Oct. 29 in Basra, Iraq.

Spc. Roberto Cervantes with 2nd Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, inspects an Iraqi Army Humvee engine during a maintenance class at Oct. 31 Camp Ali, in western Iraq. Iraqi maintenance Soldiers of the 1st Brigade, receive weekly hands-on training from U.S. Soldiers on how to maintain, troubleshoot, and fix Iraqi Army vehicles.



U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Daniel St. Pierre

# NEWS AROUND IRAQ

## Iraqi women graduate basic combat training

AL MUTHANA, Iraq – Forty-two Iraqi women became the first all-female graduating class from the Iraqi Army's enlisted basic combat training course Oct. 29 at Al Muthana.

Iraqi Army Staff Brig. Gen. Mohammed Abdul Razq, deputy director of the Tactical Training Directorate and Iraqi Army Staff Col. Mohammed Abdul Rahman Essa, deputy commander of the Regional Training Center, delivered congratulatory remarks to the pioneering female graduates.

Iraqi Army recruit Junde Lubab Ibrahim Kaleel said she was very excited about graduation.

"It is important for me, for Iraqi women and for Iraq because we have a chance for a new life for the next generation," Kaleel said.

Iraqi Army recruit Junde Mona Kidam said she was happy about graduating.

"It felt like being in college," Kidam said.

The new Soldiers proceed now to their newly assigned units, with the top five honor graduates selected to work for Iraqi general officers. Ongoing training continues at their home units.

## Information Assurance seminar assists Iraqi leaders protect

BAGHDAD – More than 20 senior Iraqi leaders from throughout the government of Iraq participated in a training seminar focusing on information assurance Oct. 28 at the Iraqi National Operations Center in Baghdad.

Ministries attending included oil, electricity, defense and interior.

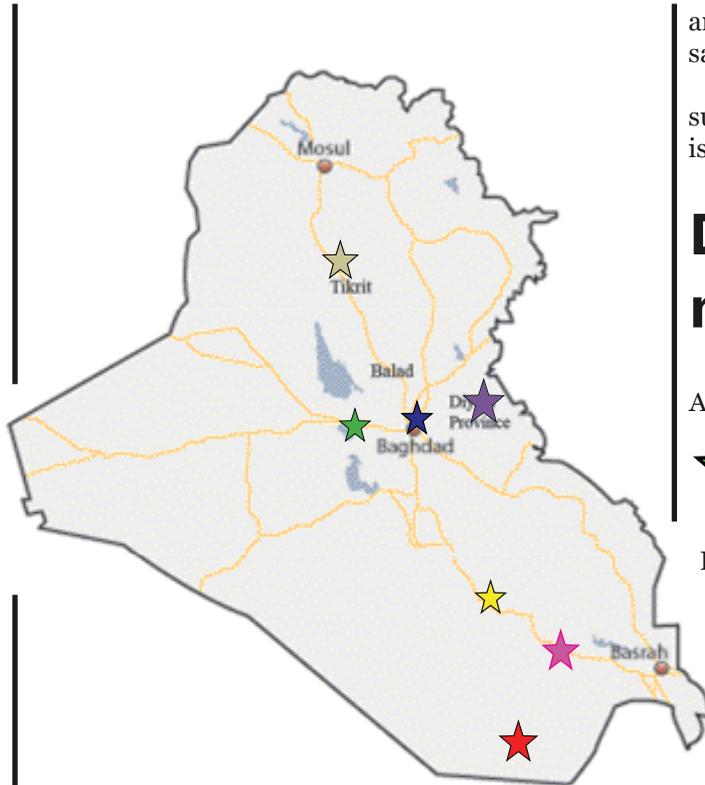
The two-hour Iraqi Defense Network Information Assurance seminar was developed by Multi-National Security Transition Command-Iraq and conducted by the Ministerial Training and Development Center.

The training was designed to inform government representatives of the threats, vulnerabilities and risks associated with sharing information on the computer network. The seminar also included discussions about actions the ministries can take to protect the information they share.

Attendees are trained to create strong passwords, protect against the spread of computer viruses and safeguard information from unauthorized personnel.

"I am now more aware of internal network threats and know what steps to take to prevent such attacks," said Staff Brig. Gen. Mohammed Fadhil Al-Shimary, chief of staff at the Prime Minister's National Operations Center. "I would like to have more people attend this valuable training."

During October, roughly 150 Iraqi Defense Network users from the MoD Directorate General of Communications attended the course. Engineer Hadi Na'ma Hussein, MoD Director General of Communications, said he would like to have all Iraqi defense network users attend one of the future courses that will be offered.



## New aviation brigade to improve safety at Ali Air Base

TALIL, Iraq – Construction is progressing on the \$61 million Combat Aviation Brigade Beddown project at Ali Air Base.

The base, also known as Contingency Operating Location Adder and Tallil Air Base, is roughly 310 kilometers southeast of Baghdad and 20 kilometers southwest of the city of Nasiriyah.

The project involves construction of a nine-story Air Traffic Control Tower and provides more than 75 acres of contingency airfield parking for rotary and medium-load fixed-wing aircraft along with supporting utilities, infrastructure and security necessary to make the facility complete and usable.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineer construction representative John Morgan said the former location of Army rotary-wing aircraft at Baghdad International Airport did not facilitate rapid response to missions in southern Iraq.

"The additional helo pavements at Ali will provide a quicker reaction time for missions in southern Iraq," said Morgan. "If launched from Baghdad support could take up to two-hours per mission."

The existing air traffic control tower was constructed 20 years ago to meet Iraq's military needs at that time. The tower controls the airspace up to 3,000 feet in a five mile radius from the middle of the airfield. Within that airspace, they are responsible for separating, sequencing and issuing safety alerts to all aircraft.

"In today's environment, the old tower's inadequate height makes it impossible to provide safe traffic control over the largest airfield in southern Iraq," Morgan said. "It's important that we provide our Soldiers with the safest possible conditions to live and work in."

In addition to the pads and tower, the base lacks sufficient transient parking to support the nearly 100 percent increase in personnel and cargo flowing through this location.

"The additional, medium load, fixed wing parking

area will alleviate some of this lack of space," Morgan said.

Construction on the project by Kulac, Inc., a prime subcontractor for KBR, Inc. began October 2008 and is 88 percent complete.

## Detainees released near Fallujah

AL ASAD AIR BASE, Iraq - Multi National Force - West facilitated the release of 33 detainees from U.S. custody and transferred two detainees who were wanted pursuant to a valid warrant to Iraqi Police custody Nov. 4 near Fallujah.

MNF-W followed a detailed release process to ensure the security of the people of Anbar and the safety of the detainees was not in jeopardy following the release.

Marines from MNF-W coordinated with the Iraqi Police to transfer all detainees who were wanted pursuant to a warrant; other detainees were released near their place of residence.

Prior to release, detainees participated in a public release ceremony where an oath of good citizenship and renouncement of violence was administered. Individuals were then welcomed by their families and friends.

In accordance with the Security Agreement, U.S. and Iraqi authorities coordinate to ensure the safe and orderly release of detainees held in U.S. custody or the transfer of detainees who are wanted pursuant to a valid warrant. The Security Agreement is an accord between two sovereign nations, Iraq and the U.S., and shows U.S. commitment to Iraq built on absolute Iraqi sovereignty.

## Engineers work to improve quality of life

NASIRIYAH, Iraq- The U.S. Army Corps of Engineer is working to improve the quality of life and the environment in Nasiriyah and neighboring villages.

The U.S. Department of State's Dhi Qar Provincial Reconstruction Team and USACE are working together to renovate the Nasiriyah Meat Processing Plant.

GRS Project Engineers Greg Croon said prior to rehabilitating, the butchers could only process a few animals each day due to poor and unhealthy conditions of the plant.

"Most processing is taking place at various sites inside the township which is outside of any controlled health and environmental framework," Croon said. "Local legislation requires animal butchering only inside the facility. However, as the old facility was so neglected and rundown, there was no feasible ground for the municipal authorities to enforce this law."

Croon said if no action was taken to provide an appropriate processing environment, the present conditions could lead to a serious health hazard for the urban population.

The provincial reconstruction team recommended a total rehabilitation of the old facility.

"The rehabilitation of the processing plant will allow healthy meat processing procedures for the town-

ship of Nasiriyah and neighboring villages," said Giuliano Masini, Dhi Qar PRT agricultural adviser.

"This will reflect positively not only on the overall health environment of the urban area but should increase revenues generated by improved storage, increased meat processing and handling capacity and higher quality standards," Masini said.

To alleviate the unhealthy conditions, the USACE's Iraqi contractor Al-Rafdain Company is also installing new, prefabricated ancillary buildings for meat by-products processing, meat chillers, constructing a waste treatment unit and new water supply system, providing processing equipment and rehabilitation of some features inside the main processing hall at a cost of \$2.5 million.

Training on handling and maintenance of the new equipment is being provided as part of the supply contract.

"This is a key point to the success of the enterprise," Masini said.

It is estimated, given the high demand of meat and increasing urban population, the plant will generate revenues that will cover the operation, maintenance and financial costs.

However, Masini said the city must work hard on a good management plan, appoint a qualified administrator and skilled technical persons to run this renewed facility with modern business methods.

As an added benefit, the newly rehabilitated plant is expected to employ roughly 120 workers daily.

"The plant will grow from 20 to 65 butchers, at least twice as many will be operating in the rehabilitated premises and other jobs will be created downstream," said Masini.

## Iraqi correctional officer class graduates

 CAMP CROPPER, Iraq – More than 600 Iraqi correctional officers graduated training this week at Contingency Operating Location Future, Iraq.

This class was a three-week pre-service refresher course for already certified Iraqi correctional officers, who will eventually completely take the reins when detainee operations transition to the Government of Iraq. ICOs work side by side with U.S. Military Police.

"At Correctional Training Center, all training of cadets is handled by Iraqi instructors," said 2nd Lt. Chris Cahak, with A Company, 1st Battalion, 128 Infantry, training officer in charge. "U.S. Soldiers only monitor the class. The CTC is also fully administered by Iraqi staff. My staff and I facilitate training and provide advice if asked."

After the cadets graduate, they go back to the Iraqi Corrections System and are sent out to their assignments. The 610 cadets who graduated were sent to Taji.

ICS may feature more advanced training classes for the ICOs in the future.

"We are going to follow the goals and the purposes in the previous curriculum," said Mohammed Homady Chiad, academy director. "We are going to take it as a foundation to develop the curriculum in the future with coordination between us and the American advisers."

This was the fourth class to graduate this year, bringing the total of pre-service graduates for the Correctional Training Center to roughly 1,500.

The two staffs are preparing for the turnover of the center to Iraqi control Dec. 15.

"The CTC has transferred in supply specialists to operate the newly constructed Central In-processing Facility and all control of supplies has been turned over to the Iraqis," said Cahak.

Chiad said, "We are going to hire new instructors and new management based on the official structure made previously. We need 80 instructors with a high ethics level because we have an advanced curriculum."

## Iraqi Interior Affairs graduates six from Interrogation Course

 BAGHDAD – Six Iraqi police officers graduated Nov. 4 from an interrogation and interview course taught by U.S. police advisers at Contingency Operating Location Shield.

Three of the officers are trainers from an Iraqi security clearance unit and three are trainers from the Wasit and Baghdad police colleges. All are responsible for training Internal Affairs personnel.

The course was four days long and covered the internal affairs interviewing. The training, sponsored by the rule of law unit from Iraq Training and Advisory Mission, was geared toward the Iraqi Army investigator.

The train-the-trainer course will help IA to become more self-sufficient as the security forces master new methods for dealing with police suspects

"I learned a lot about interviewing police suspects," said Iraqi Lt. Col. Saad Mahdi from the security clearance unit. "Sometimes it is hard to interrogate a police officer accused of a crime, because he knows the tactics and how to avoid giving answers. This class helped me to get the information from these men."

The course provided an opportunity for the participants to ask questions and share their experiences.

"I will take this information and train my students at the police college," said Iraqi Lt. Col. Zamel Rahema Zinjil. "These techniques will help them to correct their mistakes when they are investigating high-ranking officers about a criminal matter."

U.S. Air Force Maj. Joseph Musacchia, deputy director ITAM-Rule of Law and keynote speaker, told the Iraqis the training they received is valuable.

## Suspected terrorist leader arrested in Mosul

 TIKRIT, Iraq – The 5th Emergency Response Battalion, advised by U.S. forces, arrested a suspected terrorist leader linked to numerous cells in the Ninawa province under the authority of warrants issued by the Government of Iraq

Nov. 3.

The 5th ERB arrested Khalil Nazir Khalil, also known as Abu Abdallah, in his residence outside of Mosul with a warrant issued by the Higher Judicial Court of Ninawa.

Khalil is suspected of being a key leader of Jaysh Rijal al-Tariq al-Naqshabandi cells operating in Mosul. The cell has been linked to improvised explosive device attacks throughout Mosul and the Ninawa province.

The 5th ERB entered the suspect's residence and, after securing the house, constables with the 5th ERB positively identified Khalil. Once the suspected cell leader was identified, constables continued to collect evidence and interview others in the house without incident.

## Iraqi Security Forces arrest alleged al-Qaeda bomb maker

 BAGHDAD – Iraqi Security Forces arrested an alleged al-Qaeda in Iraq emir and a suspected associate of an improvised explosive device network during two joint security operations Nov. 8 in northern Iraq.

ISF arrested an alleged AQI emir of Tuz Khurmatu during a joint security operation with U.S. advisers in Pir Ahmad, roughly 74 km south of Kirkuk.

The arrested individual is also suspected of being involved in weapons procurement for the terrorist group.

The security team located the warranted individual in a residential building and arrested him without incident.

During a separate security operation in western Mosul, the 3rd Federal Police Brigade and U.S. advisers conducted a warranted search for a suspected member of AQI.

The suspect allegedly facilitates vehicle-borne improvised explosive device attacks in the region.

One individual was arrested based on evidence found at the scene linking him to suspicious activity.

The warranted suspect was not apprehended during the operation.

## Engineers tackle issues in Adhamiyah district

BAGHDAD – The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is tackling age-old problems in one of the oldest neighborhoods in Baghdad.

Engineers from the Gulf Region District are managing a pair of projects in the Adhamiyah District to provide a new storm sewer system and a sanitary sewer network to residents in the northwestern suburb.

The \$1.8 million sewer project calls for reconstruction of the existing system and replacing the sewer lines, manholes, manhole covers and connecting the sewer network to homes, said Sara Delmonico, project engineer for the sewer project. The project was built using U.S. State Department economic support funds.

The key to the sewer project, Delmonico said, is the trunk line under construction now. The trunk line acts as the main highway between the two sanitary networks and the pump station.

"This trunk line will restore the sewage flow in the network and greatly improve the area's sewage infrastructure," Delmonico said.

The new system fully complies with the Amanat Baghdad Sewer Authority's design criteria and construction specifications.

"By the end of the year, residents will see a vast improvement in the conditions of the streets with standing sewage eliminated from the area," said Delmonico. "Residents will not only have a new, working sewage network, but they will also be relieved to have the construction traffic out of their area."

The sewer project is scheduled to be completed by the end of the year with more than 600 homes initially connected to the new sewer network.

Heavy seasonal rains flooded the Adhamiyah area roads and neighborhoods due to the neglect of the old storm water sewer system.

"This project took a little longer than expected because of the security situation, the extremely poor site conditions and our initial inexperience in building a sewage infrastructure system," Delmonico said. "The storm network is now fully operational and a huge success."

# Phantom Support



US Army Photo by Sgt. Kory Smith, HHC, 260th CSSB, 96SBDE

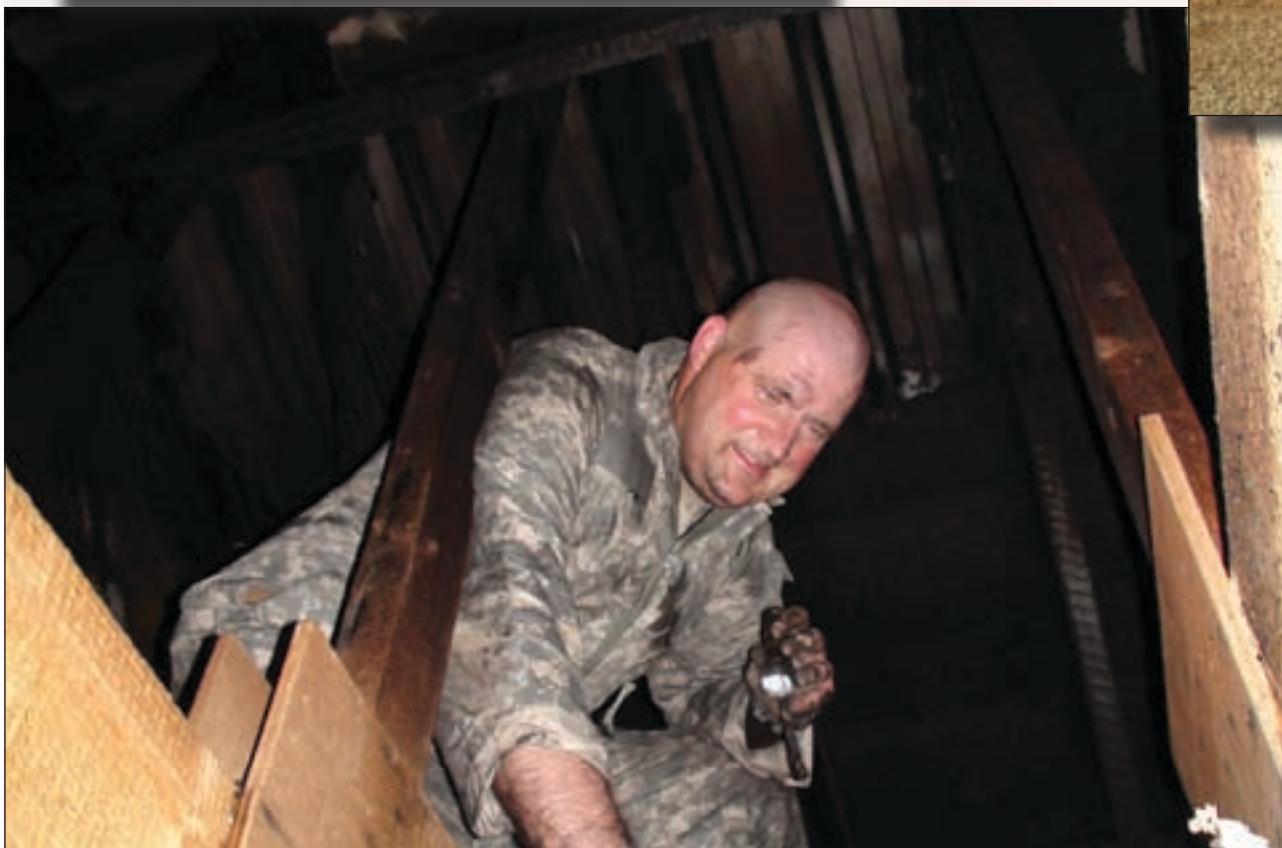


Sgt. Xavier Keyes, a vehicle operator, with the 296th Transportation Co., 260th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 96th Sustainment Brigade, and a Raleigh, Miss., native, gives Cpl. Ray Pulford, a recovery team noncommissioned officer, with 1st Maint. Co., from St. Charles, Ill., an IV during the battalion's medical sustainment class at Camp Liberty, Iraq Oct. 27. The class was given by the medical sustainment NCO for the 260th CSSB, Sgt. Sarah Christenson, from Jefferson, S.D.



Photo Staff Sgt. Kimberly Calkins, 138th QM Co., 751st CSSB, 96SBDE

Spc. Jason Holmes, a material handling equipment operator for the 138th Quartermaster Support Co., 751st Combat Sustainment Support Bn., 96th Sust. Bde., and a Danville, Ind., native, removes rollers from a container to make way for customs inspection. All four corners of the container must be simultaneously visible and completely clean. The 138th is preparing equipment for when their mission ends later this year.



U.S. Army photo by Maj. Greg Atwood, 620th CSSB, 96SBDE.

Maj. Robert Markiewicz, a St. Louis, Mo., native, and the executive officer of the 620th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 96th Sustainment Brigade, assists in the investigation of the 260th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion fire that damaged a good portion of their offices at Camp Liberty Iraq.

Spc. Adam K. Wood, an automated logistical specialist for F Company, 121st Brigade Support Battalion, swears in at a re-enlistment ceremony held on top of the ziggurat Nov. 12, at the archaeological remains of Ur, near Contingency Operating Location Adder, Iraq.



US Army photo by Spc. Lisa Cope, 13th ESC Public Affairs



U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Rob Strain, 15th Sust. Bde. Public Affairs

Members of Fort Hood-based 15th Sustainment Brigade observe a moment of silence in front of the brigade headquarters here at Contingency Operating Location Q-West Nov. 8 for those who were killed and wounded in the shooting Nov. 5 at Fort Hood, Texas.