

Crossed Sabers

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What's Inside



IA-led joint patrol protects Aqur Quf, Pg. 7



Engineers share knowledge, provide route clearance training to IP, Pg. 14-15



National Guard Soldiers become American citizens on Veteran's Day, Pg. 20



IA, U.S. troops on the hunt for insurgents, Pg. 27



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

Spc. Scott Coleman, a native of Mayville, N.D., tosses a soccer ball to an Iraqi child before the opening of a soccer field in central Abu Ghraib, Nov. 10. Soldiers with Company C provided security for the opening.

Abu Ghraib children enjoy improved recreational areas

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

BAGHDAD – Thanks to combined efforts of U.S. forces and the Iraqi community, the children of Abu Ghraib have two new places where they can safely play.

Local leaders from the Abu Ghraib area, along with Lt. Col. John Leffers, commander, 1st Battalion, 38th Infantry Regiment, and native of Utica, N.Y., attended the opening ceremony of a soccer field and a playground, here, in central Abu Ghraib, Nov. 10.

The soccer field and playground, funded by the Commander's Emergency Response Program and sponsored by the Iraqi Ministry of Youth and Sports, cost approximately \$20,000 and \$40,000

respectively, and were contracted through two different sources.

Sheikh Qassim, a member of the Abu Ghraib council, cut the ribbon to the soccer field, opening the field to the public.

After the ribbon cutting, Soldiers from the 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, were swarmed by local children as they handed out soccer balls to celebrate the opening of the new field. Claiming their new toys, the children ran and played on the field.

Just a short walk away from the new soccer field, the ribbon to a new playground was also cut. Children flooded the grounds, rushing to climb on the new equipment. They slid down a giant yellow slide and took turns swinging on primary-colored swings.

"These new areas will provide a place for children to play and build friendships with other villages' children who hopefully come [to the soccer field and playground]," said Col. Sabah Mahmoud Ala Bid, an Abu Ghraib police station commander.

First Sgt. Charles Tennant, a native of Buhl, Idaho, said the opening of a soccer field and a colorful park, with senior council members present, showed two things.

"One, the senior leadership of this city is vastly interested, involved and driven in providing a better community by creating jobs which create the projects that improve the city as a whole," Tennant said. "Second, it sends a loud and resounding state-

See ~ **ABU GHRAIB** Pg. 3



U.S., IA patrols aim to deter criminals pg. 6



Raiders search for weapons pg. 13



Prayers from Baghdad

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

Prayer of the Chaplain's Assistant

This week, in a special event sponsored by MNC-I, we will celebrate the 100 year anniversary of Chaplain Assistants in the U.S. Army. The 56M is an often overlooked, yet vital MOS, without which we could not truly support the accommodation of religious practices for our deployed Soldiers. So to all of the chaplain assistants who have ever served as guardian angel for a chaplain in a hostile environment, this prayer is for you.

Lord,
 Where is my chaplain now?
 He took off without me, and I can't find him!

Doesn't he understand
 It's my mission to protect him...
 To watch his back
 While he takes care of the troops?

I know you understand, Lord,
 For it is you who called me to this mission.
 I have planned our travels,
 Served as a one-man PSD,
 Responded to crises in the middle of the night,
 Prepared the briefing slides,
 [Briefed the slides...]
 And I trust that you notice all this,
 But sometimes it seems like nobody else does.

I must be a Jack-of-all-trades...
 Ops expert,
 Mechanic,
 Guidance Counselor,
 ALL rolled into one.
 And what do I get... ?
 Other Soldiers think I'm an "Assistant chaplain,"
 And say I have a "pud" job.
 They just don't get it!

So please help my teammates understand:
 I am a warrior.
 I will defend my chaplain at a moment's notice.
 I agree to be stuffed like a pretzel
 in the back of a cramped humvee,
 And I watch patiently over her shoulder
 as she prays with a bleeding Soldier.

Forgive me for grumbling on a Sunday morning,
 While my buddies sleep in,
 And I ready the chapel for worship.

And most of all, Lord,
 Please bless my chaplain.
 Make him bold in ministry,
 Help her serve without fear for her welfare,
 Trusting You,
 [and this Guardian Angel,]
 to ever keep watch.

Amen.



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

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ABU GHRAIB~ From Pg. 1

ment to all those who create this terror that the Iraqi people have lived with for years: We fight for our freedoms, our children and our choice. It shows the terrorists they cannot stop forward progress and they have not won, and they will not.” ✂

Sheikh Qassim, a member of the Abu Ghraib council, cuts a ribbon, signifying the opening of the new soccer field in central Abu Ghraib, Nov. 10.



Iraqi children play on a seesaw in the newly opened playground in central Abu Ghraib, Nov.10. U.S. forces provided \$40,000 in funding for the upgrades to the area.



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



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

The battle-wise Infantryman...

...is CAREFUL of what he says or writes
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Freedom Radio Baghdad 104.1 and 107.3 FM

N.C. troops assess poultry plant, offer expertise

Story by Sgt. Jon Soles

MND-B PAO

BAGHDAD – U.S. Soldiers lent their agriculture and engineering expertise, Oct. 31, to help bring a chicken processing plant into operation; one that will provide food and jobs.

North Carolina Guardsmen with 1st Battalion, 120th Infantry Regiment, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team, who have agribusiness and engineering backgrounds, visited the al-Kien plant near Mahmudiyah to offer advice and seek ways to help the plant begin operations.

Capt. Bobby Lumsden, the battalion's operations officer, walked through the plant with owner Rafea Abass Ali to inspect the plant's machinery and the massive coolers that will help keep

poultry fresh. Getting the plant up and running will not only create a market for fresh chicken in the area, but will also give farmers a place to sell their chickens.

"This will be the only factory in the area with fresh frozen chicken," said Lumsden, a native of Fuquay-Varina, N.C. "Iraqis want very fresh chicken, but their choices right now are canned chicken or chicken that is imported."

The plant has the capacity to process 10,000 chickens a month and can employ up to 150 workers. Lumsden said the plant could boost the local economy and attract other investors to the area.

"It will open up this area for more agribusiness and, as we have studied, agribusiness brings more industry and factories," said Lumsden. "It will be the first step in the process to bring economic improve-

ment to this whole area."

As Lumsden checked out the plant, he had help from two subject matter experts in engineering and agriculture.

First Lt. Joel Pierce is an engineering officer who owns a contracting company back home in Thomasville, N.C., and 2nd Lt. James Bowden, of Siler City, N.C., grew up on a large industrialized poultry farm.

What the officers discovered was that the only chicken hatchery in the area does not produce enough hens to meet the demand of hundreds of farmers in the area. They also discovered some improperly

installed steel beams that are bending under the weight of cooling towers on the roof of the plant.

"There were issues about the structure supporting the cooling tower," said Lumsden. "They

can operate right now, but they need to fix the I-beams and the ice machine."

Lumsden said the American Soldiers will continue to work with the Iraqis to help get the plant up and running. He said he hopes to see the plant processing chickens by the time the 30th HBCT redeploys in a few months.

"Time and time again, an economy has a proven to be the ultimate stabilizer in any country," said Lumsden. "This will be a great increase to the economy in the area by providing jobs and having an outlet for the farmers' products."

The al-Kien plant has come a long way and is close to beginning operations. The expertise offered by the National Guard Soldiers will help sow the seeds of peace and stability by increasing food choices and bringing jobs to Mahmudiyah. ✂

"Time and time again, an economy has a proven to be the ultimate stabilizer in any country. This will be a great increase to the economy in the area by providing jobs and having an outlet for the farmers' products."

-- Capt. Bobby Lumsden



Photo by Sgt. Jon Soles, MND-B PAO

Capt. Bobby Lumsden, of Fuquay-Varina, N.C., (left) and 1st Lt. Joel Pierce (right), of Thomasville, N.C., advise Rafea Abass Ali (center) about the placement of steel beams supporting a rooftop cooling tower on the poultry processing plant Ali owns near Mahmudiyah, here, Oct. 31.

Water trucks a symbol of commitment

Story by Staff Sgt. Mark Burrell

MND-B PAO

BAGHDAD – At a small ceremony northwest of Baghdad, U.S. forces turned over two potable water trucks to local government officials, here, Nov. 5.

Local leaders from Aqur Quf accepted the two Mercedes-Benz trucks; each one capable of delivering 2,500 gallons of water to area residents.

American forces funded the \$152,000 project said 1st Lt. James Hester, a civil affairs officer assigned to the 422nd Civil Affairs Battalion, attached to the 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division.

"The goal of the vehicles is to give you a tool to empower yourselves to give fresh water to your people," said Hester, addressing different sheikhs, Iraqi Security Forces, local government members and farmers. "My job is to just give you a gift to help you help your people."

The trucks replaced a 90-day re-occurring \$5,200 contract that U.S. forces previously had to distribute potable water to locals, added Hester, a native of Tybee Island, Ga. Not only will the trucks employ local Iraqis, but it will save money in the long run.

"The Aqur Quf region has had an issue with potable water since 2003," explained a grateful Hadir Ali Kadeem, a chairman for the local council. "It's a very nice gift and we will be able to deliver water for five villages, which is about 15 percent of the people in Aqur Quf."

Capt. Keith Roberts, an infantry company commander who operates in the area, agreed that getting potable water has been a problem in the area.

Many of the people get their water straight from canals and wind up getting sick, said



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

Sgt. Tim Laferriere, from Chapel Hill, N.C., assigned to the 422nd Civil Affairs Battalion, guards two potable water trucks U.S. forces donated to the Aqur Quf local government, here, Nov. 5.

Roberts, from Dupont, Wash., assigned to Company A, 4th Battalion, 9th Infantry Regiment, 4th SBCT, 2nd Inf. Div.

"The local people have been given an opportunity here and if they want it, they'll take it," said Roberts. "They need to maintain the trucks, get drivers and go to the distribution point themselves."

The stark white trucks will soon be painted with "The City of Aqur Quf" on the side; a symbol of progress and pride for the members of the community as well as a representation of U.S. commitment in the area. ✂

Iraqi medics learn trauma skills

Story by Spc. Kelly LeCompte

30th HBCT PAO, MND-B

BAGHDAD – In support of the Iraqi Security Agreement, Iraqi Security Forces in Baghdad are learning the skills they need to act autonomously, as U.S. forces continue to prepare their Iraqi partners to stand on their own.

Medics from 252nd Combined Arms Battalion, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team, are sharing the basic medical skills used in treating traumatic injuries with medics from the 5th Iraqi Federal Police Brigade during a course that runs through Nov. 5, here, at Forward Operating Base Falcon.

“We’ve learned how to treat bleeding and fractures, and today we’re learning how to treat burns,” said FP officer About Adnan Abood, during one of the classes.

Medics have learned how to assess casualties and basic ways to stabilize patients before transporting them to a hospital by controlling bleeding, wrapping injuries, and treating first, second and third degree burns.

“What we’re trying to get these guys to do is be self-sufficient,” said Sgt. John Montgomery, the battalion’s medical training noncommissioned officer.

Montgomery, from Fayetteville, N.C., said some of the most common situations their Iraqi partners encounter involve injuries sustained in car crashes and explosions from roadside bombs, and those are the types of situations the training focused on the most.

“That’s the kind of stuff they’re going to see,” Montgomery said. “What we’re trying to do is give them the type of basic medical skills...to be more effective in responding to [traumatic] types of injuries.”

Abood, a new medic said the class at FOB Falcon was his first medical training. He said he feels prepared to do the job because of the training.

“I like it,” Abood said. “If we have an emergency anytime, we learn how to react. If there’s an accident, for example, I’m ready always to carry stuff and get the equipment and go and treat the bleeding and take them to the hospital.”

The training also helped reinforce some of these principles for FP officer Moshtag Ali.

Ali has attended first-responder training before and said he enjoyed the class; continuing to learn new things from the U.S. Soldiers.

“It’s a good class,” Ali said. “We have learned a lot and we’ve benefitted a lot from it.”

The class involved a lecture portion and a hands-on portion, in which students practice the skills on a training dummy.

“The explanation is my favorite,” Ali said. “It’s more stories and about what can help [the patients] more.”

The Iraqis are not the only ones learning from the class. This was the first time Melvin instructed a class to Iraqi medics, and said he felt like he was continuing his learning through his teaching.

“When you teach, you learn,” Melvin said. “This is helping me too. I’m benefitting from their benefit also... and learning from them as I teach.” ✂



Photo by Spc. Kelly LeCompte, 30th HBCT PAO, MND-B

Iraqi policemen from 5th Federal Police Brigade assess trauma injuries on a medical training dummy with instruction from Spc. Michael Melvin (standing), a medic with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 252nd Combined Arms Battalion, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team at Forward Operation Base Falcon, Nov 3.

Joint search for explosives in car market

Story by Spc. Kelly LeCompte

30th HBCT PAO, MND-B

BAGHDAD – U.S. Soldiers and Iraqi security Forces continue to make southern Baghdad a safer place during a joint patrol to a car market in the Aamel neighborhood, Nov. 5.

American troops from 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team and Iraqi Federal Police, along with military working dogs, combed the market, searching for explosives, especially those often used to assemble car bombs.

“The mission...was to search for any type of vehicle-borne [improvised explosive device] making materiel, or any place where they could store anything that can be used to make vehicle IEDs,” said 2nd Lt. Quadean Knight, an American platoon leader.

The mission was part of an ongoing project by the 30th HBCT to search areas in which explosives or weapons have been found.

“The Aamel car market has been a place where they

could manufacture things like mortar tubes, and it has been known for housing IED-making materiel,” said Knight, from Greensboro, N.C.

The U.S. and Iraqi Soldiers, along with K-9 support, divided into two groups and the joint patrol moved down the crowded strip, searching garages that held cars lifted up for repairs and talked with shop owners to see if there had been any suspicious activity in the area.

Dark puddles, thick with oil and smeared by water, dotted the ground as K-9s sniffed under car parts and below hydraulic lifts.

No one found any signs of explosives, but Knight said the mission was still a success.

“It was a presence patrol,” Knight said. “Just letting [the enemy] know that we’re still in the area, still patrolling the streets with our [Iraqi Security Forces] counterparts.”

Knight said patrolling the area with our Iraqi partners plays a big role in keeping the area safe.

“Presence is a big thing. Just letting them know that we’re still coming through and searching can deter violence,” Knight said. ✂



Photo by Spc. Kelly LeCompte, 30th HBCT PAO, MND-B



Photo by Spc. Kelly LeCompte, 30th HBCT PAO, MND-B

Soldiers from 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team, wait at ground level as an Iraqi Federal Policeman climbs to a second story inside a small vehicle repair garage in southern Baghdad, Nov. 5.

Staff Sgt. Robert Legnante, of Franklin County, N.C., radios fellow Soldiers during a joint patrol with Iraqi Federal Policemen in a car market in southern Baghdad, Nov. 5.

U.S., IA patrols aim to deter criminals

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

TAJI, Iraq—St. Genevieve, Mo. native, Sgt. Daniel Mannisi, with the 1st Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, hands a soccer ball to a local boy during a search operation in Taji, Nov. 3. U.S. and Iraqi Soldiers conduct combined operations to ensure the safety of the local residents in Taji.



(Below) Iraqi Staff Brig. Gen. Munim Abd al Sattar (left), commander of the 37th Brigade, 9th Iraqi Division, and Ozark, Ala. native, Lt. Col. Eric Schwegler, commander of the 1st Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, discusses check point security with during a search for high value targets in Taji, Nov. 3. U.S. and Iraqi troops team up regularly to disrupt the efforts of terrorists who hide among the local population.

(Below, right) An Iraqi Army officer uses a local man's government identification card to see if his name is on a list of wanted men in Taji, Nov. 3. Iraqi and U.S. troops conduct searches on a regular basis to disrupt insurgent activity in the Taji area.



IA led joint patrol protects Aqur Quf

Story by Staff Sgt. Mark Burrell

MND-B PAO

BAGHDAD – On a dusty road in northwestern Baghdad, Sgt. Kegan Cline kneels beside a wall, resting his M-14 sniper rifle as a group of Iraqi girls in blue school uniforms walk by, giggling and pushing each other, Nov. 3.

The Worcester, Mass. native, smiled briefly and nodded at the girls, knowing that his presence, combined with Iraqi Army Soldiers, allows the girls to walk around safely.

“It feels great that we’re here serving a purpose,” said Cline, assigned to Company A, 4th Battalion, 9th Infantry Regiment, 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division. “These kids can go to and from school without fear and that the community sees two organizations working together as one is a great thing.”

Since arriving a few months ago in Aqur Quf, a rural area in northwestern Baghdad, U.S. troops have worked with IA Soldiers on a daily basis to help keep the area safe.

“It’s a good thing that the U.S. forces support us and we work together and the community sees that,” said IA Capt. Nomas Mohammed Hussein. “These people just need somebody to hear their concerns and understand them.”

In order to do that, the American and Iraqi Soldiers patrol the area on foot, interacting with the people face-to-face and giving the locals a different perception.

“Many of the people think that when we dismount our vehicles, we just arrest people, but that is not true,” explained Hussein. “We want to show them that now we are here to talk to them.”

The Soldiers move from farmhouse to farmhouse allowing Nomas and the other IA Soldiers time to playfully ask the children their names and talk to the adults about the local security situation.

“These patrols are important because it’s time for us to leave [Iraq] soon, so we let the IA do a lot more of the talking, like today,” said 1st Lt. Mike Slapik, an infantry platoon leader from West Bridgewater, Mass.

As Nomas spoke at length to the men of the house at each location, Slapik stood back and listened to the conversations through his interpreter.

“Everybody’s going to tell you it’s safe, but when you sit down with the people, they’ll want to tell us more information,” Slapik explained. “You have to stay and talk for an extended period of time to get a feeling for how they feel.”

The Soldiers listened to concerns about clean water and jobs. Slapik explained that they cannot fix most of these

Staff Sgt. Andrew Byrnes (front right), an infantry squad leader from Aransas Pass, Texas, 1st Lt. Mike Slapik (left), platoon leader from West Bridgewater, Mass., Pvt. Steven Gamble (middle), an infantryman from Gastonia, N.C., begin a joint patrol with Iraqi Army Capt. Nomas Mohammed Hussein in rural Aqur Quf, here, Nov. 3.



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



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

A local Iraqi man discusses security in the area with Iraqi Army Capt. Nomas Mohammed Hussein (left), and Lt. Mike Slapik (middle), an infantry platoon leader from West Bridgewater, Mass., during a routine patrol in northwestern Baghdad, Nov. 3.

problems immediately.

“It’s good to show that we’re not going to solve all their problems, but that they have to go through the local system they’ve established,” added Slapik, stressing working within the system the local government has created.

Many of the local people come to the Soldiers with problems that need to be solved at their local governance level.

“It’s a detective’s job basically,” continued Slapik. “It’s not a short turn-around, finding bad guys is a long legal process with multiple witnesses and arrest warrants issued through a judge. We like to make sure the local people see that process, so there are actually results.”

The biggest thing that Slapik and his Soldiers want to show the local populations is that American forces are simply supporting the IA, as they are the ones in charge now.

One local area man has noticed a difference in the area thanks to this relationship.

“It’s better when the U.S. and IAs work together,” said Ali Nafe Juwad. “The situation here was very bad a year ago, but it is better today because of the work the

Americans and IA do together.”

After tea is over, Slapik and his men wait on what Hussein wants to do next. The Iraqi captain broke into a thin smile as he ruffled the hair of a little girl, then shook hands and decided the patrol was finished.

After a day of meeting many familiar faces, the Soldiers climbed back into their vehicles, knowing that they left the area a little safer and with a little more information than they had a day before. ✂

Paratroopers pay final respects to fallen brother

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

BAGHDAD – A Multi-National Division-Baghdad Paratrooper who died from injuries suffered in a vehicle rollover was honored during a memorial ceremony here, Nov. 5.

Spc. Lukas Hopper, a 20-year-old infantryman from Merced, Calif., was assigned to Company D, 1st Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division. He died after his vehicle rolled over during a mounted combat patrol Oct. 30, just outside Baghdad. Hopper was serving his first deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Hopper was posthumously promoted to the rank of specialist.

Lt. Col. Dave Bair, the battalion commander, spoke about Hopper's devotion to duty and his passion for life.

"Though young, Lukas was a professional paratrooper with an insatiable internal drive," he said. "Whatever task was asked of him he wouldn't want to just

complete it, he wanted to excel at it."

"Spc. Hopper had an infectious sense of humor that drew people to him," he added. "A successful life is not measured in years it is measured in triumphs, laughs and achievements. All of which Lukas had."

His fellow troopers remembered a young man who was reliable and would never quit regardless of the task at hand.

"If there was one person who I would entrust to have my back, it was him," said Spc. Jeffrey Kern, a close friend of Hopper. "If he wasn't sure about something he would not give up until he found the right answer. He was thorough and never left anything unfinished."

"I will miss him dearly and he will never be forgotten," he said.

Hopper enlisted in the Army in January 2008. He completed his one-unit station training and Airborne School at Fort Benning, Ga.

His awards and decorations include the Army Commendation Medal with one oak-leaf cluster, the National Defense Service Medal, the Iraqi Campaign Medal, the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal,



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

A Paratrooper salutes a memorial for Spc. Lukas Hopper during a ceremony, Nov. 5, at Joint Security Station Cleary, Iraq, a remote base outside Baghdad. Hopper, a 20-year-old infantryman, from Merced, Calif., died, Oct. 30, from injuries sustained after his vehicle rolled over during a mounted combat patrol Oct. 30, just outside Baghdad.

the Army Service Ribbon, the Overseas Service Ribbon, and the Parachutist Badge.

His is survived by his parents and his two younger sisters. ✂

Aviators have unique way of saying 'thanks'

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

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – A nation's flag can be a powerful symbol of pride for people; a flag that comes with a story behind it can mean so much more.

From families and friends to companies and organizations, there are numerous people who support the efforts by deployed Soldiers. Support can come in the form of letters, movies, books, snacks and various supplies. It is all done to express the gratitude for what deployed Soldiers are doing in the service of their country.

In an effort to give back, the aviators of the 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, are taking American flags on combat missions and then sending them back home to show appreciation for the support.

There are various reasons the aviators take a flag up with them on a mission, whether it is for family and friends, groups they used to be a part of, or for organizations that have given support to the Soldiers deployed, said Capt. Lucas Kennedy, from Kearney, Neb., commander of Company A, 4th Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, 1st ACB.

"The flag I am flying today is for a company that has sent us [Morale Welfare and Recreation] type items," said Kennedy. "It is just a way for us to thank them for the movies, candy and personal hygiene products they have sent us."

All of the flags come with a personalized certificate stating the date the flag was flown, what type of aircraft it was flown in, who the pilot was and that it was flown on a combat mission in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, said Kennedy.

"I hope that these flags we fly are passed down to kids and grandkids, or fly



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

Capt. Lucas Kennedy, from Kearney, Neb., gets ready to fly on a mission over Baghdad, Iraq, Nov. 6. To show appreciation for the numerous items sent from a company out of Austin, Texas, he'll fly an American flag during the mission and later mail it to them.

proudly outside a home every day, or up on a wall of an establishment and remain there for as long as that VFW, fire hall or school exists," said Kennedy.

The flags have great symbolism which people can rally around, Kennedy said, and added it is a way for people to remember what was done, making the flag a more powerful item.

In 2003, during the initial push into Iraq, Maj. R.J. Garcia, from South Lake, Texas, the operations officer in charge for 4-227th, came into country with four flags and a plan to distribute them amongst his family.

"I gave one flag to my father, one to another family member, one to a good friend and saved one for my son who was born three days after I got back from that first deployment," said Garcia. "I decided to hold onto the one for my son until I retire, so I could say I flew with it on every combat mission I have ever flown."

"I think the flag is really a universal symbol for freedom; it's really gone beyond being just for Americans, but for the world, and I try to bring that symbol back home for people that do something special for the troops," Garcia continued.

"Where I come from in Idaho, nobody knows anybody that has been out here (Iraq), so it is kind of nice to be able to share that with them," said Chief Warrant Officer 4 Greg Marotz, from Ashton, Idaho. "We spend 12 or 15 months here and that is a way we can share what we are doing with those that really don't know."

Having sent a flag and certificate back to his junior high and elementary school, the kids were able to see a different side of the war from what is seen on T.V., and it actually put a face and a story of how the flag came to the school, said Marotz. ✂



NOV 23

The War on Terrorism

On this day in American Military History

U.S. Special Forces, Afghan Northern Alliance fighters corner Taliban at Tora Bora

After the fall of Kabul, al Qaeda and Taliban forces had retreated into major strongholds in the Tora Bora Mountains south of Jalalabad near the Pakistani border, some of the most rugged terrain in the world. The terrorists had controlled the area for years, digging hundreds of caves and refuges and establishing their training camps. In addition to being intimately familiar with the area, they had emplaced extensive fortifications and stockpiled weapons and ammunition to fight a protracted defense. With large numbers of well-supplied, fanatical al-Qaeda troops dug into extensive fortified positions, Tora Bora appeared to be an extremely tough target.

To make matters worse, the local anti-Taliban forces were even more disorganized than those in other areas. Not only were they divided into mutually hostile factions, but also each faction was deeply distrustful of American aims. However, given the few U.S. troops available in the country, Central Command had no readily available alternative to using Afghan forces for any timely attack on the region. At the time, the U.S. Marines had established only a small forward base at RHINO, south of Kandahar, and only a reinforced company of the 10th Mountain Division was at Bagram and Mazar-e Sharif. No other forces were readily available for use. Central Command and the headquarters of the Third U.S. Army generated numerous plans for the introduction of some U.S. conventional troops into the Tora Bora fight as blocking elements, but none were executed.

The mission fell to Special Forces working with an indigenous Afghan force. The Task Force DAGGER commander directed several SF teams to enter into the Tora Bora region in early December, meet with the local Afghan anti-Taliban commander, Hazrat Ali, and coordinate his attacks on the caves with U.S. airpower.

The forces of Hazrat Ali were a heterogeneous mixture of Northern Alliance soldiers loyal to Ali but whose fighting qualities were somewhat mixed. Yet lack of time and a U.S. policy that dictated the use of indigenous forces in ground operations as much as possible made the use of Ali's forces important. The SF teams were only to provide them advice and assistance with air support, not to lead them into battle. The plan was to send the Afghan forces up into the Tora Bora Mountains to assault al-Qaeda positions located in a well-protected canyon. The latest intelligence placed senior al-Qaeda leaders, possibly even Osama bin Laden, in that area.

The SF teams moved south out of Jalalabad, planning to set up an observation post along the high ground near the canyon. They were accompanied by a small Afghan security element to protect them while they were calling down air strikes. The movement up into the Tora Bora Mountains proved slow and hazardous. After a short trip in the ubiquitous pickup trucks, the teams were forced to unload and move forward on foot with burros carrying their packs. Moving into mountains where the altitude varied from 10,000 to 12,000 feet, they progressed slowly over rocky and narrow paths.



Initially, the team set up an OP on the canyon's western ridgeline and immediately began calling down air strikes, forcing al-Qaeda to move away, out of direct sight, into an even smaller canyon. Another SF team then moved to set up a smaller OP on the eastern side of the ridgeline, giving them direct observation of the new enemy concentration. The two teams then coordinated their air strikes from both sites, leaving the al-Qaeda nowhere to turn.

For seventeen straight hours the SF teams rained fire onto enemy positions as the Afghan forces of Hazrat Ali began moving into the canyon. After this preparatory fire they began hitting targets of opportunity over the course of the next several days. The fight continued into the night. Each night, as the enemy forces would light their campfires to try and keep warm, the teams used their thermal imagers and brought in more bombs and fire missions, including a number of attacks by AC-130 Spectre gunships.

The enemy fought stubbornly. Each day Ali's forces would take advantage of U.S. air power and advance into the canyon, and each evening they would fall back. Much of the same ground would have to be taken again the next day. This went on for eight days and nights, as the enemy pocket grew smaller and smaller. Ali's force soon tired of the constant action and relaxed the pressure on the enemy, with U.S. forces and air support attempting to take up the slack. By the time the Tora Bora fighting slowly ground to a halt in mid-December, the SF soldiers had called in hundreds of air strikes, dropping thousands of tons of munitions and killing hundreds of enemy troops. A few al-Qaeda were captured, but most of them fought to the death or slipped away into the relative safety of nearby Pakistan. The whereabouts of Osama bin Laden, or even whether he had been in the Tora Bora region in the first place, remained a mystery.

2001

N.C. Guard Soldiers check on neighborhood



Photos by Sgt. Jon Soles, MND-B PAO

BAGHDAD – Sgt. James Grigsby, of Winston-Salem, N.C., takes a position atop a bale of hay to provide over watch security while on a dismount patrol near Mahmudiyah, here, Oct. 31. Grigsby is an infantryman assigned to Company B, 120th Combined Arms Battalion, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team.



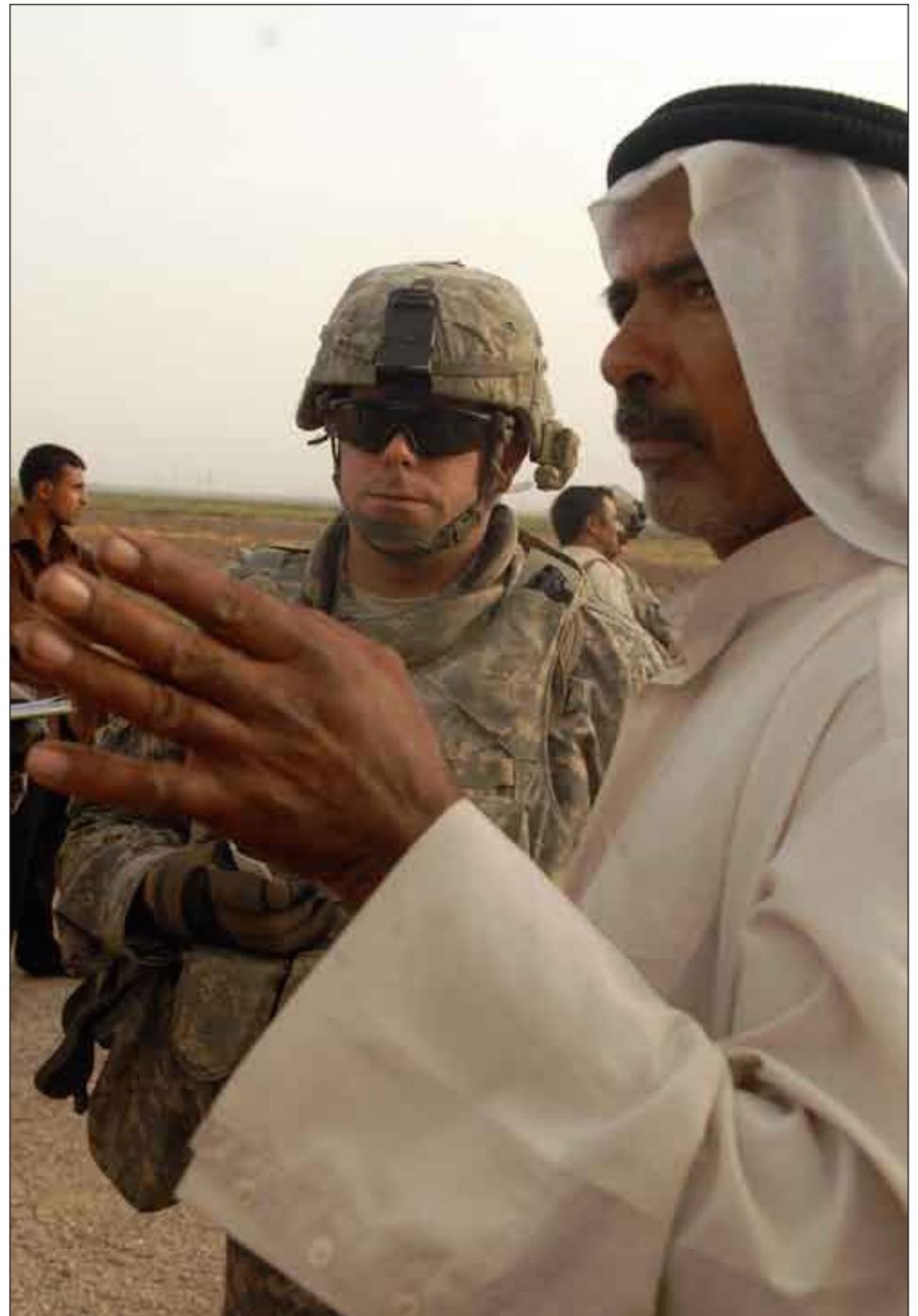
(Below) Sgt. 1st Class Robert Irwin (left) talks with an Iraqi man about security and other concerns while on patrol near Mahmudiyah, here, Oct. 31. Irwin is an infantry platoon sergeant assigned to Company B, 120th Combined Arms Battalion, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team. "I love going out and talking to them to find out what issues they have, said Irwin, from Tabor City, N.C. "As we were talking, more individuals came up and gave us information.



Spc. Joey Hucks talks with an Iraqi child while on a patrol near Mahmudiyah, here, Oct. 31. Hucks is an infantryman assigned to Company B, 120th Combined Arms Battalion, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team. "You find out more about them and how they live," said Hucks, a native of Lumberton, N.C. "When they see your face and how friendly we are, they see Americans are good people."



Staff Sgt. William Andrews (right) shares a laugh with a Sons of Iraq security member at an SoI checkpoint near Mahmudiyah, here, Oct. 31. Andrews is an infantryman assigned to Company B, 120th Combined Arms Battalion, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team. "I think it helps the younger generation see we are here to help them and hopefully, it will have a bigger impact in years to come," said Andrews, a native of Whiteville, N.C.



Engineer troops survey Liberty for new maps

Story by 1st Lt. Michael Lind

101st Eng. Bn. PAO, 16th Eng. Bde., MND-B

BAGHDAD – A temporary increase in the number of Soldiers moving through Camp Liberty is expected as the U.S. military transitions to a responsible drawdown in Iraq.

This increase means plans to improve facilities and security; an impossible task without updated maps.

Troops of the 621st Survey and Design Team, 101st Engineer Battalion, 16th Eng. Brigade, surveyed Camp Liberty, Nov. 5, to provide leaders and Soldiers with updated maps.

From North Carolina, the National Guard team includes two survey teams and one drafting team who are responsible for architectural design, land survey, and cartography.

“[The 621st] provides topographical data in our areas of responsibilities and provides input for better utilization of existing structures,” said Staff Sgt. Glenn Cornett, of Hazard, Ky.

After receiving the mission a few weeks ago, the engineers grabbed their gear and set up tripods around various points across Camp Liberty to record up-to-date survey readings.

“The Trimble 5600 is one of the instruments used for collecting traverse, topographic, and as-built data. The Trimble R-8 is the [Global Positioning Satellite] device used to collect real time data to tie into existing maps,” said Spc. Derek Adams, of Gastonia, N.C.

According to Adams, the tripods provide a plumb and level base. With a perfect set-up, the R-8 can grab GPS data and location by referencing other GPS points through traverse methods that utilize angles and distances.

In all, the mission is a three phase process.

“We survey the roads and ditches to get GPS coordinates and make sure that current points are in synch with previously documented readings,” said Spc. Micah Mahadeo, from Stanley, N.C.

Once new data is synchronized, the surveyors then compile new statistics for the outlay changes to Camp Liberty.



Photo by Spc. Ezekiel Earle, 621st Survey and Design Team

Spc. Micah Mahadeo (left), of Stanley, N.C. and Sgt. Daveline Harris of Charlotte, N.C., use the Trimble 5600 tripod in order to record terrain data at Camp Liberty, Nov. 5. The Soldiers will provide data that will create new map imagery of the base.

“We then deal with surveying canals, boundaries, T-Walls, utilities, power poles, building structures, and sewers,” said Sgt. Daveline Harris, the survey team leader from Charlotte, N.C.

According to Harris, line of sight from instrument to prism is crucial in determining accurate readings on elevation, distance, and other land feature information.

“Once [the surveyors] go out and record points and elevations... we turn the data over to the drafters so they can review the stats,” said Harris.

In the third phase, surveyors download their data into computer systems for the designers to verify the information is accurate.

“Once accurate, we use our best engineering judgment to design structures such as buildings, roadways, lighting projects, or gates,” said Staff Sgt. William Burriola, from Fairmont, N.C.

When the three phases are complete, the information is sent up to higher, where maps are produced.

“Maps [that we help make] are a combined effort of the surveyors and the designers. Higher levels than us create them; we give them the data to make it happen,” said Cornett.

“We have a sense of accomplishment knowing we help define and produce topographical maps that will be used for years to come,” said Burriola. ✂

New living quarters at JSS Rasheed

Story by Sgt. Joshua Risner

MND-B PAO

BAGHDAD – Whether it’s repaving roads or constructing buildings, engineers are right in the thick of things; swinging hammers and operating equipment.

Engineers of 1434th Engineer Company, 101st Engineer Battalion, 16th Engineer Brigade, began construction, Nov. 4, on living quarters for the Soldiers stationed at Joint Security Station Rasheed.

“We have two rooms that we are constructing barracks in,” said Staff Sgt. Lance Miller, from Diorite, Mich. “Each room will have 16 seven foot by seven foot barracks in it along with a bunk and a desk to make the Soldiers a little more comfortable.”

What started as a large empty room quickly became a corridor of small rooms. Eventually stairs were built and a second floor began to take shape.

According to Miller, the construction is projected to take two weeks but the efficient Soldiers have already moved ahead of schedule.

“They had the first floor framed by the first day and

the second floor was already in place by day two,” he said with a bit of pride. “My guys are doing really well.”

Operating ahead of schedule has given the Soldiers of the 1434th a sense of pride in what they’re doing, according to Spc. Aaron Pepin, from Escanaba, Mich.

“Every day we finish what we planned to do and that makes us feel good,” he said. “It’s actually going way better than we planned – we’re going pretty quickly.”

Though things have been moving faster than originally planned, the Soldiers are still very aware that what they do is still potentially dangerous work, Pepin added.

“A lot goes into what we do,” he said.

“You can’t slack off; you’ve got to watch what other people are doing while you’re working. You can’t goof around because there’s stuff that can happen that you don’t think will and somebody could get hurt.”

The project is one of many the Soldiers of the 1434th can be proud of. For the Soldiers that will be moving into these rooms, they can sleep at night knowing that their quarters were soundly constructed by professionals. ✂

Spc. Josh Thomas, from Maple Rapids, Mich., cuts plywood with a circular saw during construction at Joint Security Station Rasheed, here, Nov. 4.



Photo by Sgt. Joshua Risner, MND-B PAO

New school supplies brighten day in Mahmudiyah

Story by Sgt. Jon Soles
MND-B PAO

BAGHDAD – About 400 Iraqi school children have more school supplies for the classroom, thanks to a visit from Soldiers of the North Carolina National Guard.

Soldiers of Company B, 120th Combined Arms Battalion, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team teamed up with Civil Affairs Team 724 to deliver the supplies at the al-Andules primary school in Mahmudiyah, here, Nov. 2.

The drop was large enough to require a trailer to haul the school supplies; donated from individuals and groups in the United States. Staff Sgt. James Heim, a civil affairs non-commissioned officer from Chicago, said the pencils, pens, crayons and notebooks will help the education of an estimated 400 students.

“Obviously, education is very important in this area,” said Heim. “Keeping these kids in school keeps them off the street and less likely to become insurgents in the future.”

Heim said the donation was coordinated through a local sheikh who wanted to help the school. Iraqi Army Soldiers passed out the supplies in the school yard while American Soldiers helped move the boxes of supplies to the yard and pull security.

“We try to put an Iraqi face on it so it builds more pride in the country,” said Heim. “It helps build relationships in the area.”

Aside from the scholastic benefits, seeing the children line up to receive the supplies was enough to make the mission seem worthwhile to many of the Soldiers. It was also a chance for the Iraqi Army to take the lead in a humanitarian mission.

“What makes it special is that the Iraqi Army is heading this up,” said Sgt. Maj. Gary Fry of Hubert, N.C. “It’s good for [the children] to see the IA doing this so they develop a trust in their government.”

Fry, the operations sergeant major for the 120th CAB, 30th HBCT, walked around the school yard passing out pencils to small, expectant small hands, while Spc. Blake Haney passed out stuffed animals to the children. Haney said he enjoys missions that allow Soldiers to help the Iraqi people.

“I get to interact with the people of Iraq instead of just passing them by,” said Haney, from Mt. Pleasant, N.C. “It really opens my eyes to the shortages of Iraq and it warms my heart knowing we can help them.”

By supporting a school and donating tools for learning, the Soldiers of the 120th CAB, 30th HBCT are helping Iraq’s future by fostering conditions for well-educated children who will continue to help Iraq gain more self-sufficiency. ✂



Photo by Sgt. Jon Soles, MND-B PAO

Spc. Blake Haney (left), from Mount Pleasant, N.C., and Pfc. Kim Uy, from Charlotte, N.C., shake hands with Iraqi children after passing out stuffed animals at the al-Andules primary school in Mahmudiyah, here, Nov. 2. Both Soldiers are assigned to the 120th Combined Arms Battalion, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team.



Photo by Sgt. Jon Soles, MND-B PAO

Staff Sgt. James Heim (left), of Chicago, and an Iraqi soldier unload a box of school supplies from a trailer at al-Andules primary school in Mahmudiyah, here, Nov. 2.

WHAT DO THESE THINGS HAVE IN COMMON?

THEY WILL NOT BE USED TO TRANSMIT SENSITIVE OR CLASSIFIED INFORMATION. REVIEW YOUR CRITICAL INFORMATION LIST.

Have the Courage to Help a Buddy

“One suicide is one too many.”
Kenneth G. Preston
Resident Advisor, 101st Airborne

Talk to your Chaplain or a Behavioral Health Professional or call Military OneSource
1-800-342-9647
www.militaryonesource.com

Raiders search for weapons

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

Crouching under a caved-in thatched roof, Spc. Eric Marquez, an infantryman from El Paso, Texas, assigned to Company A, 4th Battalion, 9th Infantry Regiment, 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, searches the area for hidden weapons or explosives during a search in northwestern Baghdad, Nov. 2.



Leaving no stone or leaf unturned, Sgt. Nicholas Vazquez, an infantry team leader from Vineland, N.J., assigned to Company A, 4th Battalion, 9th Infantry Regiment, 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, pulls up brush looking for explosives or weapons during a sweep of the area in northwestern Baghdad, Nov. 2.



Pvt. Anthony Altero, an infantryman from Putnam, N.Y., gets a hit on a mine detector as Sgt. Nicholas Vazquez, a Vineland, N.J., native and infantry team leader, bends down to take a closer look during an operation to locate suspected terrorist cache sites in northwestern Baghdad, Nov. 2. Both Soldiers are assigned to Co. A, 4th Bn., 9th Infantry Regt., 4th SBCT, 2nd Inf. Div.



Pvt. Neil Cortez, a squad automatic gunner from Los Angeles, assigned to Co. A, 4th Bn., 9th Inf. Regt., 4th SBCT, 2nd Inf. Div., pulls security as his fellow troops search for suspected insurgent weapons caches in northwestern Baghdad, Nov. 2.



Sgt. James Hall, an infantry team leader from Orangeville, Calif., assigned to Company A, 4th Battalion, 9th Infantry Regiment, 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, searches for weapons or explosives caches in the fields of northwestern Baghdad, Nov. 2.

ENGINEERS SHARE KNOWLEDGE ROUTE CLEARANCE IRAQI POLICE

Story & photos by Staff Sgt. April Mota

101st Eng. Bn. PAO, 16th Eng. Bde., MND-B

BAGHDAD – Iraqi Police from the 1st Mechanized Brigade attended a three day class on route clearance and improvised explosive device recognition at the Task Force Iron Claw Academy, Nov. 11.

Taught by Soldiers of the 101st Engineer Battalion and the 16th Engineer Brigade, here on Victory Base Complex, the three day course covered the main components of IED's, including signs to indicate a possible IED, simulated IED lanes, and Husky vehicle familiarization.

Spc. Norman Thompson, Northbridge, Mass., 101st Eng. Bn., taught the IPs how to use the Husky, a mine detection vehicle used in convoys for route clearance.

"I was happy to help instruct the mine detection vehicle familiarization course. I ran route clearance missions for an entire deployment; I have plenty of knowledge to share," said Thompson.

This was not the first class that IP officer, Maj. Abbas Ali, attended that was taught by U.S. forces.

He was very impressed with the hands on training and felt the portion of the class that covered placement and concealment to be the most helpful.

"We now have another way to detect dangerous IEDs. This training helps us help our people and U.S. forces to avoid terrible incidents around Baghdad," he said.

Warrant Officer Jameel Nema is now serving with the IP's. He was thankful their group was able to attend the course as were most of the IP's involved.

"This group will transfer their experiences from this class to the fellow IP's they are stationed with. This knowledge will make our routes and checkpoints much safer. It will help a lot of IP's," said Nema.

This was the first time Warrant Officer Hussain Abuid has trained with the U.S. forces. Abuid felt the IP's were well taken care of during the class, receiving nothing but professionalism from the U.S. Soldiers. He was impressed by how thorough the class was.

"This training gives us more motivation to do our job. We're now able to identify different components of the IED," he said.

The last day of class had the officers walk through a simulated IED lane, putting their knowledge from the previous days to the test. Each time the IPs came across something suspicious they would stop to investigate. The IP's were able to properly detect every simulated IED that had been hidden by the instructors.

At the graduation ceremony, Col. Tris Cooper, of Marion, Ohio, with the 16th Eng. Bde., thanked the IPs for attending the class and urged them to take the knowledge learned here and share it with their fellow IPs.

"Knowledge is power, but only if it is shared," said Cooper. ✂

"This group will transfer their experiences from this class to the fellow IP's they are stationed with. This knowledge will make our routes and checkpoints much safer. It will help a lot of IP's."

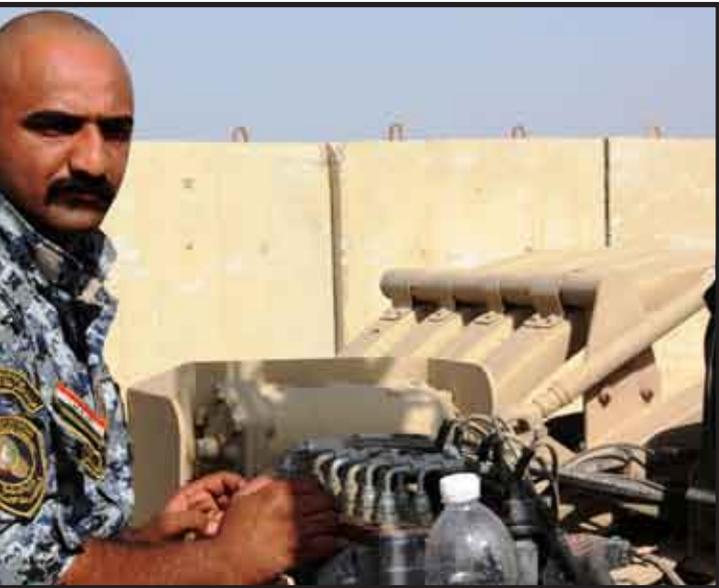
-- Warrant Officer Hussain Abuid

Carefully manipulating the controls to the arm of a Husky, IP officer Hasanin Abudhamaza, tries to pick up a cone representing a simulated improvised explosive device. Abudhamaza attended a three day course on route clearance at the Task Force Iron Claw Academy, here on Victory Base Complex on Nov. 11.

(Below) During mine detection vehicle familiarization training, Nov. 11, Iraqi Police officers practice using the arm of the Husky, the vehicle used on route clearance missions.



KNOWLEDGE, PROVIDE ANCE TRAINING TO



Holding the command wire to a simulated improvised explosive device, Iraqi Police Warrant Officer Jameel Nemaah, tells the other members of his class what he saw hidden in the grass to alert them of a possible IED. Nemaah attended a three day route clearance class, here, on Victory Base Complex, Nov. 11.

Spc. Norman Thompson (right), of Northbridge, Mass., stops to discuss the warning signs of a simulated improvised explosive device, here, Nov. 11.



Unaware of an upcoming simulated improvised explosive device, Iraqi Police walk through a training lane as part of a three day route clearance class here on Victory Base Complex on Nov. 11.

101st Engineer welders get to work

Photos by Staff Sgt. April Mota, 101st Eng. Bn. PAO, 16th Eng. Bde., MND-B



BAGHDAD – Using delicate precision, Spc. Chad Parks, of Steuben, Maine, with Forward Support Company, 101st Engineer Battalion, 16th Engineer Brigade, welds the first new hinge in place to the entrance gate of a motor pool, here, on Victory Base Complex, Nov. 7.



Getting ready to cut off the old hinges that left the gate entrance unsecure, Spc. Chad Parks, of Steuben, Maine, Forward Support Company, 101st Engineer Battalion, 16th Engineer Brigade, adjusts the gas flow to a cutting torch to the proper setting. Parks works to install new hinges to the entrance gate of the 445th Transportation Company's motor pool, here, on Victory Base Complex, Nov. 7.

Task Force Iron Claw trains Soldiers to clear the way

Story by Sgt. Tracy Knowles

101st Eng. Bn. PAO, 16th Eng. Bde., MND-B

BAGHDAD – Soldiers of the 2nd Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 10th Mountain Division, took part in a four-day route clearance course taught by Soldiers from the 16th Engineer Brigade at Task Force Iron Claw, here, at Victory Base Complex, Nov. 4.

According to the officer-in-charge at Task Force Iron Claw, 1st Lt. Craig Smith, the training teaches U.S. and Iraqi Soldiers to tell the difference between what is an improvised explosive device and what is not.

“There are so many things along the road that can be mistaken for an IED and this course really gets into the difference between recognizing what is or isn't an IED,” said Smith.

Communication is an important aspect of route clearance missions, especially when relaying messages on the location of suspected enemy activity or improvised explosive devices.

Spc. John Dunn, of Cranston, R.I., taught three days of classroom briefings and one day of hands on training out in the field.

“[Soldiers] need to be prepared, the vehicles need to work properly, communication systems need to be working properly, or the mission cannot be successful,” said Dunn.

Soldiers navigated the course in Mine-Resistant Ambush-Protected vehicles after Dunn and other instructors hid simulated IED's along the route; setting up a situation close to a real world environment.

Sgt. 1st Class Ricky Walker, of Reynoldsburg, Ohio, an assistant instructor and a veteran of both Vietnam and Desert Storm, reflected on the training he had for those wars.

“It is amazing to see the training that happens now compared to the training I had back then,” said Walker.

The well disguised training aids were set up in order to test the Soldiers' awareness.

“We don't hide them so they can find them,” said Walker. “We want the lane to be difficult so they are more aware of what is out there.”



Photo by Sgt. Tracy Knowles 101st Eng. Bn. PAO, 16th Eng. Bde., MND-B

Setting up a marker on a simulated improvised explosive training device, Spc. John Dunn, Cranston, R.I., covers the markings in the dirt during the fourth day of training at Task Force Iron Claw Academy, here, on Victory Base Complex, Nov. 4.

The training was successful after Soldiers learned how to use the specialized engineering equipment used for route clearance operations. It was evident to the instructors that the Soldiers used what they learned the three previous days.

“The training went well. It was a real eye opener for some. Everyone is used to easy IED lanes and this one is more like the real world,” said Smith.

“It was great training, more in depth, a real wake up

to what's really going on out there,” said Pfc. Zackary Leber, of Wellsboro, Pa., assigned to 2nd BSTB, 10th Mtn. Div.

As the end of day four came to a close and the Soldiers grounded their gear, the instructors reemphasized that even if the Soldiers don't see something the first time down a road, they need to continue to be diligent. The mission of the route clearance team not only protects our Soldiers but Iraqi citizens as well. ✂

Garryowen trains Iraqi Federal Police

Story by 1st Lt. Josh Risher

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

BAGHDAD – One of U.S. forces' main roles in Iraq is training, assisting and supporting the Iraqi Security Forces securing their country.

Soldiers in 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division have fully embraced their teaching role and are holding several academies throughout their operating environment teaching a variety of tools and tactics.

Soldiers from 1st Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment, conducted non-lethal force training and basic rifle marksmanship for their 2nd Battalion, 2nd Brigade, 1st Federal Police Division partners during the first week of November at Joint Security Station Istiqlal.

The Fort Hood, Texas-based troopers conducted combatives training with a specialty platoon of the Iraqi Federal Police. The emphasis on non-lethal training gives the policemen time and space to take control of a physical confrontation without raising a weapon. While all policemen who carry weapons have the ability to use lethal force in the execution of their duties, there are circumstances where non-lethal force is better.

First Lt. Mike Olvera, from San Benito, Texas, taught the Iraqis new techniques for fighting on the ground; giving them simple, energy efficient methods for bringing a suspect to the ground, as well as submission holds which give them an advantage.

"You just hold on to them, and sit down," Olvera told them as he demonstrated a takedown. "You don't need to lift them up and wear yourself out. Use their weight against them," he said as he rolled on top of a Soldier who helped demonstrate.

After allowing them to practice the throws and submissions, Olvera had them stand up for some training with their individual weapons.

"Everyone knows that being shot by a weapon will stop someone," he told them, pointing to their AK-47s, "But you don't always have to use lethal force with a

firearm. All of these moves can allow you to stop an opponent without ever pulling the trigger."

He then led them through a series of slashes, thrusts, and butt strokes used in bayonet fighting—techniques which can be used to deflect a knife attack, or to stop a charging attacker.

The Iraqi policemen practiced each movement aggressively, shouting for added emphasis.

The second part of the training consisted of a small arms firing range and teaching the policemen basic rifle marksmanship.

The block of instruction covered basic principles of marksmanship: steady position, breathing control and trigger squeeze to help each policeman consistently hit the same part of the target. The FPs learned how to load and clear the M4 rifle, as well as how to apply corrective actions if the weapon failed to fire.

"They learned pretty well," said Anadarko, Okla., native Sgt. Timothy Winn, an instructor. "When I was explaining how to perform immediate actions on a misfire, a few of them had some blank stares. But when we let them get some hands-on practice, they took right to it."

After preliminary instruction, the Iraqi FPs took their positions on the firing line and practiced their newly learned techniques. During each firing iteration, Winn and fellow instructor, Staff Sgt. John from Clovis, Calif., coached the pupils on their posture to improve their technique.

"I know that it seems cool to aim for the head," Hall told a group after their first time firing. "But you have to remember one thing. As the target gets further away, the head becomes a very small target. Aiming for the center of mass will be much more effective."

The training provided the Iraqi FPs a well rounded basic knowledge on both non-lethal and lethal tactics and tools.

According to Olvera, at the end of the training, they walked away with their heads held high, knowing they could deal with a potential assailant. ✂



Photo by 1st Lt. Josh Risher, 1 BCT PAO, 1st Cav. Div., MND-B

Pittsburg, Penn. native Spc. Nathan Lohr (on the ground), a cavalry scout from 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, practices a straight-arm bar submission hold with an Iraqi Federal Policeman during a non-lethal force class held at Joint Security Station Istiqlal.



Paratroopers hand over battlespace to 10th Mountain Soldiers

Story by Sgt. Jennie Burrett
2nd BCT PAO, 10th Mtn. Div., MND-B



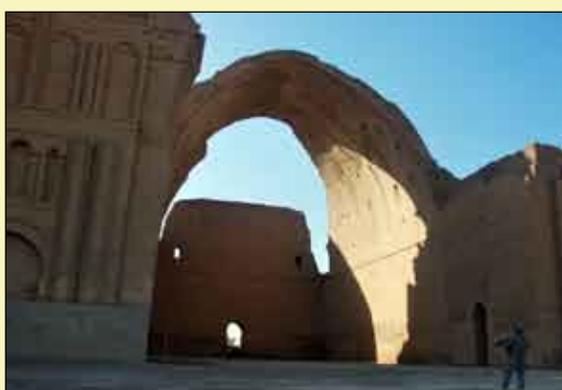
BAGHDAD – Lt. Col. Thomas Murphy (left), of Lancaster, N.Y., the commander of 210th Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division and Command Sgt. Maj. Pamela Connally, of Wichita Falls, Texas, uncased the brigade's colors during a Transfer of Authority ceremony, Nov. 9. The unit cased their colors in Sept., 2009 in preparation to deploy to Iraq.

U.S., Iraqi officials assess Arch of Ctesiphon

Story by Spc. Rebecca Schwab
2nd BCT PAO, 10th Mtn. Div., MND-B



BAGHDAD, Iraq – Lt. Col. Michael Shinnars (left), of Alexandria, Va., the deputy commander of 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, shows Lt. Col. Michael Davey (right) the area surrounding the famous Arch of Ctesiphon during a site assessment mission Nov. 8 in Salmon Pak, Iraq. Shinnars and Davey, the deputy commander of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, along with Iraqi officials, discussed plans to renovate the arch's surrounding area during the visit. Plans include building a fence, planting grass and trees, and repairing the existing structures in order to help restore national pride and bring tourism to Iraq.



When crashing is part of the plan

Story by Pfc. Kimberly Hackbarth

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

BAGHDAD – Focused on his task, Pvt. Richard Jarus, guided a small unmanned aerial vehicle in circles around a landing area near the brigade headquarters on Camp Liberty, Nov. 7.

Steering it into a straight line, he used the hand controller to tell the RQ-11B Raven to quickly lift its nose into the air, causing it to stall and crash into the ground; pieces of the UAV scattering among the rocks. The landing was a success, by a Raven pilot's standards.

When the Raven "crashes", its pieces are designed to fly off, dispersing energy among them, to keep from harming the main body of the UAV, said Jarus, a native of Hanover, Penn.

Soldiers from every battalion in the 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division had new equipment training (NET) with the Raven during the brigade's rotation at the Joint Readiness Training Center at Fort Polk, La., but most of the Soldiers who attended review training that day hadn't flown the bird in country before, said Chief Warrant Officer 3 Wayne Grimes, of Fort Lewis, Wash., a brigade Raven master trainer.

This training provided an opportunity to build the Raven pilots' confidence and evaluate their efficiency with the device. It also reinforced the skills they already learned as well as some tactics, techniques and procedures that they didn't necessarily learn during NET.

It's important to have extra time to execute flying techniques is to remind them of the skills they learned in previous training on Fort Lewis, said Grimes.

"It's so perishable since they just learned it."

The Soldiers know that they might not have many opportunities to fly the Raven, so they took full advantage of what the training day had to offer by asking questions and continually working on flying the UAV.

"The guy I went to training with [changed duty stations], so it's just me and it's hard to [fly the Raven] by



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

Pvt. Richard Jarus of Hanover, Penn., hurls an RQ-11B Raven, a small unmanned aerial system, during an evaluation training course on Camp Liberty, Nov. 7. Jarus practiced his Raven flying skills he learned on Fort Lewis, Wash.

yourself," said Jarus, who explained that since he's the only Raven-trained Soldier in his platoon, he may not get to fly it as often.

Grimes told a story about how he has flown a Raven alone, and how many others have had to do the same.

Training ended with everyone laughing and cheering as the Raven hit the ground one last time, another perfectly imperfect landing. ✂



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

Chief Warrant Officer 3 Wayne Grimes, of Fort Lewis, Wash., a brigade Raven master trainer, demonstrates how to put together an RQ-11B Raven during a refresher training course for Soldiers with 1st Battalion, 38th Infantry Regiment on Camp Liberty, Nov. 7.

Soldiers find creative outlets as escape during deployment

Story by Spc. Howard Alperin

MND-B PAO

BAGHDAD – The stresses of a long deployment can wear on Soldiers.

While there are a variety of activities, here on Camp Liberty, some Soldiers prefer to focus their down time in a more personal way.

“It helps me cope with missing home,” said Spc. Wilbur Deshields, an entry control point guard, with A Company, Division Special Troops Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division. “You can only go to the gym so many times. Drawing is my mental escape. It gives me a chance to be creative. There’s no limit to what I can do with my imagination.”

For Deshields, there is therapeutic value in having a creative outlet.

“Whenever I’m mad, stressed-out or frustrated, that’s when I get out my sketch pad,” continued Deshields, from Akron, Ohio. “I draw best when I’m upset.”

Deshields gets a lot of satisfaction by using his talent to help others.

“Sometimes, people ask me to draw a picture or an image for a tattoo. Other times, I draw something to cheer people up, to make them laugh,” he said.

Creative outlets are another way for Soldiers to express their personal development during deployment.

“Everyone that comes to theater should leave as a different person. They should have had some transformation along the way,” said 1st Lt. Michele Johnson, a casualty platoon leader and author, from Gulfport, Miss. “For an artist, you can see that transformation in their work.”

Johnson, a published Christian non-fiction writer, writes blogs, poetry and songs.

“Writing is another way to get out what’s on the inside; the feelings and emotions you’re having about a situation or a person,” said Johnson, assigned to the 271st Human Resources Company, Multi-National Division-Baghdad. “It helps me escape. It gets me away from the dirt and rocks. For however long I’m writing, I can focus on something else.”

With her first fiction novel already published, Spc. Maria Beasley from Marfa, Texas, is using this deployment to publish her second novel and start work on a third one.

“For me, writing is a spiritual thing,” said Beasley, a human resources specialist, assigned to Headquarters Support Company, DSTB, 1st Cav. Div. “It’s about believing in the impossible.”

Beasley gets her inspiration for writing from her interests, surroundings, the people in her life, stories she hears, and movies or television, she said. Her avenue for escape



Photo by Spc. Howard Alperin, MND-B PAO

First Lt. Michele Johnson, a casualty platoon leader and Christian non-fiction author from Gulfport, Miss., spends time reviewing one of her writing journals, here, Oct. 31. She is participating in a writing contest that challenges each contestant to write 50,000 words in 30 days.

from the rigors of deployment is by transporting herself into another world with original characters, she added.

Having a passion or an art allows for the time to pass that much faster while deployed, according to these Soldiers.

“It’s an outlet to express myself,” she said. “It allows me to be who I really am. I let my mind get lost in the story.”

Creative writing is good for helping to get through a year in theater, added Beasley. Her mind is always occupied with thoughts for her next chapter.

These Soldiers are proof that whether it is a chapter to be written, a song to be sung or an image to be drawn, finding an artistic outlet while on deployment is a constructive way to accomplish personal endeavors, wake up the mind’s eye and beat back stressors from interfering with the mission. ✂



Photo by Spc. Howard Alperin, MND-B PAO

More than a way to whittle down the deployment, Spc. Wilbur Deshields, from Akron, Ohio, says his sketch pad acts as a therapeutic outlet for stress.

Tactical vehicle safety: Slow down

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

BAGHDAD – As of Feb. 2009, when the 1st Cavalry Division assumed command of the Multi-National Division-Baghdad area of operations, there have been 81 military vehicle accidents.

Forty-four of those have been accidents involving the hulking Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicles, and 37 involved humvees.

According to Mr. Dale Smith, the safety director for the 1st Cavalry Division since 2002, speed is the biggest, single-most cause of accidents for MND-B Soldiers.

“If [drivers] keep their speed down, they don’t have vehicle control problems,” said Smith, from Harker Heights, Texas.

As the weather here transitions from the heat of summer to the rains of fall, Smith emphasized that tactical vehicle drivers need to use caution during inclement weather and when driving near canals, where soft road shoulders can cause rolls into the water.

“Leaders and noncommissioned officers need to enforce the standards,” said Smith. “That’s a big issue.”

Smith stressed that leaders and NCOs can engage and reinforce drivers’ skills training by conducting rollover drills, making sure all crew members use restraints, ensuring that tire pressure is correct on their vehicles, employing composite risk management, and briefing road conditions and hazards before each mission.

The Soldiers of D Troop, Division Special Troops Battalion, 1st Cav. Div. spend a large amount of their time here on the road.

“We’ve been through the rollover training and it was good,” said Pfc. Aaron Hoyt, from Mobile, Ala., assigned to D Troop. “You get the feel of a rollover, [what to watch for] and it’s not something I’d want to feel out on sector, so it makes me think about what we’re doing to be safe.”

D Troop leaders use time-tested methods to ensure their Soldiers are trained and prepared to handle dangerous situations on the road.

“The briefings we get prior to mission teach us what to be aware of and what to do in the event of an accident,” said Spc. Donald Thomson, tactical vehicle driver with D Troop from Des Moines, Iowa. “They keep us focused.”

Spc. Jermaine Ellis, from Tampa, Fla. agreed, saying that he is always on the lookout for obstacles in the road and maintains a constant check of the vehicle’s speed.

Training, situational awareness and mission safety should not stop. They should be constantly implemented, tweaked to particular missions and assessed for efficiency so that accidents don’t happen. Vehicles can be replaced; Soldiers cannot. ✂



Photo courtesy of 1st Cav. Div. Safety Office

A Mine-Resistant Ambush-Protected vehicle rests on its turret and hood after a rollover, here.

National Guard Soldiers become American citizens on Veteran's Day

Story by Spc. Kelly LeCompte
30th HBCT PAO, MND-B

BAGHDAD – Five Soldiers serving in Iraq with the North Carolina National Guard's 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team became U.S. citizens during a naturalization ceremony at Camp Victory's al-Faw Palace, Nov. 11.

The ceremony, held on Veteran's Day, was a fitting salute of Soldiers' service to their country.

Spc. Lourival Ledo Jr., originally of Brazil; Spc. Josue Reyes, originally of Costa Rica; Spc. David Toe, originally of Liberia; and Spc. Angelica Rangel, and Spc. Heriberto Mendoza-Cardenas, both originally of Mexico, all took part in the ceremony.

"It's an honor and a privilege, to call you a fellow citizen of the United States of America," said President Barack Obama in a video message. "This is now

officially your country; your home to protect, to defend and to serve through active and engaged citizenship."

"It's great," said Rangel, who is the first person in her family of five siblings, to become a U.S. citizen. "It was a good ceremony and a good experience. It definitely feels like it's our day, especially being Veteran's Day."

"It's a perfect day; I think it's perfectly fitting," said Rangel's battalion commander, Lt. Col. Barry Hull. "Rangel's an outstanding Soldier. I think she represents the best that our country has to offer. [She] recognized the value that our nation has to offer people, and recognized that it's worth defending," said Hull.

"It's a milestone," said Ledo, who has been in the military for five years now. "To be a part, not only of the 30th Brigade, but now be part of the history and be part of the citizens who serve proudly from this country." ✂



Photo by Spc. Kelly LeCompte, 30th HBCT PAO, MND-B

Service members stand at attention, waiting to take their oaths of allegiance during a citizenship ceremony, Nov. 11 at Camp Victory's al-Faw Palace, here. Five 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team Soldiers were among the 157 receiving their citizenship.



Photo by Spc. Kelly LeCompte, 30th HBCT PAO, MND-B

Spc. Josue Reyes (second from bottom), of the 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team, recites the Pledge of Allegiance with fellow service members during a citizenship ceremony at Camp Victory's al-Faw Palace here, on Veteran's Day.



Photo by Spc. Kelly LeCompte, 30th HBCT PAO, MND-B

Spc. Angelica Rangel (right), holding a flag and certificate of naturalization, shows off a coin of recognition to her battalion commander, Lt. Col. Barry Hull, after her citizenship ceremony at Camp Victory's al-Faw Palace here, Nov. 11.

Cav Soldiers, IA search for caches and criminals

Story by Pfc. Adam Halleck

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

BAGHDAD – Its 3:00 a.m. as American and Iraqi Soldiers rush to their trucks, trading the comforts of Joint Security Station Sheik Amir for the rugged farmland of al-Raood, a village north of Baghdad.

Troopers from Battery A, 1st Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, partnered with Iraqi troops assigned to 2nd Battalion, 37th Iraqi Army Brigade, 9th IA Division, conducted a massive search for weapons caches and known criminals, here, Oct. 30.

“We compiled an inclusive list of known wrongdoers in the al-Raood area who had outstanding warrants,” said Janesville, Wis. native, Pfc. Jacob Kruzel, an intelligence systems analyst. “The guys on the ground were given our target list so they could weed out the criminals who live among the people of al-Raood.”

In the early morning darkness, U.S. and Iraqi Soldiers converged on the village, creating a perimeter around the rural commu-

nity. Teams of troops walked through farmland and palm groves looking for criminals and weapons caches, while others provided security from the surrounding roads, while at the same time searching each vehicle entering and leaving the village.

“It took us about forty five minutes to control the security of about eight square kilometers,” explained Capt. Robert Reece. “At the same time we were in the process of searching al-Raood for weapons caches and high value targets who used the area as a hideout.”

The troops executed the mission after local residents requested the area be swept for weapons caches and criminal activity in hopes to deter outsiders from using it as a safe haven, added Reece.

“The local residents were pretty receptive and hospitable to us as we cleared the farmland and houses,” said Lakeland, Tenn. native, 1st Lt. Patrick Muldoon. “They even offered us food and chai.”

The Soldiers did a good job and got a good idea about security and civil capacity issues concerning the residents of al-Raood, added Muldoon.

“We got more than we needed during



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

Staff Sgt. Shad Fowler, from Amarillo, Texas, takes time during the patrol to speak to an Iraqi child during a counter insurgency mission here, Oct. 30.

the mission,” said Muldoon. “We made our point very clear that this area is not a good place for criminals to hide.”

Missions like these provide the residents of rural areas like al-Raood the opportunity to see their security forces at work with Iraqi troops in the lead.

“The Iraqi Army Soldiers were accomplishing some good things the more we got moving around the area,” said Cairo, Ga. native, Sgt. 1st. Class Phillip Cole. “A lot of the local people wanted us around [U.S. and Iraqi Soldiers] to patrol the area, they were very happy to see us out there.” ✂



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

Air Force Staff Sgt. Chris Kench, a military working dog handler from Orlando, Fla., pulls security with his K9 partner Gina, during a counter insurgency mission here, Oct. 30.



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

Fort Hood, Texas native, Sgt. Scott Phillips, uses a metal detector to search for weapons caches during a counter insurgency mission here, Oct. 30.

Engineers race to finish JSS Suj DFAC

Story by Spc. Brian Johnson

101st Eng. Bn. PAO, 16th Eng. Bde., MND-B

BAGHDAD – Joint Security Station Suj, on the northeastern edge of Baghdad, has very few of the comforts of a larger U.S. base.

Engineers from the 16th Engineer Brigade have been hard at work to try to change that.

Home to Paratroopers of 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, and soon to be home to troops of the 10th Mountain Division, the location is getting a much needed upgrade, starting with a new dining facility.

Soldiers from the 1434th Engineer Company began construction on the new dining facility in late Oct. 2009.

“Right now, the eating environment here is primitive,” said Sgt. Thomas Johnston, of North Adams, Mich.

“We need to give the Soldier a better eating environment, one that is more sanitary, and doesn’t require food to be hauled into the chow hall from a distance to be served,” said Johnston.

At JSS Suj, food preparation is done in mobile kitchen trailers that have no air conditioning. Once the food is prepared, it is transferred to the current dining facility where it can be served.

Once completed, the new facility will allow for all food preparation and serving to be done under one air-conditioned roof.

Johnston stated that this entire mission has been a cross-training mission for all of the Soldiers on the job site. Plumbers and electricians have become carpenters, and carpenters have become electricians. The cross-training has allowed the building to go up very quickly.

Spc. Scott Vaughn, of Gratton, Mich., is a plumber with the 1434th. During the construction operation, there is little plumbing work, so Vaughn has had a chance to learn some basic carpentry skills.

“For me, this is a whole new experience,” said Vaughn. “I have had to learn a lot on the job site, because this is not something that I have been trained to do.”

Making a few mistakes, Vaughn has been able to catch on pretty easily to some of the basic carpentry skills.

For Sgt. 1st Class Ted Blanford, of Toledo, Ohio, this facility has special meaning.

“I wanted to have at least one meal in the new (dining facility) before [the 82nd Abn. Div.] head home,” said Blanford, himself a former paratrooper.

“The 82nd Soldiers that were stationed here had a rough year and worked hard. The building may seem like a small thing,



Photo by Spc. Brian Johnson, 101st Eng. Bn. PAO, 16th Eng. Bde., MND-B

Spc. Carl Sammons (right), of Detroit, Mich., explains insulation cutting measurements to Spc. Jon Lindh (left) of Muskegon, Mich., and Spc. Scott Vaughn, of Gratton, Mich., at Joint Security Station Suj, Nov. 5.

but a new building to eat in makes an impact on Soldier morale,” Blanford said.

Pfc. Demetrius Green, a Paratrooper from Fayetteville, N.C., expressed excitement when speaking of the new facility.

“When we heard that a new facility was going in the other cooks and myself were excited. It’s a much needed upgrade from

what we are currently working with,” said Green.

For Green and others in his unit, the completion of the new facility will be a bittersweet sight. His unit will have finished their tour in Iraq and be heading home by the time the new dining facility begins operations in late November. ✂

Cavalry troops awarded combat spurs

Story by Spc. Ruth McClary

30th HBCT PAO, MND-B

BAGHDAD – For cavalry troops, earning the coveted gold spurs, denoting combat service, is a major achievement during their deployment.

West Virginia National Guard troopers presented the golden spurs for wartime service to Soldiers of Troop C, 150th Armored Reconnaissance Squadron, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat at Camp Stryker, here, Nov. 7.

The spurs, a legacy that dates back to knighthood, symbolizing entry into the ranks and fraternity of mounted warriors.

“It’s a way to bring morale up towards the end,” said Squadron Command Sgt. Maj. James Allen, of Paden City, W. Va. “We did the Noncommissioned Officers Induction Ceremony mid-way through the tour and we will have award ceremonies at the end. It’s a constant positive spin for Soldiers to be recognized for what they are doing.”

Historically, aspiring squires performed a mission on the battlefield to “win the spurs”. The spurs were buckled on during a mass or ceremony symbolizing that the man had become a knight. Thereafter, only the spurs signified knighthood, not the sword or armor.

The U.S. military continued the tradition, inducting cavalry scouts into the “Order of the Spur”. After troopers receive their spurs they are to be worn at all cavalry functions as directed by the commander.

Troops knelt on a red and white box as Allen and Squadron Commander, Lt. Col. Robbie Scarberry, of Milton, W. Va., pushed combat spurs down on the heel of their boots.

Troop Commander, Capt. Thomas Mills, of Winfield, W. Va., and 1st Sgt. Wanzel Reynolds, of Beckley, W. Va., gave troopers framed certificates and thanked them for accomplished cavalry trooper traits; cunning skills and



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

Pfc. Travis Hughes (middle) kneels to receive combat spurs during a ceremony at Camp Stryker, here, Nov. 7. Hughes, of Huntington, W. Va., said he learned of the spur legacy while he was at Fort Knox, Ky., and it felt good to receive a pair.

defeating the enemy.

No one knows exactly when the U.S. Cavalry began ceremonies awarding spurs for outstanding performance, but the ritual has now become an enduring practice of pride, honor and accomplishment for troops receiving spurs in Iraq for combat.

“I wasn’t aware of its legacy before coming to this unit,” said Spc. Jared Towner, of Parkersburg, W. Va., here on his third deployment. “The cavalry history is very interesting; it’s embedded in U.S. history. It ranks up there with the history of the airborne esprit de corps.”

Many Soldiers were proud to uphold the legacy of the spur. Spc. Brandon Ellison, of Green Briar, W. Va., said that he was anxious and proud to receive his spurs. Pfc. Travis Hughes, of Huntington, W. Va., said that he learned of its history when he was at Fort Knox, Ky., and it felt good to receive the spurs.

“Technically, the last time we were an armor unit so we didn’t receive spurs for combat,” said Staff Sgt. Paul Meadows, of Summerville, W. Va. “I was proud to receive them this time because it symbolizes the whole cavalry spur tradition.” ✂

Earning “The Patch” on Veteran’s Day

Story by Sgt. Joshua Risner

MND-B PAO

BAGHDAD – On a gravel-strewn area on Camp Taji, not long after sunrise here, Soldiers of 4th Striker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, gathered.

Some smoked, some talked, and others shivered in the early morning chill.

As the leaders came down, Soldiers fell into formation to be recognized for the awarding of the shoulder sleeve insignia for former wartime service; simply known as the combat patch.

“In about three hours, it’s going to be the anniversary of the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month, when the guns fell silent at World War I,” said Capt. Dennis Grinde. “The patch that you guys are wearing was worn in World War I and worn in every combat operation since. That signifies something. That identifies you as someone who belongs in the 2nd Infantry.”

As Grinde continued, the Soldiers listened intently while being told of the significance of that day and their own place in history as veterans of the United States Army.

“Now you’re a veteran, you’re special,” said Grand Forks, N.D. native to his Soldiers. “Wherever you decide to go, forever, now you’re a veteran of the United States [Army]. That’s something to be proud of.”

The sentiment reverberated through those present and the words sank in with the weight of a dozen generations of American warriors who had come before them.

One of those new warriors, Pfc. Larry Doyle, an infantryman, received a Purple Heart and Combat Infantryman’s Badge in addition to his combat patch today.

Doyle admitted the recognition carries a great feeling, but he is humble about the honors bestowed upon him.

“I came in wanting to make this a career, wanting to do



Photo by Sgt. Joshua Risner, MND-B PAO

Lt. Col. Michael Lawrence (left), commander of 2nd Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment, 4th Striker Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, salutes Pfc. Larry Doyle, of Warren, Ind., after awarding him the Purple Heart, Combat Infantryman’s Badge and his combat patch at Camp Taji, here, Nov. 11.

20 years, so it is a great honor,” he said. “I didn’t ask for it, but it comes with the job.”

When the command of “Fall out” was sounded, the recently patched combat veterans dispersed to go about the

day’s duties in service to their country. They had entered the hallowed ranks of those who had fought and served before them, and of those who are honored every year, on Nov. 11. ✂

N.C. Guard Soldiers help preserve Iraqi history

Story by Sgt. Jon Soles

MND-B PAO

BAGHDAD – What may look like large, weathered mounds of dirt in rural farmland near Mahmudiyah are actually artifact-filled ruins of an ancient civilization.

Soldiers of the North Carolina National Guard’s 120th Combined Arms Battalion, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team, surveyed the sites, here, recently, with officials from the Government of Iraq’s Ministry of Antiquities and Tourism to examine ways to preserve and protect two ancient Sumerian sites from looters.

The complexes of dirt mounds – Tal Aldair and Sobbar Abu Habba – were once Sumerian city walls outside of what is today Mahmudiyah, south of Baghdad. Pottery and clay tablets with the world’s first form of writing, Cuneiform, are known to be in the mounds. The Sumerian culture is the oldest civilization in the world, dating back to the 6th century B.C.

“It’s for the world and not just Iraq to preserve these world heritage sites because a lot of folks know it as the cradle of civilization,” said Morrison. “These [Sumerians] were the first people we know of in history to be



Photo by Sgt. Jon Soles, MND-B PAO

Nouri Obeyd Kathem (left), an archaeologist with the Ministry of Antiquities and Tourism, explains the Sobbar Abu Habba site, Nov. 4, to Maj. Charles Morrison of Nashville, N.C., (center) and Capt. Ross Boyce of Chapel Hill, N.C.

able to write and keep records and those are the kinds of artifacts that are here today.”

The sites have already seen looting, and the GoI officials and archaeologists want to prevent more plundering by erecting security fences and a guard shack at the mounds.

“It has been identified as one of those sites that have been an easy target for looters over the years because of close

proximity to Baghdad and because of turbulence in Iraq’s history,” said Maj. Charles Morrison, executive officer for the 120th CAB. “We’re working with the Ministry to secure the site for preservation and future excavation. It’s important for the Iraqi people, especially to preserve their heritage.”

Morrison, an infantry officer from Nashville, N.C., is taking a lead in the project. A self-described history buff,

Morrison formerly worked for the North Carolina of Archives and History. He said he is particularly interested in helping the Iraqis preserve a site that is 4,000 years old.

Nouri Obeyd Kathem, an archaeologist with the Ministry of Antiquities and Tourism, led Morrison over the mounds. Thousands of years of erosion have worn down the once city walls and temple structures, exposing countless pieces of clay pottery and other artifacts. Many more are still buried in the centuries-old mounds.

“They have been with us today to make sure we don’t damage any of the archaeological sites when we emplace the fence and scope of work,” said Morrison. “We’re trying to work hand in hand with the government to make sure we do what they want in terms of preserving the site.”

The plans call for security fences and possibly guard shacks to protect the sites. Signs would also be erected to let Iraqis know about the historical significance of the sites.

One of the legacies American Soldiers can leave behind in Iraq as the troop drawdown continues is a fence that will help preserve an ancient site that will continue to be a symbol of the nation’s ancient history and culture. ✂

MND-B Soldiers help provide gift of education

Story by Sgt. Joshua Risner
MND-B PAO

BAGHDAD – Education is essential for a child growing up in the world today. That is no less true in Iraq, where schools are a building block for a child’s future.

Three schools were officially re-opened here, Nov. 5, thanks to Multi-National Division Baghdad Soldiers.

The Shab Female School, Yassamin School and Monte Tenaybo Schools were in shambles before they came to the attention of Army civil affairs Soldiers, according to Staff Sgt. Frank Halstead, from Brooklyn, N.Y.

“All three schools had to be completely redone because they were a mess,” he said. “They had to be painted and

cleaned, the wiring had to be redone and the walls on the outside needed repair. Basically they were just the shells of buildings.”

So Halstead and his fellow civil affairs Soldiers took up the contracts and set to work. They arranged for the repairs to be made and periodically checked the work to make sure things were being done to their specifications.

“We had to make sure they were done up to standard,” said Halstead. “Finally it all came together and the people have schools now.”

On opening day, the students gathered

to sing songs and perform skits for the Soldiers and officials who came to see the work come to fruition.

“It feels pretty good because today you actually get to see the kids’ reactions – it’s not just a bunch of older people standing around talking to each other,” said Halstead. “The kids were happy, they looked like they wanted to be in school, to me that’s a good thing.”

“It feels pretty good because today you actually get to see the kids’ reactions – it’s not just a bunch of older people standing around talking to each other. The kids were happy, they looked like they wanted to be in school, to me that’s a good thing.”

-- Staff Sgt. Frank Halstead

For 1st Lt. Lacey Rector, from Wil- loughby Hills, Ohio, assigned 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, the girls at Shab Female School were a wel-

come sight.

“It’s nice to see females because you don’t see them very often over here,” she said. “It’s nice to see that they are being educated as well.”

The project is another example of the continued commitment of U.S. forces to helping the Iraqi people, according to Halstead.

“We’re there to help them not to hurt them,” he said. “They know if their children are being educated then that’s going to help them in the long run. They appreciate it.”

With three more schools operational in the Baghdad area, more children are getting the chance to better themselves and their communities by getting an education. It is one more thing that U.S. forces are doing to make Iraq a better place. ✂



Photo by Sgt. Joshua Risner, MND-B PAO

Col. Maria Zumwalt (left), a native of Bayamon, Puerto Rico, chats with students of the Shab Female School, here, Nov. 5. Zumwalt is the commander of Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division.



Photo by Sgt. Joshua Risner, MND-B PAO

Iraqi girls perform a skit for Iraqi officials and Soldiers during a re-opening ceremony at Yassamin School, here, Nov. 5. The project was a joint effort between Government of Iraq officials and U.S. forces.

NFL Week 12 matchups: Nov 26-30



Sheik Abdullah Bridge offers fresh path

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



Cambridge, Mass. native, Staff Sgt. Carlos Madden, a civil affairs team leader assigned to 1379th Civil Affairs Company, uses a public works contract to inspect the Sheik Abdullah Bridge in Taji, Nov. 10. The bridge is a civil capacity project that offers residents of the rural area a quicker route to the nearby markets.



TAJI, Iraq – Evansville, Ind. native, Pfc. Travis Conder, an armor crewman attached to the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, walks across the Sheik Abdullah Bridge during a final inspection in Taji, Nov. 10. The bridge offers a faster and safer route to local markets for residents of the rural area.

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Air Cav attack aviators maintain weapons proficiency

Photo by Chief Warrant Officer 2 Anthony Bailey, 1st ACB PAO, 1st Cav. Div., MND-B



BAGHDAD—Producing a blast of smoke and fire, an AH-64D Apache attack helicopter pilot from 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, fires a 2.75 inch hydra aerial folding-fin rocket while conducting a gunnery on the outskirts of Baghdad, Nov. 9.

MND-B Celebrates National

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IA, U.S. troops on the hunt for insurgents

Story by Staff Sgt. Mark Burrell

MND-B PAO

BAGHDAD – As Iraqi Security Forces continue their missions inside the city, here, insurgents and criminal groups find themselves forced out to the rural areas.

Recently, insurgents used a local farm on the western outskirts of Baghdad to attack a U.S. convoy.

U.S. infantrymen from 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, combed the area with Iraqi Army Soldiers, Nov. 4, to prevent insurgents from gaining a foothold in the area.

“A lot of weapons come through this area into Baghdad,” said Spc. Daniel Pacheco, from San Antonio. “Our job is to stop the supply routes into the city.”

The joint American/Iraqi patrol searched rows of farmlands and abandoned buildings in the area to hunt for any clues, explained 1st Lt. Mark Hamilton, a platoon leader from Baltimore.

“Historically, the people doing the emplacing or pulling the trigger aren’t doing it because they dislike the U.S. or IA, they do it for money,” said Hamilton. “The jobless rate out here is very high, I think like 70 percent, so it’s important to get out there and go see the people...so that they’re not forgotten.”

Hamilton stressed that joint patrols like this one allow local farmers to connect with Soldiers, with the hope that they will be less likely to help insurgents in the area.

“We make it a lot harder for the insurgents, so they can’t do what they want,” added Pacheco, while his fellow troops checked haystacks, looked under empty barrels and searched behind doors.

While many times the searches turn up nothing, Soldiers, like Pacheco, do understand the importance of their role in the out-lying regions of Baghdad.

“If we stop the flow of weapons into the city, then it helps the government get on its feet,” said Pacheco. “Helping the capital helps keep the country stable.” ✂



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

“It’s important to keep weapons and insurgents out of the rural areas because it’s just farmland and these people are just trying to make a living,” said Milford, N.H., native, Pfc. John Fraser (right), while walking through a farm with Titusville, Fla., native, Pvt. Brandin Durgin (middle) and an Iraqi Army Soldier during a joint patrol, north of Abu Ghraib, Nov. 4.



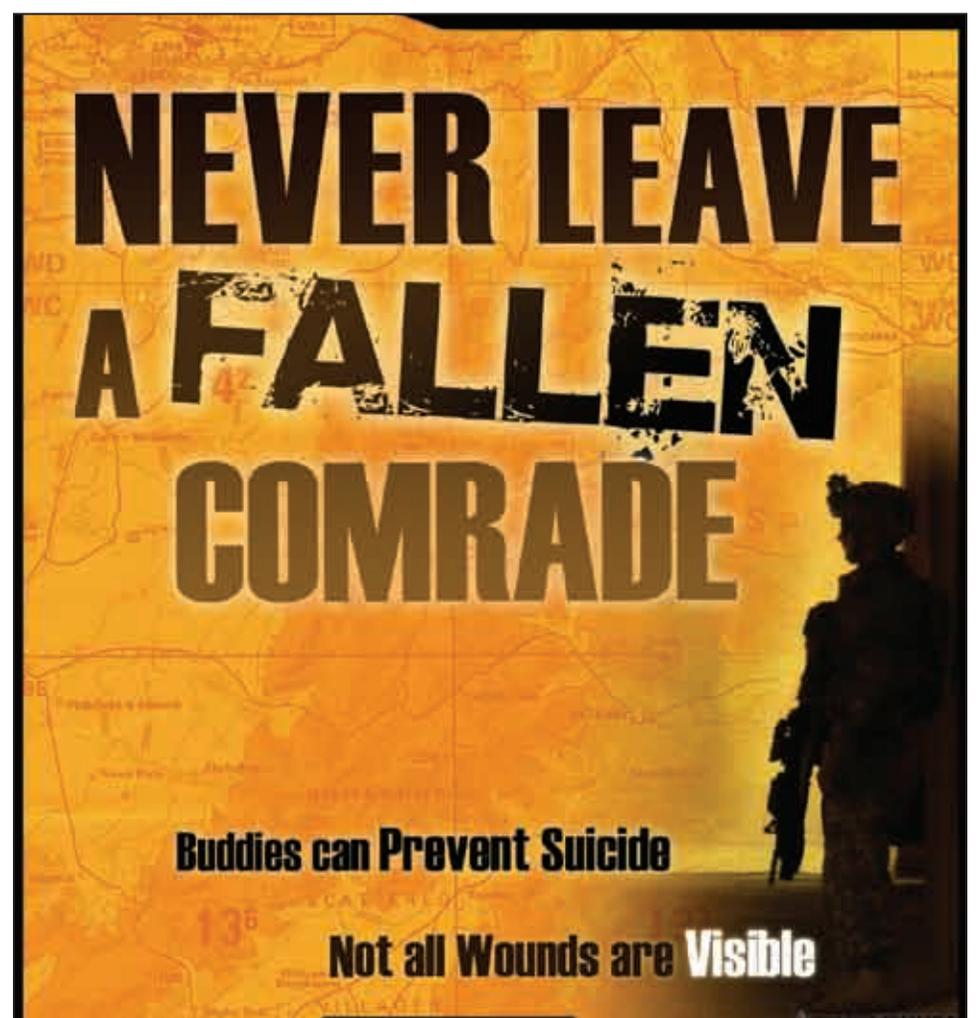
Photo by Staff Sgt. Mark Burrell, MND-B PAO

“These patrols let the insurgents know that we’re constantly on surveillance of the area,” said Pfc. John Fraser (right), from Milford, N.H., as he runs across a makeshift bridge, followed by Pvt. Brandin Durgin, from Titusville, Fla., during a joint patrol in farmland just northwest of Baghdad, Nov. 4.



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

Pvt. John Brawley, an infantryman from Fort Worth, Texas, secures an abandoned building during a joint patrol just northwest of Baghdad, Nov. 4.



U.S., IA look door to door



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

BAGHDAD—Holly Hill, S.C. native, Staff Sgt. Gerald Bush (right), a squad leader with 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, clears an AK-47 found at a house in Tarmiyah, on the northeastern edge of Baghdad, during a combined cordon and knock conducted with their Iraqi Army counterparts, Nov. 11. The joint U.S. / Iraqi patrol conducted the door to door search to eliminate the possibility of insurgents residing in the neighborhood and rid the area of any illegal weapons.



Palli, a military working dog supporting 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, sits beside the weapons and ammo he found during a combined cordon and knock conducted in Tarmiyah, on the northeastern side of Baghdad, Nov. 11.

Point Pleasant, N.J. native, Capt. Ray Canzonier, commander of Company B, 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, transmits a message relaying the success of a combined cordon and search mission for illegal weapons and ammo in Tarmiyah Nov. 11.

