



DANGER FORWARD



March 22, 2010 | Issue 8

Iraqi-owned bank opens on U.S. base

By Maj. Luke Hammond
4th BCT, 1st Armd Div

COB ADDER – The Iraqi-Based Industrial Zone at Contingency Operating Base Adder has long been a place where aspiring business-minded Iraqis work with U.S. forces and support the local economy by providing jobs. Whether they are contractors competing for contracts on COB Adder, or vendors selling everything from paintings to rugs, the IBIZ is abuzz with constant activity.

However, on Jan. 13, COB Adder saw one of the most significant events to happen in IBIZ since its establishment: the grand opening and ribbon-cutting ceremony of Warka Bank.

Warka has one of the largest banking operations in Iraq, operating over 150 locations throughout the country.

Initially proposed in the summer of 2009, the establishment of a bank within IBIZ presents will greatly aid Iraqi businesses and U.S. objectives. The bank will bring to the area – for the first time – electronic funds transfer capabilities.

Having EFT capability within the IBIZ is a critical turning point in how U.S. forces and contracting agencies such as KBR pay the Iraqi contractors who will soon do a majority of the business on COB Adder.

The base, also known as the Tallil – meaning “rule of Ali” – Airbase, is home to over 13,000 Soldiers and civilians and serves as a major logistics hub for U.S. forces in the nine provinces overseen by United States Division-South.

Until recently, contractors received payment by drawing funds directly from the local finance unit. This made the payment of contractors impossible without U.S. forces assistance.

While the payment process has largely shifted to EFT, not having an EFT-capable bank nearby meant that many of the contractors were forced to drive miles away from COB Adder in order to draw the funds to pay their workers.

In addition, having EFT capability allows for local workers



Photo by Maj. Myles Caggins
Maj. Luke Hammond, Abbas Matrood – Warka Bank regional manager – and Iraqi staff members stand in front of the newly opened facility.

to be paid electronically, provided they establish an account, and gives local contractors the ability to conduct all their financial business at COB Adder.

It is also a much more secure method of payment, without the risk of cash being lost or stolen.

See **BANK**, page 12



N.Y. MPs help Iraqis, p. 4



Learning the language, p. 6



Tribe honors Soldier, p. 9

Danger Seven sends

“My two basic responsibilities will always be uppermost in my mind - accomplishment of my mission and the welfare of my soldiers.”
- US Army NCO Creed

Accomplishing the mission and taking care of Soldiers. That pretty much sums up what being a leader in the Army is all about. In my opinion, nothing is more important to succeeding in both responsibilities than Force Protection.

Protecting your Soldiers by mitigating risk and enforcing standards keeps them alive, healthy and in the fight, and that helps us accomplish the mission.

Leaders should always look for ways to improve their foxhole. The Army has made huge strides in Force Protection over the past few years (just ask anybody who went into combat in 2003 with soft-skinned humvees and flak vests), but there is always more work to do. When it comes to Force Protection, there is no such thing as “good enough.”

Take a look at your surroundings. Identify your vulnerabilities. Do you have enough bunkers readily available? Are the bunkers properly reinforced? Are there points on your perimeter that are susceptible to infiltration? Are you checking badges thoroughly enough? There are always ways to improve your foxhole.

Some of the most troubling reports regarding Force Protection that I receive are the occasional reports of vehicles not using their CREW devices properly. IEDs remain the most consistent weapon of choice our enemy employs, and CREW devices such as the DUKE, CVRJ, and JUKEBOX are proven deterrents. Soldiers would never go outside the wire without their body armor and weapon so I can’t understand why anybody would go outside the wire without a properly working CREW device - it is your electronic body armor.

The most important factors in defeating radio controlled IEDs are 1) making sure your CREW device has a correct and up-to-date loadset, and 2) turning the damn thing ON.

There are currently more than 60 trained and qualified Electronic Warfare Officers and over 250 CREW Specialists across USD-S, so there is no excuse for leaving the FOB without a properly functioning CREW device.

It all comes down to enforcing standards. Soldiers might grumble about serving under the “hardass” NCO or officer, but at the end of the day what they really want is to serve under leaders they know are doing everything they can to get them home alive.

Anybody who has lost a comrade in battle or served as a casualty officer knows what a heartbreaking, tragic thing it is. The first questions the Family asks are “Why?” and “How?” Personally, I couldn’t live with myself if the answer was because I neglected to do something that could have protected them.

There will always be risk. It’s the nature of war. But if you’re not doing everything you can to protect your troops, start today. If you already are doing everything you can, think harder, and find a way to improve your foxhole.

PROTECT THE FORCE.

Now get after it!



Jim Champagne
Command Sergeant Major
U.S. Army



Major General
Vincent K. Brooks

PAO

1st Inf. Div. PAO: Lt. Col. Matthew Hackathorn

Command Info OIC: 1st Lt. Shamika Hill
Command Info NCOIC: 1st Sgt. David Bennett

Email: MND-S_PAO@iraq.centcom.mil
Phone: (Iraqna) (0790)-194-2865
(770)-263-9379.



Command Sergeant Major
Command Sergeant Major
Jim Champagne

Danger Forward

Print NCOIC: Staff Sgt. Chris Carney
Editor: Sgt. Benjamin R. Kibbey
Layout: Spc. Samantha Johnson

Staff Writers: Sgt. Francis Horton, Sgt. Cody Harding, Sgt. Nathan Smith, Spc. Sam Soza, Spc. Jason Kemp

DANGER FORWARD

Contributing Units

- 17th FIB
- 4th BCT, 1st Armd. Div.
- 12th CAB
- 3rd HBCT, 3rd Inf. Div.
- 367th MPAD



"No really, there I was."

By Marc Greene

USD-S Safety and Occupational Health



As an "old" aviator I remember sitting around talking with others about how we or someone we knew came within a microsecond of not making it. Those kinds of stories can fill hours of normal military boredom and offer near-endless entertainment as each new tale builds on the last. Yet, they can – and do – offer much more.

From each "almost" or "near-miss" story, even from the ones that ended badly, there is a lesson to be gathered. Whether it reinforces the rules and standards we already know or provides cautionary warning against those things we have yet to identify as risks, we can, if we take the time, glean from these stories ways in which to better safeguard ourselves and our comrades.

Perhaps, as you read this, you are thinking of the stories you could tell, even the kind you might wish to say were the experiences of "a guy I knew..."

Well that's what we are looking for. Send in your safety story about when you or a buddy was in a near-miss or actual incident.

Tell us what others can learn from the experience and what you or they did to prevent a repeat. You write the story, and if your story is the one picked, we'll send you some cool Safety Incentives.

It doesn't have to be work related; on or off duty, either one is OK. Simply send us your story, with pictures if you have them.

Please write it in the third person. We'll change the names to protect the "guilty." We aren't looking for an Edgar Allan Poe, just your experiences in the world of safety.

So, send your story to marc.greene@us.army.mil with your email and snail mail addresses.

Good luck!

There is always great information and help for your safety problems at:
<http://bronet/dss/safety/default.aspx>

This and other great information to help with risk mitigation can be found at:
<http://1idportal.1id.army.smil.mil/SpecialStaff/DivisionSafety/Shared%20Documents/Forms/AllItems.aspx>

This week in Army history

This week in Big Red One history

March 25, 1945: The Allied offensive to encircle the Ruhr region begins with the division's break out from the Remagen bridgehead.

This week in OIF history

March 25, 2008: The Battle of Basra began with the Iraqi Army operation code-named "Saulat al-Fursan," Arabic for "Charge of the Knights," driving the Mahdi Army militia from the city. It was the first major operation to be planned and carried out by the Iraqi Army.

This week in 1st Armored Division history

March 22-25, 1943: In World War II, the division fought the Battle of Djebel Naemia and then fought to break through positions barring the road to Gabes between March 29 and April 1.

Have a suggestion to make *Danger Forward* better? Send a SIPR email to our suggestion box: 1IDPAO SUGGESTIONBOX@1id.army.smil.mil

USD-S re-enlistments, March 5 - 18

1st Inf Div

INTEL & SUST CO
SPC JASON R. COOMBS
SSG CHARLOTTE E. GASPER
SGT WILLIAM F. LASTER
OPS CO
SFC JENEEN M. SAUCEDO
SPC KEITH S. PRATER
SSG BRYAN D. SMITH
SFC MICHAEL C. OBRIEN
HSC
SGT GREGORY A. BURNO
SECURITY CO
SSG KEVIN B. THACKER
SIGNAL CO
SSG JOHN P. BRYANT
SPC JASON L. CYREE

159th SOC

SPC SHANIKA R. MCCALL

5th Bn, 5th ADA

SGT MATTHEW J. SMARSH

4th BCT, 1AD

HHC
SSG JAVIER FERNANDEZ JR.

2Bn, 29th FAR

A BTRY
SPC TYLER J. WILSON
B BTRY
SGT TIMOTHY A. TURNER

HHB
SPC ABRAM R. HALL
SPC JUSTIN A. HUFFMAN

1st Bn, 77th AR

A CO
PFC RICHARD J. HARVEY
PFC AARON S. SAHNOW
C CO
PFC JERAD A. POLDEN
HHC
SPC TIMOTHY B. CONDERMAN

121st BSB

C CO
SPC SUSIE GARCIA VICENTE
D CO
SSG MICHAEL P. RYAVE
SGT MICHAEL L. RICHARDSON
SSG CORNELIUS L. HARRIS
E CO
SGT HOWARD V. MADSEN
F CO
SPC DANNY O. CABRERA
SGT DANNY E. STEELE
SPC FRANCO HERNANDEZ
SGT JOAN RESTOROBLES
G CO
SGT GARFIELD R. HAMIL
SGT ROBERT C. RANDLE JR.
SGT RAYMUNDO RODRIGUEZ
HHC
SGT CHRISTOPHER M. DUNLOP
SGT MICHAEL D. LEWIS
SSG SETH SEASTRUM

4th Bn, 6th Inf Regt

A CO
PFC JUSTIN J. SAWDY
SGT DANIEL R. HAMMACK
B CO
SPC DAVID J. NEELEY
HHC
SPC JONATHAN J. BRAMBILA

2nd Bn, 13th Cav Regt

B TROOP
SGT CHRISTOPHER W. ALEXIS
C TROOP
SGT TRAVIS D. MCCLURE
SPC DANIEL L. KENNEDY

STB

A CO
SPC RICARDO H. CARGIL
B CO
SPC CARL R. JORDAN

3rd HBCT, 3rd Inf Div

BSTB

SPC JASIA M. JOHNSON

1st Bn, 15th Inf Regt

PFC THURMAN E. DANIEL III
SFC OSCAR V. RODRIGUEZ-LOPEZ

2nd Bn, 69th AR

SPC WILLIAM R. BRADLEY II
SGT JOSHUA P. NEAL
PFC LOGAN R. STEINBACH
SPC SEUNG T. WILLIS
SPC JEFFREY T. HETTEL
SSG CHAD G. VANDERHOOF
SGT STEVEN L. RICKS
SPC ARIEL OCHOA
SPC JEREMIAH N. EKLUND

BSTB

PFC MATTHEW J. BERNARD
SPC BRANDON C. GARIG
PFC WHITNEY D. MITCHELL
PFC JOHANNA M. HARRIS
SPC JASIA M. JOHNSON

1st Bn, 10th FAR

SPC ERIN L. MCLENDON
PFC GEORGE LETT JR.
SSG RICHARD W. WALTON
SPC CHRISTOPHER T. SANCHEZ

17th FIB

HHB
SPC JOHNSON, VALI
SSG ADKINS, ROGER A.

1st Bn, 377th FAR

SSG WILLIAMS, HAROLD T.
HHB
SPC PITTMAN, TERRELL D.
SPC MAUNTLER, WILLIAM
A BTRY
SPC DIAZ, DENICIO E.
SGT JONES, JEREMIAH
SSG KLINK, RALPH
B BTRY
PFC ROSSI, CHARLES
SPC KRAUSCH, THOMAS
C BTRY
SPC RODRIGUEZ, WILLIAM

308th BSB

A CO
SPC CARRILLO, FRANCISCO
SPC BAIK, DAVEY

3rd Bn, 159th ARB

SGT VERDELL L. DAVIS

5th Bn, 158th GSAB

SGT TIAN K. MCGEE

412th ASB

PFC MICHAEL D. SCHMIDT
SGT RENO, ISAGUIRRE
SPC CHRISTOPHER COOPER
SPC MICHAEL MCCARTHY
SGT KENNETH MCGHEE

12th CAB

SGT JEREMY A. GEAHART
SGT MARK A. JONES

2nd Bn, 159th ARB

SGT CARL D. MCGRAW
SPC OLUFEMI O. MARAIYESA
PFC WILLIAM S. HARVEY
SPC KEVIN W. WILSON

3rd Bn, 158th AVN

SPC JUSTIN C. CHAMBERS
SGT KENNETH R. PERKINS
SGT ROYAL KELLAM
SGT MICHAEL J. BENTCIK
SPC EDGAR DEJESUS
SFC MARK ALLEN DUNCAN

5th Bn, 158th AVN

SGT SEAN M. SLIKER
SGT JOHN A. KASEE
SGT RYAN P. ZIMMERMAN

Empire State MPs partner in safe Iraqi election

By Sgt. Neil W. McCabe
17th FiB PAO

COB BASRA – As tens of thousands of Basra residents voted in the March 7, national elections, Soldiers from the 206th Military Police Company joined their Iraqi Security Force partners in monitoring the country’s second largest city in its Provincial Joint Communications Center.

The PJCC is a large compound, including a modern crime lab, a criminal intelligence center, a jail, barracks and administrative offices, said 1st Lt. Nicholas Monuteaux, a platoon leader with the 206th MP Co., a New York National Guard unit based in Albany. The MPs are deployed to Contingency Operating Base Basra, where they fall under the 203rd MP Battalion, attached to 17th Fires Brigade.

Rather than a staging area for executing missions, the PJCC is where representatives from Government of Iraq law enforcement, public safety and military forces work together in a single room to keep each other informed – hearing the same reports and looking at the same map – said Monuteaux, from Rensselaer, N.Y.

For roughly eight hours on Election Day, Lt. Col. Charles Buxton, the commander of the 203rd – itself a unit of the Alabama National Guard – stayed at the PJCC to be on-hand in case something happened to break the peace.

To help the Iraqis better follow the movements of the military units and teams of election observers that the MPs were tracking, Buxton, from Duluth, Ga., brought with him pieces of paper, just smaller than a postage stamp, each labeled with the name of a military element or election observer team. These tabs were placed on the large, high-resolution satellite image of the province the Iraqis had laid out on the map table of the room.

For the MPs, another advantage of the PJCC is being available to answer questions the Iraqis have about the missions and posture of U.S. forces, he said.

A case in point was the report after the polls had closed that a U.S. military con-



Photo by Sgt. Neil W. McCabe

IP Lt. Col. Awooda Abdal Hafaal Manaa, the Election Day shift commander at Basra’s PJCC, reviews a map of the city, March 7, with Lt. Col. Charles Buxton, from Duluth, Ga., the commander of the 203rd MP Bn. Buxton spent most of the day with MPs from the 206th MP Co., a N.Y. National Guard unit attached to his battalion.

voy was spotted just outside the Basra city limits. The Iraqis were not tracking the convoy and an Iraqi police commissioner went to the map table at the end of the command center’s long room to plot the convoy’s location.

Joining the commissioner were other IP’s and an Iraqi Navy lieutenant commander, whose work space and desk were near the table. Together with some MPs, they compared the report with the positions and movements of U.S. forces labeled on the map, while other MPs called up to their battalion Tactical Operations Center with their own query.

Within 15 minutes of the report, the police commissioner was able to report to the shift commander that the U.S. military vehicles were part of an Iraqi team securing ballots from polling stations.

Another example was when the battalion TOC called the MPs at 5:30 p.m. to make sure the IP’s knew that the government had lifted the election night curfew. One MP turned to another and said, “Yeah they know—they told us.”

In fact, the IP’s had passed the information to the U.S. Soldiers just before noon.

Throughout the day, Lt. Col. Awooda Abdal Hafaal Manaa, the PJCC shift commander that day, conducted video conference calls with the national operations center in Baghdad with updates on the public safety and security situation.

Several times, Baghdad asked if there were any reports of violence, always receiving a negative response. “Then, you are still the ‘White Province,’” Baghdad would respond.

“White Province,” indicated that the entire province of Basra was not marred by trouble or violence, Monuteaux said.

“Basra is the model for all the other provinces today,” he said.

As reports came to the MPs, often Buxton himself would move the tabs and use these updates as an opportunity to brief the shift commander.

At 6:15 p.m., after the polls had closed and before Buxton returned to the Basra Operations Center, a centralized facility

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Iraqi Security Forces take lead in election security

By Sgt. Nathaniel Smith
1st Inf Div, USD-S PAO

BASRA – In 2005, Iraq held two rounds of elections in a chaotic environment with heavy outside influence and security in the hands of Coalition Forces.

What a difference five years can make.

On March 7, Iraqis took to the voting booths again to make their voices heard with one significant difference: these elections, from the security to the overseeing of the process, were in the hands of Iraqis.

Iraqi Army Maj. Gen. Habib Hussein, the commander of the 10th Iraqi Army Division, said there were zero incidents in the Maysan Province thanks to the teamwork between Iraqi Army soldiers and Iraqi Police.

“We all worked together, and we were successful because of the coordination between us,” Habib said. “We are very happy and pleased to see the people as a family participate.”

Habib said that the security effort was broken down into three phases: pre-election, election, and now, post-election.

Ali Salman, a Basra voter, said the process went off without any problems in his neighborhood.

“Everybody was happy, and there wasn't any trouble at all,” Salman said. “For me, the elections are very important for establishing better security.”

“The Iraqi forces, police and Army, did an excellent job today,” he said.

Col. Steven Bullimore, commander of the 17th Fires Brigade, which is responsible for assisting Iraqi troops in Basra Province, said his Soldiers' role was purely to train Iraqi Security Forces in tactics related to searching vehicles and people, first aid skills, and crowd control techniques.

“Our role in this was a support role,” Bullimore said. “I am absolutely amazed at how successfully this was run and how smoothly this was run.”

Bullimore, who was in Iraq for the 2005 national elections, added the 2010 elections were completely different from the last.

“In 2005, I was in Baqubah,” Bullimore said. “At four in the morning, we had to shoot our way in with the ballots, then after the polls closed, we had to shoot our way out to take the ballots out.”

Col. Aziz Swilm, a spokesman for the 10th Iraqi Army Division, said the process ran so smoothly, and he credited the success to good planning.

“This plan was laid down two months ago, involving coordination between the Iraqi Army, Iraqi Police and federal police,” Swilm said. “The special elections had no incidents, and today's general elections, everything was successful.

“Whole families are participating,” he said. “That means we have good security here in Maysan.”

Swilm added that he has seen progress every time his fellow Iraqis have headed to the polls.

Once results are announced, the next phase of the election process is for the newly-elected officials to select the senior leaders in the Iraqi government.

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Photo by Sgt. Nathaniel Smith
Maj. Gen. Habib Hussein, commander of the 10th IA Division, addresses media during the March 7 national elections in Maysan Province. Maysan Province, where the 10th IA operates, saw zero security incidents during both the special elections and the general elections.



Photo by Sgt. Nathaniel Smith
Ali Salman, a voter in Basra Province, shows off his purple ink-stained finger after voting March 7. The purple ink indicates that he has voted, and it has become a symbol for Iraqis who, often in the face of great danger, choose to make their voices heard in the government.

English classes speak volumes

By Master Sgt. David Bennett
367th MPAD, USD-S PAO

COB BASRA, Iraq – Several employees at the Basra International Airport gathered March 14, in separate rooms to continue their next set of lessons, which began more than two months ago. However, these classes had nothing to do with radar procedures or ticketing processes.

Instead, the morning's topic focused on how to purchase food at a supermarket.

If there was a common thread, it wasn't extolling the value of a Dinar, but rather seeing the value in the ability to speak English while on the job.

Maj. Conrad Hawkins, civil affairs cultural liaison with the 486th Civil Affairs Battalion of Tulsa, Okla., volunteered to teach the basic English class for the men.

Hawkins acknowledged that mastering English is difficult as any language, including Arabic, and its various dialects, "that change every 100 miles as you go."

"The purpose of this is to speak correctly so the words can be pronounced," he said.

While the group of eight men grasped the slippery forms of fruits and vegetables, a contingent of eight women seated in a room down the hall tackled various topics including Iraqi culture, education,



Photo by Master Sgt. David Bennett
Sajedh Hassan, an auditor comptroller at Basra International Airport, reviews a handout during an English class March 14. Many of the students have been working together for decades.

economics, nutrition and clothing.

Since the advanced conversational English classes began in late January, they have been teaching 12 women who are all engineers at the airport. Many of them have been working together for decades.

During those last few weeks – all over the course of normal conversations – opinions have slowly filled language gaps. On this day, exchanges revealed strong bonds between the women as well as culture,

pride and hope about Iraq's future.

Wegdan Faisal, a flight information technician who has worked at the airport for 24 years, said that, over the last two decades, Iraq has lost its share of university professors and industrial professionals who left to pursue opportunity elsewhere.

Though its professional base has shrunk, Iraq remains strong, and as a professional woman, Faisal hopes to remain

See ENGLISH, page 12



Photo by Master Sgt. David Bennett
Margaret Ostrenko, a social scientist with the Army's Human Terrain System, explains a cultural concept to employees at Basra International Airport during an English class at the airport, March 14. "They want to make changes and we are encouraging that," Ostrenko said.

FIT TO FIGHT



Photo by Sgt. Cody Harding
Mr. Augusta Walker, a Safety and Occupational Health Specialist for 1st Infantry Division, takes a swing with a practice ball before the COB Basra Golf Club Challenge Mar. 21.



Photo by Sgt. Cody Harding
Cpt Anthony Hosein, left, 1st Sgt. Brian Safewright, and Sgt. Maj. William Sutton lead the pack at the start of the Molly Pitcher 5K run, held in honor of women in the military, on COB Basra Mar. 21.



Photo by Sgt. Cody Harding
Competitors for the COB Basra Golf Club Accuracy Challenge line up to the driving tees and practice some swings Mar. 21. The Golf Club, though currently small, hopes to expand during the Big Red One's Deployment.

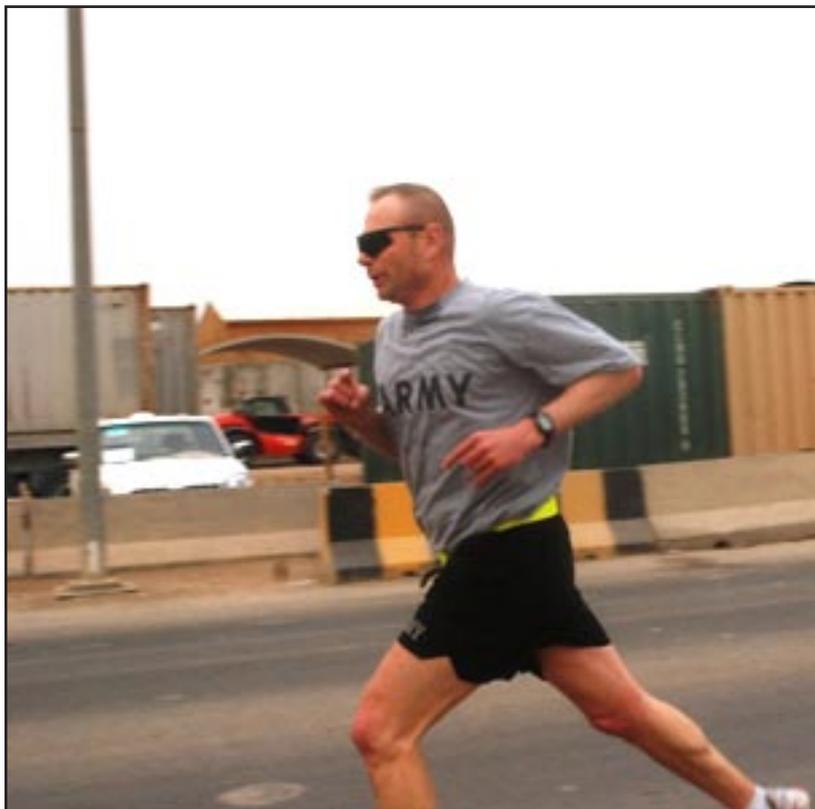


Photo by Sgt. Cody Harding
Sgt. Maj. William Sutton, 1st Infantry Division Safety Office, gives it everything he has to cross the finish line for the Molly Pitcher 5K Run on COB Basra Mar. 21. The 5k, held in honor of women in the military, was open to anyone who wanted to enter, including civilians and Saber International guards.

Soldiers gain career insights

By Sgt. Mark Miranda
4th BCT, 1st Armd Div PAO

COB ADDER – The 121st Brigade Support Battalion, “Iron Hammers,” held a seminar for its Soldiers with career advancement in mind, Feb. 27, at Memorial Hall on Contingency Operating Base Ader.

Over 300 Soldiers attended the event and were broken down into smaller groups to rotate through different stations, where they could learn about retention, drill sergeant school, career progression plans and paths to officer or warrant officer commissioning.

Each station representative provided valuable information and resources to assist the Soldiers with plans to enhance their careers.

Those interested in pursuing a second military occupational specialty received information in such career fields such as psychological operations, healthcare and civil affairs.

Former enlisted Soldiers commissioned through Officer Candidate School or the



Photo by Sgt. Mark Miranda
Chief Warrant Officer 4 Marc Assumpcao, 4th BCT, 1st Armd. Div., discusses the requirements and what to expect for Soldiers interested in Warrant Officer Candidate School.

ROTC Green to Gold scholarship program were invited to speak to the groups on their experiences and to offer guidance on the subject for those pursuing an officer commission.

Chief Warrant Officer 4 Marc Assumpcao discussed three of the biggest factors

that need to be in place for a Soldier considering putting together a Warrant Officer Candidate School packet.

“Self-determination, guidance from a senior warrant officer, endorsement from the chain of command are all key,” said Assumpcao, a native of Miami, Fla.

“This gave me a lot of information that I could use. I’m interested in the Green to Gold program; I’ve considered it quite a few times as there’s a nursing program where I can become a military registered nurse,” said Spc. Brandie Tinker, a fuel specialist from Richmond, Va., assigned to F Company.

Tinker added that, with one year left of her enlistment, she plans to work toward becoming a certified nurse assistant and then work towards her bachelor’s degree.

The guest speaker for the career progression seminar was Chief Warrant Officer 4 Christina Velez, an aviation operations officer assigned to 4th Brigade, 1st Armored Division.

Velez joined the Army immediately after high school in El Paso, Texas, and took on the challenge of putting together a flight warrant officer packet.



Photo by Sgt. Mark Miranda
Chief Warrant Officer 4 Christina Velez, a tactical operations officer from El Paso, Texas, speaks to Soldiers from the 121st BSB about careers in Army aviation.

See CAREER, page 9

Soldier receives tribal honor for service in Iraq

By Sgt. Cody Harding
1st Inf Div, USD-S PAO

WASIT PROVINCE – Throughout the history of the U.S. military, troops have been honored with awards and commendations for their service, especially for the times they have gone beyond what was required of them.

Tribes in Iraq also have a long tradition of honoring those they feel are deserving of recognition.

The “yashmagh,” the traditional head covering of Arabic tribesmen, and the black wool “agal” headband are given to the members of a tribe as a symbol of trust and honor. The highly-inclusive distinction is usually kept within the tribe, and formal ceremonies to present the agal and yashmagh to “outsiders” are rare.

For Lt. Col. Mike Bush, a Security Transition Team Officer with the 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, receiving the traditional head covering was a tremendous privilege. The shaykh of the Katawi Tribe placed the yashmagh on Bush in a formal ceremony March 2.

Though it is sometimes worn by those who have never even set foot in the Middle East as either a fashion or political statement, the actual presentation of the honor to Westerners by a tribe is rare.

From what he had been able to gather, the agal may not have been formally presented to a Westerner in several decades, Bush, a Pittsburgh native, said.

“A lot of Americans have been given the agal and headdress, but this is the first time it’s been officially given since [T.E.] Lawrence,” he said.

Bush’s interactions with the tribe in Wasit Province are mainly through the commander of the Department of Border Enforcement’s 7th Brigade, 3rd Region, who meets with Bush three times a week.

The commander’s area of operations includes the Zurbatiyah Point of Entry, a busy checkpoint on the border with Iran, and over 42 other posts along the border.

Bush’s advice to those who would follow in his steps is for



Photo by Sgt. Cody Harding

The shaykh of the Katawi Tribe places the yashmagh on Lt. Col. Mike Bush in a formal ceremony March 2. The honor is usually kept within the tribe, and formal ceremonies to present the yashmagh head covering and agal – the black wool headband – to outsiders are rare.

them to learn about the culture and show respect to the people of Iraq.

“The Iraqi People, who have a really different culture, appreciate the fact that the United States has invested the time, effort and lives here in order to bring about security and allow this country to stand up,” he said.

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Photo by Sgt. Mark Miranda

Sgt. 1st Class Julion Encarnacion and Capt. Luis Trevino speak to Soldiers about careers in the Army medical field.

CAREER, from page 8

“One of the big questions you should be asking yourself is ‘What do I have to do today to prepare for tomorrow?’ and it comes down to choices that you make,” said Velez. “People make their own luck to get to where they want to be. That ‘luck’ is a combination of being qualified, showing up on time to take an opportunity, and having the will to accomplish the goal.”

With redeployment to Fort Bliss, Texas, on the horizon, the “Iron Hammer” Soldiers are faced with the next step in their careers, and with the need for self-examination in regards to short-term and

long-term goals.

“I have 18 Soldiers; this gives them the opportunity to get information on different schools, points of contact and a chance to expand their knowledge base,” said Sgt. William Jones, a fuel specialist from Charlotte, N.C., assigned to A Company.

Those involved with running the career seminar agreed that the event was beneficial to Soldiers who were able to attend.

“It provided motivation & incentive to all Soldiers to continue to serve proudly and distinctively,” said Assumpcao.

For more from 4th BCT, visit <http://www.facebook.com/4BCT1AD>

Soldiers jazz-up International Women's Day

By Sgt. Neil W. McCabe
17th FiB PAO

COB BASRA – International Women's Day blew hot and cold as female Soldier vocalists from the 1st Infantry Division's "Spirit of the First" chorus and band took to the Holy Joe's coffeehouse stage at Contingency Operating Base Basra, backed by the division's Jazz Combo, March 8, for a Women's History Month salute to legendary ladies of jazz.

"It was a great event for Women's History Month," said Sgt. 1st Class Caleb P. Underwood, the equal opportunity non-commissioned officer for the 17th Fires Brigade, based at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash., deployed here as an element of United States Division-South.

"What really impressed me was the quality singing of the females who performed," he said. "It was like you were at jazz nightclub in Las Vegas."

Maj. Christine Pacheco, the division's equal opportunity program officer, spoke of the significance of the event.

"This was a celebration of the special women who, through their music, made our culture richer," she said.

The evening was hosted by Staff Sgt. Frank D. McCaskill, a trumpet player and leader of the division's 17-member Jazz ensemble. McCaskill, who said he grew up listening to Fitzgerald, kept the night moving along and shared with the audience biographical sketches of each of the women featured.

"Combining music and the equal opportunity mission is a great idea," said Sgt. 1st Class Randy E. Hagin, the leader of the jazz combo, and the group's drummer. "We did a similar show during Black History Month, so we are building on that partnership."

Hagin said that, when he drew up the playlist, he chose popular songs associated with the great female jazz vocalists in order to make the program more accessible to Soldiers who are more casual jazz listeners.

Joining Hagin in the combo were Staff Sgt. Gregory P. Ybarra on trumpet, Sgt. Brendan J. Osweiler, playing keyboards,



Photo by Sgt. Neil W. McCabe

Staff Sgt. Tracey L. Birdsong, a vocalist with the 1st Inf. Div. band, enjoys a riff by band trumpet player Staff Sgt. Gregory P. Ybarra, as the two perform "It Don't Mean a Thing (If It Ain't Got That Swing)," a signature song of Ella Fitzgerald, one of the great jazz songstresses saluted March 8, at Holy Joe's coffeehouse on COB Basra, for International Women's Day.

Sgt. Kerry J. Burkhart on guitar, Sgt. Ryan A. Couvillion on bass and Sgt. James D. Shank on tenor sax.

The combo also saluted female jazz music writers with their signature compositions.

"Carla Bley is really not known now, but she is still very well-known among musicians; this was a chance to put her name out there," Hagin said.

The combo played Bley's "Sing Me Softly of the Blues."

"The other composer we featured, Lil Hardin, was Louis Armstrong's first wife, and she had a great influence on his music and career," Hagin said.

Hardin wrote the song "Struttin' with Some Barbeque," but it is often credited to Armstrong, he said.

"This was a chance for us to set the record straight and give her her due."

Spc. Elizabeth A. R. Peterson, who sang Etta James' "At Last," said this was her first chance to perform jazz, but that she had so much fun at the rehearsals, she told the combo Soldiers that she wants to continue to perform with them.

Staff Sgt. Tracy Birdsong, who paid tribute to Billy Holiday with "God Bless The Child" and Ella Fitzgerald with "It Don't Mean a Thing (If It Ain't Got That Swing)," said she was interested in the contrast between the two singers. Hol-

liday lived a difficult life and died at 44, while Fitzgerald lived to 79.

"Ella just had fun. But, I think Billie Holliday was tortured by the emotion of the songs she was singing," she said. "In the end, it got to be too much."

Another performer, Sgt. Tiana C. Schneider, saluted Bessie Smith with "Saint Louis Blues," Dinah Washington with "What a Difference a Day Made" and Diana Krall with "All Or Nothing At All."

Sgt. Michelle D. Spinazzola saluted Sarah Vaughan with "Fly Me to the Moon" and Astrud Gilberto with "The Girl from Ipanema."

"They were all great," Pacheco said, adding that, of all the songs, Spinazzola's "Fly Me to the Moon," was the one she enjoyed the most.

"The song took me back to all the fun times I have had with my husband, Anibal," she said.

"With this program, we recognized the great jazz songstresses of the past, present, and after hearing these powerful performances, and maybe future female stars of jazz," she said. "This division has great talent, and nights like this are a chance to showcase it."

For more from 17th FiB, visit <http://www.lewis.army.mil/17FA/>

Play keeps audience, messages rolling

By Sgt. Benjamin R. Kibbey
367th MPAD, USD-S

COB BASRA – They may not be ready for Broadway just yet, but the Basra Gospel Choir put on a show for an appreciative crowd that any amateur troop would envy, at the Contingency Operating Base Basra Town Hall, March 19.

Rehearsing in their limited free time during the past two months, the group came together for a performance that not only drew a standing-room-only crowd, but brought those seated to their feet, applauding, at the end of the show.

Spc. Corporan Angel, 1st Attack Reconnaissance Battalion, 130th Aviation Regiment, based in Morrisville N.C., said he came out to support his unit members, and was pleasantly surprised.

“I thought it was great; I think it couldn’t have been better,” said the Raleigh N.C. native. “It was really funny, I think there were some key points in there, and it was a lot better than what I expected.”

Written by Sgt. Mario Ward, shop office noncommissioned officer in charge, 546th Maintenance Company, the play, “Fannie Mae’s Café,” hit a chord with both its humor and its sober, but hopeful, message.

“The theme basically was, your family might not be the only ones you can lean on, and you might not be able to lean on them too often,” said Spc. Andrez Powell, 1st ARB, 130th Aviation Regt., who played Mr. Raphaelloso, a humorous and entertaining – yet clearly self-serving – character who is attempting to swindle Samantha, the daughter of café owner Fannie Mae.

Samantha, blinded to his intentions by her own greed, falls happily for his machinations.

“Even family members do scandalous things,” said Powell, a Raleigh N.C. native.

Yet, the play also portrayed the importance of judging people by their character rather than their past, as personified in Roder-

ick, played by Staff Sgt. Jose Rios, Division Headquarters and Headquarters Bn., 1st Infantry Division, a Philadelphia native.

“You’ve got personnel who do things in life that may have ruined either their career or gave them a set-back,” Rios said after the performance. “You can always still move forward, even though you’re perceived a certain way or you’ve been through a lot of stuff in life, you can still move forward and be successful.”

The message was key for Ward, an Aberdeen, Miss. native, but not the only element.

“We wanted to let them know there’s a message here, but we wanted them to laugh as well,” he said.

And laugh they did, with even some of the cast members later recalling moments they had to struggle not to laugh and break character as other members of the troop got into expressing their characters.

“My personality is to make people laugh, and if I didn’t make people laugh, it wouldn’t be me,” said Ward.

Laughter is therapeutic in and of itself, Ward said, and music is another big part of his life, and so was also a big part of the play.

“I’m just a song writer, really,” he said. “I just like to paint a picture.”

The author of several short stories and novellas, Ward is on his fourth play to be written for and performed by Soldiers, and works with his church back home to put on similar motivational productions.

What keeps him interested and working though, whether he is writing, producing or simply helping someone out, is the opportunity to share with others.

“A lot of people who were in the play never did a play before; I never did a play before, until I did a play before,” he said. “So, I’m just here to show people that you can do whatever you put your mind to.”

For more from USD-S PAO, visit
www.facebook.com/1stInfantryDivision



Photo by Sgt. Benjamin R. Kibbey

Fannie Mae (with microphone), played by Spc. Maniececia Peterson, 256th Signal Company, 17th Fires Brigade, sings at the center of a musical and dance interlude during the play, “Fannie Mae’s Café,” performed by the Basra Gospel Choir at the COB Basra Town Hall Friday night. The play was written and directed by Sgt. Mario Ward, 546th Maintenance Co.

BANK, from page 1

The introduction of EFT capability also supports two of the U.S. drawdown's objectives: reduction of Iraqi reliance on U.S. support and the removal of the U.S. dollar from the Iraqi economy.

While reducing U.S. presence is an ongoing mission, making the Dinar the primary currency is more of a challenge. By eventually making EFT a standard practice, the amount of foreign currency introduced into Iraq is reduced dramatically.

The opening ceremony for Warka Bank drew elected Iraqi officials, including Ali Sadkham Eleqai, the Nasiriyah District Chairman, leaders from the Dhi Qar Provincial Reconstruction Team and a smattering of U.S. Soldiers, Defense Department

civilians, and other well-wishers.

Abass Matrood, the regional manager for Warka Bank, Safa Abd Ali, a local manager, and his staffers — many of them women — also attended.

The ceremony began with a brief introduction of the bank and its capabilities by the COB Adder IBIZ manager, Maj. Luke Hammond. He was followed by Matrood, as well as Eleqai.

Lt. Col. Alan Shumate, commander of the Special Troops Battalion, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, has oversight of the IBIZ operations. He, Matrood and Ali cut the ceremonial ribbon, and everyone entered the bank for refreshments and cake.

Matrood was especially happy to see

the completion of the latest branch. He oversees five different banks throughout the Dhi Qar Province, and sees this latest branch as a benefit to the local economy.

"This is a proud day for the Warka bank," said Matrood. "We appreciate our partnership with the U.S. forces at Imam Ali base and anyone is welcome to open an account here today."

During the construction of the bank, many people wondered if there even was a market for a bank at COB Adder, but only 24 hours after the opening ceremony, the bank was busy with customers, helping U.S. Soldiers, Defense Department civilians and contractors alike.

For more from 4th BCT, visit <http://www.facebook.com/4BCT1AD>

MP, from page 4

specifically for the Iraqi military, he gestured to his interpreter and said, "Let's let the shift commander know what is going on."

Then, at the map table, the battalion commander briefed Manaa on the most recent movements of non-Iraqi contingents.

When he had finished, the IP colonel asked Buxton for an honest assessment of the how the day's operation had gone.

During his drive through the city that morning, Buxton said to him, he saw that both security force officers and patrolmen carried themselves with professionalism.

"I am glad it went well today and there were no accidents," the battalion commander said. "I think you had a very good plan."

Keeping the Iraqi Police as the inner ring, with primacy in the city, while the Iraqi Army provided security around the outer ring, also worked out very well, he said.

"Now we just have to work together to secure the ballots," the commander said.

For more from 17th FiB, visit <http://www.lewis.army.mil/17FA/>



Photo by Sgt. Neil W. McCabe

Throughout Election Day, IP Lt. Col. Awooda Abdal Hafeel Manaa, the shift commander that day at Basra's PJCC, participated in video conference calls with the national operations center in Baghdad.

English, from page 6

and help, beginning with this small group.

"We would like to stay and build our country and make it very beautiful," she said.

Margaret Ostrenko is a social scientist with the Army's Human Terrain System, which provides commanders with cultural, human geographical information in order to enhance operational effectiveness. She chose to head the advanced English class because of the unique pool of professional Iraqi women.

Ostrenko is part of a Human Terrain Analysis Team of retired military members and academics that works in southern Iraq. Prior to her HTAT position, Ostrenko was an assistant professor in communication management at Saint Leo University School of Business in Saint Leo, Fla.

Farida Samona, a bilingual, bicultural advisor with the HTAT, said the opportunity for the women to express themselves in English is unique.

"With Saddam (Hussein in power), they didn't use English a lot," Samona said. "They didn't have that freedom."

The ability to speak English translates into opportunity in more ways than one.

The airport has been expanding, upgrading equipment and adding passengers. The ability to read an operating manual written in English or speak to a passenger in English is now part of the women's jobs, said retired Iraqi Maj. Gen. Falah Hassam, an intelligence advisor for the 1st Infantry Division, and who was instrumental in launching the classes.

He said that, as the airport must meet new state certification processes, English-speaking employees are a requirement. Such improvements are essential, he said, if the airport is to move ahead as a main transportation hub in southern Iraq.

For the men and women at Basra International Airport, moving ahead means change, and change is the word of the day.

"They want to make changes and we are encouraging that," Ostrenko said.

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ON THE HOMEFRONT

Danger Forward

March 22, Issue 8

By Dan Vergano
USA Today

PITTSBURGH – A meat-eating amphibian roamed the badlands of Pennsylvania some 300 million years ago, paleontologists reported this week.

A team led by David Berman of the Carnegie Museum of Natural History in Pittsburgh describes *Fedexia striegeli* in the current *Annals of Carnegie Museum* journal.

The creature's name is a thank-you to Federal Express, which owns the road-cut land on which the fossil skull of the creature was found, and its amateur finder, Adam Striegel.

Based on its five-inch-long skull, *Fedexia*, "record the earliest occurrences of vertebrates adapted to a terrestrial existence," says the study, "primarily living and feeding on land." The creature, which lived about 70 million years before the

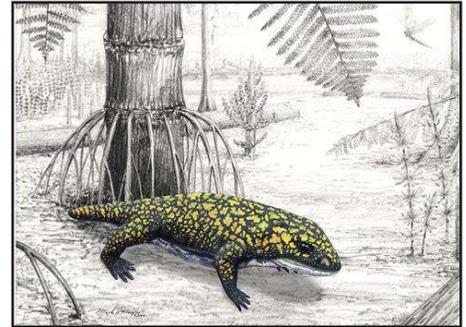
first dinosaurs, likely only returned to the water to lay eggs.

Dating of the fossil comes from chemical comparison of the skull to the rock layers of the western Pennsylvania road-cut from which it tumbled in 2004. It was then discovered by Striegel, then a senior at the University of Pittsburgh.

"What is particularly amazing about this discovery is that it was made by an amateur who had no prior experience in recognizing vertebrate fossils in the rock, a talent that usually takes years to develop," said Berman, in a statement.

Then near the equator, the geology of western Pennsylvania indicates that North America enjoyed a dry climate at the time when *Fedexia* roamed, following a wetter period that saw the emergence of some of the first land animals tens of millions of years earlier.

"Yet, aquatic amphibians continued to dominate the Pennsylvanian vertebrate as-



Fedexia gives evidence that the first widespread occurrence of terrestrial vertebrates 300 million years ago was due to a brief episode of a globally warmer, drier climate.

semblages during this episode," says the study, which follows earlier suggestions that the drying-out of swampy terrain spurred the evolution of land-dwelling creatures whose ancestors mostly lived in the water.

Pittsburgh is the hometown of Lt. Col. Mike Bush, featured on page 9

County gets U.S. grant to help fight obesity

BY FRED TASKER
Miami Herald

MIAMI – Better bike paths, more fruits and vegetables in neighborhood stores and more outdoor farmers' markets are some of the ways Miami-Dade plans to spend \$14.7 million it will receive from the federal government.

The grant, aimed at fighting obesity, is part of a \$370 million program called Communities Putting Prevention to Work announced Friday by the Obama Administration.

The grants go to 44 counties, cities, tribes and other groups across the country to fight obesity and tobacco use. The money comes from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.

Lillian Rivera, administrator of the Miami-Dade Health Department, said she was thrilled. "I've worked in public health for 30 years, and I've never seen a pot of money this big for chronic health problems."

Instrumental in winning the grant, Rivera said, was the Consortium for a Healthier Miami-Dade set up in 2003. It brings together the Miami-Dade School Board, county government, the Health Foundation of South Florida and others to work on health problems.

Here's how the grants will be used in Miami-Dade:

- The School Board and Parks and Recreation Department will create safer routes to encourage children to walk to school by hir-

ing crossing guards, improving signs and persuading parents that walking is safe.

- The Health Department will work to get corner food stores to stock healthy fruits and vegetables in inner-city neighborhoods that don't have supermarkets.

- The Zoning Department will encourage developers to create bike and walking paths in new communities.

- The Florida Agricultural Extension Service will work to set up farmers' markets in more locations.

The grants were announced in Washington, D.C. by Kathleen Sebelius, secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services.

"We know two-thirds of adults and one-third of children are overweight or obese," she said. "This comes with huge costs for their health -- heart disease, stroke, certain cancers, diabetes."

"Last year these cost the nation \$150 billion in health care costs," she said.

"We've made a lot of progress over the past 50 years in reducing tobacco use. But now this has stalled," Sebelius said. "Every day 4,000 kids under 18 have their first cigarette."

"If we want to live in a healthy country, we have to do a better job," she said. Miami-Dade is one of two Florida counties receiving grants. Orange County (Orlando) will get \$6.6 million for tobacco prevention.

Miami is the hometown of Chief Warrant Officer 4 Marc Assumpcao, featured on page 8

AROUND THE COB

Danger Forward

March 22, Issue 8

Legal

(VOIP 858-4098)

Legal Assistance Office

Mon. – Fri.
0800-1800

Sat.
0800-1700

Trial Defense Services

Mon. – Sat.
0900-1130
1300-1700

USO

Every day

Closes 0600
Re-opens 1000

This week at the USO

550 Cord Cuff Night

Tue, March 23
2100-2300

AAFES New Release

Movie Day

Wed, March 24
1900-0200

Ward 57

Texas Hold Em

Tournament

Thur, March 25
1900

NCAA 2010 CBB PS3

& XBOX 360 Tournament

ment

Sat, March 27
2100

UFC

(TV areas only)

Sun, March 28
0500

Religious Services

(COB Basra Chapel)

Protestant

Sundays

Contemporary Worship

1000

General Protestant

1130

Gospel Worship

1400

Liturgical Protestant

1700

Roman Catholic

Sunday Mass

0830

Saturday Vigil Mass

2000

Mon-Fri Mass

1130

Jewish

Friday

1800

LDS

(COB Basra House of
Prayer)

Sundays

1400 - 1500

Chaplain Programs

Bible Studies

Regular

(HHB 17th FiB Conf Rm)

Wednesdays

2000

Gospel of John

(RIVRON MWR - Camp
Alpha)

Wednesdays

1800

New Believers

(COB Basra Chapel)

Thursdays

2000

Fellowship

Men's Fellowship

(HHB 17th FiB Conf Rm)

Mondays

1900

The Truth Project

(308th MWR tent)

Wednesdays

1900

AA

(COB Basra Chapel)

Thursday

2000

Wild at Heart

(HHB 17th FiB Conf Rm)

Fridays

1900

Holy Joe's Coffee

Mon.-Sat.

0600 - 2200

Special Events

This Week

Ward 57

Texas Hold Em

Tournament

Thur, March 25

1900

- Operation Ward 57, in conjunction with the COB Basra USO, will be holding the 1st ever "Hold 'em for Heroes" poker tournament in order to help support our wounded brothers and sisters in arms.

- The event will include trophies for 1st, 2nd and 3rd place.

- Grand Prize is a Sony PS3 game system with 2 controllers and 5 games.

- Make it to the final table and receive a Ward 57 Shirt

- Go to www.operationward57.org and make a donation of \$5 or more, and bring proof of the

donation to the event.

The larger the donation, the larger your starting stack

Women's History Month

March is a time to celebrate women's contributions to the our nation and our military.

Women's History Month Observance

(COB Basra Town Hall)

Fri, March 26

1900

Times & programs

Fire Warden and Fire Extinguisher classes

(Fire Station 1, across from D-Main)

Wednesday @ 1000

- All unit Fire Wardens are required to submit the USF-I Task Force Safe Fire Safety Checklist to the fire chief monthly. This form can be taken to either fire station or emailed to Mike White, mwhite@sallyportglobal.com. For an electronic copy, email Mike White.

- Fire extinguisher exchange and re-service program: Expelled or unserviceable extinguishers can be brought to either fire station for exchange or re-service. We also have a limited number of extinguishers to hand out.

March Madness on the COB

March 27 - April 20, every Wednesday and Saturday at the main gym courts

- 18 teams
- Battle to elimination
- Prizes provided by Harley Davidson and other businesses on COB Basra.

“Hopefully, we give the Soldiers something to do and a memorable event.”

- Master Sgt. Darwin Nealy
senior medic, 1314th CA Co.
and tournament organizer.

Big Red One Puzzle of the Week



Hint for this week: perspectives

Each week, look for a new brain teaser here, with the answer in the following week's Danger Forward.

*Solution for last week: ROWPU (Revers-osmosis Water Purification Unit)
Brought to you by the 1st Inf. Div. ORSA Cell*

A look around USD-S



Photo by Spc. Samantha J. McCarthy, 308th BSB
Staff Sgt. Michael Butler has Sgt. 1st Class John Rankin ready in place to demonstrate the “Straight Arm Bar from the Mount” during combatives instruction for Soldiers from the 1st Bn., 77th Regiment route clearance team at COB Basra, MAR 10, 2010. Both are from the 308th Brigade Support Battalion.

Have a photo from around USD-S? Email it, along with the photographer's name, rank and unit, the date and place it was taken, and a short description, to benjamin.kibbey@iraq.centcom.mil, and you could have it featured here and receive a coin from DCSM Jim Champagne.

Sudoku

8	5		4					3
9			7	3				2
2	7		8					6
		6		1		5		4
1	9							
	4			5	6	8	3	
4			1	8	3	7		
						2		9
6	1			2				

For solutions visit: www.puzzles.ca/sudoku.html