

The Arrowhead Brigade

ON POINT



NOTE FROM ARROWHEAD 6 AND 7

"It has been said that democracy is the worst form of government, except all those other forms that have been tried from time to time."

- Sir Winston Churchill

Dear Family and Friends of the Arrowhead Brigade,

Greetings, and an early Happy Easter from your deployed Arrowhead Soldiers. We start this month's update with another quotation from Sir Winston Churchill. Why? First, because Churchill is an eminently quotable historical figure, but more importantly because his observation is particularly poignant given what we have observed this month. More on the elections in a moment.

First, as always we'll talk about the weather (old men are prone to do that, so we're told). Nellie and Cindy tell us that signs of Spring are in the air at home. We're not exactly sure what signs we have been seeing here. Just when we thought we had bypassed Spring and headed straight into Summer, we got a break in temperatures along with some welcome rain. We're tempted to describe our current conditions as downright pleasant. Please don't panic, though.

April is just ahead. We should start to see temperatures routinely hit the mid and upper 90's and even a few days peaking over 100 degrees. Despite the recent rain, Diyala is still in the midst of a four-year drought. Historically this region sees 11-15 inches of rain per year; we've received just 2 inches so far. Speaking of



Col. David Funk

history (weak segue, we know), let's highlight the elections we just witnessed here.

Elections in Iraq - March 7th, 2010

We explained last month how Iraq stood on the precipice of history, how it would put to the test a fledgling democracy's ability to deliver a safe, credible, and legitimate electoral process. We can now report that although it wasn't always pretty, the Iraqi government and its security forces delivered. The people of Diyala responded, with 62% of them turning out to vote. Care to guess how many people traditionally turn out to vote in the U.S.? Research on our own 2008 Presidential Elec-

tions shows we also had 62% voter participation. This was the highest, incidentally, since 1960... and it was absent the gunfire and explosions we had here in Diyala. As we said, it wasn't always pretty. Yet watching people walk the streets with their newly inked fingers was somehow beautiful.

We spent Election Day in the Diyala Operations Center with the Governor, his Chief of Police, and countless Iraqi Army leaders monitoring the day's progress surrounded by the cackle of radios, the hum of computers, and the incessant ringing of cell phones - many, many cell phones. Meanwhile, your Arrowhead Heroes stood by at strategic locations all over Diyala, ready to support the ISF in any way possible. The enemies of democracy made multiple feckless attempts that day to discourage voters from going to the polls. But the full force of the ISF was clearly on display. The enemy was capable of making noise, but it soon became apparent he was incapable of dissuading the people. The noise-makers fell silent by late morning, and we thrilled at the site of long lines of people entering the polls to vote. From there, the day progressed nearly without incident. The polls were closed; ballots were counted and moved to consolidation sites; and we anxiously awaited the announcement that 62% of the people voted.

At this point the nation transitions to announcing the winners and seating the new government. The successful vote was of course an important event, but the challenges ahead are no less profound. The recent announcement of the winners has already increased the tension level, as the losers assess their next moves. There is a

scheduled several-month period to select and seat a new Prime Minister and President, along with the 325 members of the parliament who will serve Iraq for the next four years. This process will be just as important for the legitimacy of Iraq's election as the vote itself. We will now witness the country move through a period of (hopefully peaceful) political transition of its leadership. Of course no one can predict how this period will transpire. We do however see hope for a peaceful and prosperous future. The people of this democracy have discarded the message of the terrorists. They are ready for peace, and your Soldiers are ready to continue helping them achieve it.

Arrowhead Super Squad Competition - March 28th 2010

Just this past week, the Brigade hosted a military skills competition bringing together the best squad from each battalion to compete for the coveted Arrowhead Best Squad Competition Trophy. Each squad included one Iraqi Soldier from our partner units. It was a grueling competition that included weather just like back home - rain and mud (I'll bet you can even picture it). During the competition, each of the squads took a fitness test and then ran with combat gear over a three-and-a-half mile course where they were tested at five military skills stations along the way: First Aid, Marksmanship, Digital Skills, Stryker Vehicle Recovery & Combatives. No sooner had the competition ended when the clouds parted revealing a blue and beautiful sky - a fitting backdrop for CSM Bjerke's presentation of the winning trophy to the Tomahawk Squad from A Company,

1-23 Infantry. All of your Soldiers (including our Iraqi partners) did a terrific job and represented their battalions well. We couldn't be prouder of the teamwork and competitive spirit we saw that morning. You can find more on this competition, to include pictures and story, on our Facebook site. Congrats to the Tommies and all



Command Sgt. Maj. Alan Bjerke

our competitors. Arrowhead! Arrowhead Fallen Soldier, PFC Erin McLyman

Sadly, we must acknowledge the tragic loss suffered by the Ar-



rowhead and Front Line Families this month. PFC Erin McLyman was more than an inspiring Soldier and Warrior; she was also a great friend. Erin was mortally wounded when indirect fire struck her FOB earlier this month. 296th BSB hosted a Memorial Ceremony on the 18th of March, and her chain of command and friends poignantly honored her memory and life. There was standing room only in the gymnasium as Soldiers and civilians heard a consistent description of Erin: always smiling, upbeat and friendly, a fiery red-haired Soldier who loved life and her fellow Soldiers. We walked away from the ceremony filled again with immeasurable admiration and respect for the Sacrifices your Arrowhead Soldiers are making every day here.

We'll close this month's update with a simple thought - Less than 5 months to go! It's hard to believe we have been here that long already. It's even harder to believe the magnitude of the achievements your Arrowhead Soldiers have made in that time. The nation of Iraq has a long way to go, but the road gets shorter each day because of the heroes who surround us. Thank you for your continued love and support. You make us what we are. Until next month we are humbly...

Arrowhead 6 and 7

ARROWHEAD

SECOND TO NONE

AMERICA'S CORPS!



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Specialist Scott Noel, Battle Company, 5th Battalion, 20th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, provides security while Iraqi Army forces clear a section of Imma Assad. The village and the surrounding area were part of a larger clearing operation completed over four days by the partnered forces.

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ON THE COVER

Soldiers from 1/37th FA work to hook up air hoses to a simulated inoperable Stryker during the Arrowhead Best Squad Competition. The competition required nine members from each battalion to complete challenges testing their physical and mental skill. (US Army photo by Pvt. Zachary Zuber)

THE BACK COVER

Mortar team members from Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 5/20 Inf. set the fuse on an illumination round. The team is firing several of the rounds as part of a counter-indirect fire effort at Forward Operating Base Warhorse. (US Army photo by Pvt. Zachary Zuber)

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The ON POINT is a command information magazine authorized for members of the U.S. Army and the 3-2 SBCT community. Contents of the ONPOINT are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense or Department of the Army. The editorial content of the magazine is the responsibility of the 3-2 SBCT Public Affairs Office. ONPOINT is prepared monthly by the 3-2 SBCT Public Affairs Office, which includes Soldiers of the 135th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment. Any story or photo submission should be forwarded to the editor at jennifer.palmeri@sbct1.army.mil.

Successful Elections Prove Progress In Iraq

Story and Photos by
Pfc. Adrian Muehe
135th MPAD

DIYALA, Iraq – On March 7, Iraqi citizens in Diyala province proved their desire for democracy and chose to ignore threats of violence and harm. Iraqi Security Forces showed they know how to plan and execute successful security operations to allow this democratic process to happen. They demonstrated what they have learned and what they have always been capable of, all in one day.

At the Diyala Provincial Joint Coordination Center, leaders from the Iraqi Security Forces came together to manage efforts to keep their people safe as they voted for the leaders they support during the Iraqi Parliamentary Elections.

“We are happy for our success but also sad because one civilian died,” said Brigadier General Kamal Issah Mustafa. “This was a success for democracy that we consider a step forward in our future.”

The day proved a step forward because of the process involved in creating a secure voting environment.

“For approximately a month we have been holding conferences and lectures, creating

plans to prepare for the elections,” said Brig. Gen. Mustafa. “We were able to preserve lives and make the voting process much easier.”

Another equally significant factor in this process was that there was almost no involvement by members of the 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, who are the main operational United States Forces-Iraq unit in the province.

Arrowhead Soldiers throughout the province were stationed strategically to be available if needed, but that situation never arose.

“Our mission was to provide support for our ISF counterparts, and be quickly available if requested,” said 1st Lt. Brett Sim, the fire support officer for the 5th Battalion, 20th Infantry Regiment, 3-2 SBCT. “Today was a test for the ISF if they could secure their cities for a free democratic election.”

“They have proven themselves not to us, but to the people, that they could plan and execute their security missions throughout elections.”

This day did not just provide proof of the ISF’s success, but also successes of the training and cooperative work done by the 3-2 SBCT with their Iraqi counterparts since their arrival

in Iraq.

“The partnerships that the company commanders and platoon leaders have developed over the past six months helped make yesterday’s election successful,” said Lt. Col. Mitchell Ramin, the 5/20 Inf. commander. “Through those partnerships, we have modeled professional behavior as well as trained ISF police and soldiers how to search individuals and vehicles.”

“Another product of the



A member of the command group at the Provincial Joint Coordination Center places a marker for a notable event in the Diyala province during elections.

partnership was the sharing of information between all security forces, not only US Forces and ISF but between the Iraqi Army and Iraqi Police.”

As the process of collecting and counting the votes continues, 5/20 Inf. Soldiers will continue to make themselves available if needed.

“We are currently enhancing the security posture at the ballot storage warehouse and the Baqubah Library where the Diyala Province ballots are being counted,” said Lt. Col. Ramin. “This is in response to a request from the Independent High Electoral Commission for all of Iraq. The ISF in Diyala are currently more than capable

of providing the necessary security at these two sites.”

The work they have done in preparation, combined with the successes on election day, provide the leaders of both forces with an opportunity to look at what the country and security forces can do in the future.

“These elections are a tremendous sign for the future of Iraq; the security forces performed magnificently,” said Lt. Col. Ramin. “They had a very good plan that they executed, resulting in a successful election. It was very good to see the progress they have made over the past 4-5 years.”

“We helped ourselves to get rid of a dictator, so now each

citizen can vote freely for the member of parliament that they prefer,” said Brig. Gen. Mustafa. “Half of the success belongs to the efforts of coalition forces, and we thank our brothers for supporting us.”

Below: Soldiers of the 5th Battalion, 20th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, watch as Iraqi Police forces set up security around a ballot warehouse in Baqubah, Iraq. Soldiers of 5/20 Inf. were visiting with officials to let them know they were available if needed to assist with security.



TOMAHAWKS BRING THE HEAT IN THE IRAQI DESERT

Story and Photos by
Pfc. Adrian Muehe
135th MPAD

DIYALA, Iraq – “Hang it,” repeated Spc. Nicholas Keim, of Olympia, Wash., and an assistant gunner for Headquarters and Headquarters Company (HHC), 1st Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, while holding a 120mm mortar round steady over the massive gun pointed out of the back of a Stryker vehicle. While waiting for the call to release, he maintained this position with sweat dripping off his brow in the Iraqi desert.

“Fire,” said Spc. Stephan Forbes of Denver, Co., a gunner for HHC, 1/23 Inf. After this call, Spc. Keim repeated his order. He

dropped the mortar into the tube and immediately braced himself for the recoil. A couple short seconds later the round fired. The back of the Stryker vehicle sunk down from the force of the shot, sending the dry dirt resting under the vehicle into the air causing a massive cloud of dust. Flames erupted from the end of the mortar tube as it fired the 120mm shell down range. All eyes immediately went to the target, which was engulfed in a cloud of smoke as the round impacted.

This action was a small part of a fire coordination exercise (FCX) conducted by 1/23 Inf. It lasted three days and coordinated their assets of forward observers, mortar men, close air support, and field artillery, in the desert just outside of Forward Operating Base (FOB) Grizzly, Iraq, March 21-23.



Private First Class Daniel Stamper, a native of St. Frances, Minn., and an assistant gunner for Headquarters Platoon, Apache Company, 1/23 Inf., at right, ducks down as a 60mm round is fired in the desert area around FOB Grizzly, Iraq, on March 23.

“This training happened so that we can clearly and accurately identify targets so we can use our assets to the best of our ability,” said Sgt. Victor Ramos, of Hollis, N.Y., and a fire support non-commissioned officer (NCO) for Blackhawk Company, 1/23 Inf. “We bring in close air support. We bring in rotary wing support. We bring in mortars, and we bring in GLMRS (Guided Multiple Launch Rocket Systems).”

This training exercise started with the forward observers, who were running this spectacular show. Their role was to confirm and identify targets before they are cleared to call for fire with their available assets.

“We usually don’t get to do this in country,” said Spc. Kerry McDonough, of San Antonio, Texas, and a forward observer with 1st Platoon, Apache Company, 1/23 Inf. “I’ve spent most of this deployment acting as an infantryman, out there with them in case something happens and air support needs to be called in.”

After the forward observers identified the targets and their locations, they had to decide what assets they were going to use to minimize the threat. The preferred way to do this is to call in air support, but if the enemies have anti-air capabilities, they would have to be eliminated before pilots can fly over. This is when mortar fire comes into the situation.

The Tomahawk mortar men wield three different kinds of artillery. On the ground they fire 60mm and 80mm rounds.

Out of the back of Strykers they have 120mm rounds. The size of the target and how far away the objective is located determines what size round is used. Firing these mortars serves two purposes. The first is to destroy targets such as anti-air guns to clear the way for air support. The second is to fire for effect. The purpose of this option is to put a large number of rounds in the same vicinity to scare the enemy as opposed to destroy them.

Assisting with the mortars with indirect fire were GLMRS fired out of FOB Normandy. These rockets were field artillery called in by the forward observers and create more of a destructive force than the portable mortars.

After the mortars and rockets were fired, the anti-air threat was neutralized. After the forward observers confirmed this they talked to the pilots of two Kiowa helicopters who were at hand. The Kiowas went in and dropped

ordinance on the targets to annihilate the simulated combatant stronghold.

“My Soldiers see how important this job is,” said Sgt. Ramos. “They know we still have rust on the chains and now we know how to break that rust off.”

After this refresher training, these Soldiers are confident that, if the situation ever arrived, they can effectively call in the support they need to save Soldiers’ lives, said Sgt. 1st Class Joshua Brooks, a native of Johnsonburg, Pa., and the battalion fire support NCO for 1/23 Inf.

“We identified issues we can fix to make our fire support teams better, and found new training objectives,” said Sgt. 1st Class Brooks.

At the beginning of April, the Tomahawks will take what they have learned and perfected from this exercise and teach Iraqi Army Soldiers how to effectively use these techniques with their assets.



Above: Specialist Nicholas Keim, of Olympia, Wash., and an assistant gunner for HHC, 1/23 Inf., readies a 120mm mortar round for firing as part of a fire coordination exercise in the desert just outside FOB Grizzly, Iraq, on March 21. The mortar was fired as part of a call for fire exercise done by forward observers on the ground.



Left: A Kiowa helicopter flies past a group of Stryker vehicles lined up for a fire coordination exercise in the desert near FOB Grizzly, Iraq, on March 21. The pilots were interacting with forward observers on the ground to drop live ordinance on simulated targets as part of the training exercise.

Frontline Soldiers Operate Warhorse Woodshop

Story and Photos by
Pfc. Adrian Muehe
135th MPAD

DIYALA, Iraq – One thing that continuously catches peoples' eyes on Forward Operating Base Warhorse, Iraq, is the intricately detailed wooden signs in front of buildings throughout the base. These works-of-art are created by two Soldiers from Task Force Frontline, 296th Brigade Support Battalion, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division.

Sergeant Douglas Lambe, of University Place, Wash., the woodshop non-commissioned officer in charge, and Spc. Charles Wells, from Tacoma, Wash., a wood worker, from Company B, 296th BSB, operate the woodshop here.

Their workplace is in a battered shed constructed by their predecessors. Inside there is a square work table that takes up most of the space. The walls are lined with various power tools with lumber spread out and sorted below them. The sounds of saws and power drills are constant, filling the air with sawdust and the aroma of freshly cut pine.

Sergeant Lambe didn't plan on being a carpenter on this deployment

"I thought I was going to be

doing (Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning) repair, because that's what I do," said the woodshop NCOIC.

Before joining the Army, Sgt. Lambe had worked as a construction worker. This experience led him to his current position of running the woodshop on FOB Warhorse.

"On every tour I've been on, there's always been a place to build things," said Sgt. Lambe while talking about how his woodshop came to be.

"I was asked to assess the woodshop left behind, said Sgt.

Lambe. "My name got brought up to the sergeant major because of my construction experience.

"I built them [296th BSB command group] a large command table and they loved it," said Sgt. Lambe. "I've been here building ever since."

To help him with the woodshop, Sgt. Lambe enlisted the help of Spc. Wells.

"I needed someone that could grow, and he has grown," said Sgt. Lambe of the light-wheeled vehicle mechanic's progress as a carpenter. "He came in here not knowing how to build much

of anything. Now, he can build furniture, and he is really honing his skills on these tools, and learning how to use them to make things pretty."

These men work on projects for various people on the FOB. Currently, Sgt. Lambe is working on book shelves for the FOB chapel, complete with professional quality signs used for labeling different religious material that will be on the shelves for distribution.

The carpenters made a bookshelf from a pile of lumber in about an hour by flawlessly cutting the wood and putting the correct notches to hold it together.

With all that they build, their pride is in the work they do with their signs, a skill that they acquired and honed during this tour.

"I wish I was a better artist," said Sgt. Lambe about his command impressing signs. An artist is always his own hardest critic.

With their woodshop duty on FOB Warhorse just past the halfway point in Iraq, these men plan on continuing their work and perfecting their skills. Sergeant Lambe intends to open his own shop after he gets out of the Army.

"This is a skill I'll definitely be able to make money off of," said Sgt. Lambe. 🛠️



Sergeant Douglas Lambe, from University Place, Wash., woodshop non-commissioned officer in charge for Company B, 296th BSB, cuts a board using a power saw in his woodshop on FOB Warhorse, March 6.



Specialist Charles Wells, a woodworker for Company B, 296th Brigade Support Battalion, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, staples padding onto a physical therapy chair he is constructing in the woodshop on Forward Operating Base Warhorse on March, 6. Specialist Wells left his position as a light wheeled vehicle mechanic to work in the woodshop during this deployment.

BETTER BUSINESS MEANS BRIGHTER FUTURE

Story by Pvt. Zachary Zuber
Photos by Pfc. Adrian Muehe
135th MPAD

DIYALA, Iraq – During the closing months of their time in Iraq members of 1st Battalion, 37th Field Artillery Regiment, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, have formed into the Economic development teams (EDTs) and are collaborating with the Diyala Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) to enhance the economic opportunities for citizens in the Diyala province, Iraq.

After the successful resurgence of the Aruba Suq in Muqadiyah, the teams are now implementing a similar plan to provide the same upturn for the Jalula and Khalis markets to continue stimulating the local economy. The EDTs will focus on providing grants and connecting merchants to banks in order to support a more stable market for future generations, while the PRT encourages local non-government organizations (NGOs) to play an active role in identifying participants.

The program is designed to not only construct new and existing shops, repair roads, but also provide educational courses for people in the community to learn about how to operate a small business and

A store owner in the Aruba Suq of Muqadiyah, Iraq prepares a piece of tubing to be cut for a customer. Shops like this one are eligible to be part of migro-grant surges that will promote commerce in the area. (US Army photo by Pfc. Adrian Muehe)

improve their shop to increase their revenue. There is also a training program to encourage collaborations with banks and the establishment of business associations.

“These projects we are doing in the suqs are designed to bring a more modern and efficient way of doing business in small geographic areas,” said Michael Rothe, senior economic advisor for the U.S. State Department. “In the long term we are hoping to have an impact on the broader province.”

Local NGOs such as the International Red Crescent have a vital role to ensure that grants are provided to individuals based upon feasible and realistic business plans rather than sectarian affiliations.

The organization spends a lot of time out in the markets working with individual shop owners and community members to promote educational classes and revitalization opportunities for the area.

“These local groups are really on the front line for this,” said Mr. Rothe. “The Red Crescent and the Small Business Development Center are training hundreds, if not thousands, of small business owners on business management. They are also providing follow-up inspections, making sure that grantees are using the funds as they were intended to be used.”

The PRT and EDTs have also modified the micro-grant process by providing certified checks in place



of the traditional cash payments, in an effort to encourage merchants to use local banks.

“Most of these merchants have never had a bank account,” said Capt. Peter Curley, part of 1/37th FA who is an assistant to the PRT economic team. “In an effort to encourage the relationships between merchants and banks we can provide them with either electronic funds transfers or certified checks.”

“We chose certified checks for payments so that they can create a relationship with the private banks which they haven’t had yet.”

This liaison is the first step toward creating a market where the shop owners can work directly with private banks to receive loans for future needs. Because the citizens have done little or no business with banks in the past, available credit is hard to find.

“Right now we are laying the foundation for citizens to fill out

loan applications, and establish a relationship with the banks so that when credit becomes available they can use it,” said Mr. Rothe.

The PRT and EDTs want to encourage partnership between local organizations and merchants because it can provide a great future and more stable economy for all of Diyala. Improving the knowledge citizens have of the banking system will provide long-lasting changes through the coming years.

“In addition to micro-grants the NGOs will have increased capacity to train, and they will be able to organize business associations in the market,” said Mr. Rothe. “This will increase their purchasing ability, as well as allow them to generate improvements in the community.”

They hope that by working on these areas of the local economy, they will give Iraqi businesses the keys to more than just a new shop.

Above: While on a patrol, Soldiers look over the selection of a local nut shop during a joint patrol of the marketplace in Jalula, Iraq, on Feb. 10. Patrols like this are establishing relationships between military forces and the local population in order to evaluate the needs of local markets for potential micro-grants. (US Army photo by Pfc. Adrian Muehe)

Construction Gives Soldiers a Better Home

Story by
Pvt. Zachary Zuber
135th MPAD

DIYALA, Iraq – With the responsible draw down of US forces in Iraq nearing its end, many stations where Soldiers live and work are preparing for their impending closure. One, however, Forward Operating Base Cobra, in the Diyala province, is being built up so that members of 1st Squadron, 14th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, can continue operating as one-third of the Tripartite Forces in the northern region of the province.

The base has been undergoing improvements since November to almost everything; including recreation facilities, a gym, improvements to the Dining Facility, even the emplacement of new container housing units. All being built or refurbished to create an increase the capabilities, safety, and quality of life for Soldiers operating in the surrounding area.

“This construction enables us to conduct pretty much any mission we need to,” said Captain David Von Bargaen, the supply and logistics officer for 1/14 Cav. “When we first arrived here, about half of the

squadron had to stay at FOB Caldwell.”

Cramped space has since been alleviated by providing two new living areas so that the entire squadron has been able to permanently move down instead of making a nearly 70 kilometer trip between FOB Caldwell and FOB Cobra.

“Up until this past week we were completely split, which made mission planning more difficult,” said Capt. Von Bargaen. “Now we have almost 1,100 people here, which allow us to work better throughout the Combined Security Area, as well as per-

form partner missions building relationships within the local communities.”

Partnered missions that support the local community are vital to the country’s progress as US Forces prepare to leave. There are even more advanced operational capabilities that are provided by the many improvements to FOB Cobra.

One significant addition to the FOB is the Forward Aerial Refueling Point, which allows a larger landing area for helicopters as well as the ability to sustain more flights by offering fuel services.

“The FARP is not completed yet but is expected to

be operational within a couple weeks,” said Capt. Von Bargaen. “Having one here allows us to have more flights and to include air assets in our mission planning.”

Another enhancement that is vital to the health of Soldiers on FOB Cobra is the movement of a level two plus medical center, which was moved from FOB Caldwell along with the rest of the squadron.

“A level two plus facility means that the center will have a forward surgical team, a lab for testing, X-ray capabilities, and an ICU [Intensive Care Unit] on site,” said Capt. Von Bargaen. “This is important because prior to this we were outside of the ‘golden hour’ window for casualties, and now they will be able to get immediate treatment.”

Of the many projects included in the expansion, those that will have the highest impact on the members of Warhorse Squadron are the new gym, planned laundry facility, and improvements to the Dining Facility.

“We just recently had our DFAC [Dining Facility] operations contracted out to provide better meals equal to what people are eating anywhere in the brigade,” said Capt. Von Bargaen. “At one time we had only five guys doing the cook-

ing, and they did a great job, they just didn’t have the equipment they needed.”

Prior to the contract, the cooks had to work out of a trailer to provide meals for Soldiers at FOB Cobra. They also had limited storage space for frozen or refrigerated foods.

All of the improvements have taken quite a bit of planning and hard work, and has not been without some challenges, the largest of which being how to fit everything in the existing area.

“The issue that we have right now is really the space,” said Maj. Todd Duncan, the brigade engineer for 3 SBCT, 2nd ID. “There really isn’t the space to put more out there right now with everything we

have put up.”

“However, with the expansion of the FOB, they will be able to continue operating the checkpoints [at the CSA] like they have been.”

This massive undertaking, which began in November and is planned to finish in April, is providing everything the Soldiers need to be both proficient and happier with their time at FOB Cobra.

“This took a lot of really hard work on a lot of peoples’ part to maintain operating capacity while working on this project,” said Capt. Von Bargaen. “With some drastic improvements once in a while, everyday things get a little better here.” 🇺🇸



Soldiers tour the Private First Class Erin L. McLyman Dining Facility at Forward Operating Base Cobra, Iraq, after its dedication ceremony. The facility was remodeled as part of the expansion, and was named in honor of Pfc. McLyman, who was killed last month during a mortar attack on the base. (US Army photo by Pfc. Adrian Muehe)



A containerized housing unit built for Soldiers to live in now sits surrounded by t-wall barriers on Forward Operating Base Cobra. Two months ago this area was just a gravel pit, this new living area was constructed as part of an effort to expand the base. (US Army photo by Pfc. Adrian Muehe)

Forward Operating Base Warhorse Boxing Smoker



Boxing Smoker Winners

David Nsamba
Ugandan Security
1st Lt. Kevin Heath
HHC, 5/20 Inf.
Spc. Heath Weisiger
HSB, 1/37th FA
Sgt. Kyle Lund
Battle Co., 5/20 Inf.

Pfc. Hezekiah McRae
HSB, 1/37th FA
Capt. Jon Anderson
Apache Co., 1/23 Inf.

Sgt. Trenton Williams
296th BSB
Sgt. Timothy Bianchini
HHC, 5/20 Inf.

Spc. William Pennington
296th BSB
Staff Sgt. Rayshaun McIntosh
Battle Co., 5/20 Inf.

Capt. Kristen DeWinne
Brigade HHC

Major Luther R. Johnson, 3 SBCT, 2nd ID information officer, organized the first boxing smoker held on Forward Operating Base Warhorse.

“The boxing smoker concept was a vision I had with Roberto Munoz. There were a lot of people conducting boxing type workouts in the gym. We wanted to allow them to put some of that training to use in a safe environment. I believe the boxing smoker was a huge success due to the efforts from TF 296 and KBR. People are still talking about the boxing smoker to this day. The boxing smoker was a huge morale boost to everyone on Fob Warhorse,” said Maj. Johnson.



Strength, Skill Tested by Best Squad Competition

Story by Pvt. Zachary Zuber
Photos by Contributors
135th MPAD

DIYALA, Iraq – The best squads of 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, came together at Forward Operating Base Warhorse to battle through a set of challenges that would define which battalion could claim the title for the brigade’s Best Squad on March 28.

Five teams of eight Arrowhead Soldiers were accompanied by a member of the Iraqi Army as the trudged through the rain and mud to complete challenges that tested their physical endurance, mental capacity, and Soldier skills.

When all tasks had been completed, the ‘Earthpigs’ of Apache Co., 1st Battalion 23rd Infantry Regiment, 3 SBCT 2nd ID were the winners, finishing nearly 50 points ahead of anyone else.

“All of the squads did a great job, however we were the quickest squad around the course which I attribute to the boys putting in the

hard work,” said Staff Sgt. Gabriel Trollinger, squad leader of Apache Company’s winning team. “We went out and ran the course in full kit twice to prepare for this.”

Their preparation paid off as they were able to celebrate at the awards ceremony held in the gym where an hour earlier four of their nine teammates had proven ample knowledge of combatives techniques. During the ceremony Col. David Funk, commander of 3 SBCT, 2nd ID, spoke about what had been displayed over the length of the course.

“Where the rubber meets the road out there is where you are, at the small team level,” said Col. David Funk, as he spoke to all the squads during the award ceremony. “You are the heroes that make us successful in what we do.”

When his squad was announced winners of the Arrowhead brigade’s best squad competition, they heard their first sergeant yell out “Apache!” above the applause.

With a level a pride only those Soldiers and their leaders could feel they returned his call.

“On the Warpath!” 🇺🇸



The winning squad from Apache Co., 1st Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment



Squad of Battle Co., 5th Battalion, 20th Infantry Regiment



Squad members from 2nd Battalion, 3rd Infantry Regiment



Squad of 18th Engineer Co., 296th Brigade Support Battalion



Squad from 1st Battalion, 37th Field Artillery Regiment

Illuminating the Night to Increase Base Safety

Story and Photos by
Pvt. Zachary Zuber
135th MPAD

DIYALA, Iraq – Though security is part of every servicemember's job, 5th Battalion, 20th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, performs an operation at Forward Operating Base Warhorse that helps to ensure safety on a higher level.

Squads from 5/20 Inf. provide countermeasures to indirect fire (IDF) attacks on the base by firing illuminating mortar rounds during hours of darkness to light up specific areas in order to disrupt any enemy movement in the surrounding area.

"When the brigade first came to this area we hadn't received much

more than erratic IDF, but as a response to the increase in attacks the brigade began tasking battalions to perform counter-IDF measures," said Sgt. 1st Class Stanley Wilson, a Crystal Springs, Miss. native.

"Originally, the operations were tasked to multiple battalions, but 5/20 [Inf.] took over the entire process because it falls under our area of operation," said Staff Sgt. Jerry Adamick, from Huntsville, Texas.

To those not involved, it may seem like the process is simple, however this program is much more involved, requiring detailed planning and coordination.

"As we receive intelligence that indicates there may be indirect fire against us, we send out patrols to clear the ground and make sure there is nothing that can get hit by a round," said Sgt. 1st Class Wilson.

"Then forward observers in the

tactical operations center will clear the air before we fire."

Once they have ensured that there will be no civilian or military damages in a targeted area, the battalion's mortar teams are authorized to fire. The teams themselves then focus on putting the round in the right location, which requires experienced leaders such as Staff Sgt. Adamick and Sgt. 1st Class Wilson

"I have spent eight years perfecting my skills as a mortar man, so that I can be confident in myself and my crew," said Staff Sgt. Adamick. "That allows me to be confident in where we are firing."

By combining their knowledge with the information gathered, members of 5/20 Inf. continue to protect FOB Warhorse and protect the surrounding area safer for all its residents.

"Our goal is to prevent indirect fires in the area of FOB Warhorse, it's something that just needs to be done," said Staff Sgt. Adamick. 🇺🇸

An illumination round is fired from a Stryker of the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 5th Battalion, 20th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division. The round was part of a series used for counter-indirect fire efforts performed at Forward Operating Base Warhorse.



SIGNAL SOLDIERS PROVIDE A UNIQUE METHOD OF COMMUNICATION

Story and Photos by
Pvt. Zachary Zuber
135th MPAD

DIYALA, Iraq – Communication between forces in different areas are an important thing in the Army. The 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division has an entire company of Soldiers dedicated to keeping proper lines of communication open.

A few of those Soldiers have taken part in a program which starts another line of communication between those who are deployed and their families at home. In February, members of the 334th Signal Company, 296th Brigade Support Battalion, 3-2 SBCT, started working with the United Through Reading program to allow Soldiers to send videos of themselves reading stories to their family members.

The videos are a great way to improve morale of both families and servicemembers who have to deal with the difficulties in communication that worldwide deployments can cause.

"Our goal for taking part in this program was to connect parents to their kids," said 2nd Lt. Chauncey Henry, a Frostproof, Fla. native. "It's easy for parents to call but with this their kids get to see them and make a visual connection, so that if you're reading a book to them they can read along."

Providing this extra bit of communication increases the morale of the deployed family member and can help ease their transition when they come back home. For many Soldiers, it can be their best option



Staff Sergeant Christopher W. Miller changes settings while recording a video for the United Through Reading program. The videos are provided for free to Soldiers with children at home to provide a fun connection during deployments.

for young children to have continued recognition of their parents as they grow.

"For me, being on my third deployment, I don't get a lot of face time with my son who is four," said Sgt. Benjamin Seibert, a non-commissioned officer in the 334th Sig. Co. "With this he can have recognition of who I am, so I did a night-time thing for him to watch before he goes to bed at night."

For such a seemingly simple method of communication, there is a lot that goes into producing these videos, as well as implementation of the program itself.

"I emailed several different organizations, and after training and certification I received the materials to begin the program, including 25 books to start a permanent library," said 2nd Lt. Henry.

After the start-up process, things became simpler, especially the preparation of the DVDs for the Soldiers to send home.

"Each video can take anywhere from 30 minutes to three or four hours depending on the length of the recording," said Staff Sgt. Christopher W. Miller, the video manager for the program. "Usually we are able to get the completed DVDs to Soldiers by the next day for them to send out."

Their goal for the program is to make sure that every Soldier on Forward Operating Base Warhorse has the opportunity to provide this unique connection.

"We think this is a great thing for people with families, and it can really help build better morale," said Staff Sgt. Miller. 🇺🇸

Arrowhead 6 Commander's Conference

Story and Photos by
Pvt. Zachary Zuber
135th MPAD

DIYALA, Iraq – Company commanders from 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, met with their Brigade Commander, Col. Dave E. Funk, at Forward Operating Base Warhorse, Iraq, to reflect on their current performance, discuss personal experiences and speak of anticipated leadership challenges during the final months of deployment.

The two-day Arrowhead Commanders' Conference hosted several events ranging from philosophical discussions to learning the importance of logistical planning to the commanders playing competitive game of dodge ball.

"Colonel Funk talked about what has happened in the last eight months and what is going to happen in the next four months," said Capt. Richard Bell, a native of Coppell, Texas, and commander of Headquarters and

Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Infantry Regiment, 3 SBCT, 2nd ID. "We went over his commander's intent on how he sees us going over operations on security and economics, and how we're going to transfer over to the next unit."

During previous years, equipment accountability, has not been a strong suit of the U.S. Army. With the Responsible Drawdown of U.S. Forces from Iraq, a large focus of the conference was to communicate to the Company commanders the importance of logistics and maintaining an accurate catalog of all resources. The blue prints describing the plans for their transition to 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division and the schedule for the timeline for Arrowhead Soldier's travel back to Joint Base Lewis-McCord, Wash., were explained to the captains.

"We went over how to hand over equipment, and how we're going to prepare the battlefield for them in terms of prepping the Iraqis for a transition," said Capt.

Bell. "We talked conventionally about how operations will continue into next year and lead to a responsible draw-down in 2011."

Besides operational planning, time was set aside to develop professional skills that will benefit any company leader. This was done primarily through peer-led classes. Captain Dave Birie, 2/3 Inf., instructed a class on Army Command Supply Discipline (ACSD), teaching his peers how they should properly document and record usage of issued supplies to minimize waste.

"I'm probably not the best person to teach this class," said Capt Birie while joking about his role as an instructor for this course as he doesn't see himself as a role model for ACSD.

"The best way to learn is by teaching," said Col. Funk in response to Capt. Birie's remark. "Explaining it to others really reinforces the information for you."

The conference concluded with Col. Funk addressing his unit commanders with a message of gratitude.

"I joined the Army in a time of peace; I graduated West Point in 1986. You all joined a different Army, and knew exactly what you signed up for," said Col. Funk. "I thank you all for putting on that uniform every day and putting up with all the stuff you have to deal with to make this Army work." 🇺🇸

Colonel David E. Funk, commander of 3 SBCT, 2nd ID, poses for a group photo with the brigade's company commanders after a friendly dodgeball game that was part of the Arrowhead Commanders' Conference at FOB Warhorse, Iraq, on March 27.



Chaplain's Corner Point of Grace

By now most of us have seen the blockbuster movie by Mel Gibson "The Passion." If you have not, I highly encourage you to go buy it and view. Gibson's movie follows the traditional passion play format of Holy week. It follows the footsteps of Christ from the time he entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday thru His Crucifixion to the morning of His Resurrection.

Passion plays have a long and distinguished heritage in Christianity, and no discussion of its purposes, and its aftermath can be complete without an understanding of the Theological significance.

As the Lenten Season ends with Christ's Triumphal Entry on Palm Sunday and we move into the Easter Season, which begins with His Resurrection, a time of renewing and rebirth. It becomes apparent that we are provided with the perfect occasion to focus our spiritual walk on the central teachings of our faith; that of justification by grace through faith in Christ Jesus alone.

The Doctrine of Justification by the gift of grace is grounded in the full atonement, which Christ won by spilling His blood and dying on a wooden cross. What do I mean by atonement? Well, in scripture it is referred to in terms of redemp-

tion, expiation, reconciliation and the taking away of the stain of sin. Sin then, is an offense to God, a debt that we owe, a broken relationship between God and us, a stain which we cannot remove or blot out.

"But God desires all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth", (1 Timothy 2:4.) So God has done everything necessary to pay for our debt to reconcile, liberate and forgive us, in order to bring us back into fellowship with Him. It's all God's doing, not ours.

God gives us the gift of Grace, not because we deserve it or because we have earned it by doing good things, it is entirely His free gift to give, and He does so willingly. It is given by His grace alone. **"For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God – not because of works, lest any man should boast"**, (Ephesians 2:8-9.)

The wonderful Gospel (Good News) is that it is God alone, by His grace that gives us the gift of faith and transforms our hearts and lives into something new and beautiful. It is through the heroic endurance of Christ Jesus as he forgave his tormentors for the



CHAPLAIN (MAJ.)
PATRICK BASAL

merciless cruelty of being tortured and crucified, which express how much and by what means our transformation was accomplished.

Let us then respond in kind and forgive others for what they have done to us. For it is through the act of repenting and forgiving that we are brought back into fellowship with God. Forgiveness is pardoning or absolving the offense of others and of oneself and starting anew. What better time is there to allow change and transformation of our lives into something pleasing and acceptable to God, then by our acts of forgiveness this Easter Season.

PAX DOMINE (The Peace of the Lord)

Staff Sgt. Amy C. Tirador
209th Military Intelligence
Company
July 18, 1980 - November 04, 2009

Pfc. Erin McLyman
296th Brigade Support
Battalion
May 10, 1983 - March 13, 2010

Staff Sgt. Todd W. Selge
Company A, 5th Battalion, 20th
Infantry Regiment
June 22, 1984 - September 3, 2009

Sgt. Jordan M. Shay
Company A, 5th Battalion, 20th
Infantry Regiment
April 3, 1987 - September 3, 2009

MAY THOSE FALLEN NEVER BE FORGOTTEN



3RD STRYKER BRIGADE COMBAT TEAM
2ND INFANTRY DIVISION
"AMERICA'S FIRST STRYKER BRIGADE"