



US Soldiers visit Iraqi clinic, provide medical care to locals

Story & photo by Sgt. Phillip Valentine
366th MPAD, USD-C

BAGHDAD – Despite the heat of an Iraqi summer, a medical team made up of Soldiers from United States Division – Center traveled to a small Iraqi town south of Baghdad to help the citizens there June 1.

As Iraqi Security Forces secured the perimeter, members of 2nd Battalion, 14th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Div., and 1st Advise and Assist Bde., 3rd Inf. Div., visited a medical clinic in Qarghuli to conduct a combined medical engagement. The event provided basic medical care and medicines for local residents and displayed American commitment when partnering with Iraqis.

“ [T h e medical engagement] promotes better relationships between the two different cultures,” said Los Angeles native Spc. Tomas Martinez, a medic assigned to HHC, 2nd Bn. “I like helping people. That’s why I chose to be a medic.”

As locals arrived, they were routed to appropriate physicians based on their needs. Fort Benning, Ga. native, Capt. Kathryn Payne, battalion surgeon assigned to 1st Bn., 41st Field Artillery, 1st Advise and Assist Bde., took care of the women and children. As a pediatric physician, Payne said

she enjoyed the opportunity to examine and interact with Iraqi youth.

“I enjoy seeing kids, so any chance I get to see them, I will,” she said; “even if it is just giving them some toothpaste and a toothbrush.”

She said she hopes conducting missions such as this will influence the Iraqi people to think kindly of Americans and continue working toward partnership with the United States.

Staff Sgt. Christopher Whitaker, a native of Rancho Cordova, Calif., and senior treatment noncommissioned officer assigned to HHC, 2nd Bn., said he also enjoyed helping children.

“We are here to do some good and if we help in the long run, that’s great,” said Whitaker. “It is gratifying

when people walk away with a smile.”

West Point, N.Y., native 2nd Lt. Jen Wardynski, assigned to 1st Advise and Assist Bde., helped coordinate the medical side of the event. She believes missions like this help foster stronger ties within the Iraqi communities.

“As we get closer to closing up and leaving, it is important to do all we can to leave on good terms, not just the big guns.”

Wardynski said that USD-C medical personnel are doing the best they can and hopes the Iraqi people, no matter what their politics are, see that these Soldiers are good people and want to help. ▲

“As we get closer to closing up and leaving, it is important to do all we can to leave on good terms. It is good for them to see Americans in the right light, not just the big guns.”

– 2nd Lt. Jen Wardynski



An Iraqi man holds his son while Capt. Joon Choi, a New York native and battalion surgeon assigned to 2nd Bn., 14th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, United States Division – Center, cleans off a ‘boo-boo’ before applying an adhesive bandage June 1 at a clinic in Qarghuli. Choi and fellow U.S. military medical personnel gathered to give the local residents basic care and medications to help provide a little relief.

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Iraqi Police learn 'use of force' from US forces

Story & photo by Pfc. Kimberly Hackbarth
4th SBCT, 2nd Inf. Div., USD-C

TAJI, Iraq – Soldiers with C Troop, 2nd Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment, recently facilitated “use of force” training at a Tarmiyah police station beginning mid-May.

The class was led by a civilian police officer from the United States with the assistance of previously trained Iraqi Policemen. Soldiers with 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division played the roles of local citizens during training scenarios similar to what the IPs encounter out on the streets.

The Soldiers provided the U.S. perspective on law enforcement and how it's supposed to operate, said Staff Sgt. Anthony Lovell, a cavalry scout with C Troop, and the noncommissioned officer in charge of IP advisory training.

“[We're] trying to ... train the Iraqi Police to where they can start establishing their foothold in their own country and [ensure] that they have the knowledge and training that we would give our Soldiers,” said Lovell, a Phoenix native.

During the training, the IPs were taught the difference between deadly force and non-lethal

force and the appropriate uses of each through a series of classes and exercises.

Knowing the difference between when it is appropriate to use a shoulder lock to subdue an uncooperative individual and when to use a bullet to engage the enemy is important knowledge in the day-to-day work of IPs, said Muhanad, a policeman at the Tarmiyah police station.

“Sometimes I have to use deadly force because we have different situations [in the cities],” said Muhanad.

C Troop Soldiers pushed hard to incorporate the train-the-trainer concept, which allows students to take what they've learned and train their fellow Iraqi Security Forces members.

Muhanad had previously attended training with the C Troop Soldiers, returning this time as an instructor to demonstrate the train-the-trainer concept. Lovell said he was encouraged by the police officers' growth.

“[IP training is] important so we can start our successful withdrawal and turn the area of the remaining operational environment over to the Iraqi Police and Iraqi Army,” said Lovell.

The police training is scheduled to continue throughout the summer, moving to other stations across the 2nd Sqdn., 1st Cav. Regt., footprint. ▲



Spc. Tony Hand, a cavalry scout with 2nd Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment, acts as a citizen resisting arrest during “use of force” training at a police station in Tarmiyah May 13.

Vigilance is key

Story by Staff
USF-I PAO

In the past, five suspected kidnapping attempts were reported on Victory Base Complex as members of United States Forces - Iraq remain high-value targets for terrorists and criminals.

To some, kidnapping may seem unlikely on an installation like VBC, but the dangers of working in a war zone remain high and to prevent a kidnapping, everyone needs to stay alert and pay constant attention to their surroundings.

“It's good to feel confident as service members, but there is a time to be vigilant,” Lt. Col. Kevin Dennehy, director of USF-I's Personnel Recovery Division said. “Remember where you are; you're in Iraq.”

Master Sgt. Robert Service, force protection non-commissioned officer in charge with 939th Military Police Company, shares Dennehy's belief that Soldiers need to be aware of the threat and work to avoid complacency.

“We still have an enemy,” he pointed out. “We can't just say everything's 100-percent secure. I think that obviously is not the case.”

When the MPs encounter lone Soldiers or civilians in an unpopulated part of VBC, they provide the person with a list of anti-kidnapping protective measures and talk to them about the risks. The guidance puts the bottom line right upfront – don't be caught off guard.

The information they provide reminds Soldiers that they need to know their surroundings, remain alert and look for anything unusual. In other words, maintain situational awareness.

“I actually live this stuff,” Dennehy said. “I look behind me, I look around, I check under bridges ... It's easy for three guys to grab you and throw you in a car if you don't see it coming.”

Dennehy understands the importance of traveling with a battle buddy or wingman whenever it is possible.

“Anybody can be perceived as low-hanging fruit if they are walking alone,” he said, adding that Soldiers need to know where they are, where they're going, and stick to well-lit areas at night.

Service's force protection measures go even farther, with more guidance on maintaining a low profile and avoiding predictable patterns, such as traveling the same routes consistently.

He advises everyone to make sure their supervisor or co-workers know where they are going and when they expect to return.

According to Service, everyone needs to protect themselves at their living quarters as well, citing a recent incident in which suspicious individuals were knocking on doors to Soldiers' rooms at 3 a.m.

Service said people need to keep their rooms secured at all times and be cautious when answering the door.

When something suspicious does happen, it needs to be reported to the Provost Marshal's office immediately. Service said sometimes people won't talk about an incident for a couple days

Navy Lt. Cmdr. KC Chhipwadia, the senior intelligence officer for the PRD, like Service and Dennehy, said military members, civilians and contractors sometimes need to be reminded where they are, that they understand the threats, and know how to keep themselves and their Soldiers safe.

None of the PRD staff wants another face added to their posters of isolated, missing, detained or captured individuals.

To report suspicious incidents or activities, dial 911 from any DSN phone or call the PMO on Camp Victory at 485-2758. ▲



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Soldiers run half-marathon in Iraq in observance of Memorial Day

Story & photo by Maj. Timothy Hyde
2nd BCT, 10th Mtn. Div. PAO, USD-C

BAGHDAD – With temperatures reaching over 100 degrees before 9 a.m., May 30, Soldiers at Contingency Operating Station Hammer, east of Baghdad, kicked off their Memorial Day observance with a half-marathon shadow-run.

Capt. Scott Bostic, of Atlanta, the medical operations officer for 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, coordinated and planned the event as a “shadow run” with the Great Midwest Marathon and Endurance Festival being held in Elkhart Lake, Wis., Memorial Day weekend.

“[I wanted] to find a meaningful event for us to do during Memorial Day weekend and partner with an organization that was also doing a Memorial Day event back in the States,” explained Bostic.

In deciding on an event to shadow in the U.S., Bostic came across the Elkhart Lake event, in its inaugural year, and discovered the race coordinator, Jeff Grady, was not only an avid runner himself but also has ties to the military. Grady’s nephew, 1st Lt. Sean Grady, just completed a tour in Afghanistan in February.

Bostic sent an e-mail to Grady asking to shadow the midwest endurance festival run.

“I’m a millennium man and I tell you, I teared up when I read that,”

Grady said. “I mean, these men and women are fighting for our country.”

The overall winner of the Iraq event was 1st Lt. Tanya Gaab, of Waretown, N.Y., a military intelligence officer for 2nd BCT.

“It’s nice to always do something to mark a holiday that means a lot to everybody, not just to people in the military, but everybody that has benefited from the great sacrifices that people have made,” Gaab said.

The spirit of the run, like the events happening in Elkhart Lake, was to bring people together for camaraderie and to gain a sense of true accomplishment when crossing the finish line. With the event taking place during Memorial Day weekend, it took on an additional meaning for some.

Capt. Evan Godderz, of Green, Iowa, a transportation officer with 210th Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd BCT, said the Memorial Day event was a perfect tribute to the loss of a friend, Capt. Leif Nott, who was killed during the initial phase of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

“As I was saluting him for the last time at his funeral, I promised to always do something to remember him on Memorial Day and remember him each day of the year,” Godderz said.

The half-marathon was the unit’s first event of many in observance of Memorial Day on COS Hammer. There was also a 5-kilometer morning run on Memorial Day and some sporting events sponsored by various units throughout the day. ▲

“As I was saluting him for the last time at his funeral, I promised to always do something to remember him on Memorial Day and remember him each day of the year.”

– Capt. Evan Godderz



The runners and support staff from the half-marathon run conducted by the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division at Contingency Operating Station Hammer display their medals and camaraderie May 30 following the Memorial Day celebratory event. The run was conducted in conjunction with the Great Midwest Marathon and Endurance Festival being held in Elkhart Lake, Wis., during Memorial Day weekend.

Army team assesses Ramadi schools

Story & photos by Sgt. Michael MacLeod
1st Advise & Assist Bde., 82nd Abn. Div., USD-C

RAMADI, Iraq – U.S. forces evaluated several schools in Ramadi, for potential refurbishment May 27.

A platoon of paratroopers with Company D, 2nd Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 1st Advise and Assist Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division, toured Warrar Elementary and Warrar Middle School in northern Ramadi to assess whether they were good candidates to recommend for capital improvements.

“We will take the information we’ve gathered and funnel it to [Anbar Provincial Reconstruction Team] representatives to see if they can help the people out there,” said 1st Lt. Thomas Dyer, civil affairs officer for the company.

“[Because we are redeploying soon], our funds as a battalion are cut off, and we’re just trying to make a smooth transition from our departure to the PRT taking over these projects and hopefully making a difference,” he said.

While the company has been involved with several school refurbishments, they are scheduled to return to the U.S. with their mother unit, 1st AAB, 82nd Abn. Div., later this summer, he said.

Dyer found the Warrar schools worthy to recommend to the PRT. With 600 students each, the schools were overcrowded, lacked efficient restrooms, running water and reliable power, he said.

Additionally, lack of a secondary school nearby precludes education past primary school.

“If the students and teachers don’t feel comfortable, they won’t succeed,” said Mugbil, headmaster of Warrar Middle School.



Students at the Warrar Middle School in Ramadi, Iraq, take an examination May 27. The school was one of two reviewed by a U.S. Army civil affairs team for potential inclusion in future refurbishment projects.

Mugbil said that in the six years of his tenure, money for improvements to the school has come from his own pockets and those of his teachers.

“The Americans came only once, long ago,” he said. The schools currently receive no aid from the Government of Iraq.

Dawood, school guard for Warrar Elementary said there have been no major improvements in the school’s infrastructure in the five years he has worked there.

While the education facilities in Ramadi may not be ideal, at least they have students, said Col. Ahmed Hamid Sharqi,

the first leader of Iraqi Security Forces resistance to al-Qaeda in Iraq located in Ramadi and the current head of Iraqi Police in the northern City District.

The school assessment team visited Ahmed in his Ramadi office shortly after evaluating the schools.

“Three to four years ago, there were few students in the schools because of the insurgency,” said Ahmed. “Now the situation is much different.”

When the insurgency died down, Ahmed said that students had to be taught to respect teachers again, and he and his fellow officers lent a hand.

“I visited many schools and advised the students why they should start listening to the teachers,” he explained. “You advise the kids to stay in school. You don’t use power.”

According to Ahmed, who is credited with standing up the Iraqi police in Ramadi to fight AQI, coalition forces visited many schools in the beginning and brought clothes, books and other supplies.

However, a big part of filling the schools was making the city safe enough for the students to attend, he said.

“Coalition forces have helped the IP very well since 2006,” he explained. “That’s why we are so strong. Most [IPs] are using techniques they learned from [coalition forces] for foot patrols, convoys and clearing buildings. Now the [police] are really good fighters. They do everything – intelligence, traffic and military-like fighting.”

“These schools were empty before.

Now we visit and they are full of teachers and students. We are moving forward,” he said.

Capt. Bryan Morgan, company commander and partner to Ahmed under the advise and assist role his brigade is playing in Anbar province, said that what Ahmed really gave the people of Ramadi – and by proxy, the education system – is the courage to fight back against terrorism and take control of their city.

“When I came here as a platoon leader in 2005, the people wouldn’t even talk to us,” said Morgan. “[Route] Michigan was a ghost town because it was full of [improvised explosive devices] and a lot of fighting, and now there are people in the streets and kids going to school.”

“Back then, it was bounding from building to building [to move through the streets] because there were snipers everywhere, and a machine-gun ambush was an easy thing to wander into. It’s drastically different now. It’s a functioning city again.”

Morgan’s company will be returning to the U.S. in just a few months. It will be his third time leaving Iraq since the 2003 invasion.

“We are genuinely leaving with a feeling of accomplishment this time,” he said.

“It’s not perfect, but the Iraqis are definitely taking the lead in their own country. They fought for it hard enough to where it is their own achievement as well, where it wasn’t just handed to them by the U.S.

“They have sacrificed a lot as well – the ISF and the Iraqi leaders.”



A school administrator talks with 1st Lt. Thomas Dyer, a civil affairs officer, and Capt. Bryan Morgan, commander of Company D, 2nd Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 1st Advise and Assist Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division, about the state of the Warrar Elementary School in Ramadi. Dyer will pass off his findings to the Anbar Provincial Reconstruction Team.

Mada'in Park opens to bridge communities

Story & photo by Pfc. Emily Knitter
1st Advise & Assist Bde., 3rd Inf. Div., USD-C

BAGHDAD – Built by the Persians on the northeast bank of the Tigris River almost 1,500 years ago, an arch from the ancient city of Ctesiphon still stands today as an impressive monument to the great powers of the past.

Considered the oldest and largest free standing arch in existence today, some see the arch as a symbol for unity in Iraq; a bridge between its violent past and a peaceful future.

In the sixth century, Ctesiphon was the largest city in the world. On the other side of the Tigris River sat its sister city, Seleucia. After the Arab Muslims conquered the area from the Persians in A.D. 637, they combined Ctesiphon and Seleucia, calling the area Mada'in, or "the cities."

Today, the arch is located in the small Iraqi town of Salman Pak. The site of Ctesiphon – and especially its famous arch – used to be one of Iraq's major tourist attractions, but over the last couple of decades the area fell into disrepair.

That has all changed now due to a large clean-up effort and the recent construction of the new Mada'in Park, said Lt. Col. Michael Davey, deputy commanding officer for the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division.

"A lot of the locals came here and this was where they either burned or dumped their trash," Davey said. "You had kids



The Mada'in Park, located in Salman Pak, was recently completed and offers picnic tables, swings and a soccer field for local families and visitors. Iraqi and U.S. authorities hope the new park will help to encourage the regrowth of tourism in the area.

out here trying to play soccer [and] walking through the trash field. [Now there's] a place for families to eat, kids have things to play on, there's a parking lot and [there] is a soccer field where they can have youth tournaments. It's all trying to bridge the gap ... and bring people together for the betterment of Iraq."

The Government of Iraq, together with U.S. authorities, designed the park

and hired local contractors to build it, complete with landscaping, picnic tables and swing sets. The hope, Davey said, is that tourism will be restored to the area and that local families will have a clean, safe place to spend time together.

Local Iraqi residents seem to share that sentiment. Ali Haider has lived in the same house across from the new park for the past 30 years and said he's very hap-

py about the progress being made since the new park officially opened June 1.

"It is gorgeous indeed," he said. "At first, it was not as good as it is now. It used to be a mess. But as you can see, [we] are very happy and proud of the progress that the U.S. forces have made here. Now there's a soccer field, and a park where kids can actually play ball. We're very happy and thankful." ▲



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This is my rifle, there are many like it

1-38 Soldiers train Iraqis in rifle marksmanship

*Photos by Sgt. Phillip Valentine,
366th MPAD, USD-C*



BAGHDAD – Pvt. Kristoffer Plaza, assigned to Company A, 1st Battalion, 38th Infantry Regiment, 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Inf. Division, maintains watch outside of an Iraqi military compound May 27.



Staff Sgt. Eroch Moore, assigned to Company A, 1st Battalion, 38th Infantry Regiment, 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Inf. Division, introduces himself to Iraqi Soldiers gathered at an Iraqi military compound.



Sgt. Christopher Bell, assigned to Company A, 1st Battalion, 38th Infantry Regiment, 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Inf. Division, demonstrates a proper prone unsupported firing position with an M-16 rifle at an Iraqi Army compound occupied by 2nd Platoon, 4th Bn., 24th Bde., 6th IA Div.



Major Gen. Terry Wolff (left), commanding general of 1st Armored Division and United States Division – Center, discusses joint training with Iraqi Army Maj. Jabar May 27 at an Iraqi Army compound occupied by 2nd Platoon, 4th Battalion, 24th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Div. Wolff was joined by Soldiers assigned to Company A, 1st Bn., 38th Infantry Regiment, 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Inf. Div. who are responsible for training IA personnel so they can fully take over protection of the Iraqi population.

Soldiers in Iraq relocate, establish new partnership

Story & photos by
Staff Sgt. Samantha Beuterbaugh
366th MPAD, USD-C

BAGHDAD – After several successful months at Camp Stryker, artillerymen with United States Division – Center have relocated to eastern Baghdad to continue their partnership mission, this time with Iraqi Federal Police.

Previously, the Soldiers of 1st Battalion, 41st Field Artillery, 1st Advise and Assist Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, worked with the Iraqi FA School and Directorate at Contingency Operating Location Constitution.

They wasted no time after moving into their new location at Contingency Operating Station Loyalty. Medics from the unit conducted an advanced medical skills evaluation with their new IP counterparts May 26 to kick off the battalion's latest partnership.

"[This class] is setting a tone to let the rest of the Iraqis know and understand our mission ... to help them be more self-sufficient, [enabling the Iraqis] to move on and have a bright future," said Sgt. 1st Class Landon Chapman, a native of Bristol, Va., and the medical



Saeed Hameed Najji (right), a first sergeant with 1st Federal Police Division, leads his men in a simulated patrol to kick off a final medical training exercise at Joint Security Station Loyalty May 26. The exercise was the first partnership mission for 1st Battalion, 41st Field Artillery, 1st Advise and Assist Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division and their new Federal Police counterparts. The training lasted three days and comprises techniques to control bleeding, prevent shock, obtain and maintain an open airway, treat abdominal injuries, and learn tactical combat casualty care.



A 1st Federal Police Division police officer assumes the position of a simulated casualty in a battlefield-training environment to complete a three-day medical course.

platoon sergeant assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 1st Bn.

The three-day training course focused on basic life-saving techniques, but delved further into techniques used by actual health care providers, said Chapman.

"Our main goal is to focus on them being able to train their own Soldiers; more of a train the trainer atmosphere," said Chapman.

Some of the skills taught in this course included how to control bleeding, prevent shock, obtain and maintain an open airway, treat abdominal injuries, and learn tactical combat casualty care comprising care under fire, tactical field care and casualty evacuation procedures.

"I think [training] is so important [in case] we have a bad situation," said Saeed Hameed Najji, a first sergeant with 1st FP Div. "We need this information, these skills."

Eleven students attended the training; nine of them Iraqi medics. U.S. medics are putting emphasis on working with the Iraqi medics to build on the skills they already have, said Chapman.

"Over the next few months, we're going to continue to build [their skill level up]," Chapman said. "The training will get more and more advanced as we go. I think they're going to do very well simply because of their desire to learn."

Because U.S. troops are drawing down, Chapman said it's important to leave Iraqis with skills that can be continued for generations.

"We want them to be able to have confidence and knowledge so they can train their soldiers [and] medics to the standards they need to be able to save lives," explained Chapman.

"We want them to be able to have confidence and knowledge so they can train their Soldiers [and] medics to the standards they need to be able to save lives."

– Sgt. 1st Class Landon Chapman

Chapman, now serving on his fourth deployment, said this tour is the most important because his mission is focused directly on building a bond between Iraqi and U.S. forces.

Hameed said he is confident he will be able to teach other Iraqis the life-saving techniques he has learned, adding he looks forward to future training and said it feels great to be working with and learning from the Americans.

"We are like a family," said Hameed. "We're partners." ▲

Soldier volunteers to create professional gym

Story & photo by Spc. Daniel Schneider
366th MPAD, USD-C

BAGHDAD – There have been many improvements to the Iron Gym at Camp Liberty, since 1st Armored Division took responsibility of it from 1st Cavalry Div. back in January, but the effort of the guys behind the scenes day-to-day goes unseen.

Being a gym staff member is not a military occupational specialty that Soldiers can train in; instead a gym's staff is made up of Soldiers from many different specialties brought together and meshed into a cohesive team.

One such individual who became a regular part of the Iron Gym's staff is Spc. Keith Moya, a fuel transportation technician assigned to Company B, Division Special Troops Battalion, 1st Armd. Div.

Three months ago, he volunteered to join the gym staff, back when the Iron Gym wasn't at a professional standard. Sgt. 1st Class Gregory Smith, the Iron Gym's noncommissioned officer in charge, and a few volunteers, including Moya, set their minds to creating a place Soldiers could be proud to work out in.

"At first, we worked on cleaning the place up," said Moya. "We got assistance from DSTB with extra personnel to help us clean and mop the place out."

After cleaning, the gym staff situated the exercise equipment to test out new methods to make the gym feel more like a professional gym.

"We tried many different combinations before

we finally got it right," said Moya. "Now the exercise routines flow better for people's work out regimen."

Moya also helps out in some of the programs designed to draw people in and stimulate their competitive edge, namely the monthly endurance challenges.

"With it getting hotter outside, more people are coming in during the morning to compete, which is my shift," Moya said.

Moya also maintains supplies for the gym, working with Co. B, DSTB supply office.

"When we deliver the supplies to the gym, Spc. Moya helps out quickly," said Pfc. Cabel Doyle, a supply clerk assigned to Co. B. "He comes to help without being asked and has a very welcoming attitude."

While Doyle works out at the gym, he's noticed the speed in which Moya and the other gym staff cleaned up the place. "There are some times when a Soldier goes to a different machine, and by the time they come back, the weights are already put back on the rack," said Doyle

"In the gyms back home, you can end up waiting for equipment," said Doyle, "but at the gym here, the staff helps right away."

All the work done by Moya and the rest of the gym's staff has paid off in attendance.

"When we first started, at certain times during the day, the gym would be practically deserted," Moya said. "Now, every month when we go through the sign-in rosters, there are more and more people attending." ▲



One of Camp Liberty's Iron Gym staff, Spc. Keith Moya, a fuel transportation technician assigned to Company B, Division Special Troops Battalion, 1st Armored Division, goes through the newly arrived Iron Gym T-shirts May 19 in the gym's supply trailer. The 500 T-shirts are being handed out to gym members who regularly work out there.

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Feet favor fanatical foot care

Story by Spc. Daniel Schneider
366th MPAD, USD-C

BAGHDAD – Feet are one of the hardest working parts of the body. According to Dr. Catrine Tudor-Locke's publication, "Medicine and Science in Sports and Exercise," following a study done with 200 men and women; men walked 7,192 steps per day, and women walked 5,210 steps on average.

That means your feet hit the ground an average of about 3,000 times per foot, and when feet get taken out of commission, it quickly becomes apparent how important it is to take care of them.

The Division Special Troops Battalion aid station says an average of one in every 30 cases they see involve the feet in one fashion or another, and most of the extreme cases could have been prevented by simple measures or seeking help before they got out of hand.

Sgt. Eric Johnson, treatment noncommissioned officer in charge assigned to Company B, DSTB, 1st Armored Division, has witnessed many of these foot ailments during his time working in the battalion aid station. He passes his knowledge on to Soldiers about ways to prevent Soldiers from going to sick call and more measures to correct foot problems.

Recurring issues include blisters, foot fungus, warts and ingrown toenails.

Blisters are caused by repetitive friction on certain hot spots of the feet, and are common when breaking in new boots or running shoes.

One of the main preventions Johnson suggests is just pay attention to how your feet are feeling. "If you notice certain areas of your feet are feeling hot, sore or raw from being rubbed, don't just pass it off," he pointed out. "When you notice these spots of discomfort, take action. You can use moleskin directly on the skin, or placing tape on the sock over the affected region. The trick is to displace the friction off of the skin directly."

Once a blister forms, the best thing to do is limit the irritation to the affected area. The aid station has moleskin, and will be happy to provide training on



Photo by Spc. Kim Wilkins, 1st Armored Div. PAO, USD-C

Sgt. Eric Johnson, a Dallas native and treatment noncommissioned officer in charge assigned to Company B, Division Special Troops Battalion, 1st Armored Division, cuts an infected ingrown toenail down the center prior to removing it. Ingrown toenails are one of many foot ailments Soldiers can experience during their deployment.

how to properly use it on a blister to relieve pain.

Foot fungus, including athlete's foot, and blisters can be caused by prolonged dampness.

"The skin of the feet is different than most of the rest of your skin. It's not as porous as the rest, so moisture tends to get trapped under the top layer of skin and sits there," the Dallas native explained. "Keeping your feet dry and airing them out when you can will help alleviate both foot fungus and blisters. Also, a light coating of Gold Bond foot powder between the webbing of the toes and any other hot spots unique to your feet can help."

Warts are a problem that can require long-term treatment and can cause potential misery for the recipient. They are caused by a virus that gets into the cracks of the feet, and can take anywhere from one to three months to appear. The treatment for this ail-

ment can easily take six months to properly remedy.

"One of my patients has been coming back every week for the last three months to get treatment for a wart on the bottom of the feet," said Johnson. This particular ailment is very persistent, and can recur over and over again.

Wearing shower shoes to the shower can prevent this ailment, as it doesn't allow the skin of the foot to touch the floor of the public showers, which could have been infected by another Soldier.

The last foot ailment troubling some Soldiers in Iraq is ingrown toenails. Ingrown toenails can be excruciatingly painful, and can lead to further problems if not treated.

They can be caused by a genetic disposition to the nail's growth pattern, by stubbing your toe so badly that the nail changes shape and grows into the skin or by boots being too tight around the toes and shoving toenails into the skin.

The treatment of ingrown toenails usually involves removing the toenail. Infection is a serious concern of such an ailment.

Some problems can be solved by simple measures if caught in time.

"Most of the Soldiers I've seen with foot problems buy new, more comfortable boots at the [Post Exchange], and it seems to solve the problems before they get out of hand," said Sgt. 1st Class Jose Maldonado, operations sergeant assigned to 501st Military Police Co., DSTB, 1st Armored Div. "We don't do as many foot patrols as previous deployments, but we're still outside sweating a lot. Foot injuries can prevent a team member from being able to perform their role, hurting the team's mission readiness."

Most foot ailments can be prevented by proper hygiene and equipment, said Johnson. Pay attention to your feet—if they hurt, don't ignore them. If you have a foot problem starting, take action quickly to avoid further issues. 🚩



Photo by Spc. Kim Wilkins, 1st Armored Div. PAO, USD-C

This is the aftermath of an ingrown toenail removal at the Division Special Troops Battalion aid station. Ingrown toenails can be caused by a genetic disposition or boots being too tight, and can become infected by poor hygiene.

New military police platoon stands up, tackles security missions

Story & photos by Staff Sgt. Samantha Beuterbaugh
366th MPAD, USD-C

BAGHDAD – “I just couldn’t wait to start doing what the recruiters showed me in videos,” said Pfc. Gabriel Fain.

The Hartford, Mich., native and military policeman assigned to 501st Military Police Company, Division Special Troops Battalion, 1st Armored Div., has realized it doesn’t take long for a Soldier’s hopes to become reality.

Fain is one of the newest 501st MP Co. recruits who have shifted out of a training role and settled into a routine at Camp Liberty.

While several new Soldiers washed the windows and mirrors of their Mine-Resistant Ambush-Protected vehicles, others checked radios and prepared weapons, mounting M240B machine guns in their gunner hatches and ensuring their weapons had the full combat load of ammunition. Once the privates lined up their vehicles, a lieutenant talked to them about the mission.

The Soldiers then climbed into their vehicles, performed final checks, and the convoy commander chanted over the radio, “Three-two-one...run!” This is a daily scenario for the 7th Platoon squad-sized element comprising 12 Soldiers, four who are new privates, and a new lieutenant; 2nd Lt. Tricia Thibodeau.

A Gainesville, Ga., native and 7th Plt.’s officer in charge, Thibodeau came into the company as a platoon leader, fresh out of officer training.

“My squad leader, Sgt. [Trip] Linton, took us all under his wing and brought us up to speed quickly,” said Thibodeau. “We started doing missions about four weeks after they stood us up as a squad.”

During the four weeks leading up to missions,

Thibodeau’s team conducted a lot of training, including developing standing operating procedures, or SOPs, which provide the unit with a “playbook” on how to react during different scenarios they encounter.

“We had to create our own squad-specific SOPs for any events that could occur in sector ... and then make sure that everyone in the squad was comfortable with those SOPs,” Thibodeau said. “There was never really a rough stage, we just started going.”

Linton, a Savannah, Ga., native and the senior non-commissioned officer in the platoon, completely concurred with Thibodeau’s assessment of the platoon.

“All of my Soldiers have impressed me,” Linton said.

They traveled to the International Zone in downtown Baghdad for their first few missions to familiarize the squad with travelling in a convoy, but they soon came to know the roads beyond.

The first time Thibodeau felt challenged was on the long road to Contingency Operating Location Ur shortly after starting missions.

During the trip, the squad was faced with several challenges. One of the vehicles in their convoy broke down right outside Victory Base Complex, followed by the breakdown of the vehicle used in recovering the disabled vehicle. Thibodeau faced several challenging decisions, such as finding a new route at the last minute.

“Despite the frustrations of having our trucks break down on us and then having to find [COL] Ur, which none of us had been to, I was extremely proud of the squad that day,” said Thibodeau. “[The Soldiers] showed that even when a mission doesn’t go as smoothly as hoped for, [they] could still pull their weight.”

Fain said the missions got his blood pumping.

“I’ve been waiting since I signed up for the Army to do what I’m doing now,” said Fain.



Pfc. Gabriel Fain, a Hartford, Mich., native and military policeman assigned to 501st Military Police Company, Division Special Troops Battalion, 1st Armored Division, prepares for a convoy May 17 before heading back to Camp Liberty. Fain is a new MP and has finally settled into a routine. He escorts personnel to where they need to go.

Along with the countless videos a recruiter showed Fain, the recruiter also told him there’s no limit to what he could do as a young private because of his eagerness to learn, said Fain.

“I’m out there driving Humvees, MRAPs and big old trucks that I never thought I’d be able to drive. ... I guess I’m doing pretty good at it,” said Fain as he smiled and pointed to his chest, where a new private-first-class rank hung. He earned his promotion May 1.

The squad members have been pushing each other, not just as individuals, but as a team. According to Linton, the privates are always willing to jump in and help each other out, and they have bonded well with the rest of the squad.

Their primary mission is to act as a general support squad, which calls for them to travel all over the Baghdad area, transporting passengers where they need to go.

“It’s my job as a private to drive them as safe as I can,” said Fain. “It’s all about their security; it’s up to us to keep our [passengers] safe.”

Fain feels a great sense of pride knowing he’s responsible for Soldiers that outrank him.

“I’m only 19 years old and [some passengers] may be more experienced than me,” admitted Fain. “We’re really in command of the people we escort.”

Fain said he realizes and appreciates the accomplishments he’s made already as a private: “I get to be those guys in the videos I watched.”

Editor’s Note: This is the second in an ongoing series about the lives and experiences of new Soldiers serving with 501st Military Police Company in Iraq. ▲



Pvt. Andrew Bowles, a Ferdinand Beach, Fla., native and military policeman assigned to 501st Military Police Company, Division Special Troops Battalion, 1st Armored Division, situates gear and weapons in his gunner’s hatch at Camp Liberty before a May 19 mission.

501st Military Police takes charge of Iraqi Police school from 217th MPs

Story & photo by Spc. Kim Wilkins
1st Armd. Div. PAO, USD-C

BAGHDAD – The Soldiers of 217th and 501st Military Police Companies participated in a transfer of authority ceremony at the Criminal Justice Center on Camp Liberty May 27 to pass responsibility of the center from the 217th, a Reserve unit from Prattville, Ala., to the 1st Armored Division MPs from the 501st.

During the ceremony, Maj. David Worthy, commander of the 217th, said the day marked a proud moment for him and his Soldiers because of all the work they did to help transform the once struggling school into a top-notch academy.

The Criminal Justice Center was established in August 2009 with only one classroom housing approximately eight to 12 students per class.

When the 217th took over the school, the commander of 336th MP Battalion, Lt. Col. Marc Garcia, had a vision of expanding it into a combined multi-agency advanced police academy. The 217th, which falls under the 336th, inherited the task in October 2009 and provided



Students of the Criminal Justice Center, Iraqi instructors and 217th Military Police Company stand at parade rest as Maj. David Worthy, commander of 217th MP Co. speaks during a transfer of authority ceremony held on Camp Liberty May 27. The 217th, out of Prattville, Ala., transferred authority of the center to 501st MP Co., United States Division – Center.

all the manual labor to get the center up-and-running as well as expanding its reach.

The school now offers four different courses: a human rights course, an officer development course, a counter insurgency course, and a train-the-

trainer course.

“At first, we taught the classes through interpreters along with the International Police advisors,” said Staff Sgt. Christopher Mello, a military policeman with the 217th and former deputy non-commissioned officer in charge at the

center. “But in the middle of May 2010, we stepped back into the advisory role as the Iraqi instructors took the lead in teaching the classes.”

All classes are two weeks in length and the Ministry of Interior regulates the courses. The ministry is the branch of government that controls the police force in Iraq.

These days, the schoolhouse can graduate a maximum of 102 students per class, but the 501st has plans to capitalize on all the 217th successes and build from them.

“We are going to sustain the training and improve upon the number of Iraqi Police that attend the class by having 150 students graduate every two weeks,” said Staff Sgt. Cetric Coulter, the new deputy NCOIC for the Criminal Justice Center.

With the 501st vision set and the 217th preparing to return home, Mello admitted having mixed feelings about the ceremony.

“It is bittersweet to leave because we have a relationship with our Iraqi partners,” said Mello, “but we are confident that the 501st will continue to do great things with them.” 🚩

More than just providing food 1AD Soldiers provide oasis from work

Story by Sgt. Phillip Valentine
366th MPAD, USD-C

BAGHDAD – An oasis is defined as a pleasant or peaceful area or period in the midst of a difficult, troubled, or hectic place or situation.

Soldiers from Company B, Division Special Troops Battalion, 1st Armored Division, who are assigned to the Iron Oasis Dining Facility at Camp Liberty work tirelessly every day to provide a place for Soldiers and civilians to sit, relax and enjoy a meal.

“We try to make it a complete experience,” said Sgt. 1st Class Kevin Gibson, an Ocala, Fla., native, and the food preparation management noncommissioned officer in charge at the facility. “A good meal, good music and a good environment.”

There have been several new ideas implemented at the Iron Oasis, including smooth jazz and salsa music played in the seating area and movies shown in the theater room and outside under a covered picnic area. The also provide council meetings where Soldiers can ask questions and make suggestions to improve all aspects of the facility.

The Iron Oasis Soldiers also try to bring visiting acts and performers to entertain their customers on the outside stage. Karaoke is also a new program in which

customers can try their hand at singing for those walking by.

Spc. Jeffrey Wu, a food service specialist, is on his second deployment to Iraq and said seeing the familiar faces that come into the dining facility is his favorite part of coming into work every day.

“It makes me feel good to know that we make a place where people can relax and have a good meal,” he said.

Even though he enjoys greeting people and talking to them on a daily basis, he said he wonders what some customers may think when they enter the facility.

“We do so much more than what our customers see us doing during chow hours,” said Wu, who is okay with whatever is thrown his way. “My policy is to go with the flow, do my job and adapt.”

Sgt. George Wright, a shift leader, also enjoys the social aspect of working at the Iron Oasis.

“It’s always something new,” he said. “It is like an old neighborhood park where people gather and exchange ideas and stories.”

It is not all fun and socializing for those who work at the Iron Oasis, though. Proper food preparation and handling is important business, stated Pfc. Alex Howley, a Manahawkin, N.J., native who works at the dining facility.

“I take my job very seriously. Any food that I see

that can cause problems, or anything brought inside that could cause harm to our customers, I deal with immediately,” said Howley. “Our standards are very high.”

In addition to making sure customers are safe from harm, he said another priority for him is to make sure everyone has the opportunity to get an equal amount of food.

The Soldiers working in the dining facility are required to enforce standards. They keep an eye out for people removing too much food from the building, point out improper uniform wear, and call the appropriate commands when high-ranking leaders enter. This requires them to keep their eyes open and maintain a high level of tact at all times.

Other ways the Iron Oasis crew helps create a pleasant atmosphere: decorating for major holidays; reserving rooms for special events; collecting and distributing snacks and drinks for units conducting 24-hour operations. They also coordinate and supervise the delivery of water to the area covered by the 1st Armored Division, like the Iron Gym, living areas and division headquarters.

Gibson said it is a team effort that gets the job done. He credits his Soldiers for the success.

“They are helpful, especially with all the changes that occur on a daily basis,” he said. “I listen to their ideas and try to implement them. We get together and come up with a plan to make sure there is quality food for our customers.”

“It makes me feel good doing my job, I take pride in it,” said Gibson. “I can see it in our customers’ faces that we are making their day better.” 🚩

Baghdad University gets beefed up by Raiders

Story & photo by Spc. Luisito Brooks
4th SBCT, 2nd Inf. Div., USD-C

BAGHDAD – While searching for shade, nearly a dozen cows, long tails swatting at flies, wandered to the edge of a fenced paddock where Soldiers from 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, stopped to pet and feed them hay through the bars.

Iraqi students from the College of Agriculture at the University of Baghdad in Abu Ghraib displayed 11 new dairy cows given to them by the Raider Brigade, May 26. The university also received state-of-the-art equipment to conduct artificial insemination to increase the size of their herd and train others to do the same.

“This project has been our priority,” said Hamza, dean of the college. “We have the cows to teach our students at our school ... the proper procedure of artificial insemination.”

The \$83,000 project included 22 dairy cows – divided equally between the university’s veterinary and agriculture Colleges – food, and equipment.

“The students will learn how to clean, feed and maintain these animals,” said Hamza. “The students will use the same equipment that students at American universities are using.”

Hamza said he feels the best way to improve the economy and standard of life for the people of Iraq is through good education. Upon completion of the training, each student will have a valuable skill set they will be able to bring to the job market.

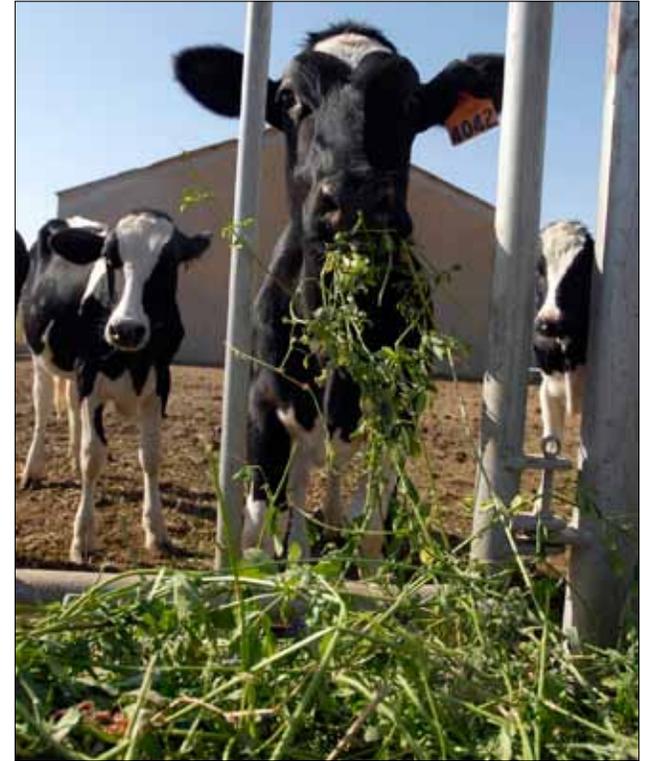
“Projects like these have endless possibilities,” said Capt. Talgin Cannon, the project manager from 4th SBCT, 2nd Inf. Div. “The knowledge gained from this will give these students a place in this society to make improvements.”

With each cow able to produce an average of six gallons of milk a day, the school will also capitalize from the project by selling the milk collected from the cows by students.

“We can sell the dairy cows or its milk to raise money for the school,” said Hamza. “Getting the books and lab equipment that we need will be easier now.”

As the Raiders prepares to depart Iraq later this year, leaders say they will leave with the knowledge that they have helped ensure that institutions like the university and its Agriculture and Veterinary Colleges will remain successful.

“We want to leave the university with more than just dairy cows,” said 1st Lt. Darron Wright, the 4th SBCT, 2nd Inf. Div. deputy commanding officer. “It is the partnership of the two [colleges] that will remain.”



One of the 11 dairy cows purchased by 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, stares at passersby while it munches on locally grown alfalfa hay in a paddock at the University of Baghdad College of Veterinary Medicine May 26.

MPs escort aid workers to Iraqi agricultural college

Story & photo by Staff Sgt. Samantha Beuterbaugh
366th MPAD, USD-C

BAGHDAD – United States Division – Center Soldiers continued their support of a partnership between Iraqi educators and a provincial reconstruction team during an escort mission to Abu Ghraib May 20.

Military policemen with the military police platoon assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company,

4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, escorted Chris Crowley, Iraq mission director, and Anne Aarnes, the senior deputy assistant administrator, both members of U.S. Agency of International Development, to the Abu Ghraib College of Agriculture. The meeting, coordinated by the PRT attached to 4th SBCT, 2nd Inf. Div., allowed the USAID representatives to meet the school dean and discuss projects to promote Iraq’s development.

“We provide security for the PRT while they conduct

humanitarian aid and projects [to include classes] for the Abu Ghraib area,” said Staff Sgt. Sandy Hosch, a native of Hesperia, Calif., and squad leader assigned to the MP platoon.

The MPs also escorted the representatives to a dairy food-processing plant at the college, where they manufacture and sell products with the help of not only their employees, but students as well, said Christine Sheckler, a USAID member assigned to the PRT.

“There is some interest in improving [the dairy plant’s] setup, and we do want to look into the dairy sector,” said Sheckler.

Sgt. Reginald Chretien, a native of Beaumont, Texas, and a team leader with the platoon, said he has been to several classes and demonstrations at the college as a security asset.

“There was irrigation training that was two weeks long and we had to sit through a lot of those classes,” Chretien said. “I felt like I was going to school, like we should be getting a degree.”

Despite his light-hearted attitude, military police work is serious business. The security they have provided has helped ensure Iraqis receive training in new skills that can generate income and improve the civil capacity of Iraq.

“It’s nice to see that we’re bringing these farmers into the 21st century so they can maximize their resources,” said Hosch.

Since Hosch first arrived in Iraq, he said the bonds established between Iraqi communities and U.S. forces have continued to grow.

The U.S. forces have been working closely with USAID aid workers to bring hope for a safe and secure Iraq, a relationship Sheckler deems a success. She admits her work wouldn’t be possible without them.

“The Soldiers take me out every day,” Sheckler said. “Without the Soldiers, I don’t go anywhere. If I don’t have good Soldiers to take me out, that protect all of us, then none of us are around to see any success.”



Chris Crowley (middle), the Iraq mission director with U.S. Agency of International Development, is escorted by Spc. Vincent Minniti (right), a military policeman with the military police platoon assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division back to his vehicle while on the Abu Ghraib College of Agriculture grounds. Crowley and Anne Aarnes, the senior deputy assistant administrator for the Middle East Bureau, met with the dean of the college to discuss upcoming projects.

CRT mechanics, Stryker operators work together to keep vehicles rolling

Story & photos by Pfc. Kimberly Hackbarth
4th SBCT, 2nd Inf. Div., USD-C

BAGHDAD – With grease on their coveralls, wrenches at their sides and a row of Strykers lined up in front of them, the mechanics of 1st Combat Repair Team are ready to get down and dirty.

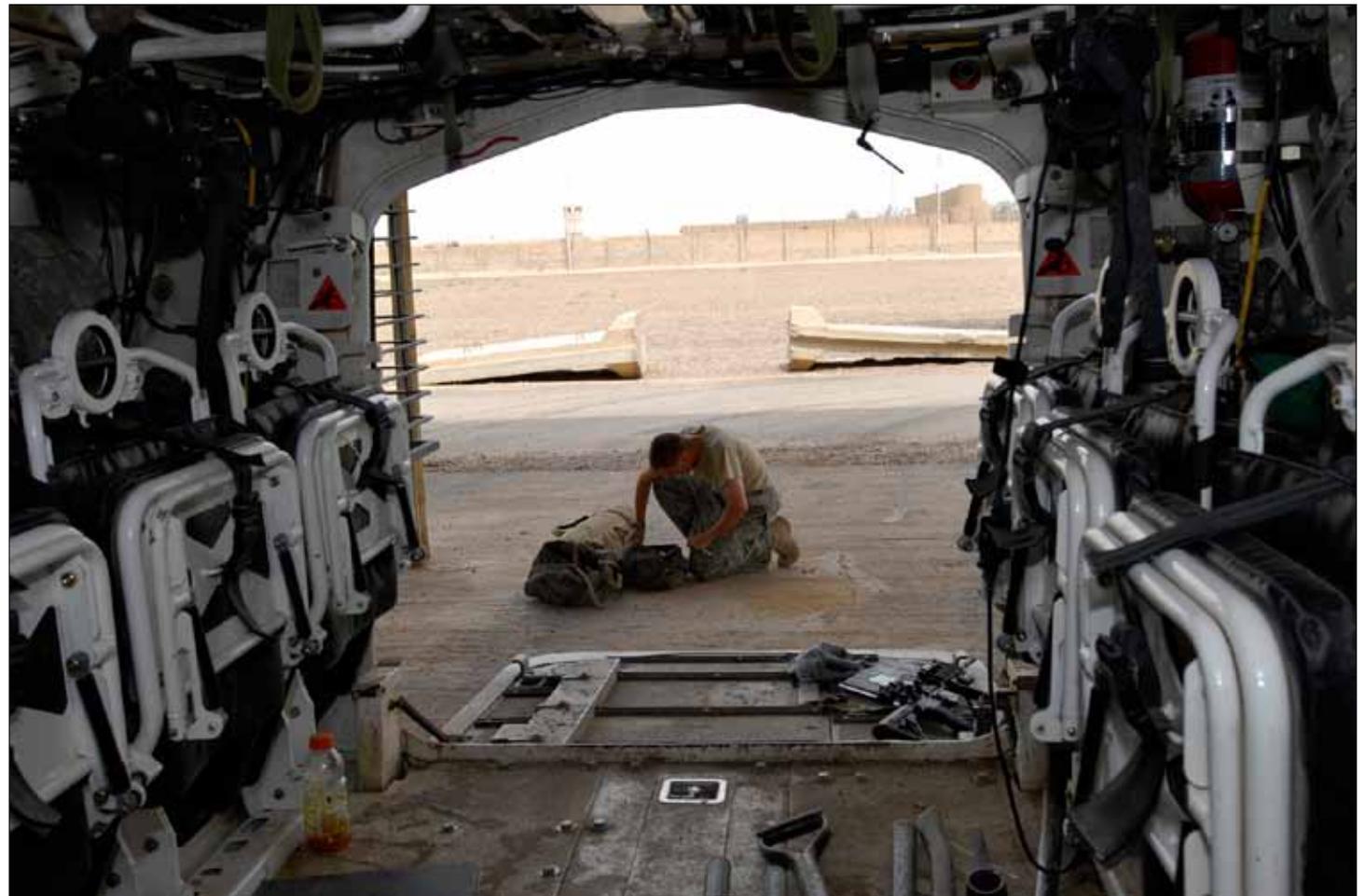
From the moment Stryker operators drive vehicles into the motor pool, CRT mechanics, part of Company B, 702nd Brigade Support Battalion, work alongside the Soldiers of 4th Bn., 9th Infantry Regiment “Manchus” to fix the damaged vehicles as quickly as possible so the infantrymen can get back to their missions.

Specialist Nathaniel Smith, a native of Coffman Cove, Alaska, who has worked as a mechanic with 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, since he joined the military almost five years ago, said it’s easy for CRT Soldiers to work with the Manchus because the CRT has supported the battalion with vehicle maintenance since the brigade rotation at the Joint Readiness Training Center on Fort Polk, La. last June.

“In order to support an actual line unit, you’ve got to know your guys and know how they take care of their stuff,” said Smith.

He added that the 4th Bn., 9th Inf. Regt., Soldiers are constantly out on missions and once they return to the JSS, they come straight to the motor pool to have their vehicles fixed.

The mechanics, like Sgt. Larry Bruce,



Pfc. John Buchanan, a mechanic with 1st Combat Repair Team, Company B, 702nd Brigade Support Battalion, 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, searches through his tool bag for the right wrench to use on a bolt inside a Stryker May 20.

from Benton, Ill., said they’re appreciative of the opportunity to do their jobs, even though it means something comes into their shop broken.

“They’re letting us do our job because we’re not going to be proficient unless something breaks, or they tell us something breaks,” said Bruce.

As a way to assist the Manchus in better maintenance of their Strykers, Bruce and his Soldiers also teach classes on common issues with vehicles and how to resolve them. The infantrymen respond well, said Bruce.

“They ask questions because they want to know more about their vehicles,”

he said. “It helps out a lot of those guys and it teaches them to be better operators and how to take care of their equipment.”

Of course, no one can do the job quite like an actual trained mechanic, a fact Pfc. Jeff Basile, from Kings Mountain, N.C., takes pride in.

“I love turning wrenches!” exclaimed Basile. “It’s very satisfying knowing the battalion would not run if wasn’t for the mechanics.”

In his nine years as a mechanic in the Army, he said 4th Bn., 9th Inf. Regt., is one of the best battalions he has ever worked for.

“[The battalion commander and command sergeant major] do everything they can for us to help us out and accept us as family... like we are Manchu warriors,” he said.

Bruce said he has grown accustomed to the “small-town” life at Nasir Wa Salam and tends to prefer it over “big city living” on places like Victory Base Complex, which houses the rest of his battalion.

“Here, we’re a really close-bonded family because all [we’ve] got each other,” said Bruce.

Once the wrenches are stored and the pumice soap washes away the grease of another long day, the Manchu mechanics of 1st CRT rest easy knowing that tomorrow they’ll be needed again to get down and dirty. ▲



Spc. Nathaniel Smith, a native of Coffman Cove, Alaska, and mechanic with 1st Combat Repair Team, guides the engine of a Stryker into the engine compartment of a vehicle being serviced.

Car bomb exercise complete

Story & photos by Sgt. Michael MacLeod

1st Advise & Assist Bde., 82nd Abn. Div., USD-C

AL ASAD AIR BASE, Iraq – Iraqi army medics participated in a mass-casualty training exercise near here June 3 as a final test following months of training by U.S. Army medics.

Medics from three clinics – 7th Iraqi Army Division, Field Engineer Regiment and Motor Transportation Regiment – triaged and evacuated 25 casualties of a simulated vehicle-borne improvised explosive device at the 7th IA Division headquarters dining facility at Camp Mejid, an IA base adjacent to Al Asad Air Base.

The exercise was planned, organized and directed by medics of 1st Advise and Assist Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division, who have been mentoring the Iraqi medics since August 2009.

“As in our Army, their medics will disseminate to the different brigades and divisions, and that training knowledge will go with them and spread throughout the entire Iraqi army,” said Capt. Kyle Brown, assistant operations officer and Iraqi Security Forces coordinator for 307th Brigade Support Battalion, 1/82 AAB.

“Having the 307th BSB here is critical for the IA. These ‘soft’ skills the Iraqi Army needs to sustain themselves are absolutely critical. They lack that expertise in the army, and we’re here to show them how to do it for themselves,” said Brown.

The training was designed to mimic an actual bombing that occurred on an Iraqi base in 2005 that killed 65 soldiers and wounded more than 250, staff Brig. Gen. Ismaeel Khalif al-Khalifawi, commander of 7th IA Division, told American and Iraqi troops following the event.

Al-Qaeda in Iraq had recruited a worker at the base, and following several months of befriending the guards, the worker was able to smuggle in enough TNT to turn a tanker into a bomb and detonate it at the base dining facility, said the general.

“As an army, we should have every means to prevent such an incident from happening on our bases,” said Ismaeel.

Following the blast of several harmless “flash-bang” grenades, a bus load of Iraqi soldiers made up with moulage, or mock injury kits and fake blood, moved to the foot of the dining facility and pretended to be injured. Simulated amputees were fitted with devices that appeared to be bleeding stumps that squirted fake blood. One soldier held a stick to his head as if it had penetrated through his eye. Many soldiers yelled in mock pain. It was all designed to stress the medics, said Staff Sgt. Tiari Ventura, senior medical adviser for the 7th IA Division medics and organizer of the event.

The Iraqi medics’ response to the blast was entirely professional, she said.

“They went to the people who had massive bleeding first so they wouldn’t bleed out,” said Ventura. “Then they moved their patients to separate the ones that were more serious. They loaded their most serious patients last so they’d come off the vehicle first when they got to the hospital.”

Ventura said the IA medics have made great strides during her unit’s time with them. Iraqi medics typically receive about 25 days of training, as compared to a U.S. Army medic’s 16 weeks.

While the Iraqis were very good at treating individual trauma cases, they struggled with the concept of triage, or separating and prioritizing casualties based upon severity of injury.

“We go with the DIME concept,” said Sgt. Michael Stewart, whose job was to shadow Cpl. Hassan, the Iraqi triage noncommissioned officer in charge.

DIME stands for delayed, immediate, minimal and expectant, and is used to direct traffic and ensure that the patients are getting the proper treatment, he said.

Fellow medic, Spc. Aubrey Stoda, said the American medics started training the Iraqis for the mass-casualty exercise, or MASCAL, by going through the steps of MARCH – massive bleeding, airway, respiration, circulation and hypothermia and head wounds.

“They were pretty good on it, just as we thought they would be,” said Stoda. “Then we started adding in the triage and evacuation.”

Eventually, American medics brought together all three Iraqi clinics on Camp Mejid for five-patient, 10-patient and 15-patient exercises. The cul-



Iraqi medics with 7th Iraqi Army Division race to bring simulated car-bomb casualties played by other IA soldiers and U.S. Soldiers with 307th Brigade Support Battalion Advise and Assist Bde., 82nd Airborne Div., to a casualty collection point during a mass-casualty training exercise at Camp Mejid, June 3. Gathering the wounded allows a single medic to care for many casualties to conserve manpower.



Iraqi medics evacuate an amputee role-played by a U.S. Soldier. American medics have been training the Iraqis since August 2009.

minating event was the 25-patient MASCAL.

“They just had a threat of someone trying to wear one of their uniforms and coming on this base, so we thought that if something actually happened, we should probably get them ready for handling a MASCAL situation,” said Stoda.

Army medics should hold MASCAL exercises quarterly, according to 1st Lt. Jessica Larson, a physician assistant who joined the Army after working with amputees from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan at the Brook Army Medical Center.

“It’s a skill. You use it or you lose it,” said Larson.

The IA have a large turnover with their medics, so quarterly training would give new medics the opportunity to be trained by old medics, she said.

“This is really a train-the-trainer scenario for us so that when we leave, they’re in a more comfortable position to train their new people.”

Larson’s role during the June 4 MASCAL was to assist the Iraqi officer in charge as he controlled the many moving parts.

“His role was to coordinate between the 7th IA Division and the military police that are outside, in terms of coordinating ground evacuation, or air evacuation if they have that capability, understanding what their casualty rate was, where they needed to go, and being able to relay that information

s Iraqi medic trauma training



Cpl. Hassan, a medic with 7th Iraqi Army Division, applies a tourniquet to a patient with a simulated amputation during a mass-casualty training exercise orchestrated by medics of 307th Brigade Support Battalion. As the triage noncommissioned officer in charge, Hassan must evaluate which of the 25 simulated injuries get treated and evacuated first.

upwards as well as mobilize the military police,” said Larson.

Unlike in the U.S. Army, communication in the Iraq army has to be from officer to officer to get anything done, she said.

The American advisors were very pleased with the results.

“It went really well,” said Stoda. “The first MASCAL with just five patients, even with all three clinics there ... was just chaos. They left really injured casualties alone, while they were trying to help someone with a little scratch and boo-boo. This time, they did massive bleeding first, they were organized like they were supposed to be, and they got everyone out in 25 minutes. That’s a pretty good time.”

American advisors will continue advising and assisting Iraqi medics at Camp Mejid, but they will move into teaching preventive medicine, said Brown, whose unit is expected to return to the United States by the end of summer.

“When our replacement unit gets here, we will introduce them to all of our Iraqi counterparts, show them everything we’ve done for the past year, and make sure they don’t repeat any of the things we’ve already trained them on,” he said.

“Our goal is to set them up on a training plan [for the Iraqis] for the first couple months that they’re here so they can carry forward and continue on down the road of Iraqi self-sustainability.” ▲



Medics with 307th Brigade Support Battalion, prepare simulated wounds on a Soldier for a mass-casualty exercise, to be treated by Iraqi Army medics.



Medics with 307th Brigade Support Battalion, paint the face of a simulated casualty with fake blood for a mass-casualty training exercise, he will be treated by Iraqi Army medics with 7th IA Division. Twenty-five American and Iraqi Soldiers were prepared with varying injuries.



U.S. Army medics Spc. Aubrey Stoda and Sgt. Michael Stewart, with 307th Brigade Support Battalion, congratulate Cpl. Hassan, an Iraqi medic with 7th Iraqi Army Division, following a successful mass-casualty training exercise executed by Hassan and fellow Iraqi army medics. The exercise was a culminating event marking the end of months of triage and trauma training by the Americans.

Paratroopers learn as much as Iraqis during air assault training

Story & photos by Sgt. Michael MacLeod
1st Advise & Assist Bde., 82nd Abn. Div., USD-C

ALASAD AIR BASE, Iraq – Sometimes the advise-and-assist mission can be less than glamorous.

A platoon of 82nd Airborne Division paratroopers finds itself building a Russian helicopter from pieces of dilapidated wooden walls using a ball-peen hammer, two carpenter's hammers and a fire ax to help out an Iraqi helicopter quick reaction force that has no helicopters.

It is June. The temperature is nearly 120 degrees. Fine desert dust powders their sweaty hands and faces in a gritty talcum that smears like wet paint when wiped.

A Soldier scavenges bent, rusty nails from a rubble pile. Others fill sandbags, and with parachute cord as wheel struts, the bags become landing gear.

The question is, will it fly?

"Iraq is, for the most part, a modern and developed country, even though in many parts of the countryside, it can seem very backwards to American Soldiers," says 1st Lt. Theron Tingstad, underscoring his platoon's efforts as they prepare to teach air assault tactics to the Commando Battalion of 7th Iraqi Army Division, which now had their first MI-17 twin-turbine, medium transport helicopter made of two-by-fours and plywood.

In its second week of a month-long partnership with the Iraqi commandos of Camp Kassam just north of Rawah, Iraq, 2nd Platoon of Company B, 1st Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment, will spend three days training their partners how to safely and efficiently load and unload from helicopters.

Before training the jundi, or Iraqi soldiers, Tingstad must meet with the Iraqi leader with whom he's been working, a paratrooper himself with more than



U.S. Army advisors with Company B, 1st Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 1st Advise and Assist Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division, observe Iraqi Army commandos with 7th IA Div. demonstrate room-clearing techniques June 8 at Camp Kassum. The exercise is part of a month-long air assault training course being taught by the U.S. paratroopers.

200 jumps, Lt. Col. Hamed. Another officer informs him that Hamed has been transferred, and the Soldiers just returned from a night long mission and will not be available until the following day.

No leader, no jundi.

"There are some challenges with the Iraqis learning the way we work, but also us learning the way they work," says Tingstad.

The following morning, the 30-year-old Ranger-

tabbed lieutenant from Detroit is in a classroom with his interpreter, Joe, teaching several Iraqi officers – all platoon leaders – the basics of air assault operations, and his noncommissioned officers are outside with two-dozen jundi clearing a "glass house" – boards placed on the ground to simulate the walls of a building – of insurgents.

"It's really important to have a good relationship with your interpreter," says Tingstad. "What takes you four minutes to say may take him 10 due to words and concepts that he needs to explain, and you have to be able to trust him to do that."

For example, "chalk" is a common term for a group of Soldiers preparing to load an aircraft, but the word makes no sense in Arabic, he says. Tingstad spent four months at a university in Egypt prior to joining the Army, and his knowledge of the Arabic language and customs builds immediate rapport with the Iraqi officers.

Outside, his paratroopers are learning that the Iraqi soldiers already know a lot.

"For many of the things we tried to teach them, they already had techniques," says Staff Sgt. Robert Burnett. "They picked up a few techniques from us, such as shooter stance and the way we handle non-combatants versus combatants, but we're definitely going with the way they've been trained on room clearing because they are proficient at it right now."

Tingstad points out that, traditionally, Iraq has had a great education system and a very strong military tradition, so there are some things they don't need to be taught anew, or when being taught, they merely need to learn the fundamentals so they can shape them toward their own system.

During an earlier visit to the base, the training

See ~ Air Assault ~ Pg. 17



First Lt. Theron Tingstad, a platoon leader asks 2nd Lt. Ali Hassen Hashem of Commando Battalion, 7th Iraqi Army Division, to write in the names of his squad leaders in an air assault diagram. Ali is one of four Iraqi officers and over 40 soldiers taking a basic air assault training course from U.S. advisors.

US, Iraqis provide health care to Anbar town

Story by Staff

1st Advise & Assist Bde., 82nd Abn. Div., USD-C

AL ASAD AIR BASE, Iraq – U.S. Army health care providers and Iraqi doctors held a one-day medical clinic June 3 for the residents of Kubaysah, Iraq.

American medics from 1st Advise and Assist Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division joined local doctors to assess and treat nearly 400 of the town's 20,000 residents.

Capt. Kenneth Brodie, a physician assistant with 3rd Battalion, 319th Airborne Field Artillery Regiment, estimated that between several Army medics and the four primary care providers – two males and two females, one each Iraqi and American – they treated about 90 percent of the cases that walked through the door.

"We saw a lot of what we expected to see; a lot of congenital-type issues that we were unable to treat," explained Brodie. "On the flipside, we were able to treat acute-type situations – dermatological rashes, ear infections, those kinds of things that we could treat with antibiotics

and analgesics."

First Lt. Jessica Larson, a physician assistant with 307th Brigade Support Battalion, said she and her female Army medics treated many cases of menstrual cramping and arthritis among women; and among children, strep throat, diarrhea and eczema issues associated with poor water quality.

Kubaysah's water is pumped in from the Euphrates River in Hit, but power issues often limit the amount of potable water available to townspeople, said the mayor. Like many nearby towns, Kubaysah gets power from Haditha Dam, which currently has only one of six turbines in use.

"There are a lot of chronic issues that we're not able to address," said Larson. "Obviously, there's difficulty in turning people away and telling them that we're not able to help them. Then there's the reaction when you are able to help someone, you can see the appreciation on their faces."

"One of the most satisfying things is when we are able to educate them on



Photo by Spc. Katie Summerhill, 366th MPAD, USD-C

Spc. Aubrey Stoda, a medic with 307th Brigade Support Battalion, 1st Advise and Assist Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division, demonstrates to a patient how to open wide during a one-day, U.S.-Iraqi medical clinic June 6 in Kubaysah. Female health care providers were present to meet the cultural restrictions of the Iraqi people.

what's going on with their bodies; a simple fix," she said.

According to Brodie, the town has only the one medical clinic, where the

event was held. A surgeon from the hospital in Hit, Dr. Ahmed, visits the clinic at least twice a week. Ahmed was one of the providers at the event. ▲

~ Air Assault ~ From Pg. 16

team was showing Hamed how U.S. officers make an operations order, when the veteran lieutenant colonel gently reminded the Americans that the Iraqi Army has had an order system in place for some time.

"As with cases such as their room-clearing techniques, a lot of times there's a reason for their doing [it] the way they do it, and we just haven't been here long enough to understand it," said Tingstad. "There may be a reason born of experience."

In fact, this unit of Iraqi commandos trained with Marines and Navy SEALs in 2009 near Al Asad Air Base, and prior to that, they worked the rough Ameryiat Alfallujah area near Fallujah, according to 2nd Lt. Ali Hassen Hashem, a 25-year-old platoon leader and former Baghdad University student who joined the Army two years ago.

"We really do appreciate this training though," says Ali. "We always learn so many new tactics from the Americans." Ali takes two steps forward, salutes, and says, "Reporting for duty!" with a toothy smile.

When violence in Rawah picked up, the commandos were moved to just north of the town, sandwiching it between them and 2nd Battalion, 28th Iraqi Brigade to the south.

"People in Rawah are good people," says Ali. "They are getting back to their jobs and building the economy. Still, they are sometimes afraid to give information on the terrorists. The townspeople don't always know who is working for [al-Qaeda in Iraq]. It is complicated. I talked to a mechanic who once worked for AQI. They forced him to fix their truck. But now he doesn't work for them anymore. You see?"

In the evening, the Iraqi officers and jundi come together at the fabricated helicopter, now with two long rows of Army cots for seating. Tingstad is opting for a light touch as a trainer, asking the Iraqi officers to teach their own men what they learned in the morning classroom session. But first, they all watch a demonstration put on by the U.S. Soldiers.

As the paratroopers load the helicopter, there is no trace of the casual young men who were laughing, joking and shooting hoops in a nearby barn just 30 minutes ago. Infantry is what they do.

Platoon sergeant Sgt. 1st Class Gary Wilson directs his men with simple commands, and they move swiftly from the bird to a temporary guard position around the wooden aircraft. At another command, the infantrymen fan silently into a tactical formation and move through the thistles and desert cobble toward their objective. The jundi are impressed.

It is now 2nd Lt. Tahseen Abd al Lafeef Muhi's turn. He barks orders to two squads of jundi. They line up and load up, careful not to get near the two-by-four "rotor" of the helicopter. Perhaps not as disciplined as the American troops, nevertheless, the Iraqis unload, secure the landing zone and move in their own style of tactical formation across the same field. It's not the wedge formation they were taught last week, but it seems to work for them. After they reload the helicopter, it is another lieutenant's turn with another two squads. They practice many times.

"We have a term in English called 'muscle memory,'" Tingstad explains to the Iraqi officers present. Joe begins translating.

The training is a success, and the following morning, the exercise is repeated. Amateurs train until they get it right; professionals train until they never get it wrong, Tingstad explains. They are here to make the Iraqis professionals at air assault.

When the training concludes, Tingstad tells the Iraqi officers that his men will be leaving shortly, but they will be back in a few days for more instruction. He also tells them they are planning to bring in two MI-17 helicopters from Baghdad in a few weeks for a culminating exercise. The young Iraqi lieutenants' faces light up.

Ali and Tasheen thank Tingstad and Wilson once more and march off with their troops.

Wilson remarks at how much better the training goes with Iraqi officers present, as Iraqi noncommis-

sioned officers do not have the same authority over enlisted soldiers as do American NCOs.

"Having the officers out here telling their men what to do made the trip from Al Asad worthwhile," says Wilson.

Wilson is on his fourth deployment, the third to Iraq. Last time, he and his men spent 15 months in a difficult area of Baghdad. Back then, most of the partnered training consisted of marksmanship, room clearing and first-responder medical training, he says.

While advise-and-assist training is sometimes challenging, he says it's important to remember the Iraqi Soldiers also have a difficult job. The day after his company exchanged gifts and said their goodbyes to their Iraqi Army training partners in Baghdad, a car bomb detonated outside the post and killed 30 of their Iraqi friends.

Says Tingstad, "I'd heard stories of it being very frustrating to work with the Iraqis at times, but in fact I found that if we were able to approach things the right way, the Iraqis were very motivated to learn. They really want to be good at their jobs, just as we do."

"The advise-and-assist brigade is a new concept. The foreign internal-defense type mission is something that used to be done by Special Operations Forces only, and now we are doing it on a grand scale across this entire country. Over the next year, two years, we are going to see if this experiment pans out."

"Regardless, you never know what kind of partnerships we might have in the future where we're partnering with them in actual operations, so it's important for our own benefit to see how they work," says Tingstad.

As the "production model" advise and assist brigade assigned the mission of security-force assistance in Iraq, 2nd Plt.'s unit, is scheduled to return to the U.S. later this summer. The unit replacing them will also be an AAB. ▲

Celebrating heritage brings Soldiers together

Story & photos by Pfc. Emily Knitter
1st Advise & Assist Bde., 3rd Inf. Div., USD-C

BAGHDAD—Inside a high school in Kentucky, the hallways were full of students in cowboy attire. Designated as “Western Wednesday,” the school was celebrating the history of the West. Amid the sea of cowboy boots and plaid shirts, one student wore a cook outfit.

A guidance counselor pulled the student aside and asked what he was doing.

“It’s Western Wednesday,” the student said.

“Where is your cowboy outfit?” the teacher asked.

Jesse Kim was one of only three Asians in the school. He explained that during that time period, most Asians were either cooks or railroad track layers. The teacher told him he had to take off his costume because he was racially profiling.

“I am Asian. How are you going to tell me I am racially profiling my own people?” Kim asked the teacher.

Now a mechanic with B Company, 3rd Brigade Support Battalion, 1st Advise and Assist Brigade, Kim, joined other 1st Advise and Assist Bde., 3rd Inf. Div., Soldiers May 30 to perform in celebration of his heritage during Asian Pacific Heritage Month at Contingency Operating Station Falcon.

“Regular U.S. citizens don’t know a lot of what is outside the textbooks,” said Kim, who was born

in Vusan, South Korea. “Although the military has a wide variety of cultures, ceremonies like this teach people a lot. They keep us enlightened, and the next time these people attend something similar, they know more about our culture and will be more open-minded.”

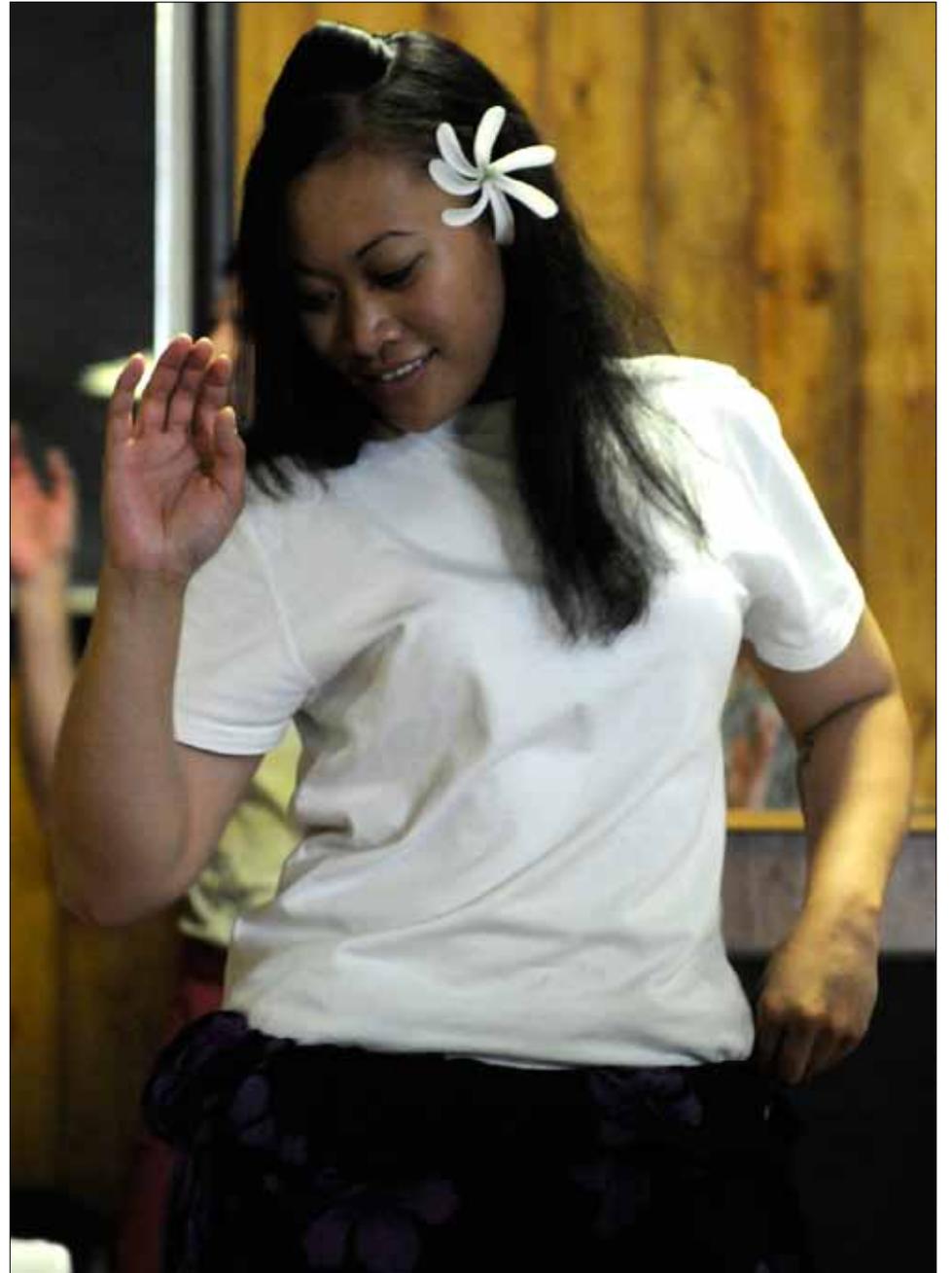
The show featured traditional island dances and a speech by Lt. Col. Johnney Matthews, the 3rd BSB commander.

As the Soldiers performed, the audience quickly got involved and followed along with the rhythmic beats of the music, and the aggressive, enthusiastic style of some of the dances. The room was quickly filled with cheering and clapping from the packed crowd as dancers encouraged them.

The production brought some of the native Pacific culture to the audience, highlighting many unique differences, but throughout the performance there were also subtle reminders that everyone in the room was united for a much different cause.

The performers’ shirts were illustrated with black marker designs representing traditional tribal tattoos and were the same style shirts worn under their uniform blouse every day. The male dancers wore fringed anklets, traditionally made from banana tree leaves, that were made from shredded sand bags as a substitute.

One of the dancers, Capt. James Powell, said he believes that being



Spc. Lata Pitolau, born in Pago Pago, American Samoa, now a native of Salt Lake City and a unit supply specialist with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Advise and Assist Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, dances during a performance for Asian Pacific heritage month on Contingency Operating Station Falcon May 30.



Soldiers with 1st Advise and Assist Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, dance during a performance for Asian Pacific Heritage Month on Contingency Operating Station Falcon May 30.

able to escape the repetitious tasks of deployment is one of the biggest benefits of the performances.

“I think [the Soldiers] appreciate having some levity. Everything is so serious all the time,” said Powell, a dentist with 1st Advise and Assist Bde., 3rd Inf. Div. “It’s nice to get some break from work and to get together to appreciate the many cultures, not just Asian and Pacific, but all cultures we represent throughout the Army.”

Although Powell jokingly claimed that although he is “from the island of Utah,” his participation in the show displays another quality of Asian Pacific culture.

“There are actually quite a few Polynesians that live [in Utah,] so I was introduced to the dances when I was younger. In junior high and high school, I learned a couple of them,” Powell said. “[Me] being in the performance just shows that [Asians] are very accepting and are always willing to share their culture.”

Soldiers trade muscle for wreaths in remembrance

Story & photo by Spc. Jared Eastman
1st Advise & Assist Bde., 3rd Inf. Div., USD-C

BAGHDAD – Soldiers of 5th Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment stand at parade rest outside of their headquarters on a hot Monday morning at Contingency Operating Station Falcon.

In front of the formation is a wooden platform with two rifles, two pairs of boots with spurs and two helmets. On May 31 the squadron's Soldiers did more than just pay silent tribute to their fallen comrades, they mixed sweat with tears.

"It is more than fitting that we stand together," said Lt. Col. Kirk Dorr, the 5th Sqdn., 7th Cav. Regt. Commander: "one squadron, one family, within the capital city of Baghdad, and honor those Warpaint troopers who willingly gave their last full measure of devotion in this war-torn region throughout Operation Iraqi Freedom."

As he spoke, Soldiers individually went up to the memorial to place a set of dog tags on either rifle, signifying a fallen Soldier from either OIF III or V.

"Each of our fallen was uniquely special," said Dorr. "As members of a true band of brothers, they learned to rely on one another. They chose to be faithful. They chose to reject the fashionable skepticism of this conflict. They chose to believe and answer the call of duty. They stood for something."

Originally known as Decoration Day, Memorial Day is meant to commemorate U.S. men and women who died while in military service. First created to honor Union Soldiers during the American Civil War, it grew after World War I.

"The observance of this day was born of compassion and empathy in 1863," said Dorr. "As the Civil War raged, grieving mothers, wives, daughters, sisters and loved ones were cleaning Confederate Soldiers' graves in Columbus, Miss., placing flowers on them. They noticed nearby the Union Soldiers' graves dusty, overgrown with weeds.

"Grieving for their own fallen Soldiers, the Confederate women understood that the dead Union



A rifle laden with dog tags marks the 5th Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment Soldiers who have fallen in Operation Iraqi Freedom III at the squadron's memorial ceremony on Contingency Operating Station Falcon May 31.

Soldiers buried nearby were the cherished loved ones of families and communities far away," Dorr said. "They cleared the tangled brush and mud from those graves as well as the own Soldiers' graves and laid flowers on them, too."

The official name was changed by federal law in 1967 to Memorial Day and was moved from May 30 to the last Monday of May in 1971.

Originally, General John Logan had chosen May 30 because it was not the anniversary of a battle. But the name change seemed to have little effect on the squadron standing under the hot Iraqi sun May 31 as they listened to Dorr.

"As members of a time-honored fraternity, we should commit to the following: first, that we will never forget or forsake our fallen or wounded war-

riors; second, that we understand that peace is a fragile thing that needs constant vigilance; and lastly, that we'll keep the peace by remaining strong yet compassionate towards the innocent, and by demonstrating to our adversaries that if called upon to do so, we will bring hell to their doorstep to defeat them at any time, any place around the world."

As the Soldiers prepared to kick off Memorial Day with a unit run, Dorr offered one last bit of encouragement.

"Be thankful for your blessings, and take care of one another. You are among the elite one percent of the American population that has taken an oath to server our nation. Be proud of that," Dorr said. "Rest soundly, fallen troopers. We carry your spirit forward." ▲

Treat every weapon as if it is loaded.

Handle every weapon with care.

Assess the target before you fire.

The muzzle of the weapon should never point at anything you don't intend to shoot.

Keep the weapon on safe, and your finger off the trigger, until you intend to fire.

Joint effort builds trust between citizens, Iraqi Army

Story & photo by Spc. Daniel Schneider
366th MPAD, USD-C

BAGHDAD – Despite the stifling heat, Soldiers from 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, and the Iraqi Army teamed up June 4 to bring a little relief to an impoverished Iraqi community.

Iraqi soldiers of 2nd Bn., 25th IA Regt. took the lead in a humanitarian aid drop for the rural Bashariyah district, an Iraqi community near the town of Yusifiyah. Iraqi and U.S. Soldiers from 2nd Battalion, 14th Infantry Regiment, worked side-by-side to

hand the food, water, toys and clothes out to local villagers of all ages.

U.S. forces were present to assist and advise their IA counterparts as needed.

“The IA battalion’s training, planning and operations section conducted the planning, selected the site, and provided their 1st Company to facilitate the drop, and 2nd Bn, 14th Inf. Regt., provided the packages to be delivered,” said Capt. Steven Kurvach, executive officer of Company D, 2nd Bn, 14th Inf. Regt. “I was amazed at how extremely professional and orderly [the IA] were in performing the H.A. drop.”

The deputy commander of 1st Advise and Assist

Brig., 3rd Inf. Div., Lt. Col. Stanley Fugate, also attended the drop since Bashariyah is in 1st AAB’s operational area. He was impressed with how the joint mission turned out.

“It’s great to see how quickly the [2nd Bn., 14th Inf. Regt.] has worked together in planning and executing this drop after being so new to this area,” said Fugate.

In the last two weeks, Co. D has conducted humanitarian aid drops every three or four days, but this was the first time they supplied this particular community with aid.

“The people were visibly pleased to receive the water and food. The children – the abundance of smiles and laughter is testament to their satisfaction with the bags of toys,” said Kurvach, a native of Victor, N.Y.

The village in the Bashariyah area is a very small enclave, tucked away from the larger cities of Mahmudiyah and Yusifiyah.

The people are farmers without the infrastructure, medical facilities or social services that are normally available in the larger cities. The Government of Iraq is trying to figure a solution to provide for these people, but the improvements will take time to accomplish, Kurvach said.

He also said he believes the drop will help solidify the villagers’ trust in the Iraqi Army, and generate support from the locals in countering al-Qaeda in Iraq.

“What I observed while watching the IA in this operation is an Iraqi force that has become the guardian of the Iraqi people,” said Kurvach. “Since there are still dangerous dissidents and violent men at large, this is what the people need the most; a professional fighting force – a guardian who the people can rely on for help and protection. If there are still al-Qaeda operatives hiding out in Al Bashariyah, I believe the people will look to the Iraqi Army for help.” ▲



Iraqi soldiers hand out toys June 4 to local Iraqi families living near Yusifiyah. The Iraqi Army and U.S. Soldiers worked side-by-side to hand out the items during a humanitarian aid drop to help provide legitimacy and improve relations between local villages and the IA.

Don't Lose CONTROL

MRAP ROLLOVER PREVENTION IS ALL ABOUT CONTROL:

- Crew Coordination** Driver, senior occupant, gunner and passengers know their responsibilities; remain vigilant; identify and communicate potential hazards.
- Observe your surroundings** Be aware of bridge limitations, low hanging power lines, soft-shouldered roads, and the presence of culverts, canals, and ditches.
- Never drive the vehicle beyond its limitations** Avoid abrupt steering, excessive acceleration, and panic braking.
- Training** Conduct mission briefings, rollover drills, and crew coordination refreshers prior to every mission.
- Reduce speed** in turns and on wet or unimproved surfaces.
- Organize all equipment** Ensure everything is securely stored and tied-down to avoid projectile hazards in the event of an accident or rollover.
- Leaders** ensure only properly trained, qualified, and licensed personnel operate vehicles and equipment! Insist that all personnel wear seatbelts / gunner restraints.

ENGAGED LEADERS MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

1st Armored Division celebrates Army birthday



Photo by Spc. Daniel Schneider, 366th MPAD, USD-C

BAGHDAD – During a cake cutting ceremony in the Iron Oasis dining facility at Camp Liberty, Sgt. Maj. Danilo Diaz (right), supply and logistics senior noncommissioned officer, 1st Armored Division, raises his hand in triumph after being introduced as the oldest member assigned to 1st Armored Division. The Roxas City, Philippines, native was joined by the youngest member, Pvt. Sepe Salik, a Kosrae, Micronesia, native and food service specialist assigned to Company B, Division Special Troops Battalion, 1st Armored Division and Los Angeles native Command Sgt. Maj. Sal Katz, senior enlisted leader, DSTB, 1st Armored Division. The Soldiers celebrated the U.S. Army's 235th birthday during lunchtime June 14.

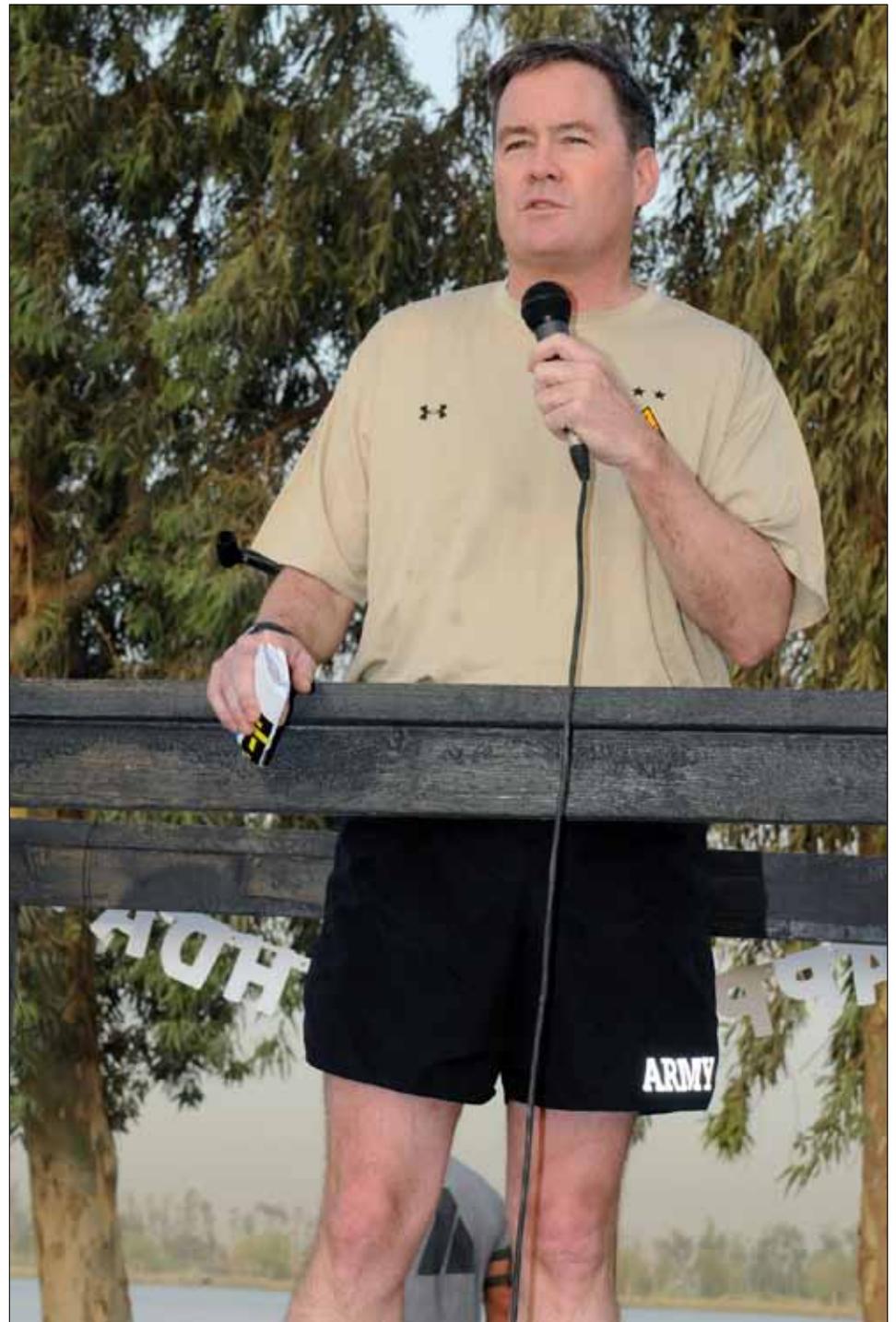


Photo by Spc. Daniel Schneider, 366th MPAD, USD-C

United States Division – Center Commanding General, Maj. Gen. Terry Wolff gives an inspirational speech highlighting the Army's birthday before the start of a 7-kilometer run. This event marked the first of a full day of birthday celebrations on Victory Base Complex as the Army and fellow branches enjoy the Army's 235th birthday June 14.

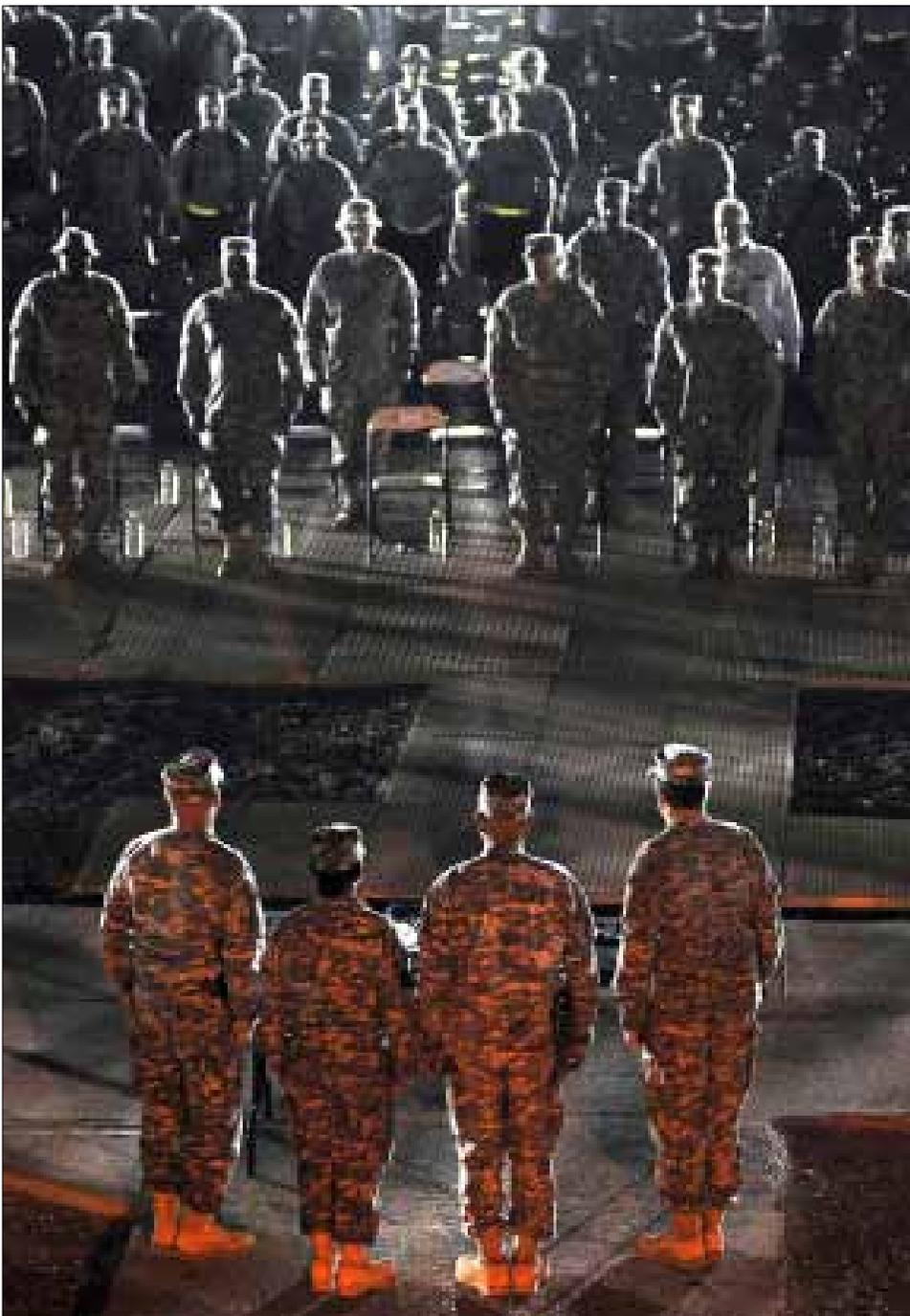


Photo by Sgt. Phillip Valentine, 366th MPAD, USD-C

The youngest and oldest members of 1st Armored Division stand with Maj. Gen. Terry Wolff, commanding general, United States Division – Center (bottom right), and Command Sgt. Maj. Sal Katz, senior enlisted noncommissioned officer, Division Special Troops Battalion, 1st Armored Division, (bottom left), during a ceremony at Camp Liberty June 14.



Photo by Spc. Daniel Schneider, 366th MPAD, USD-C

Dirty Hescos singer and lead guitarist, Sgt. Brandon Boron, a Las Vegas native and member of the 1st Armored Division band, sings rock 'n' roll music at a concert during the Army's 235th birthday celebration, hosted by United States Division – Center at Camp Liberty June 14. The celebration included a cake cutting ceremony and an opportunity for service members and civilians to relax.

Fort Bliss honors fallen heroes

Story by Natalie Hinojos

Fort Bliss Monitor

FORT BLISS, Texas – Service members, veterans and their families gathered at the Fort Bliss National Cemetery to pay tribute to all the fallen heroes who served on Memorial Day.

An empty chair draped with the POW/MIA flag was placed in front as a reminder of the service members who have yet to return. Onlookers bowed their heads in a moment of silence. The ceremony continued with the Pledge of Allegiance and an invocation. The 62nd Army Band performed traditional music throughout the ceremony. A 21-gun salute provided by a salute battery, firing the 75-mm Howitzer honored servicemembers who have died.

The ceremony continued with speeches from Maj. Gen. Howard Bromberg and the director of the Dallas/Forth Worth National Cemetery, Ronald Henderson, contributing their thanks to those who died in action.

The ceremony concluded with the traditional laying of the ceremonial wreath, which was then blessed by Native American veterans from the Eagle Claw Warrior Society. The group also blessed the chair draped with the POW/MIA flag.

“For the blessing of the wreath and gravesite on Fort Bliss National Cemetery, we use corn pollen because when we die, we go back to Mother Earth. So the corn pollen is given to us from Mother Earth,” said Edward Santa Cruz of the Chiricahua Apaches, member of the Eagle Claw Warrior Society. “The sage is used to clear the air of hostilities and make the four-day journey of the deceased, which we believe in, back into Heaven.”

Civilians experience life of a Soldier

Story by Spc. Melissa Church

3rd Brigade Combat Team

FORT DRUM, N.Y. – Civilians in the Fort Drum community got the chance to spend a day in the life of a 3rd Brigade Combat Team Soldier on May 18.

Soldiers took their civilian guests on a tour of everyday training, as well as deployment training, and gave examples of what deployed life is like.

Civilian guests came to Fort Drum’s Division Hill, where they ate a lunch of Meals, Ready-to-Eat and had a look at some military vehicles Soldiers drive while deployed.

“I think if they realize what we are driving around in down range, it may make them feel like we are a little bit safer in Afghanistan,” said Spc. Anthony Sparks, a team leader in, Company A, 710th BSB.

They divided into four groups and went through four lanes of training: a medic simulation lane; a Counter Improvised Explosive Device lane; a vehicle training center; and Humvee Egress Assistance Trainer and the Virtual Training Facility.

By participating, civilians walked away with a little bit more knowledge, and possibly appreciation, for the rigors of a Soldier’s lifestyle.

Memorial Day observed with community

Staff

Fort Stewart, Hunter Army Airfield Public Affairs

FORT STEWART, Ga. – Fort Stewart and Hunter Army Airfield joined the local community to remember and honor those who have died in service to our nation in Memorial Day observances, May 28-31.

Richmond Hill Soldiers, veterans and civilians gathered at Richmond Hill’s J.F. Gregory Park for a Memorial Day Observance, May 28.

“It’s our responsibility to see that their sacrifice is not forgotten,” said Ray Gaster, Vietnam Veterans of America. “We honor at this time those who died for our freedom; we salute you, Fallen Soldiers, and thank you for your sacrifice.”

The keynote speaker was Brig. Gen. Jeffrey Phillips, 3rd Infantry Division deputy commanding general-rear.

On the forefront of the minds of those at the Richmond Hill observance was the 426 3rd Infantry Division Soldiers who have died in the current conflict.

“We mourn the loss of these comrades,” said Bill Helms, American Legion Post 27. “We remember those who have fallen – they’ve give it all for freedom, and they’ve given it for us.”

Warriors Walk at Fort Stewart currently hold 426 Eastern Redbuds, and five more will be added in June.

Remembering those who gave their lives

Story by David Kuhns Sr.

Northwest Guardian

JOINT BASE LEWIS-MCCHORD, Wash. – “Our fallen were great men and women ... Today we grieve at their loss, but smile at the memories,” said Brig. Gen. Peter Bayer Jr., I Corps chief of staff, as he spoke at the Joint Base Lewis-McChord Memorial Day ceremony Monday.

The ceremony, held at the Fort Lewis Cemetery was attended by several hundred people who gathered to honor those who have given their lives in the nation’s service.

Memorial Day carries extra meaning, Bayer said, for those stationed on JBLM and the residents of the surrounding area. Sacrifice has a very personal meaning here, he said. He cited the 255 “brothers and sisters” from JBLM who have died while serving in Iraq, Afghanistan and the Philippines over the last eight years.

“And we remember the 18,000 who are still deployed,” he said.

Those who have died in uniform provide a lasting example of service, Bayer said. And they inspire those who still wear the nation’s uniforms.

“There is an unbelievable sense of pride that comes from being called a Soldier, an Airman, a Sailor, a Marine or a Coast Guardsman,” Bayer said.

The sacrifices we should remember go beyond just those in uniform, Bayer said.

“I spoke on Memorial Day last year at Camp Victory, surrounded by Soldiers, Airmen and Marines serving in Iraq,” he said.

They exemplified selfless service.

Soldiers welcomed home from Iraq

Story by Staff

Herald Union

WIESBADEN, Germany – WIESBADEN, Germany — More than 80 Soldiers with the 1st Armored Division’s Special Troops Battalion came home from Iraq June 4.

“They worked their way out of a job,” said Lt. Col. Conrad Wiser, division headquarters rear detachment commander in Wiesbaden. Wiser’s remark referenced the fact that the 1st AD assumption of operational responsibility in Baghdad and the Anbar Province in 2010 was efficiently accomplished. So efficiently, some Soldiers got to go home early.

“Surprised. I was just surprised,” said Spc. Shannon Dahl with Company A, DSTB.

After almost two years in the military and now six months spent in Iraq, Dahl said he was ecstatic to be home with his wife and three sons.

The Soldiers were expected to complete a seven-day reintegration process to include briefings on finances and relationships.

Wiser told the crowd of supporters at the welcome home ceremony that a majority of the 80 Soldiers would be gone before the end of the summer having permanent changes of station. The 1st Armored Division Headquarters is slated to move to Fort Bliss in June 2011. Wiser noted that the division will only take about 10 to 20 percent of Soldiers currently in the division to the new location.

Mullen visits Fort Bragg community

Story by Reginald Rogers

Paraglide

FORT BRAGG, N.C. – The U.S. armed forces’ highest-ranking officer, Adm. Michael Mullen, chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff, dropped in on the Fort Bragg community June 2 and spent time with Fort Bragg Soldiers.

Mullen visited with Soldiers from the Warrior Transition Battalion, XVIII Airborne Corps and the U.S. Army Special Operations Command. He also took time to meet with Soldiers for an all-hands question and answer session while at the Soldier Support Center.

During the meeting, Mullen spoke about the state of the U.S. military and said he was interested in hearing concerns the Soldiers may have or challenges they may be facing.

“I know we have challenges, we’re in our ninth year of war, two wars, multiple deployments,” he said. “The pace has been quicker than any of us anticipated and it’s been sustained. While we are coming down in Iraq, we’ll be down to 50,000 (troops) by the end of August and we’ll add a few more thousand by the end of this year in Afghanistan.”

Mullen also addressed the U.S. military’s service in Haiti, medical concerns for Fort Bragg Family members, the possible repeal of the Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell policy and care and reintegration of wounded warriors back into Army units.

Soldiers at the event said they were pleased that he took time to visit with them and address their issues.

US partners with Iraq to stabilize economy

Story & photo by Sgt. Tresa Allemang
13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary)

BAGHDAD – “Iraq’s Victory Base Complex vendors, contractors and civilians will soon have a new bank to meet their financial service needs,” said Maj. Andrea Singer, as bank officials and employees broke ground at Camp Liberty in Baghdad for the Iraqi-based Industrial Zone’s Golden Construction Company to begin building the Bank of Baghdad.

Singer, the theater financial management liaison officer for the 326th Theater Financial Management Center, said the Victory Base Complex branch of Bank of Baghdad will be one of 10 Iraqi banks to be established on U.S. bases throughout Iraq. And is the second on VBC, as part of the Banks on Bases Initiative.

The new bank, expected to open in about 10 weeks, will ease the impact on the Iraq Joint Operations Area as the financial management units help set the conditions for the responsible drawdown of U.S. forces in Iraq, said Capt. Eric C. LaBay of Denver, Colo., the 15th Financial Management Company Banking and E-Commerce officer.

Singer of Los Angeles, Calif., explained that the goal of the Banks on Bases Initiative is to eventually transition the installation, as well as the rest of the country, into using Iraqi Dinar instead of U.S.

currency to help strengthen the Iraqi economy.

“The dependence on U.S. currency has resulted in the dollarization of the Iraqi economy, which increases the probability of fraud and exposes service members to unnecessary risk by creating a potential funding source for our adversaries,” she said. “By de-dollarizing the Iraqi economy we are helping to strengthen the Iraqi business and banking infrastructure and improving the value of the local currency.”

Singer said this bank will be available for use by local nationals, third-country nationals, and contractors working on Victory Base Complex, and also noted that the Bank of Baghdad was approved by the U.S. Treasury to hold government funds for U.S. Army finance companies.

“Having banks on bases throughout Iraq also allows the U.S. government to send electronic payments to our vendors rather than disburse cash,” added Capt. Shaun Miller, U.S. Army Central Command banking officer for Iraq.

“We have already seen a domino-like effect at other bases, where vendors and contractors are turning around and paying their employees electronically as well,” said Miller, a Washington D.C.

resident. “We are promoting financial cultural change toward the banking system, and away from cash.”

“This bank will not only create jobs, but will also increase the confidence in the Iraqi Dinar and the Iraqi banking system,” Singer stated. “Iraqi’s are still learning to place faith in their banking system because when Saddam was in power, it was not uncommon for him to seize bank assets.”

She said as local nationals see the benefits of using their banking system; they will gain confidence and will begin establishing checking and savings accounts, as well as be able to obtain loans.

To date, the U.S. Financial Management Community and the Iraqi Based Industrial Zone, known as IBIZ, with assistance from Miller, have

been responsible for officially opening Iraqi banks on two of the U.S. Enduring Bases. Eight additional “Banks on Bases,” have been solicited throughout Iraq, and are expected to be operational within the year.

“This is a great example of the partnership we’ve created,” Fort Leavenworth, Kan., native, Maj. Jerry England, IBIZ project coordinator said. “Together we are working to build the economy.”

“This is a great example of the partnership we’ve created, together we are working to build the economy.”

– Maj. Jerry England



Bank of Baghdad employees, (from left), Sahir Mahmood, regional manager; Elaf Shukur, Victory Base Complex branch manager; Saraj AlDeen A. Bahjat, marketing manager; Abdul Ameer Al Shameri, executive manager of engineering; and Khaldun Khalid, customer service representative; dig in on Camp Liberty ground as the Iraqi-based Industrial Zone’s Golden Construction Company prepares to build the Bank of Baghdad. The bank is expected to open in about 10 weeks, and is being built to help stabilize the country as the U.S. prepares for the responsible draw down of its forces.

USD-C Soldier doubles as boxing coach while serving in Iraq

Story & photos by Spc. Daniel Schneider
366th MPAD, USD-C

BAGHDAD – A Division Special Troops Battalion Soldier has answered the call to use his past experiences to coach Soldiers at Camp Liberty.

The battalion's senior noncommissioned officer recently approached Staff Sgt. Jermaine Ellis, NCO in charge of supply for Company B, DSTB, 1st Armored Division, about training Soldiers in boxing. Ellis was an excellent candidate since he started boxing when he was 6 years old, and continued until he hung up his gloves in 2004 after 18 years of professional experience.

"Command Sgt. Maj. [Sal] Katz came to me with his vision of starting a new boxing program for Soldiers. When I was boxing for the Army, he was my first sergeant, so he knew I used to box," the Youngstown, Ohio, native said. He smiled. "Some parts of your past you just can't bury."

"I tried to shy away from volunteering at first, but eventually I realized that I owe it to these Soldiers to pass on my experience to them," he admitted.

One of his boxing students, Pfc. Daine Watson, a squad driver assigned to 501st Military Police Co., DSTB, 1st Armd. Div., came from a boxing background. He had boxed four years before deploying to Iraq, mainly in clubs, high school and college, but he acknowledges that the



Staff Sgt. Jermaine Ellis, noncommissioned officer in charge of supply assigned to Company B, Division Special Troops Battalion, 1st Armored Division, demonstrates a jab to one of his students May 26 during a boxing lesson at Camp Liberty's Iron Gym. Ellis, a native of Youngstown, Ohio, is one of the coaches of a boxing program that started about three months ago.

training he's receiving here has been very useful.

"Back home, I had the same coach so it was always the same kind of fighting that he'd teach us," said the right-handed Watson about his hometown coach when he lived in Elmont, N.Y. "Staff Sgt. Ellis pushes us to step out of our comfort zone and fight

both 'southpaw' as well as [with] our natural hand."

Not all of Ellis's trainees have had prior experience in boxing. Despite this, he still takes the time to mentor and teach them, based on their level of experience.

"So long as you have the willingness to learn and self-discipline to change and get better, you will," said Capt. James Battle, an Apache helicopter

pilot and acting liaison officer for 1st Combat Aviation Brigade and a native of Hampton, Va. "The coach can only teach you so much, but ultimately it is up to you to be willing to change and soak up the knowledge like a sponge."

Private 1st Class Brian Robinson, a supply specialist with 501st MP Co., said he has evolved into a contender under the expert tutelage of Ellis.

"At first, I just wanted to use boxing as a new workout program be-

cause we condition a lot with running and abdominal workouts, and it was something different to learn while I'm in Iraq," the Tavares, Fla., native said. "Now, I want to see what I can do with this knowledge I'm gaining."

Robinson will get the chance to put his training to the test in the boxing ring soon. DSTB is sponsoring a boxing smoker competition, scheduled for July 3 at Camp Liberty.

Ellis, who originally left boxing because it was taking too much time away from his family, is pleased he can now pass on his knowledge to these fighters without sacrificing any more time than he already is by serving in Iraq.

"I've put a lot of training into these fighters – ideas, ideology, beliefs," said Ellis. "You show them how to do a move hoping it's going to work. Then when you watch them execute it flawlessly, you think, 'Wow! All this hard work and it finally paid off.'" ▲

"So long as you have the willingness to learn and self-discipline to change and get better, you will."

— Capt. James Battle



Staff Sgt. Jermaine Ellis, noncommissioned officer in charge of supply at Company B, Division Special Troops Battalion, 1st Armored Division, trains Spc. Amador Amador, a supply specialist, also with Co. B, during boxing practice May 26 at Camp Liberty's Iron Gym. Ellis, a native of Youngstown, Ohio, has 18 years of boxing experience. He is now passing his years of knowledge down to Soldiers.

Iraq bicycle club rides 50 miles for wounded service members

Story & photos by Sgt. Phillip Valentine
366th MPAD, USD-C

BAGHDAD – The sun’s reflection sparkled off the surface of Lost Lake. Herons basked in the early Sunday morning heat May 30 as three bicycle riders glided by them. The few vehicles on the road gave the riders leeway for safe passage.

Members of the Victory Base Complex Bicycling Club regularly meet every Sunday and ride around Victory Base Complex, usually finishing at a popular coffee shop on Camp Liberty.

This particular day, however, the club gathered at Lost Lake for a 50-mile ride to shadow a “Ride 2 Recovery” bicycle tour beginning on the same day in Arlington, Va.

“The Ride 2 Recovery program is for wounded service members and is supported by organizations like the United Service Organization and the Wounded Warrior Program,” said Col. Mike Shenk, a Carlisle, Pa., native and command inspector general assigned to United States Forces-Iraq.

The program helps injured veterans overcome obstacles and depression. Studies have demonstrated the relationship between exercise and state of mind. Exercise, such as bicycling, promotes relaxation and improves quality of sleep, which helps the body recover

and reduces stress.

An avid cyclist, Shenk has been racing bikes since he was 8 years old. He said he is addicted to anything with two wheels.

“It’s the ability to pedal yourself around with the wind in your face. It’s freedom,” he said. “The thing about riding is, almost everyone has ridden a bike. It takes you back to when you were a kid.”

Shenk believes that riding in a group has many benefits. He believes that cycling causes less stress on the body than running, and helps him maintain a fitness level that increases his scores on physical fitness tests. This drive is maintained and fostered by riding in a group, he said.

“You don’t want to be the guy who falls out. It is harder to stay motivated by yourself and it is safer to ride with a group. This is why we wear bright clothing,” said Shenk, showing off his highly visible bicycle jersey.

Another club member and Pembine, Wis., native, Sgt. Major Thomas Pollack, the training, plans and operations sergeant major for 1st Armored Division, believes events like this are important.

“Always remember the Soldiers,” he advised. “Everything is about the Soldiers.”

Although the club members rode in support of the program, they also rode

for themselves and each other. Physical exercise and camaraderie are two things all the club members say drives them to ride.

“I am addicted to it. Every day, I tell myself to take a rest, but I usually ride,” said Navy Capt. Al Given, chief of biometrics and a Haymarket, Va., native assigned to USF-I. “But if I do rest, I wish I went riding. I am a terrible runner so I go with my strengths.”

Given has been with the club since October 2009 and will be traveling back home soon, leaving the club one member short.

“I have a few weeks left with these guys to train them, mentor them, and make them better,” he said with a laugh.

He added he has a bike for sale, but the buyer must join the club to receive the bike, and with it, will earn a free membership into the club. The club has no membership fees.

Pollack said he never rode with a group until he joined the club. He had to learn hand signals and group riding techniques. In the short time

Victory Base Complex Cycling Club member and Pembine, Wis., native, Sgt. Maj. Thomas Pollack, training, plans and operations sergeant major assigned to 1st Armored Division, prepares to dismount after a 50-mile bike ride. Pollack started cycling to train for triathlons and said he enjoys the camaraderie of the club.



Members of the Victory Base Complex Cycling Club, Col. Mike Shenk, command inspector general, United States Forces-Iraq, Navy Capt. Al Given, chief of biometrics, USF-I, and Sgt. Maj. Thomas Pollack, training, plans and operations sergeant major, assigned to 1st Armored Division, take a bicycle ride around VBC May 30. The club meets every Sunday for group rides, camaraderie and fitness.

he has been with the club, he said he has learned much. Riding in a group has motivated him and the Sunday get-togethers drive him to exercise even more than he already does.

“If I didn’t show up Sunday, I would have a stupid e-mail from the group, making fun of me,” he said, laughing. “It’s a lot of fun; we help each other out.”

Pollack likened riding to a dog.

“We call it the dog analogy,” he said. “Every time I go outside and every time I eat, I am happy – just like a dog.”

For more information about the VBC Bicycling Club please contact Col. Mike Shenk, USF-I Command Inspector General, Building 132, Jackson Street, Camp Victory, DSN: 318-485-3750 or SVOIP: 708-243-4692. ▲

Daddy's girl visits father while in Iraq

Story & photo by Staff Sgt. Samantha Beuterbaugh
366th MPAD, USD-C

BAGHDAD — Years after Sgt. 1st Class Shaheed Shakir joined the military, his oldest daughter Siobhan followed in his footsteps.

Those footsteps led Sgt. Siobhan Eastman to Camp Liberty April 8, where she linked up with Shakir, a liaison officer for 1st Advise and Assist Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division.

Eastman, the supply sergeant for Company B, 37th Engineer Battalion, 20th Engineer Brigade, 18th Airborne Division in Joint Air Base Balad, received a supply mission to Camp Liberty. While there, she made good on a tradition the two of them have maintained for years: father-daughter date night.

"We went to the PX, got manicures, I got a facial, and then we went by the [dining facility] for some delicious lasagna," said Eastman.

This was a typical date night — minus the PX — that started when Eastman was an early teen. They usually kick back, watch movies, spend time and just laugh together.

"We literally just make up stuff to laugh about like two kids," said Shakir. "We're clowns together."

The Gainesville, Fla., natives have been fortunate this deployment; they've had several opportunities to visit one another.

"Ever since she was 5 years old, we could never be away from each other for too long," said Shakir.

Throughout their military careers, they've always managed to be stationed close together and had commands that supported them.

"If we go longer than two days [without phoning each other], then somebody's in trouble," explained Eastman.

The longest stretch of time they have ever gone without seeing each other was when Eastman attended basic and advanced training for the military, which lasted about six months.



Sgt. 1st Class Shaheed Shakir, a liaison officer for 1st Advise and Assist Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division, lifts dumbbells as his daughter spots him at the Iron Gym on Camp Liberty April 8. Sgt. Siobhan Eastman, the supply sergeant with Company B, 37th Engineer Battalion, 20th Engineer Brigade, 18th Airborne Division, is currently stationed in Joint Air Base Balad and was tasked to travel to Liberty for some supply dealings. While at Liberty, she reunited with her father for a few days.

"She can't live without me!" Shakir said smiling.

Eastman once called Shakir to inform him that her duty station was changing. Slightly disheartened at the mere thought of it, he found the courage to ask where. She laughed when she told him it was just across the street from his location at Fort Bragg.

They phone often just to talk, but she also seeks his advice in leading Soldiers.

"My first answer is always as a non-commissioned officer," said Shakir.

She sees how hard he works and says that it is her motivation to go to the next level, to want to do better.

Shakir smiles at the thought of his daughter's successes in the military and, as a jumpmaster and father, is proud to admit his daughter followed his footsteps even into airborne school.

"I was deployed when she went to jump school. ... I remember that whole day, her first jump. She kept calling and calling," said Shakir. "I was ready to talk to her ... first, to make sure she was okay and next, to make sure she didn't punk out!"

Eastman admits she was nervous but that it turned out to be a great experience.

Although Shakir is proud of Eastman's service in the Army, Eastman said he didn't always feel that way.

"He almost didn't even let me join [the Army]," said Eastman.

Shakir tried to contact his daughter when she was with the recruiter to tell her not to join but the phone call wouldn't go through, so he figured it was meant to be.

Shakir is proud of his daughter despite his initial feelings of discomfort about permitting her to join the Army, saying he is happy she did something for herself. With her serving in Iraq, he has grown closer to her, and a bit more protective. Shakir has become acquainted with several of the Soldiers in Eastman's company.

"Daddy's eyes are everywhere," jokes Shakir.

Their relationship is as close as a father and daughter can be, said Shakir. As a child, he didn't receive a lot of love and decided at a young age he wanted a child so he would have someone who would always love him.

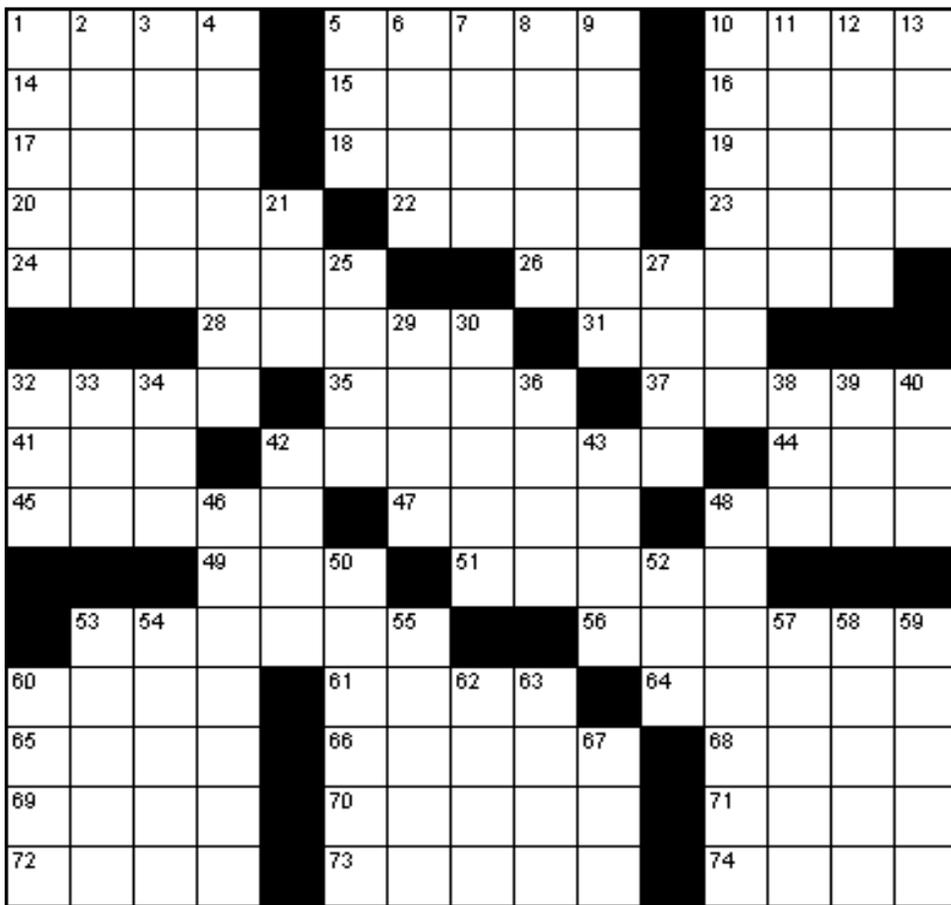
She does: "I will always be my daddy's baby." ▲

Wishing you a happy Father's Day!

You may have thought I didn't see,
Or that I hadn't heard,
Life lessons that you taught to me,
But I got every word.
Perhaps you thought I missed it all,
And that we'd grow apart,
But Dad, I picked up everything,
It's written on my heart.
Without you, Dad, I wouldn't be
The person I am today;
You built a strong foundation
No one can take away.
I've grown up with your values,
And I'm very glad I did;
So here's to you, dear father,
From your forever grateful kid.

By Joanna Fuchs

CROSSWORD



Down

- 1. Travesty
- 2. Fruit of the oak
- 3. Cove
- 4. Set free
- 5. Flexible container
- 6. Song for solo voice
- 7. Crease
- 8. Inside
- 9. Short sleep
- 10. Invective
- 11. Livid
- 12. Catapult
- 13. Camping equipment
- 21. Family
- 25. Den
- 27. Large woody plant
- 29. Parts of the Roman calendar
- 30. Type of anesthetic
- 32. Police officer
- 33. Wonder or admiration
- 34. Acquire
- 36. Spoken by an actor
- 38. Single unit
- 39. For each
- 40. Female sheep
- 42. Stopper
- 43. Chair
- 46. School for special training
- 48. Highly poisonous herb
- 50. Harry the magician
- 52. Ancient Roman sun god
- 53. Not as wet
- 54. Cowboy exhibition
- 55. Courage
- 57. Body of rules
- 58. Entertain
- 59. One of the senses
- 60. Yore
- 62. Jungle king
- 63. Reservoir
- 67. Condensation

Across

- 1. Impartial
- 5. Primary
- 10. Huge
- 14. Skin condition
- 15. Stadium
- 16. Small island
- 17. Roster
- 18. Colossus
- 19. Slender
- 20. Brook
- 22. Ends a prayer
- 23. Payment for use
- 24. Involve
- 26. Evaluation
- 28. Terrestrial gastropod
- 31. Argument in favor
- 32. Coop
- 35. Object of worship
- 37. Run off to marry
- 41. Be indebted
- 42. Exact
- 44. Novel
- 45. Part of a flower
- 47. Rational
- 48. This place
- 49. Drinking vessel
- 51. Term of a contract
- 53. Mythical beast
- 56. Male feline
- 60. Poke
- 61. Narrate
- 64. South American ungulate
- 65. Assistant
- 66. Chord with three notes
- 68. Burden of responsibility
- 69. Appear
- 70. Call forth
- 71. Price
- 72. System of weights or ancient city
- 73. Regenerate
- 74. Hinge joint

June 7 solution

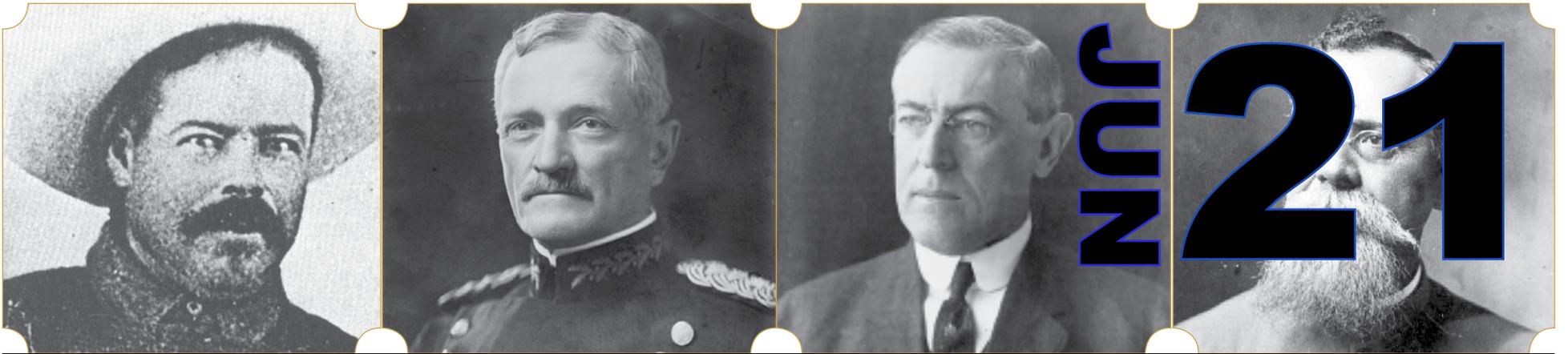


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WWI

US Soldiers attacked by Mexican government troops

With World War I entering its third year, a controversial U.S. military expedition against Mexican revolutionary Pancho Villa brings the neutral U.S. closer to war, when Mexican government troops attack Brig. Gen. John Pershing's force at Carrizal, Mexico June 21, 1916.

In 1914, following the resignation of Mexican leader Victoriano Huerta, Pancho Villa and his former revolutionary ally Gen. Venustiano Carranza battled each other in a struggle for succession. By the end of 1915, Villa had been driven north into the mountains, and the U.S. government recognized Carranza as the president of Mexico.

In January 1916, to protest President Woodrow Wilson's support for Carranza, Villa executed 16 U.S. citizens at Santa Isabel, Mexico. Then, on March 9, he ordered a raid on the border town of Columbus, New Mexico, in which 17 Americans were killed and the center of town was burned. Thirteenth Cavalry from the nearby U.S. Army outpost Camp Furlong pursued the Mexicans, killing several dozen rebels on U.S. soil and in Mexico before turning back. On March 16, under orders from Wilson, Pershing launched a punitive expedition into Mexico to capture or kill Villa and disperse his rebels. The expedition eventually involved 10,000 U.S. troops and personnel. It was the first U.S. military operation to employ mechanized vehicles, including automobiles and airplanes.

For 11 months, Pershing failed to capture the elusive revolutionary, who was aided by his intimate knowledge of the terrain of northern Mexico and his popular support from the people there. Meanwhile, resentment over the U.S. intrusion into Mexican territory led to a diplomatic crisis with Carranza's government in Mexico City. On June 21, 1916, the crisis escalated into violence when Mexican government troops attacked a detachment of the U.S. 10th Cavalry at Carrizal. The Americans suffered 22 casualties and more than 30 Mexicans were killed.

The U.S. Army's actions in Mexico led Germany's foreign minister, Arthur Zimmermann, to think Mexico might welcome further opportunities to take up arms against its powerful neighbor. In January 1917, Zimmermann sent a telegram to the German ambassador to Mexico proposing a Mexican-German alliance in the case of war between the U.S. and Germany and promising Mexico financial support and territory including Texas, New Mexico and Arizona in return for its support.

In late January 1917, with Wilson under pressure from the Mexican government and more concerned with the war overseas than with bringing Villa to justice, the Americans were ordered home.



The Zimmermann Telegram, intercepted and decoded by British intelligence, reached the U.S. government in February; Wilson authorized the State Department to publish it in early March. Americans were outraged, and public sentiment began to turn irrevocably against Germany. The U.S. formally entered World War I on the side of the Allies on April 6, 1917.

Pancho Villa continued his guerrilla activities in northern Mexico until Adolfo de la Huerta took over the government and drafted a reformist constitution. Villa entered into an amicable agreement with Huerta and agreed to retire from politics. In 1920, the government pardoned Villa; three years later, he was assassinated at his ranch in Parral by an unknown assailant.

