

Soldier to fight MMA professionally

"I have to give a lot of credit to the Red Bulls. My amateur fights determined I have the technical prowess, the skill, the talent, but this deployment I really had to focus on getting in that next level of shape."

— Capt. Eli Donker
2nd Battalion, 150th Field Artillery Regiment

By Spc. Samuel Soza
367th MPAD



COB BASRA – Soldiers know that deployments take them to unexpected places, like when they run their first marathon, or finish a college degree, or when they use the time to get physically fit for professional mixed martial arts fighting.

The last one might not apply to most, but Capt. Eli Donker, 2nd Battalion, 150th Field Artillery Regiment, has a chance to test the Modern Army Combatives Program in the fires of the professional circuit.

According to Donker, once he returns home from his current deployment, he will again defend the Elite Cage Fighting Amateur Heavy Weight title -- Elite Cage Fighting being the largest MMA organization in Indiana -- but it will be his last amateur fight.

"My first professional fight is going to be in Nashville, Tenn., for Gameness Fighting Championships in May," he said. "Based on that fight, they are going to determine whether or not I am ready to move up to EWC (Elite Warrior Championship) or the UFC (Ultimate Fighting Championship)."

His ultimate goal is to have a fight on television, said Donker.

"I don't consider myself to be the next heavy-weight champion contender," he said, "but I would love to get a televised event that Soldiers can look at and say, 'Hey, I do that training,' and then walk with a little bit of swagger because that's just us doing our job."



Photos by Spc. Samuel Soza

Capt. Eli Donker, 2nd Battalion, 150th Field Artillery Regiment, native of Fairbanks, Ind., hits the punching bag while working on his striking technique at a gym on COB Basra, Nov. 28. Donker will be fighting his first professional fight for the Gameness Fighting Championship in May.



COOKIES FOR THE TROOPS

Care package quartermasters supply Soldiers with treats

By Pfc. J. Princeville Lawrence
34th Red Bull Infantry Division PAO



COB BASRA – Few things put a smile on a Soldier's face faster than getting a care package during a deployment.

For Soldiers, these boxes are a reminder of home, a wanton luxury, a treasure chest filled with cookies and cakes and treats.

While many boxes come from family and friends, some boxes hail from unfamiliar addresses, from men and women back home who chose to adopt and supply Soldiers they do not know.

These men and women are care package quartermasters,

home-front philanthropists who mail their appreciation overseas. These postal patriots want to do what they can for Soldiers, like the women from the Good Samaritan Society Senior Center in Maplewood, Minn., who prepare the cookies.

Anne Carson, the Good Samaritan Society Health Information Coordinator, said the residents came up with the idea.

"The residents wanted to do something for the troops," Carson said. "They threw around a few ideas before they decided to make the cookies."

These women, veritable cookie veterans, have been baking cookies for their families for many years, and it was an easy switch from baking cookies for little Johnny to shipping cookies to G.I. Joe.

"They are just like grandma's cookies," Good Samaritan resident Helen Malmberg said. "We are all grandmas."

Once mailing has begun, care package quartermasters can quickly find themselves captivated with supplying Soldiers. Laurie Kate Collier, a dentist, started sending care to one Soldier and quickly found herself baking for six, including the author of this article.

"They know me very well at the post office," Collier said.

Sending cookies is not as simple as just baking and folding and stamping, Collier said. Care package quartermasters must gently prepare their gifts for war zone conditions, a task that includes "making sure the custom forms are correct, packing the boxes so the items don't get crushed in transit, waiting in long lines at the post office," she said.

"I had to figure out what baked items would survive the trip to Iraq because it takes a week or two," Collier said. "I went through lots of ice packs also, so the items could survive the heat."

Despite these challenges, Collier said she's, "happy to make things a little better over there for the Soldiers."

"It's the least I can do to make things a little better while you all are away from home," Collier said

Patriotism has never been so delicious.

For more of Pfc. Lawrence's stories, visit:
www.TheRedBulls.org/Horton



Courtesy photo

Helen Malmberg and Mary Fitzgerald whip up a batch of cookies to send to Soldiers overseas. Malmberg and Fitzgerald are residents of the Good Samaritan Society Senior Center, and, since August, have been sending treats to 34th "Red Bull" Infantry Division Soldiers in Iraq. "They are just like grandma's cookies," Good Samaritan resident Helen Malmberg said. "We are all grandmas."

THE RED BULL REPORT

34th Red Bull Infantry Division
Public Affairs Office



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34th Inf. Div. PAO: Lt. Col. Kevin Olson
OIC, Command Information: 1st Lt. Shamika Hill
NCOIC, Command Information: 1st Sgt. David Bennett
NCOIC: Staff Sgt. Chris Carney
Managing Editor: Sgt. Ben Kibbey
Graphics Designer: Sgt. Eric Jungles
Layout/Design: Spc. Francesca Stanchi
Staff Writers: Sgt. Francis Horton, Spc. Sam Soza,
Spc. Samantha Johnson, Pfc. J. Princeville Lawrence

Contributing Units

- 3rd BCT, 3rd Infantry Division
- 17th Fires Brigade
- 4th BCT, 1st Armored Division
- 28th Combat Aviation Brigade
- 367th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Media Queries please contact 34th Inf. Div. Public Affairs Office at MND-S_PAO@iraq.centcom.mil

Iraqi port sights bright future on horizon

By Master Sgt. David Bennett
367th MPAD



UMM QASR – When the city of Basra was particularly unstable between 2006 and 2008, the port of Umm Qasr was left to tread water as a contributor to Iraq's economic development.

Now, however, through the collaboration of the Joint Interagency Task Force-Iraq and Iraqi partners, the port is positioned to navigate over its next developmental hurdle.

Today, port operations are more secure than they were just two years ago, when Shiite extremists controlled much of the area. Quelled by Iraqi forces, the city of Basrah is now peaceful. JIATF, which comprises such organizations as the Department of Homeland Security and Department of Defense, is charged with aiding in Iraq's reconstruction. Part of that collaboration includes devising a plan to make Umm Qasr more attractive to potential international trade partners.

Steadiness in a city that could be Iraq's primary economic generator is a major priority of Multinational Force-Iraq.

Gen. Raymond Odierno, commander of MNF-I, arrived Nov. 21 to speak with JIATF officials about the taskforce's progress at Umm Qasr and its efforts to meet mandates under the International Ship and Port Facility Code – a certification that more countries are obtaining to gain a larger slice of the global maritime marketplace.

A tool of the International Maritime Organization, ISPS is a comprehensive set



Gen. Raymond Odierno, commander, MNF-I, reacts to a comment from a member of JIATF-I, Nov. 21.

of measures to enhance the security of ships and port facilities. It was developed in the wake of the 9/11 attacks.

In the last few months, ships from such countries as North Korea, Jordan, Panama and Sierra Leone have arrived at Umm Qasr carrying wheat, cars and building materials. Built in 1958, Umm Qasr is designed to handle agricultural and manufactured goods and is Iraq's only deep-water commercial port.

Odierno understands that implementing the ISPS certification for Umm Qasr is important for drawing more international trade prospects because ISPS is becoming the accepted standard in international shipping operations. The challenge is getting Iraqi stakeholders to embrace the concept as well.

"If they become more efficient, they have an incredible opportunity," Odierno said of the port authority and its role in Iraq's economic future.

Maj. Mark Reiswig, a civilian military transportation officer for the 34th Infantry Division, helps address port and security issues for JIATF's Port Advisory Co-

ordination Element. While Umm Qasr has made strides to bring the port nearer ISPS compliance, the bigger test is convincing Iraqi stakeholders that privatizing one of the state's most significant state-owned assets will be key.

"The concept that you can come over as a company and make money is pretty foreign to them," said Reiswig of Rockville, Md. "Iraq will look like Kuwait and Bahrain, once they start to make (progress)."

The ISPA certification process is about eight months from being completed.

Because an international port is only as safe as the incoming vessel's last port of call and the cargo's last inspection, it is essential that Iraq ensures measures are sufficient to fend-off threats and protection breaches, said Maitham Najim, Umm Qasr's head of port security.

"(JIATF) gave me a lot of direction, also a check list that helps," Najim said.

The check list is long, but getting shorter.

JIATF and port officials

are currently working to improve various port security features, including better ways of controlling port access, screening and inspecting cargo, installing additional security equipment, upgrading customs processes and introducing automation.

Capital for the upgrades is being provided by a \$370 million loan from Japan.

At the port site, trucks move containers to one yard daily where they are off-loaded and moved to another yard to be used again. Before, containers were stacked in one location and left.

It's getting better as far as efficiency, said Coast Guard Cmdr. Joseph LoSciuto, PACE officer in charge, but there's room for improvement across the whole port operation.

"Right now, it takes 10 days to process cargo once it comes in," he said. "With the changes we want to implement we can cut that down to five days."

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Photos by Master Sgt. David Bennett

Workers at Port of Umm Qasr load bags of grain from a cargo vessel that entered the port Nov. 23. The JIATF-I and Iraqi partners are working to gain International Ship and Port Facility Code certification to entice more maritime business to Iraq.

From Page 1**MMA**

"I'd really like to win that and let it be something we can all share in," said the Fairbanks, Ind., native.

Donker realizes there is more than just him in the fight, and values that.

"I have to give a lot of credit to the Red Bulls. My amateur fights determined I have the technical prowess, the skill, the talent," he said, "but this deployment I really had to focus on getting in that next level of shape."

Donker is grateful to the many Soldiers who share their workout and fitness knowledge with him, from a master sergeant body-builder and a sergeant first class "fitness fanatic", to an "Ironman" on the officer staff.

"Without using this deployment to get into this kind of shape I never would have been able to make the jump to pro," he said, "I really appreciate my brothers and sisters in the 34th. Being attached to those guys has really helped out."

A former Army rugby player, Donker took an interest in the role of effective hand-to-hand combat during his first deployment to Iraq in 2003 with the 101st Airborne Division.

He said the experience showed him that, while the Soldiers were very proficient with their firearms and crew-served weapons, combatives was "something we needed to focus on."

In 2006, he was again on Iraqi soil with the 101st and had since become a "second level" instructor in the combatives program.

"My brigade really took the training seriously. It really made a difference and helped out in a lot of situations," he said.

After returning home, Donker entered his first amateur MMA fight and won with a second round knockout.

It was a two-fold victory, because

he not only won but also recognized that this was a way to test the combatives program.

After winning a second fight, Donker said he began to consider taking his interest to the next level.

Eventually Ranger Up, an apparel company of current and former service members that sponsors the MMA group "Team Rhino," noticed him.

Donker is slated to join the team soon, he said.

He hopes the test of the combatives program in the professional circuit will show that the techniques taught can stand up to other disciplines.

"It adds a credibility," he explained, "Mixed martial arts is the closest way to replicate actual combat, so I can get in there and know it's going to work and know that what I am teaching Soldiers is going to work for them."

MACP focuses on straightforward moves that can be performed quickly and have a "high tolerance" for different real-world situations, he said.

"You don't have to be incredibly precise with them and that's because of the gear, the battle fatigue, the non-standard conditions," he said. "You're not in a ring. You're on a concrete surface or up against a wall or inside a room."

Donker also said that while MACP has defined positions and moves, the strength of the program is the mentality that it fosters.

The culminating challenge for the first level of instruction is the infamous "clinch-drill," when Soldiers must come at a punching instructor from outside striking distance.

"Watching guys go from being scared to being bloodied and confident is awesome," he said, "Clinch-drill day is my favorite day because you get to see Soldiers really understand, 'That hurt, it was scary, but it didn't hurt that bad, it wasn't that

scary and I'm still going to win."

He said mental preparation is key.

"That attitude, whether it's a fire-fight or a hand-to-hand fight or whatever is going on in deployment, it might save their life," he said.

"The basic principle is close the distance, gain a dominant position, and finish the fight," he said, "The definition of a warrior is willingness to close with the enemy."

For the remainder of his time in country, Donker will continue to coach Soldiers in the informal classes on Contingency Operating Base Basra and is helping prepare a team of fighters for an upcoming all-Soldier tournament on Camp Bucca in December.

Donker is exuberant about the opportunity to apply his experience.

"I'm on the threshold of fighting professionally and that's just amazing," he said, "Being able to fight, and represent the Guard, represent the Army, it's very humbling. It makes you want to work pretty hard."

For more of Spc. Soza's stories, visit:

www.TheRedBulls.org/Soza

**ARABIC WORD
OF THE DAY**

Zeen ~
Good/OK/(I) got it



يومك من الحروب

HOMETOWN HIGHLIGHT

Fairbanks was named after Sgt. Nathan Fairbanks, who was killed in September 1812, when his platoon of 12 soldiers was ambushed by a group of Indians just outside of the town.



**Red Bull Radio
PODCAST**

3/1 Cav's
New Role

www.TheRedBulls.org/podcast

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Under an agreement between the Syrian and Iraqi Transport ministries, the first rail trip from the western Syrian seaport of Tartous to Umm Qasr took place earlier this year. According to Reiswig, having a working railway that connects to Basrah's port is an integral part of the transportation equation.

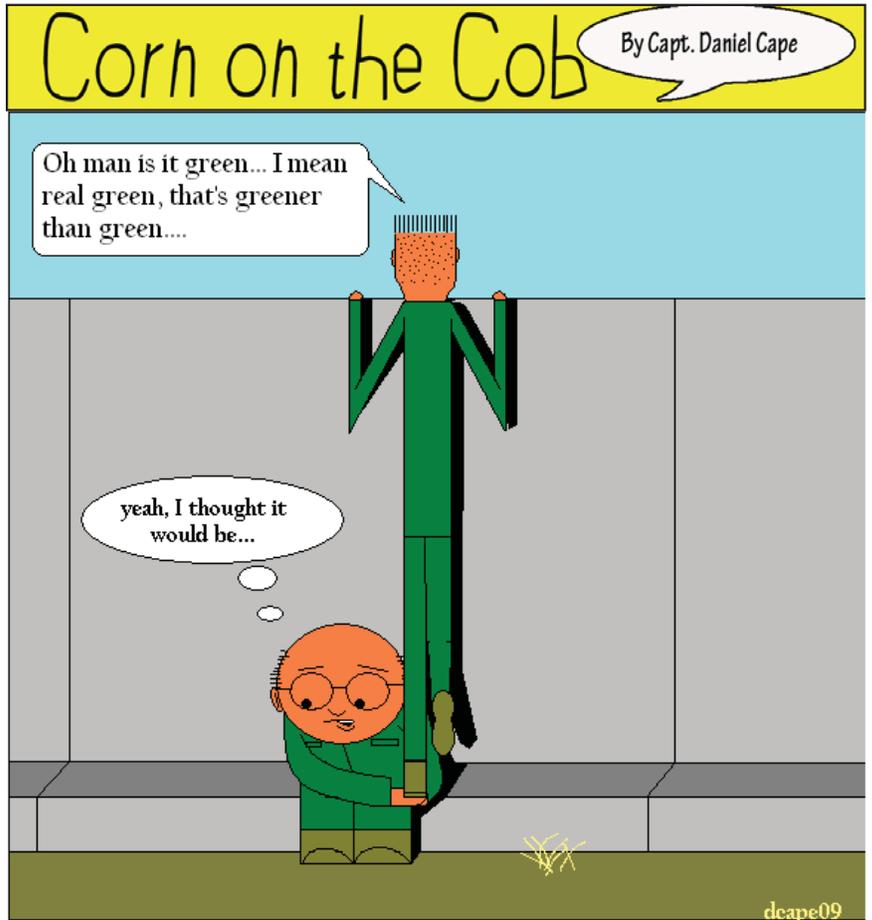
Advisors are pursuing a reduction of the number of port employees to 900 from 4,800, Luscioto said. That's because the state-owned port, a major employer, has a long-standing tradition of patronage.

Convincing their Iraqi counterparts that trimming employee rolls is beneficial to the port's overall efficiency will be difficult, but essential for the port's future.

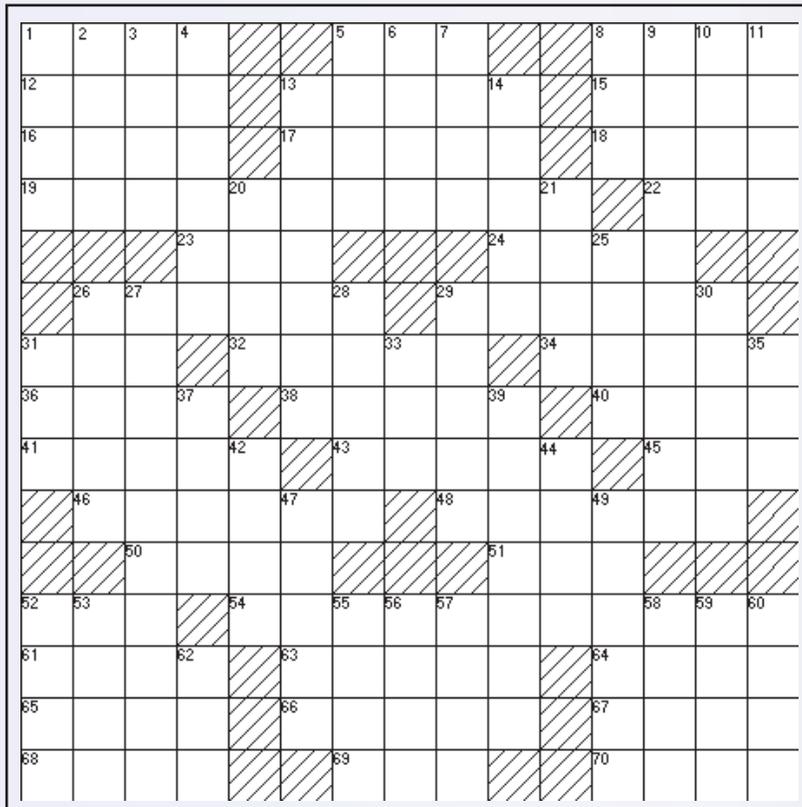
There are no simple solutions in convincing some Iraqi officials that the move to privatization is a move toward a stronger future in Iraq.

"This is important, but we can't do it unless they want to do it," Odierno said.

For more of Master Sgt. Bennett's stories, visit: www.TheRedBulls.org/Bennett



Crossword



For puzzle solutions visit: www.TheRedBulls.org/puzzlesolutions

Across

- 1. Was attired in jazzlike riffs
- 5. Escape 32. Ballroom dance
- 8. Historical periods 34. Film
- 12. Ends a prayer 36. Pledge
- 13. A clique 38. Rent
- 15. Peddle 40. Sea-based armed forces
- 16. Elk or caribou 41. Normal
- 17. Small egg 43. Perpendicular to the keel
- 18. Epic 45. Golf ball support
- 19. Enlightening 22. Taxi
- 23. 52 in Roman numerals
- 24. Departure 46. A short trip to do a task
- 26. Disengage 48. A sliding container
- 29. Tranquil 50. Basilica area
- 31. Music with 51. Ottoman officer
- 52. American Sign Language
- 54. Perceive what isn't there
- 61. Be in an agitated emotional state
- 63. Not smooth
- 64. Smile
- 65. Indolent
- 66. French for "Room"
- 67. Told an untruth
- 68. Sword
- 69. Go through the air
- 70. Cobs of corn

Down

- 1. Dry riverbed
- 2. Portent
- 3. Coral ridge
- 4. Sign up
- 5. Magma
- 6. Adjoin
- 7. French Sudan, today
- 8. S
- 9. Start up again
- 10. Seaweed
- 11. Thick slice
- 13. Provoking laughter
- 14. Flat
- 20. Violent disturbance
- 21. Test
- 25. Religious figure
- 26. Imperial decree
- 27. Make into a citizen
- 28. Work dough
- 29. Modeled
- 30. Frogman
- 31. Former French coin
- 33. Prattle
- 35. Center of a hurricane
- 37. Angelic instrument
- 39. Otagia
- 42. Whip
- 44. Wise men
- 47. Approaches
- 49. Finagle
- 52. Competent
- 53. Detergent
- 55. A unit of bread
- 56. Quiet time
- 57. Not pretty
- 58. Operatic solo
- 59. Level
- 60. Concludes
- 62. Caustic



Around the world in 34 seconds



DAMASCUS, Syria – Syria’s interior minister says an explosion near a bus parked at a gas station was an accident and three people were killed. Mohammad Sammour ruled out a terrorist attack in a statement to state-run Syrian TV. He said the bus driver and two gas station workers were killed when a tire they were pumping air into exploded. Syrian TV quoted Sammour as saying “there were no explosives involved” in Thursday’s accident.



WASHINGTON – The White House on Wednesday shouldered some of the blame for an embarrassing breach of security that permitted an uninvited couple to gatecrash President Barack Obama’s debut state dinner last week. In the latest twist, the White House said it would in the future ensure that White House staff are physically stationed alongside Secret Service agents to screen guests at official events. “After reviewing our actions, it is clear that the White House did not do everything we could have done to assist the United States Secret Service in ensuring that only invited guests enter the complex,” White House Deputy Chief of Staff Jim Messina said in a memo released to the media. The incident, which has an international dimension because the gatecrashers were within feet of Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and they shook hands with Obama, has already drawn a rare public apology from the Secret Service, and Messina reiterated they had been at fault.



ST. PAUL – Andrew Ebbett’s rebound shot in overtime lifted the Minnesota Wild to a 5-4 victory over the Nashville Predators on Wednesday night. Guillaume Latendresse, who scored for Minnesota during a five-goal first period, was stopped twice by Nashville goalie Pekka Rinne before Ebbett grabbed the puck and punched in the next try with a backhand from the slot. Both Ebbett and Latendresse joined the team in the past two weeks. Jason Arnott scored twice, including the go-ahead goal early in the third period, helping Nashville’s top line get back on track. Steve Sullivan, who had three assists, tied the game at 3 with his goal midway through the second period.



VIENNA – A 33-year-old furry photographer is winning fans on social networking website Facebook for pictures of her daily life as an orangutan in a Vienna zoo. Orangutan Nonja’s photos, taken with a camera that dispenses raisins as she snaps, have won over 500 fans on Facebook since the zoo launched an online photo album on Tuesday. Although the slightly blurry images of Nonja’s climbing rope, food and companion’s shaggy red-brown fur have won lots of admiring comments from fans, the photographer herself is not so interested. “Of course the apes don’t care about the pictures, they are just an accidental side product,” said the zoo spokesman Gerhard Kasbauer. “They just know that when they press the button, a raisin pops out.”

X