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December 17, 2009

## U.S. Army regiment stays behind the scenes during elections

By Staff Sgt. Natalie Hedrick  
3rd HBCT Public Affairs Office



FOB KALSU – With the Iraqi National Elections approaching, U.S. Soldiers are preparing to support the Iraqi Army and Iraqi Police while remaining in the background.

The Soldiers of the 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, who are responsible with assisting Iraqi forces in and around Najaf, Iraq, take that mission very seriously.



A boy in Najaf, Iraq enjoys popcorn given to him by Soldiers from “C” Co., 1st Bn., 15th Inf. Regt., 3rd HBCT, 3rd Inf. Div., during a reconnaissance mission of polling sites.

The actual coordination and facilitation of the elections for Najaf has been organized by the Najaf Iraqi Police and the 3rd Battalion, 30th Brigade, 8th Iraqi Army, said Capt. Neil Penttila, commander, “C” Company, 1st Bn., 15th Inf. Regt., whose company is currently stationed at Forward Operating Base Endeavor outside Najaf.

“We try to stay in the background whenever necessary,” Penttila said. “It’s the Iraqi plan. We’re incorporated into that plan as a safety net. We go on their command.”

During the elections, the 1st Bn., 15 Inf. Regt. will be providing enablers to

the Iraqi Army and Iraqi Police such as intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance assets. They will also be ready to provide support at the Iraqi commander’s request.

As part of a reconnaissance mission, Soldiers of “C” Co. traveled to various polling sites in Najaf, Dec. 3, recording their locations and ensuring they will be accessible during the elections.

Penttila said he feels confident in the capabilities of the Iraqi Security Forces in Najaf, and that his confidence extends to his Soldiers’ readiness if they are called.

For more of 3/3 stories, visit:

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~ Capt. Neil Penttila

Commander, “C” Company

1st Bn., 15th Inf. Regt.



Photos by Staff Sgt. Natalie Hedrick

Four women from Najaf, Iraq walk down the street as Soldiers from “C” Co., 1st Bn., 15th Inf. Regt., 3rd HBCT, 3rd Inf. Div., drive past during a reconnaissance mission, Dec. 3. The Soldiers were checking out polling sites in the area, recording their locations and ensuring they will be accessible during the elections. Soldiers from “C” Co. will support the elections but stay behind the scenes as much as possible.



Photos by Sgt. Francis Horton  
Air Force Lt. Col Craig Fery and Chief Master Sgt. Frederick Manamon oversee the construction of a living sustainment area being constructed by local contractors on COB Basra.



Air Force Lt. Col Craig Fery (Right) inspects concrete pulled from the new airfield helicopter parking area on Contingency Operating Base Basra with Chief Master Sgt. Frederick Manamon while Sgt 1st Class Richard Blair, noncommissioned officer in charge of 375th Eng. Co., 2nd Platoon Vertical Construction discusses ways to strengthen the concrete.

# FET builds a better base

By Sgt Francis Horton  
367th MPAD,



COB BASRA – As U.S. forces continue to build-up the infrastructure of Iraq, service members are working to make living in Iraq a bit more bearable for everyone.

“We take care of all facility engineering tasks on Basra,” said Air Force Maj. Trevor L. Smith Sr., outgoing officer in charge of the Facility Engineering Team (FET) on Contingency Operating Base Basra and member of the 732nd Air Expeditionary Group under the 34th Infantry Division.

The FET has been in a state of transition as they prepare to redeploy back to the states. Smith’s successor, Air Force Lt. Col. Craig Fery of the 732nd AEG, has visited to job sites to check on current and possible future projects, Fery said.

When the U.S. Army took over COB Basra, there wasn’t much in the way of comforts built, Smith said. In the last few months, things like paved roads and a new USO have cropped up thanks to the FET.

When planners decide to build something, whether it is a new set of Living Sustainment Areas or latrines, contracts are drawn up and local contractors bid on them, Smith said.

Iraqi contractors are the first to bid on the contracts, providing economical support for the country and starting the process of turning the base over to the Iraqi people.

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## THE RED BULL REPORT

34th Red Bull Infantry Division  
Public Affairs Office



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- 17th Fires Brigade
- 4th BCT, 1st Armored Division
- 28th Combat Aviation Brigade
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Photo by Spc. Samuel Soza

Gary Mead, of Phoenix, Ariz., electrical technician with ManTech, installs the Boomerang acoustic shooter-detection system at Contingency Operating Base Basra. The system uses a cluster of microphones to analyze incoming gunfire and alerts Soldiers to the shooter's location.

## Shooter-detection system comes around

By Spc. Samuel Soza  
367th MPAD



COB Basra – “What goes around comes around”, is one way to describe the Soldier’s trained response to enemy contact.

Now Soldiers have one more way to make sure they can keep that saying true.

A new acoustic shooter-detection system called Boomerang detects incoming gunfire and alerts Soldiers to the shooter’s location, allowing them to immediately return fire accurately.

“It’s an anti-sniper detection system,” said Pierre Jackson, an installer of Boomerang systems for the firm D3M.

“Basically, if someone is firing at you, it picks up exactly where they’re firing from,” said the **Baton Rouge**, La. native.

When a Soldier is on patrol, the device is passive. It signals Soldiers

with an audible and a visual warning if it detects an incoming, supersonic round.

It relays the direction, distance, and azimuth to the shooter.

Training only takes a half-hour.

“The system itself seems very easy to learn,” said Chief Warrant Officer Joshua White, native of Ft. Lewis, Wash., electronic warfare officer for the 17th Fires Brigade.

“It’s something that the Army has

used to protect the Soldier,” he said. “That’s what’s important: bringing our Soldiers home.”

According to Michael Reich, of Winchester, Ky., an instructor on the Boomerang system for D3M, the system is a crucial tool for Soldiers.

“It’s going to be a very effective system that’s going to help them get

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### HOMETOWN HIGHLIGHT

**Baton Rouge dates back to 1699, when French explorer Sieur d’Iberville leading an exploration party up the Mississippi River saw a reddish cypress pole festooned with bloody animals and fish that marked the boundary between Houma and Bayou Goula tribal hunting grounds. They called the tree “le bâton rouge,” or red stick.**

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**SYSTEM**

out of the heat of the battle," he said.

The \$15,000 system is becoming more commonplace on Soldiers' tactical vehicles and takes approximately an hour to install.

A cluster of microphones picks up the sounds of incoming supersonic rounds and a computer analyzes the sounds.

Since only supersonic rounds are detected, a false alarm cannot be created by such things as fireworks, said Reich.

The Boomerang system can also discern outgoing fire and even allows Soldiers to recall the last ten shots registered, he said.

The first of these Boomerangs arrived in Mosul in July 2009.

"Since then the system has been improved," said Jackson. "It's gone from 100 pounds to 26 pounds, it's very manageable and easy to maintain."

"We have gotten excellent feedback on them," he said. "It's been field tested and that's why they come with a zero-fault test on the system itself. Soldiers can trust this stuff."

According to Reich, a former Airman, there are already plans to adapt the system for foot patrols.

"I love this job," he said, "I love coming out, helping the Soldiers with this system that is really effective. I feel like I'm really giving them stuff that is going to help save their life over here."

Formerly an enlisted infantry Soldier, Jackson was deployed to Iraq from 2003 to 2004, where he received his first Purple Heart in combat.

"Once a Soldier always a Soldier," said Jackson, "Anything to help them out because I've been there."

For more of Spc. Soza's stories, visit: [www.TheRedBulls.org/Soza](http://www.TheRedBulls.org/Soza)



**Red Bull Radio  
PODCAST**

"CASEVAC"

[www.TheRedBulls.org/podcast](http://www.TheRedBulls.org/podcast)



Photo by Spc. Samuel Soza  
Kinechen Eason, of Tarboro, N.C., electrical technician with Computer Science Corps, installs the Boomerang acoustic shooter-detection system control panel in a Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicle at Contingency Operating Base Basra. The system detects gunfire and alerts Soldiers audibly and visually to the shooter's distance and direction.

**ARABIC WORD  
OF THE DAY**

Inta/inti - you  
(singular, m/f)



كلمة من اليوم

**Attention St. Cloud Area Soldiers**

A video teleconference is being held for St. Cloud Area Soldiers

Information about services offered in and around St. Cloud for returning vets

Valuable and specific information for Soldiers who reside in that area



When 17:30 Dec. 17th  
Where Town Hall (Interim Chapel)

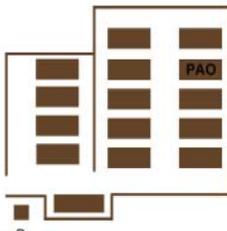
**a CHANCE TO SHOW YOUR APPRECIATION TO THOSE WHO APPRECIATE YOU...**



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Dec. 19, 2100-0000, come to the PAO trailer behind Green Beans Coffee near D-Main to Skype with volunteers packing cookies for you!

Contact 1st Lt. Shamika Hill: [shamika.hill@iraq.centcom.mil](mailto:shamika.hill@iraq.centcom.mil)



Green Beans

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**BUILDS**

“Contractors are self-sustained,” Smith said.

When a company is hired, they provide their own labor, supplies, tools and management. The Joint Contracting Command, Iraq, draws up contracts and presents them for bidding.

As the local contractors work, the FET checks up on the various projects they are working on. The team makes sure projects are being completed on time and meet land and building specifications.

“Things are always changing on the COB,” said Fery. “We have to police the management of the land.”

During the turnover, Smith has been showing Fery some of the major construction sites on post. The two are going over the various elements of the COB and the current state of buildings, as well as introducing Fery to the key customers and challenges present, Smith said.

Currently, the biggest project is the eventual turnover of the Basrah International Airport. The FET is currently overseeing the construction of an aircraft parking lot for military use, Fery said. The military will continue to use the airport for flights.

Most of the necessary construction has been finished or is currently in progress, and the FET will work on sustaining the quality of life for the service members stationed here. Things like clean water, roads and sewage will have to be constantly monitored.

Construction projects continue to start here, and though sustainment and quality of life is important, the FET is keeping green as well.

“Environmentally, we want to leave the base better than we found it,” Fery said. Once the eventual handoff to the Iraqi government comes, Basra will be a base with sustained living conditions and plenty of assets for the Iraqi soldiers.

The U.S. presence in Iraq may be winding down for American troops, but the FET is here to make every day until we leave as pleasant as possible.

For more of Sgt. Horton’s stories, visit

[www.TheRedBulls.org/horton](http://www.TheRedBulls.org/horton)



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Photo by Pfc. J. Princeville Lawrence

**Black Hawk, suns come out over COB Basra**

A UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter flies low over Contingency Operating Base Basra during the late afternoon hours Dec. 12.

**S U D O K U**

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		8		5				
				8				7

For puzzle solutions visit: [www.TheRedBulls.org/puzzlesolutions](http://www.TheRedBulls.org/puzzlesolutions)

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# Red Bull Flea Market & Charity Collection



**Sell or donate  
your stuff!**

## Sunday, January 17, 2010

at the Red Bull USA Volleyball courts from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

**This is an opportunity to sell your items privately, from service member to service member or to donate items to charity! Provide your own display, and set your own prices. Pick up bags to store donations\* prior to Jan. 17 at the Red Bull MWR tent.**

\*SUGGESTED ITEMS - clean towels and bed linens, useable running shoes, civilian clothes, etc.

\*PROHIBITED ITEMS - uniform clothing items, undergarments, any military equipment, any item with an NSN, and weapons.

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Instructor: Staff Sgt. Paul Gidding

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9 a.m. - 8 p.m.  
Beauty Shop hours:  
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Now accepting Eagle Cash!

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"A touch of home"  
sidewalk cafe  
guitar hero/rockband room  
xbox/playstation "battle stations"  
theater  
phones/internet  
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new movie titles  
**open daily**  
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**6 am**  
Located in the main gym

**Soldiers/Hunters:**  
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[www.TheRedBulls.org/events](http://www.TheRedBulls.org/events)  
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an all expense-paid  
pheasant hunting trip!

## Around the world in 34 seconds

**WORLD** KHAN NESHIN, Afghanistan – Only a few hundred American troops are policing the southern border of one of Afghanistan’s major smuggling areas, leaving open a vast expanse of desert that the Taliban uses to shuttle in weapons and fighters from Pakistan. This dusty hamlet 75 miles (120 kilometers) north of the border in Helmand province was the Taliban’s key transit point from Pakistan before the Marines arrived in July. Since then, the Marines have set up a series of patrol bases east and west of Khan Neshin to disrupt the Taliban’s supply lines. But the battalion deployed at only about 50 percent of its authorized strength, and one of its three companies is posted in central Helmand. That leaves several hundred Marines to cover roughly 6,000 square miles — an area larger than Connecticut. As a result, the Marines may have trouble curbing Taliban supply lines as thousands of fresh troops pour into the province as part of President Barack Obama’s surge.

**U.S.** WASHINGTON – US President Barack Obama, in remarks aired late Sunday, awarded himself a B plus for his first 11 months in office, stressing in an interview with talk show queen Oprah Winfrey that there was still much to be done. “A good solid B plus,” Obama said during an hour-long, intimate soft-focus ABC network Christmas at the White House special, when Winfrey asked what grade he would give himself. Explaining why he wouldn’t give himself top marks, the president said his administration had “inherited the biggest set of challenges of any president since Franklin Delano Roosevelt” which they were still working on.

**SPORTS** CHICAGO – Kobe Bryant scored a season-high 42 points to spark the Los Angeles Lakers to their 12th victory in 13 games, pounding the Chicago Bulls 96-87 in an NBA game. Bryant, wearing a splint on his broken right index finger, scored 20 points in the first quarter and finished with a slam dunk in the closing seconds that had the Chicago crowd chanting “MVP” for Most Valuable Player honors. Pau Gasol pulled down 16 rebounds and Andrew Bynum added 11 points for the Lakers while the Bulls, who lost for the 11th time in 13 games, were led by 21 points from Derrick Rose and Britain’s Luol Deng. French standout Joakim Noah added 11 points and 20 rebounds for the Bulls, who fell to 8-15. The reigning NBA champion Lakers improved to 19-4, the best record in the Western Conference.

**ODD** UKRAINE – A chemistry student from the northern Ukrainian city of Konotop was killed when a stick of chewing gum exploded in his mouth, Ukrainian media reported on Tuesday. The 25-year-old student of Ukraine’s Kiev Polytechnic Institute was working at a computer in his parents’ house late on Saturday when the incident occurred. A forensic examination established that the chewing gum was covered with an unidentified chemical substance, thought to be some type of explosive material. Police questioning revealed that the student had a bizarre habit of chewing gum after dunking it into citric acid. On his table, police found both citric acid packets and a similar-looking unidentified substance, believed to be some kind of explosive material. Investigators believe that the student simply confused the packets, and put the gum, covered with explosive material, into his mouth. Although the local forensic department does not have the necessary equipment to identify the substance, it refused to send it to the capital, Kiev, over fears that it might explode during transportation. Forensic experts from Kiev are expected in Konotop on Wednesday.