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INDEPENDENCE *Gazette*

Ready to Roll

*56th SBCT prepares for
operations in Iraq*



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All editorial content of the Independence Gazette is prepared, edited, and approved by the Multi-National Division Baghdad Public Affairs Office.

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Why the Independence Gazette?

The name for the 56th SBCT magazine and newsletter is derived from the unit's historic ties to Benjamin Franklin and the city of Philadelphia.

The 56th Brigade is known as the Independence Brigade because the brigade is headquartered in Philadelphia, the birthplace of American independence.

The name Gazette harks back to the "Pennsylvania Gazette," a newspaper run by Benjamin Franklin. Franklin did not start the Gazette but under his ownership the paper became the most successful in the colonies.

The legacy of Benjamin Franklin lives on with the 1-111th Infantry tracing its lineage back to 1747 when Franklin organized his Associators to defend Philadelphia from the threat of French privateers.

The Independence Gazette will chronicle the activities of the 56th in Iraq as it continues to build on the proud legacy of the Pennsylvania militia: "Citizen in peace, Soldier in war."

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On The Cover.

Spc. Ryan Cannon (L) and Pvt. 1st Class Steve Grimes (R) of Headquarters Company, First Battalion, 111th Infantry install camouflage netting on their Stryker vehicle at Camp Taji, Iraq. The 1st of the 111th, like most battalions in the 56th, will leave Camp Taji and work at joint security stations in various locations north of Baghdad.

The 56th SBCT on Feb. 24 took over operations from the 25th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, which ended its 15-month Iraq deployment.

U.S. Army photo by Master Sgt. Sean Whelan



Brigade prepared to meet challenges of Iraq deployment, says 56th SBCT commander



56th Stryker Brigade Combat Team Commander Col. Marc Ferraro (center, facing forward) meets with Iraqi Police officials and the commander of 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat team, 25th Infantry Division, Col. Todd McCaffrey (at right) following a ceremony marking the turn over of Joint Security Station Awad Feb. 4. The 56th SBCT will build upon the security gains made by 2-25 Soldiers during their 15-month deployment. U.S. Army photo by Master Sgt. Sean Whelan

**By Capt. CORY ANGELL
56th SBCT PAO**

"I'm sure that a lot of our families back home have been hearing good news about some of the things happening in Iraq," said Col. Marc Ferraro, the 56th Stryker Brigade Combat Team commander. "That being said we are still conducting full-spectrum operations and our Soldiers will maintain an offensive mindset."

Ferraro said the Soldiers of the brigade understand that there are still security concerns in the area of operations.

"I do think that operations here are shifting," Ferraro said. "I expect to see more and more emphasis put on our non-lethal targeting as we shift from offensive operations to stability operations."

Ferraro said that some non-lethal operations include assisting the Government of Iraq in identifying the greatest need for essential services such as power, water and waste disposal - something many back home may take for granted.

"All our operations are joint operations," Ferraro said. "We work very closely with the Iraqi Security Forces in both our lethal and non-lethal targeting and Iraq is continuing to grow and take on a greater role in day to day operations."

Referring to the mission here, Ferraro said the one thing that will remain constant is change.

"The Security Agreement calls for some forces to move out of the cities by June and we operate in a constantly changing environment," Ferraro said. "For this reason some units have been realigned and we expect that other changes will occur, but the mission overall will stay the same: Provide a secure environment and foster the continued growth of the Government of Iraq."

Ferraro said the brigade was set up for success and will meet the challenges that lay ahead.

"We have received some very challenging training and we are fortunate enough to replace one of the finest brigades in the U.S. Army," Ferraro said. "The 2nd [Stryker] Brigade [Combat Team], 25th Infantry Division has outstanding leaders and Soldiers who have welcomed us with open arms and saw to it that we learned from their 15 months here in Iraq."

Ferraro said the command has preached "mission first and family always" for the long mission ahead.

"We told our leaders to strive to keep families informed," Ferraro said. "Even if a Soldier gets a small injury playing football he's to give a call home and let his family know he is alright."

Ferraro pointed out that support from home is strong and that it helps Soldiers concentrate on the challenges ahead. "They are focused on their mission," Ferraro said, "and eager to begin the work they have been trained to do."



Pennsylvania National Guardsmen, from left, 1st Lt. Michael Deal, Pfc. Michael Deal Sr. and Pfc. Johnathan Deal are serving together in Iraq with the 56th Stryker Brigade Combat Team. Deal Sr. is the father of Lt. Deal and the other Pfc. Deal. The two privates enlisted 18 months ago so the trio could deploy together. The three soldiers are shown here at Camp Beuhring, Kuwait, prior to moving into Iraq. U.S. Army photo by Master Sgt. Sean Whelan

Pittsburgh area 'Deals' three of a kind for 56th SBCT

Father, sons serve together in Iraq

By Sgt. DOUGLAS ROLES
56th SBCT PAO NCO

A Pittsburgh area National Guardsman who enlisted at an age when many Soldiers are winding down careers is serving in Iraq with his two sons.

The trio volunteered for the 56th Stryker Brigade Combat Team's deployment and has trained together in Mississippi and Louisiana following the brigade's

September 2008 mobilization.

"We knew going in that the Stryker Brigade was going to be deploying. That's why we signed up as combat engineers," Pfc. Michael Deal Sr., 42, said of the respective enlistments of he and his son, Pfc. Johnathan Deal, 20, in August and September 2007.

Deal's other son, 1st Lt. Michael Deal, 24, was serving in the Pennsylvania Guard's 55th Brigade at that time. He volunteered to go with 56th. He has been a Guard Soldier for three years.

The Deals are from Freeport, Butler County, Pa. Lt. Deal works as an intelligence

officer at the 56th SBCT Headquarters company. The enlisted Deals serve in the 856th Engineer Co. as combat engineers, with the youngest Deal driving a Stryker.

Lt. Deal led the way into military service. While a high school senior, he was in a Freeport hospital for a routine visit. The date was Sept. 11, 2001.

"I knew at that point I wanted to join the National Guard and make a difference," Deal said. He enlisted about a year later.

As a civilian, Lt. Deal works as a sports marketer. Johnathan Deal was an engineering student at Penn State

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Education easy at Taji center

By Master Sgt. SEAN WHELAN
56th SBCT PAO NCO

Many Soldiers use deployments as a time to reset and for introspection and self evaluation. Some find after this time of reflection that there is room for some personal improvement. One of the best ways to return home a better you is by taking advantage of the Army's education programs.

The Camp Taji Education Center is a good place to start or continue your education, but to make the most of your experience it's smart to do your homework before you sign up for class.

Sgt. 1st Class Robert Smith is the noncommissioned officer in charge of the Taji Education Center and says if you want the Army to pay for your online courses there are steps you must take before enrolling. "You have to have some idea what you want to do and have a school and degree program picked out," Smith said.

Once that's done the potential student needs to read and fill out a *Statement of Understanding for Use With Army Tuition Assistance* form. This form is available at the Education Center or on the Go Army Ed tab on Army Knowledge Online. "Soldiers need to have this form signed



by themselves and their commander and bring the form with their mobilization orders with them to the Ed Center," Smith said. "I can then get them enrolled in the Go Army Ed program." In addition to college courses Soldiers can

also take CLEP, DSST and Excelsior exams at the Education Center to earn college credits. If Soldiers take advantage of the Army education programs they can look forward to returning home with more than a combat patch.

56SBCT education officer lists A,B,Cs of benefits

By 1st Lt. ROBERT PRAH
56th SBCT EDUCATION OFFICER

The Camp Taji Education Center offers services including Federal Tuition Assistance, proctoring examinations, ASVAB testing, fast classes, as well as a computer lab for educational use. 56th SBCT Soldiers are encouraged to contact their education representatives for more information.

The center is at Building 613A, Sooner Avenue & 37th Street. DSN (318) 834-3336. Hours of operation are: Monday - Saturday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m, closed Sundays.

Did you know?

Upon redeployment, you will qualify for the following benefits:

1. Under the Post 9/11 G.I. Bill - Housing stipend equal to the Basic Allowance for Housing of an E-5 with dependents for the ZIP code where the student is enrolled in school. The average monthly BAH for an E-5 with dependents is \$1,328. This does not currently apply to students enrolled in online or distance education programs.

2. Under the Post 9/11 G.I. Bill - You may receive up to \$1,000 per academic year which is paid at the beginning of the semester in one lump sum. Actual payments are adjusted based on the number of credits enrolled.

3. Under the Post 9/11 G.I. Bill - You will be able to decide how much of your benefits can be transferred to your spouse or children. Defense and service officials are still working on final details; the rules will allow the entire career force to transfer all or part of their post 9/11 benefit to family members.

4. There are several Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education institutions offering online degree programs for students interested in online higher education. Contact 1st Lt. Robert Prah for more information. The PASSHE online institutions are listed as those 14 institutions participating in the 100 percent Education Assistance Program in Pennsylvania. There is no tuition out of pocket.

Interested in learning more about your education benefits while on active duty and after demobilization? An education briefing is being planned now. If a minimum of 20 Soldiers attend, an iPod raffle will be held. Contact 56th Stryker Brigade Combat Team education officer 1st Lt. Robert Prah for more information on the briefing and raffle. Email robert.prah@us.army.mil. Or, contact Education NCOIC Sgt. Warren Wolfe at: warren.wolfe@us.army.mil.



Soldiers from 1-111th building on progress realized in Tarmiyah



Photos by Sgt. Doug Roles

Spc. Jeremy Yoder (center), 1st Battalion, 111th Infantry Protective Service Detail, pulls security while other Soldiers in the patrol advance. The PSD escorted battalion leaders and civil affairs Soldiers to two ribbon cutting ceremonies in Tarmiyah Feb. 15. One was at a new ambulance facility (below, at right) while the other took place at the new internally displaced personnel center in Tarmiyah (right) which primarily serves displaced residents of Horya. Sheik Sa'id Jassia wielded the scissors at the back-to-back events.

**By Master Sgt. SEAN WHELAN and Sgt. DOUG ROLES
56th SBCT PAO NCOIC, NCO**

A 56th Stryker Brigade Combat Team unit has seen success from the start of its new mission in Iraq despite what the company's commander has termed "long days, short nights" and a learning curve that equates to "drinking from a fire hose."

Soldiers of Company C, 1st Battalion, 111th Infantry took control of Joint Security Station Tarmiyah (north of Baghdad) Feb. 14, as other 56th SBCT units were also in the process of taking the reins from their departing 2nd Brigade, 25th Infantry Division counterparts. The company started its deployment with the discovery of a weapons cache while working jointly with the Iraqi Army the evening of Valentines Day.

"Our first mission as the battlespace owner turned out to be a very productive and rewarding experience for everybody," said Capt. Peter Muller, commander of the Kutztown, Pa.-based unit.

Muller, from Clifton Heights, near Philadelphia, said the Soldiers in his unit are eager to continue the work of their predecessors.

"Right now our mission is to support the Iraqi Security Forces ... and to continue to develop civil capacity in the Tarmiyah area, as well as in the surrounding towns, by doing civil projects, assisting the Iraqi governance and continuing to help build their infrastructure," Muller said.

Part of that infrastructure includes the new ambulance center in Tarmiyah and the nearby displaced persons administrative facility. Soldiers from the unit took part in ribbon cutting ceremonies for both facilities Feb. 15. Muller credited the departing unit for the part it played in those developments and for helping the National Guard Soldiers prepare for the turn over.

"It's been a great experience so far. It's like drinking from a fire hose," he said. "The unit before us has done phenomenal work. I can't speak enough about the

great job that Company A, 1-114th, 2-25, has done here."

"They've set us up for success," "It's been a whirlwind. Long days. Short nights. But it's worth it," Muller said. "It's our responsibility to continue the good work that they started,"

Part of the ribbon cutting event included the escort of battalion leaders and civil affairs Soldiers to the ceremony. As the 1-111th units began taking over their battlespace, Staff Sgt. Dennis Hardman, noncommissioned officer in charge of the 1-111th's Protective Service Detail, has taken on escort missions.

Hardman said his unit began working its mission in early February. He said his Soldiers are doing well.

"They're really excited," he said.

The unit is comprised of Soldiers selected from throughout 1-111th.

Hardman said the "Team Blue" PSD mis-



sion has included a learning curve for the Soldiers who previously had not worked together, let alone rolled out together in their MRAP (Mine Resistant Ambush Protected) vehicles.

Hardman, of Elizabethtown, Pa. said the departing soldiers helped with the change.

"The Team Blue I replace gave me a lot of feedback, gave us suggestions, and we've

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Faces of Sa'ab Al Bour

These images are from a mission in Sa'ab Al Bour with the departing Public Affairs Officer Maj. Allen Hing, 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, and Capt. Cory Angell, 56th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, public affairs officer.

(R) Woman and child and Sa'ab Al Bour street scene. (U.S. Army photo by Maj. Allen Hing.)

(Below) Iraqi boy in U.S.A. shirt. (U.S. Army photo by Capt. Cory Angell.)

The 56th SBCT Public Affairs would like to acknowledge the 2nd SBCT public affairs staff for their support and guidance during the transition.





Clockwise from top right: Sgt. 1st Class Roger Daub, noncommissioned officer in charge of the 56th SBCT's Protective Service Detail, talks with Soldiers during an after action review of a training event in mid-January; a squad moves in to clear a room at the Military Operations on Urban Terrain site at Camp Beuhring, Kuwait; Sgt. Michael Gjerde (center, right) and Sgt. Kyle Lewis lead a patrol into the MOUT site; Spc. Steven Garver (kneeling) and Sgt. Jerry Ash pull security.

Stryker Brigade detail provides security, escort for command staff

By Sgt. DOUG ROLES
56th SBCT PAO NCO

When Soldiers of the 56th Stryker Brigade Combat Team's Protective Service Detail roll out on missions in Iraq they rely on training that began in September at Camp Shelby, Miss. and continues throughout their deployment.

The PSD's noncommissioned officer in charge, Sgt. 1st Class Roger Daub, is proud of the progress his platoon has made working as a team - considering many of the unit's Soldiers first met as the Pennsylvania Army National Guard brigade mobilized in late summer.

The PSD is responsible for escorting military leaders and officials to various functions. Daub said the platoon hopes for uneventful missions but

needs to be able to immediately react to threats. He said the unit's Soldiers trained until their squad movements became muscle memory.

Daub, 44, a Hershey, Pa. resident, said it's important that each Soldier knows how to respond in different situations, staying aware of not only potential threats but the location of other Soldiers. He said in this phase of the war in Iraq, Soldiers also need to know what level of force to use.

"The Soldier in today's battlefield is responsible for so many things now, down to the lowest level, not just the leaders," Daub said. "We teach them to go from zero to 60 in a millisecond."

During several days of training in January at Camp Beuhring, Kuwait, Daub's goal was to "create a little chaos" as the PSD's squads moved through a Military Operations on Urban Terrain site.

The Soldiers practiced patrolling through an urban setting,



reacting to enemy contact and clearing rooms. The Soldiers had to move quickly while wearing helmets, body armor and other protective gear. All the while, Daub motivated them, directing them to move more quickly while working as a team and still being aware of safety aspects such as muzzle direction.

Each training event at the MOUT site was followed by a brief after-action review that allowed Soldiers to review with Daub what worked well and what the team needs to improve.

"Was it chaotic? It was chaotic and no one was shooting at you," Daub told the PSD following one drill in which Soldiers firing plastic bullets covered each other as the team crossed an open area from one building corner to another.

"They're working on their movement and formations," Daub explained. "They're also training on how to protect the principle and move from point

to point." Daub pointed out that the Soldiers began training together in September. He said since then they have become a cohesive unit. Daub said training began with basic Soldier skills and progressed through lanes training at

"That transition happens when they, as a team, execute on a collective event,"

**Sgt. 1st Class Roger Daub
PSD NCOIC**

Camp Shelby and force-on-force mission readiness exercises at the Joint Readiness training Center at Fort Polk, La.

"That's where their confidence really develops," he said. "That transition happens when they, as a team, execute on a collective event."

Daub said he wanted the Soldiers trained to the point where they attain what he calls "quality arrogance."

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**Photos by
Master Sgt. Sean Whelan**



Ready ...

Aim ...

Make ...

Pa. Guard Artillery History



(Con't from Page 8)

efficient and their guys are technically competent. We've been working our guys in with theirs and getting up to speed with the way they perform day-to-day operations."

While lethal missions very rarely occur at this stage in the war, Beard said, his counterparts have fired illumination rounds nearly every night since he arrived.

"Primarily we have two missions," Beard said. "One is counter-fire, if we happen to get fired upon by the enemy. Our main mission, though, is illumination/terrain denial. By firing illume (artillery rounds designed to light an area from the sky) at night, it basically prohibits the enemy from going out, planting IEDs and doing bad things."

"I think it's good for our guys to see an active duty crew in action and see that a National Guard crew can be on par with them and as be successful as they are," Beard said.

According to Beard, there are three main parts to artillery: eyes, brains and brawn.

"The eyes are the forward observers that are out there on the ground and visually see the target," Beard said. "The brain, which is the fire direction center, takes the data that the forward observer gives them and calculates it into a method that the brawn, the guns, can understand. Those three work in conjunction. The observer will see a target and then pass it down to us, we'll calculate it and pass it down to the gun line. Once the round is fired, the observer will see it impact and either give an assessment of the damage to the target or make corrections if the round is not on target."

The overall mission of the 1-108th is that of base defense with tasks that vary from personal security to clearing roads of improvised explosive devices. Of the three firing batteries in the battalion, Bravo Battery is the only unit currently tasked with firing the Howitzers.

According to Hoskins, while his crew has a few members that have deployed previously, they did not do so as artillerymen.

"This is the first time that the majority of us have been to combat and it's actually rare that a field artillery unit gets to come to combat and perform its primary job," Hoskins said. "Artillery is often used as military police and supplements to infantry and cavalry units because there's no need for a full battalion of field artillery anymore. We feel pretty lucky."

By Capt. ED SHANK
1-108th FA

Bravo Battery, 1st Battalion, 108th Field Artillery made history in Kuwait in January as the first Pennsylvania National Guard unit to fire artillery outside the continental U.S. since World War II. On Feb. 14 the battery set a new landmark by becoming the first National Guard unit to fire the M777A2 in Iraq.

According to Staff Sgt. Harry Hoskins, chief of Howitzer Section 2, the honor is not lost on the men of his battery.

"Every member of my crew is aware of the fact that we're making history and are excited to finally be doing the job we've been training to do," Hoskins said. "Our crew is pretty fired up to finally be here in Iraq and doing a real combat mission and we're gaining a lot of experience from the unit we're replacing. The guys from 2-11th (the outgoing unit) have been nothing short of totally awesome. We're learning from them and are excited to take over the mission."

The ordnance fired on Feb. 14 was intended to calibrate the unit's M777 Howitzers – brand-new guns recently fielded to the

Photo by Capt. Ed Shank

Soldiers of Bravo Battery, 1st Battalion, 108th Field Artillery, fire the M777A2 artillery piece at Camp Taji, Iraq Feb. 14. The shot was one "heard 'round the world" as the 108th became the first National Guard unit to fire the "triple seven" in Iraq. The unit also marked another first in January, while firing in Kuwait. Those shots made the unit the first Pennsylvania National Guard unit to fire artillery outside the continental U.S. since World War II.

108th and no other National Guard units. Bravo Battery fired rounds from M777A2 Howitzers for nearly four straight hours – calibrating their guns and getting a feel for conditions at Fire Base Mayhem, Camp Taji.

According to 2nd Lt. Korry Beard, fire direction officer for Bravo Battery, the calibration was designed to account for muzzle velocities which will improve the accuracy of where the rounds will impact, thereby reducing the chances for collateral damage.

"The calibration went really well," Beard said. "The 2-11th has been here for more than a year. Their crews are very pro-

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Two firsts for PA's FA

- First Pa. National Guard unit to fire guns outside U.S. since WWII

- First Guard unit to fire "triple seven" in Iraq

PSD

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"They're 100 percent confident," he said. Daub said the training at Beuhring, before moving into Iraq, was especially important because the Soldiers had not trained together for several weeks – during the movement from Fort Polk to Fort Dix, N.J. and during the Christmas leave period.

Following a drill in which the PSD was to move into the MOUT site and secure the mock village for a visit by a dignitary, Daub asked the Soldiers to recount what happened following the initial contact with the enemy (played by other PSD Soldiers).

"It was chaotic and everyone was scrambling like maniacs," Sgt. Chris Roe, of Hermitage, Pa. recalled.

The group then walked through Soldier movements from the point of contact to the securing of buildings. Asked by Daub for something his squad needs to improve upon, Roe said, "We have to keep talking."

He said during the preceding lane he no-

Pittsburgh

(Con't from Page 2)

University's Behrend Campus, Erie. He enlisted following his first year of college and interrupted his studies to deploy with the family.

The elder Deal is an electrician and has worked for several Pittsburgh area firms.

"I worked for corporate America and it was somewhat satisfying. In essence I wanted a purpose-driven life," he said of his decision to enlist.

He said he has friends who were serving in the military and he talked to them about their service.

"They all felt that it benefited their life," Deal said.

"I really didn't have any influence on them joining," 1st Lt. Deal said, adding that he "didn't campaign" for them to join. The elder Deal said though that he and Johnathan saw the benefits Lt. Deal was receiving from the Guard. The two privates enlisted a few weeks apart.

"We ran into each other now and again at basic training," Johnathan Deal said.

The younger Deals said their mother had some concerns about the enlistment. The elder Deal too said his ex-wife "was worried."

"At first she thought we were kidding around with her," Lt. Deal said.

He said the trio "has always been close"

ticed one of his Soldiers quit firing. Roe said there was "a pop, pop," an expletive from that Soldier, "and then quiet" as that Soldier's weapon jammed. The Soldier had failed to yell out that his rifle had malfunctioned.

"The best thing you can do is just keep communicating," Daub said.

He said there is a natural tendency for a person to go quiet when something goes wrong but said in a combat situation squad leaders need to know what's happening.

"If you say 'My weapon's jammed,' I'm not going to ask 'Why?'" but I'm going to cover you," Daub said.

The drill was followed by another training iteration featuring a similar mission. This time the squads did a better job of communicating, calling out to each other as portions of the village were secured.

By the end of the day Daub was pleased with the progress.

and said he probably worries about the other two more than they realize.

Lt. Deal said his father "seems happy" but admits he initially didn't think his dad was serious about enlisting.

Asked if he worries about his sons and the coming months in a combat zone, Pfc. Deal said: "Being an older man I realize there's no more risk than driving to and from work in performing my duties in the National Guard."

"The training is more superior than I ever would have suspected," he said, terming enlistment at age 40 "a fun challenge."

"I plan on doing my full 20," the elder Deal said while the three Soldiers sat for an interview. "It's definitely one of the best decisions I've made in a while."

The younger Pfc. Deal said he is leaning toward 20 years while his brother says he's staying in until he "doesn't feel it's a satisfying experience any more."

"I don't see that being any time soon," he said.

Noting the difference in age groups, Deal Sr. told his sons "you could probably do 40 [years]."

The elder Deal said he appreciates the structure of the military and the respect Soldiers give each other at different levels.

"I've gotten a tremendous amount of respect from my superiors because of my

"You guys have made huge leaps and bounds," said Daub. "You guys looked pretty good out there."

Soldiers said they were pleased with how quickly they got back into the rhythm of working with each other after a few weeks without squad-level drills.

"I don't think we're as rusty as we thought we might have been," said Pfc. Daniel Deyo, a Carlisle resident. "After a couple of run-throughs I think everybody got back in sync."

Deyo said there's no one else he'd rather go into harm's way with than Daub.

"He definitely knows how to take care of us," Deyo said.

Daub stressed that the Soldiers take care of each other by training together. He said the time going through drills yields confidence.

"Hopefully you don't have to pull the trigger on someone," Daub said. "But at least you're prepared if you have to."

age," the elder Deal said.

He said younger Soldiers have come to him for mentoring, especially during basic training.

Asked how other Soldiers have reacted to his father's service, Johnathan said, "Actually they've been pretty cool about it. They ask me how it feels to have a father in the Guard."

The elder Deal said he prepared himself financially for the deployment because he took "somewhat" of a cut in pay compared to working on the civilian side. Deal said though that the personal satisfaction outweighs the financial aspect of the deployment.

The Deals are also looking beyond the deployment. Michael Deal Sr. is engaged. Johnathan Deal wants to finish his college education while the younger Michael Deal wants to continue to work in sports marketing possibly in Washington D.C. He has a degree in sports marketing from Duquesne University.

Deal Sr. said he appreciates the support Soldiers receive from the public despite varying opinions on the Global War on Terror.

"The public's graciousness and courtesy has been overwhelming," Deal Sr. said. "It seems to me the public really supports civilian Soldiers."

Did you know ... ?

Why the 28th Infantry Division is called 'The Iron Division'

Couthiezy, France -- July 15, 1918

Among the 17 National Guard divisions assigned to the American Expeditionary Force during World War I was the 28th Division, Pennsylvania National Guard. The 28th received its baptism of fire on July 15, 1918, during the German Army's Champagne-Marne Offensive. Four companies from the 28th were attached to a French division on the front line, while the rest of the division took up second-line defense positions.

Two of the companies, L and M, were from the 109th Infantry Regiment made of the old 1st and 13th Pennsylvania Regiments. In the early hours of July 15, the German 36th Division crossed the Marne River and attacked the Allied front. When the adjacent French units fell back, L and M Companies were surrounded. Wave after wave of Germans attacked the Pennsylvanians. Despite the overwhelming odds, the two companies stubbornly held their position and inflicted heavy casualties.

At 0800 the remnants of L and M Companies withdrew and fought their way back to the front line of the 109th, five kilometers away. Of the 500 assigned officers and men only 150 remained. The brunt of the German offensive now fell on the 109 Infantry and the other units of the 28th Division. For three days, the 109th held its positions



Men of Iron By Don Troiani

Couthiezy, France -- July 15, 1918

while under heavy attack. Fighting in ravines, woods and trenches, the doughboys fought like veterans. A German after-action report described the battle as "the most severe defeat of the war." For its staunch defense the 109th was nicknamed "Men of Iron" and the 28th was later dubbed the "Iron Division." Today's 103d Engineer

Battalion (The Dandy First) and the 109 Infantry (Thirteenth Pennsylvania) continue the proud heritage of the "Men of Iron."

www.ngb.army.mil/About/default.aspx

Information compiled by Col. Andrew Schafer, 56th SBCT Deputy Commanding Officer

Soldier to Soldier ...

The threats we face together

Now that we are in our Area of Operations and conducting missions we face the enemy threat every day. We have meetings and briefings regarding the enemy threat and we train and train so that when the threat appears we are able to defeat the threat and save the lives of our fellow warriors. With all that effort, the biggest threat to us tends to go unnoticed.

Accidents are also our enemy and can take the lives of our Soldiers or injure them during our tour. We must put the same effort we put into defeating the enemy threat into defeating the threat of accidents. This, just like combat, requires strong leadership at the lowest levels. It's the responsibility of our NCO's to enforce the standards and fight our most dangerous enemy, complacency. Soldier's need to take their



time and think. Think at the clearing barrel, think in the motor pool and think about everything you do where safety is at concern. Together we can defeat our enemies and help bring our fellow Soldiers home safe to their families. By Command Sgt. Maj. John E. Jones, Brigade Command Sgt. Major

Tarmiyah

(Con't from Page 4)

made improvements along the way."

Along with living at the JSS, Company C Soldiers are also manning Patrol Base Mushada East, which is affectionately known as "the chicken coop" (because of its former usage). Muller pointed out that elements of the 328th Brigade Support Battalion are supporting the company at the JSS in Tarmiyah.

Muller said the diverse background of the civilian Soldiers aids the mission.

"What we bring is a multitude of civilian talents. I have Soldiers who are police officers, carpenters, electricians, firemen and EMTs on the civilian side, as well as businessmen, who can assist with civil capacity development, as well as ISF development," said Muller. "These are the skill sets that we have that help us generate support."

Muller said he has been talking to Iraqi leaders about how the unit can partner its civilian-side police officers with the Iraqi Police.

Muller said the goal for the unit is to get to a point at which it is primarily providing tactical overwatch, with ISF in the lead.

"That's where we're moving to," he said. "We are very much in support of the Iraqi security forces."

Muller said there is still an enemy threat in the unit's area of operations but said security has greatly improved. He said the work of the 1-114th with ISF means his unit's mission will increasingly become one of helping to build civil capacity. He said his Soldiers are up to task.

"They're more than prepared to assume this mission," he said.

Chaplain's reflection

Meet challenges with strength, fortitude and reliance on training

WELCOME TO IRAQ

By the time you read this message the entire 56th Stryker Brigade Combat Team will be in Iraq and we will have already assumed authority for the mission or be very close to doing so. No doubt there is a great deal of excitement as we begin this task, but also a certain amount of anxiety over the many challenges that lie ahead. It is true that all of us, both individually and collectively, will be called upon to serve to the best of our ability and use the

training and resources that we have received in preparation for this time. This can also be a source of pressure and tension.

I encourage all of you to meet these emotions and challenges with a sense of trust and fortitude. Do not become complacent or careless, but rely upon your training, preparation, the buddy next to you and our command. Our families, friends and rear detachment will also support and assist us. We have an opportunity to play a crucial role in the security of our nation

and to exercise a critical part in perhaps the most pivotal time in the modern history of Iraq.

Finally I ask Almighty God to look kindly upon us, to keep us safe from the enemy, to bless our missions with success for ourselves and the people of Iraq. I ask God to watch over our loved ones and keep them secure and assist them in this difficult separation. I personally pledge to keep all of you in my prayers. If I or any members of our Religious Support Teams can be of help



and service to you please do not hesitate to call upon us. "Strength through Honor"

Col. Bert S. Kozen
Command Chaplain
56th Stryker Brigade Combat Team
"Pro Deo et Patria"

Schedule of services at Warrior Chapel - Bldg 510

POC Master Sgt. Jon McWilliams, DSN: 834-3329

Saturday	Sunday
Noon - Catholic Mass	10 a.m. Protestant service
5 p.m. - Catholic mass	Noon - Catholic mass
8 p.m. - International service	2 p.m. - LDS service
	6:30 p.m. - Contemporary protestant service

Legally speaking ...

Soldiers are responsible for knowing General Order Number 1



Welcome to Iraq! We have several hot legal issues this month. First and foremost, never forget that we are all under the Uniform Code of Military Justice. Capt. Matthew P. Smith, trial counsel, can address any questions leaders may have regarding the UCMJ and disciplinary actions.

All Soldiers are responsible for knowing and abiding by Multi-National Division(B) General Order Number 1 (GO#1). This Order is published by the Commanding General MND(B) and disobeying it is the same as if the CG stood in front of you and told you not to do something and you did it anyway. It is seri-

ous business with punitive consequences.

Operationally, negligent discharges usually peak within the first 30 days of Turnover Of Authority. Extra vigilance is required during this time period. Successful TTPs to prevent negligent discharges include having leaders clear all weapons, having another Soldier inspect the weapon and having the Soldier who is clearing the weapon verbally describe each step as the Soldier goes through the process.

On the non-lethal front, foreign claims are a combat multiplier. In this environment we shoot more dollars than bullets. Just as with bullets, dollars must be properly aimed and well placed. This means that the information you place on the claims card is critical to insure that only proper and deserving claimants are paid. Procedurally, when you have caused or witnessed an

incident, complete and hand a claims card to the Iraqi civilian. At the conclusion of your patrol, notify Maj. Frank McGovern or Spc. Davis via email with the details of the claim. Every Monday Iraqi civilians go to the Government Information Center located by Gunner's Gate to present their claim. (They are responsible for their own transportation.) The legal office then gives them a ticket with a date to return (usually the following Saturday or Wednesday, i.e. 7 to 10 days). During this time period we confirm whether an incident occurred, whether it is payable and if so, in what amount. We will follow-up with units to confirm the incident. It is important that you respond when you receive these inquiries. The Iraqis live in your battlespace and we want to pay proper claims promptly. Keep in mind that we receive many fraudulent claims, so don't give out claims cards



By Maj. Robert Cameron and Maj. Frank McGovern

Odds & Ends

What do you think of life at Camp Taji?

"Life on Taji is actually a lot better than I expected it to be in Iraq. We have Burger King and there are tons of MWR things we can do. The only bad thing is the mud."
1st. Lt. Duncan MacQueen, Milford, N.J.
HHT, 2-104th Cav.



"The post is good. I like the post. The DFAC is definitely the number one spot at Camp Taji - as long as they don't run out of Pepsi."

Sgt. 1st Class Andrew Plummer, D-112th



"Life's pretty good. I go to the motor pool and work on vehicles. That's fun. The PX and the bazaar are some of the hot spots at Camp Taji"

Pfc. Khiree Owens, Philadelphia, D-112th



"These are the best living conditions we've had the entire mobilization. The food has been terrific."

2nd Lt. Scott Detweiler, Starksboro, Vt. D-112th



"The weather's really nice. The food's really good. MWR is pretty good and I like the gym."

Spc. Ben Helbert, Reading, D1-112th



"I like it. It's quiet so far. The 2-25 was just really squared away. They've really welcomed us."

Staff Sgt. Ann Williams, Jonestown
56SBCT personnel NCO



Have a soldier story to tell?

The Independence Gazette welcomes story ideas and submissions.

Those submitting photos for publication should include their rank and full name (for photo credit) as well as caption information including the "who, what, when and where" of the event.

Submissions should be sent to: independencepao@yahoo.com

Find 56th SBCT news online at www.dvidshub.net
Click on "News from the Field" Scroll to 56th SBCT

56th Stryker Brigade Combat Team Mission

*56th SBCT partners with
Iraqi Security Forces to conduct
combined full spectrum operations
in order to secure the population,
improve capabilities of the ISF, and
support civil authorities, to provide
a safe and secure environment and
set the conditions for transition of
security responsibilities to the ISF*