

COALITION CHRONICLE

Volume 4, Issue 7 July 2009

**ROMANIAN
FORCES END
MISSION
IN IRAQ**

**IAG
Cases
Colors**

***Iraqis take over
flight surgeon
training mission***





The Romanian Army marks its end-of-mission with a ceremony at Contingency Operations Base Adder, Dhi Qar Province, Iraq, on June 4. Romania has had forces in Iraq since 2003. (U.S. Army Photo By Staff Sgt. Brendan Stephens)

page 19



page 6

The first MC-12 Liberty aircraft in-theater flies its first combat sortie.



page 7

“Operation Iraqi Stephen: Going Commando” declared victory at Al Faw Palace.



page 18

Military working dog, Ryky, helps “Dawg Medic” live up to nickname.

COALITION CHRONICLE

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Departments

- Feature Up Front* _____ *page 1*
- Freedom’s Focal Point* _____ *page 10*
- Profile Feature* _____ *page 18*
- In Memoriam* _____ *page 21*



Spc. Brandon Malinky, 1st Platoon vehicle gunner from Wilcox, Pa., displays his pride by holding the company guidon while enjoying a moment of downtime at Camp Stryker, Baghdad. Malinky and his fellow Soldiers with the 515th Engineer Company (Sapper), attached to the 225th Engineer Brigade, just wrapped up their 15-month deployment which took them on route clearance missions in nine of the 18 provinces in Iraq. (Courtesy photo)

Mission ends for mobile engineers

by Scott Flenner
Courtesy photos
225th Eng. Bde. PAO, MND-B

As seen from the rearview mirror, the 515th Engineer Company (Sapper), attached to the 225th Engineer Brigade, moves through the Maysan province conducting route clearance operations.

OBJECTS IN MIRROR ARE CLOSER THAN THEY APPEAR

1-TFC-08

Clearing roads of dangerous IEDs is a difficult job for engineer units. Any route clearance Soldier will tell you that after travelling the same routes day in and day out, they know exactly what looks out of place; it's this knowledge that helps keep these guys safe.

For the Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., Soldiers from the 515th Engineer Company (Sapper), attached to the 225th Engineer Brigade, learning the routes changed a remarkable four times during the course of their 15 month deployment.

From northern to southern Iraq, the engineers cleared 84,854 kilometers of road on more than 688 missions. As the "Outlaws" moved from one base to another as their mission changed to help their fellow Soldiers, they ended up clearing roads in nine out of the 18 provinces in Iraq.

"We just went where route clearance was needed the most," said Capt. Andrew Hutchinson, executive officer for the 515th Eng. Co., from Kate, Texas. "We have got to see pretty much everything, from Basra to Balad."

Being in constant shuffle does come with its share of disadvantages for a route clearance team, explained Sgt Evan Hutson.

"The difficulty of moving around, especially for a leader, is when you are not able to travel down the same roads day after day and study them," Hutson said. "You are not able to become

familiar with what should be there and what may be a possible IED."

Although as Hutson also explained, it does help fight one of Soldiers worst enemies--complacency.

"Every day when you are traveling down a road going 10Km an hour, especially if you are going down a route that you have been on before and nothing really is happening, you get complacent," said Hutson, from Indianapolis, Ind. "But when you are constantly moved around all over this theater in Iraq, like we were, it makes it really hard to become complacent."

It is hard to become complacent, but even harder to become comfortable.

At one point during the Outlaw's tour, the Soldiers had to sleep in their trucks and eat MREs for a week straight. By the end, the same Soldiers were moved to "Shangri-La," also known as Victory Base Complex in Baghdad, where they stayed in air-conditioned trailers, enjoyed prepared food at the dining facility and complained that their internet connection was too slow.

But whether they were sleeping in their trucks, surfing the internet, or moving to yet another base camp, Hutchinson said one thing remained the same.

"As a unit, we have grown close, we are pretty tight knit; we all support each other."

Summing up their mission Hutchinson said, "This deployment has been interesting."



The ferret arm of the specialized route clearance vehicle known as the "Buffalo," is operated during route clearance operations in the Wasit province.

A Dad Deployed

Story and photos by by Cpl. Jo Jones
MNF-W Public Affairs

Staff Sgt. Christopher Honold looks at photos of his newborn daughter.



Staff Sgt. Christopher Honold, a night chief with Movement Control Center - Iraq, Multi-National Force - West, Al Asad Air Base, Iraq, plays his guitar in an empty conference room after work. Honold, a Malvern, Ark., native, is serving his fifth deployment and is responsible for tracking the movement of ground forces operating in support of MNF-W.

AL ASAD AIR BASE, Iraq – When Staff Sgt. Christopher Ryan Honold joined the Marine Corps in 1998, he just wanted to get out of his hometown of Malvern, Ark., and travel the world. He had no idea that 11 years and five deployments later, he would still be wearing the same uniform and that the Marine Corps would have become his calling.

“I like seeing and experiencing different places,” said Honold, an assault amphibious vehicle crewmember by trade. “I have been able to meet a lot of different people.”

Honold’s first deployment was with the 2nd Amphibious Assault Battalion during the initial invasion of Iraq in 2003, and he later set sail with the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit for a deployment which took him to Kuwait and to Iraq for the second time.

In 2006, Honold had an opportunity to serve in the Republic of Georgia as part of the Georgia Sustainment and Stability Operations Program. There, he was among a team of service members who spent six months teaching basic infantry skills to the Georgian army. Honold followed this with a shipboard deployment to the Mediterranean and Persian Gulf regions.

Now on his fifth deployment in six years, Honold serves as a night chief with Movement Control Center, Multi-National Force - West, at Al Asad Air Base. His primary duty is to track and update the status of convoys or patrols operating in the Al Anbar province of Iraq. Additionally, he is responsible for knowing alternate routes that convoys can take should any major incidents occur and vectoring those units down these new paths.

Honold said this deployment has allowed him to see a



different side of his former job and the Marine Corps.

“I used to be the one going out on convoys, and now I’m the guy coordinating them and making things happen,” said Honold. “Before I got here, I didn’t even know the logistical side existed, so it’s interesting to see how we get the convoys from place to place.”

According to Maj. Christopher Hafer, Honold’s officer-in-charge, Honold has adapted well to his new role and takes steps to ensure he and his Marines are taken care of, both personally and professionally.

“Staff Sgt. Honold is open-minded, eager to learn and provides good leadership to the younger Marines,” said Hafer. “Effective leaders find a balance between mission accomplishment and troop welfare, and Staff Sgt. Honold understands that balance and is helping his Marines achieve that balance.”

In addition to learning his role as a night chief, Honold is also managing family matters during this deployment. His wife has a lot on her hands trying to take care of their two young daughters while Honold is gone.

“Nothing in this world means more to me than my family,” said Honold. “With my being in the Marine Corps though, I know they are provided for and taken care of.”

Honold said it is hard being separated from his family, but he is grateful he can communicate with them through email, phone calls and letters.

To relieve the stress from work, family separation and other deployment challenges, Honold says he exercises and plays guitar.

“Music is my passion,” said Honold. “It’s one of the things that defines me.”

But an even more defining quality is the love he shares with his family, and upon returning home from this deployment, Honold says he plans on spending as much time with them as possible.



Staff Sgt. Christopher Honold keeps track of convoys by writing call signs on a white board.

MC-12 LIBERTY FLIES

FIRST COMBAT SORTIE

Photos by Senior Airman Tiffany Trojca
AFCENT Public Affairs

The first MC-12 Liberty aircraft in-theater lands here at approximately 6:20 p.m. local time, June 10 after its first combat sortie. The Air Force's newest ISR platform, the MC-12 is a medium-altitude manned special-mission turbo prop aircraft designed for intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance. The aircraft will operate from here in direct support of Coalition and joint ground forces.



JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq -- The U.S. Air Force's new MC-12 Liberty aircraft flew its first combat sortie June 10.

"This is truly a success story," said Brig. Gen. Brian Bishop, 332nd Air Expeditionary Wing commander. "Our mission here is to deliver combat airpower and overwatch to the joint fight in-theater, and the MC-12 brings a huge ISR [intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance] capability to employ in support of the ground commander."

The aircraft, which arrived in Iraq June 8, is assigned to the 362nd Expeditionary Reconnaissance Squadron, and took off from JBB at approximately 2:30 p.m. local time for a four-hour mission.

"Project Liberty MC-12 is the first of its kind," said Lt. Gen. Gary North, 9th Air Force and U.S. Air Forces Central commander. "What our Air Force teams at our various headquarters staffs have done with the program has been nothing short of miraculous.

"They've satisfied very ambitious objectives and done it alongside our industry partners to achieve combat-urgent requests in a superb fashion, from initial contracts to combat sorties inside eight months," the general added. "This capability to the field will enable our ability to continue to provide the persistent stare and integration of the MC-12 as our U.S. Air Force's newest ISR platform in theater.

"The allocation of this asset to the fight to best integrate within the

joint forces in-theater will meet the needs of the commanders in both Iraq and Afghanistan as we continue to receive the combat-coded aircraft in the AOR (area of responsibility)," North said.

The MC-12 is a manned special-mission turboprop aircraft designed to augment information gathered by other intelligence-collection capabilities operating in-theater and allow military leaders to make battlefield decisions. Overall, the aircraft carries a specialized four-person crew aboard and communications equipment to provide full-motion video and signals intelligence.

"The MC-12 is an embodiment of the Air Force's commitment to Coalition ground forces," said Lt. Col. Phillip Stewart, 362nd ERS commander. "Our focus is to provide dedicated, responsive ISR operations, and we're ready to go."

In April 2008, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates established the ISR Task Force to better support warfighters on the ground in the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility with increased ISR. A few months later, the task force launched Project Liberty - a program to deploy MC-12s to the AOR.

"ISR is a core Air Force mission," North said. "Our Airmen know how important ISR capacity, capability and integration are in combat operations. The MC-12 enhances and complements the entire ISR umbrella, from the continuum of space down to small UAVs and will integrate in a seamless fashion into the scheme of maneuver in the processing, exploitation and dissemination of intelligence at all required levels in the battlespace."



Lt. Col. Phillip Stewart, 362nd Expeditionary Reconnaissance Squadron commander, conducts a pre-flight inspection of an MC-12 Liberty aircraft here, June 10, prior to the aircraft's first combat sortie. A native of Silver Spring, Md., Colonel Stewart is deployed here from Langley Air Force Base, Va.

Iraqi Assistance Group Cases Colors



Story and photos by Staff Sgt. Luke Koladish
114th PAD, MNC-I Public Affairs

Command Sgt. Maj. Hector Davila and Brig. Gen. Keith C. Walker, the Iraqi Assistance Group's command sergeant major and commanding general, case the units colors on the patio of the Joint Visitors Bureau, June 3. The function of the AIG has been merged with the Multi-National Corps - Iraq staff.

After more than four years of leading the Iraqi Security Force development line of effort, the Iraqi Assistance Group conducted a casing of colors and patch ceremony on the Joint Visitors Bureau hotel patio, Camp Victory, June 3.

"On the backs of a brave few, we have labored to create an Iraqi Security Force that is now the centerpiece of our security operations moving forward. You have done what was needed, when it was needed the most," Multi-National Corps - Iraq commanding general, Lt. Gen. Charles Jacoby told the group of about 100 Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines.

Jacoby said the ceremony represented a critical chapter in MNC-I's mission, now that its

focus has shifted from conducting security operations to partnership and development with Iraqi security forces.

"We've reached the point where the partnership is, what I like to say, the core, C-O-R-E, of the Corps effort," Iraqi Assistance Group commanding general, Brig. Gen. Keith C. Walker explained.

"So, in recognition of that change of environment, we have merged over the past two months, and we've merged that function of the IAG with the Multi-National Corps staff," he continued.

The IAG has received, staged, moved and integrated operations for military transition teams since its inception in February 2005. The unit expanded its mission when it assumed command over National

Police Transition Teams in April 2006, becoming the headquarters and principal planning staff supporting the 160,000 members of Iraqi Ground Forces Command.

"The provisions of the security agreement make the business of partnership that much more important. Our partnership is now an operational relationship between Iraqi forces and coalition forces where all operations are conducted by, with, and through the Iraqi Security Forces," Walker said.

Prior to the casing of the colors, Walker presented the Joint Meritorious Unit Award for dedication to the mission beyond the call of duty and IAG's significant contribution to the success of both MNC-I and Multi-National Force-Iraq.

During the last year they have spearheaded the unity of effort to plan, synchronize and execute the strategic vision of 210 transition teams composed of more than 3,000 personnel across the Iraqi theatre of operation.

Because of their close work with security forces they became a key plug-in with the Iraqi Army, National Police, Port of Entry Authority, Department of Border Enforcement and Iraqi Police Service for MNC-I.

"The big vision is flashlights pointed inward and guns pointed out," said IAG Chief of Staff, Marine Col. James McGinley, referring to the Iraqi Army focusing on exterior threats and the Iraqi Police and National Police dealing with domestic disturbances.

The IAG increased the capabilities of the Iraqi Army by synchronizing the fielding of rifles, up-armored

Humvees, and radios and developing the War Fighter Training Program. The advanced training for platoon and company-size Iraqi Army units led to what is now the Iraqi Army's Warrior Training and Commando Battalion training program.

In 2009, the IAG assumed the lead role in establishing police primacy throughout Iraq. They integrated key International Police Advisors and Coalition forces personnel into existing operations, initiating a field survey of Iraqi Police Services to develop the way ahead for Police Transition Teams.

They worked with Coalition forces and Iraqi elements to provide senior advisory and mentorship to the Iraqi Police in multi-faceted projects like Major Crimes Task Force, a team that worked closely with Iraqis as they conducted crime scene investigations, analysis of physical evidence and suspect interviews.

Seven land ports of entry were upgraded to full operational capacity including installation of traveler identification system, multiple mobile x-ray devices as well as the full time presence of augmented Coalition forces Border Transition Teams.

Following the casing of the colors by Walker and Iraq Assistance Group Command Sergeant Major Command Sgt. Maj. Hector Davila, the unit moved the Big Red One patch from their left arm to right, having earned their combat patch.

"While we end the IAG's mission, our partnership remains steadfast as we strive to assist Iraq toward a capable self-sustaining ISG that provides enduring security for the nation of Iraq," Walker said during his closing remarks.

"Sir," he said, addressing the MNC-I commanding general, "mission complete, courage."



Members of the Iraqi Assistance Group and Multi-National Corps - Iraq render the final salute to the IAG colors during the casing of the colors and patch ceremony held at the Joint Visitors Bureau, Camp Victory, June 3.

Steven Colbert
came to Iraq ...

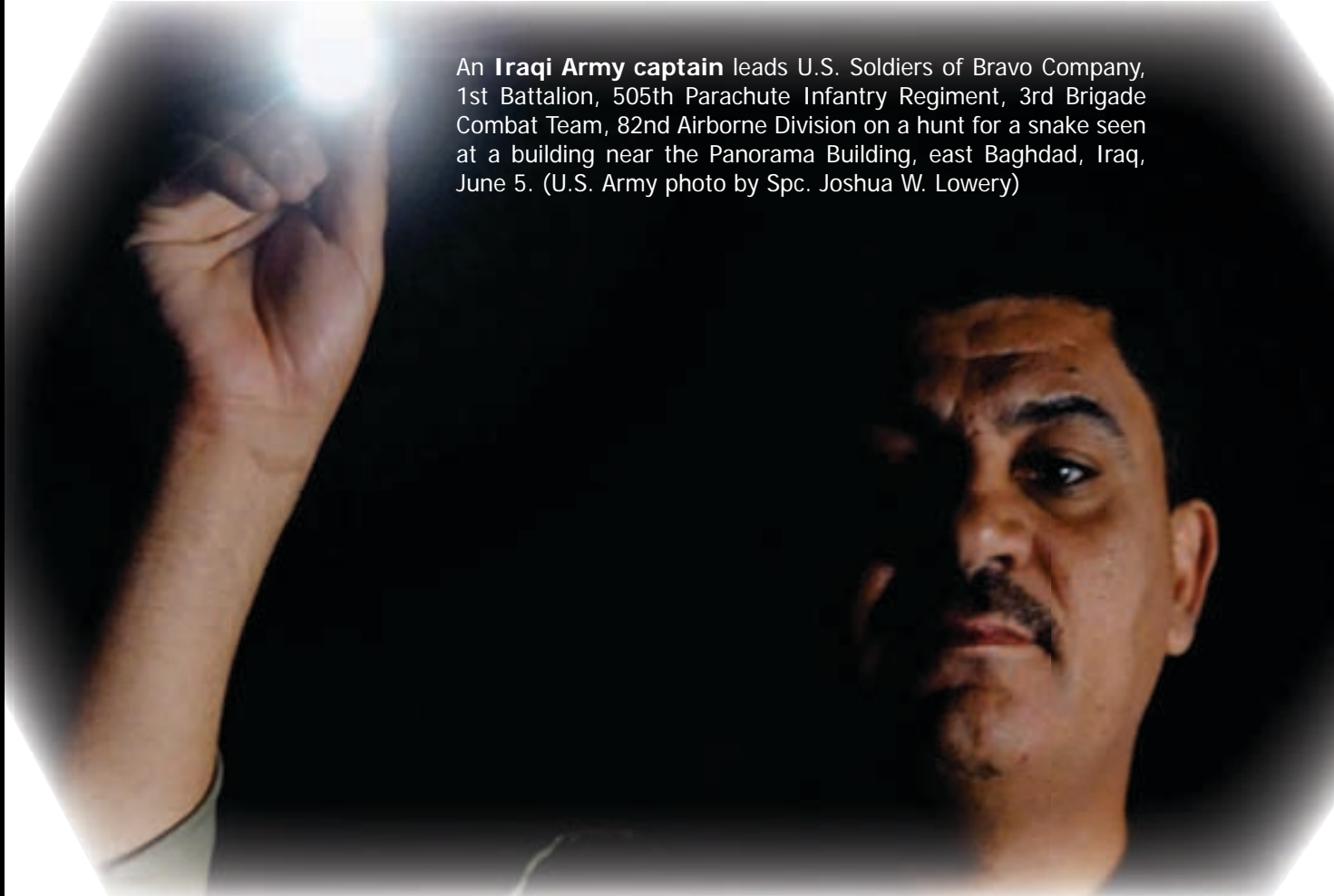
U.S. Army photos by Lee Craker

Iraq

... declared Victory ...

and went
COMMANDO!!!!





An Iraqi Army captain leads U.S. Soldiers of Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division on a hunt for a snake seen at a building near the Panorama Building, east Baghdad, Iraq, June 5. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Joshua W. Lowery)



A choir of Ugandan security personnel, raise their voices in praise at a revival at the Camp Liberty Field House, May 30. A different chapel led the revival each night during the five-day event, which culminated May 31, the Global Day of Prayer. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Joshua Risner)



Iraqi Police Patrol Director, **Maj. Gen. Ali (center)** and **Col. Byron Freeman (left)**, commander of the 8th Military Police Brigade, Multi-National Division—Baghdad, from Norfolk, Va., attended the Iraqi Police River Patrol graduation ceremonies on the banks of the Tigris River, June 7. (U.S. Army Photo by Staff Sgt. Jessika Malott)



A Soldier of B Troop, 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, communicates with the air cavalry crewmembers in a wheat field to find out a safe time to take the casualties to the UH-60 Blackhawk, helicopter, June 3. The injured Soldiers were placed on the helicopters after the second Blackhawk arrived. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Peter Ford)

Pfc. Katelynn Harkless of 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, throws a punch at **Spc. Jasmine Hernandez** of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, during Fight Night, a once a week competition held at Joint Security Station Loyalty, eastern Baghdad, Iraq, June 12. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. James Selesnick)



Rear Adm. Thomas Cropper, center, deputy commander of Naval Forces. U.S. Central Command, tours a hardened aircraft shelter at Ali Air Base, Iraq, June 16, with **Cmdr. Michael McClintock**, left, Commander, Task Group 57.18 and **Command Master Chief Maurace Clark**. Cropper is visiting sailors serving in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Michael James)



Marines and U.S. Army Soldiers pose for a photo during a break on a zone reconnaissance by Grappler Company, 3d Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, in the Nineveh Province, June 5. The purpose of the reconnaissance was to look for weapons caches and possible insurgents in the area. (U.S. Marine Corps photo by Lance Cpl. Brian A. Kinney)



An **Iraqi girl** smiles after receiving a new backpack during a humanitarian aid school supply drop in the Waddi neighborhood of Mosul, Iraq, June 18. Iraqi police distributed more than 100 backpacks filled with paper, notebooks, pens and pencils to children in the area. (U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Kamaile Chan)

AL ASAD AIR BASE, Iraq – In the middle of the barren, dry Iraqi desert, sprawling Al Asad Air Base needs a lot of water. Whether it is for drinking, showering, cooking or equipment maintenance, the consumption of water is one of the most pressing concerns for service members and civilian contractors serving at this remote base.

To fulfill this need, the men and women of the Al Asad Base Command Group's Department of Public Works toil tirelessly behind-the-scenes to keep the water flowing.

"The Base Command Group provides support services all across Al Asad, and water is a key support service," said Cmdr. Nicholas Merry,

a public works officer with the DPW. "The goal is to make sure water is always there."

Members of the DPW are responsible for water distribution and oversight of contractors who use water for reasons like construction, dust abatement and replenishment of water storage tanks and bladders. They are also in charge of the contractors who operate the Oasis Water Bottling Plant aboard Al Asad.

Petty Officer 2nd Class Timothy Sepula, a hull maintenance technician with the DPW, said the BCG distributes more than 1 million gallons of potable and non-potable water every day. Potable water is that water which is safe for drinking

and non-potable water is deemed safe for washing and cleaning.

Each day, water flowing from the Euphrates River and on-base wells is channeled into one of three on-base lakes (Lakes Liberty, Al Asad and Freedom) or is purified at the water bottling plant. At the base's water treatment facility, the water slated for external use is piped into one of two 800,000-gallon freshwater cisterns on Al Asad where water department personnel treat the water before it is distributed throughout the base for use at wash racks and in shower units.

Water intended for potable use is pumped to a different facility where it is run through a reverse osmosis

Petty Officer 2nd Class Timothy Sepula, a hull maintenance technician with the Department of Public Works, Base Command Group, checks a flow meter aboard Al Asad Air Base, Iraq. Service members with Al Asad's Base Command Group provide properly treated water to everyone on base by managing water distribution and overseeing the contractors who operate the Oasis Water Bottling Plant.

water purification for 25 years, said safe water is of the utmost importance. Quality assurance managers and staff at the bottling plant, some of whom are former employees of major soft drink companies, test the water every two hours to ensure the levels remain in a safe range. They also use a laboratory to test water samples for contamination.

Merry, a civil engineer who is serving his first deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, said the amount of water available on Al Asad is directly proportional to the amount of water available in the Euphrates River, meaning likely less water will be available in the upcoming summer months as the Euphrates River levels go down.

In efforts to prevent water depletion, the BCG ordered the installation of several new water storage tanks on Al Asad. These tanks provide the base with an additional 5 million gallons of water, something Navy Capt. Timothy McMahon, commanding officer of the BCG, said is important with Iraq's dry climate.

"The storage tanks significantly increase our water storage capacity and allow us to better deal with contingencies around Al Asad and the other outlying FOBs," said McMahon. "The BCG, in coordination with the Marine Expeditionary Force and KBR contractors, made this a priority and it all came together in an expeditious manner."



water purification unit, which Sepula says can produce purified water at a rate of 800 gallons per minute. From the reverse osmosis units, the water is collected into storage bladders and tanks, and then distributed to places like living areas, dining facilities and even other forward operating bases.

Some water goes directly to the Oasis Water Bottling Plant on Al Asad where it goes through a three-step, ultra-filtration process before being treated in a reverse osmosis water purification unit. Afterward,

the water goes through additional filtration processes before filling plastic water bottles that are created in the water bottling plant.

Once filled, automated machines cap and seal the water bottles, which are then put into cases of 12. The cases are palletized and bound with plastic wrap before being delivered to designated points aboard Al Asad and other bases in the Al Anbar province.

Darren Woodruff, a site manager at the plant, who has worked with



*Story and photos by Cpl. Jo Jones
MNF-W Public Affairs*

LEFT: Filling machines pour water into plastic bottles at the Oasis Water Bottling Plant at Al Asad Air Base, Iraq. Once ready for transport, contractors managed by service members with Al Asad's Base Command Group deliver the water bottles to Al Asad's living areas and other forward operating bases.



Sgt. Laurence Cameron (left), a medic with Battery B, 113th Field Artillery, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team, checks an IV on military working dog while Sgt. James Harrington, assigned to 1st Cavalry Division, Provost Marshal's Office, helps.

'Dawg Medic' Lives Up to His Call Sign

Story and photos by Sgt. Mary Phillips
30th HBCT PAO, MND-B

Sgt. Laurence Cameron was given the radio call sign "Dawg Medic" by other Soldiers during this deployment, but it wasn't until a recent mission that the Rock Hill, S.C., native actually lived up to the nickname.

Cameron, a combat medic with B "Dawg" Battery, 113th Field Artillery, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team, patrolled with two military working dogs, June 20, when one of the dogs became overheated.

Military dog handler, Sgt. James Harrington, of the 1st Cavalry Division Provost Marshals Office, called for Cameron.

"The handlers are all trained in dog first aid, but I show the medics how to do it too," said Harrington, a native of New Orleans. "That way they can take care of the dogs if one of the handlers goes down."

Cameron immediately got to work on giving the dog, Ryky, intravenous fluids.

"The dog handler explained how to do it and I went about doing the procedure," said Cameron, "and when it comes to an IV, there is not that much difference between a dog and a human."



Although Cameron did not expect to have to give an IV to a canine, he knew it was a possibility.

"When I was at training in Wisconsin, I had a drill sergeant that had been a dog handler and he taught us a little bit about working with the dogs," said Cameron, "It was interesting to actually get to do it."

This is only the third IV that "Dawg Medic" has given to anyone –

or anything – for overheating since the beginning of this deployment. Overheating is a problem in Iraq because of high temperatures, and Soldiers, even the furry kind, must be wary of it.

"We monitor the dog's temperature throughout the patrol," said Staff Sgt. Christopher Jasper, another dog handler on patrol. "Once their temperature gets over 102 degrees we have to start looking at ways to cool them down, and once it gets to 103 or 104, we have to get them an IV."

Because of his call sign, some of Cameron's fellow Soldiers also refer to him as the "veterinarian."

"Everyone thought it was funny that I actually worked on a dog because of me being called 'Dawg Medic' and 'Veterinarian.'"

Cameron was happy to be able to help what he referred to as "a fellow soldier."

"It was cool to be able to help out a dog that is there to help us by detecting explosives," he said. "It's part of the Army's battle buddy system. They are Soldiers like us, they just have four legs."

Medic Sgt. Laurence Cameron, of Battery B, 113th Field Artillery, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team, has been known as "Dawg Medic," since the beginning of his deployment.

ROMANIAN FORCES END MISSION IN IRAQ



by Sgt. Mark Miranda
1st AD, 4th BCT, MND-S

Multi-National Force - Iraq commanding general, Gen. Raymond T. Odierno, receives a gift from Romanian President Traian Basescu during an end of mission ceremony June 4, at Contingency Operating Base Adder, Iraq. The Romanian Army has spent six years supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom; their soldiers will gradually withdraw by July 31. (U.S. Army Photo by Spc. Bradley Jack Clark)

CONTINGENCY OPERATING BASE ADDER, Iraq -- Military operations in Iraq formally ended for Romanian forces, June 4, as one of the U.S.'s coalition allies prepared to ship out some of its remaining troops with an end-of-mission ceremony held by Romania's 26th Infantry "Red Scorpions" Battalion.

The Romanian flag was lowered over the 26th's compound affectionately known as "Camp Dracula," in a ceremony following a memorial for the Romanian military personnel who died in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The event was held just an hour before the U.S. Army 1st Armored Division's, 4th Brigade Combat Team, conducted a relief-in-place, transfer-of-authority ceremony with the outgoing 4th Brigade Combat Team of the 1st Cavalry Division.

Romanian President Traian Basescu, supreme commander of Romanian armed forces during wartime, was on hand.

Romanian Lt. Col. Gabriel Toma, commander of the 26th Infantry Battalion, received a U.S. Bronze Star Medal from U.S. Army Lt. Gen. Charles H. Jacoby Jr.,

commander of Multi-National Corps - Iraq.

"It's hard to say farewell to a trusted partner," Jacoby said. "Few have been as committed to freedom of the Iraqi people as the Romanians, and I extend my thanks, as it's been an honor to serve with them here in Iraq."

Jacoby praised the Romanians as a dedicated and capable force, and expressed condolences for their lost soldiers.

Since August 2003, Romania has deployed more than 5,200 troops to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Assigned to two different multi-national divisions, Romanian forces have provided intelligence support to Multi-National Division - South by conducting reconnaissance and surveillance missions and operating unmanned aerial vehicle platforms.

Romanian forces also provided base security, supply-route security and quick-reaction forces in Basra, and conducted training and monitoring of Iraqi army units, culminating with the May 23 graduation of Iraqi commandos on Camp Ur.

Iraqi air force Lt. Tahssen, nurse and flight medic instructor, explains the procedures to reconfigure a C-130 Hercules aircraft for aero-medical evacuation transport to Iraqi flight medic students at New Al-Muthana Air Base, Iraq, June 2.

USAF flight surgeons hand over training mission to Iraqis

Story by Staff Sgt. Tim Beckham
Photos by Senior Airman
Jacqueline Romero
AFCENT Public Affairs



NEW AL MUTHANA AIR BASE, Iraq -- As U.S. forces withdraw over the next year, the Iraqi air force will assume new missions and responsibilities. One such mission is the aero-medical training of flight medical technicians, also known as “flight medics.”

The four-week training course is now taught by Iraqi flight medics with coalition oversight. Soon, the Iraqi instructors will have complete oversight of the course.

“This is a very important mission for me and for the Iraqi air force,”

said Iraqi air force Lt. Amar K. Gaad, nurse and flight medic instructor. “We are here to save lives so that our army counterparts can focus on their mission and on their service to our country.”

After graduating June 4th, the largest class ever of 18 newly certified Iraqi flight medics will be well equipped to directly support their assigned military units in the airborne medical evacuation or MEDEVAC of their unit’s casualties in helicopters and C-130 Hercules aircraft.

“Upon graduation the new flight medics will be able to care for their patients while transporting them via air to medical facilities” said Col. (Dr.) William W. Dodson III, Multi-National Security Transition Command - Iraq ITAM AF Surgeon. “This will add to the strength of the Iraqi military.”



Iraqi air force Lt. Tahssen, nurse and flight medic instructor, explains the steps for securing a litter on the C-130 Hercules aircraft to Iraqi flight medic students at New Al-Muthana Air Base, Iraq, June 2. The four week course, once taught by U.S. instructors, is now instructed by Iraqis. After the training the flight medics will be able to convert C-130 Hercules aircraft into aero-medical evacuation transports.

IN MEMORIAM

NAMES OF COALITION SERVICE MEMBERS WHO DIED BETWEEN JUNE 1 AND
JUNE 24, 2009 WHILE SERVING IN OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM

**GREATER LOVE HATH NO MAN THAN THIS: THAT A MAN LAY
DOWN HIS LIFE FOR HIS FRIENDS.**

JOHN 15:13

June 2

Sgt. Justin J. Duffy, 31

June 4

Spc. Christopher M. Kurth, 23

Spc. Charles D. Parrish, 23

June 5

Lance Cpl. Robert D. Ulmer, 22

June 13

Staff Sgt. Edmond L. Lo, 23

June 16

Sgt. Joshua W. Soto, 25

Capt. Kafele H. Sims, 32

June 19

Spc. Chancellor A. Keesling, 25



A doctor from the Balad Ruz clinic checks a young girl's throat during a medical capabilities mission conducted by the 21st Iraqi Army Brigade, in the village of Taweela, Diyala Province, Iraq, June 5. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Ali E. Flisek)