

Marne Focus

Volume 1, Issue 7
July 5, 2007



Serving Task Force Marne and MND-Center



Operation Marne Torch continues

Pfc. Jason Denson with Company A, 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division out of Fort Stewart, Ga., pulls security at a house in Arab Jabour, southern Baghdad, during Operation Marne Touch on June 18. Operation Marne Touch is a joint sweeping operation through Arab Jabour as part of an effort to halt the movement of weapons and explosives into the capital.

Spc. Olanrewaju Akinwunmi

Latest munitions prove accurate, destroys house

2nd BCT, 3rd Inf. Div. PAO

ARAB JABOUR, Iraq- The 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division used one of its newest munitions, the Excalibur, a precision-guided artillery round, to destroy a house laden with explosives June 29.

A suspected vehicle-borne improvised explosive device parked alongside the house was also destroyed.

Area residents told U.S. and Iraqi forces that al Qaeda purposely rigged the house to detonate, and warned the people in the neighborhood to stay away.

Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, questioned a resident in a nearby house who informed the patrol that the house was rigged with explosives targeting Coalition Forces.

The resident also stated that the house was often used as a cache for anti-aircraft weapons and other munitions.

Two Excalibur rounds were fired at the house, followed by Hellfire missiles from Apache helicopters to destroy the VBIED.

This is the first time 2nd BCT has used the Excalibur in combat operations.

Commandos capture, kill al-Qaeda fighters

2nd BCT, 10th Mtn. Div. (LI) PAO

CAMP STRIKER, Iraq – After being shot in the head with a nine millimeter pistol, a 2nd Brigade Combat Team Soldier fired back killing the insurgent.

Coalition Forces also detained eight others near Koresh, Iraq, four miles south of Baghdad July 1.

Soldiers from Troop C, 1st Squadron, 89th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry), from Fort Drum, NY, conducted the mission based on tips. The squadron launched an immediate air assault to nab men on their most wanted list.

One of the BCT's most wanted terrorists fired at one of the Soldiers with a nine millimeter pistol, striking the Soldier in the helmet, but causing no injuries. The Soldier returned fire,

See **COMMANDOS**, page 5



NBA stars bring the magic to the desert

page 8



82nd Sustainment Brigade makes history

page10



Cav. Soldiers work to be good neighbors

page11


Marne 6 sends

Troops help Iraqis gain freedom, build security, ensure a brighter future

I am so proud to be the Multi -National Division - Center commander, and on the celebration of our Nation's 231st birthday, I was humbled to be in your presence. Every day I witness your magnificent acts of selfless service and courage, and they inspire me.

Our country just turned 231 years old, and for 231 years, we've celebrated our freedom and democracy. Right now the Iraqi people are not as lucky, and you are making history by helping to bring freedom to the Iraqi people. You aren't sitting at home reading history books, but you will be in the history books your children read.

Growing up you didn't fear going to the mall, going to school, or hanging outside on your neighborhood street block. The Iraqi children are not so lucky – their markets are attacked, their schools are attacked, and their neighborhoods are not safe. You are helping to reverse that. You are securing their neighborhoods, expelling the terrorists, and taking the fight to enemy in aggressive operations to secure the innocent.

Every day you put on body armor, load your weapons, and head out on patrols to help the Iraqi people. You are motivated to do well, you want to accomplish your mission and most of all, you want to spread the ideals

we are so fortunate to have in America.

You are helping the Iraqis gain their freedom. Soldiers are meeting with local leaders, empowering sheiks and council members, and helping the Iraqis take the steps forward to have a

strong democratic society.

It's hard to be away from families – to miss anniversaries, to miss birthdays, and to miss vacations. But what you are doing is so important. Not only to the



**Task Force Marne Commander,
Maj. Gen. Rick Lynch**

Iraqi people, but to the world. By banishing the terrorists here, you are ensuring that your children and your children's children will never have to wage this type of fight. You are ensuring that your children and your grand children will continue to go to work and school safely and without fear.

You help build their schools, bring water to remote villages, develop youth centers, and conduct tailgate medical missions. Your work is so very important to our Nation and we appreciate your sacrifices.

The Army is a family, and when we're miles away from home, we have each other to rely on. The Soldiers left and right of you are your battle buddies, your partners in this fight against terrorism. That's why we need you to stay Army. Reenlisting is not just about you and your options, but it's about continuing to make the sacrifices our country needs from you. It's about committing not only to your future, but the Nation's future.

Thousands of miles away Americans celebrated a Nation's birthday, but you are the ones that guard their freedoms and give them that opportunity.

ROCK OF THE MARNE!

Officers wanted

The 3rd Infantry Division Commanding General Maj. Gen. Rick Lynch is looking for "high speed" Soldiers and Warrant Officers who are interested in being a commissioned officer in the United States Army.

All 3rd Inf. Div. Soldiers are invited to submit an application packet for one of the commanding general's 14 Officer Candidate School Direct Select allocations.

Applicants must meet eligibility requirements IAW AR 350-51 and Army MILPER Message 06-128. Completed packets are due to the G1 Section before 15 July.

For more information, contact 3ID-G1Programs-Actions@iraq.centcom.mil or your brigade S1.



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3rd Combat Aviation Brigade
214th Fires Brigade
82nd Sustainment Brigade
720th Military Police Battalion
Mobile Unit 3 Explosive Ordnance Disposal Battalion

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Marne 7 sends

Telling Soldiers 'good job' more than lipservice, shows leadership

I've been in the Army for almost 27 years, and the caliber of today's Soldier is at an all-time high. They're educated, knowledgeable and mentally and physically able to withstand the rigors of combat operations.

Not everyone can be an American Soldier. It takes a remarkable type of person to adjust to innumerable situations, and not only live but thrive in environments that would break the spirits of most.

As I travel to different forward operating bases I meet Soldiers who I refer to as "super troopers," they are the total package. That is they're motivated, and have this relentless pursuit for success.

However, no matter how tenacious a person is, there comes a time when he or she needs to know that their work is not in vain, but appreciated. Leaders should recognize their Soldiers in a timely manner for jobs well done. Don't assume that your Soldiers know that they are doing a good job. Did you tell them, if not, how do they know?

This is a volunteer Army, Soldiers are Soldiers because that's what they want. They packed up and left home to

serve in Iraq, Afghanistan, Africa and other corners of the world to support the Global War on Terrorism.

Not everyone can do what you do, you who wear the uniform. Soldiers take the fight to the enemy and set the example for others around the world. They are feared, emulated and respected by nations.

Soldiers are the Army's most valued resource. That's not a cliché for me. Those words come from the heart. I don't stress the importance of safety and tell troops to guard against complacency because that's what command sergeants major do. Without Soldiers – disciplined and self-motivated – the battle is lost.

Soldiers should be proud, whether you are turning wrenches, tracking the battle or in the heat of the battle. Americans depend on you to defend and preserve their freedoms, civil liberties and to keep their country safe and secure.

Keep up the good work.

Remember to continuously take the fight to the enemy, stay on guard and that complacency kills.



**Task Force Marne
Command Sergeant Major,
Command Sgt. Maj. Jesse L.
Andrews, Jr.**

ROCK OF THE MARNE!

Soldiers take leaders' advice, taking classes, starting a degree plan, preparing for future

Story by Spc. Emily Wilsoncroft

Task Force Marne Public Affairs

Whether they are spending the deployment working in an office or patrolling outside the wire, most Soldiers have at least a few hours of time that are purely their own.

The big question is: how are you going to spend yours?

Well there is a plethora of options. You can sit in your tent playing video games and trolling around the Internet for entertainment. You can sleep. You can go to the gym or play sports.

These are all completely legal and viable options. However, perhaps there is something you haven't thought of: education.

Staff Sgt. Jenny Currey, 3rd Signal Company, Special Troops Battalion, 3rd Infantry Division G-6 operations NCO, said this is the second deployment she's used to take classes.

"I've done 22 credit hours while I've been deployed," she said. "I'm 14 classes away from a bachelor's degree in graphic design."

Currey, who is currently taking two online courses through Franklin University, said she's found it a worthwhile endeavor.

"It really helps me pass the time," she said. "And I'm always learning new things."

Pfc. Rose Grubb, the 3rd Inf. Div. G-3 express clerk, said she started taking classes at Fort Stewart before de-

ploying.

"I just take one class at a time," she said. "When one is done, I sign up for the next one, and just keep that up."

While in Iraq, Grubb said, continuing her college education "gives me something to focus on other than what's going on outside the wire."

Master Sgt. James Woods, 82nd Sustainment Brigade liaison officer, said he's been taking college classes since he first came into the Army, and is now working toward his bachelor's degree in business administration.

He said he always encourages his Soldiers to sign up for classes.

"As soon as we arrived (in Iraq), I made them all make goals for the credit hours they were going to complete," he said. "My advice is to determine what field you want to concentrate on, and start now. It's never too late to get an education, but start early."

For Soldiers who are planning to spend several years in the Army, military education is another thing they might want to start with early.

Sgt. Aaron Waller, Headquarters and Headquarters Support Company, STB, said he is taking correspondence courses because plans to make the military his career.

"I want to be a sergeant major someday," he said. "Sergeants major need to be intelligent and subject matter experts in their fields, and that's why I'm continuing my education."

See **EDUCATION**, page 9

THIS WEEK IN MARNE HISTORY



The History of the Third Infantry Division Patch

Sasha McBrayer,
Fort Stewart Museum, Special Projects Officer

*"... For the part we have played ...
For the hardships we knew,
That's why we wear three bars of white
Upon a field of blue ..."*

The concept of the United States Army shoulder insignia originated in the American Civil War. During that period a series of color coded Corps Badges were developed. Similar Corps Badges were used again during the Spanish-American War in 1898. However, the concept of the modern divisional insignia clearly began with the 81st Division, which in October 1918 began wearing an olive drab circle with the representation of a wildcat within. The design was based on the unit's time training at Camp Jackson, S. C., on the banks of Wildcat Creek. General Pershing initially objected to the 81st's violation of uniform standards. He later changed his mind, deciding that unit insignia would promote morale. Pershing then ordered all units in the American Expeditionary Forces to design and wear a distinctive shoulder patch on the left sleeve.

While the Third Division was involved in the Argonne-Meuse campaign in October 1918, their headquarters received an Army directive authorizing divisions to wear the new types of insignia. Brig. Gen. Preston Brown, who had just assumed command of the division, conceived the design at that time. The division G-2 first officially interpreted his design with the following symbolism: The clear blue field of blue stands for loyalty, steadfastness, and undying devotion to the principles of right and justice by the American Soldier. The three clear-cut white stripes stand dually for the three operations the division took part in Marne, St. Mihiel, Argonne-Meuse and also its numerical designation as the Third Division

The first patches were crudely stitched together. By

1939 the patch was enclosed by an olive drab border about simply uniforms of that eventually the would become part of the patch this day when printed, the green mains despite the ors of the modern form.

**The evolution
of the 3rd In-
fantry Divi-
sion patch.**

	1919 -1939
	1939 -1969
	1944 -1945 Italian - made
	1969 - Today
	1969 - Today Subdued
	2002 - Today Desert Subdued

Spc. Chris McCann
Maj. Kenneth Stone, a native of Ames, Iowa, and battalion surgeon for the 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry) out of Fort Drum, N.Y., examines a young Iraqi boy at a medical operation in Cargouli Village, Iraq, June 21. Almost 200 local residents were seen for various illnesses.



Troops aid local residents, build friendships

Story by Spc. Chris McCann
 2nd BCT, 10th Mtn. Div. (LI) Public Affairs

BAGHDAD — Combat medics are seldom short of chances to apply their skills. But as counterinsurgency efforts

continue in Iraq, the medical expertise of battlefield paramedics and surgeons is sometimes co-opted to aid local residents.

Soldiers of the 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry) from Fort Drum, N.Y., joined by the 4th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division soldiers conducted a medical-civil affairs clinic in Cargouli Village June 21.

In the Cargouli Village, Maj. Kenneth Stone, a native of Ames, Iowa, and the 4-31 battalion surgeon, joined by several medics of the battalion and an Iraqi medic, treated mainly aches and pains and stomach illnesses, which the team chalked up largely to poor water quality.

"It's sad that in most patients that we see, their issues stem from water problems," said Spc. Erin Byers, a native of Cape Canaveral, Fla.

In these rural areas, the civilians drink, cook and clean from canal water.

Muhamad Sebeh, a resident of Cargouli Village, was one of about 200 people seen by the medics. He came to be treated for arthritis.

"It's wonderful that the Americans are doing all the things they do," Sebeh said. "The situation here has gotten much better since the arrests after those Soldiers were kidnapped. We're free to walk around now, thanks to the Americans. And when people come to harass us, we kick them out."

Several local women waiting to be seen agreed.

"It's very, very good of the Americans to do this for us," said Badriyya Abdullah. "Since the Soldiers got rid of the terrorists, we've been able to start negotiations for power and water improvements."

The operation was hopefully just the start of improvements in the area, locals said. Cargouli Village was long a stronghold of Sunni terrorists, and is not far from the patrol base where two Soldiers were captured May 12. But since the arrests made during the search for the missing Soldiers,

villagers have been bolder about pointing out terrorists and improvised explosive devices, and have even booted some passing terrorists from the area.

In the nearby village of Arab Jassim, a former sanctuary for terror, the local sheikh, the leader of a Cargouli sub-tribe, hosted the operation in his guest house.

"It's good that you Soldiers have come out here," said Umm Muhammad, one of the sheikh's daughters. "I've seen a few repeat customers for treatment. I think doing these will help relations between the people and the Coalition Forces."

The sheikh was also very positive.

"It's great," he said. "The timing isn't so good, with the crops coming in right now, but still, we have no clinic and this sort of thing is our only access to medical care. The road to Baghdad is closed off, so it's wonderful you have come out here."

Company A, 478th Civil Affairs Battalion Soldiers out of Miami, Fla., also joined the efforts by distributing bags of Iraqi government-issue flour, school supplies, and clothes donated by U.S. citizens at the operations.

Maj. David Hernandez, a 210th Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd BCT medical provider working with the 2-69th, treated many of the patients in Arab Jassim.

"And it does improve relations — they come here to the patrol base as though I'm their doctor. So I've seen a lot of the people before, either when they're sick or they're bringing an ill family member," said Hernandez, a native of Eagle Pass, Texas.

"With the amount of kids we see at these, I hope it will influence them to see us in a more positive light in the future," said Sgt. Jason Lane, a native of Ridgecrest, Calif.

A similar operation was conducted June 22 by Company B, 2nd Battalion, 69th Armored Regiment, 3rd Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division from Fort Stewart, Ga., in Arab Jassim, just outside the company's patrol base. Both villages are in rural areas southwest of Baghdad.



Spc. Chris McCann

Ridgefield, Calif., native, Sgt. Jason Lane, with 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry) medic out of Fort Drum, N.Y., listens to a baby's breathing at a medical operation in Cargouli Village, June 21.

Coalition Forces detain nine, build battle position

2nd BCT, 10th Mtn. Div. (LI) PAO

FORWARD OPERATING BASE MAHMUDIYAH, Iraq – Coalition Forces seized an area between Mahmudiyah and Yusufiyah in an air-assault operation in the early hours of June 30, afterwards they began construction of a battle position there to prevent movement of anti-Iraqi forces.

Soldiers of the 4th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division, in conjunction with troops of the 2nd Battalion, 15th Field Artillery Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry) out of Fort Drum, N.Y., cleared an area along a highway known as Route Sioux during the night.

Troops of Battery A, 2nd Bn. 15th Inf. Regt., discovered a small cache of anti-coalition propaganda compact disks and route-clearance troops from the 2nd Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 2nd BCT, found an improvised explosive device consisting of six 60mm mortar rounds as they traveled to the site of the new battle position.

The IED was destroyed by an explosive ordnance disposal team with a controlled detonation and the mission progressed.

Roads leading to the site were blocked and all vehicles there were searched, resulting in the detentions of six local

nationals. One was on a U.S. persons-of-interest list, three others were on a similar list from the Iraqi army, and two carried false identification papers.

During construction efforts for the new position, 2nd Bn. 15th Inf. Regt., Soldiers came under small-arms fire; attack aviation arrived and suppressed the fire. Iraqi troops attempted to find the source of the attack, but found no one.

Soldiers of Btry. A remained to secure the area as construction personnel continued to build the battle position and reed-clearance teams cleared vegetation from the area to provide better observation.

The battle position, strategically placed in the area which has long been a central terrorist haven, will provide a much-needed center for operations in the area, planners said.

“The establishment of a new battle position in the Sayyid-Abdullah corridor consolidates the progress made by the Iraqi Security Forces in denying the area as a safe-haven to al-Qaeda in Iraq and other anti-Iraqi forces,” said Maj. Matt Zimmerman, operations officer for the 2nd Bn. 15th Inf. Regt., and a native of Willington, Conn.

“It also establishes an additional line of communication between the cities of Mahmudiyah and Yusufiyah. Hav-

ing that communication will allow the 4th Bde. 6th IA to increase their control in their area of operations, and help them to provide a safe and secure environment for the local populace.”

The nine detainees were taken to Forward Operating Base Mahmudiyah for questioning.



Staff Sgt. Dennis J. Henry Jr.

A U.S. Army Soldier from the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, Fort Drum, N.Y., guides barriers into place while building a new battle position near Mahmudiyah, Iraq, on June 29.

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Commandos conduct 100th air assault mission

2nd BCT, 10th Mtn. Div. (LI) PAO

RADWANIYAH, Iraq – Troops from the 1st Squadron, 89th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry) out of Fort Drum, N.Y., conducted the 2nd BCT's 100th air-assault mission west of Radwaniyah June 29.

The raid, called Operation Wolverine Visegrip, was conducted to clear a former stronghold of al-Qaeda in Iraq just southwest of Baghdad.

Coalition and Iraqi army checkpoints along Route Yankee, a major road in the area, had long been coming under frequent small-arms fire attacks, prompting the clearing operation. The information used to plan the assault was gleaned from local tips and informant net-

works.

Soldiers of the 2nd Battalion, 14th Infantry Regiment, 2nd BCT provided ground interdiction along the road, preventing escape by fleeing terrorists, as five platoons of 1st Sqdn. 89th Cav. Regt., "Wolverine" troops were airlifted in by UH-60 Blackhawk helicopters.

The 2nd BCT has conducted many air assaults over the last 11 months, using helicopters to gain rapid access to the far-flung rural villages in the area of operations.

A strip of houses along Route Trailblazers was searched and cleared, and empty AK-47 magazines were found, as well as firing positions on and around the homes, but the isolated settlement was "a ghost town," said Capt. Michael Murphy, a native of Springfield, Mo., and the operations

officer for Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 1st Sqdn. 89th Cav. Regt.

Soldiers came under sporadic small-arms fire during the operation, but were unable to find the persons involved.

Iraqis living in the vicinity intend to keep the area cleared of anti-Iraqi forces, Murphy said, adding that 1st Sqdn. 89th Cav. Regt., will increase civil-military operations in that vicinity to aid local residents with basic necessities such as trash removal and water and sewage services as soon as possible. Many residents had fled the area due to the presence of al-Qaeda affiliated terrorists.

"Now that this area has been cleared, I think families will begin moving back in," Murphy said.

The Freedom Report

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Report under Audio)



A weekly radio program about troops serving in

Operation Iraqi Freedom

COMMANDOS, from page 1

killing the insurgent.

The man was wearing a suicide vest and carried two hand grenades. Explosive Ordnance Disposal teams were sent in to deactivate the vest.

Initially, seven other suspected terrorists were detained. A follow on search netted another suspect from the list of most wanted.

The al-Qaeda suspects were wanted for orchestrating attacks against Iraqi Security and Coalition Forces as well as intimidating and murdering locals who did not collaborate with the al Qaeda fighters.

The individuals are being held for questioning.

Paratroopers detain IED emplacers during night air assault mission

Story by Sgt. J.H. French
4th BCT (ABN), 25th Inf. Div. Public Affairs

KALSU, Iraq – As the paratroopers packed inside the helicopter, engines roared to life and lifted them into the black of night, June 23.

The destination of the paratroopers was Hawaii, but it was no island paradise, it was the target name for an insurgent stronghold in a village just outside Mahmudiyah.

The paratroopers from Company C, 3rd Battalion, 509th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team (Airborne), 25th Infantry Division conducted Operation Peregrine II and captured five members of an insurgent cell in north Babil.

“The operation was a night time air assault to capture several (individuals) that we believe are directly responsible for attacks in our area, including the bombing of a bridge that took the lives of three of our fellow Soldiers,” said 1st Sgt. Karl Zaglauer, first sergeant for Company C. “This was actually the third raid we have conducted in response to the bridge attack.”

The paratroopers trained and rehearsed for three days in preparation for the mission but at the last minute plans changed.

“Prior to take off we learned that the main target had

moved locations,” Zaglauer said. “So, we came up with a hasty plan and our guys executed it flawlessly.”

Even though the paratroopers made the raid look easy, it did have its problems.

“It was difficult. This was our first air assault, and at the last minute there was a change, but we were flexible and stuck to the basics,” said 1st Lt. Nathaniel Bretz, a platoon leader with Company C.

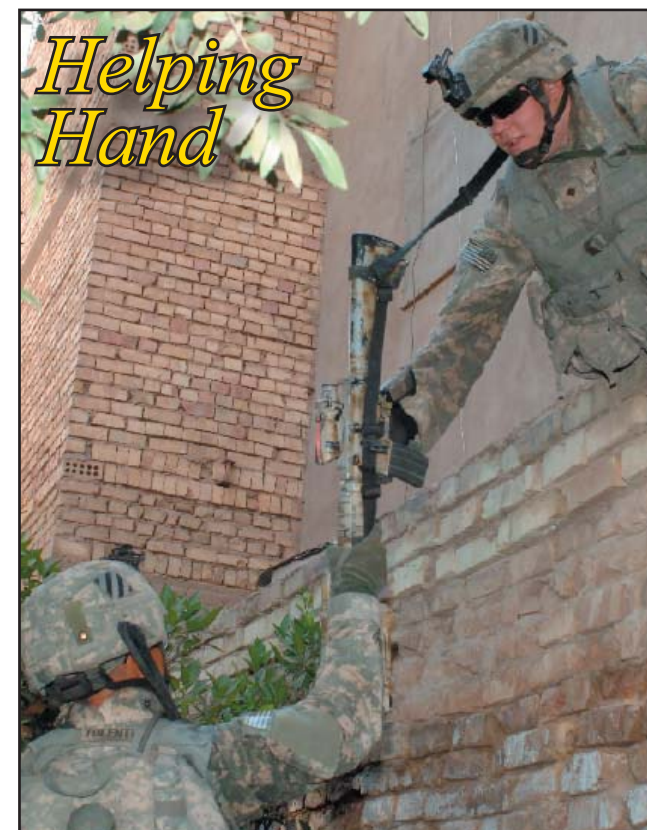
According to Bretz, several factors added to the difficulty of the operation including the sheer number of houses located within the vicinity of the target.

“Everything was a little more built up than we expected,” he continued. “But, we were able to clear the objective and take five insurgents off of the street.”

More missions of this type are being planned by Company C.

“We like conducting these types of operations because it gives you the element of surprise,” said Capt. Stew Lindsay, commander of Company C.

In all, 19 suspected members of the IED cell have been detained. Company A, 2nd Battalion, 69th Armored Regiment, attached to 377th Parachute Field Artillery Regiment, 4th BCT, (ABN), 25th ID, detained 14 insurgents June 24 while conducting a raid south of Baghdad alongside the Iraqi army.



Staff Sgt. Bronco Suzuki

A U.S. Army Soldier assigned to Company C, 2nd Battalion, 69th Armor Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division prepares to climb a wall during a combined cordon and search operation with Soldiers from 2nd Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division in the Rusafa area of Baghdad, Iraq, on June 19.



Sgt. J.H. French

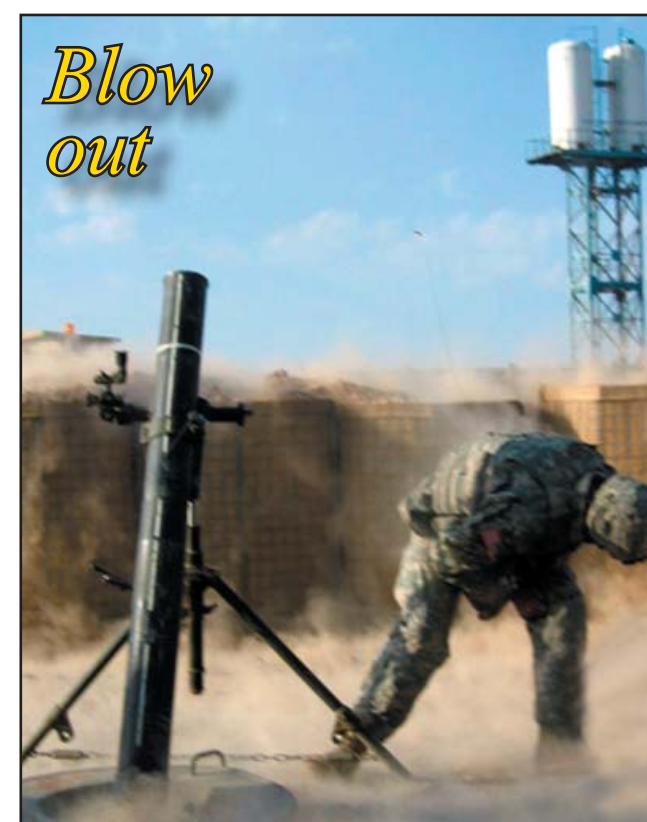
Master Sgt. Mark Powell, a military policeman with the 4th Brigade Combat Team (Airborne), 25th Infantry Division provides security during a raid near Mahmudiyah, June 23.

Sgt. J.H. French
A UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter descends to pick up paratroopers following an air assault and raid near Mahmudiyah, June 23.



Sgt. J.H. French

Sgt. Matthew Ashmead, a medic with Company C, 3rd Battalion, 509th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team (Airborne), 25th Infantry Division searches a stack of mattresses.



U.S. Army photo

SpC. Anthony Gormley, a native of Jackson, Mich., and a mortarman with the 2nd Battalion, 14th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry) out of Fort Drum, N.Y., fires a 120mm mortar from Patrol Base Gator Swamp, southwest of Baghdad recently.

MCT Soldiers keep TF Marne on track

Story by **Spc. Emily Wilsoncroft**
Task Force Marne Public Affairs

CAMP VICTORY, Iraq - Every time a Task Force Marne Soldier rolls outside the wire, a member of the 384th Movement Control Team is watching – and for 12 hours of the day, that person is either Pfc. Marianne Webb or Pvt. Shawn M. Maurer.

Both Soldiers are movement control coordinators with 384th Movement Control Team out of Fort Eustis, Va., and their tasks begin each night when they sit down in the division operations center.

“We monitor and maintain convoys in the (Multinational Division – Center) battle space,” said Webb, a Parma, Ohio, native. “We check to see if they have any issues, and if they do, we can assist them. We also get in contact with the landowners (brigades that control the roads in a particular sector) and change routes and route status when necessary. We’re the information center for convoys.”

If they were to give incorrect information to a convoy, Webb said, that could put the convoy in jeopardy. And when they are contacted by unit, they must always be ready to answer the call.

“If a unit needs something, they contact us and we coordinate it,” she explained.

As one might expect, this mission requires vigilance.

“You could sit there for hours and have nothing happen, but once stuff does happen, it goes down in an instant,” said Maurer, a Midland, Mich., native. “It gets very stressful – I just have to step back for a minutes and figure out how I’m going to get everyone’s questions answered.”

Webb said she’s more comfortable in those unexpected situations.

“I get fidgety when there’s nothing to do,” she said. “When something comes up, I like making the calls to find out what to do about it – it makes me feel like I’ve made more of an impact.”

“Every time something (adverse) happens, we learn,” Webb added. “Unfortunately, it’s usually something we’d rather not have to learn from.”

“Back (in the U.S.), all we do is go to school,” she continued. “We’re constantly learning, constantly preparing to do the job we’re doing.”

Maurer agreed.

“Whether the incident is small or big, it’s never exactly the same as any other,” he said.

During slower periods, though, the Soldiers are still busy.

“We’re the extra watchdogs,” Webb said. “If (Maurer) notices that a convoy has been sitting in one place for too long, he’ll call them to find out why.”

The position Webb and Maurer hold is one of considerable responsibility, and it’s rare to see junior-enlisted Sol-

diers in their chairs, according to Sgt. 1st Class Eugene Carlson, 384th MCT’s detachment first sergeant.

“The majority of the stations in the DOC are manned by senior NCOs or officers,” he said. “We have four privates down there, two at night and two during the day. They’re working way above their pay grade, and they’re well-respected down there.”

Maurer and Webb are so well-respected, in fact, that they were recently awarded Army Achievement Medals based on a recommendation from somebody outside of their section.

“They do an outstanding job tracking convoys, doing maps and determining route status, (medical evacuation) status and incident status,” Carlson said. “All four guys working in the DOC ... have met and exceeded our expectations.”



Spc. Emily Wilsoncroft

Maj. Gen. Rick Lynch, Task Force Marne commander, awards the Army Achievement Medal to Pvt. Shawn M. Maurer, a movement control coordinators with 384th Movement Control Team, during an awards ceremony June 12 at Task Force Marne headquarters.



Spc. Emily Wilsoncroft
Maj. Gen. Rick Lynch, Task Force Marne commander, awards the Army Achievement Medal to Pfc. Marianne Webb, a movement control coordinator with 384th Movement Control Team, during an awards ceremony June 12 at TF Marne headquarters.

Casualty team keeps Soldiers' memories alive

Specially trained Soldiers keep accurate records

Story by **Spc. Emily Wilsoncroft**
Task Force Marne Public Affairs

CAMP VICTORY, Iraq - With the creation of Task Force Marne and Multinational Division – Center has come yet another new development – the Casualty Liaison Team.

The casualty team, which deployed from Fort Eustis, Va., has been attached to the 3rd Infantry Division since May, and its job is to report and track all of the casualties in the Multinational Corps – Iraq area of operations.

“We also assist with keeping accurate casualty statistics throughout the deployment and providing personnel support to the casualty cell as a whole,” said Staff Sgt. Marian Griffin, the team’s operations

NCO.

“That means receiving casualty reports from the brigades under (TF Marne), reviewing the (Defense Casualty Information Processing System) reports prior to them being sent to MNC-I.”

The team came to the division as a result of the Personnel Service Delivery Redesign concept.

“Historically, the G1 (Personnel) Casualty Section has come from Soldiers already assigned to the division G1 section,” said Maj. Bill Haas, the deputy G1 for the 3rd Inf. Div. “Under PSDR, this new concept of attaching a trained team has alleviated a lot of the stress on the division G1 for additional manpower, training and resources. Having this team attached who are already fully trained in their profession rather than having to begin a training program in a combat zone is a tremendous accomplishment.”

The job these Soldiers do is not one that just anybody could step into, Griffin said.

“When you’re working with casualties, you need to have a strong character,” she

said. “It can be very emotionally draining to have to deal with the kind of information we have flowing in. Our reports have to include the details of what actually happened to each person, and that can be very graphic.”

The data the team compiles also becomes part of more tangible products, such as pamphlets and a memorial wall display in the TF Marne headquarters building. They also put together Hero Cards – cards containing each fallen Soldier’s picture and personal information – for Maj. Gen. Rick Lynch, TF Marne commander.

“The Soldiers know how important their job is,” Griffin said. “Every time they see someone stop to look at the memorial wall and go through all the individual Soldiers’ dog tags, or somebody reading through the pamphlets, it shows them that somebody out there is benefiting from what they do.”

In order to ease the tension that comes with their work, the casualty team tries to keep its office atmosphere lighthearted, Griffin said.

“We laugh a lot in this section,” she said. “It helps to lift a lot of the stress. We’re

always checking on the Soldiers and making sure they’re getting enough down time when they need it.

“Everyone has their (family) pictures around to give us a focal point,” she added. “It reminds us of who we’re doing this for.”

Despite their sometimes emotionally daunting task – paired with the added challenge of adjusting to the demands of a division they had never before worked with – Haas said the casualty team has had no trouble fitting in.

“The team has not faced any problems nor do I anticipate that they will,” he said. “They are highly professional, highly trained and highly motivated to do their job in support of the division. They have all stepped up and excelled in everything we have asked of them.”

Griffin concurred.

“This job is rewarding,” she said. “We work hard, and we’re always looking for ways to ‘improve our foxhole.’ I’m impressed with my team, and I wouldn’t ask for anyone else.”

Troops search main source of IED suppliers

Story by Sgt. Luis Delgadillo
Task Force Marne Public Affairs

PATROL BASE MURRAY, Iraq - It's typical around this time of year for the early morning sun to turn the outside temperature up to more than 100 degrees.

Today is no different, except that these days Company B, 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, patrols the banks of the Tigris River - turning the heat up on al-Qaeda in Arab Jabour.

Operation Guardian Torch, conducted by the 2nd BCT, is a key part of the 3rd Inf. Div.'s Operation Marne Torch.

Guardian Torch aims at seeking and destroying al-Qaeda elements in Arab Jabour and finding weapons caches.

"This area is considered by most intelligence, to be the home source for (Vehicle-Borne Improvised Explosive Devices) and high explosives throughout all of Iraq," said Sgt. Luke J. Hitchcock, a second platoon team leader in Co., B. "We're trying to wipe this area clean of all of that, so we can deter and stop IEDS and explosives in Iraq."

Capt. John T. Newman, company commander for Co., B, said al-Qaeda in Iraq has had free reign to exploit Arab Jabour due to the lack of U.S. and Iraqi military presence.

"The insurgents are utilizing this area to push weapons and people up into Baghdad so we're trying to cut off their supply line," he said.

Newman says that thus far the people of Arab Jabour have been friendly and though some residents have left the area, most local civilians are very glad to see U.S. and Iraqi troops.

Despite the welcome, Arab Jabour remains a very dangerous place for Coalition Forces.



Sgt. Luis Delgadillo

Pfc. Joseph S. Brown, an infantryman with Co., B, 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, patrols in Arab-Jabour.

Insert, Brown searches for weapons caches and bomb-making materials in storage bins. The Woodbourne, N.Y., native is assisting in the hunt for al-Qaeda operatives who are using the area to funnel supplies into Baghdad.

"The more of a presence that we show here and the more friendliness that we show them, the more willing to work with us they will be," said Hitchcock, a native of Bolivar, N.Y.

He said that in the past insurgents were threatening local civilians, but since his unit's arrival the local civilians say the threats have stopped.

Hitchcock said that the most rewarding part about his job is seeing the locals when they're happy and working

with the Iraqi army to help clean the country up.

Though Co., B, will not stay in Arab Jabour once the operation is completed, elements of 1st Bn., 30th Inf. Regt., will stay to hold the region.

"Our sister companies are staying in this area for the long hall," said Newman.

Newman said that the next goal for Arab Jabour is to stand up a provincial government and police force that can enforce the rule of law.

Standing in their shadows, NBA players humbled by troops support

MND-C PAO

FORWARD OPERATION BASE KALSU - They stand 6'3," 7'0" and 7'6," but in the presence of Soldiers, they are the ones looking up.

Former National Basketball Association stars Greg Minor, Thurl Bailey and Shawn Bradley visited Forward Operating Base Kalsu to meet the troops stationed there June 15.

The trip was part of the Classics of Hardwood 2007 Goodwill Tour to visit 20 FOBs: two in Kuwait and 18 in Iraq, to raise troop morale.

This visit included autograph sessions, meet and greets, hospital visits, basketball clinics and 3-on-3 competitions.

"You can just tell we're doing something by the big smiles on (the troops') faces," said Minor, a former Boston Celtic.

Such smiles have kept Bailey, a former all-star with the Utah Jazz and Minnesota Timberwolves, coming back. Bailey as a participant in the Classics of Hardwood tours has been to Kosovo, Bosnia, Italy, Germany and Sarajevo.

"If you talk to most people in the states, if they had an opportunity to do something, even something small to boost morale, they would do it," he said. "We get to do it firsthand."

Thurl brought friends with him this year, a 7'6 former center for the Philadelphia 76ers, New Jersey Nets and Dallas Mavericks.

"Bailey asked me to do it, and I thought it was a great opportunity," Bradley said.

By coming over, Bradley said he is able to bring the message that people back home care about the troops and support them.

"All the positive reinforcement can't hurt," Bailey said.

Neither did having the stars sign autographs and take photos with the troops.

"I was so excited to know they were coming," said Pfc. Monique Grogan, Company C, 26 Brigade Support Battalion. "It was nice of them to come down here to see us."

Grogan, a 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division Soldier, said she was thrilled by their generosity, having received autographs for her kids, mother and father.

Spc. William Eskeridge shared his comrade's enthusiasm. A basketball fan who remembered watching Bradley play, said finally seeing him in person was a great experience.

The three basketball stars said they were also touched.

"It is a real blessing for us," Bailey said, adding that seeing the sacrifices made by the young men and women in the armed forces, who protect the freedoms enjoyed back

home, makes him appreciate those freedoms even more.

"It definitely did a lot for the Soldiers," said 1st Lt. Glan-dis Hillman, Headquarters and Headquarters company, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division. "We really appreciate them leaving their own families behind to come and visit us."

"I hope they come again," Grogan said.



Courtesy photo

Thurl Bailey, a former NBA star, signs an autograph for a Soldier at the Forward Operating Base Kalsu dining facility June 15.

1-15 Soldiers build ties with Salman Pak residents

Story by Spc. Ben Hutto
3rd HBCT Public Affairs

FORWARD OPERATING BASE HAMMER, Iraq – Soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment stationed at a combat outpost in Salman Pak are getting to know the town's citizens up close and personal.

Soldiers from 1st Bn. 15th Inf. Regt., are spending more times these days interacting with the Salman Pak citizens during dismounted patrols.

Maj. Steve Delgado, the executive officer for 1st Bn. 15th Inf. Regt., explained that Soldiers live amongst the people they are trying to assist, and are able to respond to threats quicker than if they were living on Forward Operating Base Hammer -- miles away. Living in Salman Pak also helps the Soldiers understand their environment better.

"This helps us in two ways," said Delgado. "One, we become closer to the populace by sharing some of the same experiences and trials as they do, and it helps us think like the threat force. We now know where they live, hide, run to and attack."

All of this information has been very helpful to 1st Bn. 15th Inf. Regt., during Operation Marne Torch, a Multi-National Division-Center operation which aims to eliminate insurgent sanctuaries southeast of Baghdad.

"We have been extremely successful in accomplishing our purpose for this operation, disrupting the extremists' activities and denying them safe havens," said Delgado. "We have accomplished this by conducting numerous operations which have uncovered a plethora of caches and we have detained numerous individuals."

All of the operations, according to Delgado, will help secure the area making it safer for troops operating in the area and the people who live there.

"Generally, the response from the populace has been positive," said Delgado. "The good people of Iraq know we are conducting operations to secure them and disrupt insurgent activities. They want to help us and try to provide assistance by giving us information. This operation is another opportunity to demonstrate to the populace how we are here to help."



Spc. Ben Hutto

Cpl. Aaron Wait, from San Antonio and a rifleman with Company A, 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, escorts a young girl across the street during a dismounted foot patrol in Salman Pak June 20.

Marne Torch results in five suspects detained

Story by Sgt. Natalie Rostek
3rd HBCT Public Affairs

FORWARD OPERATING BASE HAMMER, Iraq – Soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, detained five individuals early Sunday morning during a search in the village of Dura'iya.

The unit's mission, according to 1st Bn., 15 Inf. Regt., leaders, was to disrupt key insurgent networks in the battalion's area of operation.

Soldiers searched several houses for weapons and improvised explosive device-making materials. The searches resulted in the detention of five individuals and the seizure of one rifle.

Soldiers of the 1st Bn., 15 Inf. Regt., have begun aggressive operations to eliminate insurgent sanctuaries to the southeast of Baghdad as a part of the Multi-National Division Center's Operation Marne Torch. The battalion has conducted three air assault missions in the last 12 days to eliminate or deter destabilizing influences in the region.

"When the enemy chooses not to engage us, in the areas they consider sanctuaries, it shows us that the enemy fears us. It also shows the local population that we will

protect them," said 1st Lt. Josh Powers, from Atlanta, Ga., assistant operations officer for 1-15 Inf.

The 1st Bn., 15 Inf. Regt., is assigned to the 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, from Fort Benning, Ga.



Sgt. Natalie Rostek

Soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Infantry Division search a suspected insurgent safe house near Dura'iya June 17.

EDUCATION, from page 3

Woods said today's technological advances make it more convenient for Soldiers to earn credit hours during deployments.

"We didn't have all this technology back when I started taking classes," he said. "We didn't have online classes."

Sgt. 1st Class Eugene Burr, a career counselor Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry), concurred that it's gotten much easier for Soldiers to work toward their degrees.

"I have been taking classes since 1991, and things have changed," Burr said. "Now Soldiers can take classes online and they are affordable. The Army used to only pay 75 percent of tuition; now it pays 100 percent."

He added, "The most important thing for Soldiers to remember is that there is life after the military and if they do not have a degree, they will start back at the bottom when they get out."

Although the Internet eliminates many difficulties faced by Soldiers in the past, one obstacle that still remains is that of time.

"I was having trouble staying caught up while we were in the process of deploying," Grubb said. "I encourage people to take classes and continue their education, but you have to know how to manage your time and not take on more than you can handle."

"You have to make sure you have the discipline to get the work done," Currey emphasized. "I try to do all my assignments a week prior to their due date ... and stay ahead, in case of unforeseen circumstances."

Most Soldiers agree that it's a challenge to keep up with their studies, whether deployed or not, but all say that the extra effort is worth it.

"I have taken three classes since I have deployed," said Cpl. Antonio Foy, a paralegal NCO with HHC, 2/10th Mtn. Div. (LI), who is working on his associate's degree in criminal justice. "Taking classes and being in the Army is not always easy, but taking the classes keeps you busy and keeps you out of trouble. I want to be able to look back on the Army and know that I did something while I was in."

Many deployed Soldiers have chosen the path to higher learning, both military and civilian, and there is no shortage of resources to help them do so.

If you're seeking to acquire civilian credit hours, go to your education center and speak to a counselor. He or she can help you get the ball rolling toward your education goals.

"I think education is the most important thing to have when you get out of the Arm," Woods said. "That and the experience you have will make you a successful person."

https://www.earmyu.com/docs/GAE_FactSheet_04-07.pdf

Tip:

The Army has launched a new online tuition assistance process. Be sure to register and get your username and password set up even if you don't intend to start classes right away.

Sustainment unit marks new page in history

Logistic troops surpass boundaries, resupply outposts

Story by Staff Sgt. Felix A. Figueroa
82nd Sust. Bde., Public Affairs

LIFE SUPPORT AREA ADDER, Iraq – The Army's transformation towards modularity back in January 2006, brought forth a lot of change that affected the composition of many units. One unit in particular was the 82nd Airborne's Division Support Command or DISCOM now known as the 82nd Sustainment Brigade. Unlike its previous entity and composition, the brigade now has organic elements such as the 21st Chemical Company, 82nd Signal Company, and the 11th Quartermaster Company to name a few.

Although the name has changed, the brigade's mission remains; provide effective and responsive logistical support to forward tactical units. In August 2006, they answered their nation's call to duty and deployed to southern Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, relieving 16th Corps Support Group, Third Corps Support Command.

"Today, we enter the next chapter in the global war on terror, in order to extend peace and freedom around the world," said Col. Stephen R. Lyons, 82nd Sust. Bde., commander.

Since that fateful historical day, the Soldiers of the 82nd Sustainment Brigade have supported Iraqi security forces counterinsurgency operations as well as the coalition Soldiers engaged in OIF.

However, all of the Soldiers falling under the 82nd Sust. Bde., do not hail from Fort Bragg, N.C. The brigade has two battalions assigned to them with their own distinction and historical credibility; the 3rd Infantry Division's 260th Corps Support Battalion, and the Army Reserve's 81st Infantry Division's 365th Corps Support Battalion.

The 365th CSB or 'Black Cats' mission is tactical sus-



tainment, in other words, receiving products, while the 260th CSB mission is tactical distribution operations or convoys.

Together these tried and true units make up the modern Army's logistic brigade providing support for units throughout southern Iraq.

In Badrah, the 82nd Sust. Bde., coordinated and oversaw an airdrop of critical supplies to the 3rd Border Transition Team in late February. The airdrop to this isolated outpost, consisted of water and food, and was intended to find and validate an additional means of re-supply to small units in remote locations.

"As you move away from the forward operating bases and into the more remote locations, you have small units out there that are vital to the stability of the country," Helwig said.

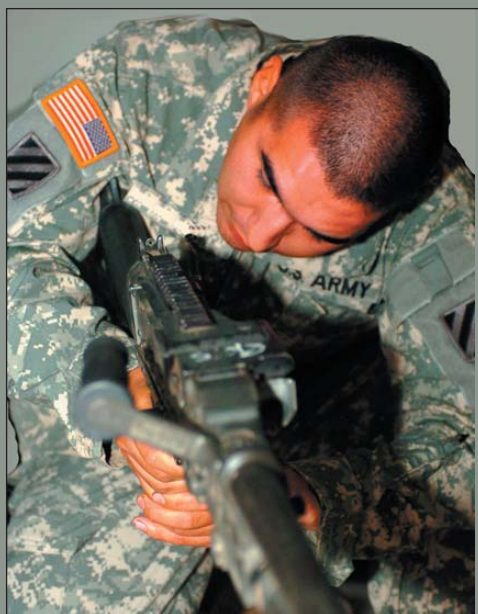
"The intent of this airdrop was twofold," said Maj. Jared Helwig, SPO Plans and Effects officer with the 82nd Sust. Bde.

"Having the ability to supply these border security units from the sky, considering their remoteness and the potential dangers inherent in the overland routes, is critical to the overall mission, Helwig said.

"To a smaller degree, we have to show everybody that we can support these types of operations anywhere, anytime," Helwig said.

The 82d Sustainment Brigade not only proved that they could support such an operation, they also made history during that mission because it was the first-ever logistical support airdrop during OIF.

"I am particularly proud of our all-American formation with units representing 14 different (countries), Soldiers representing all 50 states and territories, and representation from the reserve, National Guard, and active components. Together we remain focused on accomplishing the mission, protecting the force, and growing the future. United in purpose we find tremendous power in the diversity and talents of our Soldiers," Lyons said.



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**Weapons safety
Perform pre-combat checks,
pre-combat inspections**

Iraqi air force delivers, displays proficiency

Story by Pfc. Roberto H. Baumgartner
82nd Sust. Bde., Public Affairs

CAMP ADDER, Iraq – Iraqi soldiers got a big boost in national pride and confidence June 25 as they watched an Iraqi air force C-130 deliver fresh water to Camp Delta.

The fledgling Iraqi air force provided bottled drinking water to keep convoys off the road, this was their first logistical mission.

The aircraft delivered roughly five truckloads of palletized water. This meant that trucks and the necessary security trucks that would accompany them did not have to hit road, said Lt. Col. Jeffrey Drushal, support operations officer in charge for the 82nd Sustainment Brigade.

According to the brigade leadership, this was truly a coalition effort. When the Iraqi cargo plane landed at Camp Delta, it was directed to a safe landing by the Polish air control operators. While these types of flights are routine for the U.S. Air Force, it was something new for the Iraqi air force. The "training wheels" are off, according to Drushal, and this is what appears to be the beginning of a resolute and competent new Air Force for the Iraqi people.



Courtesy Photo

Pallets of fresh water are loaded onto an Iraqi air force C-130 to be delivered to Forward Operating Base Delta. The aircraft delivered roughly five truckloads of palletized water keeping military vehicles off the Iraqi roads.

1-89 Cav. reaches out to new neighbors

Story by Sgt. Ben Brody

Task Force Marne Public Affairs

BAGHDAD, Iraq – After recently taking over Combat Outpost Corregidor, troops greeted their new neighbors by offering a service rarely available in the rural farmland south of Baghdad - medical care.

Soldiers from Troop B, 1st Squadron, 89th Cavalry Regiment, brought a flatbed truck loaded with medical supplies to a small building just outside the COP, while humvees fitted with loudspeakers patrolled the area, advertising the June 30 event.

To make the event a success, Trp., B coordinated with other elements from 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division – bringing female medics and a chaplain from 210th Brigade Support Battalion, as well as a Civil Affairs team to distribute humanitarian aid.

“In this culture, it’s very important that an Iraqi woman be seen by a female practitioner, without any men present,” said Miami native Spc. Arianne Torrenegra, Company C, 210th Bde. Spt. Bn. “I came out here for that reason, and because I love helping people, whoever they are – that’s why I’m a medic.”

As temperatures soared to 118 degrees, residents suffering from a wide variety of ailments, from the flu to epilepsy, steadily made their way across tilled farmers’ fields to the outpost.

Among the first few patients seen were three men, all suffering from a stomach flu likely caused by drinking unclean water. The men left with oral rehydration salts, vitamins and as much bottled water as they could carry off.

“This is really like a sick call for the local populace – we can diagnose and treat simple illnesses and afflictions,” said 2nd Lt. Max Smith, a medical officer for 1st Sqdn. 89th Cav., Regt., from Grand Haven, Mich. “We can only do so much, but we’ve got to do as much as we can.”

Iraqi soldiers helped run a checkpoint, patting down residents before they approached the medics. Around noon, one of the Iraqi soldiers reported that a woman had collapsed in a nearby field.

Immediately a team of U.S. and Iraqi troops raced to the spot where the woman lay drifting in and out of unconsciousness. Troopers from 1st Sqdn. 89th Cav., Regt., formed a ring of security, while medic Spc. Christina Baker, Co. C, 210th Bde. Spt. Bn., from Salem, Ore., and an Iraqi soldier helped her to a shady grove near the main road.

There she was put on a stretcher and brought to the makeshift clinic, where she received an I.V. to replace her lost fluids. The diagnosis: unusually heavy menstruation, coupled with anemia made her especially vulnerable to the day’s punishing heat.

Soldiers from 3rd Civil Affairs Battalion brought a trunk full of backpacks containing school supplies, and Chaplain (Capt.) Daniel Kang, 210th Bde. Spt. Bn., handed them out to children after their checkups.

“I love seeing the kids smile,” said Kang, of Charlotte, N.C., who traveled to COP Corregidor to provide religious services to the Soldiers stationed there. “The base I live on has plenty of chaplains, but these guys don’t have that opportunity. Some don’t care for it, but some of the Soldiers really draw great strength from religious faith.”

As the squadron physician’s assistant, 1st Lt. Martin Stewart had his hands full during the operation, he put it in perspective.

“The value of this is immeasurable – it improves our standing with the local population to the point that they trust us, and help us in securing the sector,” Stewart, from



Sgt. Ben Brody

Spc. Arianne Torrenegra, a medic from 210th Brigade Support Battalion, dabs tears from a sick Iraqi girl’s face at a makeshift clinic near Combat Outpost Corregidor June 30.

Bryan, Texas, said. “Since we literally live right down the street from these folks, that gives us the ability to make follow-up treatments, which vastly improves the quality of care we can give.”

The area around COP Corregidor, while seeming like sleepy farmland, is in reality a notoriously violent zone known as “the belly of the snake,” referring to its role in staging car bomb attacks on Baghdad. Many Soldiers and civilians have died on the dusty, crater-pocked streets here.

Throughout the day, the low thuds of Explosive Ordnance Disposal teams detonating found bombs punctuated the rural quiet, reminding residents of the stark choices upon them.

“Iraqis here realize that we’re going home eventually, and that al-Qaeda isn’t, so they’ve got a limited time to help us root out a force that has been extremely destructive for them,” Stewart said. “The tide is turning here, attacks are way down, and I believe missions like this have been a big part of that change.”

Sgt. Ben Brody
Pfc. Kris Kroll, 1st Squadron, 89 Cavalry Regiment, gathers medical information on a man complaining of seizures during a medical operation near Combat Outpost Corregidor June 30.



Sgt. Ben Brody

Spc. Christina Baker and Pfc. Kris Kroll, medics with 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, unload supplies to set up a small clinic outside Combat Outpost Corregidor June 30.

Sgt. Ben Brody
An Iraqi boy suffering from a birth defect peers warily at 1-89 Cav. Soldiers who set up a small clinic outside Combat Outpost Corregidor June 30.



Officer strives for success, enjoys challenges of MI

Story by Sgt. 1st Class Thomas Mills
3rd CAB Public Affairs

BAGHDAD – Standing in front of roughly 200 Soldiers from 603rd Aviation Support Battalion May 17 at Camp Buering, Kuwait, a slim female figure raises her voice to get the audience to get quiet.

Beside her, butcher paper is covered with phonetically spelled Arabic words. The class on Arabic language, history and culture is about to begin, and 2nd Lt. Heather Wilson, military intelligence officer for the 603rd ASB, Combat Aviation Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, wants to make sure everyone hears what she has to say.

“My hope is that every Soldier, every small interaction (with the Iraqi people) can be a positive one,” she said about the purpose behind her class. “I think that it’s so important to learn the culture when you go to that country.”

Learning is something at which Wilson excels, say Soldiers who work with her.

Learning, say Soldiers working with Wilson, is something at which she excels. Already, they say, Wilson shows remarkable promise as an officer and a leader through hard work, high initiative and a stick-to-itiveness rarely seen in young officers.

“She’s great,” said Sgt. Kelvin Cooley, 603rd ASB military intelligence NCOIC.

Its speaks volumes that she learned Arabic, said Cooley. After taking an Arabic college class, Wilson began studying Arabic on her own time and can be found at her desk with an Arabic language primer developing her skills in this difficult language on many nights.

“She’s really dedicated and always willing to learn and she takes initiative,” said Cooley. “Arabic is probably one of the hardest languages to learn beside Farsi or Urdu.”

Learning foreign languages and military operations is not what Wilson always had planned for herself.

Mostly raised in Lusby, Md., Wilson didn’t set out to become an Army MI officer. Her thoughts were on much loftier goals.

“Actually, I wanted to be an astronaut as cheesy as that sounds,” she said.

As a small child she lived near Cape Canaveral’s Kennedy Space Center. A tour of the complex hooked her on the concept of flying in space and piloting in general.

“Later I reevaluated my skills and how clumsy I was,”

she joked. “Five concussions later, I decided that I shouldn’t be a pilot.”

The intrepid young girl turned to art, only to become a professional painter as a pre-teen. Completing her first oil painting at 12, Wilson entered it into several art shows where she won honorable mentions and notoriety.

After selling several paintings locally, Wilson, who was 16 and attending Patuxent High School in Maryland, tired of the art business retired as a professional painter. Creating art wasn’t challenging enough, she said, and she was looking for something that tested her limits.

Wilson attended college at Colorado State University in Fort Collins, Co. The first of her family to go to college, she set her sights on the Army and, specifically, being a military intelligence officer. Both of her parents were enlisted in the Navy, said Wilson, but that isn’t why she wanted to become an Army officer.

She wanted to be an Army officer because it seemed like it would be as much of a challenge as she could handle.

“I love that the Army is hard for me. I love that,” she said. “You definitely learn your limits.”

Lt. Col. Adrian Farrall, commander, 4th Battalion, 3rd Aviation Regiment, 3rd CAB, was Wilson’s battalion commander at the Military Science Course at Colorado State and remembers a remarkable young cadet who thrived on challenges.

“She was a great student and a great cadet,” he said. “She took a full course load and her cadet work, but she was more than able to deal with it.”

On top of course work and cadet studies, Wilson volunteered as a sexual assault and rape counselor at the school.

“She powered right through any challenges she faced,” said Farrall.

For officers the job you wish to get is not necessarily the job the Army wants you to have. Wilson’s goal was to become a military intelligence officer. Her mentors all had that same goal — make Wilson a military intelligence officer.

“All five branches of the military revolve around those guys on the ground kicking in the doors,” said Wilson.

Wilson knew intelligence and operations went hand-in-hand, and you can’t be successful without good military intelligence. “I wanted to be a part of that,” she said.

She was also looking toward the future. Knowing she would deploy to the Middle East once she was commis-

sioned, she began studying Arabic and Middle Eastern culture in college. Using that knowledge hinged on her becoming a military intelligence officer.

When it finally came time to informing Wilson of her branch, Farrall took his time about giving her the information.

“He messed with me for about 10 minutes,” she said. “He said, ‘Have a soda,’ and I was like, ‘Tell me what my



Sgt. 1st Class Thomas Mills

2nd Lt. Heather Wilson, military intelligence officer, 603rd Aviation Support Battalion, 3rd Combat Aviation Brigade, instructs members of 603rd ASB on Arabic language and customs during training at Camp Buering, Kuwait, May 17.

branch is!”

Finally, the wait was over. Farrall told her she would become an MI officer.

“I’m really lucky I got to do something I have such a passion for,” Wilson said. “I’m glad I had good mentors to steer me in the right direction.”

Since joining the ranks of the 3rd Infantry Division’s Combat Aviation Brigade after being commissioned in May 2006, Wilson has proven MI was the right choice.

“(Wilson) brings enthusiasm, technical expertise, learned from her intelligence courses, and a tremendous work ethic and an extreme willingness to listen and learn which I personally feel is one of the most important traits for a young officer,” said Lt. Col. William McGarrity, the 603rd ASB commander.

Because the 603rd ASB is a support unit, Wilson’s work centers on ground intelligence. She provides route and enemy analysis which allows the support unit to understand, from a ground role, what the enemy is doing and is most likely going to do. She also works with the brigade intelligence elements to keep the 603rd ASB “in the loop” with regards to the threat, he said.

She does all of this, he said, with a seriousness and maturity level not always seen.

“She clearly is destined for future greatness in the Army,” said McGarrity. “I can tell that by observing her at this level. There are some officers you just know will do well. She is one of them.”

Inside the 603rd ASB headquarters tent Wilson’s potential is duly noted.

“As an NCO I really admire her. She’s going to be very successful in life,” said Cooley. “She’s an effective leader, she does what she needs to do, and I do what I need to do. We work hand-in-hand.”

While Wilson is building a potential career, either in the Army or in another government agency, she said she’s comfortable with her place in life right now.

“I saw how much (the military) impacted my parents. The positive impact it had on them,” she said. “I find my family here. I find a great sense of purpose here.”

