

Serving Task Force Marne and MND-Center

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By Sgt. Ben Brody

Chief of Staff of the Army Gen. George W. Casey Jr. administers the Oath of Enlistment to 124 Task Force Marne re-enlistees at Task Force Marne Headquarters, Camp Victory Aug. 11. Each Soldier took a picture with Casey after the ceremony.

Gen. Casey re-enlists 124 Marne Soldiers

Soldiers receive U.S. flag flown over Al Faw Palace, other surprises

By SGT. BEN BRODY
MND-C Public Affairs

CAMP VICTORY – Chief of Staff of the Army Gen. George W. Casey Jr. administered the Oath of Enlistment to 124 Task Force Marne Soldiers during a re-enlistment ceremony here Aug. 11.

"These great Soldiers here epitomize the best of what the United States of America stands for," Casey said. "It's important not to lose sight of what's at stake in this war – the power of our values and our civilization."

Among Soldiers re-enlisting for fixed periods of time, their commitment totaled 621 years. Soldiers further along in their career re-enlisted for an indefinite period of time, until they retire or separate.

After administering the oath, Casey greeted each Soldier and posed for individual photos.

As a surprise, the re-enlistees each received a 3rd Infantry Division coin, an American Flag that had flown over Camp Victory's Al Faw Palace, and their choice of an MP3 player or a Gerber tool.

"A lot of Soldiers could go a whole career without getting within shouting distance of a four-star general," said Master Sgt. James Nicolai, 3rd Infantry Division Reenlistment Operations NCO. "Having the Chief come out and greet everybody is pretty exciting."

Though not assigned to Multi-National Division-Center, Soldiers from 3rd Infantry Division's 1st Brigade Combat Team, posted in



By Staff Sgt. Tony M. Lindback

Chief of Staff of the Army Gen. George W. Casey Jr. addresses re-enlistees during the ceremony.

Ramadi, took the opportunity to participate in the ceremony and visit their division headquarters.

"The guys enjoyed coming out and getting some cool stuff they can use, in addition to the incentives the brigade gives out like priority for a four-day pass," said Sgt. 1st Class Robert Delaney, career counselor for 1st BCT's 5th Squadron, 7th Cavalry.

Bonuses for the group's re-enlistment totaled over \$1.4 million, most of which went to Soldiers re-enlisting for the first time.

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Marne 6 sends

Operation Marne Husky

Combat aviators, infantry to break new ground

Across the division, we are really excited about yesterday's launch of Marne Husky. We are so confident in our aviators that we are giving them ground space in order to fight both Shia and Sunni insurgents in an area where we cannot reach with land forces.

We're also giving the Combat Aviation Brigade an infantry company from 3rd Battalion, 509th Infantry Regiment from 4th Brigade Combat Team (Airborne), 25th Infantry Division to help the aviators with raids, sensitive site exploitation, and time-sensitive targets. Together, the two units are going to create a lethal capability new to Task Force Marne.

We're so confident in the success of Marne Husky, we plan on making this a permanent relationship – an infantry company working for our combat aviators.

Over this week, I'm taking the time to visit all of our aviation units, and I am so proud of each one of those Soldiers from the pilots who put themselves at risk every time they lift-off, to the mechanics who keep the aircraft in the air, to the Soldiers who load the missiles, to the Soldiers who edit the gun tapes for national television.



Maj. Gen. Rick Lynch

Showing gun-tape footage to our families at home is so very important. For the most part, the media shows all the violence in Iraq – every car bomb, every IED, every civilian attack. But what our

aviators are doing is very powerful – they are blowing it up before it kills our Soldiers. Most times, their strikes result in secondary explosions, just proving that the boat or the house or the factory was storing munitions to kill our Soldiers.

When our families see these tapes on television, they can see the success you are all making. In the five months that the 3rd Infantry Division has run Multi-National Division – Center, you have made true progress for the security of Iraq.

Marne Torch, Marne Avalanche, and now Marne Husky have been extremely successful operations. We are not only see-

ing a decrease in sectarian violence, but an unbelievable increase in the number of concerned citizens approaching you with information about insurgents, IEDs and caches. Your hard work has made them comfortable – you have helped them to feel secure, and in turn, saved your buddies from harm.

We are going to keep the enemy on the run. We are going to give them nowhere to hide. Every time they move, our scout weapons teams will see them, our air weapons teams will engage them.

Every day I am so very proud of you. You put on all that body armor and continue to patrol, turn wrenches, fuel trucks, analyze intelligence, and are steadfast as always in your commitment to the mission. The 124 Soldiers who re-enlisted with Gen. Casey this past weekend are my heroes. They offered continued sacrifices in a tough time and acknowledged a future of service to our nation. We couldn't be any more proud.

ROCK OF THE MARNE!

Flag Salute

Chief of Staff of the Army Gen. George W. Casey Jr., Maj. Gen. Rick Lynch and Command Sgt. Maj. Jesse L. Andrews, Jr., salute during the National Anthem at a re-enlistment ceremony outside Task Force Marne Headquarters, Camp Victory Aug. 11. Task Force Marne had 124 Soldiers who re-enlisted.



By Staff Sgt. Tony M. Lindback



TASK FORCE MARNE PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE

Commanding General – Maj. Gen. Rick Lynch
Command Sergeant Major – Command Sgt. Maj. Jesse L. Andrews Jr.

Task Force Marne Public Affairs Staff

TF Marne PAO – Lt. Col. Randy Martin
TF Marne Deputy PAO – Maj. Alayne Conway
TF Marne PA NCOIC – Master Sgt. Marcia Triggs
TF Marne PA Ops – Sgt. 1st Class Craig Zentkovich

Editorial Staff

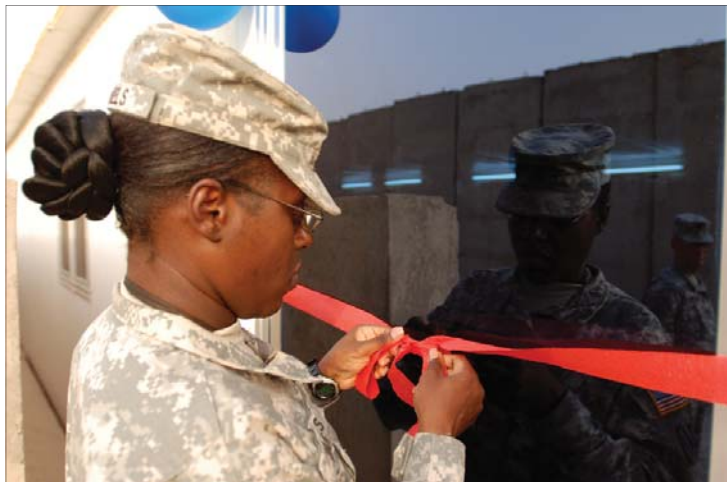
Managing Editor – Master Sgt. Marcia Triggs
Editor: Sgt. Michael Connors
Layout: Sgt. Michael Connors, Spc. Emily J. Wilsoncroft
Contributing Writers – Staff Sgt. Tony M. Lindback, Staff Sgt. Carlos Lazo, Sgt. Benjamin Brody, Spc. Emily J. Wilsoncroft
Graphics – Staff Sgt. Tony M. Lindback, Spc. William Hatton

Contributing Units

2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division
3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division
2nd Brigade, 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry)
4th Brigade (Airborne), 25th Infantry Division
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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Medal of Honor recipient memorialized



Sgt. Patricia Daniels decorates the entrance to the Sgt. 1st Class Paul R. Smith room for the dedication ceremony.

By Staff Sgt. Tony M. Lindback

By STAFF SGT. TONY M. LINDBACK
MND-C Public Affairs

CAMP VICTORY — The 3rd Infantry Division's 51st Medal of Honor recipient was the focus of attention at headquarters Aug. 4.

Special Troops Battalion Command Sgt. Maj. Mark Thornton dedicated a day room in memory of Sgt. 1st Class Paul R. Smith.

"One of the character traits I've read about Sgt. 1st Class Smith was that he was very involved with taking care of Soldiers," Thornton said at the ceremony. "He was not one of those people you noticed right away. What you noticed was that his Soldiers never lacked for anything, never complained for anything because he made it a priority for himself, as a noncommissioned officer, to ensure they had the things they needed."

In Smith's name, Soldiers of Task Force Marne now have an air conditioned day room with plush leather chairs and sofas.

While kicking back, they have the

opportunity to watch television or a DVD on a large flat-panel monitor. There's also a stereo and a stocked refrigerator for cold refreshments.

"Something like this does wonders for people's morale," said Spc. Dylan Brenner, who works at TF Marne headquarters. "It just makes it a little more comfortable for the Soldiers who work 12- and 13-hour days here."

The day room was intentionally placed next to the division headquarters, Thornton said, to allow Soldiers separation between where they work and relax.

"You want Soldiers to understand that the chain of command is there for them, specifically the noncommissioned officer side of the house," Thornton said.

"If we're taking care of Soldiers... mission accomplishment, will take care of itself," he added. "Soldiers can stop worrying if their contributions are recognized and appreciated. They know they're appreciated."

Soldier enjoys benefits of continued commitment

By STAFF SGT. TONY M. LINDBACK
MND-C Public Affairs

CAMP VICTORY — Less than one year ago she was thinking of getting out of the Army. Today she is a leader of Soldiers — a noncommissioned officer.

As contractual obligations to military service tick away, Soldiers have to make a decision — stay in or get out. Leaders who actively mentor their Soldiers can make a difference in those life-altering decisions.

When Sgt. Octavia Ransom, unit supply specialist, Headquarters and Headquarters Operations Company, Special Troops Battalion, 3rd Infantry Division, was approaching her decision, she leaned more toward getting out.

A newly-assigned leader convinced Ransom to rethink her decision.

"When I arrived at HHOC and took over as the company first sergeant she was working in the supply room," said 1st Sgt. Jon Helring. "She was not 100 percent in love with the Army at that time. She was talking about getting out, going to school and doing some other things. Even just going to a different supply room and working a different aspect of her job."



By Master Sgt. Marcia Triggs

Chief Warrant Officer Doretha Magee places rank on Sgt. Octavia Ransom during her promotion ceremony.

Helring explained that the company was under new management and asked Ransom to give it a chance.

He showed her the benefits of staying in the Army and how she could get further in her education with less out-of-pocket expense if she would give it a little more time and thought.

Ransom did just that, and after weighing her options she decided to re-enlist in November.

She signed a two-year agreement with the intention of extending that obligation with another re-enlistment in Iraq that will include a tax-free bonus. An added bonus came Aug. 1 when

she was promoted into the NCO corps.

Ransom said she is happy with her decision and will know what to say when she has a Soldier contemplating getting out.

"I would say I was there once upon a time," Ransom said. "I sat down and talked to superiors and told them I wanted to get out, but you really have to think about your plans for the future. And if you don't really have plans you should consider staying in and pursuing your career. The military has good opportunities. You have school, you can do different jobs — it has a lot to offer."

Concerned citizens form watch group

2nd BCT, 3rd Inf. Div Public Affairs

ARAB JABOUR — Soldiers of 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Infantry Division, recently conducted a registration drive for the Arab Jabour Concerned Local Citizens program.

More than 125 concerned local citizens stepped forward Aug. 4-6 to register for the program. The Concerned Citizen program is a policing initiative in which citizens guard infrastructure assets and assist Coalition Forces with tips on insurgent activity.

To become an official member of the Concerned Citizens program, citizens were photographed, fingerprinted, and entered into the human identification system. They were also issued high-visibility vests with an Iraqi flag sewn on the left side. The vests are official uniforms for the Arab Jabour Concerned Local Citizens.

Once accepted into the program, citizens will go through a three-day block of training provided by the 2nd Brigade Combat Team. Once the training is complete, the Concerned Citizens will break up into neighborhood watch teams and guard infrastructure areas.

The critical areas the citizens need to protect are water pumps, schools, medical clinics and their own homes. These areas have been targeted by al-Qaeda as retribution against local residents who have helped Coalition Forces.

The newly assigned Concerned Citizens will be incorporated into 1-30th Inf. Regt.'s overall security plan.

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Rocketmen: Caught on tape



Images from captured insurgent video

An image from a video showing insurgents firing rockets at Coalition Forces. The insurgent-produced videotape was found Aug. 7 by Soldiers of 3rd Sqdn., 1st Cav. Regt., 3rd HBCT, 3rd Inf. Div. during a raid in which the 3rd HBCT's most wanted insurgent was captured. The video shows insurgents in Iraq using Iranian rockets, according to an Aug. 8 MND-C release.

Video shows Iranian link to weapons used in Iraq

MND-C Public Affairs

FOB HAMMER – Soldiers of 3rd Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment conducted a raid Aug. 7 in northeast Nahrawan – about 20 miles east of Baghdad – resulting in the discovery of the 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team's most wanted insurgent.

In that same raid, Soldiers captured an insurgent-produced videotape showing insurgents setting up 46 rocket launchers all aimed at American Soldiers, and firing rockets aimed at American positions.

Thirty-four of the launchers were armed with Iranian 107mm rockets.

This video provides clear evidence of insurgents equipped to launch deadly rockets on Coalition Forces in Iraq.

The video also shows insurgents setting up and firing a rocket that landed near Forward Operating Base Hammer Aug. 5. On July 11, 12 of the rockets were fired at FOB Hammer, killing one Soldier and wounding 15 others.

3rd HBCT captures top target, video

By **SGT. NATALIE ROSTEK**
3rd HBCT, 3rd Inf. Div. Public Affairs

FOB HAMMER – Soldiers of the 3rd Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment conducted a raid Aug. 7, in northeast Nahrawan, resulting in the discovery of the 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team's most wanted insurgent.

According to Capt. Matthew Carman, of Allentown, Pa., Battle Captain for the 3rd HBCT, the insurgent was found hiding under a bed in a house adjacent to his own by Pfc. Doug Jones of the brigade's Time Sensitive Target team.

After 3rd HBCT intelligence received information on the insurgent's location, the TST team and Troop B, 3-1 Cav. moved to the target site on foot.

"The whole idea was to move covertly to the house so nobody would take off running," Carman said. "They walked a significant distance to the house. Then they brought in the trucks."

Jones said he was clearing the house of people before bringing in bomb searching dogs to the building. He searched a room that had already been searched once. While clearing closets, Jones said he saw one of the beds move.

"He must have been shivering a little because I saw the bed just barely move," he said. "I thought it may have been a kid hiding because he was scared."

Jones said he flipped the bed and still didn't see anything because the insurgent was hiding between a bed and a wall. Jones saw the insurgent's arm when he put the bed back down.

"I was smiling and I guess that made him smile because he



Ordinance lined up in an image from the video.

smiled back up at me," Jones explained. "I told him to stand up and then get on his knees. He smiled really big then, like he was happier about this than I was."

Soldiers searched the entire house and found a video depicting insurgents preparing rockets to be launched against 3rd HBCT's main operating base. Video footage shows men setting up rockets aimed at FOB Hammer, which were launched July 11, killing one Soldier and wounding 15. The video also shows an Aug. 5 rocket attack against FOB Hammer.

Thirty-four of the launchers in the video were armed with Iranian 107mm rockets, according to an Aug. 8 Multi-National Division-Center release.

The unit detained 10 individuals found inside the house, including the most wanted individual.



An insurgent walks toward a line of rockets in an image from the video.

1-15 teams with Iraqis at traffic control point

By Staff Sgt. Carlos J. Lazo
MND-C Public Affairs

COP CLEARY – Soldiers of 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment spent time working side-by-side with Iraqi Emergency Reaction Forces, running a traffic control point Aug. 1 near Wahida.

The Emergency Reaction Force, according to Maj. Jeremy Moore, of Portland, Ore., Iraqi Security Force Chief for 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, is a battalion-sized ISF unit that conducts security and checkpoint operations along Coalition-traveled key routes.

"They are comprised of previous Iraqi Special Forces units," Moore said. "They are tactically proficient enough to operate autonomously. They are also skilled at gathering intelligence because they know the area."

"What we did today was not so much supervise, but assist ERF with running a traffic control point," said 1st Lt. T. Clay Groton, 3rd platoon leader, Company C.

Soldiers assisted with site security and searched vehicles and people along with

the ERF. This was not the first time such an operation has been conducted by 1-15 Inf. Regt. Soldiers.

"We've been out here a couple of times before," Groton said. "They have many traffic control points around this area."

Traffic control points help in maintaining the overall security of the area.

"Being that weapons commonly come into Baghdad from Al Kut, coming out of Iran, this is a major highway to stop weapons and insurgents," Groton said.

An ERF member working at the site said his duty is to search, not only for weapons, but for improvised explosive devices and foreign fighters as well. It is a job acknowledged by his U.S. counterparts.

"They (ERF) are pretty squared away and they're also reliable," Groton said. He added that ERF assistance has led to weapons cache finds.

Groton said the goal was to show the ERF members that Coalition Forces support what they do.

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



By Staff Sgt. Carlos Lazo

A soldier from the Iraqi Emergency Reaction Forces and a 1-15 Soldier collaborate on traffic-control-point operations near Wahida. The ERF is comprised of previous Iraqi special forces, said Maj. Jeremy Moore of the 1-15th.

ISF, Paratroopers capture suspected al-Qaeda terrorist

4th BCT (Abn.), 25th Inf. Div.
Public Affairs

KALSU – Iraqi Security Forces and Paratroopers captured a suspected al-Qaeda terrorist during Operation Marne Avalanche Aug. 5. He was wanted for a string of attacks against security forces and citizens in North Babil.

The Iraqi army, Iraqi police and Paratroopers from Company A, 1st Battalion, 501st Airborne, 4th Brigade Combat Team (Airborne), 25th Infantry Division conducted an early morning raid in Snadeej near Jurf As Sukhr to capture the suspected insurgent.

"More than 50 IPs, 20 IA soldiers and 50 Paratroopers participated in the operation," said the commander of Company A, Capt. Henry Moltz, of Midlothian, Texas. "The populace was very receptive to the ISF-led operation, and a local source pointed the man out to us."

Thanks to joint operations like this one, the Jurf As Sukhr area is on the road to security and stability, Moltz said.

"This operation marks 50 days in Jurf As Sukhr with no attacks,



Courtesy photo

Iraqi policemen escort a suspected al-Qaeda terrorist to a police vehicle during Operation Marne Avalanche.

as compared to six months ago when there was at least one attack every day," Moltz said. "The drop in violence is a testament to the Paratroopers and Iraqi Security Forces who have embraced the Joint Security Station concept and who have trained and fought side by side."

The JSS isn't the only key to success in the area. According to Soldiers and Paratroopers who

work in the region, Iraqi citizens are a big factor in their success.

"The people in Snadeej and Jurf are tired of violence," said Moltz. "They are tired of being scared. They want a better life."

During Operation Marne Avalanche, Paratroopers of 4th BCT (Abn.) have killed 16 insurgents, conducted numerous precision raids, and captured more than 110 insurgents.

Concerned citizen leads U.S. Soldiers to cache

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

RUSHDI MULLAH — A concerned Iraqi citizen led Coalition troops to a weapons and ammunition cache along Route Malibu, near Rushdi Mullah, Aug. 4.

Soldiers of 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry) out of Fort Drum, N.Y., followed the man to the cache site, where they uncovered weapons buried in the ground.

The cache consisted of a ZSU-1 anti-aircraft weapon, 200 12.7mm heavy machine-gun rounds and four 57mm rockets.

An explosive ordnance disposal team destroyed the contents of the cache in a controlled detonation.



Courtesy photo

The cache consisted of a ZSU-1 anti-aircraft weapon, 200 12.7mm heavy machine-gun rounds and four 57mm rockets.



FREEDOM REPORT

TELLING THE TASK FORCE MARNE STORY
ONE SOLDIER AT A TIME...

EVERY FRIDAY ON DVIDSHUB.NET
UNDER AUDIO/NEWS CAST



'High five' for medical clinic

By SGT. NATALIE ROSTEK
3rd HBCT, 3rd Inf. Div. Public Affairs

FOB HAMMER — Soldiers of 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team held a free medical clinic Aug. 5 at a school in al Zatia.

Medics set up two treatment stations in one classroom in the school and one reception station in a separate classroom.

Before the clinic began, 3rd Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment's loudspeaker team broadcasted a message to residents announcing the opportunity to receive free medical care.

During the broadcast, residents from the area began forming two lines, male and female, waiting to be seen.

The patients were brought one-by-one into a reception room where they were signed in and screened.

Patients with medical conditions ranging from upper respiratory problems to stomach ailments came to the school seeking medical care.

The medics gave their best effort, treating every ailment that came their way.

Staff Sgt. Jade Chiara, of Staten Island, N.Y., NCO in charge of the aid station on FOB Hammer, said some conditions were far too complicated to handle.

"Not being able to give them exactly what they need has to be the hardest part," Chiara said. "Some patients needed chest X-rays or cardiology exams, and we are just not able to do that here."

Chiara said when the medics see conditions they aren't able to treat on the spot, they do what they can to ease the suffering and explain to the patient they need to get to the hospital to see a specialist as soon as possible.

The mission was not just beneficial to the Iraqis but also to the medics who attended, said Pfc. Laia Brunson, of Atlanta, a medic in the 203rd Brigade Support Battalion.

"This is a learning experience," Brunson said. "Some people that come in here have conditions Soldiers don't have, like arthritis. Soldiers don't come into the aid station with arthritis."

At the completion of the mission, the medics had seen about 135 patients.

"We are helping these people who do not have access to or can't afford medical care," Brunson said. "This is an overwhelmingly proud feeling I have being here."

Above: Capt. Se Young Um and Staff Sgt. Jade Chiara listen as a mother explains the symptoms of her child's ailment at an improvised medical clinic in a school classroom. The 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team held the clinic Aug. 5, in Al Zatia.

Right: Capt. Se Young Um and Staff Sgt. Jade Chiara check the breathing of a local child.

Below left: 1st Sgt. Tony Williams listens to a man's pulse. Below right: Sgt. Anthony Abeyta gives a high five to a local boy after the medical clinic.

Photos by Sgt. Natalie Rostek





THIS WEEK IN MARNE HISTORY

PROVIDED BY SASHA McBRAYER
Fort Stewart Museum



Rank and organization:
Sergeant, U.S. Army,
7th Infantry,
3rd Infantry Division

Birth: January 12, 1919
Wilmington, Delaware

Entered service:
Wilmington, Delaware

Place and date of action:
Cape Cavalaire, southern
France, August 15, 1944

Sgt. James P. Connor: Medal of Honor Recipient

Citation: For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at risk of life above and beyond the call of duty. On 15 August 1944, Sgt. Connor, through sheer grit and determination, led his platoon in clearing an enemy vastly superior in numbers and firepower from strongly entrenched positions on Cape Cavalaire, removing a grave enemy threat to his division during the amphibious landing in southern France, and thereby insured safe and uninterrupted landings for the huge volume of men and materiel which followed. His battle patrol landed on "Red Beach" with the mission of destroying the strongly fortified enemy positions on Cape Cavalaire with utmost speed. From the peninsula the enemy had commanding observation and seriously menaced the vast landing operations taking place. Though knocked down and seriously wounded in the neck by a hanging mine which killed his platoon lieutenant, Sgt. Connor refused medical aid and with his driving spirit practically carried the platoon across several thousand yards of mine-saturated beach



Courtesy photo

Connor's grave at Delaware
Veteran's Cemetery

through intense fire from mortars, 20-mm. flak guns, machineguns, and snipers. En route to the Cape he personally shot and killed 2 snipers. The platoon sergeant was killed and Sgt. Connor became platoon leader. Receiving a second wound, which lacerated his shoulder and back, he again refused evacuation, expressing determination to carry on until physically unable to continue. He reassured and prodded the hesitating men of his decimated platoon forward through almost impregnable mortar concentrations. Again emphasizing the prevalent urgency of their mission, he impelled his men toward a group of buildings honeycombed with enemy snipers and machineguns. Here he received his third grave wound, this time in the leg, felling him in his tracks. Still resolved to carry on, he relinquished command only after his attempts proved that it was physically impossible to stand. Nevertheless, from his prone position, he gave the orders and directed his men in assaulting the enemy. Infused with Sgt. Connor's dogged determination, the platoon, though reduced to less than one-third of its original 36 men, outflanked and rushed the enemy with such ferociousness that they killed 7, captured 40, seized 3 machineguns and considerable other materiel, and took all their assigned objectives, successfully completing their mission. By his repeated examples of tenaciousness and indomitable spirit Sgt. Connor transmitted his heroism to his men until they became a fighting team which could not be stopped.

Civil Affairs brings team to Patrol Base Murray

By SPC. EMILY WILSONCROFT
MND-C Public Affairs

PB MURRAY – Following closely on the heels of major combat operations near Arab Jabour, 3rd Civil Affairs Battalion has set up the area's first-ever CA team at Patrol Base Murray.

"We're mostly focusing on atmospherics, like getting water pumps and electricity working, improving road conditions – basic life," said Staff Sgt. Bryan Schindler, a CA team NCO.

The group has been establishing itself at PB Murray for a little more than a week, and it has been working with Soldiers from Company A, 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment to get things up and running smoothly.

"We are at the grassroots level of the civil affairs effort," said Capt. Brian Love, one of the CA team leaders. "There have been combat ops going on here for two months, so the majority of our work involves battlefield assistance like legal claims and medical operations."

The newly arrived civil affairs Soldiers are still getting a feel for the area, he said.

"It's a matter of looking to see what's not functioning, like governance, electricity, etcetera," Love added. "Our goal is to connect this area to the people who run it, and bridge the gap between them and the central government."

In the short time they've been in place, Love said the team has already made significant progress.

"We've set up a governance hall and meet there regularly," he said. "We've met a few of the local citizens ... and are running regular operations."

The Soldiers have also facilitated the repair of several of the neighborhood's water pumps and canals.

The key to the team's success is in the support of the Iraqi people, he said.

"The vast majority are indifferent to us," Schindler said. "The reaction isn't favorable, but it's not hostile either."

Love credited the people's ambivalence to the recent offensive operations in the area.

"It's not a fun time for the locals," he said. "They understand that what's going on is intended to help them, but they're still skeptical."

"Civil affairs is based on relationships," he added. "Ours is the first long-term (CA) group in the area, so it's going to take some time to get that trust built up."

In addition to the operational difficulties involved with integrating a CA unit into an area where there previously was none, the team has been dealing with the logistical issues that come with setting up a new patrol base.

"(1-30th) has really been working well with us," Schindler said. "They've been getting us tents and making sure we have everything we need."

The quality of life has steadily improved at Murray over the past weeks, he said. The base has only been in existence for two months.

"We used to only have (Meals, Ready to Eat) for every meal, but now we've been getting hot chow more often," he said, "and we have air-conditioning in the (tactical operations center)."

Love said the team and its mission are growing together.

"Just as we started out sleeping under the



By SPC. Emily Wilsoncroft

Navy Capt. Don McMahon and 1st Sgt. Robert Fletcher receive a brief from Maj. Eric Weis and Capt. Brian Love on the new governance hall in Arab Jabour.

stars with nothing but camouflage nets and have improved our area, we're trying to improve the Iraqis' area," he said.

The CA battalion's commander and first sergeant, Navy Capt. Don McMahon and 1st Sgt. Robert Fletcher, visited their team Aug. 9 to assess the Soldiers' developments.

"Things are good," Fletcher said. "This is the first time Captain Love has had the chance to work with (the other team members), and they've really integrated well."

"I think that our being out here for the first time in and of itself is a huge success," he continued. "It's always good to be the first ones in, so we can be there before we're really needed. There are a lot of things we can fix before they break."

Fletcher said the timing of the mission was proving to be accurate.

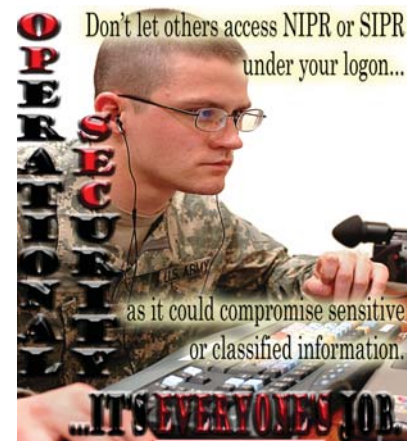
"There is a tremendous amount of synchronization going on between conducting lethal and non-lethal activities in this area," he said. "The sanctuaries for the bad guys are being emptied out, and that allows civil military operations to get in."

McMahon said he saw progress during his visit, and praised his team's hard work.

"Things are moving in the right direction here," he said. "Everyone plays a critical role, and everyone should be able to look back and say, 'I've made a difference.'"

In some ways, that's already happening, Love said.

"Sometimes you have to look back a week to see that things are getting better all the time," he said, "but they are."



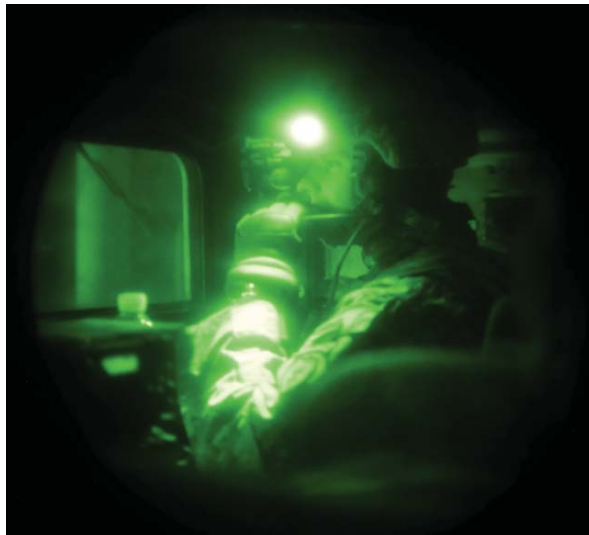


Photos by Petty Officer 2nd Class Justin K. Thomas



Night view

Top left: A Soldier attached to 1st Squadron, 40th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team (Airborne), 25th Infantry Division kneels prior to moving out July 31 for Operation Leap Frog. The purpose of the operation was to capture high-value targets in south Baghdad with cooperation from Iraqis. Top right: Soldiers of Troop C, 1-40th move out to conduct Operation Leap Frog. Bottom right: A Troop C leader, 1-40th, conducts a radio check prior to commencing Operation Leap Frog.



Iraqi army, U.S. Soldiers find night vision goggles, detain three suspects

4th BCT (Abn.), 25th Inf. Div. Public Affairs

KALSU – Iraqi soldiers joined U.S. Soldiers from Task Force Steel in a joint operation dubbed Algeria III in support of Operation Marne Avalanche Aug. 4 in the Chaka III region of North Babil, to secure the area from insurgent activity.

Soldiers from 8th Iraqi Army Division and Company A, 2nd Battalion, 69th Armored Regiment, 3rd Infantry Division, attached to 4th Brigade Combat Team (Airborne), 25th Infantry Division, moved from house to house searching for any presence of insurgent activity or violations of the rule of law set forth by the Iraqi government.

"This operation was one of the biggest operations our company has done with Iraqi Security Forces," said Capt. Jim Browning, commander, Company A. "Everything on this mission was totally led by the Iraqi army. We were just there for support."

This Iraqi-led operation yielded one pair of night vision goggles, three detainees and five AK-47 assault rifles with ammunition.

"The operation was a complete success," Browning said. "The Iraqi army soldiers have made vast improvements since we last conducted an operation with them, and I'm confident they'll only get better."

Iraqi police, Paratroopers trade soccer balls for trash

By SGT. MARCUS BUTLER
4th BCT (Abn.), 25th Inf. Div. Public Affairs

ISKANDARIYAH – Iraqi police from the Tahir IP Station near Hay Saskiri, Iraq, teamed up with Coalition Forces from Forward Operating Base Iskan to help the people of Hay Saskiri clean up their neighborhood Aug. 7 during Operation Soccer Sweep.

Iraqi police and Paratroopers from Company C, 1st Battalion, 501st Airborne, 4th Brigade Combat Team (Airborne), 25th Infantry Division devised an incentive program called Operation Soccer Sweep to help the people of the Hay Saskiri area help themselves by cleaning up the trash from their neighborhood.

The incentive behind the plan was that for every two bags of trash collected, the Iraqi police in turn would give out one soccer ball.

"The motive behind this was not just to hand out something free, but have the people take part

in helping their area," said 1st Lt. Sean Breen, 2nd platoon, Company C.

Hay Saskiri is located in a very volatile area where both Sunni and Shiite Muslims meet. It is at this fault line where much of the violence occurs in the 1-501st Airborne's area of operations.

"This particular area is a very important place," Breen said. "Hopefully, we made some friends through this operation who may help us on future missions."

The Iraqi police organized garbage trucks to dispose of the trash, handed out the trash bags, soccer balls and school supplies.

About 200 bags of trash were collected, 100 soccer balls were handed out along with numerous boxes of school supplies, all of which were donated by family and friends of the 501st and other organizations back in the United States.

"Just to see the smiles on the faces of the children as they received their rewards made the entire mission more than worth it," Breen said.

Telling the Task Force Marne story One Soldier at a time...

FREEDOM REPORT

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Infantrymen bring care to Quarghulli

By Sgt. BEN BRODY
MND-C Public Affairs

YUSUFYIAH — In the farmland south of Baghdad, quality medical care is hard to come by.

There are few doctors, and even if a resident could afford to see a doctor in the city, travel to Baghdad is difficult at best.

The dusty roads, once devoid of any security presence, are now lined with razor wire and punctuated with Iraqi army and U.S. checkpoints, making it as difficult for farmers to travel as it is for armed insurgents.

So instead of the farmers going to the doctor's office, a team of U.S. Soldiers brought the doctor's office to the people.

Soldiers from Company C, 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry), set up a makeshift clinic at the schoolhouse in Quarghulli Village, 20 miles south of Baghdad.

Residents were invited to come in for treatment, primarily for stomach ailments caused by drinking from the irrigation canals flowing from the nearby Euphrates River.

In the blazing heat, Soldiers rigged camouflage netting to shade the villagers waiting for treatment. Troops providing security from gun trucks traversed their machine guns across surrounding fields, as loudspeakers broadcast the Soldiers' invitation in a prerecorded Arabic message.

"This is a regular mission for us, because it's one of the best things we can do to improve peoples' lives without spending a ton of money," said Capt. Shane Finn, Co. C, 4-31 Inf. Regt. commander. "This

is something any rifle company can put together on the spot, and it goes a long way building trust with the people here."

Finn, from Clinton, N.Y., said medical operations have become a "battle drill," a mission that has been rehearsed and executed so often that all the Soldiers know their roles and little advance planning is needed.

As entire families made their way through the village to the school, it became clear that both the Soldiers and the villagers had something to gain from the operation. As residents collected medicine and school supplies, village sheikhs and local medical providers came to speak with Finn.

"The sheiks say that as we push al-Qaeda fighters out of the area, local doctors and nurses are becoming more capable of caring for Quarghulli's people," Finn said. "That's the end state — Iraqis taking care of Iraqis."

The American infantrymen and medics conducting the operation seemed to know most of the people coming in for treatment. Some of the Iraqi men greeted Soldiers by name.

Two brothers, aged 17 and 20 but both under four feet tall, showed up. They were well-known to the Soldiers, who seemed delighted to see the pair. The brothers left with a new soccer ball and water-treatment pills.

"The medical ops help Soldiers understand the village's culture, and they get the locals accustomed to us in a good way," said 1st Sgt. David Simpson of Dallas Center, Iowa, the Co. C, 4-31 Inf. first sergeant. "They know that they can come to us if they need help — lately we've been seeing 30 to 50 villagers a week at our gates."

While the main purpose of the operation was to diagnose and treat sick Iraqis, a handful of Iraqi Provincial Volunteers, former insurgents and militiamen recruited to fight al-Qaeda, appeared and briefed the Soldiers on some of their recent successes.

"Say what you want about (alliances with former enemies) but IEDs have been way down since we started working with the IPVs," said Pvt. Keith Wray, a 4-31 Inf. medic. "It's definitely safer here than it was."

The operation placed a special emphasis on talking to the local women to assess village conditions, said Sgt 1st Class Lita Fraley of 478th Civil Affairs Battalion.

"With the roads blocked by checkpoints, it's easier for women to get through without a hassle — so a lot of the traveling men used to do is now falling on the women," Fraley, of Houston, Texas, said. "The locals think it's about time to open the roads back up."

In about five hours, the Soldiers treated 176 Quarghulli residents and demonstrably strengthened their relationship with the village. The evidence: five hours in a former insurgent hotbed without a single gunshot, explosion, thrown rock or shouted curse. The village was all smiles.



Photos by Sgt. Ben Brody

Capt. Chris Dominguez, a physician's assistant with the 210th Brigade Support Battalion, drains a boil on an Iraqi girl's head at a makeshift clinic in Quarghulli.



Capt. Shane Finn, commander of Co. C, 4-31 Inf. Regt., speaks with local sheikhs about security at the clinic. The medical aid mission took place without incident.



An Iraqi girl waits for her prescription to be filled while holding water supplied by U.S. Soldiers.

Operation New Blue

Iraqi police recruits put to the test



Spc. James Boyd with the 23rd MP Co. runs with an Iraqi police recruit during the 100-meter dash portion of Operation New Blue's phase II in Lutifiyah.

By **STAFF SGT. TONY M. LINDBACK**
MND-C Public Affairs

LUTIFIYAH – Communities like Lutifiyah, Yusifyah, Mahmudiyah and Al Rasheed will be getting a little more brotherly love from the boys in blue thanks to a new operation. Iraqi police recruiting, dubbed Operation New Blue, is putting residents in police stations to guard their own communities. Iraqi police stations in the area are currently assigned officers from outside communities.

The multi-phased operation began with recruits applying. During phase one recruits filled out applications and had their finger prints and picture taken and entered into a database to receive a background check. If the background check was cleared, the applicants were allowed to return for phase two, said Capt. William F. Jennings, commander, 23rd Military Police Company, from Fort Bragg, N.C., currently under tactical control of 2nd Battalion, 15th Field Artillery Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division.

Phase two of the drive took place July 29 and was a day-long event. It consisted of a literacy test and a physical fitness test similar to the Army's APFT.

Jennings said, "We had a total of 289 that actually came through the gate, but there were a total of 216 that were on our list from the first phase of the recruiting. The ones who weren't on the list were escorted outside the gate and told that we would have a future recruiting drive there and they'd have another opportunity."

The literacy test was more of a reading comprehension test, said Jennings. The recruits were given a paragraph written in Arabic and were then given five questions referencing the who, what, when, where and why of the material.

Staff Sgt. Jeffrey Schaffer, police transition team chief for the Lutifiyah police station, 23rd MP Co., was in charge of the literacy test portion of event.

"They did better than I thought they would," Schaffer said. "Being this far south of Baghdad, I've noticed in the past, the average Iraqi has a tough time reading and writing. Out of the guys we had come in, about 75 percent passed the literacy."

For those who passed the literacy test there were more obstacles to overcome -- 10 push-ups, 10 sit-ups, five pull-ups and a 100-meter dash had sweat pouring from many in the mid-day heat. Not all were prepared for the events, as some wore sandals. Many sprinted barefoot on jagged rocks.

"The guys at the recruiting drive are giving it all they got," said Schaffer. "They're sitting in the sun, 120 degrees in the straight sun, waiting in line all day long," he added.

"It's determination," Schaffer said. "Most of them are trying to provide for their families. I commend them for that."

There hasn't been a police station in these areas over the past four years, according to Jennings. He said it's been a challenge getting enough police for democratic policing, especially in urban areas.

Schaffer said, "The residents want to police their own. That's the best thing about the recruitment we did. The majority of them are from Lutifiyah, and they'll be protecting their own."

To see the recruits walking the streets, providing a secure community for neighbors and family is the goal. It is hoped by Schaffer and Jennings that people will have the feeling that the local law enforcement is family, and that will inspire them to help clean up their towns and rid them of illegal activity.

Right: Spc. Wayne Hall, 23rd MP Co., works side by side with an Iraqi policeman during the recruitment drive. Far right: A recruit does pull-ups as part of a physical fitness test to qualify for training. Recruits had to complete five pull-ups, 10 push-ups, 10 sit-ups and a 100 meter dash.



Marne band rocks COPs

By Sgt. NATALIE ROSTEK
3rd HBCT Public Affairs

COP CLEARY – Soldiers of 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment were treated to two nights of musical entertainment Aug. 8-9, at Combat Outposts Cleary and Cahill.

The Task Force Marne band from Camp Victory in Baghdad traveled to the outposts to perform for the 1-15 Infantry Soldiers.

The Soldiers assigned to the outposts do not have many of the same amenities or access to Morale, Welfare, and Recreation activities most Coalition Forces personnel have on the larger bases and Logistical Support Areas.

"We love to come out to places like (COP Cleary and Cahill) because they don't have luxuries like Victory," said Staff Sgt. Matthew Stephenson, of Oil City, Pa., operations noncommissioned officer and saxophone player for the band. "If we can take them away from the stresses of what they do for just a minute, we have done our job."

The entire TF Marne band, consisting of almost 40 Soldiers, typically plays in ceremonies and formal Multi-National Division-Center functions. Sgt. Mike Franz, of Los Alamos, N.M., said he enjoys traveling to the smaller bases with a smaller group of band members.

"It's more peaceful," he said. "The people here are more tolerant of each other. There is definitely a difference in the attitudes between here and Victory."

Traveling to the outposts is not easy. Each trip requires a Chinook full of the band's equipment. They must load up keyboards, guitars, drums, speakers, sound boards and any other equipment the band needs to perform. Additionally, each of the 11 members packs a rucksack for their week-long tour.

"Moving our equipment really isn't hard. It's more of an annoyance," Stephenson said. "We've done it so much we have a system down. It goes pretty fast."

The band began their tour at COP Cleary. Members of the trombone quartet performed jazz and chamber music in the Dragon Inn dining facility.

Before their next performance, band members were awarded Army Achievement Medals for their efforts to

improve morale of the 1-15 Infantry Soldiers.

After dinner, the rock band Conformed Chaos took the stage to perform familiar songs from various country and rock bands.

"We play a wide variety of music," said Staff Sgt. Dana Fischl, of Seymour, Wis., lead female vocalist in Conformed Chaos. "This way, at least there is something they can enjoy and something they can recognize."

Fischl, who is the only female in the TF Marne band, said there usually is not much participation at bases like COPs Cleary and Cahill where there are mostly all male Soldiers, though that doesn't bother her.

"I understand the Soldiers have it rough out here," she said. "It's mostly males and I don't expect them to get up and dance when we play. But if I can just put a smile on their face, I'm okay with that."

After the dinner concert was over at COP Cleary, the band packed up their equipment once again and loaded it onto a Chinook and flew to COP Cahill for another show.

Some Soldiers at COP Cahill pulled their humvees or Abrams tanks up to the makeshift stage while others brought out chairs or sat on the ground. The cooks threw burgers and hotdogs on the grill. Another Soldier took on the roll of vendor and passed out non-alcoholic beer.

"This is a good morale booster," said Pfc. Aaron Hunker, 20, Minneapolis, Company B. "It kinda brings us back home."

"It's different. It makes us feel a little more relaxed," said Pfc. John Bell, of Tustin, Calif., a medic for Company B.

Sgt. Hector Garcia, of New York, a Company B team leader, had been out all day on two separate missions, but still made his way to the stage to enjoy the show.

"This is a good break in the day," he said. "It raises morale out here while we are living in such harsh conditions."

Members of the band agree their tour was a success and they accomplished their mission of putting smiles on the faces of 1-15 Infantry Soldiers at COPs Cleary and Cahill.

The 11 members of the TF Marne Band made two more




Courtesy photo

Sgt. Benjamin Smith, on bass, and Sgt. Allen Ruth-erford, on guitar, with the rock band Conformed Chaos play for 1-15 Soldiers at COP Cahill.


trips in the 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team's area of operation. After playing at COP Cahill, they flew to COPs Cashe North and Cashe South to put on a concert for Soldiers of the 3rd Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment.

Both 1-15 Infantry and 3-1 Cavalry are assigned to the 3rd HBCT, 3rd Infantry Division from Fort Benning, Ga. The 3rd HBCT has been deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom V since March 2007.



**MND-C
EQUAL OPPORTUNITY OFFICE
PRESENTS**

WOMEN'S EQUALITY DAY
Aug. 26





Time: 3-4 p.m.

*Location:
Marne DFAC
VIP Room*

*Guest Speaker:
Col. Patricia Anslow
Commander
875th Engineer Battalion*

"Celebrating Women's Right to Vote"





POC: Master Sgt. Lewis 822-7653/54

Combat Re-enlistment



Courtesy photo

Spc. Paul Brown (right) of Chattanooga, Tenn., with Company A, 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment re-enlists June 14 at Combat Outpost Cashe.

“They (Soldiers) discovered him in the health clinic ... They decided right there that they were going to do everything in their power to help him.”

Capt. Jimmy Hathaway, Commander
Headquarters Troop, 3-1 Cav.

Soldiers help boy get surgery

By SPC. BEN HUTTO
3rd HBCT, 3rd Inf. Div. Public Affairs

For a child in Hollandia, the 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team and Coalition Forces have become the answer to his family's prayers.

Sitting in the local health clinic with his father on a warm May morning, Ahaip Najim had no idea that hope would come walking through the door.

That morning, members of the 97th Civil Affairs Battalion and 3rd Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment, were assessing the town's needs.

“They discovered him in the health clinic there and just gathered around him,” said Capt. Jimmy Hathaway, commander, Headquarters Troop, 3-1 Cav., of Fort Benning, Ga. “They decided right there that they were going to do everything in their power to help him.”

At birth, Ahaip had an obstructed bowel that required emergency surgery. The surgery left the child's intestines outside his body. The doctor's plan was to reintroduce the intestines back into the body in six to eight years. How-



Photos by Air Force Staff Sgt. Shawn Weismiller

Soldiers from Company A, 97th Civil Affairs Battalion, greet Ahaip in Hollandia as they make final plans with his family for his transport to al Sadr Hospital in Najaf for life-changing surgery.

ever, according to a 97th Civil Affairs medic, from Fort Bragg, N.C., that option would leave the child at risk of infection or rupture.

Cavalry and Civil Affairs Soldiers began to call around and use their contacts throughout the Army to find help.

“Finally, we were put in contact with the hospital in An Najaf, Iraq,” Hathaway said. “They agreed to help us. It was a really good situation.”

The next stumbling block was finding a way to transport the child and his father to al Sadr Hospital. Pieces started falling into place after Multi-National Force - Iraq Commander Gen. David H. Petraeus visited FOB Hammer.

“We briefed Gen. Petraeus about the situation,” Hathaway said. “He asked if there was anything we needed. He said this is exactly the type of thing we needed to be doing and volunteered his own aircraft. The aircraft was provided by Multi-National Division - Center but Gen. Petraeus' offer really said a lot about how important this mission had become to everyone.”

The 3rd HBCT used a convoy to pick up Ahaip and his father and brought them to FOB Hammer. From Hammer, the pair traveled to al Sadr Hospital by helicopter.

“We had two Black Hawks, two Apaches and a MEDEVAC waiting for us when we pulled up,” Hathaway said. “The support we received was phenomenal.”

The flight was set, but the patient wasn't so sure.

“He was scared at first,” Hathaway said. “We had to stop and refuel, and he seemed to relax after that. He just needed some time to get used to it. He seemed to be having a good time near the end.”

The child was expected to be at al Sadr Hospital for 10 to 14 days. Before attempting the surgery, doctors there wanted to run diagnostic tests. The surgery initially was expected to take place June 4, but had to be pushed back due to the Ahaip's anemic condition. The first of two surgeries was finally performed June 17.

“The first surgery went well,” Hathaway said. “The child is recovering. He currently is using a colostomy bag, but the second planned surgery will hopefully eliminate the need for that and let him lead a normal life.”

Ahaip's father has been able to remain with him throughout his hospital stay.

“The hospital has been very supportive,” Hathaway said. “They have given him a place to stay, given him meals and even washed his clothes. They have really done a great job helping this family out.”

The help Soldiers extended to the boy and his family has improved the Coalition's relationship with the town.

“They are very pro-Coalition,” Hathaway said. “They were very receptive and happy that we have helped. They all saw the coverage of this on Iraqi television and saw that we were trying to help. One man told me, ‘You did what you said you were going to do. Thank you.’ That means a lot. We go into the town now and people come out to see us. They laugh and joke with us. We feel welcome there.”



Ahaip and his father await transportation to Najaf on a UH-60 Black Hawk at FOB Hammer.



Ahaip's mother distracts him as medics from 3rd HBCT conduct a check-up in Hollandia.