



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Marcus Butler

Brig. Gen. James Huggins awards the Silver Star to Master Sgt. Thomas Ballard for his actions in a fire-fight against the soldiers of Heaven cult Jan. 28.

Soldiers awarded for action

SGT. J.H. FRENCH
4TH BCT (ABN), 25TH INF. DIV.

KALSU – The details were sketchy. The only information coming in was that 10 Iraqi army soldiers had been killed and their brigade commander was taking fire and needed help.

With that little bit of information and the belief that they were facing a force of no more than 15 or 20 militants, 12 Paratroopers from 4th Brigade Combat Team (Airborne), 25th Infantry Division's Military Transition Team O810 went to the aid of the soldiers of 1st Brigade, 8th Iraqi Army Division, Jan. 28.

The Paratroopers' initial mission was to provide close air support and communication with the helicopters circling above the firefight taking place on the ground just north of Najaf.

However, the mission quickly changed as the team approached the site of the ongoing battle. Nearing the battle, Paratroopers saw an AH-64 Apache helicopter fall from the sky. The MiTT's mission changed in an instant. They moved to the site of the downed chopper to protect the wreckage and look for the pilots.

"When I saw the Apache go down, it immediately changed everything," said Master Sgt. Thomas Ballard, non-commissioned officer-in-charge of MiTT O810 "Everything was focused on that crash site. That's where we had to go and that's what we did."

Once the small team of Paratroopers reached the crash site, security became top priority.

"As we reached the crash site, we were driving on a road parallel to the crash site, so I decided to have Master Sgt. Ballard's vehicle, the lead vehicle, pull onto the far side and the rest of our convoy would remain on the other side," said Lt. Col. Stephen Hughes, deputy commander, 4th BCT (Abn.), 25th Inf. Div., and the MiTT team chief. As my vehicle pulled into position in an open area, we started receiving contact with heavy machine gun fire, an RPG was

See AWARDED, Page 3

Arab Jabour citizens turn weapons caches in to 3rd BCT

2ND BCT, 3RD ID PAO

ARAB JABOUR – Concerned citizens in Arab Jabour and al-Buaytha found weapons caches and turned them over to Coalition troops Sept. 11.

Arab Jabour citizens delivered a weapons cache in a Bongo truck to the Soldiers of Company C, 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, Sept. 11 while they were conducting a picket line on a local highway.

Picket lines employ stationary security vehicles positioned on roads traveled by Coalition Forces to prevent insurgent activity.

An explosive ordnance disposal team was called to destroy the cache, which consisted of 250 12.7mm rounds, one 122mm rocket warhead, 31 rocket propelled grenades, 15 propelled chargers, one rocket propelled grenade launcher, one rocket propelled grenade mortar, two 60 mm mortars and other bomb-making

materials.

In al-Buaytha, concerned citizens delivered a weapons cache to the Soldiers of Company A, 1-30th Inf. Regt.

Concerned citizens delivered the contents of the cache to the Soldiers while they were conducting a picket line on a road north of Patrol Base Murray.

The cache consisted of 16 57mm anti-aircraft rounds and was taken to PB Murray by an explosive ordnance disposal team.

3rd HBCT hosts medical operation at new clinic

STAFF SGT. SEAN RILEY,
3RD HBCT PUBLIC AFFAIRS

FOB HAMMER – Coalition troops, working with the Salman Pak Council, provided free medical assistance to local residents at a new clinic in Salman Pak Sept. 11.

Soldiers of the 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division and Iraqi National Police set up and supported the operation.

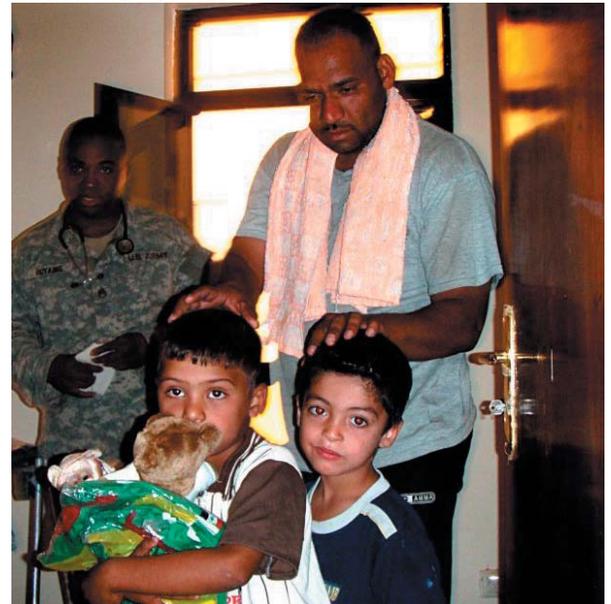
Soldiers screened and treated about 140 people, while others handed out newspapers, children's toys and sports clothing.



courtesy of 1-15 Inf. Regt.



Above: 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment Soldiers provide security at the entrance to the free medical clinic, hosted by 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team medical personnel in Salman Pak Sept. 11. Below: An Iraqi man ushers his sons out of a clinic room after a screening by 3rd HBCT medical personnel.



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4th Brigade (Airborne), 25th Infantry Division
3rd Combat Aviation Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division
214th Fires Brigade
82nd Sustainment Brigade
720th Military Police Battalion
Mobile Unit 3 Explosive Ordnance Disposal Battalion

AWARDED: Paratroopers earn recognition for January fire fight

From Page 1

launched at us.”

It didn't take long for the Paratroopers to realize they were up against more than a small 15- to 20-man force.

“We began engaging, and continued engaging. There were 265 bodies reported at the end, but I can tell you, there was more than that,” Ballard said.

Once the fighting began, it didn't end for the 12-man team until nearly three hours later, when backup finally arrived.

“There were a lot of bullets flying, we were only a small group of people, and didn't know whether we could hold our position if the enemy made a concerted effort to get to the helicopter,” said Maj. John Reed, the MiTT operations officer.

“The guys we were up against were the Soldiers of Heaven cult, led by a man who believed he was the 12th Imam,” Ballard said. “It was said that upon his return, the demise of all the other leaders, religious and otherwise, would mark his coming, and he was planning to put that into effect the very next day coincidentally.

“They had ungodly amounts of weapons, there were tunnels, bunkers, there were even trenches, and they were around the entire perimeter of the compound,” Ballard said. “It wasn't until the next day that we found out there was almost 1,000 people on that objective and what we were really



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. J.H. French

Master Sgt. Christopher Crawford and other Paratroopers of the 4th Brigade Combat Team (Airborne), 25th Infantry Division congratulate Master Sgt. Thomas Ballard and Lt. Col. Stephen Hughes after they received the Silver Star and Bronze Star for valor during the fight against the Soldiers of Heaven cult, Jan. 28.

up against.”

After the fighting was over, more than 400 militants were captured, not to mention all the cult members who had died during the fighting.

For their actions during the battle against such a large foe, and for their willingness to sacrifice themselves and never leave their fallen comrades, the entire 12-man team was awarded Army Commendation Medals for

valor.

Ballard, Hughes and Reed were further recognized Sept. 9 for their actions. Ballard received the Silver Star, while Hughes received a Bronze Star with Valor and Reed the Bronze Star.

Reed said. “His dedication to the mission, his disregard for the enemy threat, and his lead from the front attitude has been an inspiration for us all.”



Safety Thought of the Day Complacency Reminders

Complacency is “the feeling of security, often while unaware of some potential danger or defect.”

The road to complacency:

Individual does something successfully without negative consequences.

Individual is now experienced and soon believes he/she is an expert.

Individual downplays the threat or the environment and takes safety for granted.

Individual takes shortcuts and then rationalizes violating the standards (“Hey, we haven't been attacked in over two months”).

Examples of complacent behavior (Do you know anyone who does this?):

Physically present but mentally absent from guard duty (headphones, reading magazines, napping)

Unsafe driving (not wearing seat belts or PPE, driving near the edge of the road, not slowing down in limited visibility)

Smoking near the tents, in vehicles, or around explosive or flammable products

Fight complacency. Think about what you are doing and how you can make your task safer.

Headline Highlights

Russian birth-rate boosting; chocoholism

Skip work, make babies

ULYANOVSK, Russia (Reuters) — The governor of a central Russian province urged couples to skip work Wednesday and make love instead to help boost Russia's low birth-rate.

And if a woman gives birth in exactly nine months time — on Russia's national day on June 12 — she will qualify for a prize, perhaps even winning a new home.

"It's normally something for the home — a fridge or a television set," Yelena Yakovleva at the Ulyanovsk regional administration press office, said. "It doesn't matter if it's a girl or a boy."

Newlyweds Karina and Anton Bukhanovsky walked hand in hand down the main street of the regional capital of Ulyanovsk. They live in St Petersburg but traveled to Ulyanovsk to soak up the atmosphere Wednesday.

"I used to live here," said Karina, 19. "We plan to come back on the same day next year and try for a baby and the prize nine months later," she said.

Anton, 21, kissed her gently on the cheek and they strolled off arm in arm.

Regional governor Sergei Morozov told employers to contribute to a Kremlin campaign to boost the birth rate by giving couples Wednesday off to have sex. Russia wants to reverse a trend in which the population is shrinking by about 700,000 people a year as births fail to outpace a high death rate boosted by AIDS, alcoholism and suicide.

This is the third year Ulyanovsk region, famous as the birthplace of Soviet state founder Vladimir Lenin, has dedicated a day to encouraging couples to

produce more babies.

Prizes will extend equally to unwed women who produce children on the right day, though the biggest prizes will go to married couples. On Russia Day this year, a family won a jeep after their fourth baby was born on the holiday.

Next year, the top prizes will include an apartment, Morozov told Reuters. "We need more people," he said.

This year a record 78 babies were born on June 12 at the main hospital in the regional capital of Ulyanovsk, beating the 2006 total of 26, said chief doctor Andrei Malykh.

"The scheme is working. People want the prizes," he said.

Chocolate not an addiction

YORK (Reuters) — Resistance is futile. The more we try to fight off a craving for chocolate, the more our desire for it grows, a British researcher said Tuesday.

But chocoholics can take heart that such sweets are not addictive despite the fact many people consider themselves as having no control over their urges to eat the sweets, said Peter Rogers, a psychologist at the University of Bristol.

"Food behavior can look like addictive behavior in extreme situations but chocolate does not fit these criteria," Rogers told a meeting sponsored by the British Association for the Advancement of Science.

Many people point to certain compounds found in chocolate — such as phenylethylamine — that produce a buzz when they reach the brain as evi-

dence chocolate is addictive, Rogers said.

But many of these compounds also exist in higher concentrations in other foods with less appeal, such as avocados or cheese, and do not cause addiction despite what many chocoholics believe, he said. Instead, a social attitude that chocolate is "naughty but nice" may actually drive people to see chocolate as a forbidden pleasure and desire it even more, Rogers said.

"In other words, chocolate is a highly desirable food, but which according to social norms should be eaten with restraint," he said. "However, attempting to resist the desire to eat chocolate only causes thoughts about chocolate to become more prominent, consequently heightening the desire."

Other studies have suggested that dark chocolate contains more of the beneficial compounds linked with heart health, though experts note that the high sugar and fat content of most chocolate candy might cancel out some of the benefits. But even health benefits do not make dark chocolate as popular as milk chocolate and chocolate covered confectionary, Rogers said further research has shown.

And the fact these favored choices contain lower amounts of the so-called psychoactive compounds found in dark chocolate provides more evidence chocolate is not addictive, he said.

"It is therefore far more plausible to suggest that a liking for chocolate, and its effects on mood, are due mainly to its principal constituents, sugar and fat, and their related orosensory and nutritional effects," he said in a statement.

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from Sudoku: The Original Brain Workout From Japan

Solution to yesterday's puzzle:

7	9	5	3	8	6	1	2	4
8	1	4	5	9	2	7	3	6
3	6	2	4	7	1	9	5	8
1	7	3	8	6	4	5	9	2
5	2	6	9	3	7	8	4	1
9	4	8	2	1	5	3	6	7
4	8	1	6	5	3	2	7	9
6	5	9	7	2	8	4	1	3
2	3	7	1	4	9	6	8	5

ARABIC WORD OF THE DAY

Al-Qaeda

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