

Serving Task Force Marne and MND-Center



The blast from the M109A6 Paladin creates a huge cloud of dust during a registration Oct. 16 at Forward Operating Base Delta.

Courtesy photos / 214th Fires Brigade Public Affairs

Big guns on target

214th Fires Brigade Public Affairs

FOB DELTA – The artillery's mission is to provide precision long-range fire for maneuver units on the battlefield.

The decisive fire can be from cannons, rockets or missiles. To keep the guns on target, units perform calibration and registration. FOB Delta conducted a registration Oct. 16 to check the accuracy of its big guns.

"Registration is done to account for nonstandard conditions like wind and tube conditions to ensure we are firing accurately," said 1st Lt. Derrick Zanders, Company B, 1st Battalion, 9th Field Artillery Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, out of Ft. Stewart, Ga.

Although registration is usually done when the artillery weapons are not shooting accurately or when one or more of the five requirements for accurate predicted fires are not being met, the FOB Delta registration was done to verify the accuracy of its M109A6 Paladins. The five requirements are target location, firing unit location, ammunition and weapons information, meteorological data, and computational procedures.

For the cannon fire directions specialists, the registration allowed them to learn more about their job.

"I got to learn about deflection and quadrant correc-



Pfc. Aaron Hillary, a cannoneer crewman with Co. B, 1-9th FAR, loads a projectile into an M109A6 Paladin.

tions," said Spc. Justin Toney, a cannon fire directions specialist with Co. B, 1-9th FAR. This was Toney's first registration. "I also learned how the data from the guns allows you to get a more precise shot group when attacking the enemy."

The goal is to hit the target with the first round and use the additional rounds for the target's destruction, said Spc. Elijah Payne, another cannon fire directions specialist.

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Marne 6 sends

Attacks way down thanks to you

Concerned citizens' success; emphasizing safety

I spent last week engaging groups of concerned local citizens in each brigade. I met with Meda'in concerned citizens at Patrol Base Assassin, Route Malibu concerned citizens in Qarghouli Village, Hawr Rajab concerned citizens, and concerned citizens in Haswah along Route Dolly.

The concerned citizens are definitely the Division's decisive effort – we are at a point where we have more concerned citizens – approximately 23,000 – than we do Coalition Soldiers. Sustaining the concerned local citizens program is the key to the future security of Iraq.

It is because of you that we arrived at this point. You all – Task Force Marne Soldiers – worked tirelessly to secure Iraqis, and you've done it so well that they feel safe enough to secure their own neighborhoods, their own farms, and their own families against both the al-Qaeda terrorists and the Shia extremists who want to



Maj. Gen. Rick Lynch
Task Force Marne Commander

destroy the Iraqi nation.

Everywhere I visited, the concerned local citizens leaders gave you credit for helping get to the point where they could build and man their own checkpoints. Every sheik noted that he has wanted security for the past few years, and that you have been the ones to empower him.

I couldn't be more proud to be Marne 6.

Attacks are way down across the entire Division, a direct reflection of who you are – Soldiers who are doing the right thing every day. You are vigilant and well trained – you know what needs to be done, and you do it right every time.

Last week, the Army Combat Readiness Center visited 2nd Brigade, 10th Mountain Division and 2nd Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division to conduct sensing sessions and safety assessments. It was obvious to the safety professionals that our leaders take safety seriously, and I expect that principle to trickle down to every junior leader and every Soldier.

The Center brought up many valid concerns, and I refuse to lose a Soldier to a safety failure. I have zero tolerance for safety accidents. Leaders must remain engaged; NCOs must set and enforce the standard, and every Soldier must remember that he or she is a safety officer. No one should ever let an unsafe act go

unnoticed.

Across our battlespace leaders are engaging safety with creative thinking. In Commando's AO, NCOs are rigging harnesses for Soldiers to lift and lower their gear into guard towers. At Patrol Base Hawkes, two sergeants built floors into the guard towers so that if a Soldier falls it is only a few feet instead of 30 feet. Their ingenuity embodies the spirit I expect every Task Force Marne Soldier to have – Soldiers' safety is the No. 1 priority every day, and any step we can take to improve it is a positive step for the entire Division.

I grow more proud of you every day, and I am continually amazed by your acts of courage and your fierce determination to succeed beyond all expectations. You truly are America's finest sons and daughters.

ROCK OF THE MARNE!



Giving the Oath of Enlistment

Maj. Gen. Rick Lynch, Task Force Marne commander, administers the Oath of Enlistment to 141 Paratroopers from 4th Brigade Combat Team (Airborne), 25th Infantry Division during their re-enlistment ceremony Oct. 14 at Forward Operating Base Kalsu.

Photo by Sgt. Marcus Butler
4th BCT (Abn.), 25th Inf. Div. Public Affairs



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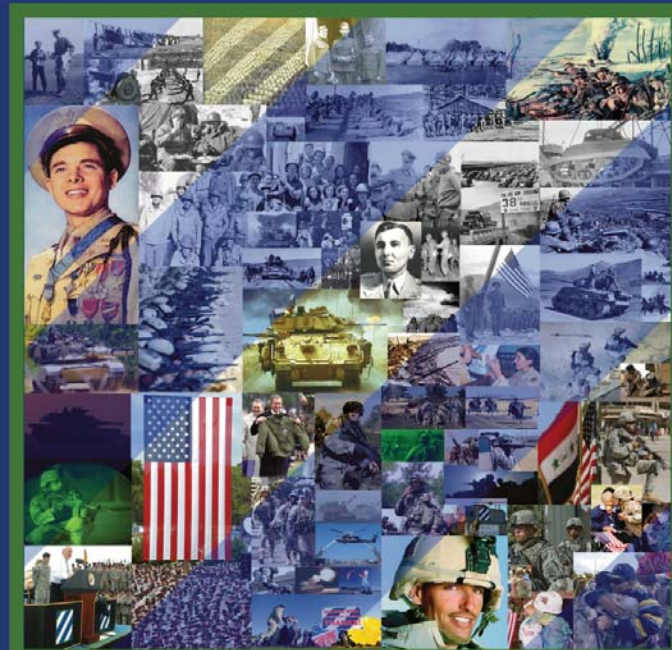
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214th Fires Brigade
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Celebrating 3rd ID's Birthday: Nov. 21

3rd Infantry Division "Rock of the Marne"



90 Years of Service to our Nation
1917 - 2007
21 November 2007

3RD INF. DIV. 90TH BIRTHDAY EVENTS

- | | |
|-------------------|---|
| Nov. 17 | Nov. 21 |
| -Truscott Trot 5k | - Dining in |
| | - Cake cutting at lunch |
| | - Michael Scott concert on Oasis Stage |
| | - Special meal at Marne Dining Facility |
| | - Audie Murphy Club induction ceremony |
| | - Mass re-enlistment ceremony |
- 

Learn more about 3rd ID: 1918 – the patch is born

On Oct. 18, 1918, Brig. Gen. Preston Brown took command of the 3rd Division in the middle of the fighting in the Meuse-Argonne Offensive, as the division was pushing northeastward against the Hindenburg Line and toward the Meuse River.

Brig. Gen. Brown would oversee the 3rd Div. for the remainder of the campaign and until after the Armistice in November.

Brig. Gen. Brown had an unusual background for a commander. Unlike previous 3rd Div. commanding generals, he was not a West Point graduate. Born to a prominent Kentucky family in 1872, he graduated from Yale in 1892. He then took the unusual course of enlisting in the Army as a private.

By 1897 he was a second lieutenant; in 1900 as first lieutenant he was sent to the Philippines during the Insurrection there. Then came the crisis of his career.

Another lieutenant filed a complaint against him in early 1901 for having shot and killed a Filipino in American custody the previous December.

Brown claimed the man had been trying to escape, but after an investigation he was convicted of manslaughter in a court-martial. He was sentenced to dismissal from the Army and five years' hard labor in a federal penitentiary.

Fortunately for him, by the time he was sentenced a family friend had become President. Teddy Roosevelt commuted Brown's sentence and allowed him to remain in the Army.

World War I made him. In rapid succe-

sion he was promoted to major in 1916, lieutenant colonel in 1917, and colonel in 1918.

He showed his fitness as a 2nd Div. brigade commander during the Battle of Belleau Wood on June 1, 1918 when, in response to a French query he said, "General, these are American regulars. In 150 years they have never been beaten. They will hold." Soon after he was promoted to brigadier general and became Chief of Staff of the 2nd Div. From there he moved to command the 3rd Div.

Brown's time as commanding general was short, but he left a lasting memento of his tenure: the 3rd Div. patch.

Brown was very interested in distinctive insignia for Army units. As brigade commander he had requested that Pershing authorize a distinctive buckle for the 9th In-

(the patch) was to have both a "striking appearance" and "extreme simplicity of design" so that it could "be easily and correctly made by any member of the division" and not "deteriorate into a caricature."

fantry.

Now, while the division was still engaged in the Meuse-Argonne offensive, he ordered the G-2 Section to prepare the first official representation of the 3rd Div. patch, which was to have both a "striking appearance" and "extreme simplicity of design" so that it could "be easily and correctly made by any member of the division" and not "deteriorate into a caricature."

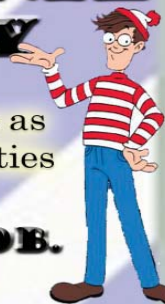
Having gotten the patch with its three white stripes on a clear field of blue, he pushed to get the patch authorized. Within a week of Brown's becoming commander of the 3rd Div., on October 24, 1918, the adjutant general authorized the patch, and it remains the 3rd Inf. Div. insignia today.

Not all of our enemies are outside the FOB...

OPERATIONAL SECURITY

...some have disguised themselves as one of us. Report suspicious activities immediately.

...IT'S **EVERYONE'S** JOB.



A feast of toys during Eid al-Fitr

Celebration marking end of Ramadan brings Soldiers and villagers together

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

FOB HAMMER – The children of Al-Juburi received 899 boxes of donated toys and clothes in celebration of Eid al-Fitr, the feast marking the end of Ramadan Oct. 8.

Civil Affairs Team 911, 489th Civil Affairs Battalion, out of Knoxvilleville, Tenn., currently attached to the 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, delivered the toys and clothes to approximately 450 children.

"We, as civil affairs, are often given the privilege of providing these small gestures of kindness in a country that has had more than its fair share of hardships," said Maj. James Gregory F. Lester, of Knoxville, Tenn., the team chief for Team 911.

Lester said his team is always enthusiastic to interact and build relations with the Iraqi people. The Al-Juburi Village, which is predomi-

nately Sunni, is located in an area where extremists are attempting to incite sectarian violence and tension. The team's hope, Lester said, was that a donation, no matter how small, would help influence good will with the people of Al-Juburi.

The three days following Ramadan are traditionally festive occasions in Islamic communities, where people feast and exchange small gifts.

The toys and clothes were all donated from U.S. citizens who mailed the items to the 1-15 Inf. Regt. at their own expense. The average cost to mail one of the boxes was \$36.

Lester hoped the mission could enable the children to see U.S. Soldiers in a different light.

"We hope that some day when one of these small children grows up maybe they'll tell their children 'I remember when the Americans came to our village and handed out toys after Ramadan,'" Lester said.



Courtesy photo / 489th Civil Affairs Bn.

Capt. James Rivenbark, of Knoxville, Tenn., part of Civil Affairs Team 911, 489th Civil Affairs Bn. out of Knoxville, Tenn., currently attached to the 1-15th Inf. Regt., hands out toys to children in Al-Juburi Oct. 14.

Ramadan goodwill: Coalition releases detainees

MND-C Public Affairs

BAGHDAD – Eid al-Fitr, the three-day feast that follows a month of fasting during Ramadan, is a time of goodwill, charity and mercy. This year, Coalition Forces commemorated the Eid with a release of detainees, part of a bid to encourage national reconciliation and build public support for the Iraqi government.

Historically, prisoner releases during Ramadan and the Eid are goodwill gestures in the Middle East. Following that tradition, 20 men were released in a ceremony held Oct. 11 by the 4th Brigade Combat Team (Airborne), 25th Infantry Division at FOB Kalsu.

One Sheikh present at the event explained the significance of the release, coming as it did at the end of Ramadan.

"This is a very important religious occasion for us. It is one of our honored traditions. It signals the end of bad blood between tribes. Everyone begins to put their differences aside," Sheikh Mahdi Nasr al-Faisal al-Johaishi said.

"This is the time we begin working to-

gether for a better future. With this prisoner release, Coalition Forces are sharing in our traditions and our time of happiness," al-Johaishi said.

One element of the release was new this year, crafted to encourage governance and capacity building at the local level. Under a system called the "guarantor program," tribal Sheikhs and representatives present at the event accepted responsibility for the released men and their future actions, pledging to keep them from engaging in criminal acts.

"After many years, the Coalition Forces are finally working with the Sheikhs to help establish security," Johaishi said.

His sentiments were echoed by another tribal attendee, Hadi Ali Hussein al-Dolaimi.

"Coalition Forces need to work directly with the tribes more often. The first level of any type of government is the tribes," al-Dolaimi said. "No one wants a unified government more than us."

Elsewhere in Multi-National Division-Center's area of operation, 17 individuals were released in another ceremony, held at Camp Striker, with 2nd Brigade Com-



Sgt. J.H. French / 4th BCT, 25th Inf. Div. Public Affairs

Sheik Ali Omran Al Shimari leads a group of detainees away from FOB Kalsu. Maj. Rick Williams (background) of 4th BCT (Abn.), 25th Inf. Div. hugs one of the policemen who attended the release ceremony.

bat Team, 10th Mountain Division.

The mayor of Mahmudiyah, Muayad Fadhil al-Ameri, who was on hand, praised the positive implications.

"It is clear evidence that Coalition Forces are concerned with the welfare of the people of Iraq," al-Ameri said.

Major Brett Kessler, the 2-10th Mtn. Div. staff proponent for reconciliation initiatives, explained the principle behind

releasing men detained for various acts against Coalition Forces and Iraqi security forces.

"We aren't going to make people change their minds about us, but we can keep motivating them to change their behavior," Kessler said. "These motivators will continue to see citizens fighting extremists and not Coalition or Iraqi security forces."

The prisoner releases are part of a joint venture between the Government of Iraq and Multi-National Force - Iraq, called Operation Lion's Paw. The effort has focused on expanding reintegration programs for detainees upon release, and assisting them with re-entering society.

Iraqi Vice President Tariq al-Hashimi said the operation is a step towards reconciliation.

"I am very pleased with the efforts of the Coalition and all of the positive things they are doing to prepare the detainees for release," Hashimi said. "Success will be achieved when we break the cycle of extremist violence and find ways to reintegrate former detainees into the fabric of the new Iraq."

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2-3 pushes farther south than ever before

Suspected al-Qaeda caught in crosshairs

By SGT. LUIS DELGADILLO
2nd BCT, 3rd Inf. Div. Public Affairs

FOB KALSU – Coalition Forces detained 13 during a daytime air assault targeting al-Qaeda leaders in Arab Jabour Oct. 12.

Soldiers of Company A and Headquarters and Headquarters Company's Scout platoon, of 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat



A Soldier from Co. A, 1-30th Inf. Regt. moves down a flight of stairs in the suspected safe house.

Team, 3rd Infantry Division rounded up the detainees in thorough house-to-house searches.

A squad-sized element of Iraqi soldiers also contributed by entering and clearing a Mosque near the houses, which were the focus of the operation.

All of the detainees were identified by a local source, said Capt. Eric Melloh, commander of Co. A.

They were bad guys, and it was evident by the fact that there were grenades, multiple AK-47s, ammunition and materials to build improvised explosive devices, Melloh added.

Both junior Soldiers and officers were proud of their accomplishment.

"It's good to get one (a high-value individual) on the list like that," said Spc. Tom Puskar, an infantry team leader from Co. A.

Puskar said during their searches of buildings he and the Soldiers in his squad were able to detain three of the 13 suspected insurgent leaders.

"This is one of the best missions we've



Photos by Sgt. Luis Delgadillo

Soldiers of Co. A, 1-30th Inf. Regt. pull security as they close in on a suspected insurgent safe house during an air assault operation in Arab Jabour.

ever done," Melloh said. "It was a company-sized air assault into an objective further (south) than we've ever gone."

The operation, dubbed Operation

Benelli, also led to a suicide vest, four grenades, three AK-47s, 18 magazines, improvised-explosive-device materials and fake identification cards.

Paratroopers capture six IED cell members

By SGT. J.H. FRENCH
4th BCT (Abn.), 25th Inf. Div.
Public Affairs

FOB KALSU – Paratroopers captured six members, to include two lieutenants, of an improvised explosive device cell responsible for attacks against Iraqi Security and Coalition Forces in North Babil Oct. 17.

Paratroopers from Company B, 3rd Battalion, 509th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team (Airborne), 25th Infantry Division detained the men during Operation Salcha, an early morning raid.

"The men were members of an IED cell," said Capt. Eric Nylander, commander of Co. B. "The cell is a part of the al-Qaeda network in North Babil." "Last week, we arrested the leader of the cell," Nylander continued. "After tonight's operation, we have captured most of the cell's senior leadership."

Nylander believes security in the area will visibly improve since Paratroopers have begun to target the cell so effectively.

A Paratrooper with Co. B, 3rd Bn., 509th PIR searches through the house of an IED cell member during Operation Salcha Oct. 17.



Sgt. Marcus Butler

"I think we will definitely see a decrease in IEDs," Nylander said. "I think it will also embolden the local population. We are seeing an increase in Concerned Citizens Program participation, and the people are standing up for themselves."

The two lieutenants were implicated by numerous sources for their involvement in several IED attacks along Iraq's Highway 1, as well as the bombing of another roadway east of Haswah. That incident completely severed the road, making it impassable.



Courtesy photo / 1-15th Inf. Regt.

Staff Sgt. Richard Wonsowski, of West Point, Ga., 1-15th Inf. Regt., secures suspected insurgents during a combat patrol north of Salman Pak.

1-15th gets al-Qaeda members

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

FOB HAMMER – Eleven people were detained and 49 buildings cleared Oct. 16 during Operation Belleau Wood II, an intensive search north of Salman Pak to capture or kill al-Qaeda and insurgents operating in the area.

"Acting on local tips, we were able to disrupt an al-Qaeda IED cell," said 1st Lt. Clifford Cieslak, from Pasadena, Md., the fire support officer for Company A, 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment.

Leaders are optimistic that the capture of the cell will allow 3rd Heavy Brigade

Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division Soldiers and Iraqi Security Forces to better secure the area and allow the local population to continue improving governmental functions, Cieslak explained.

Soldiers from Co. A, 1-15 Inf. Regt. detained the men after they were identified as possible insurgents responsible for attacks against 3rd HBCT. Improvised explosive device materials, two AK-47 assault rifles, a shotgun and ammunition were found during the search.

The 1-15 Inf. Regt. is assigned to 3rd HBCT, 3rd Inf. Div., from Fort Benning, Ga., and has been deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom since March.

2-10 introduces 101st Abn. to local Iraqis

Wheelchairs, fresh flatbread exchange hands, as incoming unit inherits tribal friendships

By SGT. BEN BRODY
MND-C Public Affairs

MAHMUDIYAH – A year ago, U.S. troops would encounter bitter combat if they tried to set foot in the home of a powerful Mahmudiyah sheik. Now they're getting invitations from the sheiks to do just that.

After nearly 15 months spent securing the area south of Baghdad, Soldiers from 2nd Battalion, 15th Field Artillery, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division are getting ready to go home to Fort Drum, N.Y.

Before they go, they are sharing both their experiences, and their new Iraqi friends, with Soldiers from 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (AASLT), who will take over operations in the next few weeks.

A team of Soldiers from 2-15th FA, the 3rd BCT, 101st Abn. Div. and Iraqi troops converged on Mahmudiyah's Saedi tribal compound Oct. 15 and set up a makeshift clinic in the compound's meeting rooms.

"Medical operations are a good way to get information about the community we work in, and help raise the quality of life," said Capt. James Brumley, battalion surgeon for 2-15th FA. "The sheik looks powerful in front of his village because he brings the American doctors."

In addition to the U.S. and Iraqi troops securing the compound, several concerned citizens – local Iraqis recruited to protect their neighborhoods from al-Qa-eda fighters – patrolled the surrounding

streets in their bright orange vests.

As residents lined up to be seen by the medics, Capt. Blake Keil, commander of Battery A, 2-15th FA, met with Sheik Faysal, who controls the concerned citizens program in that area.

"We can treat basic stuff here – nothing long-term," said Staff Sgt. Dustin Parchey, a medic with Battery A. "Most of the complaints in these rural areas are about stomach pain from worms, upper respiratory infections from the dust, and back pain from working in the fields."

In a partnership with a Mahmudiyah metalworking factory, Soldiers brought five wheelchairs for Iraqis who need them.

"A lot of times on these medical operations you see people brought in on wheelbarrows, lawn chairs, or just carried – so we ordered 1,000 wheelchairs from a local factory," said Parchey, who is from Harrisburg, Pa.

Parchey said the factory built bicycle frames and bed frames, but was quiet and had few employees. The wheelchair order changed that.

"Our order for all those wheelchairs created a bunch of jobs in Mahmudiyah," said Brumley, who is from Coeur d'Alene, Idaho.

After five hours, medics had seen and treated 181 Iraqis.

As the group packed up to head back to base, Sheikh Faysal's daughter came out with an armful of freshly baked flatbread and passed the steaming loaves out to the hungry Soldiers.



Photos by Sgt. Ben Brody

Sgt. Matt Konopatski, of Tunkhannock, Pa., a sniper with Battery A, 2-15th FA, watches a road from the roof of Mahmudiyah's Saedi tribal compound Oct. 15 during a medical operation held there. Concerned citizens, Iraqi soldiers and Soldiers from 2nd BCT, 10th Mtn. Div. and 3rd BCT, 101st Abn. Div. (AASLT) came together for the MEDOP and to further develop friendships.



Capt. Blake Keil, commander of Battery A, 2-15th FA, greets local sheiks at Mahmudiyah's Saedi tribal compound. Soldiers from Battery A set up a clinic in the compound and rendered medical aid to 181 Iraqis.

3rd HBCT conducts MEDOP in Narhwan



Photos by Sgt. Timothy Kingston / 55th Combat Camera

An Iraqi boy (above) has his wrist wrapped by Sgt. Matthew Goodner, of Largo, Fla., a medic with 3rd Sqdrn., 1st Cav. Regt., during the MEDOP in Narhwan Oct. 8. Spc. Kristina Phillips (left), of Lewisburg, Pa., a medic from Co. C, 203rd BSB, greets a toddler prior to an examination.

Mending more than wounds in Hawr Rajab

Recent support from community leaders allows 40th Cav. Regt. to lend residents helping hand

By **Sgt. Luis Delgadillo**
2nd BCT, 3rd Inf. Div. Public Affairs

FOB KALSU – Coalition Forces, Iraqi army soldiers and concerned citizens combined efforts to hold a humanitarian assistance and medical operation in Hawr Rajab Oct. 13.

The operation was made possible by a recent shift in the area as local residents have come forward to work with Coalition troops to rid their neighborhoods of insurgent activity.

“The problem that we had in the beginning is that we didn’t have the support of the community leaders, so in essence we were fighting the entire town,” said 1st Lt. Daniel L. Doverspike, a platoon leader for Troop A, 1st Squadron, 40th Cavalry Regiment.

Doverspike said that by gaining the respect of local leaders, 1-40th Cav. Regt. Paratroopers gained an ally in the fight against insurgents, resulting in greater safety for both parties.

The Paratroopers provided oversight as food, personal hygiene items, and toys were distributed to more than 500 residents.

Residents received food items, children received toys, and inside the concerned citizens’ headquarters, those who sought medical treatment were seen.

Sgt. Michael J. Cavallo, a combat medic with Troop A, said that he received more than 200 people through his triage station and sent more than 50 in to see both U.S. and Iraqi medical personnel for further assistance.

“I think the people really liked it,” said Cavallo. “I think they were impressed, and it actually helped bond the IA, CLCs (concerned local citizens), the U.S. Army and the local populace. It made our friendship a little stronger.”



Spc. Carl A. Spoeneman (above), a scout with Troop A, 1-40th Cav. Regt., kneels in front of a crowd of people at Hawr Rajab’s medical and humanitarian assistance operation Oct. 13. Sgt. Michael J. Cavallo (left), a combat medic also with the 1-40th, cleans a shrapnel wound for an Iraqi man. He received the injury two weeks prior during an insurgent mortar attack on the town.



An Iraqi army soldier gives a stuffed teddy bear to a girl during the humanitarian assistance and medical operation in Hawr Rajab.

Photos by
Sgt. Luis Delgadillo

Shiite, Sunni cities reconcile differences

By **Sgt. Marcus Butler**
4th BCT (Abn.), 25th Inf. Div.
Public Affairs

ISKANDARIYAH – After shifting from a continuous cycle of violence, the city of Jurf as Sakhr is now focused on rebuilding and starting over.

With help from 4th Brigade Combat Team (Airborne), 25th Infantry Division and governance from the city of Mussayib, Jurf as Sakhr is rebuilding its economic structure and restoring its landscape.

Members of 4th BCT (Abn.), 25th Inf. Div.’s Embedded Provincial Reconstruction Team met with Sheik

Sabah al Janabi, mayor of Jurf as Sakhr, and various shop owners to see what needed to be done to reopen the market shops and revitalize commerce in the area.

“We meet with local shop owners in Jurf as Sakhr in order to interview them to see who would be provided a small-business loan to help improve their shop,” said Dr. Lewis Tatem, a member of the EPRT.

Along with the economic planning and renovations for local shop owners, the EPRT is focusing on education, public health, governance, sports and recreation.

Unlike other rebuilding projects, the EPRT instituted several programs

which set time constraints to ensure the projects are accomplished on time.

“Our team is composed of Iraqi municipal council leaders and both United States civilians and military personnel,” said Tom Timberman a member of the EPRT. “In this regard, one of the key benefits is a starter network of contacts that sub-provincial Iraqi leaders can use to request various kinds of assistance.”

Another bright point to this program is that it brings two former enemies together for the common good. The cities of Jurf as Sakhr and Musayib have had a long-standing history of violence.



A Paratrooper with 1st Bn., 501st PIR walks down a road in Jurf as Sakhr as his patrol makes their way to a meeting with the mayor and the 4th BCT (Abn.), 25th Inf. Div. Embedded Provincial Reconstruction Team.

Sgt. Marcus Butler

At headquarters, tradition isn't flagging

Soldiers keep colors looking sharp for visitors

By Sgt. Michael Connors
Editor, *Marne Focus*
MND-C Public Affairs

CAMP VICTORY — “The general’s early!” said a Soldier, as he popped in to Task Force Marne headquarters. “He’s waiting outside,” emphasized the Soldier who was growing more alarmed by the second.

Was the coffee made? Was the lobby counter shined? Was the photographer standing by? Was the commanding general and his staff ready for the early visitor? Some had deer-in-the-headlights expressions, at a loss to the answers. But at least one Soldier in the lobby was calm and collected in the face of unexpected circumstances.

Spc. Jesse Harmon, of the Marne Visitors Bureau located at headquarters, was taking his last close, hard stares at the national and division colors, making sure he had perfectly set them up in the lobby for

“No one really notices me. But, you know, if you were just to take me out, take out what I do . . . a lot of people would notice.”

— Spc. Jesse Harmon
HHSC, STB

the visitor. “The flags are ready,” he said simply, while walking backward from the flags, taking the whole picture in, as if he might spot a blemish in his setup at the last second.

Harmon’s final overview was only a formality though. With several months’ experience setting up the colors for the MVB and nearly two years’ experience on the 3rd Infantry Division Honor Guard, he made the flags look impeccable, once again. And as it turned out, despite the initial surprise, everyone “adjusted fire” quickly on the early visit, and it seemed to go off routinely.

“I take a lot of pride in my work,” said Harmon, who falls under Headquarters and Headquarters Support Company, Special Troops Battalion. “Even though it’s an easy job, I still take a lot of pride in it . . . It’s a small piece of the puzzle, but it’s an important piece of the puzzle.”

Sgt. Vincent Touchet, who also works in the MVB and is a member of HHSC, STB, is the noncommissioned officer in charge of flag setup. He echoed the sense of pride in the job.

“It’s morale and everything because you can see people when they come in, see the flags, they’re taking pictures in front of them,” said Touchet, of Winnie, Texas. “That means a lot that we’re doing our job and keeping the standards high.”

There are many details to the setup that people may not be aware of said Harmon, who’s on his second tour in Iraq, having served as a cavalry scout with 5th squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment in 2005-06. For instance, the process starts with ironing the flags by hand. When they are placed indoors, a wire “spreader” is used to give the flags their crisp diamond-shaped appearance. The American flag must always be slightly higher and slightly in front of the other flags, and flags are placed in order of importance from left to right from the viewer’s perspective.

It terms of the division flag, Harmon said it is important to correctly arrange



Photos by Sgt. Michael Connors

Spc. Jesse Harmon scrutinizes his setup of the division flag and the U.S. Army Campaign Streamers in the lobby of Task Force Marne headquarters Oct. 15. The colors are set up in the lobby for distinguished visitors.

the division’s 23 U.S. Army Campaign Streamers, which hang from the top of the flag. They are also ironed; and for indoor setups where there is no wind to blow them about, care is taken to drape the three most notable streamers (Aisne, Aisne-Marne, and Meuse-Argonne) over the front of the flag where they will stand out most.

Setting up flags is just one of the many important tasks Harmon and Touchet are responsible for at the MVB. Touchet, a cook by trade, is the logistics and food service NCO. He coordinates with the dining facility to provide food and beverages for distinguished visitors. Harmon assists Touchet with logistics and food service and is the driver for distinguished visitors.

Touchet, who’s also on his second tour in Iraq, joined the MVB last October back at Fort Stewart, prior to the current deployment. During his previous tour in 2005-06, he served on a personal security detail with 3rd Battalion, 7th Infantry Regiment, earning a Combat Action Badge.

“It’s something different and a challenge for me because I’m learning everything about the job besides just the flags,” said Touchet.

Harmon, who earned a Combat Action Badge during his previous tour as well, also pointed out how different this job is compared with what he’s done in the past. Though his work as a cavalry scout directly influenced battlefield operations, Harmon expressed the different, but important impact of his current work, particularly setting up the colors.

“No one really notices me,” he said. “But, you know, if you were just to take me out, take out what I do . . . a lot of people would notice.”



Harmon adjusts the wire “spreader,” which gives the flag its crisp diamond-shaped appearance.



The finished product: Rocky with the national and division colors in the Task Force Marne headquarters lobby.



Phase maintenance: kicking birds out of hangar and into sky

By Pfc. MONICA K. SMITH
3rd CAB, 3rd Inf. Div. Public Affairs

BAGHDAD – Routine, or phase, maintenance is required for each aircraft in 3rd Combat Aviation Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division. The constant need to conduct phase maintenance inspections cycles aircraft through the hangars continually.

The relentless flow of incoming aircraft requires Soldiers to quickly and efficiently conduct maintenance and test flights to avoid a backup of aircraft or a delay in mission readiness.

“Phase maintenance is a scheduled period, after so many hours of flight time, that an aircraft has to be inspected and repaired so it can continue on its flight schedule,” said Sgt. Raymond Lindholm, technical inspector in Company B, 603rd Aviation Support Battalion. “It is preventive maintenance so you can catch something before it happens, like a (preventive maintenance checks and services) on a truck, only more in-depth for a helicopter.”

Each aircraft receives maintenance after a specific amount of hours in flight. The Chinooks receive maintenance after 200 and 400 hours, Apaches at 150, 250 and 500 hours, and Black Hawks after every 360 hours in flight.

An entire company has been dedicated to phase maintenance. Over 300 Soldiers

from B Co., 603rd ASB work around the clock to ensure the aircraft are inspected, repaired and ready to fly as soon as possible.

“We’ve cut our time into less than half, which is faster than the Army expected us to do,” said Spc. Art Flores, phase maintenance team leader, B Co., 603rd ASB.

The various maintenance procedures specify the amount of time Soldiers are allocated to complete each phase.

For the Chinooks, the 200-hour phase maintenance usually takes 30 days to complete; with Soldiers working 12-hour shifts, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, that time has been reduced to around 11 days. The 400-hour phase has been reduced from about 40 days to 15 days.

“When we first got here things were slow but now it’s a cycle,” said Lindholm. “It’s continuous so there is really no downtime. It gets pretty packed in here sometimes. Birds are always coming in and out.”

Though the Soldiers work on the aircraft quickly, they do not sacrifice quality of work for quantity of birds they send back into the flight.

“If it’s close to being bad, we’re going to replace it,” said Flores. “Not that it needs to be replaced but we’re not going to run the risk of it going bad during a firefight because that’s putting the pilots’ lives at risk, and that puts the infantry



Photo by Pfc. Monica K. Smith

Pfc. Carlos Del Bosque (sitting) and Pfc. Thomas Nash, both members of Co. B, 603rd ASB, check the torque of a tire on a Chinook Oct. 19.

guys at risk.”

After the aircraft has been serviced by the phase maintenance team, technical inspectors check to ensure all repairs and maintenance procedures have been performed correctly.

Then test pilots fly the helicopter and test out various parts of the aircraft to

further ensure each repair has been completed. The test flight also ensures no new problems have surfaced that may put other pilots, or their crews, in jeopardy.

“We make sure the helicopter doesn’t come out of the air and kill the people on board,” said Lindholm. “The helicopter has to be able to finish the mission.”

Adrenaline on two wheels for Striker BMXers

By Pfc. MONICA K. SMITH
3rd CAB, 3rd Inf. Div. Public Affairs

CAMP STRIKER – A Soldier flies through the air with the wheels of his BMX bicycle spinning. The setting sun reflects on the metal of the handlebars. He lands on the ground with a cloud of dust and the screeching of tires.

Private Dustin Alexander, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 4th Battalion, 3rd Aviation Regiment, is extreme biking in an extreme setting. Already in a difficult environment, Alexander has found a way to bring a little more adrenaline to Iraq.

“I’ve always liked biking since I was little,” said Alexander. “It’s really my only real sport or hobby. It’s fun and it



Pvt. Dustin Alexander, HHC, 4th Bn., 3rd Avn. Regt., works on keeping his balance and focus.

always challenges. It’s dangerous and I get an adrenaline rush.”

Alexander, from Chillicothe, Ohio, biked for two years and then took a year’s break. It wasn’t until he deployed to Iraq that he began biking again.

“I had my bike sent from home,” said Alexander. “When I went home on leave I decided to bring my bike back and my buddy sent it to me.”

When Alexander’s bike arrived he began biking in the evening after work on a strip of concrete near the North Morale Welfare and Recreation center at Camp Striker. It wasn’t long until others joined Alexander, riding and practicing tricks every night.

Sgt. 1st Class Jerry Andrew, line troop

platoon sergeant for Troop C, 3rd Squadron, 17th Cavalry Regiment, had been biking at the airfield during his time off and built two ramps to practice jumps and tricks on. He moved the ramps from the flight line to Camp Striker after seeing Alexander riding.

“I saw these guys riding around and it motivated me,” said Andrew. “I’m learning all this new terminology from these guys. The best part is getting big air – jumping. Doing 360s in the air is my favorite trick.”

Before biking at the flight line, Andrew had also taken a break from biking. Instead of a one-year break like Alexander’s, Andrew had taken a 20-year break from the sport.

“I started biking when I was four-years old,” said Andrew. “I haven’t ridden since I was 16 and I’m 35 now.”

Alexander says the key to riding is to go for each trick whole heartedly.

“If you think you can land it then land it, don’t hesitate,” said Alexander. “Don’t think about doing it; just do it. Don’t hold back.”



Photos by Pfc. Monica K. Smith

Pfc. Thomas Polk, Co. D, 2nd Bn., 3rd Avn. Regt., practices his jumps and tricks Oct. 20 at Camp Striker.

Camp Victory Rising Star to be chosen

By **Sgt. BEN BRODY**
MND-C Public Affairs

CAMPVICTORY – Soldiers from 3rd Infantry Division have been competing in Operation Rising Star, a contest based on American Idol, at the Oasis Stage here, since Oct. 19.

The contest consists of three elimination phases – the first is an a cappella competition, and in the final two phases, singers are accompanied by background music of their choice.

“We’ve been preparing for a month for this – it’s been a great morale boost to the Soldiers,” said event organizer Sgt. Colleen Bruton, an administrative sergeant for division logistics. “For the participants and the audience, it’s something different to do at night.”

“There are three judges – three tough judges,” said Sgt. 1st Class Marian Griffin, who sings in 3rd Inf. Div.’s R&B band Premium Blend.

Sgt. Maj. Essie Jackson, who is in charge of organizing 3rd Inf. Div.’s Rising Star participants, said the contest has been a hit so far.

“We had never done this before – we didn’t know what kind of reaction we’d get,” Jackson said. “Now it’s all I hear about. People are always dropping by my office with good comments.”

After the first two phases of Rising Star, the list of competitors is down to five 3rd Inf. Div. Soldiers: Master Sgt. Kevin Crawford, Sgt. 1st Class Edwin Reyes, Staff Sgt. Christian Friedman, Staff Sgt. Lilnell Pickett and Staff Sgt. Tara Williams.

The five will compete for a grand prize of \$500 and the chance at the Army-wide prize of \$2,000. The 3rd Inf. Div. winner will have a video of their performance posted on the Army Knowledge Online Web site.

The final phase of local competition is scheduled for 7 p.m. Oct. 27 at Oasis Stage.

Your final 5 contestants to square off Oct. 27 at 7 p.m., Oasis Stage



Master Sgt. Kevin Crawford



Portraits by Staff Sgt. Tony M. Lindback
Staff Sgt. Christian Friedman



Sgt. 1st Class Edwin Reyes



Staff Sgt. Tara Williams



Photos by Sgt. Ben Brody
Staff Sgt. Lilnell Pickett



Sgt. 1st Class Edwin Reyes serenades Staff Sgt. Tara Williams, both of 3rd Inf. Div., during Operation Rising Star's a cappella phase of competition at Camp Victory, Oct. 19. Reyes and Williams were each selected for the final competition.

PVT MURPHY'S LAW



Turn bonuses, savings into great wealth

Courtesy of the Office of the Staff Judge Advocate

Many of you are nearing a decision point in your respective careers. Whether officer or enlisted, first-term or seasoned Soldier, many of you are contemplating the choice between continuing to serve your country or leaving the Army to join the private sector. It is that impending decision that prompts me to address you today.

As Soldiers, we enter the "Profession of Arms" to serve a cause greater than ourselves. Very few in our society will ever know the devotion to duty and camaraderie we experience. The citizens of our grateful nation stand in awe of your courage, commitment and selfless service in the cause of freedom. Many of you have personally experienced their love and admiration as you arrive home for R&R or stand to be recognized at public events.

Although there can be no greater accolade than being hailed as our Nation's next "greatest generation," accolades alone may not be enough for Soldiers who are also husbands, wives and parents. That is why our civilian and military leaders have worked hard to offer you benefits that may, in some way, compensate you for the sacrifices you and your family members have made. As you come closer to deciding whether you will re-enlist or retain your commission, it is important that you understand the potential value of the Army's latest incentive programs as well as the military's retirement system. I invite you to read the following article to gain a greater understanding of the benefits of staying Army.

Retire with wealth

Albert Einstein called compound interest the "Eighth Wonder of the World." Taking advantage of Einstein's eighth wonder is the key to unlocking the potential value of the Army's current incentive programs. As many of you know, the Army now offers many Soldiers reenlistment or Critical Skills Retention Bonuses (CSRB). The decision to invest your bonus can make all the difference when it comes to financing your children's college education or supplementing future retirement benefits.

A \$25,000 bonus invested today for a Soldier's new-

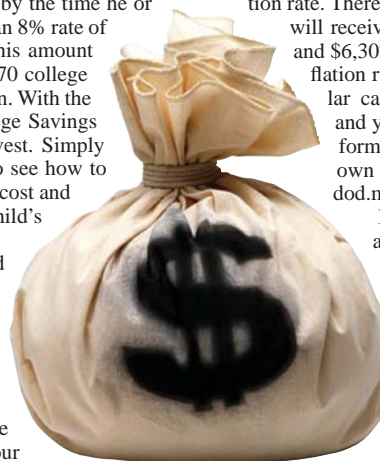
born child will grow into \$99,900 by the time he or she is ready for college, assuming an 8% rate of return. Add just \$50 a month to this amount and your child will have a \$122,370 college fund prior to high school graduation. With the rise in the popularity of 529 College Savings Plans, it is easier than ever to invest. Simply visit www.savingforcollege.com to see how to take advantage of this simple, low-cost and tax-free way of saving for your child's education.

If you are a single 25-year-old Soldier who would rather invest for retirement, \$25,000 invested in the Thrift Savings Plan will mature into \$543,113 before you reach age 65. Add just \$100 a month to the TSP and you will have \$853,980 when you retire. Combine this retirement nest egg with your inflation-protected retirement annuity addressed below and you will enjoy a retirement few people envision. Visit www.TSP.gov to learn more about the advantages of the TSP and how easy it is to participate.

Einstein's eighth wonder can also help you understand the actual value of your retirement benefits. Did you know that an E-8 retiring in 2007 with 20 years of service will receive over \$1.8 million in retirement income based on an average life expectancy? How is this possible when his monthly check is \$1,990 a month if he retires this year? The answer lies in the fact that military retirement benefits are indexed to inflation. The amount the E-8 receives will increase each year according to the infla-

tion rate. Therefore, the retired E-8 in our example will receive \$3,489 per month after 20 years and \$6,302 after 40 years, assuming a 3% inflation rate. The tables below contain similar calculations for varying pay grades and years of service. You can easily perform these calculations based on your own career assumptions at <http://www.dod.mil/cgi-bin/finalpayhigh3.pl>.

Financial planners are fond of the adage, "People don't plan to fail, they fail to plan." I hope this information guides you toward planning a future that includes the Army. Whether you provide a college education for your children or a comfortable retirement for yourself, no one deserves a secure future more than you – those who secure our freedoms and liberty.



E-7 With 20 Years Of Service				
Years Out	Year	Monthly Pay	Annual Pay	Cumulative Pay
1	2007	\$1,820	\$21,837	\$21,837
10	2016	\$2,374	\$28,492	\$250,337
20	2026	\$3,191	\$38,291	\$586,768
30	2036	\$4,288	\$51,460	\$1,038,904
40	2046	\$5,763	\$69,158	\$1,646,537

E-8 With 20 Years Of Service				
Years Out	Year	Monthly Pay	Annual Pay	Cumulative Pay
1	2007	\$1,990	\$23,879	\$23,879
10	2016	\$2,596	\$31,156	\$273,744
20	2026	\$3,489	\$41,872	\$641,632
30	2036	\$4,689	\$56,228	\$1,136,044
40	2046	\$6,302	\$75,624	\$1,800,492

E-9 With 26 years of Service				
Years Out	Year	Monthly Pay	Annual Pay	Cumulative Pay
1	2007	\$3,343	\$40,115	\$40,115
10	2016	\$4,452	\$53,414	\$459,869
20	2026	\$5,862	\$70,341	\$1,077,895
30	2036	\$7,878	\$94,533	\$1,908,470
40	2046	\$10,587	\$127,044	\$3,024,693

O-5 With 20 Years Of Service				
Years Out	Year	Monthly Pay	Annual Pay	Cumulative Pay
1	2007	\$3,452	\$41,425	\$41,425
10	2016	\$4,504	\$54,051	\$474,894
20	2026	\$6,053	\$72,639	\$1,113,111
30	2036	\$8,135	\$97,621	\$1,970,821
40	2046	\$10,933	\$131,195	\$3,123,512

O-6 With 26 years of Service				
Years Out	Year	Monthly Pay	Annual Pay	Cumulative Pay
1	2007	\$5,551	\$66,615	\$66,615
10	2016	\$7,243	\$86,918	\$763,668
20	2026	\$9,734	\$116,810	\$1,789,973
30	2036	\$13,082	\$156,983	\$3,169,242
40	2046	\$17,581	\$210,972	\$5,022,864

Sgt. Dion Parson, Headquarters and Headquarters Support Company, submitted this photo of Sgt. Barris Todd, who is working on a humvee. Barris is a refrigerant maintenance NCO with HHSC.



Photo Contest Winner: Sgt. Dion Parson

Photo Contest Get Published!



Want to be famous?

Email your best photo to the editor: michael.connors@iraq.centcom.mil. A photo will be chosen for the next edition of the *Marne Focus*. Include your rank, full name, job title, unit, photo date and a brief caption with rank, full name, job title and unit of each Soldier in the photo.

Correction: In the Oct. 11 edition of the *Marne Focus* a photo of Sgt. Zettion Branham was included in a commentary on R&R in Qatar. The inclusion of her photo was in no way meant to convey that Sgt. Branham endorsed any of the commentary. Her photo was only included to show a Soldier who went on the inland sea trip. We apologize if there was a misunderstanding.

Patching relations

1-30th hosts MEDOP, Iraqi doctors take lead

By SGT. LUIS DELGADILLO
2nd BCT, 3rd Inf. Div. Public Affairs

FOB KALSU – The rural backdrop of Al Buaytha seems an unlikely setting for a medical clinic. Still, setting matters little when the welfare of a community is at stake. In Al Buaytha, the location chosen proved to be ideal.

In an effort to bring health care to local residents and improve their relationship with the community, 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment Soldiers hosted the most successful medical operation in Al Buaytha to date near Patrol Base Dragon Oct. 16.

Taking the lead providing medical care was a group of visiting Iraqi doctors, including a pediatrician and three other specialists.

Medical personnel from 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division also treated patients, but due to the presence of the Iraqi doctors, they minimized their role.

"Right now I'm not seeing patients; I'm just acting



Photos by Sgt. Luis Delgadillo

An Iraqi girl and boy from Al Buaytha admire a 1-30th Inf. Regt. Soldier. Healthcare providers, including Iraqi doctors, provided medical treatment to the rural community Oct. 16.

like an assistant to the doctors," said Capt. Ricardo Swenness, of 1-30th Inf. Regt.

Swenness said that this medical operation was substantially different compared to other operations held in Arab Jabour and Al Buaytha thanks to the attendance of the Iraqi doctors and the abundance of medical supplies.

"I see an improvement, especially today because we have a pediatrician and also because we've been doing this often enough now that the other health care providers, myself included, are now becoming more learned in treating children," Swenness said.

To date, 1-30th Inf. Regt. Soldiers have hosted six medical operations and have treated a total of 627 patients. This event, which was the first hosted by Co. D, treated 217 local residents.

As health care providers busied themselves inside the building, children outside clamored for the attention of the Soldiers and concerned citizens who passed out food items, clothes and personal hygiene products.

While having difficulty organizing a rowdy group of excited children into a single-file line, Pfc. Josh Kopp, a fire support specialist with Company D, said he felt good about pulling security for the medical operation.

Kopp said he welcomed the change of pace from his normal duties, "It makes you feel like you're

helping...doing something finally."

If the children were at times tricky to tame, the adults attending the event patiently waited to be seen at the entrance to the improvised clinic.

Though it is unclear if this same group of doctors will be available to attend the next medical operation hosted by Soldiers of 1-30th Inf. Regt., the hope is that through concerned-citizen involvement with the Iraqi Ministry of Health, a clinic will be permanently established in the Arab Jabour region.



Capt. Ricardo Swenness, a physician assistant with 1-30th Inf. Regt., helps to examine a toddler.



A young girl helps a Soldier from Co. D, 1-30th Inf. Regt. carry a litter during the MEDOP.

