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Colonel Richard Francey, 41st Fires Bde. commander, and Iraqi Police Capt. Hayder Adnan Ali al Saidy, liaison to Coalition forces, walk down the streets of al Kut, Oct. 21.

By SGT. 1ST CLASS JOE THOMPSON
41ST FIRES BDE.



FOB DELTA – Walking down the streets of al Kut, you'll notice that shops are buzzing and markets have plenty of goods for sale.

Children ride their bicycles in the street alongside horse-drawn carts carrying goods to and from the market place.

People smile, and respond with "Alaikum al Salam," which is "And upon you be peace," when greeted in passing.

On this particular afternoon, Coalition Soldiers, accompanied by the Provincial Director of Police and the 32nd Iraqi Army Brigade commander, are walking down the streets of al Kut, heading to a restaurant for lunch.

Walking beside the Iraqi Security Forces leadership is the the 41st Fires Brigade commander, Col. Richard M. Francey, Jr.

On this particular stroll, he is dressed like his Iraqi partners; in uniform but with no body armor.

"It is a testament to the Iraqis taking control of their destiny," said

Francey. "They have a vested interest in the stability and security of their province and city, and because they are taking responsibility of the security by working with the Iraqi Security Forces, I feel comfortable in walking down the streets with my Iraqi brothers."

Accompanying Francey on this walk toward a late lunch, is Capt. Krofton Owen, 41st Fires Bde. ISF Line of Effort chief, who serves as liaison for Iraqi Police and Coalition forces.

"The overall attitude that I per-

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IA gives back to students; school reopens after two years

By Pfc. Christopher McKenna
3RD BCT, 101ST ABN. DIV. (AASLT)



CAMP STRIKER – The 23rd Brigade, 17th Iraqi Army Division handed out gift bags to students from the Sanadid School in Shak-eriyah and the al Fatoh Elementary School in Al Fatoh Oct. 19.

“It is always a good thing when the children receive gifts, they enjoy seeing the Iraqi Army Soldiers come through the school,” said Soad Ahmed Jasaim, Sanadid School assistant headmaster.

“The IA has done a lot for us recently, especially in giving this school back, when two months ago it was (used) by American Soldiers,” he added.

For two years, the Sanadid School was used by Coalition forces as Patrol Base Lion’s Den until Sept. 6 when it was transitioned back to IA control. The IA then reopened the school upon taking back control.

Classes took place in tents during that two-year period. Educating upward of 800 students, the IA knew converting the building back



Photo by Pfc. Christopher McKenna
Lieutenant Colonel Fatatl Rasheid Hamid, 2/23/17th IA commander, hands out gift bags to students at the al Fatoah Elementary School in Al Fatoah Oct. 19.

to a school was the top priority.

“Today we are showing that we care and that we will give back to the people in need,” said Col. Al-cram Saddam Mathuaf, 23/17th IA

commander. “We are giving the children school supplies and items they both need and want.”

Giving the area back was only the beginning, as there is still work to be done in the school.

“The students are like my children, I will ensure that I help them the best way I possibly can,” Mathuaf said. “Starting next week we are going to start painting the school and doing small things that we can accomplish at our level.”

The plan is to ensure the school is supplied with electricity through a generator run by 2nd Battalion, 23/17th IA and clean bottled water.

“We are doing what we can in order to support these schools and make sure they are getting what they need,” said Lt. Col. Fatatl Rasheid Hamid, 2/23/17th IA commander.

The IA Soldiers who handed out the gift bags were as cheerful as the children who received them.

Hamid said that his Soldiers were proud to give back and he plans to continue providing for the schools in the future.

NORMALCY

From page 1

ceived was very receptive, with people smiling and shaking hands with us,” said Owen.

“The markets we saw looked better than some of the larger markets I have seen while on vacation,” he added.

Seven months ago, the situation was

drastically different on the ground in Al Kut, as Jayish Al- Mahdi forces held an uprising in the city in March. The ISF responded, and ever since, have steadily improved their professionalism and ability to provide security to the people of Wasit.

“They have come a long ways,” said Capt. Tommy Karpuk, the 41st Fires Bde. Iraqi Army LOE Chief, who also went along for the walk.

“We have been working with the ISF, helping them and training them so that they can get better and better at their jobs, and it shows,” he added.

For now, the security situation in Al Kut seems safe, said Owen. With the provincial security being handed over at the end of October, it will be the ISF who will be solely responsible for the safety, stability and security of Wasit Province, he added.

THE Mountain View

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3rd BCT, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault)
4th BCT, 1st Cavalry Division
4th BCT, 3rd Infantry Division
7th Sustainment Brigade
41st Fires Brigade
354th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment
793rd Military Police Battalion
Division Special Troops Battalion, 10th Mtn. Div.
Task Force 49



Engineers dress their lips for Halloween showdown

By SPC. JUSTIN SNYDER
MND-C



CAMP VICTORY – A group of Soldiers and Airmen from the Multi-National Division - Center Engineers are sitting at the Coalition Café, enjoying their lunch, when a few people walk by with a chuckle and a stare.

This group of guys, already known as jokesters by their comrades, are not getting laughs because of their jokes, but because of their mustaches.

“We get people staring at us and laughing at us all the time,” said Maj. Paul Kremer, MND-C Division Engineers. “It’s really nothing new. We all look equally dumb.”

That’s because the engineers are taking part in a competition of who can grow the best mustache.

“We put in a lot of long days and are always looking for ways to keep things light hearted,” said Lt. Col. John Edborg, MND-C Div. Engineers. “We have a fantasy football league and do a ‘prison’ gym session together daily.”

“We were all together at the gym when someone said we should grow mustaches. Right away everybody was bragging about how they could grow the best one, so we decided to put people’s words to the test.”

What began as friendly nagging and bragging soon became an all-out competition, fit with an operation order, in-progress reviews and an ever expanding set of rules.

A few of the rules are that the mustache must remain within Army Regulation 670-1- Wear and Appearance of Army Uniforms and Insignia and there can be no use of dyes, markers or mascara to improve the appearance of the “stache”

The winner will be decided during an ‘American Idol’-like finale on Halloween night, where judges will decide who has grown the best “stache” since the beginning of the contest, which kicked off Oct. 5.

Different categories that the engineers will be vying for victory in are the Most Cheesy, Sexiest, the Tom Selleck and the best 70’s film-star mustache.

Since the beginning of the contest, the engineers have seen the mustache fad grow amongst their surrounding comrades in the MND-C Headquarters, a trend that they are proud to take credit for.

“We are definitely trendsetters,” said Air Force Major Brent “The Frenchman” Hyden, MND-C Div. Engineers and a native of Arlington, Texas. “People have started to copy us, but we totally started it.”

However, not everyone has been so thrilled by the mustaches.

“I was talking to my wife on the webcam and she saw my lip,” said Capt. Anthony Bonnes, 54th Eng. Battalion liaison officer to the MND-C Div. Engineers, as his voice quivered, remembering the fear he felt. “She wasn’t exactly thrilled about it. I had no choice but to drop out and shave off mine.”

Kremer, nicknamed “Home Depot” because “he could sell any piece of hardware with that stache,” believes he has the advantage going into the final week of the competition.

He also knows he must stay on his ‘A’ game.



Photo by Spc. Justin Snyder

Air Force Major Brent “The Frenchman” Hyden, MND-C Div. Eng., and a native of Arlington, Texas, uses a magic marker to accent his mustache.

“I think I’m leading, but there is a lot of potential out there in those guys,” said Kremer, a native of Fort Thomas, Ken. “I just need to stay focused, but it’s going to come down to the end.”

The engineers credit techniques such as Rogaine and drinking a lot of ‘near’ beer to their successful mustaches.

“Pop’s Wings will give you an extra quarter inch of growth also,” added Edborg, referring to a favorite snack from the Coalition Café. “I credit him with a lot of the success.”

While their “staches” have brought the engineers notoriety and hopefully victory come Halloween night, their fate lies in the hands of their owner and the feared razor.

“I don’t know if the guys will keep them on or not,” said Nathan “Ponch” Magee, MND-C Div. Eng. and a native of Fort Ord, Calif. “I’m not thinking about then, but I’m thinking about Halloween night.”

May the best mustache win!

To wear or not to wear? That is the question.

Express your opinion on when and when not to wear the new Army Combat Shirt.

Have an idea? Go to the Mountain Sound Off Blog at www.taskforcemountain.com



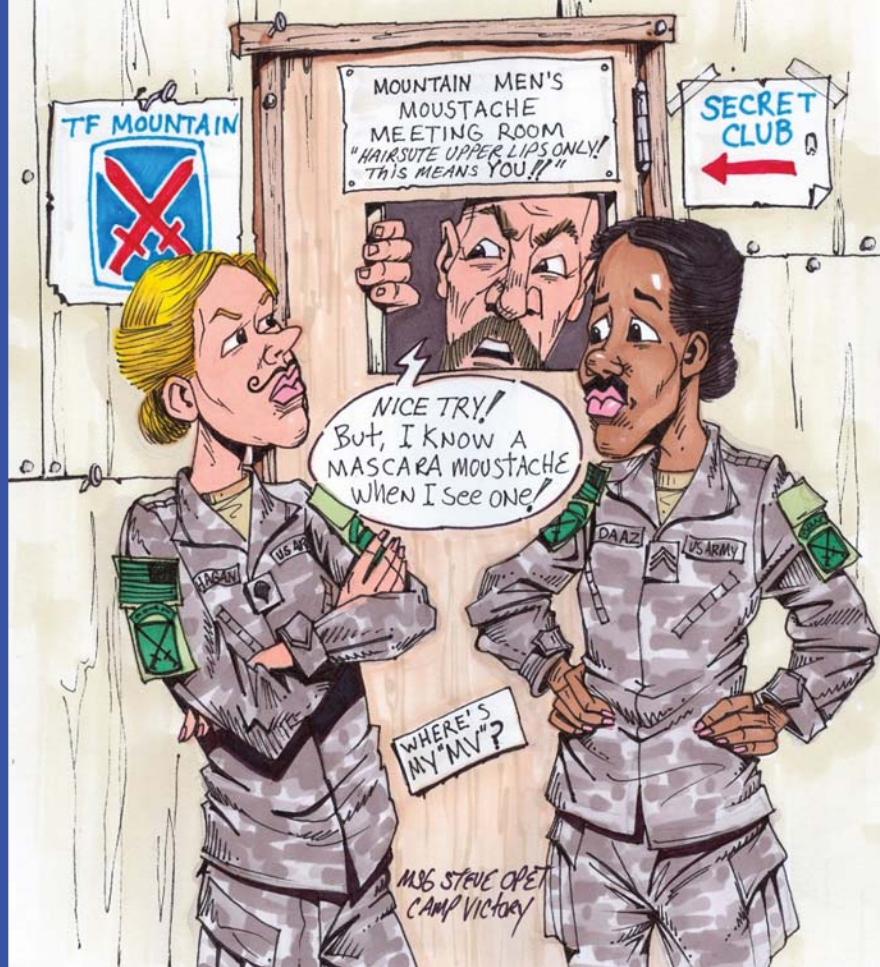
HOLIDAY SHOUT OUTS

Many of us won't be home for the holidays, but you can make sure that your family and friends hear from you with a recorded holiday message that will air on your local television station state-side. This is a great opportunity for you to wish happy holidays to the people that mean the most to you. And it only takes about 20 seconds! Check with your BCT Public Affairs Representative for schedules in your AO.



For MND-C Soldiers, show up at the Task Force Mountain Media Operations Center, Bldg. 51C, just outside of the Division Headquarters building from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Oct. 30 and Oct. 31.

Opet's Odyssey



Gauntlet Organization Day 2008



(Right) Private Bryan Watts, Headquarters and Headquarters Company Division Special Troops Brigade and a native of Pine Bluff, Ark. prepares food for hungry Soldiers during Gauntlet Orgization Day 2008, Oct. 25. (Center) Soldiers take part in a pick-up football game. (Background) A Soldier goes up for a spike during a first round match-up in the volleyall tournament.



Photos by Spc. Justin Snyder

Headline Round-up

U.S. News:

Gov. of New York, David Paterson's embattled top aide resigned Friday, after a week of escalating criticism over his failure to pay \$300,000 in taxes on time and a questionable excuse for the lapse. "Members of an elected official's staff should never distract from the work of the principal who they are privileged to serve," chief of staff Charles O'Byrne wrote in a letter to Paterson. "It is clear to me that my personal history has become a distraction to the work of your administration." Paterson wrote O'Byrne that he accepts the resignation, effective Friday, with regret.

Sports News:

New Orleans Saints veterans Deuce McAllister and Will Smith reportedly are among several players who have violated the NFL steroids policy. Fox 31 television in Denver, citing an unnamed source, reported Friday there are between six and 10 positive tests in the NFL for a weight-loss diuretic. The only names the station mentioned were the two Saints, who are in London for Sunday's game with the San Diego Chargers.

Entertainment News:

The mother and brother of Jennifer Hudson were found shot dead Friday at a South Side home, and police were looking for a missing child who is the nephew of the singer and Oscar-winning actress. A man suspected in the deaths was in custody Friday night, but the 7-year-old boy had not been located, according to published reports.

Health News:

The government is warning parents about Carter's Inc. baby garments with tag-less labels after about 400 babies who wore the clothing developed rashes on their backs. The warning applies to the fall 2007 line, which includes about 110 million garments, said Mary Drayna, a manager for the Atlanta company. The Consumer Product Safety Commission said Friday that children should stop using these garments if they develop a rash, but the agency did not announce a recall of the product line. Drayna said the affected clothing includes knit items such as body suits, shirts and pajamas.

Quote of the Day

"Misfortune shows those who are not really friends."—Aristotle

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WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE SCARY MOVIE?



Photo by Spc. Tiffany Evans

"Nightmare on Elm Street, the first one. It was a new concept at the time it was made and had good graphics for back then," Nathan Magee, Multi National Division-Center Division Engineer and a native of Fort Ord, Calif.



Photo by Spc. Tiffany Evans

"I'd say 'The Evil Dead', because it has Bruce Campbell and he's like the best horror movie actor ever," said Jesse Bruhm, 10th Mountain Division Headquarters and Headquarters Company Administrative Law Non-Commissioned Officer-in-Charge and a native of Falmouth, Mass.

For the answer to today's puzzle, go to:



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ARABIC WORD OF THE DAY

Where are you injured? wen in-jeh-ruh-hit?