

# Thousands of mission miles pay off

**By Lt. Col. Pat Simon**  
225th Eng. Bde. PAO

BAGHDAD — Driving a dump truck for the Louisiana National Guard almost three decades ago, then Pvt. Jerry Crooks, could not even begin to imagine that he would travel the world; eventually climbing to the highest rungs in the military.

On Oct. 4, before some of the same Soldiers that he has worked and traveled with through the years, the small town farm boy from Deville, La., now deputy commander of the 225th Engineer Brigade, proudly received his promotion to colonel.

“It’s taken me longer that I had originally planned, but as a 19 year old kid trying to lay out long term plans and not fully understanding the requirements and the competitive nature of the process, it was hard,” reflected Crooks.

Crooks’ military travel can easily qualify for frequent flier miles: more than 20 missions that took him to countries like Belize four times, Honduras, Panama and Guatemala twice, the Bahamas, Jordan, Italy, England, Germany and now Iraq.

Crooks’ most memorable missions were humanitarian and partnership in nature to Guatemala and Belize; building schools and roads in 1992 after the devastating effects of Hurricane Mitch.

“Entire communities were just gone,” recalled Crooks. “It’s amazing the amount of

water and the flooding that took place in such a short time period. The elevation rose 20 plus feet in just two to three hours.”

It is those missions that helped shape Crooks’ skills in leading Soldiers and dealing with civilian and military leaders from different countries.

“As you continue to get bits of training opportunities, it leads to leadership development,” Crooks added. “As some leaders say, the science of leadership is there. You can

read and train. You can prepare. You have trained staffs that can support that, but the many years of experience fine tunes the overall art of leadership.”

Like his father, Crooks’ son, Pfc. Taylor Crooks, also joined the Louisiana National Guard in his late teens. Crooks said he is fortunate to have his son along with him during his current tour supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom, and was proud to have him at his promotion ceremony.

“In some ways, I think he

was more excited. He was just so pumped up,” said Crooks with a smile. “It was just good seeing the excitement on his face. He and I have come a long ways in the last 18 months as a father and son and there’s no doubt that a lot of that is a result of the military.”

Wherever his military travels may take him next, Crooks plans to take it all in stride as long as he can.

“I’m not through yet. I think I have a few more years in me.”



Photo by Lt. Col. Pat Simon

Lt. Col. Jerry Crooks (center), deputy commander 225th Engineer Brigade, from Pin-ville, La., with his son, Pfc. Taylor Crooks (right) by his side, is promoted to the rank of colonel by Brig. Gen. Owen Monconduit, commander of the 225th Eng. Brig., Oct. 4. The elder Crooks’ military career spans almost three decades; highlighted by over 20 overseas partnership, humanitarian and combat missions.

# Military Transition Team advises Iraqi Army

*Photos by Pfc. Adam Halleck,  
1st BCT PAO, 1 Cav. Div.*



TAJI, Iraq- Iraqi officers, both assigned to the 37th Brigade, 9th Iraqi Army Division, discuss a plan to search a former weapons cache site, Oct. 2.



San Antonio native, Capt. Michael Martinez (left) and Sgt. 1st Class Paul Mattes, both assigned to the 37-9 Military Transition Team, discuss the building clearing skills of Iraqi Army Soldiers they train and advise



San Antonio native, Capt. Michael Martinez (left), the operations officer assigned to 37-9 Military Transition Team, provides guidance to an Iraqi Army lieutenant, Oct.2, during a mission to determine if a former weapons cache site in a village north of Taji is still being used to harbor weapons.



Soldiers assigned to the 37th Brigade, 9th Iraqi Army Division, question a local scrap yard worker, Oct. 2, during a search of a former weapons cache site in a village north of Taji.

# Cavalry medics focus on crucial training

**By Sgt. Alun Thomas**

*1st ACB PAO, 1st Cav. Div.*

CAMP TAJI, Iraq — In the midst of battle, with wounded and injured Soldiers in need of crucial medical help, aviation medevac teams will always be there to save lives.

For the air medevac team of the 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, passing down knowledge of lifesaving steps to Soldiers who need it most is equally as important to those on the frontlines.

Medics in Company C, 2nd Battalion, 1st ACB, here, taught essential medevac basics, Oct. 2, to members of Military Transition Team 10520 Phoenix, should they need them.

Staff Sgt. Robert Martinez, from Robinson, Texas, a flight medic with Co. C, said the exercise covered various facets of medevac procedures.

“We showed them how to set up landing zones and how to load patients,” Martinez said. “We are trying to see what can best facilitate saving time, saving lives and best help us procure that life and get them to a medical facility.”

Martinez taught several techniques to the MiTT team, including litter carries, loading procedures and overall safety.

“The aircraft safety issue is definitely number one more than anything,” Martinez said. “Anybody approaching the aircraft has to be careful because we don’t want to cause more injury to the patient or cause further casualties.”

Medevac evacuations are a time sensitive issue which makes it vital to be as efficient as possible.

“People’s adrenaline is



Photo by Sgt. Travis Zielinski

UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter flight medics from Company C, 2nd Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, train Soldiers from Team 10520 Phoenix, a military transition team for the Iraqi Army, how to safely approach and load a litter into a Black Hawk, here, Oct. 2. The training keeps Soldiers fresh on aircraft operations.

already high, so we have to keep cool, calm and collected under those conditions,” Martinez said.

Martinez said his personal experiences in combat revealed that Soldiers are sometimes taken by surprise when they are called upon in medevac situations.

“Most people are frazzled because they don’t expect contact and the catastrophic events that occur,” he said. “Coming from the ground myself that’s why I’m in a flight medic community now, so as to be at a higher level of care and to save more lives.”

Martinez was impressed with the MiTT team’s proficiency at completing the medevac training under the spinning blades of an UH-60

Black Hawk helicopter.

“They did great executing everything. It was a good hands-on orientation which gave them a better understanding of themselves and their troops should anything happen.”

Maj. Dante Antonelli, the MiTT’s chief, from Fort Bragg, N.C., who helped his team through the procedures, said the intent was to familiarize his team with both hot and cold load medevac situations.

“We did both, so the first time they were exposed to working under a hot rotor system was not in combat,” Antonelli said, himself a former medic. “This was important because it gave us a chance to understand the

commands they have to take under a rotor system where normal communication is not allowed.”

Although some of the MiTT team had worked under these conditions in combat before, some had not.

“This was their first opportunity to actively be under a rotor system with a helicopter,” he said. “They met the training objectives today.”

Antonelli praised the Co. C medevac team for making the training a valuable experience.

“Their medevac crew supported us on a very short notice training cycle because we are waiting to push from Taji. They responded and were very professional. They got the job done.”

## On This Day In History

October 8, 1918

### ALVIN YORK KILLS 25 AND CAPTURES 132:

During World War I, U.S. Corporal Alvin C. York is credited with single-handedly killing 25 German soldiers and capturing 132 in the Argonne Forest of France. The action saved York's small detachment from annihilation by a German machine-gun nest and won the reluctant warrior from backwater Tennessee the Congressional Medal of Honor.

Around 1915, York experienced a religious conversion after a friend was killed in a bar brawl.

Two months after the United States declared war on Germany in 1917, York received his draft notice. Because his church opposed war, he asked for conscientious objector status but was denied at both the state and local level because the small Church of Christ in Christian Union was not recognized as a legitimate Christian sect. Enlisting in the 82nd Infantry Division, he was offered noncombat duty but eventually agreed to fight after being convinced by a superior that America's cause was just.

On October 8, 1918, York and 15 other soldiers under the command of Sergeant Bernard Early were dispatched to seize a German-held rail point during the Allies' Meuse-Argonne Offensive. The Americans found themselves behind enemy lines. A brief firefight ensued with a superior German force, and in the confusion a group of Germans surrendered. York immediately returned fire and with his marksman eye began picking off the German gunners. He then fearlessly charged the machine-gun nest. Several of the other surviving Americans followed his lead and probably contributed to the final total of 25 enemy killed. With his automatic pistol, York and the other seven survivors took custody of some 90 Germans and on the way back to the Allied lines encountered 40 or so other enemy troops, who were coerced to surrender by the German major that the Americans had in their custody. The final tally was 132 prisoners.

## FAMOUS FEATS OF CHUCK NORRIS



### DID YOU KNOW?

The Great Wall of China was originally created to keep Chuck Norris out. It failed miserably.

## MND-B Pic of the day!



Photo by Sgt. Tracy Knowles, 225th Eng. Bde

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq — Five Soldiers from the 621st Engineer Detachment Survey and Design Team, 101st Eng. Bn., 225th Eng. Bde., receive applause after accepting Army Achievement Medals, Oct. 4, for their quick action in aiding injured U.S. Soldiers, here, From left to right: Sgt. Benjamin Brawley, of Wingate, N.C., Spc. Ezekiel Earle, of Morganton, N.C., Spc. Jeremy Hughes, of Thomasville, N.C., Spc. Timothy Killough, of New Salem, N.C., and Spc. Micah Mahadeo, of Stanley, N.C.



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## Quote For Today

“Determination is the wake-up call to the human will.”  
 — Anthony Robbins —

### Iraq 3-Day Weather Report



**Today**  
96° F | 69° F



**Tomorrow**  
98° F | 69° F



**Saturday**  
98° F | 68° F

### TRIVIA TIME!!

Can you name the four U.S. state capital cities named after U.S. Presidents?

Last Issue's Answer: Jeff Francoeur

# Cav Round-Up radio newscast available

## MND-B PAO

BAGHDAD — The Cav Round-Up is a three-minute radio newscast from Baghdad covering military units and events across Multi-National Division — Baghdad.

Today's Cav Round-Up # 171 was produced by SGT Lisa Heise, MND-B Public Affairs Office.

This newscast includes the following stories:

1. Soldiers of Delta Co, 252th Combined Arms Bn., 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team work with the Iraqi Federal Police to keep the streets safe.

The MP's search multiple homes and warehouses in effort to protect and secure the area.

2. Five soldiers from the 621st Engineer Det., 101 Engineer Bn., 225th Engineer Brigade receive

Army Achievement Medals for their actions after a recent attack at Camp Liberty.

They acted without hesitation while assisted combat medics and helped evacuate wounded Soldiers.

NIPR LINK: Cav Round-Up

SIPR LINK: Cav Round-Up

Check out more news at the 1st Cavalry Division's homepage:

[www.hood.army.mil/1stcavdiv/](http://www.hood.army.mil/1stcavdiv/)

## Trigger's Teasers

The objective of the game is to fill all the blank squares in a game with the correct numbers. There are three very simple constraints to follow: **Every row of 9 numbers must include all digits 1 through 9 in any order. Every column of 9 numbers must include all digits 1 through 9 in any order. Every 3 by 3 subsection of the 9 by 9 square must include all digits 1 through 9.**

Every Sudoku game begins with a number of squares already filled in, and the difficulty of each game is largely a function of how many squares are filled in. The more squares that are known, the easier it is to figure out which numbers go in the open squares. As you fill in squares correctly, options for the remaining squares are narrowed and it becomes easier to fill them in.

### Yesterday's Answers

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

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



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The **Daily Charge** welcomes columns, commentaries, articles, letters and photos from readers.

Submissions should be sent to the Public Affairs NCOIC [nicholas.conner@mnd-b.army.mil](mailto:nicholas.conner@mnd-b.army.mil) and include author's name, rank, unit and contact information. The **Daily Charge** reserves the right to edit submissions selected for the paper.

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