

ANACONDA TIMES

SEPTEMBER 6, 2006

PROUDLY SERVING LSA ANACONDA



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Family Values

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Five years later...

"It was just chaos ... You couldn't see your hand in front of your face." - Page 15



Photo by Master Sgt. Steve Valey

David Smith displays his father's Medal of Honor as Birgit Smith addresses the audience during a dedication ceremony of the Paul R. Smith Middle School in Holiday, Fla., Aug. 25. Smith died in combat April 4, 2003, as he fought off Iraqi attackers near Baghdad International Airport. He received the Medal of Honor posthumously April 4, 2005.

Middle school dons name of Medal of Honor recipient

by Master Sgt. Steve Valey

Army News Service

HOLIDAY, Fla. – What began last year as a suggestion by retired Maj. Gen. Fred Raymond came full circle last Friday during a dedication ceremony of the new Paul R. Smith Middle School in Holiday, Fla.

More than 500 family, friends, Soldiers, veterans, legislators, county officials and students were present.

Raymond recommended to the Pasco County School Board in September 2005 that the new school be named after Medal of Honor recipient Sergeant 1st Class Paul R. Smith.

see Smith, Page 3



Photo by Spc. Alexandra Hemmerly-Brown

Sgt. Gloria I. Ingalls, from Calexico, Calif., and a civil affairs clerk with 3rd Corps Support Command here, holds a boxer's stance while a class receives tips from North American Boxing Organization middleweight champion Joey Gilbert Aug. 28.

"I will never quit."

I am Sgt. Catherine Evernham , from Long Beach, N.J.
FSC, 250th Combat Support Battalion >> Admin. Sergeant



Three women share the fight in war, cancer

by Spc. Alexandra Hemmerly-Brown

Anaconda Times Staff Writer

LSA ANACONDA, Iraq – It's hard to find someone who hasn't had their own life or a family member's affected by cancer, but adding that struggle to the stress of war can magnify the effect of the disease.

Maj. Kathy A. Shear, Sgt. 1st Class Carolina Castle, and Sgt. Sonia M. Rodriguez, have a lot in common. All three women participated in LSA Anaconda's recent Relay for Life event Aug. 18, and all three have survived years of struggle with cancer. They are women who are not only serving their country in Iraq, but are doing it in spite of a personal battle – cancer.

A clash with the sun

Shear, a native of Warnerville, N.Y., and deputy operations officer for 3rd Corps Support Command, has been battling cancerous basal cells since 1999. Shear first noticed reddish blemishes on her forehead that year, but ignored them for six more years.

"I continued to enjoy the sun every chance I got, not knowing that the sun was fueling the cancer," Shear said.

Last May, she went to Walter Reed Army Medical Center, in Washington, D.C., to have the blemishes looked at, and it was then that she learned they were cancerous.

Shear had the mass removed, but was left with a two-centimeter hole in her forehead, and a flap made of her own skin to cover the hole.

"I see the scar every time I look in the mirror," Shear said.

She was told that a reoccurrence of cancer was very likely within five years, but Shear found a new outbreak of cells only five weeks after her initial surgery.

Those were also removed, but Shear found still more cancerous cells just before deploying to Iraq in October of 2005. When Shear returns home, she will once again go through the process of finding out if the cells on her forehead are cancerous.

"There are so many people in the armed forces that are cancer survivors and until I had cancer, I had no idea how many there are," she said.

Shear, whose mother is also a cancer survivor, stresses the importance of being educated about the disease.

"It is so important to educate the public on this deadly disease," Shear said. "My advice is that something that doesn't seem normal, probably isn't."

She refuses to let cancer defeat her positive attitude, and this fight has reinforced her outlook on life.

"Being deployed has made me realize that life is entirely too short to worry about the small challenges and things that we deal with on a daily basis," she said. "I believe that God does not provide you with obstacles he does not feel you can handle."

Shear is confident that cancer will not gain any ground in her life, and that one day a cure will be found.

"I will overcome this challenge and endure the anesthetic needles in my forehead and the slicing away of my skin because I refuse for it to win in any form or fashion," she said.

Helping find a cure

Castle, from Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., an operations non-commissioned officer with the 50th Engineer Company, was first diagnosed with leukemia at 3 years old. She continued to

receive chemotherapy until the age of 6. Her mother was diagnosed with throat cancer and died in 1974, followed by Castle's father's death from lung and kidney cancer in 1986.

"Since the loss of my folks, I have felt like I cheated them," Castle said. "Not loving them enough, and cancer should have taken me instead. I didn't do enough to save them ... these thoughts have haunted me for years."

Castle has been involved in Relay for Life events since 1989 and has used them as a way to deal with the loss related to cancer in her family.

"I decided to turn my negative frustration into

some positive constructive production," she said.

She said that fighting against cancer has helped her build up her honor, dignity, discipline, and courage.

"My Papo taught me not to be afraid," Castle said. "He used to say: 'When life gets tough, don't step back. Observe, adapt, and find a way to get through. Don't ever get lazy because that is just an excuse to not succeed.'"

Castle was a key player in organizing the Relay for Life event here Aug. 18. More than 600 servicemembers took part in the event which raised more than \$24,000 for cancer research.

"Goodness, a Relay for Life in Iraq ... Life is good," she said. "I really hope my folks were watching because this is something to talk about for years to come."

To anyone who is suffering from cancer, Castle offers the advice to not shy away from it and stay strong through treatments.

"You are scared, and you are feeling alone," Castle said. "You're not (alone)."

Castle gives the guidance to never give up fighting the disease and to make the most out of life.

"I am no fortune teller, but I do know that life is too short –don't waste it," she said.

Fighting for her child

Rodriguez, from Long Beach, Calif., a noncommissioned officer with the 650th Transportation Control Detachment, did not have cancer herself, but both her mother and young son were diagnosed with the disease.

Rodriguez's mother passed away from breast cancer when Rodriguez was a junior in high school, after battling with the disease for six years.



Maj. Kathy A. Shear

hospital," Rodriguez said. "My mother spent exactly one week in Mexico before she passed away."

"It was really hard for me, but my mother's death showed me how strong I could really be," she said.

Her son, Carlos, was diagnosed in 2002 with a different form of cancer—leukemia. He was 3 years old when they caught the disease in its early stages, and he continued to receive treatment for the next three years.

"It was hard to explain to my son why he was sick, but after a thorough explanation, he understood," she said.

It was a happy day for Rodriguez when, two days before mobilizing for this deployment, she received a phone call that her son was officially declared free of the disease, she said.

"My son's recovery made me believe in medicine again, a belief I had lost when my mother lost her battle," she said.

Rodriguez recommends that anyone in her position study the disease they are dealing with. She said she researched breast cancer and leukemia, and that knowledge gave her a better understanding on what to expect.

Thoughts for the future

These women have all faced heartache and challenges through their fight against cancer, but have all refused to let the disease defeat them.

"It takes continued dedication, promotion, and education of this disease in order to fight against it and win," Shear said. "I look forward to the day when there is a 100 percent cure rate."

Castle plans to continue participating in Relay for Life events in the hope that one day a cure will be found.

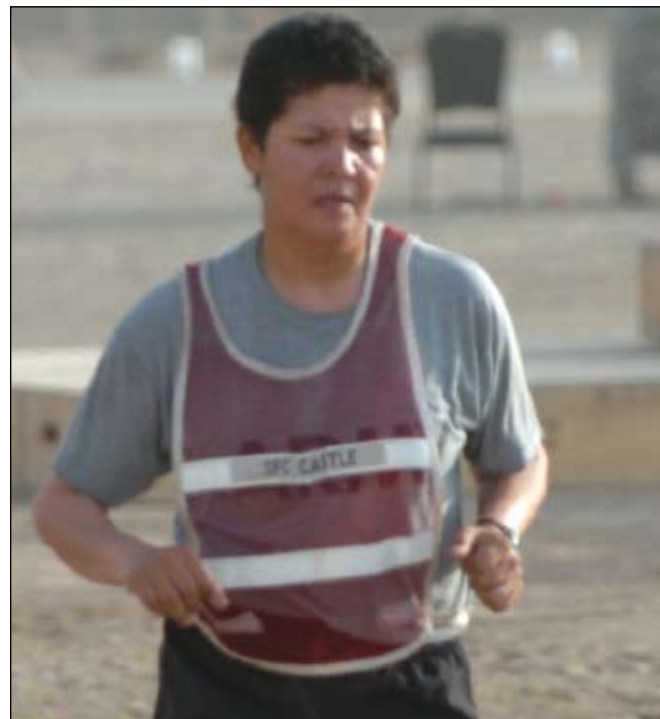
"Life is too short, and the beauty of traveling through it is the mystery of not knowing when your turn comes up," she said. "Don't worry about that; love, and life will be enriched."

Rodriguez said she hopes telling her story will help others get through the pain and trauma that comes with the disease.

"Even though my mother lost her battle with cancer, knowing she struggled to stay strong for her children and maintain our household so we still felt like a family, makes me feel positive that I can handle anything that comes my way - including this deployment," Rodriguez said.



Sgt. Sonia M. Rodriguez



Sgt. 1st Class Carolina Castle

Soto siblings become U.S. citizens

by Spc. Karonda Fleming

Anaconda Times Staff Writer

LSA ANACONDA, Iraq - The U.S. Army reunited a sister and brother as they became American citizens during a naturalization ceremony here.

"I joined the Army in 2004, just one week after my sister joined," said Erick A. Soto, tracked vehicle mechanic, 16th Engineer Battalion, out of Friedberg, Germany, currently based at Ar Ramadi.

"I wanted to become a better person, not just by staying at home," said Adriana Soto Cota, supply specialist for 3rd Corps Support Command out of Wiesbaden, Germany. "I wanted to get out and do something with my life."

Soto, 27, and Soto Cota, 22, were both born in Mexicali, Mexico and moved to El Centro, Calif., when he was nine and she was four years old.

"This country gave me a lot," Soto Cota said. "It gave so many opportunities for my family. I feel part of this country now. I still love my country of Mexico, but the United States has offered a lot more for us. It helped us out."

They never imagined that they would get their American citizenship in Iraq.

"It just feels great, knowing that I'll get to see my sister before she goes back to Germany," Soto said. "Especially, since I am based in such a hostile place."

"It gives me a little push for the duration of my deployment," he said. "Now, I will be able to go back home in one piece. I'm very happy."

The military has brought the two of them together, again. Their reuniting wasn't planned. It just coincidentally happened.

They said they attended basic combat training at Fort



Spc. Erick A. Soto and Spc. Adriana Soto Cota, of El Centro, Calif., are a brother and sister team as they pledge their oath of citizenship to the United States of America on Aug. 28 at Logistical Support Area Anaconda in Balad, Iraq.

Jackson, S.C., but were in different companies, living in barracks that were nearby.

Serving as active duty Soldiers, they are both stationed in Germany, apart by merely a couple hours driving distance, and now they are deployed in Iraq.

Soto and Soto Cota are very happy to become naturalized American citizens.

"I feel that I have more bragging rights," Soto said. "I can say that America is my country now."

Soto said that he feels great inside because he is a Soldier and now an American Soldier.

"I can tell people that I'm an American citizen fighting for my country," he said.

"It feels great," Soto Cota said. "I have my brother here with me. That makes it even better."

She said that when she is in uniform, it makes her feel like she has done something great, which makes becoming an American citizen more rewarding.

"This is a life-changing experience for me," Soto Cota said. "I am letting go of my Mexican citizenship to become an American. I am still going to be Mexican, but I will also be an American."

Some of Soto's hobbies include boating, going to the gym, and working on cars. When Soto returns home, he plans to finish

his degree in Psychology.

Soto Cota also plans on attending college.

"I have always planned on going to school," she said. "I would like to someday get a civilian government job."

She said because of her citizenship there are no obstacles that would prohibit her from a job.

"There will be new opportunities and new opened doors for us to go to work," she said. "We can have a career anywhere in the United States."

Smith, from Page 1

Smith's parents, widow and two children live in Holiday, and his 12-year old son David is now a student at the school that bears his father's name.

"I told the board members that students could learn a lot about courage, selflessness, and service to country and community from Paul Smith's example," said Raymond. "Paul Smith is an outstanding role model for Pasco County students."

Smith died in combat April 4, 2003, as he fought off Iraqi attackers near Baghdad International Airport. His actions saved the lives of at least 100 Soldiers, caused the failure of a deliberate enemy attack hours after Soldiers seized the airport, and resulted in an estimated 20-50 enemy soldiers killed, according to the official Medal of Honor narrative.

Smith received the Medal of Honor posthumously during a White House ceremony April 4, 2005. He served in B Company, 11th Engineer Battalion, 3rd Infantry Division.

U.S. Representative Michael Bilirakis, R-9th District, presented the school a U.S. flag that flew over the U.S. capitol. Col. Mark McKnight, 3rd Inf. Div. chief of staff, presented a framed plaque of the Smith's official Medal of Honor narrative.

"I'm hoping students here will want to learn more about the man whose name graces this school," said Smith's wife Birgit.

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ARMY RESERVE

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ANACONDA TIMES

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18th CSB switches

Unit moves from west to east VBC; acquires missions

by Sgt. Joshua Salmons

4th Sustainment Brigade

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq—The 18th Corps Support Battalion finished the majority of its “in-stride move” to East Liberty Saturday, July 29, officially turning on the lights and beginning operations from the new Victory Base Complex area.

Formally the sole proprietors of Logistical Base Seitz, a small base on west VBC, the Germany-based battalion will now join a much larger community of personnel as part of the Army’s continued consolidation and realignment of units throughout the Baghdad area.

“We’re going from small town to the big city,” said Maj. Horace Bowden, 18th CSB executive officer. “We’re going from being masters of our own destiny to the larger picture.”

Along with new living, work and supply support activity (SSA) areas, the 18th has also received some new responsibilities with the move: managing an additional entry-control point (ECP) and one of the VBC’s Joint Land Attack Cruise Missile Defense Elevated Netted Sensor Systems (JLENS)—those camera-equipped aerostats seen on camps used to monitor activity outside of the wire.

“Everything about the move should be transparent to the customer units,” said Maj. Wayne Bondy, the 18th support operations officer. “We’ve continued operations and moved at the same time.”

Which wasn’t without challenges, requiring intense levels of coordination and planning, explained Bondy. The first phases included moving the SSAs to provide uninterrupted services to customers and operations, followed by additional

waves of furniture, equipment and vehicles to the respective new offices and yards on East Liberty.

“I think they did it to test us—to see if we could handle it,” said Sgt. 1st Class Greg Brewer, a platoon sergeant with Battery C of the 2nd Battalion of the 5th Field Artillery Regiment, one of the transportation assets assigned to the 18th.

He laughed as he remarked about the work the move required from his troops through the day before they headed out each night on regular missions. “It seems like it all just came down at once—missions, moving, everything.”

Most of the moving was handled by internal battalion assets, utilizing their own palletized load systems (PLSs), forklifts and other vehicles—that part of the problem of relocation could depend on the 18th’s self reliance.

While many soldiers chaffed at the normal pains any move causes, Bowden saw the move as a good opportunity.

“This was a chance to look at how our systems operate,” he said. “The nine-month mark is a typical time to get complacent. By ripping the Band-Aid off the old way, we can see holes in how things work. It’ll give us a fresh look at our processes.”

Efforts will continue to improve the areas of the 18th’s new home. Two large maintenance buildings are planned to provide enclosed facilities for mechanics and fabricators, along with other projects that the 18th hopes to have completed in time for their replacement units in a few month’s time.

“The soldiers deserve the real credit for all of this,” Bondy said. “It was their hard work that moved us and kept us going. This is just one more step for getting both [the unit] and [the Army] home.”



Photo by Sgt. Joshua Salmons

Pfc. Necroy Smith cuts shelves from old furniture to fit some of the new office spaces on East Liberty, Victory Base Complex, Iraq. Smith is an administrative specialist with the 18th Corps Support Battalion.

Iraqi Army Brigade Takes the Lead in Mahmudiyah

by Maj. Jose Garcia

101st Airborne Division PAO

FOB MAHMUDIYAH, Iraq - The 4th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division officially assumed responsibility for security in parts of Mahmudiyah, Yusufiyah and Lutufiyah during a Transfer of Authority ceremony Aug. 14.

During the ceremony held at the Iraqi army compound in Mahmudiyah, the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division transferred to the Iraqi Brigade known as the “Desert Lion” absolute responsibility for security of a region that includes roughly 322 square kilometers in South Baghdad and is referred to by many as the “Triangle of Death.”

Local sheiks, community leaders, and senior military leaders, that 4th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division, worked closely with throughout the past 11 months, also attended during the hour-long ceremony which included a pass and review of the Iraqi troops and a demonstration of combat tactics by Iraqi soldiers.

Lt. Col. Eric Conrad, commander, 2nd Brigade Troops Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, and Military Transition Team Chief for the 4th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division, worked closely with the leadership and Soldiers of the brigade and was proud to see the progress that they have made in the past 11 months.

“I am very proud of the Soldiers of this unit, they have demonstrated that they are

ready to move forward to the next level and take responsibility for security of this area,” said Conrad.

In addition to security provided by the Iraqi army in this area, soldiers from 4th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division, often are directly engaged with many humanitarian and other local civic actions. The unit has provided security for many essential service construction projects, it has physically helped repair local schools and it has actively improved local area appearance and pride in the community.

“In addition to fighting well and ensuring the security of Iraqis in key areas of South Baghdad, the 4th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division, has done a great job in working to improve essential services and quality of life in the area,” said Col. Todd Ebel, Commander 2nd Brigade Combat Team. “The brigade’s soldiers have helped repair several local schools and other facilities long neglected; many have simply selflessly served their people and are committed to making their communities better.”

Ebel expressed his full confidence in the soldiers and leadership of the Iraqi soldiers.

“Col. Ali is a true patriot. I have watched him and his brave soldiers continue to excel and keep up the fight against terrorists and other insurgents,” said Ebel. “I do not make this statement lightly. For many reasons the fight in South Baghdad is unlike other areas; it is arguably the most complex and most lethal area in all of Iraq. To operate here and to be effective in balancing lethal and non-le-



Photo by Spc. George Welcome

Iraqi army soldiers from 4th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division, perform a demonstration of their battlefield tactics during a Transfer of Authority ceremony held here Aug. 14.

thal counterinsurgency tasks takes raw courage, patience and a strong will to persevere under the harshest conditions,” Ebel continued. “Daily Col. Ali and his men do just that and they have been phenomenal. I am very proud of them.”

Ebel pointed out that the security of the area does not reside only with the Iraqi army and other coalition security forces.

“The future of Iraq and its security does not lie with Iraqi Security Forces alone,” said Ebel. “It is the people that must choose peace, freedom and prosperity and cooperate to achieve it. It is only by working together can Iraqis move forward in their desire for a peaceful and prosperous future.”

The 1st Battalion, 4th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division assumed responsibility of

the Lutufiyah area, the southern part of the triangle, from 1st Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, on June 15.

A month later the 2nd Battalion, 4th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division assumed responsibility for the city of Mahmudiyah and the surrounding countryside, from 1st Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment.

The 4th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division has demonstrated that they are well prepared for their task of security in southern Baghdad and have moved together forward to meet this challenge.

“I am proud to have served and trained with such a great group of soldiers. They are a superb unit and ready to assume this important task of security for south Baghdad,” said Conrad.

332nd EOSS keeps Balad Air Base flying

story and photos by Spc. KaRonda Fleming

BALAD AIR BASE, Iraq - The 332nd Expeditionary Operations Support Squadron has twenty-two controllers that run the towers.

There are more than 150,000 operations that fly in and out of the airfield each year, said Staff Sgt. Cortney B. Goes, air traffic controller, who was previously based at Ellsworth Air Force Base, S.D.

"It is the busiest air base I have ever worked at," Goes said. "At Ellsworth, we only had 12,000 operations a year...we do more operations here in a month than what my base did in one year."

Balad's airfield operations control one-third of all Iraq's airspace traffic, said Maj. Michael P. Gregoritsch, Airfield Operations Flight Commander, 332nd EOSS.

He said this includes anything flying south of Kirkuk Regional Air Base and north of Ali Base.

Gregoritsch said that they control traffic in five airports to include Baghdad International Airport. They also oversee airfield management at four Army forward operating bases.

"We are a hub within a hub spoke system," Gregoritsch said. He explained that all of the heavy aircraft, C-5s or C-17s, come in from other countries to drop off cargo that may need to go to other FOBs. C-130s then pick up the cargo and take it out to other smaller bases.

"All big shipments come here and then we distribute them out via airlift," he said. On average, 500 aircraft come in and out per day, and 90 percent of those are helicopter operations he said.

Dirt, rocks, or anything on the runway, tends to be a big problem Gregoritsch said, especially for the F-16, because its intake is very low to the ground. A lot of time is spent all day sweeping the runways and keeping them clear.

The air traffic controllers have a vital role in the elimination of foreign object debris.

"We play a huge part in the FOD removal by contacting airfield management and telling them exactly where it is," Goes said.

She explained an experience with an F-16 pilot.

"We had an F-16 still taxiing on the ground," Goes said. "While I was still talking to him, he mentioned that he just went over some rocks."

Anaconda Times Staff Writer

"We (air traffic controllers), in turn, get an airfield management vehicle and its sweepers to check the runway for debris," she said.

Pot holes on the runway can cause it to shut down, Gregoritsch said. The concrete occasionally tears up due to the heavy aircraft flying in and out.

There are two airfield managers that work with the civil engineer squadron 24 hours a day, seven days a week, using three big street sweepers.

There are three main positions that control the airfield, including ground control, flight data, and local control.

The ground control operator communicates with all taxiing aircraft on the runway as well as all vehicles, she said.

The flight data position is similar to a secretary, in that the operator must answer the phone. That person must also monitor the weather conditions, she said.

The local control operator handles all airborne traffic within a 5 to 10-mile radius, she said.

"If we didn't have a control tower here, this place wouldn't see near the amount of traffic," Gregoritsch said.

"There would be more convoys, because we wouldn't be able to get the Air Force traffic in and out of here, and the Army helicopters wouldn't be able to accomplish any of their training or missions here on base," he said.

Airfield operations are important for the day-to-day operations in Balad.

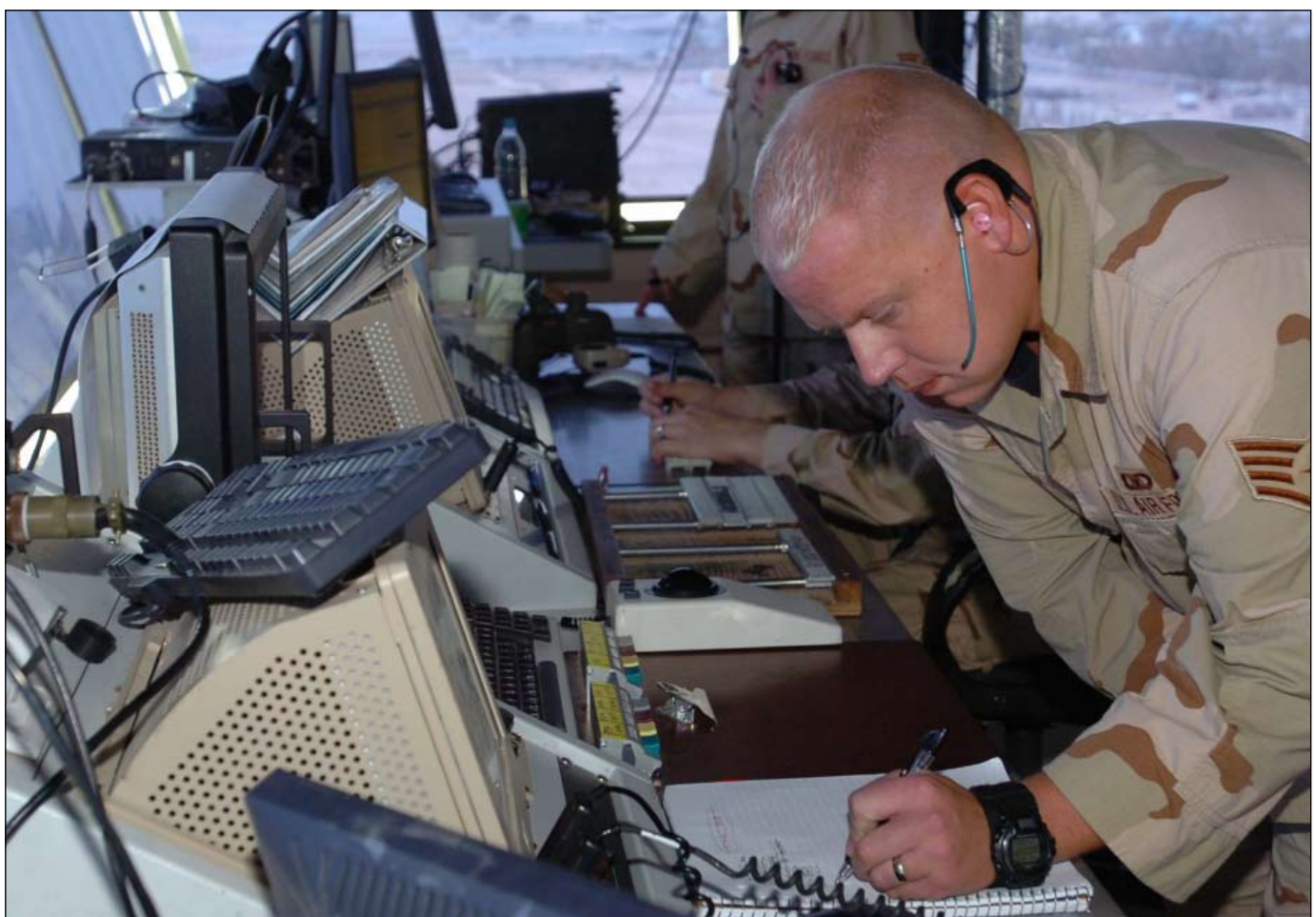


Staff Sgt. Cortney B. Goes talks with a taxiing plane to ensure that the butcher board is accurately filled out, which is a system that keeps track of all flying aircraft for the day with the wing number, time of landing and departure.

"I think this has absolutely been a great experience to be here," Goes said. "I feel that I have played a big part, and I will be proud forever. It's something I can tell my grandchildren about later in the future."



(Above) Airman 1st Class Joseph W. Potter is working the flight data position. He is responsible for answering the phone, as well as monitoring the weather conditions within the area. (Right) Staff Sgt. Dwight D. Aiken is working as the local air control operator. He uses a scope on a computer screen which shows radar of all airborne traffic within a 5 to 10-mile radius.



130th Engineer Brigade makes a difference

by Spc. KaRonda Fleming

Anaconda Times Staff Writer

LSA ANACONDA, Iraq - Soldiers often find themselves routinely performing the same missions each day throughout their deployment in Iraq. However, the 130th Engineer Brigade has found a love for donating to the Iraqi community in addition to their typical jobs.

The unit's time outside the wire is usually limited to repairing potholes, managing routes, and constructing forward operating bases, said Capt. Brian J. Henderson, commander of Headquarters, Headquarters Company, 130th Engineer Brigade, based in Hanau, Germany.

Henderson, whose hometown is Martinsville, Va., said interactions with the Iraqi citizens were normally restricted to friendly waves as the unit traveled to various bases.

"We wanted to try to get out and do a little more," he said.

The 329th Civil Affairs Battalion helped coordinate frequent visits to the Almaq Sood School, just outside of LSA Anaconda.

The first mission to the school was in June, said Sgt. Andrea P. Migliore, noncommissioned officer in charge of Personnel Actions Company, HHC, 130th Engineer Brigade. Since then, there have been more visits to the school, which toys, candy, shoes, and clothes were donated.

Migliore, whose hometown is Pennsville, N.J., said she realized after her first visit to the school that none of the children had shoes to wear.

"I sent out a mass email to friends and family back home, and now, I have over three hundred pairs of shoes that will be donated to the Iraqi community."



Staff Sgt. James E. Morris, 130th Engineer Brigade, hands out clothes, shoes, and toys to the Iraqi children of the Almaq Sood School.

There are only 40 students at Almaq Sood School, Migliore said. The rest of the shoes will go to other schools within Iraq.

Spc. Joel P. Jessen, operations specialist, whose hometown is Hardin, Mont., said doing civil affairs missions gives him a sense that he is doing something good for the local Iraqis. All of the missions Soldiers conduct here are important, he said. However, donating to the children gives a better sense of helping people.

"The interaction with the kids made me feel happy," Jessen said.

"I saw in their faces. How they appreciated what we were doing. They were really happy

to get the donations," Jessen said.

"(Children) are the future generation of this county," Migliore said. "Donating these valuable supplies makes a lasting impression. They will always remember what we have done for them ... hopefully other units are doing these types of things everywhere."

Migliore said it's nice to get out and feel like she has done something for the cause. Instead of doing the same job day after day, she now has a chance to go outside the wire and make a difference.

"It may not be a huge difference, but it's a difference to me."



An Iraqi girl waits patiently for her gifts.

**Restrict access to
EOD only.**



CA Soldier learns Arabic customs from parents



Photo by Spc. KaRonda Fleming
Staff Sgt. Magda R. Khalifa, 404th Civil Affairs Battalion from Fort Dix, N.J. is a reserve Soldier on her second tour of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Her first tour to Iraq was in 2004 in Diyala Province.

by Spc. KaRonda Fleming

Anaconda Times Staff Writer

LSA ANACONDA, Iraq -- As the oldest daughter of three immigrant parents, Staff Sgt. Magda R. Khalifa, a reserve Soldier with the 404th Civil Affairs Battalion, has provided much cultural awareness to her civil affairs unit.

Khalifa said her father, a Muslim, emigrated from Egypt and her mother, a Catholic, emigrated from Columbia.

"It was a very unique situation," Khalifa said. "Growing up, with parents from two very different backgrounds."

"Irrelevant to which religion either of them were, it taught me the values of living with both customs," Khalifa said.

As a young child, Khalifa still had the opportunity to celebrate Christmas. Her family followed the Ten Commandments and taught her values on how to become a good person. She said those values were passed down through both of her parents equally.

"I feel that they have instilled in me a lot of values, like the love of my country," Khalifa said. "As a child of immigrants into the United States, I am able to appreciate what I have, having being born in America."

"I appreciate the value of freedom and the rights I have as an American Soldier. That is partially why I want to serve my country," Khalifa said.

When she joined the military in March 2002 in civil affairs, she said it seemed to be one of the most versatile jobs for a female Soldier.

Khalifa said she primarily wanted to be a part of civil affairs because it brought the broadest range of opportunities for her to do different things in the Army. It allowed her to leave the wire too, even though she was a female Soldier.

Being born and raised in New Jersey, Khalifa said she enjoys eating Italian food and sushi.

Approximately 97 percent of all civil affairs personnel are reserve Soldiers, Khalifa

said. The way the Army is structured, the reserve Soldier can bring their civilian job skills to the table when they deploy.

"I've deployed with civil affairs Soldiers, who serve as doctors, city planners, teachers, coaches, engineers, and writers," Khalifa said. "They are able to use their civilian job skills to help develop solutions while deployed."

Khalifa said she had a career as a computer consultant, working for a Fortune 500 company. She said she hasn't been in the corporate world since she enlisted, and is now in Iraq for her second tour. Her first tour in Iraq was in 2004 in the Diyala Province.

It is important to know a country's culture as a civil affairs Soldier, she said. "We tend to be cultural subject matter experts by either speaking the language or understanding different aspects of the culture. I am able to bring that to the table. Many things don't seem foreign to me, such as the certain dishes that they cook."

Khalifa said, "I feel I have a better understanding of the Iraqis because of similarities with a fellow Middle Eastern culture, being the Egyptian culture, which I was exposed to through my father's side of the family."

She said she visited both Egypt and Columbia while growing up. In Columbia, she enjoyed the vibrant Latina culture, the way they celebrate life, the food, and the music.

Egypt was a bit of a contrast, she said, but she did love the family structure, hospitality, and the food there too.

"On some level, I can see similarities, and of course there are some differences," Khalifa said. "Having seen both cultures at a young age has set me up for an easier transition in deploying to different countries with the Army."

She not only speaks English, but Khalifa is familiar with French, Spanish, and Arabic languages.

"Looking back now, it is almost like a natural predecessor to going into civil affairs," Khalifa said. "I feel comfortable working with people of different cultures who may think differently or do things differently to how we do things in America."

Freedom Radio Frequencies



- 107.7 Baghdad
- 107.9 Sinjar
- 105.1 Mosul, Fallujah
- 107.3 Balad, Kirkurk, Tallil, Ar Ramadi
- 93.3 Q-West, Tikrit, Al Asad
- 107.1 Ridgeway
- 102.5 Camp Taji

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Anaconda takes action during string of surprise attacks

by Sgt. Gary A. Witte

Anaconda Times Staff Writer

LSA ANACONDA, Iraq – The injured were scattered behind the building, each covered in blood.

One woman, her broken arm extended in front of her, cried out for help as the Air Force firefighters arrived.

The firefighters, some with bags of medical equipment, began quickly checking each of the four people lying in the sand behind the West Morale, Welfare, and Recreation Center. Then they spotted a fifth victim sprawled against a nearby chainlink fence.

As the first responders dealt with the dead and wounded, a vehicle exploded at the North Entry Control Point, maiming and killing more people.

There was a small arms attack against one of the towers and Security Forces and other units began screening traffic throughout the base.

It was a busy afternoon for leaders here Aug. 24, as the mass casualty exercise piled complications on top of calamity.

Capt. Yancy W. Caruthers, assistant medical plans officer for Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 3rd Corps Support Command, oversaw the portion of the exercise at the West MWR.

“This is as much for the leadership as the first responders, because the leaders need to know where the weaknesses are so they can fix them,” he said.

Caruthers, who is an emergency room nurse in his civilian job, spent more than two hours creating realistic-looking wounds – including burns and an amputation – for the “injured” personnel. He gave instructions on how to act and how medics should treat their injuries.

The idea was to give responders a feel for what it’s like to respond to a real emergency and get them to consider what they should do when the situation is as difficult as possible, he said.

“I want to make them think under pressure,” Caruthers said. “You get chaos ... It’s the medic’s job to manage that.”

Sgt 1st Class Don C. Hammons, acting first sergeant for 864th Adjutant General Company, has had previous experience being a casualty during one of these exercises. He said it helps everyone involved learn to deal with such situations.

“The Army’s mantra is train as you fight,” Hammons said. “So the more realistic we can make it, the more the Soldiers benefit. The more information they retain.”

Tech. Sgt. Chris D. Stafford, fire station captain, 332nd Expeditionary Civil Engineer Squadron, said afterwards that what he saw of the exercise was a success.

“I thought the coordination between all the entities went really well,” he said, noting there were only a few minor communications difficulties. “This was a really good learning environment for all of us to come together.”

Sgt. Miguel A. Garibay, NCOIC at one of the traffic control points, said the exer-



Photo by Sgt. Gary A. Witte

Top Left - A medic treats Petty Officer 3rd Class Michael J. Gawlik, a customs inspector for Naval Customs, for a simulated head injury during the mass casualty exercise Aug. 24. Top right - Firefighters and medics evacuate a casualty from near the West Morale, Welfare, and Recreation Center. Sgt. 1st Class Don C. Hammons, 864th Adjutant General Company, lies on the ground as a simulated fatality. Left - Spc. Alan Rosenthal, a Quick Reaction Force Soldier, runs back to the firing line after doing 10 push-ups. The Soldiers increased their heart rate before performing the live fire exercise. Bottom left - Soldiers from B Battery, 5th Battalion, 113th Field Artillery Regiment conduct a vehicle checkpoint to ensure people have clearance to be on post. Bottom center - Sgt. James Smith, a team leader with the QRF, provides cover as other members of his team tactically move closer to the targets during live-fire stress drills. Bottom right - Sgt. James Smith, a team leader with the QRF, provides cover as other members of his team tactically move closer to the targets during live-fire stress drills.

Photo by Spc. Amanda Solitario



Photo by Sgt. Gary A. Witte



Photo by Spc. Amanda Solitario

by Spc. Amanda J. Solitario

Anaconda Times Staff Writer

LSA ANACONDA, Iraq—In the midst of an attack, reaction time is important. Life and death decisions must be made without hesitation. Anaconda’s Quick Reaction Force carries out that challenge.

The team found themselves at Smith Range participating in a post-wide mass casualty exercise on Aug. 24, testing their response to a threat against Anaconda.

While other servicemembers reacted to small arms fire aimed at a tower, indirect fire on the West Side Morale, Welfare, and Recreation center, and an exploding vehicle at the North Entry Control Point, the QRF countered an infiltration on the perimeter.

“We try to replicate what they might encounter if they actually had to respond to a breach of the wire or a ground attack of some type on the LSAA,” said Maj. Eric Teegerstrom, the squadron executive officer for 1st Squadron, 167th Cavalry, a Nebraska National Guard unit.

The QRF Soldiers were just about to eat lunch when a voice over the radio told them they had a mission, he said. A set of grid coordinates were the only clues to what was happening.

Teegerstrom said they are rarely given a lot of information before they move out. The unit usually has to plan as it goes.

“They have to be able to think on their feet and react quickly to very serious changing situations,” he said.

From the time the initial call came in, until the time they arrived at the range, only 11 minutes had passed, he said.

After the first team made it to the scene, range control officials answered the Soldiers unspoken questions by explaining the scenario. They told the Soldiers what they were experiencing was a battle drill, and they were going to conduct stress-fire training.

As the situation became clear to the teams, the puzzled expressions faded from their faces.

The team split into two groups, one going to the right of the range, the other going to the left. With only a few shots fired down range, the team stood up and moved behind the firing line.

They were then instructed to perform 10 elevated push-ups in full gear. After that, they ran about 15-in-one direction and back, only to start with push-ups again.

Once everyone completed their repetitions, they moved back to the firing line.

The goal was to raise their heart rate and get the adrenaline flowing. Once the body was under stress, they were to work as a team in a live-fire situation, Teegerstrom said.

The exercise resumed with teams shifting from one position to the next, shouting for cover as they moved. Green smoke moved across their line of sight making it difficult to engage the targets, and loud explosions echoed through the air muffling the squad leader’s commands.

Soldiers quickly changed magazines as they expended rounds, and switched between rifles and handguns. At times, Soldiers fumbled in the chaos of the moment to fix weapon’s malfunctions.

“The key is to not let the pressure get to you, and to just do things the way you have been taught from day one,” Pfc. Darryl Schroeder, a driver with the QRF, said afterward.

The most important thing is to communicate, no matter how stressful the situation, Teegerstrom said.

“The success that they have is going to be based almost entirely upon that communication,” he said.

The exercise was a good one for the QRF, said Capt. Robert West, force protection officer for the 35th Area Support Group. They were able to see their strengths and weakness in more than one area.

“This was a good drill for them to look at their staging, call-up, and deployment around the base,” West said.

At the end, each team conducted an after action review to discuss what went well and what they need to work on.

“That was the whole point of the exercise,” Teegerstrom said. “Not just to succeed, but to fail so you know where you need to train to improve.”

Base defense operations are vital to improving the security at Anaconda, he said.

“These exercises all serve a real important purpose in preparation in case something more large scale did happen,” he said.

West said the day was fast-paced and challenging for all those involved. The individuals who put the exercise together did their best to make it as real as possible by using events that have been seen in Iraq

“I hope each of the tenant units and everybody on the post takes their preparations seriously,” Teegerstrom said. “This is still a pretty dangerous place to live and work.”



Photo by Spc. Amanda Solitario

Anaconda welcomes its newest faces, tenant

by Spc. Amanda Solitario

Anaconda Times Staff Writer

LSA ANACONDA, Iraq—For weeks, faces of a foreign nation have been seen marching and drilling down the streets of Anaconda. Today, they are guarding their posts—protecting everyone here.

During a pass and review ceremony on August 19 at the Holt Memorial Stadium, more than 175 personnel with the Ugandan Security Force had one last inspection marking the completion of their training.

The U.S. Department of Defense signed a contract in July with Special Operations Consulting to provide security for many of the areas on this camp, said Fredrick Lynch, commander of the Ugandan security forces and a SOC representative.

SOC is a private company that employs foreign security specialists from Uganda and uses an American staff to supervise, he said.

These Ugandan men and women are taking over various tasks at Anaconda in order to re-

duce some of the extra stress that guard duties place on Soldiers, Lynch said.

“We are relieving Soldiers of the tasks that are probably better done by us, so they can get back and focus on the important things they need to do,” he said.

Lynch said the Ugandan security force will be highly visible, taking over guard positions at the dining facilities, the Morale, Welfare, and Recreation centers, the post exchanges, and the pools, just to name a few.

“We are going to be just about everywhere,” he said. “I don’t think a Soldier can move around on this base in a course of a day and not see a Ugandan somewhere.”

Servicemembers can expect polite and professional attitudes from the security force, said Capt. Robert J. West, LSAA force protection officer with the 35th Area Support Group.

At the same time, they will be firm with enforcing the rules and regulations at each guard post, he said.

Lynch said his group works directly for the military and implements the guidelines that

are put into place.

“We do not make the policies,” he said. “We do not make the rules. We enforce the rules that the military prepares.”

Apparently, they are doing very well with executing the policies and procedures because West is able to see consistency throughout their areas of operation.

In the past, things were not always uniform, because different units had different command philosophies, he said.

The Ugandans are following one set of special orders unique for each duty, West said.

“If you come to the mess hall and you don’t have your ID (identification) card, they are not letting you in,” said Lynch. “The rules are applied across the board without interpretation and stringently.”

West said, doing things like removing sunglasses to check ID cards and clearing weapons before entering a facility is to ensure the safety of everyone on the base.

“The ultimate goal is not to inconvenience,” he said. “The ultimate goal is to protect the places where Soldiers eat, work, and relax.”

West said the Ugandans have been employed to safeguard everyone on Anaconda, and he has extreme confidence in their abilities.

“They are going to do a good job for us,” he said.

The process started months ago in the Republic of Uganda, a country in East Africa, he said. SOC sent a team to scout the area for potential security guards.

Lynch said they looked for those individuals who could pass an English literacy test and were in good physical condition. Additionally, the potential employees had to undergo extensive medical exams.

Of those selected, almost every one is retired from the Ugandan military, West said. Many of them are combat veterans. They are a professional group of individuals with many skills among them, he said. Several were teachers, doctors, and businessmen before coming to Anaconda.

Lynch said they have left their homes and families behind in Uganda in search of a better life for their loved ones. The money they make here far exceeds the salary of those high-paying jobs they once held.

After SOC made their selections, training began. For five weeks, the group experienced an environment similar to basic combat training.

The 11-man U.S. managerial team from SOC led the regimented training. The staff, all prior service, utilized an eight-module training process and ensured the Ugandans absorbed all the information.

SOC instructors taught basic medical knowledge from first aid to weather related injury treatment. They showed the Ugandans threat assessments and the correct way to search personnel. The Ugandans learned how to guard a post and maintain the log book.

The Ugandans drilled on the rules for the use of force and each member had to qualify on the M-4 rifle to U.S. military standards. They spent five days on the range, honing their shooting skills.

They were very motivated to train from the moment their plane landed, West said, adding that the trainees were very eager to learn and did not hesitate to ask questions.

The Ugandans have been screened, selected, and trained specifically for this task, said Lynch. They are well prepared for the mission.

The final ceremony demonstrated the group’s discipline and professionalism as they marched in sync to the beat of drums around the field.

Col. Mark W. Hampton, commander of the 35th Area Support Group, spoke to the security forces and applauded them for their hard work.

They are providing protection for more than 25,000 servicemembers and civilians, he said, adding that Anaconda is a much better place with them here.

“You are the newest citizens of LSA Anaconda,” Hampton said.



The Ugandan security forces march in review during a ceremony at Holt Memorial Stadium Aug. 19. Following the ceremony, they sang three songs in their native language for the crowd.



A leader stands in front of his platoon before their final inspection. The Ugandan security forces have taken over many of the guard duties for Soldiers at Anaconda.



Photos by Sgt. 1st Class Mark Bell

657th Area Support Group's Command Sgt. Maj. Jorge Young uncases the unit colors with Col. Stephen T. Nakono, commander of the 657th ASG, a Hawaii-based Army Reserve unit, during a Transfer of Authority ceremony held Aug. 29, at LSA Anaconda.

657th ASG takes helm of Mayor's Cell

by Sgt. 1st Class Mark Bell

Anaconda Times Editor

LSA ANACONDA, Iraq -- "Aloha and good morning."

With those words Col. Stephen T. Nakano and the 657th Area Support Group took charge of the logistical support area's Mayor's Cell from the Missouri Army National Guard's 35th Area Support Group during a Transfer of Authority ceremony on Aug. 29.

From housing to force protection, Nakano said the Fort Shafter-based unit traded their sunglasses and sandy beaches of Hawaii, for ballistic goggles and the rocks covering nearly every parking location.

"It is an honor for me to stand here today, commanding and representing the 657th Area Support Group as we take our next step into history and fulfill the destiny of this outstanding unit," Nakano said.

The 657th ASG, an Army Reserve unit from the 9th Re-

gional Readiness Command, spent the past eight months training for a mission that each week will have more than 150,000 people using Morale, Welfare, and Recreation facilities, 24,000 bags of laundry washed, 335,000 meals prepared, 600 tons of trash disposed, and 62,000 people riding the 14 local bus routes, according to the Mayor's Cell.

"We have been tirelessly preparing for the mission," he said about force protection and life support on Anaconda.

Nakano said his Soldiers are ready to meet the master planning objectives for Anaconda.

"We will provide for a better future for all of Soldiers, airmen, sailors, Marines, Department of Defense civilians, contractors and host nationals living and working on Anaconda," he said.

Nakano thanked the 35th Area Support Group commander, Col. Mark W. Hampton, for a transition that would lead his unit to success. "Thank you for the warm Missouri hospitality extended to the 'Warriors from the Pacific Rim,'" he said. "Your willingness to share information about the keys to success in maintaining a safe and secure environment has made for a smooth transition between our units."

The 35th ASG spent the past year changing from a division support command to an area support group, Hampton said.

"You then organized to become a garrison command with the unique mission of keeping LSA Anaconda running smoothly and safely," Hampton said to his troops. "We remained flexible, quick to adapt, and respond to the daily challenges of the unit mission."

Hampton said that although his Soldiers aren't on the front lines, they are still making a difference.

"We've helped units be more successful at their own missions by affecting and shaping the environment in which they work," he said.

Nakano closed the ceremony and began his year-long adventure on Anaconda. "Aloha and Maholo," he said.



35th Area Support Group's Command Sgt. Maj. Gary D. Blackorby and Col. Mark Hampton, commander of the 35th ASG, a Missouri National Guard unit, based in Springfield, salute the U.S. Flag during a Transfer of Authority ceremony held Aug. 29.

Firefighters gettin' dirty

photos by **Spc. Alexandra Hemmerly-Brown**

210th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Rescue Air Mobility Squad trains for emergency missions outside Anaconda



Sgt. Jacqueline L. Daniels, from Billings, Mont., a firefighter with the 452nd Ordnance Co. here, uses a hydraulic spreading tool to open the door of an old Chevy truck, Aug. 17.



A traditional firefighter's hat rests waiting to be used during a training exercise Aug. 17.

LSA ANACONDA, Iraq - While most of the firefighters here wear Air Force uniforms, there are a few to be found wearing U.S. Army tapes.

The small, seven-man team that makes up the 452nd Ordnance Company, a Reserve unit based in South Dakota, is a rarity in the Army.

Working closely with Air Force firefighters, the unit labors to control structural, grass, dumpster, electrical, and other types of fires on Anaconda.

Furthermore, the Army firefighters take part in an important mission while in Iraq to recover injured Soldiers in vehicle accidents during convoys.

The Rescue Air Mobility Squad is a team of firefighters who are ready to react to a convoy emergency by helicopter, 24 hours per day.

If a call comes in for assistance, a

RAMS team will load up and fly out to the accident location taking with them only a "basket" full of gear that weighs more than 200 pounds, said Sgt. Aaron Leming, a firefighter in the unit.

The team's mission on site is to get to casualties as quickly as possible and get them out of the disabled vehicles. Casualties may be trapped inside a burning or crushed vehicle, so timeliness is key.

Once on the ground, the firefighters use special tools: manual, electric, and hydraulic equipment, to wrench, rip, and cut their way to a casualty. Sledgehammers, saws, and mechanical spreaders are all part of a firefighter's tool kit.

The unit, along with their Air Force counterparts, train with these tools periodically to become as proficient as possible, and to be ready if a call should come.



Firefighters use special equipment to free people from wrecked vehicles.



Sgt. Lee E. Weis, from Billings, Mont., a firefighter with the 452nd Ordnance Co. here, uses a K-12 saw to cut the hinges off a Humvee door.



(Right) Firefighters of the 452nd Ordnance Co. here, carry their "basket" of extraction tools, weighing over 200 pounds, during a training exercise Aug. 17. (Above) Sgt. Lee E. Weis, from Billings, Mont., a firefighter with the 452nd Ordnance Co. here, swings a sledge hammer to dent the frame of an old Chevy truck, making it easier for his team to cut its roof off.



Movie Schedule

Sustainer
Reel Time
Theater

(schedule is subject to change)

September 6

5 p.m. Garfield: A Tail of Two Kitties
8 p.m. Invincible

September 7

5 p.m. Superman Returns
8 p.m. Invincible

September 8

2 p.m. The Devil Wears Prada
5 p.m. Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest
8 p.m. The Covenant

September 9

11 a.m. Click
2 p.m. Idiocracy
5 p.m. Superman Returns
8 p.m. Idiocracy

Septmeber 10

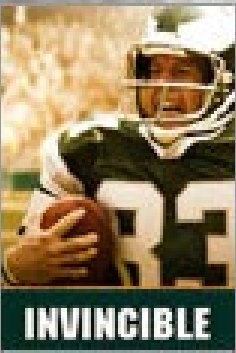
2 p.m. Superman Returns
5 p.m. Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest
8 p.m. Idiocracy

Septmeber 11

5 p.m. The Devil Wears Prada
8 p.m. Idiocracy

September 12

5 p.m. Waist Deep
8 p.m. Idiocracy



Religious Services Schedule

Roman Catholic Mass

Saturday 5 p.m. Tuskegee Chapel
Saturday 8 p.m. Provider Chapel
Sunday 8:30 a.m. Freedom Chapel
Sunday 9 a.m. Tuskegee Chapel
Sunday 11 a.m. Provider Chapel
Sunday 11 a.m. Air Force Hospital
Monday - Friday 7 p.m. Tuskegee
Sacrament of Reconciliation
30 minutes prior to each mass

Church of Christ

Sunday 2 p.m.. Tuskegee Chapel
Islamic Prayer

Friday 12:30 p.m. Provider Chapel
Samoan Congregational Service

Sunday 4 p.m. Provider Chapel
Latter Day Saints

Sunday 1 p.m. Provider Chapel
Sunday 4 p.m. Freedom Chapel
Sunday 7 p.m. Tuskegee Chapel

Friday Shabbat Service

Friday 7 p.m. Tuskegee Chapel
Eastern Orthodox Prayer Service

Sunday 3:30 p.m. Tuskegee Chapel
Protestant-Gospel

Sunday 10 a.m. Sustainer Indoor Theater
Sunday 11:30 a.m. Freedom Chapel
Sunday 2 p.m. Air Force Hospital Chapel

Sunday 7 p.m. Provider Chapel

Protestant Praise and Worship

Sunday 9 a.m. MWR East Building
Sunday 9 a.m. Eden Chapel
Sunday 7 p.m. Freedom Chapel
Sunday 7:30 p.m. Eden Chapel
Wednesday 7 p.m. Freedom Chapel

Protestant-Contemporary

Sunday 11 a.m. Town Hall

Protestant-Traditional

Sunday 9:30 a.m. Air Force Hospital Chapel
Sunday 9:30 a.m. Provider Chapel
Sunday 10 a.m. Freedom Chapel
Sunday 5 p.m. Tuskegee Chapel
Sunday 7:30 p.m. Air Force Hospital Chapel
Protestant-Praise and Worship
Sunday 9:30 a.m. Sustainer Indoor Theater
Sunday 9:30 a.m. DFAC Four Overflow Room

Sunday 5:30 p.m. Tuskegee Chapel

Non-Denominational

Sunday 9 a.m. Signal Chapel
Non-Denominational Spanish
Sunday 2 p.m. Freedom Chapel
Latter Day Saints

Sunday 1 p.m.. Provider Chapel
Sunday 4 p.m.. Freedom Chapel
Sunday 7 p.m.. Tuskegee Chapel

Religious schedule subject to change

Movie Synopsis for Sept. 6-12

Click

PG-13, language, crude and sexual humor, drug references 98 min

A workaholic architect comes across a universal remote that allows him to perform TiVo-like functions on his life, such as pausing events or fast-forwarding over them. When the remote begins creating its own memory and choosing what to fast-forward over, the man sees how much of his personal life has passed him by and realizes the importance of spending more time with his family.

Garfield: A Tale of Two Kitties

PG, off-color elements, 80 min

When Garfield follows his owner, Jon Arbuckle, to England, the U.K. may never recover, as Garfield is mistaken for a look-alike, regal cat who has inherited a castle. Garfield savors the royal treatment afforded by his loyal four-legged subjects, but his reign is in jeopardy. The nefarious Lord Dargis is determined to do away with Garfield, so he can turn the castle into a resort. Garfield's bigger, better, more purr-fect world is soon turned upside down in this tale of two kitties.

Pirates of the Caribbean 2

PG-13, adventure violence 145 min

Once again thrown into the world of the supernatural, Captain Jack Sparrow finds out that he owes a blood debt to the legendary Davey Jones, Captain of the ghostly Flying Dutchman. With time running out, Jack must find a way out of his debt or else be doomed to eternal damnation and servitude in the afterlife. And as if this weren't enough, the Captain's problems manage to wreck the wedding plans of a certain Will Turner and Elizabeth Swann, who are forced to join Jack on yet another misadventure.

Invincible

PG, sports action, mild language, 104 min

When the coach of Vince Papale's beloved hometown football team hosted an unprecedented open tryout, the public consensus was that it was a waste of time - no one good enough to play professional football was going to be found this way. Certainly no one like Papale - a down-on-his-luck, 30 year old, substitute teacher and part-time bartender who never even played college football. But against these odds, Papale made the team and soon found himself living every fan's fantasy - moving from his cheap seats in the upper deck to standing on the field as a professional football player.

Superman Returns

PG-13, action violence, 153 min

Following a mysterious absence of several years, the Man of Steel, Superman, comes back to Earth-- but things have changed. While an old enemy plots to render him powerless once and for all, Superman faces the heartbreaking realization that the woman he loves, Lois Lane, has moved on with her life. Or has she? Superman's bittersweet return challenges him to bridge the distance between them while finding a place in a society that has learned to survive without him.

Idiocracy

R, language, sex-related humor, 85 min

Private Joe Bowers, the definition of "average American", is selected by the Pentagon to be the guinea pig for a top-secret hibernation program, set 1,000 years in the future. He discovers a society so incredibly dumbed-down that he's easily the most intelligent person alive.

Remembering the fallen: Firefighter serves as Soldier

by Sgt. Gary A. Witte

Anaconda Times Staff Writer

LSA ANACONDA, Iraq – He was supposed to be off from his job as a New York City firefighter that Tuesday morning, but Sgt. Sean G. Cummins didn't wait to be called when disaster struck.

When he saw the World Trade Center towers hit by the airplanes he immediately went to the station and joined other firefighters going to the site, Cummins said. They threw as much equipment as they could in pickup trucks and arrived at the scene just five minutes after the second tower collapsed.

"It was just chaos," he said. "You couldn't see your hand in front of your face."

The attacks happened during the shift change. Two of the firefighters who died were working on behalf of Cummins, who was taking a required training class the night before and was scheduled to drive his mother to the airport that day.

Cummins didn't need to think to remember the names of his replacements – Firefighters Pete Carroll and Steve Siller.

He was close to both men, regularly switching shifts with Carroll. He said they found Carroll, but never recovered Siller's body.

"They had nine kids between them," he said.

Cummins, a Reserve Soldier, currently serves with the 404th Civil Affairs Battalion in Iraq. He said many

New York firefighters and police officers joined or rejoined the military after the city recovered.

"This feels like my penance to come here," he said of the Army. "These guys give up their life. The least I can do is give up a year."

Born and raised in Dublin, Ireland, Cummins said he wanted to join the American military ever since he was a child, but had to have his green card first. He started visiting America in the summer of 1983, finished an apprenticeship in carpentry, and then got his visa six years later.

"The day I got my green card, I went to the recruiting station," Cummins said.

He was working and had just gotten married, so he joined the Naval Reserve, working construction as a Seabee. The unit was shut down in 1993, so he switched to the Army Reserve and later, the National Guard, attending Infantry and Airborne school.

In 1996, he changed his civilian career and became a firefighter.

"I wanted a job with a bit of excitement with it," he said.

After four years on the job, Cummins was scheduled to join the city's special operations unit, Rescue One, on Sept. 23, 2001. The night before the terrorist attacks, he was taking a night diving course required for the unit.

The morning started off beautifully with clear skies he said. Before the day was out, he would see military jets flying across the city and he would be in rubble searching for sur-

vivors. Among the debris, twenty floors worth of building was compacted into the height of one floor level, he said.

"Me being small, it was my job to crawl down in the holes looking for people," Cummins said.

While police and firefighters were lauded for their efforts, Cummins said there were many people who deserve to be recognized.

More civilians could have survived if they had just walked out of the buildings, he said. Instead, many stayed to help the injured, the elderly and the disabled.

"So many people stayed back and helped other people," Cummins said. "There were a lot of heroics that day. Just regular people."

As the evening started, one man showed up at the site and started handing out peanut butter and jelly sandwiches to emergency workers who had not eaten all day, he said.

Cummins said he has no intention of viewing the recently released movie "World Trade Center," although he knows that members of



Photo by Pfc. Paul J. Harris
Sgt. Sean G. Cummins serves with the 404th Civil Affairs Battalion helping the Iraqi people.

his unit served as consultants to the filmmakers.

"I was there," he said. "I don't need to see it."

In 1998, Cummins had served with the Air Force as a firefighter, but then rejoined the Army in order to come to Iraq this year.

His history as a rescuer is never far away.

In his Humvee, he carries a length of steel about four feet long known

as a Halligan Tool, presented to him by his unit before he left. The instrument is used to pry people from their vehicles and Cummins said he keeps it around in case he has to get someone out of a vehicle quickly.

In June, the New York Fire Department presented his family with an award he had earned before he left on deployment – the Dennis Lane Memorial Medal. Cummins had climbed an outside fire escape to pull an elderly woman out of the fifth floor of a burning building.

Years ago, Cummins even had to use his CPR skills at home when one of his infant daughters stopped breathing.

His girls are both 9 years old now and he has a son who just turned 12 last month.

"I'd rather stay here longer if that means they don't have to come over here," he said.

Cummins earned his American citizenship in 1993. He said many natural-born citizens take their country and the rights it provides for granted.

"You don't realize what you have until you fight for it," he said, noting that he doesn't think there's any better way to come to America than to join its military. "That proves you want to be an American."

Sept. 11 movie provokes strong response among servicemembers

by Sgt. Gary A. Witte

Anaconda Times Staff Writer

LSA ANACONDA, Iraq - The audience was silent as the closing titles showed the number of people killed at the World Trade Center. Few in the crowd said anything even when they stood up and walked out as the credits rolled.

The "World Trade Center" movie, which premiered here last month, proved to be an emotional experience for many who saw its portrayal of the events of Sept. 11, 2001.

Sgt. 1st Class Vanessa L. Cudjoe, of Clio, S.C., and Sgt. 1st Class Carmen D. Baldrich, of Lorain, Ohio, said the movie made them both cry.

"The person behind us was crying, too," Cudjoe said.

The movie tells the true story of Port Authority Police officers who survived the initial collapse of the buildings, only to find themselves struggling for their lives while trapped in the rubble.

Baldrich, a senior movement NCO with the 609th Movement Control Team, said she and Cudjoe, who has the same job with the 626th MCT, discussed how they would support each other in a similar situation.

"It showed how strong human beings can be and not even know it," Baldrich said.

The movie previously faced controversy from those who were concerned its director, Oliver Stone, would use it to make political points. Those servicemembers interviewed after seeing the film were pleased that he didn't.

"He didn't do it ... political," said Sgt. Keith Thomas,

logistics node officer for the 172nd Striker Brigade. "He just told the story of those two guys."

Others felt a movie about the terrorist attacks shouldn't be made yet.

Sgt. D'Angelo Foster, a welding NCOIC with 1st Brigade, 68th Combined Arms Battalion, said before attending the show he felt the film came too soon, since the U.S. military still has a job to do in the Middle East.

"We're still here," Foster said. "We still haven't got (Osama) Bin Ladin."

Senior Airman Chris N. Sutton, 332nd Expeditionary Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, of Bethlehem, Pa., said it was a hard movie to watch because of the ordeal the officers went through.

"I wasn't sure if I wanted to see it or not," Sutton said. "(But) it makes you realize why we're here."

The movie also shows the torment faced by the officers' families as they attempted to find out if they had been killed in the attacks.

Cudjoe and Baldrich said military families back home go through a similar stress worrying about their servicemembers here in Iraq.

"The families go through the same thing we go through," Baldrich said. "They just don't put on uniforms."

Senior Airman Blake E. McKinney, a structuralist with the 332nd Civil Engineering Squadron, said he was a sophomore in high school when the Sept. 11 attacks happened.

"It was probably one of the reasons I joined the military in the first place," he said. "You want to do something to make your country more secure."

McKinney said many of his fellow Servicemembers felt ambivalent about the movie coming out.

"I know a lot don't want to see a 9-11 movie right now," he said. "It hits too close to home for some of them."



Photo by Sgt. Gary A. Witte
Servicemembers examine the lobby poster for the "World Trade Center".



Photos by Sgt. Kevin McSwain

Local Iraqi police open up boxes containing new protective vests that were distributed by 40th CSG during a recent visit to Baqubah.

40th CSG delivers protective vests to Iraqi Police in Baqubah

by Sgt. Kevin McSwain

Anaconda Times Staff Writer

BAQUBAH, Iraq - Iraqi police officers now have another layer of defense thanks to the recent donation of 2,000 protective vests by a nonprofit group in the United States.

The new vests, many of which were presented during an Aug. 15 ceremony here, were delivered through the efforts of an international shipping company and the U.S. Army.

When Lt. Col. Jodee Kautzman, intelligence and operations officer in charge at the 40th Corps Support Group, was mobilized, she had a plan that not only included completing her mission, but also have an impact in the lives of the Iraqi people.

"When I received my mobilization order, I had a 5-month-old baby and a 3 year old and I promised them that I wasn't going to come to Iraq. I just do my time ... I was going to make a difference," she said.

And with one email from the Brotherhood of the Badge founder Mike Harris, she did. The organization, founded in 2003, collects used police gear from all over the United States and sends it to Iraq to help the national police force.

"In past operations, the Brotherhood of the Badge would send the donated equipment by ship, which would take months, to Kuwait and then convoy it to where it needed to go," she said.

This system was cost effective because most of the gear was shipped free through boating companies that would sail past Iraq. The difficulty was that the ships had to have available space for the equipment which meant everything arrived at different times, Kautzman said.

Also, since the equipment would take so long to arrive, the points of contact that were



Soldiers work with local community leaders during a recent protective vest distribution in Baqubah.

established earlier in the process would be gone and the equipment would sit at the docks until it could be sorted out.

"It was like reinventing the wheel since 2004 ... by the time the equipment arrives, the original point of contact is gone," Kautzman said with a frown. "I am trying to forge an enduring path for shipment of donated equipment."

Mike Harris called his local congressman, Rep. George Radanovich, who made some calls to DHL asking for help with the shipping charge, said Kautzman.

The Brotherhood of the Badge only had to pay \$6,000 of the \$197,000 to ship the equipment to New York. DHL paid the overseas shipping to Balad, she said.

"The donation from DHL made this delivery possible," said Kautzman. "The Brotherhood of the Badge had already purchased the vests, which were worth approximately \$2.5

million, and did not want to waste money they could use to purchase more equipment on shipping costs."

Once the vests arrived, Kautzman personally sorted the shipment of vests by size and location. About 200 vests will be sent to Baghdad, she said. And the remainder will be split between Camp Speicher and Forward Operating Base Warhorse.

On Aug. 15, Kautzman traveled to Camp Speicher to witness the presentation of the vests to the Iraqi police officers of Baqubah.

The police officers in Fresno, Calif., developed a bond with the police force of Baqubah through the training program and they chose the city as one of the recipients of the first private donation of its kind, said Kautzman.

"My husband worked with Mike Harris when he was in Baqubah during Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003, she said. Brotherhood of the Badge shipped used police equipment to his military police unit."

Some of the Soldiers with the 649th Military Police Company began to talk to former Diyala Chief of Police, Gen. Walled Khaled Abed Al-Salaam, and told him about Harris. The chief wrote a letter to Harris asking for help.

"This donation will help in their fight



Lt. Col. Jodee Kautzman unloads protective vests in Baqubah during a recent visit.

against terrorists," said Lt. Col. William Benson, company commander of the Police Transition Team of the 3rd Brigade, 4th Infantry Division.

"Since 2003, the police force has been training on how to secure an area and become proficient with their weapons," Benson said. "Now they are beginning to learn the investigation phase of police work."

The 978th Military Police Company, a Police Transition Company, provided an escort to the police station. "We train the Iraqi police in basic skills needed to properly perform their duties," said Sgt. Scotty Roach, a gunner with the PTT based on FOB Warhorse.

"We train them in combat lifesaver classes, weapons familiarization and any other skills we feel they need training in," he said while pulling security at the Iraqi police station.

Gen. Ghassan A Al-Bawy, Iraqi Chief of Police for the Diyala Province, said his police force was about to begin more intense training and with the arrival of new vests, he felt his officers will be able to have a better training experience.

"We have over 10,000 officers," Al-Bawy said through his interpreter. "And we will make sure the new vests are inventoried and distributed to the officers that need them the most."

Along with the MP training, the Iraqi police are trained by the Iraqi Police Liaison Officers, a group of privately contracted police officers from all over the United States.

Derek France, the administrative officer for IPLO, joked that the Iraqi police are getting better equipment than they have.

"As fellow police officers, we want to give them the best training and equipment possible," he said.