

AnacondaTimes

JULY 25, 2007

PROUDLY SERVING LSA ANACONDA



Web Image

F-16 crashes

An F-16 crashes during take-off in support of coalition ground forces.

Page 5



Photo by Staff Sgt. Chris A. Durney

Engineers fill blast holes

National Guard unit patches potholes to keep insurgents from placing IEDs on roads.

Page 8



Web Image

Winning war against IEDs

Soldiers create device to protect against IEDs on combat logistics patrol.

Page 10



Photo by Spc. Jennifer L. Sierra

Sgt. Steven P. Morin, education center noncommissioned officer in charge, 15th Brigade Troops Battalion, Camp Taji, engages his target during the weapons qualification portion of the noncommissioned officer of the year board here, July 13. Morin was named as this year's 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) NCO of the year July 14.

Sustainment command selects top Soldiers for year

by Spc. Jennifer L. Sierra

Anaconda Times staff

LSA ANACONDA, Iraq — Looking one sergeant major in the eye can be intimidating enough. Soldiers competing for the noncommissioned officer and Soldier of the year board had to answer to six on July 14, here.

Sgt. Steven P. Morin, education center noncommissioned officer in charge, A Company, 15th Brigade Troops Battalion, Camp Taji, was named this year's 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) NCO of the year.

Spc. Caleb Vanvoorhis, infantryman, B Company, 1st

Battalion, 16th Infantry Regiment, 1st Infantry Division here, was named this year's 13th SC(E) Soldier of the year.

The competition was split between two days. Day one consisted of two events the Army Physical Fitness Test and weapons qualification range.

"Running the track was the hardest," said Morin. "It was more of a psychological barrier than it was physical."

Day two consisted of a board where Soldiers answered approximately 24 questions per sergeant major. Morin said it was tough. "It seemed more like an interrogation. At times,

it felt personal," he said. Vanvoorhis said the sergeant majors tried to trick him but they couldn't catch him off his game.

Both Soldiers said they studied hard for the board and had great support from their leaders.

Morin said he studied every day with his platoon sergeant for at least an hour and that she, "pushed me to my limits."

"It (winning) demonstrates the leadership that I have received through my senior NCOs," he said.

Vanvoorhis said he prepared himself "mentally, did relaxation exercises, studied,

read current events; I practiced board procedure, proper wear of the uniform, weapons maintenance, and practiced qualifying... I'm here because I had a good squad leader to help me out."

He also said, "Winning brings credit on my unit and it motivates me to be the best Soldier I can be."

Each Soldier had a senior NCO as a sponsor. Sgt. 1st Class Olivia Brown, headquarters platoon sergeant, A Company, 15th BTB, was Morin's sponsor and Sgt. 1st Class Ryan McLane, platoon sergeant, B Company, 1/16 Infantry, 1st ID, was Vanvoorhis'

See SOY, Page 6



Photo by Spc. Karly Cooper

15th SB Command Sgt. Maj. Mark Joseph (left) and 15th SB Commander Col. Aundre Piggee (right) presents 13th SC(E) Command Sgt. Maj. Terry Fountain (middle) with a plaque of appreciation during Fountain’s visit to Camp Taji on July 7.

13th SC(E) CSM visits Taji

by Spc. Karly Cooper

15th SB, Public Affairs

CAMP TAJI, Iraq — Command Sgt. Maj. Terry Fountain with the 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), took time to visit the 15th Sustainment Brigade July 7.

Fifteenth SB Commander Col. Aundre Piggee and Command Sgt. Maj. Mark Joseph presented Fountain with a ‘Wagonmaster’ ball cap and plaque of appreciation.

“We are proud to make Command Sgt. Maj. Fountain an official ‘Wagonmaster’ member,” said Piggee.

The 15th SB’s time in country was recently extended. Fountain took the opportunity to remind the 15th leadership that no command wants to leave without its people.

“Due to the extension, we, the 13th SC(E), wish that we could take you with us,” said Fountain.



Photo by Spc. Karly Cooper

Thirteenth SC(E) Command Sgt. Maj. Terry Fountain (left) visited the 15th SB July 7. Col. Aundre Piggee (right), the 15th SB commander, gave Fountain a “Wagonmaster” ball cap in appreciation for his support.

Images from “outside the wire”



Navy Photo by MC2(DSW/SW) Christopher Perez

Coalition Forces and Iraqi Army return enemy fire at a check point located near the Salt River canal in the Wassit Province.



Navy Photo by MC2(DSW/SW) Christopher Perez

(Above) A Coalition Forces member loads his ammunition in order to return enemy fire at a check point located near the Salt River canal in the Wassit Province.

ANACONDA TIMES

13th SC(E) Commanding General, Brig. Gen. Michael J. Terry

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Anaconda Times is a command information newspaper in accordance with Army Regulation 360-1.

Anaconda Times is published weekly by the Stars and Stripes central office, with a circulation of 5,000 papers.

The Public Affairs Office is located on New Jersey Ave. building 4136, DSN 318-433-2154. Anaconda Times, HHC 13th SC(E), APO AE 09391. Web site at www.dvidshub.net. Contact the Anaconda Times staff at: anaconda.times@iraq.centcom.mil

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3rd Sustainment Brigade
82nd Sustainment Brigade
507th Corps Support Group
15th Sustainment Brigade
CJSOTF-AP

News update: developments throughout Iraq



Photo by Spc. Olanrewaju Akinwunmi

An Iraqi army soldier and a Soldier with Company B, 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division out of Fort Stewart, Ga., clear a building in Arab Jabour, Iraq, during Operation Marne Torch. This is a joint sweeping operation through Arab Jabour as part of an effort to halt the movement of weapons and explosives into the capital.

Two captured during Operation Geronimo Strike III

Multi-National Division – Center PAO

KALSU, Iraq — Paratroopers from Strike Force Geronimo detained two suspected Al Qaeda insurgents during an air assault and raid July 10 northwest of Iskandariyah.

Paratroopers from Company A, 3rd Battalion, 509th Airborne, 4th Brigade Combat Team (Airborne), 25th Infantry Division conducted Operation Geronimo Strike III in order to capture members of an Al Qaeda cell wanted in connection with the kidnapping of three American Soldiers and other attacks against Iraqi and Coalition Forces.

“Tonight, we conducted an air assault into the Jurf As Sukr area looking for two high level targets, some of the guys involved in the missing Soldiers incident,” said Capt. Matthew Gregory, commander of Co. A and a Charlotte, N.C. native. “This is an area that coalition forces had not been to in a little while. This shows them we have the ability to get in places they thought they were safe

and get them where they live.”

In addition to capturing the cell members, the operation netted two AK-47 assault rifles, eight fully loaded maga-

zines, two hand grenades and a ski mask.

“Going after the worst of the worst is what Operation Geronimo Strike was designed to do,” said 1st Lt. John Lafferty, a platoon leader with Co. A, from Valdese, N.C. “There are guys who are on the fence, and when they hear we’re capturing their leadership, we have a better chance of stabilizing the government and legitimizing the security forces here.”

The insurgents are being held for further questioning.

The weapons and ammunition was confiscated for use in the investigation.

National Iraqi concern for Amerli village

Multi-National Division – North PAO

AMERLI, Iraq — A prominent parliament member provided condolences on behalf of the central government of Iraq during a visit Wednesday to the village of Amerli, the site of a catastrophic truck bomb reported to have killed nearly 150 civilians and wounded some 250 more.

Sheikh Mohammed Taqi al-Mowla arrived with a U.S. coalition forces escort from Baghdad to survey the rubble remains of several houses and the main market in Amerli, all destroyed by the July 7 attack.

“Today we bear witness to the terrible operation of the [terrorists], who have no mercy for anyone in Iraq, but kill the innocent,” said Al-Mowla in an interview with local Iraqi media. “Here now, we have come on behalf of [President Jalal Talabani], his deputy, the religious leaders, and [Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki] to console the victims’ families during their suffering.”

Al-Mowla’s presence marks the second visit by a senior Iraqi official in as many days. The day prior, another member of parliament, Abbas al-Bayati visited the village.

Amerli has become a rallying point for the Iraqi government and neighboring Turkey to demonstrate national and international concern with combined ef-

forts towards humanitarian relief and a condemnation of the violence.

Turkey sent two air ambulances to transport more than 20 victims to a military medical facility in Ankara one day after the blast.

Al-Mowla called for local and national unity to denounce the terrorism. “We want to raise the voices of the victims and communicate their suffering to all the world,” he said. He urged efforts against foreign sponsored terrorism in Iraq, but did not specify any particular government or country.

Security for the village and surrounding area is a partnership between the local police, Iraqi army and coalition forces. Maj. Gen. Anwar Hama Amin, commander of the 2nd Brigade, 4th Iraqi Army Division escorted al-Mowla through the center of Amerli to a local mosque for mid-day prayer.

Anwar echoed the outpour of support from both the military and government, to include assistance from the governor of Salah Ad Din province, coalition forces, and additional support from the Kurdistan Regional Government.

Soldiers from the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division joined with Iraqi police to assist with security during al-Mowla’s visit and are working with local community leaders for additional aid to rebuild the area.

Iraqi Army and U.S. Special Operations Forces kill insurgent cell commander

CJSOTF-AP

BAGHDAD — Iraqi Army and U.S. Special Operation Forces killed a rogue Jaysh Al-Mahdi (JAM) Special Group cell commander July 11 during an intelligence driven operation in eastern Baghdad.

Iraqi Army and U.S. Operations Special Forces entered the residence to detain Said Jaffer for questioning. When the insurgent com-

mander brandished a pistol, the team verbally instructed him in Arabic to drop his weapon. However, Jaffer refused to comply and the team engaged the insurgent with well-aimed and proportional fire.

The high-level JAM leader has a history of terrorizing the New Baghdad area by extorting money, kidnapping and carrying out extra-judicial killings on innocent citizens, who resisted his criminal influence in their neighbor-

hoods.

Intelligence shows a clear link to his group partnering with outside Persian extremists, whose goal is to destroy the legitimate government of Iraq and create instability in the region.

Coalition Forces served as advisors during the operations.

No Iraqi or Coalition Forces members were injured during the operation.

Iraqi Army and U.S. Special Forces capture Al Qaeda emir

CJSOTF-AP

BALAD, Iraq — Elements of the Iraqi Army 2nd Division, with U.S. Special Forces as advisors, captured the alleged emir of Qayyarah for the Al Qaeda affiliated Islamic State of Iraq during an intelligence driven operation June 15 in Qayyarah.

During the operation, Iraqi Army and U.S. Special Forces also detained three other individuals at

the residence and recovered terrorist propaganda, passports and Korean currency.

The capture of this individual will disrupt terrorist networks operating in eastern Ninewa Province.

The individual has high level contacts in the Al Qaeda network, cells for foreign fighters and improvised explosive devices.

No Iraqi or U.S. Special Forces soldiers were injured in the operation.

Combat Stress Control

113th Medical Company (CSC)

433-2402

Individual counseling by appointment or walk-in

Command referrals

Services for combat and operationally stressed soldiers

RELAXATION TECHNIQUES

MONDAY TO SATURDAY

3:30 TO 4 P.M.

STRESS MANAGEMENT

MONDAY AND THURSDAY

10 TO 11 A.M.

HOME FRONT ISSUES

MONDAY AND THURSDAY

5 TO 6 P.M.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

WEDNESDAY AND SATURDAY

11 A.M. TO NOON

ANGER MANAGEMENT

TUESDAY AND FRIDAY

11 A.M. TO NOON

ANXIETY AWARENESS

WEDNESDAY

3 TO 3:30 P.M.

SATURDAY

10:30 TO 11 A.M.

SLEEP HYGIENE

MONDAY AND THURSDAY

6 TO 6:30 P.M.

GOAL SETTING

MONDAY AND THURSDAY

11 A.M. TO NOON

DEPRESSION AWARENESS

WEDNESDAY

2 TO 3 P.M.

SATURDAY

10 TO 10:30 A.M.

COMMUNICATION SKILLS

TUESDAY AND FRIDAY

10 TO 11 A.M.

RELATIONSHIP SKILLS

WEDNESDAY

9 TO 11 A.M.

for more information,
email:

melissa.kale@us.army.mil

433-2402

Tattoo ceremony honors fallen Soldiers

by Pfc. Rebekah Yokel

1st BCT, 82nd Airborne Division

CAMP ADDER, Iraq — Servicemembers based on Camp Adder gathered at Memorial Hall for the Tattoo Warrior Memorial Wall dedication ceremony to commemorate the loss of fellow Soldiers July 6. The service was held in honor of Sgt. Brandon L. Wallace, Sgt. Joshua A. Schmit, and Sgt. Jason A. Schumann.

The Tattoo Memorial ceremony originated from the Großer Zapfenstreich (literally translated “Grand Tattoo” or “Grand Taps”). The word Zapfenstreich (“strike the tap”) is similar to the Dutch “tap toe”, from which the English word “tattoo” comes from.

It features troops presenting arms, a prayer, and a military song.

Command Sgt. Maj. Dwight H. Williams opened with a welcoming and thanks to everyone in attendance.

Troops stood at present arms to pay respect to the flag as Ursula Dickerson sang “The Star-Spangled Banner.” Staff Sgt. Charles J. Robinson led everyone in a prayer.

“Greater love has no one than this, that he would lay down his life for his friends,” Robinson said, as he quoted the fitting words from John 15:13.

When the prayer was finished and everybody took their seats, Williams began the ceremony.

“Today we gather as a team,



Photo by Pfc. Rebekah Yokel

Capt. Edward J. Minor, 519th Signal Company commander, plays “Taps” on the bugle during the Tattoo Warrior Memorial Wall Dedication ceremony.

as a unit of one to honor, to pay respects, and to acknowledge the debt that we owe to these great men and women,” he said.

Williams continued by giving

the history of the Memorial Wall.

The Camp Adder Memorial Wall was designed and built by the enlisted Soldiers and noncommissioned officers of

“Today we gather as a team, as a unit of one to honor, to pay respects, and to acknowledge the debt that we owe to these great men and women.”

Staff Sgt. Charles J. Robinson
260th CSB

Camp Adder and dedicated in December 2005.

It serves as a memorial to the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, and civilians of Camp Adder who paid the ultimate sacrifice.

1st Sgt. James H. Glenn and 1st Sgt. Lynda L. Aul paid their respects as they revealed newly mounted plaques engraved with the names of the fallen Soldiers.

The Camp Adder MEDEVAC helicopters flew overhead just before the 21-gun salute given by Soldiers of 260th Corps Support Battalion and Capt. Edward J. Minor, 519th Signal Company commander, played “Taps” on the bugle.

“As of 6 July 2007, we have permanently affixed 72 Soldiers’ names upon this wall in their memory, that we shall never forget the price that they have paid,” said Williams. “These Soldiers loved America, they revered freedom, so they sacrificed their own so that we may be free.”

Son joins Army, continues military family tradition

by Spc. Chris McCann

2nd BCT, 10th Mtn. Div.

CAMP STRIKER, Iraq — Their mocking and sparring in the dining facility is sometimes fierce, but the love between them is apparent.

It’s not the bond between Soldiers that’s forged in the heat of combat — it’s rarer, here in Iraq. First Sgt. Ricardo Riostirado and Pvt. Bryan Rios are father and son, and lucky enough to be working practically next door to each other, although in different units.

Riostirado, a native of Humacao, Puerto Rico, who serves with 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry) out of Fort Drum, N.Y. His son, Bryan, works with Troop D, 3rd Squadron, 17th Cavalry Regiment, 10th Aviation Brigade, also out of Fort Drum.

The Army wasn’t what Riostirado wanted for his middle child. His eldest daughter is in college, and his youngest is only 3.

“He enlisted while I was at the National Training Center,” he said. The 2nd BCT spent six weeks at the Fort Irwin, Calif., facility in March and April 2005. When Riostirado got back, his wife said that Bryan had something to tell him.

It didn’t take any words at all — he just slid the pink copies of his contract across the table.

“I thought he’d just done the first steps,” Riostirado said. “But he’d done it all, even had a date to ship out, raised his hand in front of the flag.”

Riostirado was less than pleased, he said, because military service, especially in wartime, can be tough on a Soldier.

“After 15 years of seeing me busting my butt, I know he knew better than to follow along — but he did, all the way to Iraq,” he said, laughing. He admitted, though, that he’s extremely proud of his son.

“I didn’t want to get stuck in (my hometown) Sandy Creek, N.Y., looking for opportunities,” Bryan said. “I wanted to do

something like helicopter maintenance. ... I already knew about the Army, pretty much knew what to expect, and I knew that if I was lost and needed help, I had someone who would know.”

His father serving as a first sergeant with the 2nd Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 2nd BCT, at the time of his enlistment didn’t hurt matters, he said; Riostirado helped get Bryan assigned to Fort Drum. Of course, he takes flak for it as well.

“They tease me — I started getting mail here right away, because he gave me the address right away,” Bryan said. “And people say ‘Oh, you were home-schooled for (advanced individual training).’ But it’s all in fun.”

Riostirado is scheduled to return to the United States in November; Bryan’s unit just arrived in Iraq. Their tours will overlap by about four months, so the 15-month deployments won’t be as long a separation as most Soldiers and their parents face.

F-16CJ crashes during takeoff, pilot ejects safely

by Master Sgt. Steve Horton

332nd AEW Public Affairs

BALAD AIR BASE, Iraq — A U.S. Air Force F-16CJ Fighting Falcon Block 50 assigned to the 332nd Air Expeditionary Wing's 13th Expeditionary Fighter Squadron here, crashed during takeoff July 15.

The pilot ejected safely and was transported to the Air Force Theater Hospital, evaluated, and released. He was taking off on a mission to provide coalition ground forces fighting anti-Iraqi forces with close-air support, including real-time reconnaissance and armed overwatch. Other coalition aircraft already airborne covered the assigned mission.

The aircraft crashed near the runway and the resulting fire was extinguished by Air Force firefighters from the 332nd Expeditionary Civil Engineer Squadron and Army firefighters from the 60th Ordnance Detachment, 1034th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion.

"What we do is inherently dangerous and we train our Airmen to respond to this kind of incident," said Brig. Gen. Burton Field, 332nd AEW commander.

"When something like this happens, you really see every-



Photo by Airman 1st Class Andrew Dumboski

Air Force file photo: F-16CJ Fighting Falcon Block 50. The aircraft was photographed after being refueled by a KC-135 during Red Flag 06-2 about 100 miles northeast of Nellis Air Force Base, Nev in August 2006.

one come together as a cohesive team to assess and control the situation.

"The men and women here are highly trained professionals prepared to accomplish the

mission in a variety of conditions and circumstances," he said.

Aircraft from the 332nd AEW provide close air support to coalition forces around

the clock, saving American and Iraqi lives, and helping in Iraq's transition to democracy.

The 332nd ECES explosive ordnance disposal unit will

clear the crash site of any munitions and an investigation into the cause of the crash has been started. Accident investigations typically last a month or longer.

Worship services

PROTESTANT – TRADITIONAL

Sunday 0930 Air Force Hospital Chapel
0930 Provider Chapel
1000 Freedom Chapel (West Side)
1700 Tuskegee Chapel (H-6)
1930 Air Force Hospital Chapel

PROTESTANT – GOSPEL

Sunday 1100 MWR East Building
1130 Freedom Chapel (West Side)
1400 Air Force Hospital
1900 Provider Chapel

PROTESTANT – PRAISE & WORSHIP

Sunday 0900 MWR East Building
0900 Eden Chapel
1900 Freedom Chapel (West Side)
1930 Eden Chapel

PROTESTANT – SAMOAN CONGREGATIONAL

Sunday 1600 Provider Chapel

PROTESTANT – CONTEMPORARY

Sunday 1000 Town Hall (H-6)
Wednesday 2000 Tuskegee Chapel (H-6)

NON-DENOMINATIONAL

Sunday 0900 Signal Chapel

NON-DENOMINATIONAL SPANISH

Sunday 1400 Freedom Chapel (West Side)

LATTER DAY SAINTS (LDS)

Sunday 1300 Provider Chapel
1600 Freedom Chapel (West Side)
1900 Tuskegee Chapel (H-6)

ROMAN CATHOLIC MASS

(Sacrament of Reconciliation 30 min prior to Mass)

Saturday 1700 Tuskegee Chapel (H-6)
2000 Provider Chapel

Sunday 0830 Freedom Chapel (West Side)

0900 Tuskegee Chapel (H-6)

1100 Provider Chapel

1100 Air Force Hospital Chapel

Mon-Fri 1700 Tuskegee Chapel (H-6)

CHURCH OF CHRIST

Sunday 1400 Tuskegee Chapel (H-6)

ISLAMIC PRAYER

Friday 1230 Provider Chapel

PROTESTANT-LITURGICAL

Sunday 1900 Tuskegee Chapel (H-6)
Wednesday 0800 Tuskegee Chapel (H-6)

FRIDAY SHABBAT SERVICE

Friday 1900 Tuskegee Chapel (H-6)

SOY, from Cover

sponsor.

Both reflected on the accomplishments of their Soldiers and expressed the pride and confidence they felt.

"My best reward is to see him succeed. I get great pride in seeing my Soldiers succeed. I feel very proud because I know the hard work he put in everyday," said Brown.

"Sgt. Morin is a competent NCO and an excellent motivator; he carries himself in a very professional manner... He's a Soldiers' NCO," she said.

McLane said teamwork also played a part in Vanvoorhis' success. "He studied on his own and with first line supervisors... I've been there to support and give reference material and talked him through any shortcomings prior to being here. This has been a team effort."

He also said having Vanvoorhis go through this process "shows that he has the potential of being a good NCO and he has separated himself from his peers."

"Every winning candidate won because of their ability to be great leaders. Great leaders already have the desire to mentor, to share their successful practices with their subordinates and peers alike and to make those



Photo by Spc. Jennifer L. Sierra

Noncommissioned officer and Soldier of the year contestants begin the two-mile run portion of the Army Physical Fitness Test, which is a requirement as part of the NCO and Soldier of the year board held here, July 13 and 14.

"Winning brings credit on my unit and it motivates me to be the best Soldier I can be."

Spc. Caleb Vanvoorhis
1/16 Infantry, 1st ID

around them better than they are. Without provocation, they train," said Command Sgt. Maj. Robert N. Roberson

Jr., command sergeant major, 164th Corps Support Group, who served as a member of the board.

The NCO and Soldier of the year reflected on what they gained during this competition.

"I've learned that you have to go for stuff to make it. It's not going to fall on your lap. You have to go out there and get it," said Vanvoorhis.

"You really have to want it; study more than just the

study guide," said Morin. "There can only be one winner in the end."

Roberson said, "All candidates come before the board prepared. But those select few who eventually win the boards come hungry with knowledge, confidence, pride and sheer determination to never quit. Those few stand out."

Morin and Vanvoorhis will be presented their awards here July 27.

NCO board contestants included Sgt. Deanton Stokes, 260th Corps Support Battalion, Sgt. Rochelli McKenzie, 541st Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 15th Sustainment Brigade, Sgt. Tik V. Williams, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 82nd Sustainment Brigade. Soldier of the year contestants included Spc. Danny Ngo, 164th Corps Support Group and Pfc. Xiao Cao, HHC, 82nd SB.



Photo by Spc. Jennifer L. Sierra

(Above) Sgt. 1st Class Olivia Brown, headquarters platoon sergeant, A Company, 15th Brigade Troop Battalion, Camp Taji, smiles as her Soldier, Sgt. Steven P. Morin, education center noncommissioned officer in charge, 15th BTB, is named as this year's 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) NCO of the year here, July 14.

(Right) Spc. Caleb Vanvoorhis, infantryman, B Company, 1st Battalion, 16th Infantry, 1st Infantry Division here, sprints to the finish line during the two-mile run portion of the Army Physical Fitness Test. Vanvoorhis was named this year's 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) Soldier of the year.



1/82nd uncase unit colors in Adder



Photo by Spc. Jaime Avila

(Above) A formation of Paratroopers and Soldiers present arms to the singing of the National Anthem during a transfer of authority ceremony July 11 in Camp Adder, Iraq.
(Below) Col. Charles A. Flynn, commander of the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division and Command Sgt. Maj. Eric C. James, command sergeant major of the 1st BCT, 82nd Abn. Div., uncase their unit colors during a transfer of authority ceremony July 11 in Camp Adder, Iraq.



Photo by Spc. Jaime Avila

Col. Charles A. Flynn, commander of the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division and Command Sgt. Maj. Eric C. James, command sergeant major of the 1st BCT, 82nd Abn. Div., uncase their unit colors during a transfer of authority ceremony July 11 in Camp Adder, Iraq.



Photo by Spc. Jaime Avila

Lt. Col. Patrick J. Hynes, executive officer of the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division stands in front of the "Devil Brigade" and "Red Bull" formation during a transfer of authority ceremony July 11 in Camp Adder, Iraq.

Engineers smooth way for convoys

by Staff Sgt. Chris A. Durney

875th Engineer Battalion

LSA ANACONDA, Iraq — Army National Guard engineers are filling a critical role in the fight to keep roadways in and around Balad safe for logistics convoys — literally.

The mission is called Rapid Crater Repair, and it has proven to be an effective method of denying insurgents convenient IED emplacements. Engineer units use concrete and rebar to fill in bomb craters and potholes in the road surfaces along major arteries around LSA Anaconda. Necessary speed, and skills honed in civilian careers contribute to the ‘rapid’ aspect of each mission, highlighting strengths that National Guard troops bring to the mission.

On a recent morning here, troops from 4th Platoon, Charlie Company, 875th Engineer Battalion of the Arkansas Army National Guard, prepare for one such mission. Armored construction vehicles and gun trucks are gathered along with mission

supplies and weapons under the watchful eye of Staff Sgt. Mark Dailey, the mission noncommissioned officer in charge.

“This is just one of the ways we help keep the roadways safe,” says Dailey. “It helps us be more productive by eliminating the insurgent’s ability to use a hole again and again. It’s good for the convoys and it’s good for the battalion.”

Dailey and platoon commander 1st Lt. Stephen Spencer, pace back and forth between groups of vehicles and Soldiers to ensure everything is ready to head outside the wire. According to Spencer, missions like this involve dismounted operations and begin well before the hot Iraqi sun can take a toll on the hard working troops.

The 875th mobilized in July 2006 and has been in the Iraqi theater of operations since September. The Jonesboro, Ark. based unit is a keystone in the Army’s assured mobility mission in central Iraq, which is divided into three critical sub missions: route clearance, route sanitation and rapid

crater repair. The 500-man battalion includes troops from the Vermont Army National Guard’s 131st Engineer Company and the Indiana Army National Guard’s 1313th Engineer Company.

Just as the first rays of dawn break over Route Heather, one of the main roads leading in and out of LSA Anaconda, the patrol pulls up to the first blast hole and sets into motion. Hands skilled from working in the civilian construction industry man graders, bobcats, backhoes and a host of hand implements. Daily, who normally works as a supervisor for a Vermont construction firm, directs people and machinery with speed and precision. Nearby, Spencer uses a hand held radio to make sure the area is properly cordoned and everyone is keeping an eye out for potential threats.

“Rapid crater repair, route sanitation and route clearance all work together,” says Spencer. “We use all three in our fight for assured mobility. Every time we fill a series of blast holes out here, other route clearance teams and convoy drivers

come up a

Spencer a few minutes a civilian enough ago uses a concrete pole trowel

The Soldier’s face is smooth equipment of the patroling cement

The team craters before concrete.

“This is our mission convoys and people that we’re actually have which make



Photos by Staff Sgt. Chris A. Durney

(Above) Spc. Brad Buehler of 4th Platoon, Charlie Company, 875th Engineer Battalion, maneuvers a nimble bobcat with a jackhammer attachment to even out the edges of a blast hole outside LSA Anaconda.

(Below) Sgt. Jason Bolin and Staff Sgt. Randy White use a little old-fashioned elbow grease to smooth out and level the edges of freshly poured concrete. Once the patch is dry, insurgents will have one less place to easily place IEDs.



onvoys

and thank us.”
speaks quietly into his radio and a
es later a large cement truck driven by
contractor backs up to the hole. Once
regate has gone into the hole the team
mbination of hand trowels and a large
l to smooth the cement.
dieters make sure that the new road sur-
mooth and level before loading up the
and moving on to the next crater. Part
ol remains behind until the quick-set-
nt dries.
n is able to fill two more massive blast
ore they use up the entire truckload of

a very effective and important part of
n,” explains Dailey, “it gives our con-
patrols a secure feeling when they see
mitigating and filling blast holes. We
ave other units come up and thank us,
kes us proud to do the work.”



Photo by Staff Sgt. Chris A. Durney

Members of 4th Platoon, Charlie Company, 875th Engineer Battalion spent the early part of a recent day on a critical rapid crater repair mission outside of LSA Anaconda.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Chris A. Durney

(Above) The familiar Engineer castle adorns a former blast hole filled in with concrete by members of 4th Platoon, Charlie Company, 875th Engineer Battalion who recently spent a day on a critical rapid crater repair mission outside of LSA Anaconda.
(Left) Sgt. Jason Bolin, 4th Platoon, Charlie Company, 875th Engineer Battalion puts some muscle into smoothing a patch of concrete poured over a blast hole during a critical rapid crater repair mission outside of LSA Anaconda recently.

Winning war against IEDs

by Sgt. Jasmine Chopra

Anaconda Times staff

LSA ANACONDA, Iraq — Under the cover of darkness March 3, 2007, a combat logistics patrol comprised of Soldiers in the 259th Engineer Company, based here, traveled along a main supply route when an improvised explosive device detonated, injuring Soldiers and damaging vehicles.

By the evening of March 4, Staff Sgt. Darrel D. Kasson, one of the Soldiers on the CLP, was dead.

"His death hit us pretty hard. That same weekend we had three out of five CLPs hit, and other people injured too. One vehicle had all four wheels blown off," said Spc. Hans Bell, a mechanic with the 259th who has also served as a driver on dozens of CLPs.

"We thought, 'there is a problem here and something has to be done to fix it!' So we put our heads together and got to work," he said.

Within a week of Kasson's passing and using easily accessible materials, Soldiers in the 259th developed a device that has gone on to save the lives of Soldiers serving on CLPs, according to Master Sgt. Jose J. Caneira, maintenance noncommissioned officer in charge for the 259th.

The device, named the 'K Bar' in honor of their fallen friend, protects Soldiers by detonating IEDs before vehicles enter the kill zone, thus minimizing the impact of the blast to passengers and vehicles.

"It's gratifying to know that what we've done here is saving lives," said Sgt. 1st Class Alicia Giacoletti, a motor sergeant with the 259th. "We'd like to see other companies using the K Bar." Giacoletti has served as driver on several CLPs too.

"We might not be able to stop everything meant to hurt or kill us, but the K Bar is a unique idea and it's effective," said Spc. Elizabeth Bailey, a driver and gunner in the 259th.

Bailey is recovering from injuries sustained when an IED detonated near the vehicle she was driving recently. The vehicle did not have a K Bar.

"The blast is so loud and everything rattles inside the vehicle and you. Shrapnel shoots straight up and out. I



Photo by Sgt. Jasmine Chopra

Spc. Hans Bell, a mechanic with the 259th Engineer Company, maintains the engine of a humvee July 14 here. Using easily accessible materials, Bell and other Soldiers in the 259th developed a device to counter IEDs. The device was inspired by the passing of Staff Sgt. Darrel D. Kasson, who died from injuries sustained when an IED detonated near the vehicle he was driving.

"It's gratifying to know that what we've done here is saving lives... we'd like to see other companies using the K Bar."

Sgt. 1st Class Alicia Giacoletti
259th EC

could see people speaking, but I couldn't hear them... It's amazing to think that if I had

gone a little more to the left, I might not be here now," said Bailey.

As Bailey's experience and the stories of countless IED survivors show, one of the most critical technical challenges militaries face is defeating the IED.

The 259th's K Bar has led to improved safety and security of vehicles and defeated some IEDs.

Its development has also led to Soldiers mourning Kasson's death in a constructive

manner.

"The passing of Staff Sgt. Kasson was indeed a sad and unfortunate event, however there was good that came about afterward, the K Bar being one of them. All the platoons supported each other and evaluated the conditions around the event," said 1st Lt. Michael Potter, a platoon leader with 259th.

For more information about the K Bar, please contact Master Sgt. Jose Caneira at jose.caneira@iraq.centcom.mil.

Avon Walk for cancer cure

by Spc. Karly Cooper

15th SB, Public Affairs

CAMP TAJI, Iraq — Breast cancer is the most common cancer among women, according to the American Cancer Society. Women living in North America have the highest rate of breast cancer in the world.

Avon Walk For Breast Cancer was held on July 7 here. Servicemembers from all parts of the military arrived and showed their support for breast cancer awareness.

"The walk was in conjunction with the San Francisco, Calif., Avon Walk For Breast Cancer," said Capt. Nina Clarke-Brewley, the MWR Co-ordinator with the 786th Quartermaster Battalion, 15th Sustainment Brigade, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary).

Over 500 walkers from all over Taji took time to reflect and be advocates against the illness that affects men and women of all races and age.

"It was a great turnout and we had a lot of volunteers show up and give their support by manning the tables for us," said Clarke-Brewley.

With Taji being the first in Iraq to have a breast cancer awareness walk, it was a sure hit. Avon donated four different T-shirts, different lotions, pins, bracelets and other products to those who walked.

"I went home in 2005 and my mom's best friend was diagnosed with breast cancer. So when I had gotten back, I was sitting at my desk, opened a magazine, I saw www.Avon.org so I called the 1-800 number and told them that I was in Iraq," said Ruth Ndiaye, MWR coordinator.

Ndiaye then set up her first Avon Walk For Breast Cancer. "There are Soldiers who come and spend 15 to 17 months here in Iraq and then they go home and are diagnosed with the illness. It's all about bringing awareness here in Iraq and maybe eventually we can bring screening here to Soldiers," said Ndiaye.

With this being her second year of having the walk held in Taji, there was a huge outcome by having the support of Avon.

"I have had so many people come up to me and tell me about their mom, sister or friend who had breast cancer so everyone was walking for somebody, and it gives me chills to know that Avon has us listed as the 9th city," said Ndiaye.

Blocking action nets IED components

by Pfc. Robert H. Bamgartner

82nd Sustainment Brigade

ARAB JUBUR, Iraq — Soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment conducted a blocking action in a congested neighborhood near here earlier this week that led to the discovery of bomb-making components.

After more than a week of combat operations here in support of Operation Marne Torch, the cavalry scouts from 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd ID clambered up the ramps of their Bradley fighting vehicles for another push into an area that has long been a terrorist safe haven.

While this is a typical mission conducted by the “Dirty Thirty,” they treat each mission as a unique situation. These Dogface Soldiers know that complacency is the mother of failure.

“Although long missions like this can wear you down, it’s important to stay focused and do your individual job,” Staff Sgt. Ryan Collamore told his soldiers.

“It’s tough. Keeping your mind on a step-by-step, decision-making readiness can prey on your stamina,” he said.

These Soldiers are engaged in a phase of Operation Marne Torch called Guardian Torch. It is aimed at crushing the insurgency in the region by denying the terrorists safety and freedom of movement.

When the Bradley’s come to a halt, the ramp drops and the troopers pour out. They quickly rally around their platoon leader, 1st Lt. Nicolas Guillet.

“Zero, get up there and clear that house! Give me four on rooftop security,” Guillet barks to his lead element.

In a flash the Soldiers are through the front gate and stacked up on the front door.

The remaining Soldiers pull security around the perimeter while the Bradley’s, bristling with machine guns and automatic cannons, stand like monolithic sentinels on either side of the street.

The front door is breached and soldiers swarm into the house. Flashlight beams dart around the room as the snake-like formation methodically clears room after room.

From ground floor to rooftop, the three-story house is secure in less than three min-



Photo by Pfc. Robert H. Bamgartner

Infantrymen from Bravo Company, 1-30 Infantry, clear a house in Arab Jubur south of Baghdad. The grunts from 2nd BCT, 3rd Infantry Division are taking part in an offensive dubbed Marne Torch in an effort to drive insurgents from areas they previously felt safe.

“It’s good to know that these materials are out of the enemy’s hands. Little by little, piece by piece, we are making this neighborhood a safer place.”

1st Lt. Nicola Guillet
2nd BCT, 3 ID

utes.

With the house now liberated and in their control, the scouts have a refuge from two threats, enemy small arms fire and the relentless midday Iraqi sun.

From their secure position, the scouts begin canvassing the thick undergrowth along the Tigris River for command wires that might lead to improvised explosive devices on the neighboring road.

After hours of fruitless searching, the frustrated and sweat-soaked cavalry scouts returned to the secured house to regroup and gain a respite

from the brutal heat.

But they were far from finished with this mission. As darkness fell, Guillet rounded his troops for another push.

“The one house on the east corner...There was a shed next to it. I want to check that shed out again,” Guillet said.

Something had been bothering him since their earlier search. Something seemed out of the ordinary.

Inside the shed, Guillet’s instincts proved correct. Pfc. James Harrison, an infantryman from Baltimore, MD uncovered a cache of propane tanks, electrical wiring and a 12-volt battery.

Harrison also discovered AK-47 ammunition and magazines.

“This is a good find. These components would have been used to hurt somebody,” Collamore said.

“It’s good to know that these materials are out of the enemy’s hands. Little by little, piece by piece, we are making this neighborhood a safer place,” Guillet said.



Photo by Pfc. Robert H. Bamgartner

An exhausted cavalry scout from 1-30 Infantry, 2nd BCT, 3rd Infantry Division looks back on the street he and his squad just finished clearing. The Soldier is taking part in Operation Marne Torch, an effort to crush insurgent strongholds south of Baghdad.

Anaconda 2007 softball championship



Photos by Sgt. Jasmine Chopra

(Above) Sgt. 1st Class Roger Smith, radio section chief with Charlie Company, 1st of the 14th Field Artillery, motivates fellow team mate Sgt. Steven Shoffner, a supply sergeant with the 127th Quartermaster Company. The two played for team “Scrubs” at the LSA Anaconda Softball Championship July 8.

(Below) Winners and first runners-up in LSA Anaconda’s Softball Championship July 8 pose for a picture after the championship game. The game was played at Provider Field here. Second-place finishers, team “Scrubs” was made of up Soldiers from various units but the winning team was the “Hawks” from the 1034th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion.



NEW EAST SIDE PX HOURS



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On the street with Sgt. Rob Pinches

“What is your favorite MWR activity?”



Sgt. Shawn Crabtree
719th Movement Control Battalion

“Just going to my room, going online, and talking to my girl.”



Spc. Ryan Theobald
170th Military Police Company

“The pool, because it’s hot.”



PV2 Brandon King
170th Military Police Company

“Going to the gym. It’s a nice gym and I like to work out and play basketball.”

Shout outs from home

Adam Prickel
I saw you on TV a while back... you looked great! I hope you are doing well. I'm keeping you in my prayers, Adam. And in my thoughts, too!
Take care,
Judie and Steve Kopf

Nathan Palmer
Dad & I are so very proud of you! I didn't think it was possible, but that feeling intensified when we read the article in the July 4th Anaconda Times about your team and unit and the awesome support you are providing to your fellow troops! I know you feel right at home there since Dad thought he was a drill sergeant while you were growing up! You are an outstanding young man and you will go far in

whatever endeavors you choose. We love you, we miss you, and we can't wait until you're back home safe & sound!
Love always,
Mom & Dad
AKA: Rodney & Lori Palmer

Andrew Rochstein
Dear Andrew,
We are all so proud of all that you guys/gals are doing and all of the accomplishments you all have made! I can't wait until next month!!! I've missed you so much ~ We are almost there :)
LYM! Vickie and Chapelle

Rob Pinches
We want you and all of your friends to know we support you all 100% and pray for

your safe return.
Take care and be safe,
Johnny and Laurie Caruso

Andrew Rochstein
Hey Andrew, heard you're coming back sooner than scheduled. YIPEE! We are so excited and can't wait to celebrate with you. Vickie is all smiles today! I haven't seen Chapelle but I'm sure she's purring a bunch as well. You're such an awesome person and we're so very proud of you for what you and the rest of the military have done for us back at home!
STAND TALL AND PROUD!!
We love you bunches,
Cheryl

Jennifer Sierra
Hi sister! We are sending

you all sorts of stuff in the mail and you'll probably get it all at the same time. I know you'll like it. Anyway, I miss you a whole bunch already. Be safe and take care.
I love you,
Stephanie

American Soldiers
We would like to thank you from the bottom of our hearts for all that you do everyday. Despite what you may hear in the media, we support you. All politics aside, you are Americans and deserve support from your fellow citizens. We thank your families for the sacrifices they endure during your time away. We keep you and every Soldier, fallen and living, in our thoughts and prayers.
The Cajen Family

Want to see your shout-outs here?

Your family can E-mail us and send pictures at:



anaconda.times@iraq.centcom.mil



SUSTAINER REEL TIME THEATER

(Schedule is subject to change)

5 p.m.	Wednesday, July 25
8 p.m.	Georgia Rule (R) Harry Potter (PG-13)
5 p.m.	Thursday, July 26
8 p.m.	28 Weeks Later (R) Harry Potter (PG-13)
6 p.m.	Friday, July 27
8:30 p.m.	28 Weeks Later (R) Hairspray (PG)
2 p.m.	Saturday, July 28
5 p.m.	Shrek 3 (PG)
8 p.m.	Hairspray (PG) 28 Weeks Later (R)
2 p.m.	Sunday, July 29
5 p.m.	Shrek 3 (PG)
8 p.m.	Hairspray (PG) Bug (R)
5 p.m.	Monday, July 30
8 p.m.	Hairspray (PG) Shrek 3 (PG)
5 p.m.	Tuesday, July 31
8 p.m.	Bug (R) The Condemned (R)

http://jennyspouse.com

Jenny, the Military Spouse

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It Needs to be Bigger!

THREE ARE A COUPLE OF THINGS I'VE BEEN MEANING TO DO... MAYBE YOU CAN GET TO THEM WHILE I'M GONE?

SURE - WHAT ARE THEY?

LET'S SEE... SOME REQUIRED HOUSING MAINTENANCE, YARD UPKEEP, THE CAR NEEDS A CHECKUP... MIGHT AS WELL TAKE THE MOWER, TOO... A COUPLE OF THINGS I NEED FROM CLOTHING, SOME DUCTING AND SCREENS FROM SELF-HELP... HMMM... WHAT ELSE?

WELL, SINCE YOU ASKED, THAT REMINDS ME... WHAT...? YOUR RING NEEDS TO BE CLEANED?

NO...

...IT NEEDS TO BE BIGGER!

http://www.pvtmurphy.com

Pvt. Murphy's Law

THIS WON'T HURT... MUCH.

WANT TO HEAR SOMETHING WEIRD?

WELCOME TO PROCTOLOGY TO EXPEDITE YOUR VISIT PLEASE BACK IN

EVERYONE'S A COMEDIAN.

Spc. Brian Wilson, 206th ASMC

Back of the Formation

OK, OK, SO WHAT IS MY MOTIVATION?

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?

WHAT DRIVES MY CHARACTER? WHAT MAKES HIM TICK?

YOU'RE A PRIVATE GETTING IN TROUBLE

AND ACTION! OH, I AM SO SORRY

WELL, AT LEAST HE SOUNDS SINCERE

July 25

Spades & Ping Pong
2 a.m. and 8 p.m., H6 MWR

Dance Aerobics
5:30 a.m., East Fitness Center

9-Ball Tourney
3 p.m. and 8 p.m., East MWR

Spin Class
3:30 p.m., H6 Fitness Center

Aikido
5-7 p.m., East Fitness Center

Step Aerobics
5:30 p.m., East Fitness Center

Hawaiian Dance Practice
6 p.m., MWR Circuit Gym

Open Volleyball
7 p.m., East Fitness Center

Aerobics
7 p.m., West MWR

Green Bean Karaoke
8 p.m., West MWR

Cardio Funk
8 p.m., H6 Fitness Center

8-Ball Tourney
8 p.m., West MWR

Floor Hockey
8 to 10 p.m., MWR Circuit Gym

Salsa Dance Class
8:30 p.m., West MWR

Martial Arts
9 p.m. West MWR

July 26

9-Ball Tourney
2 a.m. and 8 p.m., H6 MWR

Spin Center
6 a.m., H6 Fitness Center

Tae Kwon Do 1
8 – 9 a.m., East Fitness Center

Aikido
10:00 a.m. to noon., East Fitness Center

Korean Martial Arts
4:30 p.m., H6 Fitness Center

Intermediate Swim Lessons
6 p.m., Indoor Pool

Country/Western Dance Class
7 p.m., East MWR

Tae Kwon Do 2
7 – 8:30 p.m., East Fitness Center

Pilates
7:30 p.m., West Fitness Center

Water Aerobics
7:45 p.m., Indoor Pool

Console Game Tourney
8 p.m., West MWR

Dodgeball League
8 p.m., Circuit Gym

Karaoke Night
8:30 p.m., H6 MWR

July 27

Dance Aerobics
5:30 a.m., East Fitness Center

Spin Class
3:30 p.m., H6 Fitness Center

Step Aerobics
5:30 p.m., East Fitness Center

Open Volleyball
7 p.m., West Fitness Center

Friday Night Spikes
7 p.m., East Fitness Center

Hip-Hop Dance Class
7-11 p.m., East MWR

Self Defense Class
7:30 p.m., West Fitness Center

Hip-Hop Coffee Shop
8 p.m., West MWR

Scrabble Tourney
8 p.m., West MWR

Chess Tourney
8 p.m., West MWR

R&B Music Night
9:30 p.m., H6 MWR

July 28

Pilates
11 a.m., West Fitness Center

Boxing
3 to 4:30 p.m., West Fitness Center

Aikido
5-7 p.m., East Fitness Center

Aerobics
7 p.m., West MWR

Salsa Dance Class
7 p.m., East MWR

Tae Kwon Do 2
7 – 8:30 p.m., East Fitness Center

Country/Western Dance Class
8 p.m., West MWR

Texas Hold'em
8 p.m., West MWR

Bingo Night
8:30 p.m., H6 MWR

Wrestling
9 p.m., West Fitness Center

July 29

Spin Class
1:30 a.m., H6 Fitness Center

Aikido
10 a.m. to noon, East Fitness Center

Magic, The Gathering
11 a.m., West MWR

Boxing
3 to 4:30 p.m., West Fitness Center

Poker
7 p.m., East MWR

Poetry Night
7 p.m., East MWR

Swing Dance
7:30 p.m., East Fitness Center

Gaston's Self Defense
7:30 p.m., West Fitness Center

Green Bean Karaoke
8 p.m., West MWR

Spades, Dominoes & R&B
8 p.m., West MWR

Abs Salute
8 p.m., H6 Fitness Center

Salsa Dance Class
8:30 p.m., H6 Recreation

July 30

Texas Hold'em
2 a.m. and 8:30 p.m. H6 MWR

Dance Aerobics
5:30 a.m., East Fitness Center

Tae Kwon Do
8 to 9:30 a.m., East Fitness Center

Spin Class
3:30 p.m., H6 Fitness Center

Step Aerobics
5:30 p.m., East Fitness Center

Aerobics
7 p.m., West MWR

Boxing
7:30 to 9 p.m., East Fitness Center

Cardio Funk
8 p.m., H6 Fitness Center

9-Ball Tourney
8 p.m., West MWR

Karaoke
8 p.m., East MWR

Poetry Jam
8 p.m., West MWR

Floor Hockey
8 - 10 p.m., MWR Circuit Gym

Martial Arts
9 p.m., West MWR

Martial Arts
9 p.m., West Fitness Center

July 31

8-Ball Tourney
2 a.m. and 8:30 p.m. H6 MWR

Aikido
10 am to noon, East Fitness

Center
Spin Class
3:30 and 8:30 p.m., H6 Fitness Center

Korean Martial Arts
4:30 p.m., H6 Fitness Center

Kung Fu
7 p.m., H6 Fitness Center

Tae Kwon Do 2
7p.m. – 8:30 p.m., East Fitness Center

Pilates
7:30 p.m., West Fitness Center

Foosball/Ping Pong
8 p.m., West MWR

Combative Training
8:30 p.m., East Fitness Center

Martial Arts
9 p.m., West MWR

Martial Arts
9 p.m., West Fitness Center

August 1

Spades & Ping Pong
2 a.m. and 8 p.m., H6 MWR

Dance Aerobics
5:30 a.m., East Fitness Center

9-Ball Tourney
3 p.m. and 8 p.m., East MWR

Spin Class
3:30 p.m., H6 Fitness Center

Aikido
5-7 p.m., East Fitness Center

Step Aerobics
5:30 p.m., East Fitness Center

Open Volleyball
7 p.m., East Fitness Center

Aerobics
7 p.m., West MWR

Green Bean Karaoke
8 p.m., West MWR

Cardio Funk
8 p.m., H6 Fitness Center

8-Ball Tourney
8 p.m., West MWR

Floor Hockey
8 to 10 p.m., MWR Circuit Gym

Do you have a story idea?

Contact the Anaconda Times

anaconda.times@iraq.centcom.mil

506 AEG leads multinational airlift effort for village terror bombing victims

by Tech. Sgt. Kevin Allen

506th Air Expeditionary Group PA

KIRKUK REGIONAL AIR BASE, Iraq — Airmen from the 506th Air Expeditionary Group here coordinated and carried out a multinational effort to receive and airlift 21 injured Iraqi civilians for treatment in Turkey July 8.

The civilians, ethnic Iraqi Turkmen, were victims of the July 7 market bombing in Tuz Khurmato, Iraq, which reportedly claimed the lives of more than 150 innocent people.

Two Turkish Casa-235 medical aircraft took the injured, including three children injured in the attack, and some family members to a hospital in the Turkish capital city of Ankara for further care.

Col. Douglas Tucker, 506 AEG commander, said the air evacuation was a short-notice test of Kirkuk's operational and logistical planning which the Airmen here passed with flying colors.

"Once we received notice from the Air Element in Multinational Corp Headquarters that two Turkish medical aircraft had been approved to proceed from Ankara and land here, we had less than four hours to prepare and many unknowns to deal with," said Tucker.

Little information regarding the number of wounded, the severity of their wounds, where they were located or how they would arrive was available during the initial notification.

When the injured arrived at the air base by Iraqi ambulance, they were transferred to U.S. Air Force ambulances for transport to the base flightline.

Once there, Airmen from across the group's diverse duty backgrounds aided Air Force medics and members of the Turkish flight and medical crews in moving the almost 30 patients and family members onto the aircraft for the three-hour flight to Ankara.

"Ultimately we fell back on our mission priorities - precision movement of aircraft and people, providing expeditionary medical skills and combat airmanship,"



Photo by Senior Airman Kristin Ruleau

Lt. Col. (Dr.) Michael Phillips, 506th Expeditionary Medical Squadron, and U.S. Army Sgt. Ramy Elmer, 3rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, Headquarters Headquarters Company (right), aid a man in transferring an injured girl to a Turkish medical aircraft July 8 while a Turkish Air Force medical team member looks on. The girl was hurt in the July 7 market bombing in Tuz Khurmato, Iraq. Airmen from the 506th Air Expeditionary Group worked with Iraqi medical providers and Turkish Army and Air Force members to receive, transfer and aerovac almost 30 injured Turkmen civilians and family members to the Turkish capital city of Ankara for further treatment.

Tucker said.

"We did not have a contingency plan for this event so we worked it from the basics...getting the injured on base and to the aircraft while still maintaining security," said Maj. Tamara Mayer, 506th Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron commander.

"(ESFS) personnel conducted checks of the vehicles, patients and drivers; provided overwatch during the operation; and assisted in carrying litters from the receiving area to the waiting ambulances on base," she said, emphasizing safety for both the patients and the base populace was a top priority.

"Everyone was focused on ensuring these patients were safe, stable and comfortable for their trip... the teamwork displayed was outstanding."

This is not the first time Airmen from the 506th have responded to a situation in-

volving civilians injured in terror bombings and insurgent attacks. Col. Tama Van Decar, 506th Expeditionary Medical Squadron commander, agreed with Mayer that the teamwork of the Airmen assigned to Kirkuk and their ability to adapt to any situation was instrumental to the success of the response.

"There is no way any single squadron or even the AEG alone could have accomplished this mission," she said, emphasizing the support of U.S. Army personnel, the Iraqi medical teams who brought the casualties to the base and the Turkish Army and Air Force members who worked side-by-side with American forces in this humanitarian effort.

"It was truly a team effort on the part of this base," said Van Decar, and one not without precedent.

The almost 900 group

members assigned to Kirkuk eagerly offer aid and assistance when it comes to any medical event involving local nationals and non-military personnel, according to Van Decar.

In turn, that response expedites all facets of the group's ability to react to crisis care situations.

"In the end, from the time the first patient was cleared through security until wheels up on the ramp, the injured were safely transported and loaded for their journey in only one hour," she said. "This is a tremendous accomplishment and keeps with the 332nd Air Expeditionary Wing's focus to provide outstanding medical care and support to this area of responsibility. This entire venture highlights the skill, compassion and training of all the men and women here."

The destruction and loss of life in the previous day's

terror bombing was not lost on the Airmen who facilitated and conducted this mission of mercy. The group commander here emphasized that regardless of what those serving at Kirkuk are faced with, their resolve and drive to succeed in their mission continues to be strong and focused.

"The bombing was a terrible event of intersectorian violent actions taken by a small and desperate minority," Tucker said. "Helping local Iraqis with immediate medical care and assistance in logistics is directly inline with the reason we are here."

"The strength of our combined efforts, our ability to adapt to any given situation and our commitment to setting the conditions for stability in Iraq is how we show our allies, the people of Iraq and the world that our resolve in the Global War on Terror cannot and will not be broken."

Brig. Gen. Terry visits Abu Hassan



Photos by Capt. Stephan Varga

Sheikh Sa'ad shares an array of fruit with Brig. Gen. Michael J. Terry, commanding general of the 13th SC(E).



Photos by Capt. Stephan Varga

(Above) Brig. Gen. Michael J. Terry presents Sheikh Sa'ad his coin July 9 during a visit to the Sheikh's home in Abu Hassan. Terry met with the Sheikh to discuss cooperative efforts between the tribal leader and coalition forces in the area.
(Below) Brig. Gen. Michael J. Terry stands with the Sheikh's children and grandchildren after presenting each of them a 13th SC(E) combat patch.



Photo by Capt. Stephan Varga

Sheikh Sa'ad describes the different foods to Brig. Gen. Michael J. Terry, commander, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), during his visit to the Sheikh's home in Abu Hassan July 9.