

Marne Focus

www.TaskForceMarne.com



Volume 1, Issue 21 January 17, 2008

Serving Task Force Marne and MND-Center

Making friends, remaining vigilant



Photos by Sgt. Michael Connors/MND-C Public Affairs

Sgt. Jason Ruckman with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) takes his glove off just before shaking hands with a girl during a dismounted patrol in the village of Rusti Mullah Jan 8.



A Soldier from 3rd BCT, 101st Abn. Div (AASLT) pulls security during the patrol which included the commanding general of Multi-National Division – Center, Maj. Gen. Rick Lynch. The CG also visited troops at PB Shanghai which is located in Rusti Mullah, 12 miles southwest of Baghdad.



By Spc. Ben Hutto

Sgt. Newroy Henry, medic for the mortar platoon, HC, 1-15th Inf. Regt., examines the daughter of Sheik Hamed, a local leader in Kassipa, a village near Salman Pak, at the girl's home.

Soldiers brave sniper fire to help Iraqi girls

By Spc. Ben Hutto
3rd HBCT, 3rd Inf. Div. PAO

FOB HAMMER – The National Policeman ran towards the Soldiers as they approached the pump station outside Kassipa, near Salman Pak, Dec. 21. Bent over with weapon clutched tightly, the policeman appeared worried.

The Soldiers from the mortar platoon, Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment sought cover as Capt. Chris Pearson, platoon leader, and Sgt. 1st Class Robert Lucas, platoon sergeant, ran over with their interpreter to talk to the policeman.

The pair followed the policeman to a pump station next to the Tigris River. The policeman explained that a sniper on the other side of the river was shooting at the station. It was confirmed as the sound of rifle fire rang out across the water and a round struck the ground nearby.

On the road outside the pump station, Soldiers strained to see where the gunshot came from. Sgt. Jason Neale, from Punxsutawney, Pa., reminded his Soldiers to use the cover around them.

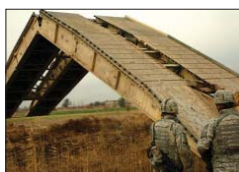
At the pump station, Lucas and Pearson scanned across the river

See HELP, page 5

Marne 6 sends.....P. 2
Marne History.....P. 10
Photo contest.....P. 11
Pvt. Murphy's Law.....P. 11
Acronym Crossword.....P. 12



Crew chief
overcomes
cancer
page 12



Bridge
launch
page 6



Spider
legacy
page 9

Like the stories
you've seen in the
Marne Focus?

THE
MARNE
FORWARD

Search for "Marne Forward"
on www.dvidshub.net
or watch on the Pentagon
Channel every other weekend:
Sat. - 1:30 p.m. (EST)
- 9:30 p.m. (Baghdad)
Sun. - 11:30 p.m. (EST)
- 7:30 a.m. (Baghdad)



Marne 6 sends

MLK Day: 'Remember! Celebrate! Act! A Day On, Not a Day Off!'

This year, the nation celebrates Martin Luther King Day Jan. 21, 2008 – the third Monday in January, close to his birthday. Across the battlefield, units are commemorating Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s life differently. What is important is that we honor the spirit of Dr. King, who spent his life working tirelessly for equal rights.

We are "Army Strong" because of our diversity, and Dr. King is the epitome of a leader who never stopped fighting for equality. In 1964, at age 35, Dr. King became the youngest person to receive the Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts to end seg-

"We know through painful experience that freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the oppressed."

— Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

regation and racial discrimination with nonviolent means.

Dr. King was one of the 20th century's foremost leaders. He was posthumously awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom and the Congressional



Maj. Gen. Rick Lynch
Task Force Marne Commander

Gold Medal; his contributions to freedom carried us into the 21st century, and we all strive

to carry out his legacy. His selfless service made him a role model for all Americans.

This year's celebration emphasizes "Remember! Celebrate! Act! A Day On, Not a Day Off." For those Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Marines who cannot take part in a large observance, we remember Dr. King's impassioned plea, "We know through painful experience that freedom is never voluntarily given by the oppressor; it must be demanded by the oppressed."

**ROCK OF
THE MARNE!**

3rd Inf. Div. receives major award for safety

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF STAFF
200 ARMY PENTAGON
WASHINGTON DC 20310-0200

DACS-SF

MEMORANDUM FOR Commander, United States Army Forces Command, 1777 Hardee Avenue SW, Fort McPherson, GA 30330-1062

SUBJECT: Director of Army Safety Composite Risk Management Award – 3rd Infantry Division

1. Congratulations on the selection of the 3rd Infantry Division (3ID) as the recipient of the Director of Army Safety Composite Risk Management Award. 3ID earned this award by demonstrating exemplary leadership and employing the tenants of Composite Risk Management to reduce the command's accident fatality rate. The command implemented proactive measures such as focusing on motorcycle safety, clearing tree-lined roads and installing safety signs, renovating an off-duty facility on the installation for Soldiers in an effort to combat drinking and driving, and emplacing an extensive safety message campaign. This dedication to safety awareness and the preservation of vital Army resources deserves due recognition.

2. Again, please pass my congratulations to 3ID on a job well done and forward photos of the award presentation to aso@hqda.army.mil so we can showcase your unit's significant safety accomplishments.

3. Army Safe is Army Strong!

SIR
The Marne Team
Super Job!
Thanks -
Bill
V/R
W H Forrester

William H. Forrester
Brigadier General, US Army
Director of Army Safety



TASK FORCE MARNE PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE
Commanding General – Maj. Gen. Rick Lynch
Command Sergeant Major – Command Sgt. Maj. Jesse L. Andrews Jr.

Task Force Marne Public Affairs Staff
TF Marne PAO – Lt. Col. Randy Martin
TF Marne Deputy PAO – Maj. Alayne Conway
TF Marne PA NCOIC – Master Sgt. Marcia Triggs
TF Marne PA Ops – Sgt. 1st Class Craig Zentkovich

Editorial Staff
Managing Editor – Master Sgt. Marcia Triggs
Editor – Sgt. Michael Connors
Layout – Sgt. Michael Connors
Contributing Writers – Staff Sgt. Tony M. Lindback,
Staff Sgt. Carlos Lazo, Sgt. Benjamin Brody, Spc. Emily J. Wilsoncroft
Graphics – Staff Sgt. Tony M. Lindback, Spc. William Hatton

Contributing Units
2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division
3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division
3rd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault)
4th Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division
3rd Combat Aviation Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division
214th Fires Brigade
7th Sustainment Brigade
720th Military Police Battalion
Mobile Unit 3 Explosive Ordnance Disposal Battalion
875th Engineering Battalion
302nd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Marne Focus is an authorized publication for members of Task Force Marne and its support assets in accordance with Army Regulation 360-1. Contents of Marne Focus are not necessarily official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government, Department of Defense, Department of the Army or Task Force Marne. All editorial content of Marne Focus is prepared, edited, provided and approved by the Task Force Marne Public Affairs Office. This publication can be found at www.dvidshub.net. Contact the editor, Sgt. Michael Connors, at michael.connors@iraq.centcom.mil.

Soldiers strike back at enemy, deftly avoid IED

AK-47 fire touches off fight, troops attempt to pin down insurgents with grenade fire

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

FOB KALSU – Overnight rainfall and high winds boded ominously for the morning's mission, but as the sun rose, clear skies greeted Soldiers of 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division.

Soldiers of Company B, 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, conducted Operation Mauser Jan. 6 to re-familiarize themselves with an area just two kilometers southwest of Patrol Base Hawkes.

Staff Sgt. David Springer, infantryman and squad leader with Company B, said he and his fellow Soldiers were going to an area where just a month prior they had received enemy contact.

Even with sunlight breaking through, morning temperatures were in the low 40s and the night's stormy weather turned the dirt roads to muck.

The mud made movement slow, but the pace was steady. First Lt. Jenio Giorgi, platoon leader for 2nd platoon, cleared the first house and met its owner, then took his Soldiers to the neighboring residence approximately 400 meters away.

As they approached the farm house, Giorgio's Soldiers reported the dilapidated home was abandoned and had been padlocked.

In an instant the morning's calm was shattered.

The familiar crack of AK-47 gun fire aimed in their direction forced the Soldiers to the nearest cover.

Immediately, the Soldiers nearest the contact side of the platoon located their adversaries 200 meters to the south and began exchanging rounds.

The suspected insurgents broke contact, but in an attempt to thwart their escape, Soldiers of Company B used a grenade launcher to discourage the enemy's movement.

Firing three grenades, Spc. Carlos Lopez, an infantryman and team leader for Company B, attempted to halt the enemy's retreat by denying them escape routes.

In another attempt at halting the enemy's getaway, Cpl. Keith McKern, a forward observer, said he called in the coordinates for mortars and delivered two high explosive 120 millimeter rounds on the opposite side of where the grenades had landed.

Believing they had pinned down their assailants, a squad of Soldiers maneuvered toward the enemy.

Moving quickly and carefully, the squad's caution paid off when they came across a suspected pressure plate improvised explosive device.

A common tactic for insurgents, the PPIED is used to



Spc. John Pierre Figueroa and Staff Sgt. David Springer, infantrymen with Co. B, 1-30th Inf. Regt., stand ready to return fire after a brief fire-fight with insurgents southwest of Arab Jabour Jan. 6.

Photos by Sgt. Luis Delgadillo

kill, injure or slow Coalition Forces on the attack.

With support of an explosive ordnance disposal team, the obstacle was removed and the search continued.

"To me, it's just like any other day," Giorgi said. "It's not the first time we've been shot at."

Since the 1-30th Inf. Regt. arrived in Arab Jabour and other nearby areas south of Baghdad, they have made steady progress in killing and capturing al-Qaeda leaders, effectively disrupting the terrorists' organizational structure and pushing them further south.

Since the establishment of PB Hawkes in mid-Sep-

tember, the Soldiers of Company B have been at the forefront of 1-30th Inf. Regt.'s push south.

In addition to establishing security for their area, Giorgi said they are working to improve the quality of life for villages surrounding their patrol base through microgrants and access to clean water.

By holding close the sacrifices of their fellow Soldiers and with the knowledge they've gathered over the past seven months, Company B will continue to work at what they do best: hunt insurgents, diminish their resources and help ordinary Iraqis take a stand.

Moving forward together



By Sgt. Ben Brody/MND-C PAO

Col. Thomas James (center) commander of 4th Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, and members of the North Babil Tribal Council and Iraqi Security Forces leaders answer questions from the Iraqi media at FOB Kalsu after a NBTC meeting Jan. 3.

The NBTC is comprised of U.S. troops, Iraqi

Police, Iraqi Army soldiers and tribal leaders. During the meeting, they discussed infrastructure projects, security, and efforts to legitimize Concerned Local Citizens

The eventual goal is to hold future meetings at locations chosen by the tribal leaders and ISF leaders and not on Coalition installations.



A Soldier with Co. B provides security during Operation Mauser southwest of PB Hawkes.

Rakkasans treat more than 650 patients

By PVT. CHRISTOPHER MCKENNA
3rd BCT, 101st Abn. Div. (AASLT) PAO

CAMP STRIKER – Gloomy weather did not deter Iraqi doctors, Iraqi Army medics and Coalition Forces from holding a coordinated medical engagement in Abu Farris, Jan. 12.

A total of 665 citizens from four tribes in the surrounding area were treated for medical and dental issues at the CME. Coalition Forces supervised the event, which was run by the IA with seven teams of Iraqi doctors.

"It was pretty much hands off for us, because the Iraqi Army did an extremely good job," said 1st Lt. Michael Podojil, fire support officer for Company B, 1st Battalion, 187th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault).

Dr. Anwar Abbas, with the Iraq Ministry of Health, treated nearly 180 patients himself.

"It is nice to see the Iraqi people meet together and, as a doctor, I give my best to help and treat the people of my country," Abbas said.



By PVT. CHRISTOPHER MCKENNA
A Soldier with 3rd BCT, 101st Abn. Div. (AASLT), hands out meals to the children in the town of Abu Farris during a combined medical effort Jan. 12.

This was the first CME in the area since the beginning of the troop surge in 2007.

"For this to even occur it took two months to coordinate the air travel for the doctors and to make sure the needed medical supplies and doctors would be present," Podojil said.

Abbas said the preparation and coordination paid off.

"Coalition and Iraqi forces provided a good environment to achieve such a peaceful mission," Abbas said.

Podojil said these types of missions build citizens' confidence in their government and the Iraqi Army.

"This is showing the Iraqi people that we are here to support the Iraqi Army, and that the Iraqi Army will continue to be here to support them," Podojil said. "It also shows that their medical system can work."

"We have been hand-in-hand with the Iraqi Army, we have their support just as they have ours, and this CME is just another example of where we come together and help the community of Abu Farris," Podojil added.

Georgians battle blaze, receive recognition



By Maj. Robert Evans

Lt. Col. Anthony Gonzalez (left), the 214th Fires Brigade deputy commanding officer and FOB Delta garrison commander, presents Cpl. Shermanin Tediashvili (right) and Capt. Zura Tskhadadze, 3rd Georgian Infantry Brigade, with a 214th Fires Brigade Safety Award Certificate and a 3rd Inf. Div. safety knife.

By SGT. 1ST CLASS STACY NILES
214th Fires Brigade PAO

FOB DELTA – The quick action of two Soldiers prevented the possible destruction of several buildings and tents at FOB Delta Jan. 1.

Capt. Zura Tskhadadze and Cpl. Shermanin Tediashvili, from the 3rd Georgian Brigade, battled an electrical fire in a latrine trailer until fire department personnel arrived to put out the fire, said John Cordes, the 214th Fires Brigade safety officer.

Tediashvili was outside his tent when he noticed smoke coming from the latrine trailer. He immediately returned to his tent to sound the alarm and get help. Tskhadadze and Tediashvili left

the tent and managed to get the fire under control until the fire department arrived, Cordes said.

For their actions both Soldiers received the 214th Safety Award certificate and a 3rd Infantry Division safety knife Jan. 5.

"These Soldiers prevented what could have been a catastrophic event," said Lt. Col. Anthony Gonzalez, the 214th Fires Brigade deputy commanding officer and FOB Delta garrison commander.

"Because they acted, we were able to save other structures and other trailers in the (Life Support Area), thus preventing a degradation in the quality of life here," said Command Sgt. Maj. Mitchell Williams, the 214th Fires Brigade sergeant major.

Utilities committee formed by Sheiks, skilled workers, CF in cooperation with GoI

By STAFF SGT. TONY M. LINDBACK
3rd BCT, 101st Abn. Div. (AASLT) PAO

CAMP STRIKER – Covering a broad, mainly agricultural area has posed challenges to Rakkasan Soldiers trying to promote economic growth and essential services in their area of operations.

Soldiers of 1st Squadron, 33rd Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) are partnering with local sheiks and skilled workers to form the Zone Utilities Committee.

Lt. Col. Brian Coppersmith, commander of 1-33rd Cav. Regt.; Capt. Toby Jimenez, Troop A commander; and 1st Lt. David Bhatta, Troop A fire support officer, met with members of the newly formed ZUC to find out what essential services projects are top priorities in the area and how to support completion of those projects.

The idea behind the ZUC is to create a committee of professionals who can support an area's needs and work with the government of Iraq. The ZUC is being taught how to work with the GoI so there will be no need for Coalition Forces' involvement in the future.

In the meantime, Troop A is educating local contractors and leaders on how the process works.

"Most of the problem is that they don't understand the contracting process," Bhatta said. "They expect quick results and turnarounds. If

we tell them we're going to clean a canal, they expect us to come back the next day with the money and an approved contractor."

Because the U.S. government and Army have to approve every project, Bhatta said there is a selection process where one of at least three contractors is chosen to complete the job.

Bhatta and his leadership are also learning to navigate contracts in the context of Iraq's tribal nature.

"Ideally we could hire any contractor, like with the United States government, and just say, 'Okay, you're hired, go pave the road.'" Bhatta, from Richmond, Va., said. "But here it's, 'Is the sheik or the tribal leader going to provide security? Are they going to ensure they're going to do the job well? Are they going to make the contractors feel welcomed?' So, that's why we have to tie in all the aspects – the tribe, the government, as well as the contractor."

Troop A spent two days meeting with the ZUC to ascertain the area's needs and the contractors' capabilities. They met near Zaidon at the Concerned Local Citizens Headquarters – West Jan. 8 and in the Civil Military Operations Center at the Radwanayah Palace Complex Jan. 9.

The hope is to complete the highest priority projects within 90 days to prove the ZUC's capability.

After the ZUC proves itself, Troop A plans to showcase their success to the GoI in hopes of transitioning the care of the populace back to the government.

HELP: After attack, troops go on to visit Sheik in Kassipa, treat girls

From front page



Photos by Spc. Ben Hutto

Spc. Jonathan Colton, from Peach Tree City, Ga., a mortarman in HC, 1-15th Inf. Regt., seeks cover and pulls security following a sniper attack at a pump station outside Kassipa.

for the sniper. Lucas saw a man move quickly from cover and disappear into the palm grove on the other side of the river. Unfortunately, he was unable to get a clear shot at the shooter.

"I was in Fallujah my last deployment," said Lucas, from Laguna, Calif. "It was all desert and hills there ... It's all palm groves and dense vegetation here, near the river. Fighting tends to be more up close and personal."

Pearson decided to continue on with the patrol.

"We're going to change up our route," said Pearson, from Baton Rouge, La. "We went the same way the last time we were over here, so we're going to change it up just to be on the safe side."

Keeping their intervals and staying on opposite sides of the road, the Soldiers of the mortar platoon pushed on until small arms fire erupted from the right

side of the patrol. They immediately hit the ground and sought concealment along the roadside as enemy bullets whistled overhead. They began firing back into the thick vegetation.

"Is anyone hurt?" Pearson asked. When everyone responded they were okay, Lucas popped up and started directing his Soldiers.

"All right!" Lucas shouted. "We are bounding around the corner! Move!"

Bodies low and weapons at the ready, two teams took turns guarding each others' movements as they worked around to a small group of houses the gunfire was coming from.

Sgt. William Ball, from Columbus, Ohio, wiped blood from his face as he moved. A cut across the bridge of his nose, where an enemy bullet ricocheted off rocks in front of him and tore off

his eye protection, proved only a minor inconvenience to the determined mortarman.

Sgt. Newroy Henry, the platoon's medic, went to inspect Ball, but was waved off by the Soldier.

"It's fine," Ball said as he prepared to go into the first house. "It's just a scratch."

Methodically, the platoon searched each house and checked every male there for gunpowder and explosive residue. Neale and Spc. Jonathan Colton, from Peach Tree City, Ga., swabbed each man's hand and arms, but every test came back negative. The homes contained no contraband or used shells, so the Soldiers gave up their search.

"They're gone," Ball said. "They ran as soon as we started firing back."

The platoon continued with the patrol despite having taken contact.

"It's real good to get out," Neale said. "Our guys need to get out and see the country and the people here. When the people here see us they try to give us gifts and chai. They attempt to feed us. Some of them know me by name. My team does a good job of interacting with people. It helps us out in a lot of ways."

Neale recounted what it was like at Combat Outpost Cahill when he first arrived.

"It was hot out here at first," he said. "After our first week here, we started attacking the insurgents and the attacks have really fallen off. When you go (from) getting hit with indirect fire every few days to getting hit with indirect fire every other month, it's huge."

Lucas explained reasons for the improvement.

"The reason we haven't been shot at in a while is a combina-

tion of the Concerned Local Citizens and aggressive patrolling. We know the area and the people here," Lucas said. "It makes a difference."

Shortly after the attack, the platoon arrived at the home of Sheik Hamed, a local leader in Kassipa.

Hamed greeted the Soldiers warmly, making sure to shake everyone's hand and offering chai to the platoon.

Pearson and Lucas talked with the local leader about the progress of several projects that Pearson and the 489th Civil Affairs Battalion, a reserve unit from Knoxville, Tenn., currently attached to the 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, had started.

As their visit came to a close, Henry checked on Hamed's daughters who had both been injured in a mortar attack two weeks prior. The girls were cleaning and peeling vegetables in their backyard when a mortar round landed near them. Both took significant shrapnel damage in their legs.

On the platoon's previous trip, Henry made sure the wounds were healing properly and changed both girls' dressings.

As the family gathered around, Henry gently examined each wound and made sure they were clean. An ugly five-inch gash on the eldest's upper leg worried him and he applied more antibiotic cream.

"I know it hurts, but you have to keep it clean," he explained to the family through the platoon's interpreter. "The shrapnel will eventually work itself out, but you cannot let it get infected. Then we will have problems."

When Henry was satisfied the family understood what needed to be done, he nodded to Pearson and it was time to leave.

The patrol continued their march down to a Concerned Local Citizens checkpoint.

"We are working with them to help them protect their communities," Pearson said. "We are near a major route and we need the CLCs to help us monitor it. They have really stepped up and coordinated security here."

"Our platoon is trying to help the Concerned Local Citizens to protect their community here. We are trying to help them with checkpoints and the program gives them jobs ... By patrolling out here every day, we are showing them that we will work and fight with them," Pearson said.

Pearson explained that the area was much more dangerous before the 1-15th Inf. Regt. arrived.

"When we took over patrolling this town, no one wanted it," he said. "The local leader here had been killed a year prior and people here were afraid ... Sheik Ali (the leader of the CLCs in the area) and the CLCs have done a good job of working with us to push the insurgents out of the area."

The CLCs manning the checkpoint were happy to see Pearson's platoon and greeted them as they walked by.

"It makes a huge difference having them out here," Pearson said.

After patrolling for five hours, the platoon headed back to the COP to get ready for their fire missions that night.

"They all work hard," Pearson said. "You couldn't ask for a better group of Soldiers."

The 1-15 Inf. Regt. is assigned to the 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division and has been deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom since March 2007.

Joint Forces collaborate to clear IEDs, set up checkpoints



Soldiers from Troop A, 3rd Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment conducted a joint operation Jan. 6 out of Patrol Base Assassin. They joined forces with Concerned Local Citizens and Iraqi Police to clear roads and set up checkpoints leading to Al Bata and Al Hamidat.



Spc. Robert Ortiz, from San Antonio, Texas, Trp A., 3-1 Cav. Regt., provides security from atop his Humvee during the joint operation Jan. 6 in the villages of Al Bata and Al Hamidat.

Photos by
Sgt. Timothy Kingston
55th Combat Camera

Letting no obstacle s

Combat engineers co

Sgt. Jake Morales and Spc. Christopher Matthews (in vehicle), combat engineers with Co. E, 1-30th Inf. Regt., 2nd BCT, 3rd Inf. Div., from Fort Stewart, Ga., recover an armored vehicle-launched bridge in Arab Jabour during Operation Acheron Jan. 10. The Soldiers moved the bridge to a new location 500 meters to the south.



Iraqi children observe as a military vehicle travels on a newly-cut road in Arab Jabour leading to the new bridge. The road and bridge connects PB Hawkes to vital canal roads in the west.



Staff Sgt. Tommy Mays, combat engineer and 1st Lt. Patrick Mahoney, platoon leader, both with Company E, 1-30th Inf. Regt., 2nd BCT, 3rd Inf. Div., move a culvert into place in Arab Jabour during Operation Acheron.



By Sgt. Luis D. [unclear]
2nd BCT, 3rd

FOB KAL, southern Arab and set up an and cut 200 m

The new p Base Hawkes was made pos 1st Battalion, gade Combat

Sgt. Jake M Company E, would allow f

"This is the since OIF I (C Morales.

The bridge OIF I along w Sgt. Tommy considered by bat bridge lau

During th guided the r structure with since his last

stand in the way

connect PB Hawkes to roads in the west



Combat engineers with Company E, 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, from Fort Stewart, Ga., set up an armored vehicle-launched bridge in Arab Jabour during Operation Acheron Jan. 10.

Photos by Sgt. Luis Delgadillo

DELGADILLO
Inf. Div. PAO

SU – Opening a new passage in Arab Jabour, Coalition Forces moved an armored vehicle-launched bridge 500 meters of new road Jan 10.

ath, connecting roads from Patrol to vital canal roads in the west, possible by Soldiers in Company E, 30th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division.

Morales, a combat engineer with the 2nd BCT, said the bridge and the new road would make for easy troop movement.

the first time I've launched a bridge during Operation Iraqi Freedom I," said

that Morales launched during the Arab-Jabour launch, Morales with fellow combat engineer Staff Mays occurred under fire and is the only true combat engineer in the 2nd BCT in this war. the Arab-Jabour launch, Morales massive two-piece hinged steel bridge launch.

Spc. Christopher Matthews picked up the bridge with the armored vehicle's large hydraulic lifting arm from the old location and transported it about 500 meters south into the new position. The new position is closer to PB Hawkes and allows for quicker access to canal roads in the west.

With the vehicle's engine revving up and pressurizing the hydraulic lines, the giant, more than 50-foot span bridge began to unfold.

Soon, people in the neighboring villages gathered to question the reason for the bridge. Though land owners weren't thrilled with the idea of a bridge cut through their fields, Capt. John T. Newman, commander of Company B, assured the residents the bridge was important for everyone, and they would be compensated for any land disturbed by the project.

Originally, the bridge was used by Soldiers of Company B to connect PB Hawkes with fellow Soldiers of the 6th Squadron, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 4th BCT, 3rd Inf. Div., who operate to the west of PB Hawkes. Now it has a new mission.

The bridge makes a 35-foot gap passable for vehicles. In coming days more gravel will be laid down to reinforce the road.



Combat engineers with Co. E, 1-30th Inf. Regt., 2nd BCT, 3rd Inf. Div., walk across the armored vehicle-launched bridge in Arab Jabour during Operation Acheron. The bridge makes a 35-foot gap passable for tactical vehicles.

Critical supplies sling-loaded to new Patrol Base

By SGT. JASON STADEL
2nd BCT, 3rd Inf. Div. PAO

FOB KALSU – In combat, the success of troops fighting on the front line depends heavily on the efforts of the troops supplying them. The 26th Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, ensures continued success as they help build the latest patrol base in the brigade's area of operations.

Soldiers from the 26th BSB, with the help of CH-47 Chinook helicopters from Company B, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Aviation Regiment, 3rd Combat Aviation Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, sling-loaded 12 military containers Jan. 4 to Patrol Base Dolby, a new base 2nd BCT Soldiers will use to conduct operations.

The containers, commonly called "milvans," held food, water and wood. They will become barriers filled with sand and dirt to provide protection around the base.

The executive officer from the 26th BSB, Maj. Henry Young, said sling-load missions – when helicopters transport containers from one location to another – are crucial to combat missions.

"We're a force multiplier in combat logistics support," Young said. "Every day counts. These 12 milvans will help our Soldiers in the battle. By doing this we're helping each Soldier to create a safer and more secure Iraq."

With sling-loading, there are fewer patrols on the road, meaning fewer Soldiers

are in harms way. "That means less risk of one of our drivers going out there and getting hit by an IED (improvised explosive device) or small-arms fire," said Spc. Ivan Zayas-Taylor, Company A, 26th BSB.

The Soldiers' experience plays a vital role in the success of the missions.

"Experience is a pretty big part," said Zayas-Taylor, who is sling-load team leader and rigger. "You can't really practice for it until you have a helicopter overhead."

Zayas-Taylor and Staff Sgt. Floyd Lewis, the sling-load team's inspector, gained experience sling-loading while assigned to the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault).

"Air assault ties into it because it's part of the sling-load procedure," said Zayas-Taylor, a Jacksonville, Ala., native. "During the second phase of air assault school you learn how to rig, hook and set up a landing zone, pick-up zone and drop zones."

These missions give Soldiers a unique job while in Iraq.

"It's not every day you work with a Chinook a couple feet above your head," Lewis said. "I think our guys like doing this. It's a different kind of pace."

Whether on the front lines or supplying the front lines, Young said every Soldier has a role in the overall success of the mission in Iraq.

"It's a team effort; we all make up the Marine team. We all have a part to play," he said.



A Soldier from the 26th BSB does final inspections of the load as it is hooked to a CH-47 Chinook helicopter Jan. 4 at FOB Kalsu during a sling-load mission to PB Dolby.



A Chinook helicopter from Co. B, 2-3 Avn. Regt. lifts off with a supply container for the trip from FOB Kalsu to PB Dolby. In all, 12 containers containing wood, barriers, food and water were sling-loaded.

Photos by Sgt. Jason Stadel

Security in Salman Pak



Photos by Sgt. Michael Connors/MND-C PAO

A Soldier from 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, provides security for the battlefeld circulation visit of Multi-National Division - Center commanding general Maj. Gen. Rick Lynch in Salman Pak Jan. 3. Salman Pak had been an area of fierce fighting between Coalition Forces and insurgents. The area has seen tremendous improvements in security in recent months.



Spc. Raquel Martinez, a member of the commanders security detail, with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division stands guard in front of a shopping area in Salman Pak while Multi-National Division - Center commanding general Maj. Gen. Rick Lynch tours the area Jan. 3. The shop owners are eligible for microgrants for improvement.

Living the Spider legacy

Soldiers pay homage to Vietnam-era counterparts, carry on insignia tradition

By Pfc. Monica K. Smith
3rd CAB, 3rd Inf. Div. PAO

CAMP STRIKER – Many units have a mascot or an insignia reflecting their unique identity. Some mascots reflect a desired quality embodied in animals or warriors, while others exalt regions.

For the Black Hawks of Company A, 4th Battalion, 3rd Aviation Regiment, each aircraft has a distinctive spider painted on the engine cowling. The illustration pays homage to the “Spiders” gun platoon of the 188th Assault Helicopter Company called the “Black Widows.”

“Our history goes back,” said Chief Warrant Officer Evan Shipton, from Newbury Park, Calif., Co. A, 4-3rd Avn. Regt. It’s a pride thing to accomplish our mission, knowing our lineage.”

The present-day Spiders are descendants of the 9th Battalion, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) Black Widows. In May 2004 the entire battalion moved from the 101st Abn. Div. to 3rd Combat Aviation Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division at Hunter Army Airfield, Savannah, Ga. Because of the Black Widows’ extensive history with the 101st Abn. Div., the name stayed with the original division. The 4-3rd Avn. Regt. needed to be re-flagged and chose to honor the Black Widows’ gun platoon, “Spiders,” said Sgt. Jason Harrison, Co. A, 4-3rd Avn. Regt.

“There’s a lot of pride,” said Harrison, from Huntsville, Ala. “We have higher expectations. Other Soldiers want to come to Alpha Company.”

The Soldiers of Co. A, 4-3rd Avn. Regt., put effort into keeping in contact with the original Vietnam Spiders platoon. For a short time, Company A was in possession of the original guidon, which has since been moved to the Fort Campbell museum.

Dick Detra, former door gunner with the Spiders platoon in Vietnam, connect-

ed with the Soldiers of Co. A, 4-3 Avn. Regt. when they were still the Co. A, 9-101st Black Widows in May 2004 and has stayed in touch with them since.

“When they were re-designated as Co. A, 4-3 Avn., at Fort Campbell, Ky., a bunch of the old Vietnam-era Black Widows, including myself, showed up for their awards day,” Detra said. “The entire company was former Black Widows so now our lineage has split to include Co. A, 4-3 Avn. It’s a beautiful thing for us old rotor heads.”

For Chief Warrant Officer Chris Daily, Co. A, 4-3rd Avn. Regt., having the Spider lineage is a source of dignity and also a sort of accountability for the unit.

“We always really like hearing the infantry guys asking specifically for our unit by referring to us as the ‘Spider people,’” Daily said. “Back during Vietnam, they had Spiders, Black Widows, on their aircraft and the infantry Soldiers would ask to work with and do missions with the ‘Spider people.’ Seeing that Spider (on the aircraft) gives us – one, a sense of pride, and two, a reason to uphold a standard. We’re seen if we do things right, and they see us if we do things wrong.”

Today the Spiders Company has two more Black Hawks than the Spiders platoon of Vietnam had Hueys and more than twice the manpower. Since deploying to Iraq, Co. A, 4-3rd Avn. Regt. has executed 50 air assault missions that have led to the capture of 200 detainees. They were integrated in the largest air assault in the 3rd CAB, Operation Marne Courageous, which included eight Black Hawks, two Chinooks, two Apaches, two Kiowas and approximately 400 infantry Soldiers.

“The Spiders and what they did, and the Black Widows and what they did – they flew some real missions,” Harrison said. “It carries on. We’ve got a lot of high expectations. The pilots demand perfection.”



By Pfc. Monica K. Smith

NOW: The Spider insignia is proudly displayed on the engine cowling of a 4-3 Avn. Regt. Black Hawk, as Lt. Dan Morse from Company A performs a preflight maintenance check at the 3rd CAB flight line in Baghdad.



Courtesy photo

THEN: Dick Detra, former door gunner with the Spiders platoon in Vietnam, served as the company artist and hand painted many of the Hueys during his tour. “Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds” was his 2nd lift platoon slick, #66-16119. The 188th Assault Helicopter Company “Black Widows” and “Spiders” were stationed at Dau Tieng and Landing Zone Sally in south Vietnam from April 1967 through June 30, 1968. Today, the 4-3 Avn. Regt. carries on the Spider legacy.





MARNE HISTORY

PROVIDED BY SASHA McBRAYER
Fort Stewart Museum



William J. Toomey archive/www.dogfacesoldiers.org

Third Division Soldiers wearing white camouflage in Hachimette (Colmar Pocket), 1945. It was an uncommonly cold winter with temperatures frequently below zero Fahrenheit.

WWII New Year's in Marne Division

"We move in the lead again to crack the 'Frozen Crust.'" Thus begins the chapter chronicling the Division's time in the Colmar Pocket, a wintry locale very near to the region of Alsace in the East of France (History of the Third Infantry Division in World War II edited by Donald G. Taggart).

It was December of 1944 and the world was at war for a second time. The Division had been away from the continental United States since October 27, 1942. We had battled through Italy and Sicily, earning several Distinguished Unit Citations along the way and would recognize 38 Medal of Honor recipients before the close of 1945.

On a snowy New Year's Eve elements of the Division would remain active throughout the night. The 10th Engineer Battalion carried the burden of keeping all roads passable. Company A was led by Capt. Albert H. Cook.

The Company scattered cinders and sand across the passage from Kaysersberg, while Company B, commanded by Capt. Daniel A. Raymond, was forced to drain the Riquewihr-Kientzheim road. Meanwhile, under 1st Lt. Robert L. Bangert, Company C of the Engineer Battalion was continuously "erecting triple-concertina wire

around and in front of (the Division's) positions."

During the night just north of the Weiss River, Company E of the 30th Infantry under the charge of 1st Lt. Douglas W. Chambers engaged a strong German patrol "in a small arms fight in the woods." Another enemy patrol scrambled into Company F's outposts South of Hill 216. Before the sun rose on the New Year, however, Company F, guided by 1st Lt. Richard N. Hagelin, reestablished their hold.

Though the Marne men had no time to celebrate the coming and going of New Year's, January 23, 1945 would forever be remembered as the Battle at Colmar Pocket, in which the 3rd Infantry Division, unable to dig foxholes in the frozen earth clashed against German tanks and tank destroyers, suffering heavy casualties. Even so, the Division successfully crossed the Colmar Canal and earned the French Croix de Guerre for great bravery in combat and one more Distinguished Unit Citation, this time for the Division in its entirety.

As we ring in 2008, let us remember the times that made the Marne Division's powerful reputation and keep our eyes forward on the challenges to come.

3rd CAB Soldier named ATC Manager of the Year

By Sgt. 1st Class Thomas Mills
3rd CAB, 3rd Inf. Div. PAO

CAMP STRIKER – A Combat Aviation Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division Soldier was named the 2007 Army Aviation Association of America Air Traffic Control Manager of the Year.

Staff Sgt. Verle Tilton, Company F, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Aviation Regiment, was notified of the award Jan. 8 for his work as the ATC manager at Liberty Pad, Baghdad.

Each year AAAA recognizes outstanding achievement in several areas of Army aviation including several functional areas to include logistics, maintenance and air traffic control, among others.

Tilton's recognition does not come as a surprise to his leaders in Company F who have seen him improve the standing operating procedures, oversee improvements in lighting and the installation of a new ATC tower, and effectively coordinate with the various agencies in the Camp

Liberty area for clearance of



Staff Sgt. Verle Tilton

airspace.

Capt. Kristopher Lewis, commander of Company F, said he was happy they were able to recognize and give credit to the outstanding job Tilton has accomplished during his deployment to Iraq.

"Staff Sergeant Tilton's commitment to standards and discipline has led to safe operations so the ground commanders are able to use and rely on Army aviation as an invaluable combat multiplier," said Lewis.

Tilton's job as ATC manager

includes facility operations, quality assurance, training the Soldiers, and rating standards.

"We're basically responsible for controlling aircraft in a safe, orderly and expeditious manner," said Tilton, who hails from Beaufort, S.C. "Other than that it's working to help improve the tower itself and working with everyone."

That "everyone" includes local artillery units, unmanned aerial system controllers, explosive ordnance disposal ranges, and multiple aviation units to clear airspace for approaching and departing aircraft.

Tilton said, though, the award is as much a testament to the Soldiers he works with at Company F as it is anything he's done.

"A leader is only as strong as his Soldiers," said Tilton.

Tilton has been invited to receive the award during the AAAA Aviation Center Chapter Banquet Jan. 31 at Fort Rucker, Ala.

The latest technology



By Sgt. 1st Class Stacy Niles/214th Fires Brigade PAO

Spc. Courtland Covington, a transportation specialist with the Texas National Guard 206th Transportation Company, fastens chains to secure Humvees on flatbed trucks Dec. 28 at Forward Operating Base Delta. The vehicles will be transported to Talil Air Force Base, Iraq, and outfitted with the latest technologies before being redistributed throughout theater.



By PFC Amanda McBride

Soldiers from Co. C, 2-502nd Inf. Regt. secure an area Jan. 10 during Operation Nanos II, a joint operation carried out by Iraqi Army and Coalition Forces to deny safehavens for al-Qaeda in an area of North Babil known as Chaka Four.

CF, IA work together, detain suspected AQI

By PFC. AMANDA McBRIDE
4th BCT, 3rd Inf. Div. PAO

FOB KALSU – Coalition Forces teamed up with Iraqi Army soldiers to conduct an operation focused on securing an area south of Baghdad known as Chaka Four Region Jan. 10.

Troops from Company C, 2nd Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment and 2nd Battalion, 4th Brigade, 8th Iraqi Army Division seized weapon caches and detained suspected al-Qaeda in Iraq members during Operation Nanos II, the first joint operation between the units.

More than 50 suspects were detained, including one individual believed to be behind the assassination of prominent sheik Imad Ghurtani last November. Soldiers also discovered a bomb-making facility and destroyed two large-caliber mortar systems, according to Lt. Col. Mike Getchell, commander of 2-502nd Inf. Regt., currently attached to 4th Brigade Combat Team, 3rd

Infantry Division.

"This operation removed the yoke of intimidation on the population of Chaka four," said Getchell, adding the next step will be recruitment and installation of Concerned Local Citizens in the former AQI stronghold.

First Lt. Brian Roberts, 1st Plt. leader, Co. C, 2-502nd Inf. Regt., described the IA's abilities on the mission.

"(The IA) were really excited to get out there and do it," said Roberts, from Redding, Pa. "They have a much better feel for who's good and who's bad."

After improving security, the unit's goal is to begin reconstruction in the area, Roberts said.

"We are now trying to transition into the building stage," Roberts said. "Where we can start reconstructing roads and getting the schools back up."

"Overall, I would say this mission was a success. It should set us up for future operations in our Company," Roberts said.

Photo Contest Winner: Capt. Constance Quinlan



(From left) Lt. Col. John Chadbourne, Pfc. Heidi Gregory, Spc. Ernesto Garcia and Command Sgt. Maj. Harry Jeffries with the 703rd Brigade Support Battalion, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division stand in front of their newly-painted sign at Forward Operating Base Kalsu. Gregory and Garcia won a trip to Freedom Rest for designing and painting the sign. Capt. Constance Quinlan is with 4th BCT, 3rd Inf. Div.

Photo Contest Get Published!



Want to be famous?

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

PVT MURPHY'S LAW

Aviation Branch Assumes Proponency for UAV Systems



GET ON THE NEWS: OPERATION THANK YOU

All Soldiers will get the opportunity to fill out personal information forms for their local media outlets. The forms will allow Soldiers to say "Thank You" to their local commu-

nities for supporting them. Some Soldiers will even get TV interviews. Don't wait to be contacted; see your local public affairs officer today for more information.

Crew chief battles cancer, is now deployed

Given 6 years to live, troop defies odds to serve in war

By Pfc. Monica K. Smith
3rd CAB, 3rd Inf. Div. PAO

CAMP STRIKER – They call him “Tiny” and like many nicknames, it doesn’t accurately describe Sgt. Jared Squires. Yet at six foot five inches, the crew chief more than snugly fits into the space allocated for him in a Black Hawk.

Squires, Company A, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Aviation Regiment, 3rd Combat Aviation Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, doesn’t mind his nickname; he’s just happy to be flying again.

In July 2006 Squires, of Los Lunas, N.M., learned he had a problem that was less than tiny – he was diagnosed with skin cancer. The Army surgeon estimated Squires would have six years to live.

“When I first found out, I went to the doctor’s office and my wife went with me,” Squires said. “The doctor came and said, ‘I’m sorry to let you know you have malignant melanoma.’ I thought ‘I’ve got two kids. I’ve got my wife.’ To put a timeline on my life ... I wanted to do everything I could right away because in six years, I might not be there for my boys.”

Squires began a series of surgeries and positron emission tomography scans, used to detect cancer and the effects of cancer therapy, at Low Country Cancer Care in Savannah, Ga. However, the cancer spread to the lymph nodes in his left arm. They removed the lymph nodes but his body couldn’t produce the skin needed to heal his wounds. The fourth surgery was a skin graft to help close the wound, which Squires said was “by far the most painful thing I’ve ever been through in my life.”

He said his inability to fly was one of the worst facets of his illness.

“I was grounded and couldn’t fly after my first surgery,” Squires said.

Once Squires completely healed from his surgeries, he began taking interferon, a protein made as a drug to stimulate the body’s immune system to fight off some types of cancer. At the end of August, Squires began a four-hour long daily treatment for 30 days which required him to be hooked up to an IV.

“The first day of treatment I could barely walk out on my own strength,” Squires said. “I almost had to be carried out.”

Squires had 11 months of self-injection of interferon, three times a week. Though he didn’t lose his hair, it did begin to thin out. His days consisted of two activities: treatments and sleeping because his treatments left him exhausted.

“My company’s (family readiness group) stepped up big time,” Squires said. “For two weeks they came to my house and dropped off meals because my wife was busy taking care of me. It was a lifesaver. It really helped.”

Sgt. Thomas Lacroix, was one of those who stepped up to help the Squires family. A member of Co. A, 2-3rd Avn. Regt., Lacroix has known Squires for seven years. The two met in advanced individual training, served a tour in Korea and then again with the CAB.

“(I) felt pretty bad for him,” said Lacroix, of Keene, N.H. “I knew his family, his wife, two kids – I tried to do everything I could to help his family out.”

As the Combat Aviation Brigade prepared to deploy to Iraq, Squires was taken out of Company A and sent to the CAB rear detachment because he was non-deployable.

While in the rear detachment, Squires worked with incoming Soldiers who were deploying while continu-



By Pfc. Monica K. Smith

Sgt. Jared Squires scans the horizon in Iraq Jan. 4 en route to Baghdad International Airport.

ing his treatments. He finished his treatments at the end of October and was cleared to fly. However, Squires was not content with simply being able to fly – he wanted to deploy.

“I had the opportunity to stay in rear detachment and I chose not to,” Squires said. “I told them, ‘No, I want to go.’ It took a lot of me, from my side, to get them to say, ‘Hey, yeah, you’re good to go.’ They tried to med-board

me and I had to get my oncologist to say, ‘he’s fine.’ They thought I was crazy. My wife knew I wanted to go and that I missed the guys. I missed my friends, we’ve been together so long – they’re my family.”

After Squires obtained all the letters he needed from dermatologists and from his oncologist stating he was rid of cancer and capable of deploying, he was on the first plane to Iraq.

“I know it was a big morale boost to have him come out and join the team again,” Lacroix said. “It was pretty rough deploying without him. There was a big void in the company.”

Squires must have routine PET scans and visit a dermatologist every six to nine months. In addition he must take active measures to prevent cancer from recurring.

“I have a 75 percent chance of it coming back,” Squires said. “But skin cancer is preventable. It’s not like breast cancer. It’s not passed down for generations. There’s a chance it will come back, but if I take the preventative steps it shouldn’t be a problem.”

Lacroix says the company is glad to have Squires back and that his returning was expected.

“That’s what he wanted and he showed he could do it,” Lacroix said. “He got better and beat it. He’s a true leader. He had the option of staying home and dodging a deployment but he chose to come out here. The younger guys look up to that.”

Answers to 3 JAN puzzle

ACROSS: 1. commanding general; 3. provincial reconstruction team; 4. mine resistant ambush protected; 6. Armed Forces Network; 16. Sergeant Major of the Army; 17. Staff Judge Advocate; 19. headquarters and headquarters company; 20. operations security. **DOWN:** 2. military police; 5. command sergeant major; 7. Iraqi Police; 8. Equal Opportunity; 9. combat support hospital; 10. Inspector General; 11. Heavy Brigade Combat Team; 12. overcome by events; 13. air assault; 14. United Service Organization; 15. patrol base

Army Acronym Crossword

By Sgt. Michael Connors

Across

- 9. JVB
- 11. ATC
- 12. IZ
- 13. BNCOC
- 14. DEFCON
- 15. GoI
- 16. JSS

Down

- 1. UAV
- 2. LZ
- 3. MRE
- 4. NBC
- 5. HAZMAT
- 6. CASEVAC
- 7. AG

- 8. FTX
- 10. TTPs

