

On the road again

Mechanic brings Iraqi Humvees back to life

SGT. KEVIN STABINSKY
2ND BCT, 3RD INF. DIV.

FOB KALSU — When the Humvee arrived on Forward Operating Base Kalsu Oct. 8, it was on its last wheels. Damaged in an accident during combat operations, the Iraqi Army vehicle had sustained severe damage to its front end, making it almost inoperable.

The Humvee was about to take its last ride to the scrap yard when one determined mechanic with the 26th Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, decided that the vehicle could be repaired and returned to the IA.

On Feb. 18, a little more than four months later, Spc. Patrick Allen's goal was reached.

Ordering parts or salvaging them from junked vehicles took the bulk of the time. Once these components, including a new engine, transmission,



Sgt. Kevin Stabinsky

Spc. Patrick Allen puts the finishing touches on an IA Humvee that was damaged during combat operations. He completed the repairs Feb. 18.

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Government center opens in Salman Pak

SGT. NATALIE ROSTEK
3RD HBCT, 3RD INF. DIV.

FOB HAMMER — A new government center opened in the city of Salman Pak Feb. 20, returning the local government to its seat in the heart of the Mada'in Qada.

Sunni and Shia leaders of the qada, along with Soldiers and leaders of the 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat

Team attended the opening ceremony.

Lt. Col. Ryan Kuhn, from Clarks, Neb., deputy commanding officer of the 3rd HBCT, said Salman Pak is on the verge of a revival after years of domination by Sunni extremists.

"The city of Salman Pak has historic meaning," Kuhn said. "It is the second oldest city in Iraq and one of the

most historic."

Many Iraqis travel to Salman Pak yearly to visit historic landmarks such as the Arch of Ctesiphon, one of the largest and oldest free-standing arches in the world, Kuhn said.

"All Iraqis have not been able to visit Salman Pak like they were in the past," Kuhn said, adding that Salman Pak used to be a resort town

where people flocked for family vacations. "Sunni insurgents took over the town; al-Qaeda had a great influence in the area."

Kuhn said the mayor of the qada, Mushen Nasser, wants to restore what was lost to insurgent intimidation.

"The part of life that has

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HUMVEES: 26th BSB mechanic brings vehicles up to speed

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front end and drive train, were collected, Allen said it took him and three civilian mechanics about one month of 'wrench' time to reassemble the vehicle.

"We basically had to build it from the ground up," he said. "The only thing good was the body."

With the 26th BSB providing wrecker and recovery missions, it was not a task he could focus on every day. However, when not occupied with other missions, Allen, from Tampa, Fla., said he spent as much as six to seven hours a day on the vehicle.

Though other missions took precedence over work on the IA vehicle, the missions reinforced his motivation to return a fully mission-capable Humvee to the Iraqis. "When you're out on a mission you don't want your vehicles to break down and stop the mission," Allen said.

Allen, who worked at a mechanic shop for four years before joining the Army, wanted to extend that courtesy to his IA partners, some of whom he met when the vehicle was first brought to the motor pool.

Capt. Tim Page, Company B, 26th BSB commander, said he hopes the Iraqi Soldiers are motivated by Allen's work.

"The vehicle is more symbolic (than anything)," said Page, from Des Moines, Iowa. "Our gesture shows we care."

Although Allen did most of the work, IA mechanics from the 3rd Battalion, 3rd Brigade, 8th Iraqi Army, helped with the initial repairs.



Photos by Sgt. Kevin Stabinsky
Spc. Patrick Allen puts the finishing touches on an IA Humvee that was damaged in combat operations.

Getting the IA to a higher level of proficiency is an important step towards handing security of Iraq over to the Iraqi Security Forces, Page said.

Building up IA logistics is one of the top ten goals of the new Multi-National Corps – Iraq commander, Lt. Gen. Lloyd Austin.

To that end, the 26th BSB is working on a program in which IA mechanics are brought on base for hands-on learning along with his mechanics, Page said.

The future of such an academy is still up in the air, but one certainty is that if instructors are needed, Allen is a definite candidate. "He's definitely a hyper-motivated guy," Page said of Allen, adding his accomplishment rebuilding the vehicle did not surprise him.

In his current tour, Allen has already won the battalion's Soldier of the Month for January and was chosen as "Challenger Soldier of the Week" for Feb. 17 to 23. For his work on the ve-



hicle, he received a battalion coin and certificate of achievement.

He may have also worked himself into a new job, a position Allen said he wouldn't be afraid of. "No challenge too great," he said, echoing the battalion motto. "If they want me to (fix) another one, it's too easy."

THE Dog Face Daily

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7th Sustainment Brigade
720th Military Police Battalion
302nd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

CENTER: Hammer, qada leaders attend opening of government bldg.

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been missing here is the ability to have fun without violence," Kuhn said. "Since the Sons of Iraq, the Iraqi Security Forces, and Coalition Forces have improved security, we are giving that an opportunity."

During the ceremony, residents of the Mada'in Qada, the 3rd HBCT's area of operation, sang and danced to celebrate the newest addition to the city.

Kuhn believes returning the government to Salman Pak will greatly benefit all qada citizens.

"This returns the promise to all the good people of the Mada'in that the elected officials are not defeated by the insurgency," he said. "Now the government can move forward to assist all the citizens. Today the insurgents have lost and the Mada'in Qada has won."

The project began June 2007 when Kuhn proposed a plan to move the government back to Salman Pak.

"I can't even imagine what that would be like," Kuhn remembers Nasser saying. "That would be the best dream ever."

Eight months and \$1.2 million later, that dream has become a reality.

"Before it was just words and now it's true," Sheik Nouri, head sheik of the



Sgt. Natalie Rostek

Lt. Col. Ryan Kuhn talks with Sheik Nouri, head sheik of the Mada'in Qada, at the home of Sheik Fathel, a Salman Pak council member, in Salman Pak Feb. 20.

qada, said through a translator. "We are grateful for what you are doing," he told 3rd HBCT leaders at the opening.

The center is fully functional, but there are still improvements to be made.

Kuhn said a project is underway to make it the first building in the area with solar-generated electricity.

"Hopefully we will work hand-in-hand for a better Mada'in Qada and a better Iraq," Nasser said through a translator. "Everything we achieve is the fruit of our efforts."

The center is the permanent workplace of the qada council and mayor. It is located in the heart of the city near the Salman Pak municipality building and the Joint Security Station where Coalition Forces work with Iraqi Security Forces.

"The whole city block is dedicated to the government and protecting the citizens," Kuhn said. "It shows that everything is returning back to normal."

Kuhn explained he is pleased with the progress made in Salman Pak over the past 11 months since the

3rd HBCT deployed to the Mada'in Qada in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

"The qada government has returned to its seat in Salman Pak," Kuhn said.

"The rule of law is back in Salman Pak with the court. Irrigation and drinking water is restored. Ministries and deputy government officials came to the qada and have projects to expand the economy and essential services. Job opportunities are produced by both education and agricultural growth. I'm happy to leave the new unit with that."

Safety Thought of the Day Generator Safety

- Allow only licensed operators to operate and maintain generators.
- Ensure generators are properly grounded.
- Ensure that Soldiers wear hearing protection when working around areas where generators are running.
- Store spare cans of fuel a minimum of 30 feet from generator sets.
- Position a fire point between the generator and the fuel storage area.
- Never refuel while the engine is running.
- Keep generators and the area around them clean and free of oil and fuel spills to prevent fires.
- Operate generators in a well-ventilated area to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning.
- Periodically inspect power cables for cuts, frays, and breaks.
- Keep adequate distance between camouflage nets, solar shades, and the generator exhaust to prevent the possibility of them catching fire.
- For guidance on working with generators, consult the appropriate TM or operator's manual.

Headline Highlights

Pig song on UK charts; publishing highlights

Pig song: download it from styTunes?

LONDON (Reuters) — In what they say is a last-ditch attempt to save Britain's pork industry, dozens of pig farmers gathered in London Thursday aiming for an Internet hit with their song "Stand by your Ham."

The song — which reworks Tammy Wynette's "Stand by Your Man" with a porcine theme — is intended to alert the public to a sector that farmers say is being pushed to extinction by greedy supermarket chains and rising feed prices.

"Stand by your ham," runs the chorus. "Sausages, pork and bacon/Help us stay in business/Because our pigs are worth it/Stand by your ham."

With little singing experience but fuelled by enthusiasm and bacon sandwiches, the 20 to 30 farmers hope to rely on affection for traditional British pork products from pies to sausages.

It will be available for download from the weekend from the Web site www.pigsareworthit.com.

"It's a lighthearted way of drawing attention to a very serious issue," Yorkshire pig farmer Richard Longthorp told Reuters by telephone from the recording session.

"If this doesn't stop, then as sure as eggs is eggs, the industry is going to disappear."

The farmers say they lose more than 20 pounds (\$39.09) a pig after unprecedented rises in feed prices fuelled by soaring global cereal prices due to higher fuel costs, competition from biofuels, increased demand from Asia and drought in Australia.

The National Pig Association says surveys show consumers are willing to pay more to keep a high-quality British pig farming — which farmers say puts animal welfare first — in business. They want politicians to put pressure on retailers.

'Are Women Human?' and other publishing highlights

LONDON (Reuters) - They may not leap off the shelves into the best-seller category, but the books shortlisted for the oddest book title prize certainly grab the attention.

"I was Tortured by the Pygmy Love Queen" recounts the tale of a fictional U.S. World War Two fighter pilot who is captured by jungle pygmies led by a sadistic woman.

Its sequel, which is not on the shortlist released by trade publication The Bookseller (www.thebookseller.com) Friday, needs no explanation: "Go Ahead, Woman, Do Your Worst."

"How to Write a How to Write Book" and "Cheese Problems Solved" are likewise self-explanatory as is the equally eclectic niche tome "People who Mattered in Southend and Beyond: From King Canute to Dr. Feelgood" that strives to put the English east coast resort on the map.

While none of the above may challenge the sensibilities too much, others are likely to prove more divisive. Try "If You Want Closure in Your Relationship, Start With Your Legs" or "Are Women Human? And other International Dialogues."

"I confess: I have been anxious that as publishing becomes ever more cor-

porate, the trade's quirky charms are being squeezed out," said Horace Bent, The Bookseller diarist and custodian of the prize. "But happily my fears have been proved unfounded: oddity lives on. Drawing up the six-strong shortlist was a fraught and wildly controversial process."

Bent paid tribute to those books that failed to make the list, including titles such as "Drawing and Painting the Undead."

Literary enthusiasts wishing to cast a vote can visit the Web site. The winner will be announced on March 28.

'Girl' at school was actually 39-year-old man

TOKYO (Reuters) - A Japanese man was arrested for trespassing this week after turning up at a high school dressed in a girl's uniform and a long wig, local police said.

Thirty-nine-year-old Tetsunori Nanpei told police he had bought the uniform over the Internet and put it on to take a stroll near the school in Saitama, north of Tokyo, on Wednesday, the daily Asahi Shimbun said.

When students standing outside the gates started to scream at the sight of him, he dashed inside the school grounds, hoping to blend in with the crowds of teenagers, the paper said.

They also screamed, forcing the man to flee, losing his wig in the process. A school clerk pursued him and stopped him at a nearby riverbank, the paper said.

Police confirmed the arrest of the man in school uniform and wig but declined to give further details.

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from Sudoku: The Original Brain Workout From Japan

Solution to Saturday's puzzle:

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

ARABIC WORD OF THE DAY

Yes

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