

# Marne Focus

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Volume 1, Issue 24 February 28, 2008

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**Combatives**  
[Back Page](#)



**How to bench 400 lbs.**  
[Back Page](#)



**Soldier brings totaled Humvee back to life**  
[Page 9](#)

|                        |       |
|------------------------|-------|
| Marne 6 sends.....     | P. 2  |
| Marne History.....     | P. 11 |
| Photo contest.....     | P. 11 |
| Pvt. Murphy's Law..... | P. 11 |
| Sports.....            | P. 12 |



Photos by Sgt. 1st Class Tami Hillis

Soldiers from 2nd Plt., Co. D, 2-502nd Inf. Regt. run to a Black Hawk during Operation Dodge City, an air assault raid Feb. 16 in Meullha. During the operation, Soldiers captured one detainee.

## Soldiers air assault in, track HVT

**Troops go after notorious operative, cell members during bold daytime raid**

By **Sgt. 1st Class Tami Hillis**  
4th BCT, 3rd Inf. Div. PAO

FOB KALSU – The distinctive sounds of four Black Hawks echo as sand and dust swirl around the aircraft. U.S. Soldiers and Iraqi Police scramble across the once-empty lot and secure a seat inside the chopper. Minutes later, as the sand and dust begin to settle, the Black Hawks are off – destination – the Meullha area of Iraq.

More than 60 Soldiers from Company D, 2nd Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, attached to 4th Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division teamed up with a squad of Iraqi Police, who work in the unit's area of operation, and conducted a raid Feb. 16 in Meullha.

The purpose of Operation Dodge City was to detain a specific al-Qaeda in Iraq cell leader along with other members in his cell, who happened to be his brothers and cousins. The unit previously conducted



Sgt. 1st Class Kenneth Schafer (right) and Pfc. Michael Stutz greet a child as she asks for water. Both Soldiers are with Co. D, 2-502nd Inf. Regt.

three raids and a couple of clearance operations in that specific area, but no males were there.

This time, the unit was hoping to have the element of surprise on the high value target and AQI cell members, which is why air assets were brought in to support

the raid.

In addition to the Coalition Forces and the IPs, some local residents from the area went along to give the unit information and show them where some of the cell's hiding places were.

"They have different hiding places they use throughout the fields, canals and even around their own houses," said 1st Lt. Stephan Yen, 1st Platoon leader, Company D.

Although the AQI cell leader wasn't there, the unit did detain one male and recovered various objects of intelligence value.

"We found some al-Qaeda propaganda, IDs, paperwork, cell phones and a secret room," said Capt. Kaiwan Walker, from Detroit, Company D commander.

The one suspect who was detained had three draft intelligence reports on him, meaning an informant or another source had gone in and filed a case against the local national; a DIR is like a warrant in the United States.

"I feel the outcome of the mission was a complete success," Walker said. "Even

**See AIR ASSAULT, Page 6**



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Marne 6 sends

## Sprint to finish in last 100 days

### CG publishes objectives for remainder of tour

Last week I published my "100 Day Letter," a list of objectives Multi-National Division - Center will strive to accomplish during the Division Headquarters' last 100 days. Together, we are going to spend these last 100 days sprinting to the finish line to hand off the baton to the 10th Mountain Division Headquarters.

Over the past 11 months, we have seen attack levels drop to pre-2004 statistics. The Surge gave us the combat power to take the fight to the enemy. We no longer commute to work - you are set in over 56 patrol bases and combat outposts to secure the population. You are stabilizing the area by meeting the needs of the Iraqi people.

We are in the "relentless pursuit" phase - we are watching where the enemy is fleeing, and following him there. We are also in "relentless pursuit" of the non-lethal lines of operations. As we sprint towards the finish line, we will work to further reduce the insurgency, increase the capability of the Iraqi Security Forces, increase the capacity of the Iraqi government and the local economy, push through the national media filter by engaging hometown outlets and the Arabic press, prepare for transition with the 10th Mountain

Division, and focus on the four "Rs": reenlistment, redeployment, reintegration, and re-set.

#### Reduce the insurgency.

We continue to clear enemy safe havens and build patrol bases in order to give the enemy nowhere to hide. As the Surge forces redeploy, we will not give up ground for which our Soldiers fought and died by only transitioning patrol bases to the Iraqi Security Forces. We are also supporting the detainee release program by releasing 300 detainees per month. Each detainee is "signed for" by a local sheikh, and if the detainee is re-arrested, so will his guarantor.

**Increase the capability of the Iraqi Security Forces.** We will continue to partner with the Iraqi Security Forces, build police stations, transition new units into Sayafiyah and Salman Pak, and renovate Joint Security Sites. The Task Force Marne Non-Commissioned Officer Academy is developing Iraqi non-commissioned officers to be the backbone of their military, as non-commissioned officers are the backbone of ours.

**Increase the capacity of the Iraqi government and the local economy.** Everything starts at the local level and money is still a munition. Our main goal is to provide



Maj. Gen. Rick Lynch  
Task Force Marne Commander

Iraqis with sustainable employment - employed Iraqis are not emplacing IEDs as a means of income. Water is a stabilizing force, and we will enable the repairs of the irrigation pumps and the treatment plants to deliver potable water to the Iraqi people. Many of you have already provided security for the Ministry of Electricity to repair power lines, and we will continue to provide security so the Iraqi people have power.

Empowering local governing councils is the key as well as working with local agriculture unions. We have become known as the Division who knows how to develop women's initiatives, and we will continue to work with Iraqi women on issues that affect women and children.

**Push through the national media filter by engaging hometown outlets and the Arabic press.** All of you are accomplishing good news sto-

ries every day, and we will continue to push through the national media filter by engaging our own local hometowns. We will also empower Iraqis to tell their own stories through local radio stations and local newspapers.

**Prepare for transition with the 10th Mountain Division.** All upcoming transitions are important, and setting our successors up for success is the way to ensure we do not lose momentum.

**The four "Rs": re-enlistment, redeployment, reintegration, and re-set.** I know the Army is not breaking because so many of you continue to re-enlist. And when we redeploy, we are going to focus on Soldiers and their Families - all Soldiers will be afforded both their block leave and their administrative leave.

We will not rest on our laurels, but we will continue to make this Division better. You all have accomplished unbelievable progress, but we still have two missing Soldiers. Over the next 100 days, we will do everything possible to find Alex Jimenez and Byron Fouty, and to kill or capture the insurgents involved in their attack. "I will never accept defeat, I will never quit, and I will never leave a fallen comrade."

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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. Emily J. Wilsoncroft

#### Contributing Units

2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division

3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division

4th Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division

3rd Combat Aviation Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division

3rd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault)

214th Fires Brigade

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Courtesy photo

Members of Trp. C, 5-7 Cav. Regt., 1st BCT, 3rd Inf. Div. work with dog teams to find weapon caches in the village of Al Sur.

## 5-7 Cav. continues to erode insurgent resources

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

FOB KALSU – Nearing the end of their 15-month tour, Soldiers from Troop C, 5th Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division continue to conduct patrols providing security to residents of Al Sur village and the surrounding area.

The Crazy Horse Troopers have de-

nied insurgent forces access to weapons, ammunition and explosives that target both Soldiers and civilians.

Local sources, recruited by tactical human intelligence teams, recently led Coalition Forces to known insurgent cache sites. The sites, located in orange and date-palm orchards, contained multiple munitions and components for improvised explosive devices. Weapons found included several pipe bombs, AK-47s

and ammunition, numerous rocket-propelled-grenade rounds and launchers.

Two patrol explosives-detection dog teams worked with the platoon to assist with the operation.

“The use of dog teams, in conjunction with local national informants, has allowed our Soldiers to find a number of large caches,” said Capt. Melvin Lowe, Troop C commander, from Pittsburgh, Pa. “The capture of these munitions will

greatly degrade the enemy’s ability to conduct operations against us.”

Prior to the arrival of the 5-7 Cav. Regt., Al Sur village was an insurgent safehaven. Extremist forces operated freely in the area, with multiple bed-down locations and numerous cache sites.

Both have drastically decreased due to the efforts of Soldiers working with local residents.

## Iraqi judges get automated

### 3rd Inf. Div. paralegal updates Iraqi courts

By RAY McNULTY  
MND-C PAO

CAMP VICTORY – For nearly 30 years under Saddam Hussein, Iraq’s legal system suffered from neglect, abuse and stagnation. Now, through a joint initiative by the United Nations, the U.S. State Department and Multi-National Division – Center, the courts are being drawn into the 21st century with training on laptops and CD-ROMs loaded with 90 years of Iraqi case law.

The technology will give Iraqi judges the tools they need to effectively and efficiently process through the country’s backlog of criminal cases. The software gives them access to the Iraqi legal code from 1917 through 2006.

The software was made available to all the Iraqi courts in MND-C’s area of operation through the efforts of the division’s Rule of Law team.

The team directed their paralegal, Spc. Wallis Lacey, a 21-year-old from Columbia, S.C., to copy the Iraqi Code of Law onto CD-ROMs. Lacey then loaded the data onto 250 customized laptop computers, for distribution to 250 judges and law professors throughout its area of operation. Lacey also worked with the office’s cultural adviser to configure and load other relevant legal and security software tools.

Together Lacey and the adviser traveled throughout the AO – an area equal in size to West Virginia – meeting nearly every judge in the system. They instructed the judges on the use and benefits of the technology. For many of the judges it was their first time using a



Courtesy photo

Spc. Wallis Lacey, Rule of Law paralegal, 3rd Inf. Div., instructs Iraqi judges on how to use customized laptops and specialized judicial software.

computer.

According to the Rule of Law team, the project harks back to Iraq’s history as the cradle of codified law, recorded as the Code of Hammurabi.

Lt. Col. Chris Royer, the director of the Rule of Law unit, 3rd Inf. Div., noted, “Hammurabi has been joined by a super laptop, courtesy of TF (Task Force) Marne.

“Lacey’s installation, project management and subsequent instruction resulted in a better educated and informed Iraqi judiciary, now equipped to interpret laws accurately,” Royer said.

## MARNE JUSTICE

### COURTS-MARTIAL RESULTS



Several Courts-Martial concluded recently with the following results:

Three soldiers from 4th Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division faced court-martial charges ranging from the murder of local nationals to placement of weapons

and command wire on deceased local nationals.

In *United States v. Vela*, SGT Vela was convicted of unpremeditated murder, false official statement, and conduct prejudicial to good order and discipline. He was sentenced to 10 years confinement, total forfeitures of all pay, reduction to E-1 and a dishonorable discharge.

In *United States v. Sandoval*, SPC Sandoval was convicted of placing command wire on the body of a local national, which conduct was prejudicial to good order and discipline. He received 150 days confinement, total forfeitures of all pay, and reduction to E-2.

In *United States v. Hensley*, SSG Hensley was convicted of placing an AK-47 on the body of a local national. He was sentenced to confinement for 135 days and reduced to E-5.

In a separate court-martial of *United States v. Vidal*, SPC Vidal, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, was convicted of two separate specifications of absent without leave (AWOL). SPC Vidal was reduced to E-1, confined for 30 days, and forfeited \$893.00 per month for two months.



# Iraqi businesses display wares at expo

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

CAMP STRIKER – Iraqi businesses put their capabilities on display at the Al Rasheed Hotel in Baghdad Feb. 15-17 for a three-day exposition.

The first-ever Baghdad Business to Business Expo enabled business owners and managers to show other companies what they have to offer.

"This is the first time in Iraq's history they've actually had to market their wares and get people to look at it," said Maj. Robert Bertrand, civil affairs planner for 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault). "Getting out, marketing and selling something rather than being directed to produce is a big change for them."

Two Mahmudiyah-based companies in particular are now adapting to a free-market economy.

The Ready Made Clothes Company and the National Metallic and Bicycle Company are companies that previously only produced goods for the government. With help from the State Department's embedded Provincial Reconstruction Team in Mahmudiyah and Rakkasan Soldiers, the businesses have expanded their lines of products and are trying to increase their clientele. The expo gave both companies an opportunity to do just that.

"If there's a restaurant and the restaurant needs uniforms, (they) have the Ready Made Clothing factory that operates in

Mahmudiyah," Bertrand said. "They now know they can go there and have their shirts made. Or, if they need a table made, (they) have the National Metallic Bicycle factory that fabricates metal products."

John Stafford, a business expert with the ePRT in Mahmudiyah, is helping companies learn how to push products and other aspects of a free-market business. By maintaining close contact with the businesses, pushing them to broaden their horizons and working as their marketing officer, Stafford has given the clothing and metal-working companies a real chance for success, said Louis Lantner, ePRT team leader.

"Most companies (at the expo) and most companies in Iraq don't understand the concept or the need of a marketing officer," Lantner said.

Lantner said marketing is key to the success of even America's best-known brands. Though the brands may already be household names, those companies continue to spend enormous sums on marketing, something Iraqi companies had not yet grasped.

Allowing the companies to market their goods at the expo was a marker of success for the ePRT and Rakkasans who have worked hard to get the companies going. It was also a triumph to have those businesses producing again and employing locals.

Area businesses' doors had been closed due to a lack of security in the Mahmudiyah qada, but now security has improved.



Photos by Staff Sgt. Tony M. Lindback

The first-ever Baghdad Business to Business Expo was held at the Al Rasheed Hotel Feb. 15-17, giving businesses a chance to market products to each other.



The Ready Made Clothes Co. is one of two businesses from the Mahmudiyah Qada featured at the Business to Business Expo. The Mahmudiyah Qada is in the 3rd BCT, 101st Abn. Div. (AASLT) area of operations.

## IA, Rakkasans find buried cache

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

PB LUTIFIYAH – A significant weapons cache was discovered through a group effort between Iraqi Army and Red Knight Rakkasan Soldiers Feb. 19 north of Lutifiyah.

Led to the site by a local tipster, members of 1st Battalion, 4th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division and 4th Platoon, Battery B, 3rd Battalion, 320th Field Artillery, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) found a mass of weapons and homemade explosives.

The cache contained various improvised explosive device-making materials, multiple explosive rounds, firearms and documentation.

"The source of intelligence for the cache was with us the whole way," said Capt. Charlie Lewis, executive officer for Btry. B, 3-320th FA. "He led us to the location and told us the cache was located between two specific houses; from there we started our search."

The IA came upon the cache first.

"The Iraqis know the area better than us and can tell more when ground in an area has been disturbed," said Sgt. Jeremiah Hash, fire support noncommissioned officer, 4th Plt., Btry. B, 3-320th FA.

This was the largest find for the battery since arriving to Iraq in October.



By Pvt. Christopher McKenna

Two Iraqi Army Soldiers pull multiple weapons and explosives from a hole during a cache find north of Lutifiyah.

"The find is extremely significant, we thought it was going to just be a regular cache," Lewis said. "Instead we found a fair amount of IED-making materials, disrupting an IED cell in the area."

Six men thought to be tied to the cache were detained and brought in for questioning.

Hash said he has seen a lot of IEDs and is confident this find will result in less attacks in the area. Hash said mortar rounds and multiple direct-fire weapon systems found indicate an indirect fire cell was also disrupted.

## PATCH-WEARER?



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Jim Tiezzi  
Dennis Noes  
Dick Gallmeyer

[ajimtiezzi@aol.com](mailto:ajimtiezzi@aol.com)  
[dnoes3ID@comcast.net](mailto:dnoes3ID@comcast.net)  
[msg1gal@msn.com](mailto:msg1gal@msn.com)

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By Spc. Ben Hutto

Leaders from 203rd BSB and the Iraqi Army join Adel Abbas (second from right) in the ribbon-cutting ceremony for his recently renovated restaurant.

## Restaurant opens at FOB Hammer

By Spc. BEN HUTTO  
3rd HBCT, 3rd Inf. Div. PAO

**FOB HAMMER** – The recently refurbished Oasis restaurant opened its doors here Feb. 11.

The owner, Adel Abbas, was one of several original vendors invited to open a shop at Forward Operating Base Hammer in the summer of 2007.

Using his own resources and workers, Abbas renovated a shelled-out administration building once used by Saddam Hussein's Republican Guard.

The original Oasis opened in August, providing Soldiers with a small menu and various items such as cigarettes and sodas. Since that time, Abbas has turned the adjacent building into a more permanent restaurant.

The new area has marble-tiled floors and walls and double the original seating capacity. In addition, the menu was expanded to cater

to 3rd HBCT Soldiers.

"I think it looks outstanding," said Lt. Col. Kelly Lawler, from Monticello, N.Y., commander of the 203rd Brigade Support Battalion. "He has taken that old shelled-out building and turned it into a great facility for our Soldiers to use."

The restaurant prepares traditional Iraqi food like falafel, humus and freshly baked flat bread, but also caters to more American favorites like hamburgers and pizza.

"The food is pretty good," said Sgt. Michael Cowan, from Nashville, Tenn., 489th Civil Affairs Battalion, a reserve unit from Knoxville, Tenn., currently attached to the 3rd HBCT. "The ambience was a lot better than I expected."

The restaurant provides 3rd HBCT Soldiers another dining option, said 1st Lt. John Enfinger, officer in charge of the mayor cell at FOB Hammer.

## Patrolling, building bonds



Photos by Spc. Ben Hutto, 3rd HBCT, 3rd Inf. Div. PAO

1st Lt. Mike Barth (bottom right) from El Segundo, Calif., platoon leader of 2nd Platoon, Company D, 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, briefs his Soldiers at Combat Outpost Cashe Feb 12 before a patrol through Saharoon, a village east of Baghdad. The unit is currently attached to 3rd Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division.



Staff Sgt. Sean Kane from Los Altos, Calif., a section sergeant in 2nd Plt., Co. D, 1-15th Inf. Regt., currently attached to 3-1 Cav. Regt., hands a resident of Saharoon a card containing phone numbers for local security forces. "If you see any trouble, you can call these numbers and someone will come help," Kane told the man through an interpreter.

## Tip from informant leads to weapon cache in Jurf as Sakhr

4th BCT, 3rd Inf. Div. PAO

**FOB KALSU** – Based on a tip from an informant, Soldiers found a large weapon cache containing more than 200 munitions Feb. 14 in Jurf as Sakhr.

The cache, found by Soldiers of Company A, 3rd Battalion, 7th Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, contained 171 60mm, 54 82mm and one 20mm mortar rounds.

This is the second cache in the past three days that Soldiers found in the area due to tips and reports from

local residents. The first cache had to be dug out and contained three 120mm, one 82mm and 10 23mm rounds.

"We're cleaning up the environment one scrap metal pile at a time," said 1st Lt. Kevin Brown, from Indianapolis, 2nd Platoon leader, Company A.

The two caches found in Jurf as Sakhr indicates progress made in the area, said Brown. As Soldiers of Company A build relationships in the community, local residents are reporting caches and suspicious activity, resulting in improved security.



Courtesy photos

Soldiers of Co. A, 3-7th Inf. Regt., 4th BCT, 3rd Inf. Div., found 171 60mm, 54 82mm and one 20mm mortar rounds in Jurf as Sakhr.





By Sgt. 1st Class Stacy Niles

Staff Sgt. Steven Thomas (center), a flight medic and unit trainer with Company C, 2nd Battalion, 238 General Support Aviation Brigade, guides Lithuanian Cpl. Simonas Šartus (left) and Staff Sgt. Raimondas Zunka during medical evacuation training at Forward Operating Base Delta.

## Soldiers provide MEDEVAC training

By Sgt. 1st Class Stacy Niles  
214th FB PAO

FOB DELTA – For servicemembers injured or wounded while traversing dangerous terrain, it's the immediate response of the security element that makes the medical evacuation process easier.

"It makes the MEDEVAC more efficient if they know what's expected and are trained to do it," said Staff Sgt. Steven Thomas, a flight medic and the unit trainer for Company C, 2nd Battalion, 238 General Support Aviation Brigade.

Thomas provided MEDEVAC training to the Lithuanian Contingent 10 platoon in preparation for their assumption of a personal security detachment and a quick reaction force for Coalition Forces at FOB Delta. Thomas presented the team with landing zone

training, 9-line MEDEVAC training and loading and unloading training.

"They did very well," Thomas said. "They were very receptive and asked pertinent questions."

The Lithuanian platoon received training both in Lithuania and Camp Buehring, Kuwait, but the training at FOB Delta was new and valuable, said 1st Lt. Gediminas Ališauskas, the LITCON 10 platoon commander. The training focused on loading and unloading UH-60 Black Hawks and safety when approaching and leaving the aircraft.

"It gave us a different understanding of first aid. We received new and better ideas," Ališauskas said. "It changed our mind-set and gave us the opportunity to train with real Black Hawks."

Ališauskas said his platoon will share the information gained here with fellow Lithuanian soldiers.

## 549th QM provides laundry services

4th BCT, 3rd Inf. Div. PAO

FOB KALSU – The Black Knights of the 549th Quartermaster Company, out of Fort Carson, Colo., are currently tasked with laundry services at FOB Iskan.

The 549th QM Co. is attached to Company F and supports the entire 3rd Battalion, 7th Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division. On a weekly average, the nine Soldiers with the Black Knights do approximately 2,300 loads of laundry.

"On an everyday basis, we each do about 13 to 15 loads of laundry," said Spc. Ronnie Coles, from Philadelphia. "It feels good to help someone get some clean clothes, hot showers, and hot chow and then drive on."

Two of the nine Soldiers will be headed to a different FOB to assist with laundry services, leaving only seven Soldiers and one noncommissioned officer with the mission at FOB Iskan.

"Right now we are supporting 3-7th Infantry Battalion and just recently our numbers were increased



Courtesy photo

Spc. Ronald Williams, from Philadelphia, 549th QM Co., looks through bags of laundry to match up the laundry ticket with the correct bag.

by 150 members of the Ugandan Security Forces," Sgt. Luis Mendoza said. "Even though we're short on personnel we make the mission successful in FOB Iskan."

## AIR ASSAULT: Building trust among locals with show of force against bad guys

From Front Page

though we didn't actually seize the HVT, I think the subsequent success will come from the forensics that we did on the objective."

Additionally, Walker said the raid in Meullha showed that Coalition Forces are willing to go in and do these kinds of operations, not just with Humvees but by air as well.

"This was our first opportunity to do an air assault within the Meullha area and I think this will show the people that we are dedicated to the security of that area," Walker said. "We went in there with the IPs and that shows the local people that we're working hand-in-hand with them. It shows that we're willing to go after AQI cells in the Meullha area and we're dedicated to ridding the area of al-Qaeda in Iraq."

The unit is also hoping the show of force will bring more credible information from informants.

"Right now even though the people in the Meullha area are working with us, I think a lot of people are reluctant to actually give credible information because they're scared of this particular family," Walker said. "By us showing we're willing to go in and try to seize these individuals I think that will open the door for more informants to come forward and give credible information."

## Air assaults: Fast but not easy

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

CAMP STRIKER – Rather than moving Soldiers on the ground through difficult terrain sometimes littered with improvised explosive devices, many infantry units in rural areas south of Baghdad opt to use helicopters to reach their targets.

"Air assaults extend the abilities of the ground units," said Capt. Joshua Karkalik, commander of Company B, 4th Battalion, 3rd Aviation Regiment, 3rd Combat Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division. "A lot of times the purpose of an air assault is the element of surprise, or the target is not reachable by ground either because of the terrain or because of IEDs," Karkalik said.

When the call comes for these air assaults, Black Hawks of 4-3 Avn. Regt. take the lead role in transporting the troops to their destinations.

The aviators' expertise helps the infantry Soldiers take their enemies unaware.

"It gives the ground troops the element of surprise. It doesn't give the enemy a chance to run because we're there and they have nowhere to go," said Spc. Rolando Rodriguez, Company A, 4-3 Avn. Regt., from Barstow, Calif.

"They're being blocked off to the north and south and we have Lighthorse (Kiowa Warriors from 3rd Squadron, 17th Cavalry Regiment), and Vipers (Apaches from 1st Battalion, 3rd Aviation Regiment) keeping watch overhead. We're there and we're quick," Rodriguez said.

Despite the hard work involved, many aviators say air assaults are the most enjoyable of their missions.

"(Air assaults) might get tough but you never get bored," said Chief Warrant Officer Joel Fonseca, Co. B, 4-3 Avn. Regt., from Salem, Mo. "You are always doing something new ... and it's not as mundane as VIP missions."

# Soldiers celebrate Black History Month

By **Sgt. Kevin Stabinsky**  
2nd BCT, 3rd Inf. Div. PAO

FOB KALSU – “Gas! Gas! Gas!” But for the contribution of one black American inventor last century, that familiar call might not echo through Army bases as Soldiers train with gas masks against chemical weapons attack.

Similarly, the blood bank system, responsible for saving countless lives on the battlefield since World War II, was the work of an African American, Frederick McKinley Jones.

On Feb. 21, Soldiers on Forward Operating Base Kalsu came together to celebrate these and the other significant contributions made by African Americans during a Black History Month program.

Guest speaker Lt. Col. Kevin R. Stevenson, behavioral health officer, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, walked the audience through the wide-ranging contributions African Americans have made to American society. During a slide show presentation, Stevenson also illustrated the direct impact some of these contributions have had on today’s Army, one example being the



Photo by Sgt. Kevin Stabinsky

Bridgette Brown, HHC, 2nd BCT, 3rd Inf. Div., recites her poem “Why Did You Make me Black?” God, voiced by Staff Sgt. Maurice Patrick, HHC, 2nd BCT, 3rd Inf. Div., answers her with reasons why He made her that way and why she should be proud.

“Safety Hood and Smoke Protector” gas mask invented by Garrett A. Morgan in 1912.

But while much of the focus of the presentation was on past accomplishments, Stevenson, a Napoleonville,

La. native, stressed that black Americans continue to make vital contributions to the country and military.

The event highlighted the struggles blacks had to overcome in the past, as well as how those struggles created strong bonds in the community.

“History is important to us,” said Capt. Christee Cuttino, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 703rd Brigade Support Battalion, 4th BCT personnel office, 3rd Inf. Div. “It shows how far we’ve come,” she said.

Although the focus was on black Americans, Cuttino, of New Britain, Conn., said it is important for all people to come out and support events such as this and other ethnic celebrations.

“Regardless of race, creed, color or background, we have all experienced struggles in life,” Cuttino said.

A major theme throughout the presentation was explaining how overcoming past struggles could help those experiencing hardships today.

One way to help overcome and prosper is by finding positive role models from both past and present, Stevenson said. He credited much of his accomplishments in life to the guidance of his family, who taught him he could do anything he put his mind to.

# Lithuanian platoon trains with 511th MP Co.

By **Sgt. 1st Class Stacy Niles**  
214th FB PAO

FOB DELTA – With slightly less than two months here, Lithuanian soldiers are already making an impact on operations in Wasit province.

The Iron Wolf platoon provides a personal security detachment and quick reaction force in support of battlefield circulation for 214th Fires Brigade staff and other Coalition Forces, said Maj. James Singer, the 214th FB operations officer.

“They provide the command group and staff a great amount of mobility that we didn’t have before,” he said.

The addition of the Lithuanian platoon allows the 511th Military Police Company, from Fort Drum, N.Y., to focus on their police transition team mission and provides security for Coalition Forces to conduct more civilian military cooperation missions, said Singer.

“They are absolutely vital in providing security in support of those operations,” Singer said.

Before assuming their mission, the Lithuanian platoon received drivers’ training, medical evacuation training and conducted a certification exercise.

During the certification exercise, led by 511th MP Co. personnel, Lithuanian soldiers navigated scenarios such as reacting to im-

provided explosive devices, reacting to a sniper, personnel recovery, vehicle recovery and reacting to an ambush.

“They did extremely well,” said Sgt. 1st Class David Riggon, a platoon sergeant with the 511th MP Co. “They are a very competent and professional organization.”

First Lt. Gediminas Ališauskas, platoon commander for the Lithuanian contingent’s 10th rotation, said his soldiers started with a few mistakes, but learned and improved.

“It was important to see my soldiers think at a level higher than they were responsible for,” Ališauskas said. “It was one of the best moments for our unit.”



By Sgt. 1st Class Stacy Niles

Sgt. Victoria Chill with Co. C, 26th BSB, discusses proper application of a tourniquet with Master Sgt. Andrius Samusevas, from the Lithuanian Iron Wolf platoon.

## LIFTERS: Soldiers push each other in gym, refuse to get out of shape

### From Back Page

was spent at Camp Edwards, north of Seoul. There he met a group of Soldiers who took him with them to the gym for his last six months where he immediately began putting on muscle mass.

“In that period of time, when I left Korea I weighed 205 pounds,” Goins said. “So I gained 75 pounds.”

Wilson, on the other hand, began lifting weights as a running back at Central State University in Ohio.

“I was actually the smallest guy on the offensive side of the ball, so I had to work out,” he said. “You can’t compete with players that big and that strong at a small size.”

The two began working out together in 2005 during their last deployment to

Iraq with the 3rd Combat Aviation Brigade. Six nights a week, the two spend two to three hours in the gym lifting massive amounts of weight and pushing each other to lift even more.

“We kind of complement each other,” Goins said. “I think we’re on the same page as far as lifting is concerned, but he may incorporate a light day every once in a while.”

Goins said he lifts only heavy weights, not bothering to work out with light weights as a measure to avoid injury. “I’ve been doing this for a while and haven’t had to deal with any injuries. I don’t incorporate light days with my workout.”

Regardless of their different basic

styles, the two Soldiers have become a solid team in the weight room, pushing themselves and others as well.

“I’ve been lifting with (Wilson and Goins) for about two months now and they’ve changed me,” said Reginald Roberts, a civilian contractor at Camp Striker. “When I first started I couldn’t (bench press) 160 pounds, and now I’m lifting 225 to 250.”

“We push each other in our weak points and our strong points,” Wilson said. “We’re there to help each other.”

“Leg press is (Wilson’s) strong point,” Goins said. Both Wilson and Goins say Wilson’s weak point would have to be the bench press.

“I can lift 360 pounds without a spot,”

said Wilson, meaning he can bench press that much weight unassisted. Goins, on the other hand has been known to lift more than 400 pounds.

When asked what weak points Goins has, Wilson is at a loss. “Bench press is his strong point, leg lifts and dead lift ... the dozer ... he’s strong all around. Any time you get a guy who goes into a bench press competition and starts out at 385 pounds ...”

Bench pressing 360 pounds is nothing to laugh at, let alone 400 pounds, and being able to lift that much is what drives these men to keep at it in the gym.

“I refuse to get out of shape,” Wilson said.



# MND-C's little birds to nest at new hangar

## Maintenance on UAVs to be more efficient, say Soldiers

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

CAMP STRIKER – Shadow unmanned aerial vehicles fly thousands of feet above the ground taking detailed photos of activities and terrain below.

Maintaining the aircraft ensures ground troops have another set of watchful eyes scouting for them. In order to perform maintenance on the Shadow, members of the Unmanned Aerial System Company attached to 1st Battalion, 3rd Aviation Regiment, are creating a maintenance hangar to perform their work in a less harmful environment.

“Right now we’re building a pad for a maintenance hangar,” said Spc. Christie Ahhing, Company A, 4th Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 3rd Infantry Division. “It’s planned to be a (100 by 200 feet) clam shell hangar for storage and servicing of the planes.”

Prior to having the maintenance hangar, Soldiers worked

on the aircraft where room was available, usually outside or in the two small tents that house the aircraft.

“The new hangar will give us a lot more room and it will be much more convenient,” Ahhing said. “With the two small tents moving the birds in and out is kind of a hassle. To get to the bird in the very back you have to move all the other aircraft out of the way.”

After a certain amount of hours an aircraft flies, it must be serviced. For the UAS, there are 10 different services to perform not including fueling, de-fueling, and performing a preventive maintenance checks and services on the aircraft.

“There’s a constant stream of aircraft coming in and aircraft being worked on, which is good, it keeps us busy,” Ahhing said.

Those services, in addition to preflight and post-flight checks, ensure the calibrations are correct. This can cause a backup as other aircraft need to be moved



By Pfc. Monica K. Smith

Spc. Christie Ahhing, Co. A, 4th BSTB, 3rd Inf. Div., and Sgt. Matthew Phelan, Co. A, 2-3 Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Inf. Div., work on a UAV at FOB Kalsu.

out of the tents.

“There is not enough room for the aircraft in our current status,” said Sgt. Matthew Phelan, Company A, 2-3 Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division. “More space equals less

chance of an accident, and it protects the birds from the elements, such as in case of a sand storm.”

The new maintenance hangar should be done in 25 to 30 days, said Phelan and it will house all the aircraft in addition to all the

equipment used to maintain the aircraft, minus the trucks to fuel and de-fuel.

“Before we were using those two small tents,” Phelan said. “We are looking forward to more space and a hardened structure.”

# Task force keeps Kiowa Warriors soaring

## Unit provides maintenance for small helicopters

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

CAMP STRIKER – When Kiowa Warrior helicopters from Fort Drum, N.Y., deployed with a combat aviation brigade from Hunter Army Airfield, Ga., the CAB didn’t have a unit to properly support the maintenance needs of the scout helicopters.

Company B, 277th Combat Support Task Force, was created to support the Kiowa Warrior unit, 3rd Squadron, 17th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd CAB, 3rd Infantry Division.

“We selected a few Soldiers from within the original Co. B, 277th who work on the Kiowa aircraft and consolidated them into a task force,” said Sgt. 1st Class Barry Merchant, first sergeant, Co. B, 277th, from Fort Drum, N.Y.

In aviation, some maintenance is done at the line company or troop level. These procedures are called aviation unit maintenance. However at some point



By Sgt. 1st Class Thomas Mills

Spc. Sylvester Maradona, avionics mechanic with Co. B, 277th Combat Support Task Force, cleans a Kiowa Warrior engine at the CAB flight line.

the aircraft may require a higher level of maintenance – aviation intermediate maintenance (AVIM), and that’s where the combat support task force was needed.

Merchant said that while the original company at Fort Drum has about 200

people, there are 65 Soldiers here, maintaining the Kiowa aircraft.

“We supply the AVIM level support,” said Sgt. Timothy Gossett, Co. B, 277th. “The line troop crew chiefs do maintenance but not at the level we do. It’s not that they can’t do the job, they just may

not be familiar with it so we work together and in doing so complete the mission.”

Company B, 277th maintains the Kiowas in several ways such as through structural repair, working on the engine, hydraulics and the power train. In addition, Co. B, 277th handles the avionics, which provides countermeasures to protect the aircraft, weapons, radios and the mast-mounted sights atop the Kiowas.

While deployed, Co. B, 277th, has integrated with the members of Troop D, 3-17 Cav. Regt., to perform maintenance on the Kiowas.

“Avionics work hand in hand with Troop D, 3-17 maintenance,” said Spc. Sylvester Maradona, avionics mechanic with Co. B, 277th. “We work on whatever they are unable to get to, to keep the birds flying. We have a lot of people helping 3-17 to relieve the stress of the amount of work that piles up.”

Members of Co. B, 277th understand that by working together, they support those who fly outside the wire on a daily basis.

“We help provide security,” said Spc. Kristin Riofrio who repairs the avionics systems on the Kiowas. “That security not only protects the helicopters but also the pilots while they are doing their mission to help protect the ground troops.”



# On the road again . . .



**BEFORE:** Damaged in an accident during combat operations, this Iraqi Army Humvee was nearly inoperable and was almost sent to the scrap heap.



**AFTER:** Thanks to the determined efforts of a Soldier who worked on the Humvee in his spare time over four months, it was brought back to life.

## Soldier rebuilds totaled IA Humvee, returns it like new

By **Sgt. Kevin Stabinsky**  
2nd BCT, 3rd Inf. Div. PAO

FOB KALSU – When the Humvee arrived here in October, 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 26th Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, decided 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, 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 as a mechanic for four years before joining the Army, wanted to lend his talents 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 3rd Battalion, 3rd Brigade, 8th Iraqi Army helped with the initial repairs.

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.



Photos by Sgt. Kevin Stabinsky

Spc. Patrick Allen, 26th BSB, 2nd BCT, 3rd Inf. Div., puts the finishing touch on an Iraqi Army Humvee damaged during combat.

Building up IA logistics is one of the top 10 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.

"Something like a two-week course could work," 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. 17-23. For his work on the vehicle, 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."





Photos by Sgt. Timothy Kingston/55th Combat Camera

Left: Sgt. Max Free, with the 67th Engineer Company, currently attached to 3rd HBCT, watches as Sam, a military search dog, looks for weapons and munitions during an operation in the village of Kesra in southern Khanassa. Above: Soldiers of Co. B, 1-15th Inf. Regt. conduct a foot patrol through the village.

## Soldiers patrol former hostile area for 1st time

By **SGT. NATALIE ROSTEK**  
3rd HBCT, 3rd Inf. Div. PAO

FOB HAMMER, Iraq – Soldiers of 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment visited the village of Kesra in southern Khanassa Feb. 24 to meet with local leaders.

Soldiers and leaders, including the commander of 1-15th Inf. Regt., Lt. Col. Jack Marr, from Minneapolis, visited the village to discuss how Coalition Forces can support the area's humanitarian and security needs.

"We have only done air assault missions in the area in the past," said Maj. John Cushing,

from Rochester, Mich., the 1-15 Inf. Regt. operations officer. "No one has been there for the reasons we were today. They had not seen Coalition Forces driving during the day since 2006."

Cushing said Khanassa has been a hostile area in the past.

"We were unsure of how we were going to be welcomed," he said. "But I think they were just as curious as we were."

The welcome was not what they had expected, Cushing said. Local leaders greeted the unit by coming to the front gate of Combat Outpost Carver, home to Company B, 1-15th Inf. Regt., to escort the Soldiers to their village.



Spc. Mark Matthews, from Springfield, Mass., a medic in Co. B, 1-15th Inf. Regt., provides security during an operation in the village of Kesra.

"After the meeting we had with about 25 different sheiks, we did a foot patrol through the town and people followed us," Cushing said. "It was a warm welcome."

Cushing said he was impressed by the village's organization. Citizens were securing their community with guard positions without any help from Coalition Forces.

"They had a robust market," he said. "It was probably better than any market I've seen in our AO (area of operation). It looked like they weren't hurting for any supplies."

Despite their stability, Cush-

ing said there are still ways to assist the village. Plans are in the works to provide the village with water.

"We will continue to work with the sheiks," Cushing said. "We want to set up the town for future relationships and improvements. This is a good example of how towns all over Iraq are starting to come together to force al-Qaeda out."

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

## Leader Rakkasans build rock-climbing gym at patrol base

By **CAPT. KYLE YANOWSKI**  
1-187th Inf. Regt.  
3rd BCT, 101st Abn. Div. (AASLT) PAO

CAMP STRIKER – With a focused mind, the Soldier grips the wall. His feet dangle as his free hand pumps the air in triumph.

The celebration is short-lived. He swivels his head and feels the rock begin to break away under his fingertips. A grin stretches across his face as he plummets to the ground; he knows even a short-lived triumph is still a triumph. The impact is sudden, yet surprisingly soft. He rolls over and looks at the man-made climbing wall. Still smiling and three hours left before his patrol starts, he picks himself up and starts again.

When a relentless patrol cycle finally yields to personal time, the Soldiers of Company C, 1st Battalion, 187th Infantry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), blend imagination, a love of outdoor activities and practical application into projects to augment the Morale, Welfare and Recreational facilities on Patrol Base Gator Swamp.

Their first project was the construction of a 20-foot tall indoor rock-climbing gym.

What started out as a simple conversation between Sgt. 1st Class Dennis Gholson and his brother Spc. Jon Gholson, from North Vernon, Ind., and Staff Sgt. Timothy Vigen, from Minneapolis, quickly materialized as members of Company C began ordering the supplies necessary to recreate a stateside pastime: indoor rock climbing.

"My brother and I built a rock wall in Muskatatuck Park in Indiana, where we're from, and decided it would be easy enough to do the same here," Dennis said.

For five days straight, the three Soldiers went to work at night and painstakingly erected a frame 25 feet long, 25 feet wide and 20 feet high. Once the frame was complete, the trio installed plywood and drilled holes for more than 1,000 hand holds.

Four rock-climbing walls were finished with varying degrees of overhang, and 20 routes were mapped out and marked.

The word quickly spread about a new rock-climbing gym on the patrol base. Soon, even Iraqi Army troops were joining the fun.



Staff Sgt. Timothy Vigen, Co. C, 1-187th Inf. Regt., gets a workout on the rock-climbing gym he built with two other Soldiers at PB Gator Swamp. They built the 25 x 25 x 20-foot structure over five straight nights during their limited downtime.

Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Dennis Gholson/Co. C, 1-187th Inf. Regt.



# THIS WEEK IN MARNE HISTORY

PROVIDED BY SASHA McBRAYER, Fort Stewart Museum



Photos courtesy of Fort Stewart Museum Haiti

Spc. Adam Silva, 92nd Engineer Battalion, 3rd Inf. Div., walks on a beach in Haiti during the unit's mission to build base camps there in 1995.

## 92nd Engineers go to Haiti

During late January and early February 1995, the 92nd Engineer Battalion received the call to join a United Nations conglomerate to build base camps in Haiti. Initially, there was skepticism going around the battalion, but as Spc. Eldridge King reported in a special to The Patriot newspaper, when reality finally hit, it turned to nervous anticipation.

"We knew this would be a hard mission physically as well as mentally," he wrote, "that we would be leaving our families for six months."

"When February 26 came, you could read the gloom across the Battalion. But just beneath the gloomy exterior was pride in knowing in their hearts that we were about to embark upon history – pride in knowing that we were helping some less fortunate people."

I remember the day we landed as vividly as an Ellis Wilson painting.

We landed in Port au Prince, then went on to Lightning Support Base. After about five days we were off to our first base camp, a 500-man camp, located in the Haitian city of Gonaives. It was our biggest mission and we were doing it first.

I was glad to hear that, because I always like to do the hardest mission first. The base camp went up in about a month and a half



Haiti is collocated with the Dominican Republic, about 730 miles south of Florida.

due to the slow distribution of material. But, despite the elements we had to deal with, it went up fairly smoothly.

After Gonaives, we were back at Port au Prince to recover for our next mission, which was the building of base camps at Jaemel and Les Cayes.

A small contingency force was left behind to handle any domestic missions that came up, such as patching holes in walls of the local prison, building a basketball/hockey court for the Canadian and American Soldiers and pulling guard duty.

The engineers had their hand in nearly every aspect of this UN mission in Haiti. The Soldiers of the battalion did an outstanding job. While serving in Haiti the Nine Deuce led the way."



## Photo Contest Winner: Harry B. Van Doren



**PEACEFUL RUN IN IRAQ:** A jogger runs by Z Lake on Camp Liberty. Harry B. Van Doren works on Victory Base Complex as an engineering technician with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

## 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







Photos by Sgt. Michael Connors

Above: Sgt. Dusten Clark straddles Pfc. Isaac Hanneman during the welterweight championship. Below: Staff Sgt. Lisa Taylor grapples with Lance Cpl. Henry Chan while Spc. Jeremy Allen referees.



## TF Marne Soldiers take it to the mat at 1st tournament

By Sgt. Michael Connors  
MND-C PAO

**CAMP VICTORY** – Task Force Marne Soldiers, accustomed to taking the fight to the enemy, took it to each other Feb. 17 in a friendly combatives tournament to see who would be crowned top warrior in their respective weight classes.

Held at the SFC Paul R. Smith Gym here, it was the first-ever TF Marne combatives tournament. All competitors had to have basic skills in combatives in order to compete, said Capt. Michael Brown, officer in charge of the event.

"All the staff did a great job setting up prior to (the tournament)," said Brown, a Multi-National Division – Center Staff Judge Advocate attorney. "I felt like we had a good turnout at 38 people; everybody was competitive, and it was a diverse group of competitors."

Col. Roger Cloutier, a former college wrestler, oversaw the tournament and congratulated the competitors afterward.

"You guys are what the Warrior Ethos is all about," said Cloutier, G-3, 3rd Infantry Division. "You came out here, competed and did great, you should be really proud of yourselves."

Welterweight champion Sgt. Dusten Clark commented on the inaugural event.

"It was a good competition – a lot of good matches out here today – very well organized," said Clark, Headquarters and Headquarters Support Company, Special Troops Battalion, 3rd Inf. Div.

The tournament was co-ed, with male and female Soldiers competing against one another. Flyweight champion 1st Lt. Alicia Beaumont was one of four female fighters.

"I love it (combatives); I'm so glad I did it," said Beaumont, the G-6 validation board officer in charge, 3rd Inf. Div. "The competition was great. The way they organized it was just amazing."

The tournament used a double-elimination format of one-round fights lasting a maximum of five minutes. Fights began on the knees and were required to remain on the ground. Winners were determined by points, submission or stoppage.

A chief concern of the competition was safety, and beyond a few bumps and bruises, no Soldiers were substantially injured, added Brown. Two medics were on-site, each match had a referee and a safety observer and matches were stopped as soon as a fighter got a submission hold, before joint manipulation could occur.

"It was good they were calling it before people got hurt because a lot of people try to fight against certain locks and that's when people get hurt," said lightweight champion Spc. Frank Castro, Company C, 1st Battalion, 185th Inf. Regt., California National Guard.

In addition to Beaumont (flyweight), Castro (lightweight) and Clark (welterweight), the winners were Sgt. Garrett Wildermuth (middle weight) and Cpl. Maurice Tunstall (light heavyweight), both with Co. B, 3rd STB, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), and Capt. Scott Kafer (heavyweight), G-3 Iraqi Security Forces cell, 3rd Inf. Div.

Started in 2002, the Modern Army Combatives Program has a foundation in Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu, known for its superior ground fighting techniques and submission holds. Modern Army Combatives was primarily designed as a practical means to defeat the enemy in close combat when weapons are not available. Additionally, the program emphasizes intra-Army competitions to encourage physical fitness and high morale, as Spc. Marianne Webb, one of the main organizers of the event, pointed out.

"The purpose of the tournament was to build morale, to give them something to rally around," said Webb, 384th Movement Control Team, 7th Sustainment Brigade. "This was something they could physically participate in and take back a sense of, 'Yeah, I accomplished something win or lose.'"

## Weight lifters max it out, motivate younger Soldiers

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

**CAMP STRIKER** – Step into the North Morale, Welfare and Recreation Center gym at Camp Striker on any given night and you may be treated to a spectacular show of strength.

On such nights, Staff Sgt. Everett Goins, Company A, 603rd Aviation Support Battalion and Staff Sgt. Charlie Wilson, Company B, 603rd ASB, a weightlifting pair who have built a reputation in the Combat Aviation Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, get a little crazy with the weights. They load 28 45-pound weights on the already heavy leg press machine, reaching around 1,500 pounds.

"It gets kind of stupid," said Wilson, from Clinton, S.C.

Goins, a native of Columbia, S.C., has competed in bench press competitions on Camp Striker, finishing in the top two positions including winning 1st place overall in his last competition. A shared theme with both Soldiers is their competitive streak.

"I pretty much like to go to the gym and go to competitions and ... see how I do," Goins said. "If I weigh 200 pounds and I (bench press) 405 to 410 pounds, in order for someone to beat me they would have to do as much as twice their body weight."

At 38 years of age, Wilson said he often finds himself competing physically with his Soldiers, many of whom are much younger than him.

"That's one of the main motivators," Wilson said. "They say,



By Sgt. 1st Class Thomas Mills

Staff Sgt. Everett Goins lifts 315 pounds on the incline bench press while Staff Sgt. Charlie Wilson spots him at the North Morale, Welfare and Recreation gym on Camp Striker.

'Oh, you're old', and I say, 'Oh, let's take (an Army physical fitness test) at your age scale.'"

Wilson's "lead from the front" mentality keeps him several steps ahead of them, though.

"It's about staying in shape and also to show the younger Soldiers that even if you're older it doesn't mean you have to slack off in physical fitness," he said.

Goins and Wilson came to weightlifting along different avenues.

"I was in Korea and I only weighed about 130 pounds," Goins said. He was stationed at Yongsan, in Seoul, and spent more time downtown during his first six months than in the gym. The last half of his tour in Korea