

Marne Focus

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By Pvt. Christopher McKenna/3rd BCT, 101st Abn. Div. (AASLT)

Force on display

Soldiers with 3rd Battalion, 320th Field Artillery, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), conduct terrain denial fire Feb. 29 at Forward Operating Base Mahmudiyah during a visit by Command Sgt. Maj. Marvin Hill, Multi-National Forces - Iraq command sergeant major.

Soldiers deny sanctuary to enemy

Troops detain 2 during daring nighttime raid to secure area around COP Carver

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



By SPC. BEN HUTTO

Soldiers in Co. B, 1-15th Inf. Regt. listen as Lt. Col. Jack Marr, commander of 1-15 Inf. Regt., speaks to them following their mission rehearsal. Early the next morning, Company B Soldiers cleared six houses and detained two individuals.

FOB HAMMER – Soldiers conducted a nighttime air assault mission in Kanasa, a small village south of Salmon Pak, Feb. 28.

The Soldiers, assigned to Company B, 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, cleared six houses and detained two individuals for questioning.

“The main purpose of this mission was to capture or kill any enemy combatants we came across and continue to secure the area around

(Combat Outpost) Carver,” said 1st Lt. Ivan Eno, platoon leader for second squad, Company B. “Overall, I think it went well. All of our guys, right down to the lowest level, understood our intent and scheme and executed it accordingly.”

Before the mission, the Soldiers went through a detailed rehearsal, asking any questions they had to ensure there was no confusion.

“This is the fourth one (air assault mission) we’ve done, so everyone is comfortable with it,” Eno said. “For

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Marne 6 sends

Eliminating extremists, building capacity

MND-C to launch Marne Rugged and Marne Piledriver

This week, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division kicks off Operation Marne Rugged, a kinetic operation to stabilize the area south of the Tigris River where 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Inf. Div. is currently conducting operations.

In coordination with 3rd HBCT and the 8th Iraqi Army, Vanguard Soldiers will build Patrol Base Summers, named for Staff Sgt. Vincent Summers from 2nd Battalion, 69th Armor Regiment, who paid the ultimate sacrifice during Operation Iraqi Freedom III.

Operation Marne Rugged is the third in a series of operations to squeeze Sunni extremists along the Tigris River Valley. Between Operation Marne Thunderbolt, Operation Marne Grand Slam and Operation Marne Rugged, you are giving the enemy nowhere to hide.

Our next Division operation begins next month in the Mahmudiyah qada. Operation Marne Piledriver will be the first Division operation completely focused on capacity building.

The key is stability – providing essential services and the peace of mind for Iraqis to live without fear.

Soldiers from 3rd BCT, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) will partner with the 4th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army for Operation Marne Piledriver. The Rakkasans will resource the Iraqi Soldiers to conduct their own air assault to kill or capture their own targets. Rather than use the operation to build a patrol base for Coalition force Soldiers, we are going to build a patrol base for the Iraqi Army, and resource them to increase their number of battle positions and checkpoints. Operation Marne Piledriver will give the Iraqis the space and time to provide their own security for their fellow Iraqis.



Maj. Gen. Rick Lynch
Task Force Marne Commander

Information operations will be the key behind Marne Piledriver – we will show the Iraqi people that this operation puts the Iraqi Army in the lead, and the results are for the Iraqi people. We are going to ensure new cell phone towers help the qada to communicate, and we will work with the Iraqi people to build a radio station in Yusufiyah and in Mahmudiyah.

Rather than use bullets as a munition, Operation Marne Piledriver will use money as a munition to focus on meeting

the needs of the Iraqi people in Mahmudiyah. Commander's Emergency Response Program projects will help to develop local agriculture to increase economic stability. We will also provide a greater focus on our local councils to ensure that the government is linked from the qada to the nahias to the Iraqi people.

Meeting the needs of the Iraqi people is no longer about providing security, but about providing stability – providing the essential services and the peace of mind for the Iraqis to live without fear. By building schools, filling the canals with water, and talking to the Iraqi people, you magnificent Soldiers are helping to return their standard way of life. First you rid their areas of the insurgency, and now you are providing them with the tools to resume to normalcy.

**ROCK OF
THE MARNE!**



Combat power

With the Euphrates River and a power plant as the backdrop, Maj. Gen. Rick Lynch, commanding general of Multi-National Division – Center, addresses members of Company A, 3rd Battalion, 187 Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) at Patrol Base Kemple March 6. The Soldiers received a personal coin from Lynch for their exemplary service.

Photo by Sgt. Michael Connors/MND-C PAO

Marne Focus

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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
7th Sustainment Brigade
720th Military Police Battalion
Mobile Unit 3 Explosive Ordnance Disposal Battalion
875th Engineering Battalion
302nd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

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By 1st Lt. Michael Denison/3-320th FA, 3rd BCT, 101st Abn. Div. (AASLT)



By Capt. Allison Flannigan/3rd BCT, 101st Abn. Div. (AASLT)

Left: Capt. Rimas Radzius, intelligence officer for 3rd Battalion, 320th Field Artillery, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), watches from an overpass as Shiite pilgrims pass through Mahmudiyah during Arba'een Feb. 25. Above: A Black Hawk flies over Mahmudiyah at the beginning of Arba'een Feb. 23.

ISF safely usher 9 million Arba'een pilgrims

MND-C PAO

BAGHDAD – Approximately nine million religious pilgrims converged on Karbala this week to celebrate Arba'een. U.S. commanders attribute careful planning and massive security operations by the Iraqi Police and Army to the overall success of the event.

"Millions of Iraqis enjoyed the freedom to worship because of the courage and professionalism of Iraq's Soldiers and Policemen," said Brig. General Jim Hugins, deputy commanding general for maneuver, Multi-National Division – Center.

The Shia Muslim holiday, which culminated Feb. 27, was preceded by more than a week of travel for many pilgrims who came to Karbala from all over Iraq and around the world. Within Iraq, millions traveled through Baghdad, Najaf, Hillah and Iskandariyah to reach the Muslim holy city.

Throughout the entire journey and celebration, Iraqi Security Forces led an unprecedented operation to secure the festivities, deploying a total of 39,000 soldiers and police to man checkpoints, secure routes and collect and analyze intelligence. Within the city of Karbala and the surrounding area, 80 ISF checkpoints were estab-



By 1st Lt. Michael Denison, 3-320th FA/3rd BCT, 101st Abn. Div. (AASLT) While Shiite pilgrims pass through Mahmudiyah Feb. 25, women pass through a tent to be searched, and Iraqi Army Soldiers on the route search men during the walk to Karbala.

lished to screen pilgrims for bombs and weapons.

More females than in previous years participated in the celebration. This was the first Arba'een since 2003

without a significant fatal act in the Karbala province. There was one attack in Iskandariyah, killing 41 people.

Multi-National Division – Center Soldiers from 4th Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division assisted the ISF, providing intelligence and logistics support throughout the ongoing security operation.

"When it comes to providing security for the citizens of Iraq, the Iraqi Security Forces – both police and army – are taking charge more and more," said Col. Thomas James, commander of 4th BCT, 3rd Inf. Div. "The high level of success achieved during Arba'een is a testament to the Iraqi Security Forces and to the fact that they can be relied upon to provide effective security for their own people and why they will continue to provide this security for a long time."

Pilgrims began the trip home Feb. 28, and millions are expected to remain on the roads through the weekend.

Arba'een is the finale of the Ashura commemoration, marking the 40th day after Imam Hussein was killed in Karbala in the seventh century.

Large-scale public celebrations of Arba'een were banned in Iraq under Saddam Hussein, but resumed in 2003 following the U.S. invasion.

Fort Stewart 'Frontline' wants to hear from you

The Fort Stewart, Ga., newspaper, "The Frontline," would like to feature Soldier Diaries in its July 4th special edition. Soldiers who would like to share excerpts of their journals or write about a memorable event can send their submissions to the Public Affairs Office at mnd-c_pao@iraq.centcom.mil.

Families in the Hinesville and Savannah areas would like to hear from their Soldiers and vicariously experience day-to-day life in Iraq. The Public Affairs Office will determine what submissions will be forwarded to "The Frontline." The deadline to send your article into the PAO is June 2.





Photos by Spc. Amanda McBride

Spc. Vincent Reed, 2nd Plt., Co. A, 2-69th Armor Regt., currently attached to 4th BCT, 3rd Inf. Div., provides security during Operation Varsity in the Obedi region.

CF, IA clear Obedi of al-Qaeda resources

Air Force F-18 called in to finish the job

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

FOB KALSU – Iraqi Army Soldiers and Coalition forces found a weapons cache and detained numerous insurgents during Operation Varsity Feb. 28 in the Obedi region of Iraq.

Iraqi Soldiers from 2nd Battalion, 2nd Brigade, 8th Iraqi Army Division and Soldiers from Company A, 2nd Battalion, 69th Armor Regiment, currently attached to 4th Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, conducted the operation to clear the area of al-Qaeda resources.

While conducting a daytime foot patrol, Soldiers uncovered the cache containing munitions and supplies for making improvised explosive devices.

The Soldiers also discovered a building rigged with multiple explosives. An Air Force F-18 jet was

called in to destroy the structure with two Excalibur GPS guided artillery rounds and two 500-pound bombs.

"The thing is getting ammunition out of the hands of enemies and clearing the al-Qaeda stronghold," said Capt. James Browning, commander of Company A.

Initially planned by Iraqi Security Forces, Coalition forces and IA worked together to finalize mission plans. Browning, from Fayetteville, N.C., said with all the forces combining their efforts, security is improving.

"Now where (the IA) are at, they're able to plan, execute and basically resource an operation of this size and magnitude," Browning said. "This has been an opportunity for both the Iraqi Army and Coalition forces to work together and clear out an area."

The detainees were turned over to the IA for further questioning.



Soldiers from Co. A, 2-69th Armor Regt. and Iraqi Soldiers from 2nd Battalion, 2nd Brigade, 8th Iraqi Army Division clear a cabbage field during Operation Varsity in the Obedi region.

Command visits Jurf as Sahkr



Photos by Sgt. Ben Brody/MND-C PAO

Pvt. Logan Johnson looks out over Jurf as Sahkr March 5. He is a member of the personal security detail for Col. Thomas James, commander of 4th Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division.



Staff Sgt. James Stutz poses for a young photographer during a mission in Jurf as Sahkr March 5. Stutz is a member of the personal security detail for Maj. Gen. Rick Lynch, commander of Multi-National Division – Center.

Torture house discovered

2nd BCT, 3rd Inf. Div. PAO

FOB KALSU – Sons of Iraq led Coalition forces to an al-Qaeda in Iraq torture house and prison in northern Zambraniyah March 5.

The patrol was conducted based on intelligence provided by an SoI leader in the area, said Capt. Chris O'Brian, troop commander of Troop C, 6th Squadron, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, currently attached to 2nd BCT, 3rd Inf. Div.

"The guy wants to clean up the area," said O'Brian, a native of Herndon, Va. "AQI killed half his family." The SoI leader, who heads a group of 300 SoI, worked with his men in support of Troop C Soldiers on the patrol.

The patrol began early in the morning as Soldiers cleared houses in an area suspected of harboring insurgents, said O'Brian.

During the initial phase of the mission, the group came under small arms fire. Reacting to contact, the enemy, who was observed wearing black, ran away.

As the patrol continued, the group discovered a man dressed in black in a suspected AQI safe house. The man was detained on suspicion of involvement in insurgent activities and the likelihood that he was involved in the earlier attack.

SoIs are pointing out the bad guys in the neighborhood, O'Brian said, adding that they have also provided actionable intelligence.

Much of that intelligence indicated that there may be an AQI prison or torture house in the town, O'Brian said, noting that he was receiving reports on the possibility for the past week.

That intelligence led Soldiers to a house full of materials used by insurgents for torture.

Coalition forces build ties in Hamiyah

By 1st Lt. WILLIAM PERDUE
3-7th Inf. Regt. UPAR
4th BCT, 3rd Inf. Div. PAO

FOB KALSU – There were no doors being kicked in and no shots being fired in Hamiyah the day of the patrol. Soldiers were geared up and prepared for anything. They had pockets full of toys and candy for children who approached them as adults greeted them with smiles.

March 1 was a typical day for Soldiers in Company A, 3rd Battalion, 7th Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division.

“You can really see how much it means to the locals when we give out the humanitarian aid bags,” said 1st Lt. Chris Blom, executive officer for Company A. “They are so grateful and appreciative of what we are doing for them and they can see that we are really here to help them.”

Soldiers on the ground know every action has a reaction. Everything they do brings about some kind of response from local residents they pass throughout the day, said 1st Lt. Ryan Daly, 2nd Platoon leader, Co. A.

The purpose of the patrol was to strengthen relations with the Hamiyah City Council and local residents, Daly said. Soldiers discussed improving ties between the Hamiyah City Council and the Jurf Nahia Council. They also discussed the progress of new and existing projects to improve local infrastructure and the importance of maintaining security.

During the first hour of the patrol, Soldiers and city council members discussed key town issues. The focus was on sending two representatives, Jabar Mohammed Naif and Kasim Fadil Abid, from the Hamiyah Council to the Jurf Nahia meeting.

It is a necessary step to cement the framework of the Iraqi government beyond the presence of Coalition forces, Daly said.

Projects to benefit area children were also discussed. Rasoul, an engineer and a council member, is working with 2nd Platoon to make improvements to the Mustaffa Secondary School. The town is also working on larger projects, including future construction of a school and repairs to the water distribution system.



Courtesy photo

Spc. Gregory Touzani, from Des Moines, Iowa, and Pfc. Troy Buford from Wichita, Kan., both with Co. A, 3-7th Inf. Regt., pose for a picture with children in Hamiyah.

On the last two hours of the patrol, Soldiers worked with the Iraqi Organization for Motherhood, Childhood and the Handi-

capped. They met with Kasim, a council member and main spokesperson for the group. Soldiers heard the group's needs

and plan to make frequent trips to deliver food, school supplies and basic medical supplies to aid area residents, Daly said.

Crazy Horse III focuses on trust in Janabi

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

CAMP STRIKER – Iron Rakkasan Soldiers conducted a two-day mission March 2-3, in Janabi Village, with the goal of gaining local residents' trust.

During Operation Crazy Horse III, Rakkasans set up new Sons of Iraq checkpoints, did biometric testing and held a coordinated medical engagement to give residents much-needed medical treatment and medications.

“The focus was on clearing routes for the new checkpoints and developing positive relations with the Janabi tribe,” said 1st Lt. Casey Zimmerman, platoon leader for 3rd Platoon, Company C, 3rd Battalion, 187th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault).

Zimmerman, from Santa Barbara, Calif., said the mission leaned toward providing stabilization in the area.

“This wouldn't work if the Janabi people ... were not supportive of change,” said Sgt. Michael Waters from Nampa, Idaho, Co. C, 3-187th Inf. Regt.

Male villagers underwent biometrics testing. The process includes obtaining fingerprints and retinal scans. The testing is



Courtesy photos

A Soldier with Co. C, 3-187th Inf. Regt. watches as Sons of Iraq search people of Janabi before they enter a biometric testing area.

performed on all SoI and males volunteering for service in the Iraqi Security Forces.

“The people of Janabi approached us, saying they bet on the wrong horse,” Zimmerman said. “Many of them were former (al-Qaeda) members not even three weeks ago.”

The reconciliation of former al-Qaeda members has allowed progress in the area.

“They have actually gone out and dug up improvised explosive devices which they had planted, turned in weapon caches and have shown dedication toward



An Iraqi doctor gathers information from a patient during a coordinated medical engagement as part of Operation Crazy Horse III in Janabi.

working together with the Coalition and Iraqi Army forces,” Zimmerman said.

A total of 314 people, including 130 women, were seen by three Iraqi doctors at the CME.

“Safety was a major concern going into the mission, especially with the history of the area,” Waters said.

Now the community is taking steps toward a more peaceful lifestyle.

Conducting joint assessments

Sgt. Paul Holko, 214th Fires Brigade civil affairs team member, asks villagers questions during an assessment near Joba Da'al Feb. 29. The 214th Fires Brigade, El Salvador Cuscatlán Battalion and 1st Georgian Infantry Brigade are conducting joint assessments of villages surrounding Coalition checkpoints.



Right: Cpl. Ana Shelia, 1st Georgian Brigade, gives a child a school package and a magazine about the Georgian military during an assessment in Joba Da'al Feb. 29. Coalition forces are building relationships and identifying projects to help villagers. Left: Lithuanian Master Sgt. Dainius Vilkaitis scans the area during the assessment.



Citizens, CF celebrate reopening of critical route out of Salman Pak

BY STAFF SGT. SEAN RILEY
3rd HBCT, 3rd Inf. Div. PAO

FOB HAMMER – Residents of Salman Pak and al Lej breathed a collective sigh of relief Feb. 29 as more than 150 Sons of Iraq, Iraqi Security Forces and Coalition forces leaders met to celebrate the reopening of the al Lej road, the main thoroughfare connecting Salman Pak and al Lej.

The road had been closed to civilians after a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device detonated at a traffic checkpoint, killing seven Iraqi National Policemen in May.

Since construction began more than two weeks ago on Combat Outpost Carver, home to Company B, 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, Soldiers had been assessing local needs. Their chief concern: reopen the road to Salman Pak.

Coalition leaders, local ISF and SoI members began working together on a plan to restore and improve Checkpoint 600, where the attack had occurred and set the conditions for safe movement of

civilians along the road.

Local leaders hope the checkpoint and road reopening will bring more people to the area.

"We have reopened the city of Salman Pak to Dura'iya, Kanasa, and al Lej – the whole Mada'in Qada can now move freely," said Brig. Gen. Aamir, the 1st Brigade, 1st National Police commander, following the road's ribbon-cutting ceremony.

Sheik Ali Hussein, the SoI leader for Salman Pak and al Bawi, opened his home for a luncheon attended by more than 150 guests after the ceremony.

"We are finally to the point where we can come to an event and see Sunni and Shia sheiks working together to secure their country," said the 1-15th Inf. Regt. Command Sgt. Maj. Mark Moore, from Waverly Hall, Ga.

Company B, 1-15th Inf. Regt. is assigned to 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, from Fort Benning, Ga., 3rd Infantry Division, and has been deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom since March 2007.



Above: Company B, 1-15th Inf. Regt. Soldiers place steel pickets at Checkpoint 600 near Salman Pak, prior to the reopening ceremony, as 1-15th Inf. Regt. Command Sgt. Maj. Mark Moore looks on. Left: A Soldier assigned to Co. B pulls security during the ceremony.

Courtesy photos

Hawr Rajab sees significant improvements

By Staff Sgt. Michael Paredes
6-8th Cav. Regt. UPAR
2nd BCT, 3rd Inf. Div. PAO

FOB KALSU – With security improving in Hawr Rajab, stores and schools are reopening and a number of programs are revitalizing a community once on the brink of chaos.

In November 2007, al-Qaeda launched their last well-coordinated offensives into Hawr Rajab, killing a total of 12 members of the Sons of Iraq and wounding eight. In the same firefight, two Iraqi Army Soldiers were killed and another nine wounded; four U.S. Soldiers were injured in the attacks.

When the insurgents attacked, the SoI program in the region was still in its infancy, but the members were not deterred. With the assistance of Coalition forces and IA Soldiers, residents began to reclaim their community and insurgents not killed or captured were forced to flee.

As rebuilding of the rural farming area began, community leaders ramped up efforts to re-establish ties with the Government of Iraq.

Sheik Ali Majeed Mushir Al-Dulaymi, leader of the SoI in Hawr Rajab, began meeting with

Yousif Yaqoub Bekhaty, Rashid District Council chairman, and other council officials to request government assistance with reconstruction efforts.

"The present challenges we face are maintaining security, promoting economic growth and stability, while helping Hawr Rajab establish an efficient local government with supporting entities," said Capt. Gregory Curry II, commander of Troop A, 6th Squadron, 8th Cavalry Regiment. "It will not happen overnight, but it is happening one day at a time."

Curry, of Walnut Creek, Ohio, said Troop A, 6-8th Cav. Regt. Soldiers are key players and a driving force behind various programs in Hawr Rajab.

His troop coordinates with Team A, Company B, 426th Civil Affairs Battalion, and the U.S. State Department's Baghdad-7 embedded Provincial Reconstruction Team.

The combined efforts of the groups, assigned to the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, mean residents of Hawr Rajab have access to resources for rebuilding their town.

Life is returning to normal with the improvements, made



By Staff Sgt. Michael Paredes

A civil affairs team member and Capt. Gregory E. Curry II, commander of Trp. A, 6-8th Cav. Regt., of Walnut Creek, Ohio, meet with the chairman of the Hawr Rajab Women's Committee to discuss issues affecting women and orphans in the area.

possible by partnership between Coalition forces, SoI, officials from the GoI and Iraqi Security Forces. Hawr Rajab is becoming a beacon of change and potential for sustainable economic improvements.

The following outlines current economic initiatives.

The Microgrant program.

More than \$50,000 in microgrants has been distributed to

approximately 50 stores. The purpose of this program is to re-open businesses, jump-start the economy and provide employment.

The effects are further reaching than the local community. To stock shops, products are brought in from other areas – some as far as India and China – making Hawr Rajab a member of the global community.

The Poultry Revitalization program.

The program will provide starter chicks to poultry farms that were shut down due to violence. Two types of chicks will be provided; one type will be raised for the purpose of producing eggs and the other for meat. First Lt. Michael E. Falk, pla-

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Georgians provide medical, humanitarian aid

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

FOB DELTA – Soldiers from the 1st Georgian Infantry Brigade are providing medical and humanitarian assistance to villages surrounding Coalition forces checkpoints in Wasit province.

"We have a very good relationship between the villagers and the Coalition forces," said Capt. Zauri Marakadze, 1GB Civil Military Cooperation (CIMIC) Team commander.

During a visit Feb. 23, the Georgian team provided supplies and medical and dental care to 50 villagers in Abu Bakar, a village of about 120 residents located near An Numaniyah.

The Georgian CIMIC group conducts one medical operation at villages around each Coalition checkpoint every month, said Marakadze.

Georgian dentist 1st Lt. Maka Kurparashvili cared for 15 patients. Most had numerous cavities or no teeth at all. Cavities and loss of teeth are common problems and many villagers do not know how to take care of their teeth, she said. Dentists gave patients training on proper brushing along with toothbrushes and other dental



Photos by Sgt. 1st Class Stacy Niles

The 1st Georgian Infantry Regiment Civil Military Cooperation Team hands out humanitarian aid during a medical operation in the village of Abu Bakar. Fifty residents received medical care.

supplies.

Eighty families received packages of food and water. The team also gave humanitarian aid to a nearby school that serves 150 students.

On Feb. 26, The Georgian CIMIC

team visited His Ais Asomar to provide medical and humanitarian assistance to residents. The village has a population of 501, said Raheem Mohsar, a resident.

The doctors treated 50 villagers, mostly women. The village is located about



Maj. Temuri Marakadze, a physician with 1st Georgian Infantry Brigade, listens to a patient's lungs in the village of Abu Bakar.

eight kilometers from the nearest medical facility; the nearest hospital is some 20 kilometers away, said Mohsar.

This was the first trip of its sort to the village and the villagers were very grateful for the assistance provided by the Georgian forces, said Mohsar.

"The people really need the medical (care) ... and we are glad to help. We intend to get out as much as possible," Marakadze said.

The group takes female medical practitioners and at least one female Soldier to provide health care to women out of respect for Iraqi cultural norms, he said.

Soldiers primed for crew chief positions

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

CAMP STRIKER – When crew chiefs are promoted, they traditionally move from flight companies to maintenance companies.

In order to fill positions left vacant, junior enlisted Soldiers from maintenance companies are brought up to line companies and trained to become crew chiefs.

“Crew chiefs are needed because we help reduce the risk of accidents for pilots,” said Spc. Rick Anderson, a crew chief trainer in Company C, 4th Battalion, 3rd Aviation Regiment, 3rd Combat Aviation Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division. “The pilots spend their time looking forward. We’re an extra set of eyes in the back of the aircraft. We can cover more.”

Soldiers chosen from Co. D, 4-3rd Avn. Regt., a maintenance company, possess the skills necessary to complete tasks crew chiefs perform daily.

“We pick ... the hard workers, the motivated,” said Anderson from Miami, Fla. “We say, ‘okay, this guy we want,’ because being a crew chief is not all about flying. It’s about taking care of your aircraft. Each crew chief is assigned an aircraft. If it breaks, it’s your responsibility to get it fixed.”

Candidates’ training begins with academics. Soldiers learn the aircraft’s limitations, physical effects of flying and daily crew chief tasks.



By Pfc. Monica K. Smith

Spc. Rick Anderson (left), a crew chief trainer with Co. C, 4-3rd Avn. Regt., shows Spc. John Marsh, also with Company C, how to perform a post-flight inspection on a Black Hawk at the 3rd CAB flight line in Baghdad.

“We go in-depth on each task so there is no confusion on how it’s supposed to be done,” Anderson said. “We train the new crew chiefs pretty intensively, which is why Co. C is the best in the brigade.”

Candidates begin at readiness level three. At this stage, they are brand new. During RL3, candidates learn basic

tasks such as surveillance, preparing the aircraft for missions and they participate in crew briefs.

Once proficient at basic tasks, they move to RL2, where they begin learning mission tasks. At this stage, candidates begin flying on missions to learn in-flight tasks.

Once Soldiers achieve RL1, they are

expected to perform all tasks to standard and are susceptible to no-notice evaluations similar to a pop-quiz.

During RL1, Soldiers are prepared to take on any mission task with another RL1 crew chief.

Spc. John Marsh, a crew chief candidate in Co. C, 4-3rd Avn. Regt., said, when it came to learning the material, maintenance information came easy for him. Having spent more than a year in the maintenance company, Marsh says he has other areas to focus on.

“Like with the radio, it’s hard remembering what to say and learning the terminology,” said Marsh, from Bonifay, Fla. “The radio is loud when everyone is talking and it takes time to learn how to respond. All the flying is new to me, but not the actual maintenance.”

During the current deployment, five Co. C, 4-3rd Avn. Regt., Soldiers have advanced from the maintenance company to the flight company. However, being chosen to progress does not automatically ensure a spot as a crew chief. Soldiers who do not meet the standard are weeded out.

“You can’t be lazy in this job,” Anderson said. “There is always something to do and if you’re sitting around that means something’s not getting done. You have to be a self-starter because our job doesn’t allow us to be around our leaders all the time. You have to get yourself and get your buddy motivated. Get your gear, get out there and get the job done.”

Flight line aid station puts Soldiers, mission first

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

CAMP STRIKER – A constant flux in Soldiers’ schedules can create difficulties for some trying to make sick call for medical treatment.

An aid station at the Combat Aviation Brigade flight line provides medical treatment to Soldiers in 3rd CAB who work there and would otherwise be unable to make sick call at the Camp Striker Troop Medical Clinic.

“We’re a small facility where we take care of mostly sick call and aviator flight physicals,” said Staff Sgt. Rey Flete, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Aviation Regiment and non-commissioned officer in charge at the aid station.

“It gives the aviators a chance to be seen when they come off the flight line without having to go through the inconvenience

of going to the other TMC.”

To date, the aid station has seen more than 7,000 patients over the duration of the deployment. Soldiers are able to visit the aid station at their convenience, allowing them to put the mission first.

“It’s convenient for where I work,” said Spc. Erick Heath, Company D, 2-3rd Avn. Regt., who came to the clinic to requalify on his combat lifesaving skills. “There’s not a set sick-call schedule so you can come when you want. It’s also convenient when it comes to training.”

The brigade aid station is fully functional and operates in three eight-hour shifts, 24 hours a day.

The station is manned by Soldiers from 2-3rd Avn. Regt., 1-3rd Avn. Regt. and 3rd Squadron, 17th Cavalry Regiment. Each shift has three to four Soldiers on duty; one is an NCOIC and another is a doc-

tor.

“The only difference between us and the Striker TMC is they are a level two (facility) and we are a level one,” Flete said. “They have an X-ray and have more lab abilities. We have a trauma room if someone gets hurt out here so we have a place to treat them.”

The aid station has been renovated multiple times since the 3rd CAB’s arrival in May. Lights and an air conditioner were installed, windows were boarded and a floor was built in the trauma room.

“The hardest part was getting this place set up,” Flete said.

With a majority of 3rd CAB Soldiers working at the flight line, having an aid station located where they work allows medics to respond to any issues that occur on the flight line.

“We’re responsible for all the aviation aspects out here as far as medical concerns go; otherwise, the Soldiers would



By Pfc. Monica K. Smith

Spc. Chris Gary (center), medic in HHC, 2-3rd Avn. Regt., guides Spc. Adam Thibeault (left) and Spc. Erick Heath, both with Co. D, 2-3rd Avn. Regt., in giving an IV as they requalify on their combat lifesaving skills at the 3rd CAB flight line.

have to wait for the other TMC line. It’s a safety thing,” Flete said.

Soldier plans to ride on professional circuit

Staff Sgt. Rustin Nobinger, 3-7th Inf. Regt., 4th BCT, 3rd Inf. Div., hopes to ride professionally for the Professional Bull Riders once he redeploy from Iraq. The seven-year Army veteran has been bull riding since he arrived at Fort Stewart, Ga., two years ago and has ridden more than 500 bulls.

Courtesy photo



By 1st Lt. WILLIAM PERDUE
3-7th Inf. Regt. UPAR
4th BCT, 3rd Inf. Div. PAO

FOB KALSU – “Marne Roundup” is not just the name of a recent Multi-National Division – Center operation designed to prevent the flow of accelerants into Baghdad. Mention it to one Soldier here, and it evokes more than combat memories.

Staff Sgt. Rustin Nobinger is reminded of the time he rode a 2,000-pound bull in a rodeo competition whenever he hears the term.

Nobinger, from Cullman, Ala., Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 3rd Battalion, 7th Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, said his goal is to ride for the Professional Bull Riders. What’s more, he is hoping to get the Army to sponsor him.

“The Army sponsors civilians who ride professionally and the reason that they sponsored those certain individuals is that they showed the same qualities that a real Army Soldier would possess,” said Nobinger. “What better representation of the Army than one of its own combat veterans?”

The seven-year Army veteran has been

bull riding since he arrived at Fort Stewart, Ga., two years ago and has ridden in the South East Cowboys Association, Professional Cowboys Association and one show in the PBR Enterprise Tour which took place in Savannah, Ga.

“I grew up watching it when I was a kid and I wanted to do it,” Nobinger said.

Nobinger said he began to ride in Ludewici, Ga., at the N.C. Ranch, after he returned from Iraq on his last deployment.

Nobinger received the opportunity to ride professionally in the PBR Enterprise Tour prior to his most recent deployment in October 2007. His break came when someone dropped out of the competition and he submitted his name. He rode a bull named Dueling Banjos and was thrown off in less than five seconds. Dueling Banjos has thrown off more than 37 riders and remains unridden.

The short stint on the bull’s back didn’t deter him. Nobinger has ridden more than 500 bulls since he started.

He said he has been invited to ride in the Professional Armed Forces Rodeo Association once he redeploy from Iraq, and he hopes to be selected for the All Army Bull Riding Team, located in Fort Hood, Texas.



Two Soldiers in Co. B, 1-15th Inf. Regt., guard two detainees during the air assault mission in Kanasa, a small village south of Salman Pak.

Photo by
Sgt. Timothy Kingston/
55th Combat Camera

RAID, From Front Page

us, it’s just another raid with a different means of infiltration.”

Eno explained that the area south of Salman Pak had been an extremist safe haven because it was sparsely populated and offered enemy fighters many places to hide and seek refuge.

“There are a lot of abandoned houses and farms down there for extremists to take refuge in,” he said. “The area is mainly marshy farmland and there haven’t been any Sons of Iraq or Coalition forces down there.”

Before the mission, Lt. Col. Jack Marr, from Minneapolis, commander of 1-15th Inf. Regt., spoke to his troops and reminded them to look out for one another and be aware of their surroundings.

“We all need to treat this like it is our first

air assault,” he said. “If you aren’t sure about something, slow down and get sure. The last time we were on one of these missions near this area, we started taking indirect (fire) as we were getting on the birds to leave. There are bad guys out there and we need to think through what they might try to do to us.”

Marr reminded his Soldiers to be respectful when they entered homes.

“Be firm, but fair,” he said. “Conduct your searches, but do not screw up the goodwill we have been building there by tearing up someone’s house or by being disrespectful to them.”

The 1-15th Inf. Regt. is assigned to 3rd HBCT, from Fort Benning, Ga., 3rd Infantry Division, and has been deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom since March 2007.



Courtesy photo

Staff Sgt. Ronald Phillips from Conway, S.C., stands beside missiles found in a weapons cache by Co. B, 2-502nd Inf. Regt.

Tip leads troops to guided missile cache

4th BCT, 3rd Inf. Div. PAO

FOB KALSU – Based on a tip, Coalition forces found a weapons cache containing 20 100mm guided Cobra missiles near Babbahani March 4.

Soldiers with Company B, 2nd Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, currently attached to the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry

Division, made the discovery.

“We have to continue to take steps to create a better environment for the Iraqi people and Coalition forces,” said Sgt. 1st Class Xavier Perdue, from Philadelphia, 2nd Platoon sergeant.

The old and unserviceable missiles were disposed of by an explosive ordnance disposal team via controlled detonation.

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

PROVIDED BY 3RD INF. DIV. PAO



Female surgeon, spy receives Congressional Medal of Honor

"There will be a defining moment for each of you."

— Lt. Gen. Ann E. Dunwoody
Keynote speech March 14, 2007 during Women's History Month Observance at Club Stewart.

At the "magnificent" Women's History Month Observance last year, justly characterized as such by 3rd Infantry Division commanding general, Maj. Gen. Rick Lynch, many extraordinary military women, as well as spouses were commemorated. Hearing individual stories of heroism was inspiring. One of the great heroines mentioned by keynote speaker, Lt. Gen. Ann Dunwoody, was female Prisoner of War, Dr. Mary Edwards Walker.

Walker (1832 - 1919) studied and taught medicine in New York and opened an unsuccessful practice with her husband and fellow doctor, Albert Miller. At the time women doctors were not highly trusted. When the War Between the States broke out, Walker volunteered for the Union Army. Because women were prevented from being surgeons, Walker served as a nurse. When she could, she worked close to the frontlines, often without pay. She was at many battle sites, including the Battle of Chickamagua, where the 15th "CAN DO" Infantry made a name for itself.

Eventually, her efforts were

rewarded via the commission as "Contract Acting Assistant Surgeon" in 1863. Thus, Walker became the first-ever female U.S. Army surgeon. This would not be the last of her famous firsts.

There was another side to Walker. Apart from the dutiful doctor, she also had the talent of disguise. In fact, she had been arrested many times for impersonating a man. Walker put this skill to good use when she began spying for the Union Army. However, it was one such mission that led to her capture by Confederate soldiers on April 10, 1864. She remained a POW for four months. The Confederates negotiated her release by demanding a trade for the return of one of their own captured POWs. The exchange was made and as Dunwoody explained in her speech, it made Walker proud that she had been exchanged, man for "man."

In 1865, as recommended by Gen. William Tecumseh Sherman himself, President Andrew Johnson awarded Walker, the first woman in U.S. history, with the Congressional Medal of Honor.

Courtesy of the U.S. Coast Guard, here are the numbers of female servicemembers held as Prisoners of War:

Civil War - 1
World War II - 88
Desert Storm - 2
Operation Iraqi Freedom - 3
*Numbers as of 7/17/06

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 communi-

ties 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.



By Staff Sgt. Michael Paredes

Soldiers of Trp. A, 6-8th Cav. Regt. patrol Hawr Rajab as the streets bustle with activity from local businesses and school children walking home.

IMPROVE: Iraqis to get vocational training through 'Village of Hope' program

From page 7

toon leader, Troop A, 6-8th Cav. Regt., said a processing plant in a neighboring town will process the poultry.

Falk, a native of Clifton, Va., said the poultry industry of Hawr Rajab has the potential to profit from commerce between itself, surrounding communities and other area markets.

By mid-March 2008, eight chicken coops will be the first to receive a scheduled delivery of approximately 25,000 heads of young poultry.

The Seed Distribution program.

The Agricultural Committee of Hawr Rajab coordinated a seed distribution program with Coalition forces in December 2007. It distributed more than 900 starter packets of seed as well as plastic to local farmers. The starter packets contained seeds for cucumbers, eggplants, bell peppers and tomatoes.

At present, success of the seed distribution is being measured by the 2nd BCT and the outlook for the program is positive.

School renovation projects.

A girls' school is currently undergoing extensive renovations to give the facility a much-needed face-lift.

A similar renovation plan for the boys' school is currently pending funding. Presently, there is a shortage of school buildings and boys attend classes in two shifts, with the morning reserved for primary school and afternoon for secondary school. Despite overcrowding at the schools, educators make due with their resources and school remains in session.

The Hawr Rajab Medical Clinic.

This facility is being repaired and is scheduled for completion mid-March 2008. Medical personnel will be provided by the Iraqi Ministry of Health and will return prior to the completion of the facilities. In the meantime, limited services are provided by a local physician assistant.

Women's initiatives.

Women of the area formed a committee to

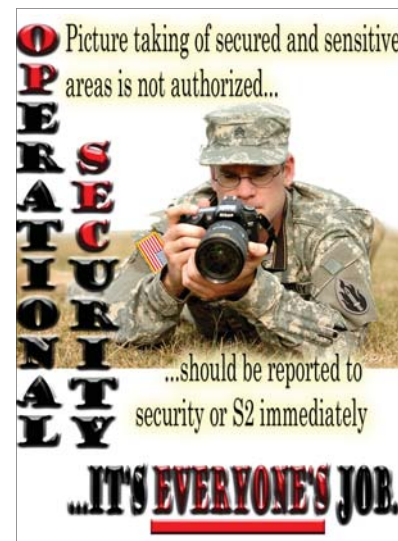
discuss problems facing women and find solutions.

The group formed in February 2008 and has since brought to light a very serious issue. Many men have been killed by insurgents, leaving families without their traditional heads of households. Now a fund exists to care for families left behind by Sons of Iraq who paid the ultimate price for protecting their homes during the fight against al-Qaeda.

'The Village of Hope.'

With the revitalization of the area and need for skilled labor, a vocational school was constructed by U.S. Air Force construction engineers, who will also provide the instructors to staff it.

A large number of SoI will be retrained as electricians, carpenters and construction laborers. This vocational school has been dubbed "The Village of Hope." The program is currently in the final approval stage at Multi-National Division - Center Headquarters.





Courtesy photo

Capt. Ken Guglielmina (left) was Spc. Janus Perez's 5th grade health class teacher in 1996. After 12 years apart, the two Soldiers met by chance in Iraq at FOB Falcon's dining facility and again at PB Stone in Hawr Rajab.

Teacher, student reunite 12 years later in Iraq

By **STAFF SGT. MICHAEL PAREDES**
6-8th Cav. Regt. UPAR
2nd BCT, 3rd Inf. Div. PAO

FOB KALSU – Two Soldiers were reminded how small the world really is during a chance January encounter at the Forward Operating Base Falcon dining facility.

After leaving Capital Christian School in 2001, Spc. Janus Perez, a reconnaissance scout with Troop A, 6th Squadron, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, carried good memories of the school with him.

One of those memories was of his fifth grade health teacher, "Mr. G."

"I sat down and I was like, 'That's him, I know that guy! That's my 5th grade health class teacher, Mr. G.,'" said Perez, from Carmichael, Calif., describing the moment he saw Capt. Ken Guglielmina.

Despite his gut feeling that Guglielmina, a member of the 412th Civil Affairs Battalion, supporting 6-8th Cav. Regt., was Mr. G., Perez approached cautiously.

Perez walked toward the oddly familiar-looking officer and tapped him on the shoulder.

"Are you Mr. G., and did you teach fifth grade at Capital Christian School in Sacramento, California," he asked.

Guglielmina answered that he was.

Although the two hadn't seen each other for nearly 12 years, Perez said Guglielmina looked nearly the same.

Guglielmina remembered a little bit about Perez, too.

"I remember Janus as a good boy and a good student," said Guglielmina, from Elk Grove, Calif.

During a second chance meeting, this time at Patrol Base Stone, they caught up and compared notes on former classmates and teachers. The two discussed their lives. Perez is now married with a 1-year-old daughter, while Guglielmina is married with an 8-year-old daughter and 5-year-old son.

Guglielmina, who is set to retire from the Army near the end of March, said he plans to return to teaching as soon as he redeploys in early March.

It is a story and lesson he can share with his new students: Fate may reunite people in the strangest places.

"It was a pleasant surprise to see him again and of all places, here," Guglielmina said.

Photo Contest Winner: Staff Sgt. Jay C. Wheeler



IRAQI FARMING: Staff Sgt. Tammy L. Santos, from Chicago, a Soldier in Company G, 703rd Brigade Support Battalion, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, discusses this year's crop with a local farmer while on patrol in Northern Babil province Feb. 23. Staff Sgt. Jay C. Wheeler is the unit historian for Company G.

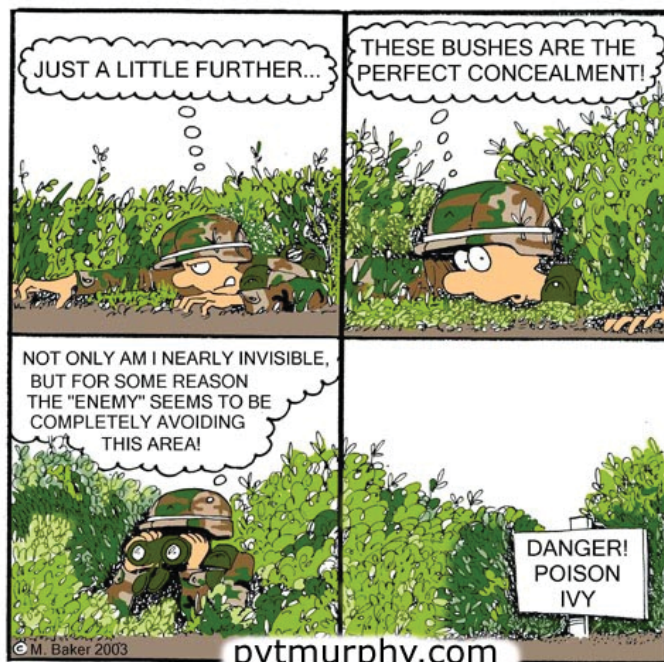
Photo Contest Get Published!



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 Classic





Photos by Sgt. Natalie Rostek

Above: Sgt. Jerry Holloway, from Lafayette, Ala., and Spc. Stephen Stricklin, from Wesson, Miss., both with Headquarters Company, 3rd BSTB, listen as a worker from al Nasser Dairy Farm explains the milking process. Right: Stricklin feeds a cow at al Nasser Dairy Farm, in a village near Wehida.



Got security? Time to revitalize dairies

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

FOB HAMMER – Members of 3rd Brigade Special Troops Battalion and 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team's Provincial Reconstruction Team conducted an assessment of al Nasser Dairy Farm, in a village near Wehida.

Floyd Wood, from Manassas, Va., agricultural adviser to the brigade from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Lt. Col. Todd Ratliff, from Holland, Ohio, commander of 3rd BSTB, talked with the farm's managerial staff and workers Feb. 26 regarding opportunities for the brigade to provide technical and financial assistance.

Spc. Amy Graybeal, a Soldier from the PRT who grew up on a dairy farm in Peach Bottom, Pa., said the farm is similar to those one might see in California.

"The climate here is similar to that of California's," she said. "It looks like they don't have as many cows for as much equipment as they have."

Her assessment was correct. Wood met with several members of the farm's leadership, including the farm manager, veterinarian, feed and nutrition specialist and financial manager.

He learned from the group that the amount of both dairy cows and farming staff has drastically decreased due to irrigation problems. Currently, the farm staffs approximately 20 employees and houses 1,000 dairy cows. When fully operational, the farm had 1,000 employees and 8,000 cows.

"They need to ship in about 50,000 gallons of water

a week just for the cows to drink and for operational maintenance," Wood said. "They need enough water to irrigate about 3,500 acres of land to produce feed for the cows. Basically right now there are just enough workers to keep the cows alive."

Wood explained that the bulk of the employees used to work in the fields tending to the alfalfa, clover and corn used to feed the cows. Without the proper amount of water to irrigate the fields, the crops cannot grow resulting in loss of jobs for the workers and malnutrition for the cows.

"The feed is also shipped in but it's poor quality," Wood said. "They have to slaughter about 25 cows per month due to malnutrition. The manager told me he gives the meat from the slaughtered cows to the workers and poor families in the area."

As a result of less production, Iraqi citizens who relied on the farm for their dairy needs are also feeling the effects.

"When the farm was fully functional, they were a large distributor of milk to south central Iraq, primarily Baghdad," Wood said. "Now that they can no longer do that, milk is being imported from Kuwait or Jordan causing the prices to go up. Mid- to lower-income families can't afford it anymore, so this problem is not just affecting direct employment, but it's also affecting the quality of life."

Wood, Ratliff, Graybeal and 3rd BSTB Soldiers toured the milking facility and cow parlors, accompanied by the farm's managers and staff.

Graybeal said she was surprised at how modern and

functional the facility was, with several automatic milking stations and devices which digitally track milk production for each dairy cow.

When the assessment was complete, the group went to the source of the farm's irrigation problems: the al Khachia irrigation pump station.

Wood said last March members of al-Qaeda destroyed the pump station, which had provided water to a large portion of the Mada'in Qada, the 3rd HBCT area of operation.

Currently, there is only one operational horizontal pump at the station. The one pump can only provide a few local families with drinking water.

"If the vertical pumps were working they could put out massive amounts of water," Wood said. "The one working horizontal pump is not enough to sustain agriculture in this area."

Wood said Coalition forces' main effort is to get the Ministry of Irrigation onboard to repair the pump station.

According to Maj. Cliff Faulkner, from Silverton, Colo., commander of Company A, 489th Civil Affairs Battalion, the plan is to have the government of Iraq move sub-pumps from the al Bawi pump station to the al Khachia irrigation pump station.

"The pumps move water down the canal," he said "A lot of people depend on them."

The 3rd BSTB is assigned to 3rd HBCT, from Fort Benning, Ga., 3rd Infantry Division, and has been deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom since March 2007.

