

# Rakkasans prepare to patrol waterways

**SGT. 1ST CLASS KERENSA HARDY**  
3RD BCT, 101ST ABN. DIV. (AASLT)

**CAMP STRIKER** – Most Soldiers who join the Army can honestly say they would have never imagined patrolling the Euphrates River in a boat.

Some Rakkasans will soon be able to say they've done just that.

Company A, 3rd Battalion, 187th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), is training to operate boats the unit received May 2.

"I'm pretty excited," said Cpl. Tomas Montoya, Co. A, 3-187th Inf. Regt. "I never thought I'd have the opportunity to work on boats over here in Iraq."

The boats will create new opportunities and capabilities in their operations along the Euphrates River, said Lt. Col. Andrew Rohling, commander of 3-187th Inf. Regt. "They bring a sense of security, strength and versatility the local populace has not always seen from the water."

The boats add invaluable dimensions to the unit's ability to conduct full-spectrum operations, said Maj. Curtis Crum, 3rd BCT operations officer. "The boats give the brigade a unique capability that is not typically resident in this type of unit's arsenal."

The unit's predecessors, 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry), ordered the boats in November 2007 to conduct riverine operations along the Euphrates to deter insurgent activity. The boats were delivered to 3-187th Inf. Regt., in January.

Since river operations are usually outside the scope of Soldiers' duties, the battalion sent eight Soldiers to Kuwait in January to train on operating the vessels.

"It was excellent, they did great



1st Lt. Jodi Krippel

Soldiers from Co. A, 3-187th Inf. Regt., launch a boat for operations on the Euphrates River during a demonstration at PB Kemple.

training," said Pfc. Travis Baldridge of the Army divers and Coast Guardsmen who taught the course. Baldridge said the three-week course in Kuwait taught boat docking, engine repair, man-overboard drills, driving the boat under varying conditions, docking the boat and repairing major malfunctions. Now, almost four months later, Baldridge is in the instructor's seat passing on the knowledge he gained in Kuwait.

Baldridge is one of five in Co. A, 3-187th Inf. Regt., training other Soldiers in the unit on boat operations.

"It feels really good to be involved in this," he said. "I'm new to the Army, I've been in for two years and it's nice that they expect me to go above and beyond the standards and to train up other people."

A training plan was established based on the battalion and company

commanders' guidance and input from the eight Soldiers who certified in Kuwait.

"The first thing in our mind is the safety of personnel in the boat," said Staff Sgt. Clifton Sanders, lead instructor for a five-day course designed to ensure all Soldiers who man the boats are physically and technically qualified for the task.

The first day, each Soldier has to complete a 50-meter confidence swim while wearing their Army Combat Uniform and boots. They also have to tread water for three minutes wearing ACUs, the improved outer tactical vest, advanced combat helmet and a personal flotation device.

"No weak swimmers or non-swimmers will be allowed on boat operations," Sanders said firmly. Those who

# Transition team gives Iraqi Army hands-on training

PVT. CHRISTOPHER McKENNA  
3RD BCT, 101ST ABN. DIV. (AASLT)

FOB FALCON – A Military Transition Team stationed at FOB Falcon, about eight kilometers south of Baghdad, plays a rigorous and important role in rebuilding the capacity of Iraq.

The MiTT helps the Iraqi Army to operate in an optimal manner, said Sgt. Chad Highland, Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 1st Squadron, 33rd Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault).

Soldiers from the MiTT, assigned to 1-33rd Cav. Regt., teaches a five-day Iraqi basic training course using U.S. Army knowledge converted into something Iraqi Army Soldiers can execute.

“It’s basically a course to teach basic Soldiering skills and something to refresh what they ... already learned in their basic training,” said San Antonio native Sgt. Adam Troxel, MiTT gunner and trainer.

The five-day course, taught monthly, has a capacity for 25 Soldiers; five

*“It’s basically a course to teach basic Soldiering skills and something to refresh what they ... already learned in their basic training.”*

– Sgt. Adam Troxel  
MiTT gunner and trainer



Pvt. Christopher McKenna

Sergeant Angel Otero, from Washington, D.C., MiTT communications noncommissioned officer in charge of HHT, 1-33rd Cav. Regt., gives a block of instruction to IA Soldiers on sector sketches at FOB Falcon, Iraq.

from each of the companies with 3rd Battalion, 25th Brigade, 6th IA Division.

Before assuming their duties, the team went through a MiTT course in Taji providing them with guidance on teaching Iraqis, said Highland, from San Clemente, Calif.

The instruction focuses on first aid, guard duty, unit movement techniques, vehicle search, reaction to improvised explosive devices, rules of engagement and other soldiering skills.

“The course itself attempts to focus more toward hands-on training so that the Soldiers can take what we teach them and utilize it out at their

battle positions and checkpoints, which is where the majority of the Soldiers coming to us work,” Highland said.

When the MiTT is not conducting classes, the team travels to IA checkpoints and battle positions to ensure the proper procedures learned are being implemented.

“When you actually go out and see them using what you taught them it is rewarding,” Troxel said. “Besides, we are all noncommissioned officers and it is our job to train Soldiers. It’s a reward in itself to be able to stand here and say ‘I help train Soldiers from a completely different country’s army than our own.’”

## THE Dog Face Daily

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## WATER: Soldiers train to patrol Euphrates River on boats

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don't meet the standards the first day have an opportunity to retest at the end of the course.

The remaining four days of training cover boat preparation, operation of the boat, battle drills and practical exercises that help prepare Soldiers for situations they may encounter during riverine operations.

"Our first mission will be ... river reconnaissance," Sanders said, an avid swimmer and certified lifeguard who voiced commitment to retraining all weak and non-swimmers.

Before executing any actual missions, Soldiers will identify potential hazards, determine loading and departure points and seek out areas frequented by criminal factions.

"The boats allow the Rakkasans to

deter illegal activity and deter insurgents from potentially using the river to transit weapons and personnel," Crum said. "As a BCT, we have added to an already incredible capability, and this ensures, as we continue to assist the Government of Iraq and Iraqi Security Forces in stabilizing acceptable security levels, it will also foster systems that set conditions for long-term Iraqi self-reliance."

## 200 students graduate from Iskandariyah vo-tech

**SGT. 1ST CLASS TAMI HILLIS**  
4TH BCT, 3RD INF. DIV.

FOB KALSU – Approximately 200 students from the Vocational-Technical School in the Iskandariyah Industrial Complex (IIC) graduated May 4 amongst friends and family members.

"I'd like to say congratulations to the vo-tech director and his staff but most of all to the students of this graduating class," said Lt. Col. Jeff McKone, Multi-National Division – Center Iskandariyah Industrial Complex liaison, Team Iskan officer in charge. "It is an honor to be a part of the success in the rebuilding of the Iskandariyah vo-tech."

Graduates received a certificate of

training along with a gift — sewing machine or computer repair kit — to help them get started in the business world.

Back in May 2007, only 32 students were enrolled at the technical school, but now there are more than 700, said Naseer Abdul Jabar, vo-tech director. He said by June they're hoping to have 1,000 students enrolled per quarter.

The IIC is located in the northern Babil Province, approximately 50 kilometers south of Baghdad, and houses a cluster of state-owned factories and the vo-tech, which is open to Iraqis wanting to learn job skills and trades.

Some of the classes held there include computers, electrical engineering, plumbing, sewing, carpentry,

HVAC, mechanical, auto mechanics, machining, milling and grinding.

"Now that you have the skills you need you will be able to serve this country and you will help the economy grow," said Sabah al-Khafaji, chief of the Mussayib council.

The IIC is a business incubator similar to the Job-Corps program in the United States, dedicated to young start-up businesses. It has the space required for manufacturing, research and development and administration for young and established enterprises.

At the same time, the vo-tech is intended to produce a steady stream of qualified workers for the industries and business, providing a further base of economic stability in the region.



Courtesy Photo

Lieutenant Colonel Jeff McKone, Team Iskan OIC, presents a student with a certificate and gift during a graduation ceremony at the Vocational-Technical School in the IIC

### Safety Thought of the Day Complacency Reminders

- Complacency is "the feeling of security, often unaware of some potential danger or defect."
- The road to complacency:
  - Individual does something successfully without negative consequences.
  - Individual is now experienced and soon believes he/she is an expert.
  - Individual downplays the threat or the environment and takes safety for granted.
  - Individual takes shortcuts and then rationalizes violating the standards ("we've always done it this way").
- Examples of complacent behavior (Do we know anyone who does this?):
  - Physically present but mentally absent from guard duty (headphones, reading magazines, napping).
  - Unsafe driving (not wearing seat belts or PPE, driving near the edge of the road, not slowing down in limited visibility).
  - Smoking near the tents, in vehicles, or around explosive or flammable products.
- Fight complacency. Think about what we are doing and how we can make it safer.

## Headline Highlights

# Skeletal paraphernalia; baseball rivalry ends in murder

## Texas teens tell police they converted skull into bong

HOUSTON (AP) – Three teenagers were arrested after two of them told police they dug up a secluded grave north of Houston, removed the skull from the coffin and converted it into a marijuana bong.

Police found a grave in the city of Humble that had been disturbed, but were still investigating the rest of the teens' story, Houston police Sgt. John Chomiak said.

Kevin Wade Jones, 17, and Matthew Richard Gonzalez, 17, both of Kingwood, were arrested Wednesday night and were being held on misdemeanor charges of abuse of a corpse, Chomiak said. The juvenile was referred to the Harris County juvenile justice system.

A woman who answered the phone at Gonzalez's home declined comment. A telephone number for Jones could not immediately be found, and it wasn't clear from court records if either had an attorney.

Police were interviewing Jones about the use of a stolen debit card when he told them about the grave theft, which purportedly occurred around March 15, according to court documents. Asked why Jones would volunteer such a story, Chomiak said, "We can only speculate and guess to what goes on in the criminal mind."

Gonzalez confirmed the story to investigators in a follow-up interview. Police were led to a heavily wooded site

in Humble where they found a knocked-over headstone and water-filled hole more than 4 feet deep. At the time, the muddy water did not allow police to see if the coffin had been disturbed.

"They dug into this gravesite and that was enough to warrant the abuse of corpse charge," Chomiak said. "There has to be further investigation into the actual gravesite."

Police believe the grave is that of an 11-year-old boy who died in 1921. Preliminary reports indicate it was part of a 19th-century veterans cemetery, Chomiak said. While residents in the area knew of the cemetery's existence, it did not appear to be maintained.

## Yankees-Red Sox argument ends in vehicular homicide

BOSTON (Reuters) – A New York Yankees' fan was accused on Monday of murdering a Boston Red Sox supporter and injuring another by running both down with a car after a heated argument over one of America's oldest sporting rivalries.

Ivonne Hernandez, 43, pleaded not guilty on Monday to reckless second-degree murder, aggravated driving while intoxicated and two counts of reckless conduct after the incident in a Nashua, New Hampshire parking lot last Friday.

Prosecutors say Hernandez was drunk when she drove her car across a dirt parking lot outside the Nashua City Hall into Matthew Beaudoin, 29, and Maria Hughes, 21, after exchanging words with

them about the Yankees and Red Sox baseball teams.

The spat began at a local bar where Hernandez said she was a Yankees fan, according to witnesses quoted by the Nashua Telegraph newspaper.

It then spilled outside where a group that included Beaudoin chanted "Yankees suck!" when they saw a Yankees sticker on the rear window of Hernandez's car, New Hampshire's Assistant Attorney General, Susan Morrell, told Reuters in a telephone interview.

"The forensic evidence at the scene indicates tire tracks going about 200 feet (61 meters) that did not swerve or brake," Morrell said. "He went onto the windshield and then when the car hit the parking meter he was ejected," she added.

Beaudoin died of massive head trauma, she added.

Hernandez told police she had only wanted to scare the group. She was ordered held without bail.

Hughes suffered minor injuries.

The Red Sox and the New York Yankees have long been one of sport's most colourful and fiercest rivalries.

While Boston won the World Series championship five times in its first two decades, including the 1903 inaugural series, they endured an 86-year dry spell before winning their sixth Series in 2004 and seventh in 2007.

The Yankees, however, have racked up 26 wins over the Series' history, including streaks of three, four and five-in-a-row championships.

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

from Sudoku Easy Presented by Will Shortz

**Solution to yesterday's puzzle:**

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

**ARABIC QUESTION OF THE DAY**

What's their target? shih-noo hed-def hoom?