

Marne Focus

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Volume 1, Issue 29 May 8, 2008

Serving Task Force Marne and MND-Center



National PrayerDay.....P. 4
 Hammer reflects.....P. 5
 School opens.....P. 8
 Fish farm success.....P. 12



MND-C Soldiers help youth of Iraq.

Pages 6-7



PB Yates expands.

Page 9



Humanitarian Efforts

Page 10

Iraqi, Coalition leaders discuss Piledriver



Soldiers with 3rd Battalion, 320th Field Artillery Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) speak with a worker in a gas facility in the Qadasiyah Apartments in Mahmudiyah during Operation Marne Piledriver April 18.

Photo by Pvt. Christopher McKenna

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

CAMP STRIKER—Iraqi Army, Coalition, tribal and Government of Iraq leaders met at the IA Compound in Mahmudiyah May 1 to discuss the progress of Operation Marne Piledriver.

Marne Piledriver, a capacity-building operation, kicked-off April 15 with an air assault and dismounted patrols throughout the Mahmudiyah Qada, aimed at disbanding any remaining al-Qaeda threat in the area.

"We want to build trust within Mahmudiyah and make sure the terrorist threat is gone for good," said Sheikh Abu Amar, Mahmudiyah Qada Council chairman. "In gaining trust, however, we expect people to come to the government when they have issues or project ideas."

Since the start of Piledriver, a series of projects have begun to improve the stability of local governance and economics throughout the qada.

Maj. Gen. Rick Lynch, Multi-National Division – Center commanding general, pointed out that Mahmudiyah was experiencing violence every day only 14

months ago. "All of that has changed now because of the implementation of security measures," Lynch said.

In conjunction with Marne Piledriver, the Rakkasans of 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) have assisted in the construction and refurbishment of schools, medical and water treatment facilities, new IA battle positions, patrol bases and various Sons of Iraq checkpoints throughout the qada.

Also, a 9-kilometer pipeline now runs to pump fresh water through the area.

In recent weeks, Operation Marne Piledriver has generated enough energy, resources and money for water treatment facilities that by August, 85 percent of the entire qada will be able to receive clean water, said Col. Dominic Caraccilo, commander of 3rd BCT, 101st Abn. Div. (AASLT).

In other improvements: One of two new radio stations is now up and running. The one in Mahmudiyah aired its first broadcast April 27 and the Yusifiyah station will become operational by May 11. Caraccilo said the stations will broadcast information on health, agriculture and voting information to the populace.

Revitalization of the fish and poultry industries is also under way, with hopes of boosting the economy by providing more jobs to the local populace.

"The ability to be able to offer all of these projects begins with security," said Brig. Gen. Ali Jassim Muhammad Hassen al-Frejee, 25th Brigade, 6th IA Division commander. He said the improved security has allowed the Coalition, IA, Iraqi Police and GoI to work together in creating a better Iraq.

"Without security we cannot do anything, and we know that," Caraccilo said, echoing al-Frejee's statements.

"Leadership is the key to the success in this area," Lynch said, who attributes the success in Mahmudiyah to three things: the great Rakkasans' leadership at battalion and brigade levels, the strength of the Mahmudiyah Qada's IA and IP forces and tribal leaders from the area willing to meet the requirements set before them.

"Seeing the country I call home move forward brings great pride," al-Frejee said. "Everyone must realize it is not being a son of Mahmudiyah, it's being a son of Iraq and it's amazing how much progress has been made over the past months."

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Marne 6 Sends

Speak to the American public

The fight is no longer about security but stability and peace

The conversation is no longer about security but about stability. Multi-National Division – Center has come to be known for its fish farming and poultry initiatives, for building windmills, and for saving the lives of countless Iraqis – babies, children, and adults.

But it took intense fighting to reach this point. The 3rd Infantry Division and Task Force Marne have lost 149

We owe it our brothers and sisters who paid the ultimate sacrifice to tell America how they gave their lives for the current security success.

Soldiers – both American and Georgian heroes – to achieve the current security situation. Every day we mourn their loss, and every day we remember their lives and the sacrifice they paid to get us here. We cannot forget what it used to be like. We cannot forget what it took to get us here.

Information operations is the deep artillery of what we are doing in Iraq. We



Maj. Gen. Rick Lynch
Task Force Marne Commander

talk to three publics: to the American public, to the Iraqi public, and to the insurgency. Our Iraqi media sections and psychological operations Soldiers speak to the Iraqi public and to the insurgency, but we – all of us – speak to the American public.

Each of us is a public affairs officer and each of us owes it to the American people to tell the story – to tell our story. Our Nation's perception of this war is what Americans see on television and

read in the newspapers – but the good news stories have difficulty making it through the national media filter. Attacks in Sadr City are all over the news, but recent initiatives to build radio stations, construct Iraqi patrol bases, and economic development initiatives do not make the front pages or the nightly news headlines.

We owe it to our battle buddies to share this story – to reach back to our hometowns and let America know what we are accomplishing over here. We owe it our brothers and sisters who paid the ultimate sacrifice to tell America how they gave their lives for the current security success.

We owe it to our Wounded Warriors at Brooke Army Medical Center in Texas, and at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C. to tell their story of how they were injured defending our freedom so when they look at the news in their hospitals rooms, they see the progress we are making. We owe it to them, we owe it to ourselves, and we owe it to the American people.

ROCK OF THE MARNE!



Marne Focus

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3rd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault)
214th Fires Brigade
7th Sustainment Brigade
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Above: Leaders of the 3-1 Cav. Regt. and 1-35 Armor Regt. discuss the importance of the Arafia Canal with local residents. Right: Water pumps in Arafia pump water from the Diyala River into the Arafia Canal.

Courtesy photos/
3-1 Cav. Regt.



Canal opens, provides water to 300 families

Iraqis, Coalition collaborate on project that includes 3 new water pumps

By SPC. JUSTIN SNYDER
2nd BCT, 1st Armor Div. PAO

FOB HAMMER – A ribbon-cutting ceremony April 28 marked the re-opening of the Arafia Canal in Arafia, Iraq, which provides irrigation water to approximately 300 area families.

Members of the Jisr Diyala Nahia Council, Sons of Iraq and 3rd Brigade, 1st National Police Division, along with leaders of 3rd Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment leaders and 1st Battalion, 35th Armor Regiment, took part in the event.

The upgrades include a new concrete lining and three functioning water pumps.

"The Iraqi people contracted all the

workers and did all the labor," said 1st Lt. Jeff Ritter, from Waterloo, Iowa, military operations officer for 3-1st Cav. Regt. civil military operations officer. "We just supplied the funding and influence to make it happen."

Ritter said the canal opening resulted from cooperation between the Jisr Diyala Nahia Council, the local community council and Coalition forces.

Ritter said continued partnership during the 3-1st Cav. Regt. and 1-35th Armor Regt. transition will allow the nahia leadership to maintain confidence in their Coalition force counterparts.

The 3-1st Cav. Regt. is assigned to the 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, from Fort Benning, Ga., and has been deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom since March 2007.

The 1-35th Armor Regt., 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armor Division, from Baumholder, Germany, is currently replacing the 3-1st Cav. Regt. east of Baghdad.

Doctors gain skills with Coalition training

By SGT. DANIEL T. WEST
214th FB PAO

FOB Delta— Military doctors here are conducting a series of lectures for Iraqi doctors in Wasit province.

This is the second eight-week course conducted by doctors from the 948th Forward Surgical Team and Company C, 26th Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, both attached to 214th Fires Brigade.

The training has proved valuable for the Iraqi doctors, particularly this second course, which held many of the same attendees as the first one.

The lectures emphasized how under the rule of Saddam Hussein, the medical community in Iraq became isolated from the outside world, said one doctor present.

The best thing for Iraqi doctors would be to establish medical schools in Iraq for post-graduate

study, the doctor said. "The schools must be in Iraq, and we need a close relationship with the U.S. to make it work."

All of the Iraqi doctors who attended the course agreed that while the lectures were very valuable, they needed practical exercises to cement the learning.

"We've always had access to the information, from books and other sources," the doctor said. "For the past 20 years, there has been little interaction with outside providers. I want the opportunity to work side-by-side with American doctors."

The training made use of practical exercises utilizing both training and observation of trauma treatment, said 2nd Lt. Jennifer Powers, Company C's Treatment Platoon leader and the training facilitator.

During the program, the military doctors got an initial list of equipment the Iraqi doctors need for their facilities.



By Sgt. Daniel T. West

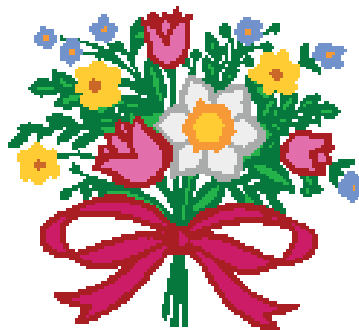
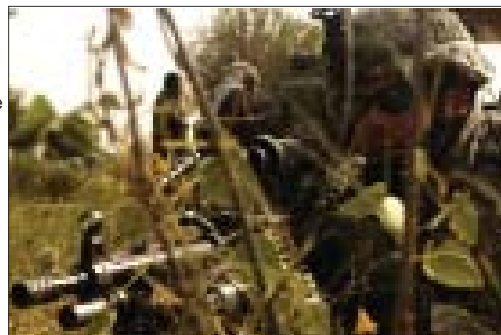
An Iraqi doctor from the Wasit province looks on as Maj. David Van Echo, a provider with Co. C, 26th BSB teaches a class about blood transfusions on Forward Operating Base Delta, April 26.

Best of Task Force Marne

The Dog Face Daily used still photography to feature the heroic actions and generous deeds of the Soldiers in the Multi-National Division - Center. The best of the photos can be found on the Task Force Marne Web site by going to the following link:

http://taskforcemarne.com/index.php?option=com_g2bridge&Itemid=21&g2_itemid=19105

The photos can be downloaded and saved for you to use as keepsakes. While at the TFM Web site, take the time to view the hundreds of articles and video clips that capture MND-C's time in Iraq.



**Don't Forget to
wish your mother
"Happy Mother's
Day"
Sunday, May 11th**

National Prayer Day observed

3rd CAB, 3rd Inf. Div. PAO

CAMP STRIKER—Soldiers from the 3rd Combat Aviation Brigade partook in good food, music and fellowship during a prayer luncheon April 30 at the CAB flight line here. The luncheon took place as an observance of the Annual National Day of Prayer, which took place May 1 with the goal of strengthening America through prayer.

"It's good for the nation to pray, and for us to publicly remind people of our Judeo-Christian heritage and that Jesus cares about our country and the world," said Chap. (Maj.) Ken Godfrey, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, CAB. Godfrey is one of six chaplains from Task Force Marne who organized the event along with their assistants.

The three-story dining facility, a recently renovated air terminal at the Baghdad International Airport, has been the site of many functions and activities, but none with the purpose of strengthening and shielding America through prayer.

"This is part of something great, our partnership with God and our country's

strength and shield through prayer," said Chaplain (Maj.) Thomas Edwards, deputy division chaplain for the 3rd Infantry Division, and guest speaker at the event.

Various Soldiers led the group in prayer, each focusing on a specific point. The seven points were: government, military, media, business, education, church and family.

"This is great," said Chief Warrant Officer 3 Francisco Vargas, aviation armament maintenance officer, with Company B, 603rd Aviation Support Battalion, from San Bernardino, Calif., who led the group in prayer for Education. "I pray every day; my personal relationship with God keeps me going, especially here."

Everyone, regardless of faith, was welcomed for the gathering, including Soldiers who have never attended such an event before.

"This is all new for me; I'm trying to learn it all," said Staff Sgt. John Klos, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 4th Battalion, 3rd Aviation Regiment, of Macomb, Mich. "It's a new and exciting experience."



Left: CW3 Francisco Vargas, from San Bernardino, Calif., and an aviation maintenance technician with Co. B, 603rd ASB, leads the group in prayer during Camp Spiker's luncheon for National Day of Prayer. Below: Sgt. Montrell Hill, of Stockton, Calif., member of the gospel group "Purified," plays the soprano saxophone during the National Day of Prayer luncheon at Camp Striker. Spc. Harvey Pegues, from Dallas, Texas, plays the drums.



Photos by Sgt. 1st Class Steve Opet

IP hone skills with Coalition



By 1st Lt. Greg Hope

Staff Sgt. Jon Kraft and Sgt. Adam Smith, both with 4th Plt., Co. C, 3rd Bn., 7th Inf. Regt. 4th BCT, 3rd Inf. Div., speak with an IP officer from the Tahrir Iraqi Police Station in Iraq during training April 23 at FOB Iskan.

1st Lt. WILLIAM PERDUE
4th BCT, 3rd Inf. Div. PAO

FOB ISKAN—A team of motivated and well trained Iraqi Policemen honed their skills and gained more in-depth training from a small group of 3rd Infantry Division Soldiers, April 23 at FOB Iskan.

Soldiers from 4th Platoon, Company C, 3rd Battalion, 7th Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Inf. Div., teamed up with the Tahrir Iraqi Police Station to reinforce basic police procedures, including vehicle and personnel searches.

"My soldiers were pretty impressed with the knowledge and proficiency that these IPs possessed," said 1st Lt. Greg Hope, 4th Platoon leader. "We definitely underestimated their abilities, and we were pleasantly surprised by their performance."

Hope initiated the IP training by offering his platoon's expertise to Lt. Col. Kareem, the Tahrir IP chief. Kareem responded positively to the training, believing that the training would be a benefit and welcomed any advice

the unit had.

The IPs arrived with Maj. Hussein, the officer in charge of the IP officers. Upon arrival, 4th Platoon recognized the IPs as some of the most proficient and skilled from the Tahrir department, said Hope, a West Chester, Ohio, native.

Kareem sent his best men to the training, Hope said. Two of the IPs had attended a two-month course in Jordan designed to teach basic police skills.

During the training Coalition forces reached several conclusions. The IPs were motivated and appreciated the tips they received to improve their performance, Hope said. The Tahrir IP department has sufficient knowledge to train its entire force, and an internal training program needs to be established in order to share the knowledge that some of the stronger officers have, Hope added.

"Now we just need to work with the Military Police Platoon on FOB Iskan to develop a training program so that these IPs can spread their knowledge to the rest of the Tahrir IPs," said Hope.

WarriorEthos

*I will always place the mission first.
I will never accept defeat.
I will never quit.
I will never leave a fallen comrade.*

Hammer leaders reflect as role in Iraq comes to end

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

FOB HAMMER – After months of intensive training at Fort Benning, Ga., and a rotation to the National Training Center in Fort Irwin, Calif., the 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team deployed to Forward Operating Base Hammer in March 2007, prepared to accomplish their mission.

Their mission in Iraq has been to prevent accelerants from coming into Baghdad, said Col. Wayne W. Grigsby, Jr., from Prince George's County, Md., commander of the 3rd HBCT.

"I'd say we were very successful doing that, in addition we came to the Mada'in Qada and helped stop the criminals that were harming the good people here," he said.

The 3rd HBCT, also known as the Hammer Brigade, captured 43 division level and brigade level HVIs (High-Value Individuals) and killed over 160 enemy fighters.

"We have been very effective along all lines of operations," Grigsby said.

Command Sgt. Major James Pearson, from Philadelphia, the 3rd HBCT's senior noncommissioned officer, is also pleased with the way his troops conducted operations.

"We have been phenomenal for over a year," he said. "I can look at what is happening in Baghdad and see an improvement. Since our arrival, attack levels have dropped to a very low point. I believe that is proof that we have been accomplishing our mission."

The 3rd HBCT inherited a battle space that had very little Coalition force presence prior to 2004. Citizens of the Mada'in Qada were routinely intimidated by extremist groups and the local economy was a shell of its former self. Shops and markets were boarded up and vacant. The local government had been forced underground and the judges who



Photos by SPC. Ben Hutto

Capt. Josh Beard, from Opelika, Ala., the civil-military operations officer for 1-10th FA, greets a worker who helped set up a well and filtration system at a girls school in Narhwan. The 3rd HBCT established relationships with citizens of the Mada'in Qada through community projects and humanitarian aid projects like the girls school.



Staff Sgt. John Zamarrripa, 3rd platoon, Company A, 1-15th Inf. Regt., jokes with citizens in Salman Pak during a market assessment mission. The 3rd HBCT worked with local business owners to improve the economy of the Mada'in Qada.

provided rule of law had fled to Baghdad. Seeing the situation, Grigsby and Pearson were optimistic, but cautious in their expectations.

"The deployment went like I expected it to," Pearson said. "I viewed us as an

extension of [Operation Iraqi Freedom] I... We had to fight in the beginning and establish ourselves in the area. We were very much in an expeditionary fight in the beginning. After we established order, we were able to build up all of the

other areas."

Pearson credits the Brigade's training as a key reason that his Soldiers were so successful.

"I have always emphasized the basics when it comes to training," he said. "Our NCOs worked hard on teaching our Soldiers core warrior tasks that they would need ... Our Soldiers knew how to fight and survive before they came out here. Once we had our fighting skills down, everything else fell into place. We were prepared to fight. All we needed to do was adjust our TTPs (tactics, techniques and procedures) based on what we were experiencing."

Grigsby said even though the initial fighting was difficult and progress was slow, the brigade's persistence and discipline remained constant.

"I cannot explain how proud I am of our Soldiers," he said. "No matter what happened, they showed up every day ready to accomplish the mission. I didn't hear any complaints or whining a single time this deployment. Much of that goes to our leaders who provided direction and kept our Soldiers focused on what they were doing, but you have to give most of the credit to our Soldiers and their commitment to serving their country."

Grigsby has seen tangible results as a result of his troops' performance.

"Security has increased ten-fold from when we first started going outside the wire here at Hammer," he said. "We were getting attacked an average of three or four times a day when we first arrived. Now we average less than one attack per day."

After capturing the HVIs, the 3rd HBCT eliminated those who menaced good citizens. In finding and eliminating weapon caches and improvised explosive devices, they eliminated another major threat. They detained 600 suspected criminals and helped rebuild the government in the area.

Salman Pak's Ministry of Irrigation replaces water pipes

By **SGT. 1ST CLASS SCOTT MAYNARD**
3rd HBCT, 3rd Inf. Div. PAO

FOB HAMMER, Iraq – Salman Pak's Ministry of Irrigation is on schedule with piping projects to restore drinking water for residents of Salman Pak and Dura'iya.

The projects, funded by the Government of Iraq, are focused on replacing water lines damaged over recent years.

The GoI is increasing efforts to rebuild and restore basic services in the region, said Capt. Matthew Givens, projects planner for the 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment.

"Every project completed in Salman Pak and the surrounding regions are made possible by in-

creased security," he said.

Givens, a native of Columbus, Ga., said projects like this one will eventually provide clean drinking water for the entire region.

"It is only one example of renewed interest by the Government of Iraq in services provided for the local people, here," he said.

Salman Pak is home to the ancient Arch of Ctesiphon, the largest man-made free standing arch in the world, which was built in 400 A.D.

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



Courtesy photo

Soldiers from 1-15th Inf. Regt., provide security for Ministry of Irrigation workers just outside Salman Pak, 20 miles southeast of Baghdad, April 15. The workers are repairing water lines to the region to provide clean drinking water for residents.

MND-C extends a hand

Capt. Mike Mullaly, a certified nurse anesthetist from Charlton, Mass., with the 948th Forward Surgical Team from Shelbyville, Ind., carries Noor into the operating room as her mother, Zainab Najj, looks on.



By Sgt. 1st Class Stacy Niles



Staff Sgt. Joseph Marcy, of the 511th Military Police Co., from a food-distribution mission in the Zuwarjat district of al-Kut, Iraq.



By Spc. Amanda McBride
Soldiers from Co. B, 415th CA, currently attached to 4th BCT, 3rd Inf. Div., distribute humanitarian-aid bags filled with food at the Hateen Apartment Complex in Iskandariyah, Iraq.

MND-C PAO

BAGHDAD – Several years ago, the diagnosis of baby Noor's rare congenital condition would have been equal to a death sentence. Today, she is on her way to leading a happy and healthy life, thanks to the Soldiers of Multi-National Division - Center.

Born with certain organs outside her body, Noor's life depended on advanced medical procedures the Iraqi medical system could not provide. Determined to get her the care she needed, doctors from 948th Forward Surgical Team, attached to the 214th Fires Brigade, successfully performed an operation that saved her life. Soldiers are now making arrangements to send her to the United States for two follow-up surgeries.

Stories like Noor's are increasingly common throughout MND-C's area of operations. Throughout the region, Soldiers are coming to the aid of the often-neglected victims of this conflict - Iraq's children.

From building schools, to distributing toys, to buying wheelchairs, Task Force Marne Soldiers are determined to improve the quality of life for Iraqi youth.

This commitment was exemplified when Soldiers from Company A, 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division came to the aid of Abdul Razik Ra'ad Mutter al-Jabouri. Last November, the young boy was doing chores along the Tigris when he stepped on an improvised explosive device planted by insurgents. Abdul lost his right arm and leg in the blast, but the Soldiers responded to the scene quickly and managed to save his life.

Company A has continued to play a role in his recovery. They transport Abdul and his family to and from the hospital for his many appointments, helping him through each step of his grueling recovery. Now Abdul is able to walk with the help of a prosthetic leg the Soldiers had fitted for him.

Often, for injuries as serious as Abdul's, a medical

evacuation by helicopter (MEDEVACs), the 3rd Combat Aviation Brigade, an average of 60 Iraqi civilians does not include evacuation by Security Forces.

Aside from individual Soldiers, the coalition routinely conduct large-scale humanitarian initiatives give local residents free care, from treating small children to the elderly.

An average of seven coalition humanitarian operations take place in the MND-C area of operations, reaching thousands of people in need.

However, not all humanitarian efforts are focused on caring for the sick and injured. Soldiers are also addressing multiple aspects of the Iraqi people's lives. They have helped facilitate an environment where children can learn and thrive.

Since their deployment, Task Force Marne has helped 87 Iraqi schools, at a cost of \$1.5 million.

In one such project, Soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division (Air Assault) coordinated the renovation of schools in Mahmudiyah. The project was led by the Mayor of Mahmudiyah and the Omah al-Muhammadiyah School and the Omah al-Muhammadiyah School for improvements.

The Commander's Emergency Response Program funded the renovations, which included new classrooms, desks, windows, and doors. These help eliminate conditions that make learning difficult.

The Soldiers have also assisted in the construction of schools for students lacking resources like books and supplies. The coalition has been spent on parks and recreational centers.

With the ball, Spc. Cortez Cox, a water purification specialist, and Staff Sgt. Howard Benjamin, a section leader, both with Company B, 2nd Battalion, 69th Armor Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), teach Radwaniyah children how to defend and take the ball away at a three-day basketball camp at PB Lion's Den.



By Staff Sgt. Tony M. Lindback

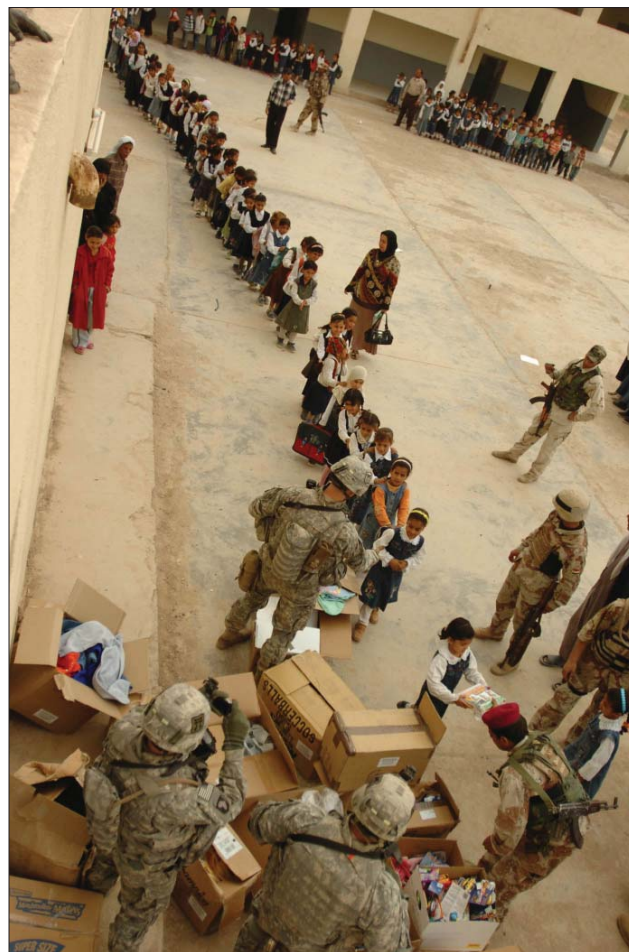
Fort Drum, N.Y., shares a moment with Iraqi children after a
g, April 30.

addressed the problem of Iraqi school supplies, textbooks and activities. To date, \$2.25 million, school supplies and youth

“Humanitarian assistance can secure key terrain. It is a critical tool in building popular support and protecting the population,” Haynes said. “TF Marne units demonstrated to populations that they had more to gain by supporting them than by supporting the insurgency.”



Noor Taha Najee uses her hands to try and form a picture in her mind of 1st Lt. Michael Kendrick, platoon leader of 2nd Platoon, Company D, 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division. Noor, whose corneas are underdeveloped, has been blind since birth.



Soldiers of Company C, 3rd Battalion, 187th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), distribute school materials donated by the Mike Stokely Foundation at a school in Mullah Fayad.

By Staff Sgt. Tony M. Lindback

Refurbished school opens in Salman Pak

By MAJ. JOE SOWERS

3rd HBCT, 3rd Inf. Div. PAO

FOB HAMMER – The only secondary school for girls in the Salman Pak area opened its doors with a ribbon-cutting ceremony April 24.

Leaders of the Salman Pak Council, the Iraqi Army, the 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment and 2nd Battalion, 6th Infantry Regiment, gathered in Salman Pak for the ceremony, which marked the completion of a \$200,000 project initiated Feb. 28.

Members of the Salman Pak Council brought the decrepit school to the attention of 1-15th Inf. Regt. leadership in January. The school was in disrepair and local leaders' desire to improve educational facilities matched the goals of the battalion leadership.

"We were looking for a big school to refurbish to make an impact," said Capt. Matt Givens, from Columbus, Ga., the civil-military operations officer for 1-15th Inf. Regt. "It was the only female secondary school in the area. Before the refurbishment, the school was pretty much falling down. It had no electricity and students couldn't use the restrooms."

Givens said the project completely overhauled the

building. Iraqi contractors repaired structural damage, erected a security wall, rewired electrical outlets, replastered the outside and repainted the inside.

Two of the most significant improvements were connecting the restrooms to a septic tank and the construction of a concrete courtyard.

"Unpaved courtyards get quite muddy when it rains," said Givens, who has facilitated 13 different school refurbishment projects during his unit's 14-month deployment. "School administrators commonly ask for concrete courtyards for assemblies and recreation."

Givens said these projects make a difference in the community.

"People view it as you're helping take care of their children and it helps to build trust within the community," he said. "They are excited when they see you helping their children."

The 1-15th Inf. Regt. is assigned to the 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, from Fort Benning, Ga. and has been deployed to Iraq since March 2007. The 2-6th Inf. Regt. is assigned to the 2nd Brigade, 1st Armored Division from Baumholder, Germany, and will soon replace the 3rd HBCT in the Mada'in Qada.



Courtesy photo

Soldiers from 1-15th Inf. Regt. pull security outside the Salman Pak Girls Secondary School, April 24. Local governmental, IA and Coalition force leaders attended a grand opening ceremony at the school which marked the completion of a \$200,000 refurbishment of the school in Salman Pak, Iraq.

Machinist saves Army time, money

By PFC. MONICA K. SMITH

3rd CAB, 3rd Inf. Div. PAO

CAMP STRIKER –The combat aviation shop is filled with techno music and heavy metal as the brigade's only machinist works busily to craft custom-made tools in support of maintenance companies.

As the machinist for Company B, 603rd Aviation Support Battalion, 3rd Combat Aviation Brigade, Sgt. Mark White saves the army millions of dollars by producing parts and tools difficult to obtain during deployment.

"I extract bolts, repair treads, make bolts, make stuff not available in the supply system by taking measurements and then I make it right here in my own shop," White said.

The wait for these parts and tools is usually long, especially for specific parts Soldiers use to work on aircrafts every day. In adding up the tool cost, plus shipping and time saved from waiting, White's platoon sergeant, Sgt. 1st Class Jose Cruz-Ortiz, estimated he was able to save the Army \$3 million during his de-

ployment.

"My job is deployment heavy," White said. "In Savannah they can go and buy stuff or they can order it and get it really quick. The work I do here saves the Army a lot of time so they don't have to order things overseas and have it shipped."

The requests and blueprints White receives from his customers come in various mediums: some as precise as a drawing with accompanying measurements, others as vague as hand gestures combined with the phrase, "it's about this big."

"Customers come up with some pretty crazy stuff," White said. "But for the for the most part it's all important stuff. They don't waste my time."

There are times when White will create a part without understanding its role.

"I made two brass ones and already they want me to make more," said White holding up a metal rod. "I don't even know what it is."

All requests go through production control to ensure his labor is put to good use, White says. The PC office decides what is impor-

tant and what isn't.

"He works wonders," Cruz-Ortiz said. "During PC meetings people will ask if he can make something for them."

At times the measurement for a product he makes has a variable of plus or minus one-one thousandth of an inch. Those measurements are called "critical measurements," White said. He works diligently with a dial caliber and magnifying glass to achieve precision.

"(The measurement is) so exact that if I'm just a little off I have to scrap the whole thing and start over," White said.

When White enlisted in the Army, many of his military occupational specialty choices were infantry related, however he did notice one as machinist. Having enjoyed shop class in high school, White chose the position.

"I enjoy it and it's fun," White said. "I like the job satisfaction. I know what I'm doing saves the Army a lot of money and helps people."

In addition to working for each of the units within the brigade, White has also assisted the Air Force, the Iraqi Army



By Pfc. Monica K Smith

Sgt. Mark White, machinist in Co. B, 603rd ASB, turns metal while shaving unnecessary parts to make an aft transmission stand sleeve April 26 at the 3rd CAB flight line shop at Camp Striker.

and once provided more than 100 modified M16 mounts for Company B, 2nd Brigade, 10th Mountain Division, from Fort Drum, N.Y. However, all projects are prioritized.

"When there's an (aircraft on ground) I stop everything and work on that," White said. "If I have the day off they'll come get me, but I know the job's important, so I don't re-

ally mind if they have to come and get me."

White's shop is an aviation intermediate level maintenance. However, there are times when producing a specialty tool requires authorization at the depot level in Corpus Christi, Texas. At first, they were wary of White's ability to produce such precise tools, but now he's granted authorization as soon as he requests it.

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Photos by Staff Sgt. Tony M. Lindback

Above: The 864th Eng. Bn. constructs a building at newly established Patrol Base Yates. Right: Spc. Kwanza Howard, a carpentry and masonry specialist from Tampa, Fla., with 1st Plt., Co. C, 864th Eng. Bn., cuts studs for a sea-hut at PB Yates. Below: Staff Sgt. Glen Hall, an interior electrician with 1st Plt., Co. C, 864th Eng. Bn., drills holes through wall studs to route wiring in a facility at PB Yates.



Arctic-tough engineers build Rakkasans' capacity



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

Patrol Base YATES – In a push to move Rakkasan Soldiers closer to the people they protect, Task Force Marne engineers are constructing a new base southwest of Baghdad.

Company C, 864th Engineer Battalion, is building Patrol Base Yates in support of Operation Marne Pile-driver, a capacity-building operation for Multi-National Division – Center. Living at PB Yates are Rakkasans from 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault).

Company C, from Fort Richardson, Alaska, is the only vertical construction engineer company serving in MND-C. Since arriving in Iraq, it has been under the command of the 479th Eng. Bn., serving TF Liberty and TF Marne.

First Lieutenant Brian Smith, 1st Platoon leader, Co. C, 864th Eng. Bn., said having a base so close to the local village eliminates the need for convoys to and from the area, allowing Soldiers to better carry out their missions.

When finished, the new facilities will create more comfortable living conditions for Soldiers currently inhabiting adequate, but battle-damaged, buildings.

"It's all about amenities for the Soldiers," said Staff Sgt. Howard Gump II, a vertical construction supervisor from New Martinsville, W. Va. "When they go out on a patrol, they know they're coming back to a house, not a dingy, grungy building."

By the end of the platoon's deployment, the engineers will have completed PB Yates among a total of 11 patrol bases and two combat outposts.

Though this project is smaller than previous ones, the engineers had to approach this site differently, Smith said.

"We usually (pre-fabricate) walls and stuff like that, bring them to their location and put them together," said Smith, from Crestview, Fla. "But with this one being so remote, it's just easier to have the materials brought here and for us to do the work on-site."

Building on-site has helped the engineers adapt to uneven and imperfect building surfaces on the fly, he said. It allowed the construction team to be more flexible according to the site's needs.

"We are the Arctic Warriors – arctic tough," Gump said. "No matter what it takes, we'll get the job done for the Soldiers of Task Force Marne and its supporting units."

Company C left its home station in September for deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Road improvements in Hay Jasmen lead to brighter days



Courtesy photos

"As a result of these improvements, the neighborhood's mood has changed from despair to encouragement and guarded optimism."

— Lt. Col. Timothy Newsome
4BCT, 3rd Inf. Div.



ISF, Coalition forces distribute food, toys

Humanitarian items distributed to more than 200 families in Zuwarijat district

Sgt. DANIEL T. WEST
214th FB, 3rd Inf. Div., PAO

FOB DELTA – Iraqi Security Forces and American Soldiers distributed humanitarian items to more than 200 families in the Zuwarijat district of al-Kut, 163 kilometers southeast of Baghdad, April 30, as part of Operation Thunder II.

The humanitarian mission furthered the operation's goal of establishing a permanent ISF presence in the area.

During Operation Thunder II, ISF occupied three buildings to serve as temporary joint security stations until a permanent facility is built, said Col. Peter Baker, commander of the 214th Fires Brigade.

"This is the first time since I came to al-Kut that ISF has come into and stayed in an area with no permanent ISF presence," Baker said.

Zuwarijat, like the Sadr area of Baghdad, was used by Saddam Hussein as a place for people he considered undesirable, said Capt. Hayder Ali Adnan, of the Iraqi Police. The standard of living is very low.

The ISF moved into the area to show residents of Zuwarijat the strength of the security forces and give them the opportunity to support ISF in finding criminals, Adnan said.

The Iraqi Army led the mission, with the support of IP and assistance in planning from American forces, Baker said.

"I think the joint security mission and the assistance mission was very



By Sgt. Daniel T. West

Pfc. Michael McNeil, of the 511th MP Co., from Fort Drum, N.Y., shares a joke with Iraqi children after a food-distribution mission in the Zuwarijat district of al-Kut, Iraq, April 30.

effective and successful," Adnan said. "The distribution mission was good."

Baker said the missions were a good example of ISF growth.

"They are more skilled and better with planning. It's a tremendous growth in capacity in a short time," he said.

Baker said he was pleased with the

results of the operation, but warned that the future stability of the area is far from assured.

"It's only been a week, but it's been a good week," he said.



By Sgt. Daniel T. West

Cpl. David Silva, of the 511th Military Police Company, from Fort Drum, N.Y., passes a package of food supplies to an IP officer in Zuwarijat, a district of al-Kut, Iraq, April 30.

"This is the first time since I came to al-Kut that ISF has come into and stayed in an area with no permanent ISF presence."

— Col. Pete Baker
Commander 214th FB



By Sgt. Daniel T. West

Sgt. Michael Valley, of the 511th MP Co., from Fort Drum, N.Y., speaks with the first of many Iraqi children to arrive during a food-distribution mission in the Zuwarijat district of al-Kut, Iraq.



Iron Brigade Soldiers – boots on the ground

2nd BCT, 1st Armor Div., PAO

CAMP BUEHRING, Kuwait - When Soldiers of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, arrived here at the beginning of April, they had a good idea what they were getting into.

This is the Iron Brigade's third deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and its Soldiers have been preparing for months at their home station in Baumholder, Germany.

Since arriving in Kuwait, training has continued with test-firing weapons, tanks and Bradley fighting vehicles. They have also taken classes on improvised explosive devices and lessons on Iraq-specific tactics, techniques and procedures.

For Cpl. Paul Sanchez, tank mechanic and native of Weslaco, Texas, this is his second deployment in support of OIF. He said the training has been a big help in preparing Soldiers for their mission.

"I know how to fix tanks, that's my job," Sanchez said. "The training here has helped me in other ways, like brushing up on my Soldier skills."

For other Soldiers, such as Pfc. Nathan Ryder, of Boise, Idaho, this is their first deployment. Ryder spent three days patrolling simulated IED lanes as part of his training.

"The IED training was very realistic," he said, adding the ability to recognize IEDs could help save his life and those of his battle buddies.

Other training at Camp Buehring involved working with Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicles. The armored vehicles are new to the Army and designed to better protect Soldiers from IED blasts.

For Pvt. Andrew Flowers, of Columbus, Ohio, Headquarters Company, this was his first introduction to the MRAP vehicles.

"We are going to be driving around in these things in Iraq," Flowers said. "Getting to know your vehicle now, before we get in country, is a big help."

Some of the Soldiers also received the new improved outer tactical vest (IOTV), which replaces the heavier interceptor body armor (IBA) and is designed to have less movement constrict-

tion.

"I like the new vest a lot," Ryder said. "I'm more comfortable in it and still feel protected."

Just as the training and gear has affected the Soldiers, so has the heat. When the Soldiers departed from Germany, snow covered the ground. Now, in Kuwait, they are experiencing near 100-degree weather daily.

"It's best that we are in Kuwait and not somewhere else more comfortable," Flowers said. "The weather here is as close to Iraq as you can get."

Outside of training, the Soldiers have been taking part in different activities on post. Camp Buehring provides a movie theater, weekly karaoke, a large gym, calling centers, internet cafes and wireless internet in tents for a fee. The dining facility provides four meals a day and food establishments such as Taco Bell, Subway, Kentucky Fried Chicken, and Starbucks offer Soldiers even more variety.

Sanchez said Camp Buehring has



By Pfc. Michael Schuch

Pfc. Robert Camocho, of Yabucoa, Puerto Rico, Co. B., 2-6th Inf. Regt., scans a simulated IED lane while training at Camp Buehring, Kuwait.

done well at facilitating the Soldiers' needs and believes it will have a positive impact on them during deployment.

The 2nd BCT, 1st Armor Div., will assist Iraqis in rebuilding their infrastructure and set conditions for long-term stability. The brigade is from Smith Barracks, Germany, and has been deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom since April.

Coalition troops continue working side by side with Iraqi residents

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

FOB KALSU— Coalition forces continue working side by side with Iraqi residents, guiding them to become more independent and better their own communities.

Soldiers from Company B, 415th Civil Affairs Battalion, attached to 4th Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, visited Tounis, 65 kilometers south of Baghdad, and Jiff Jaffa, 55 kilometers south of Baghdad, April 29 - 30.

On April 29, in Tounis, the Soldiers met with the new Iraqi Police commander, local sheikhs and muqtars during a town council meeting at the IP station. During the meeting, they discussed a problem with a transformer in an electrical sub-station, improvements and repairs to water pumping stations, and building a new soccer field, said Capt. Daniel Scheeringa, CA team chief and Chicago native.

The unit has encouraged political leaders to become more involved in all levels of government, so their people can receive better representation. This will hopefully provide them the essential services they need, Scheeringa said.

Tounis leaders recently began attending nahia meetings regularly, dealing with the sub-district government body.

The CA team also discussed an improvement project around a water pump house, and will soon meet female students and teachers from the Muella Technical College to gauge future projects.

The team visited Jiff Jaffa April 30 for an agriculture meeting with the board of directors for the agricultural union to discuss fertilizer and an adult literacy program.

They will soon receive a tender on the amount of fertilizer farmers will need for this year's spring planning, Scheeringa said. Once received, Scheringa will combine the tender with the town's seed request and submit them for approval.

Staff Sgt. Stephen Czarnowski, ePRT literacy program manager, of Livonia, Mich., gathered information to help organize the literacy project. This includes number of participants, qualified teachers and supplies.

They plan on starting the program within a month and developing it throughout different provinces, Czarnowski said.

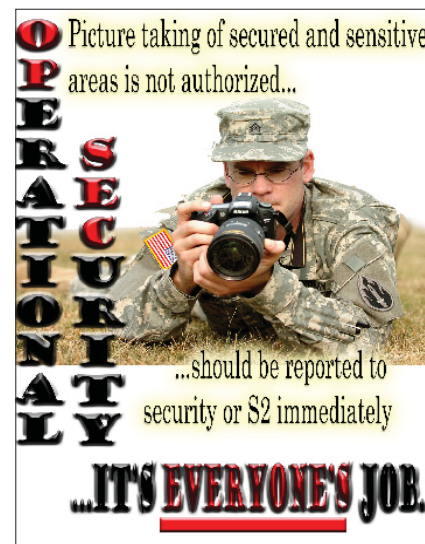
"The purpose behind the literacy program is two-fold — to provide adult literacy training, to include the women, but also to provide some jobs," Scheeringa said.

As the Soldiers continue to make their way around the area, Scheeringa said these efforts will soon push the people to become more involved with their own government.



Courtesy photo

Staff Sgt. Stephen Czarnowski, 4th BCT ePRT literacy program manager, from Livonia, Mich., talks with the board of directors for the Jiff Jaffa agricultural union April 30.



PVT MURPHY'S LAW



Success not just a big-fish tale

Local farmer looks forward to his operation growing

SGT. DAVID TURNER
2nd BCT, 3rd Inf. Div. PAO

FOB KALSU— Members of the Baghdad-7 embedded Provincial Reconstruction Team visited a fish farm south of Baghdad April 26, to assess progress in its development.

The farmer, Abdul Jabar Abid Kasim, received a \$2,500 grant from the ePRT to improve production on his farm, which is now showing noticeable signs of development. Until recently, Kasim's operation yielded just enough fish to feed his family and others in the community. Now he's looking forward to selling his fish in commercial markets and growing his operation.

The microgrant provided ready cash for Kasim to repair his water pump and buy expensive, high-protein feed, which has already paid dividends in larger, healthier fish, said Capt. Christopher Flores, ePRT fish farm advisor. Flores is also the personnel actions officer for 2-3 Brigade Troops Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, Fort Stewart, Ga.

"It's taken off a year of overhead for him," said Flores, a Corpus Christi, Texas, native whose passion for recreational fishing led him to work with the ePRT.

"Fishing is all science," Flores added. "It's been my number-one passion since I was a kid, so I know all about fish farming and how they grow."

Kasim's farm lies in the al-Buaytha loop of the Tigris River, an area with a long history of fish farming. Currently, many farms do not produce enough fish to make it a commercially robust business. However, with increased involvement in the local agricultural union and the assistance of microgrants, some farmers are getting the help they need to grow.

Nineteen fish farms in the area have received one-time ePRT grants so far, most of them received the maximum of \$2,500. Farmers like Kasim are identified to receive grants by their local representative in the agricultural union.

"He understands this is a one-time microgrant," Flores said. "He said if he does well enough he should have enough to buy another pond."

With this year's first harvest, Kasim plans to sell



Courtesy photo

Capt. Christopher Flores, from Corpus Christi, Texas, fish farm advisor to the Baghdad-7 ePRT, holds a fish grown on a farm in the al-Buaytha region south of Baghdad. Flores' passion for fishing led him to work with the ePRT to improve fish farming in the area.

1,500 kilograms of his carp to the Baghdad market. He then intends to use profits to buy a better pump to improve water circulation, which makes for healthier, faster growing fish.

In addition to improving his yield, Flores said Kasim's real success is in how he did it by working with his local agricultural union.

"He was able to convey his needs to his local union, which is Iraqi-led, and that union was able to work

with the ePRT," he said. "The process was there. An Iraqi helped another Iraqi. It's boosting his confidence in his government if he can get something done with his local union."

The payoff for Flores was in visiting the farm to check progress and finding a happier farmer.

"He was happy to see us," he said. "He invited us to stay and wanted to cook lunch for us."

And what was for lunch? Fresh fish, of course.

Iraqi teachers receive basic first-aid training

2nd BCT, 3rd Inf. Div. PAO

FOB KALSU— Iraqi teachers received basic first-aid training from Coalition force medics April 17, 20, 22 and 23 at nine Arab Jabour and al-Buaytha schools.

Teachers employed at the schools asked Soldiers from the 415th Civil Affairs Battalion, currently attached to 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, if they could teach them first aid techniques in case of emergencies.

The 415th CA team coordinated the training with medics from 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, 2nd BCT, 3rd Inf. Div., at Combat Outpost Murray.

Staff Sgts. Joshua Bundy and Jason Doyle, both civil affairs noncommis-

sioned officers, worked with 1-30th Inf. Regt. medics Staff Sgt. Jason Magee and Spc. Elizabeth Huggins to come up with a curriculum for the

"We are glad that we could assist the local Iraqi teachers. . . [it] will allow them to better care for the children"

— Staff Sgt. Jason Magee
1-30th Inf. Regt.

training.

"We wanted to provide the teachers with the proper first-aid training for school yard injuries," said Bundy, a

native of Hastings, Mich.

He said the teachers were receptive to the training and asked if the medics could come back to the school and teach them more advanced techniques.

"We are glad that we could assist the local Iraqi teachers and improve their medical knowledge," said Magee, from Elbridge, N.Y. "This will allow them to better care for the children in their classrooms."

Donations from an American company will supply the schools with first-aid kits to be left at the school. Emergency Medical Products, an Internet medical supply company based in Wisconsin, donated more than 60 first aid kits.

Bundy said plans are being made to give the teachers an advanced first-aid course.



Courtesy photo

Staff Sgt. Jason Magee, a medic with 1-30th Inf. Regt., gives instructions on CPR during first-aid training to Arab Jabour teachers.