



Spartan Chronicle

*pointing out the weekly
news from the 2nd BCT*

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Chick delivery in Hawr Rajab



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Photo by Sgt. David Turner

First Lt. Michael Falk Troop A, 6th Squadron, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division rescues a chick while poultry farmers load 6,000 of them onto trucks in Hawr Rajab, April 27. The chicks were purchased by the U.S. Department of State Baghdad - 7 Embedded Provincial Reconstruction Team to help jump-start chicken farms in the area, which have suffered in recent years.



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Chickens promote peace, prosperity in Iraq

Sgt. David Turner
2nd BCT PAO

Two Iraqi poultry farmers received 3,000 chicks each April 27 in a bid to jump-start their industry in Hawr Rajab, a rural community south of Baghdad.

The farmers, Mohammed Hussein and Amman Kameers, accepted the chicks from the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division and the Baghdad-7 embedded Provincial Reconstruction Team.

"It's meant as a start-up packet," said Mike Stevens, the ePRT agriculture adviser. "It's just to cut back on their input costs so they can make a profit and become

"Since we started working with the (Sons of Iraq), we've gotten rid of those insurgents. Now we're gearing toward agriculture."

- Sheikh Majid Wiese
Hawr Rajab Farmers Union

self-sustaining."

Poultry farming in Hawr Rajab, once a thriving industry, suffered at the hands of insurgents. Stevens said insurgents came to the area and stole chickens and destroyed chicken coops as a way to threaten



Photos by Sgt. David Turner

Chicken farmers in Hawr Rajab unload a shipment of 6,000 chicks purchased with the help of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division and the Baghdad-7 Embedded Provincial Reconstruction Team, April 27. Farmers in this region hope to revive their once thriving industry through farmers' unions and assistance from Coalition Forces.

the farmers.

"We had a lot of losses," said Sheikh Majid Wiese, chairman of the local farmers union. "Since we started working with the (Sons of Iraq) and Coalition forces, we've gotten rid of those insurgents. Now we're gearing toward agriculture." Distributing chicks to farmers is just one part of the program, said Stevens. In the coming months, the 2nd BCT and the ePRT will distribute feed and more than 12,000 egg-laying chicks to Hawr Rajab farmers. They are also working to secure funds to complete refurbishment of the al-Ra'ad Poultry processing plant in

Hawr Rajab, which could provide much-needed jobs to the region. Increased capacity in poultry farming is intended to have a trickle-down effect in the local economy, Stevens said. Hatcheries in Baghdad will be able to sell more chicks to farmers, who in turn can supply more poultry products to local markets.

"Providing these chicks will help to increase our capacity about 25 percent," said Rarad Abd Jalel Rashed, a poultry representative of the farmers union. "If we can get up to 50 percent, we will be able to be on our own and not need any assistance from anybody else."



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2nd BCT PAO
Maj. James Brownlee
Sgt. Jason Stadel
Sgt. Kevin Stabinsky
Sgt. David Turner
Spc. Stephen Crofoot

'Battle Boars' help Iraqi child recover from TB

1st Bn. 30th Inf.
Unit Public Affairs

U.S. Soldiers took a break from their daily routine to help an Iraqi child recover from tuberculosis April 20.

Ali Jamel Ali, an Arab Jabour youth, was fitted for a back brace by Soldiers of 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment.

Ali, a resident of Bayija Village, was originally diagnosed with tuberculosis by Lt. Col. Hee-Choon Lee, 1-30th Inf. Regt., 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division surgeon. Lee referred Ali to a doctor in Baghdad for proper medication and treatment.

Lee said tuberculosis bacteria typically attack the lungs but the spine can be destroyed as well. When attacked and weakened, the spine contracts a condition called Potts disease. Ali received medication from doctors in Baghdad to kill the tuberculosis bacteria.

"I'm so happy Ali Jamel Ali has started his medications which will permanently repair his spinal chord



Courtesy Photo

First Lt. Robert Seale, platoon leader, Co. A, 1-30th Inf. Regt. 2nd BCT, 3rd Inf. Div., helps Ali Jamel Ali with his new back brace. The brace will help keep his back straight while recovering from the effects of TB.

injury," Lee said.

To prevent Ali from developing a hunched back, Lee ordered a special back brace to support the child's spine during the healing process.

Ali's father said he was very appreciative of the Soldiers' efforts.

"The Americans have done more for us than we could have imagined," Jamel Ali Khudayr said.

Lee said Ali will take the spinal cord medication for at least nine months and will need to use a back brace for several years.



Sgt. Jason Stadel

Promotion

Sgt. Maj. Michael Howle cuts the cake that recognizes his promotion to sergeant major April 29. Howle has been a part of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division for four years. He served as a first sergeant in 3rd Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, the operations sergeant major 2-3 Brigade Troops Battalion and the chief of training at the Task Force Marne NCO Academy at FOB Kalsu.

Kalsu hosts Iraqi business owners

Sgt. Jason Stadel
2nd BCT PAO

Iraqi business owners and agricultural leaders attended a presentation on economic growth April 24 at FOB Kalsu.

The summit was headed by the Baghdad-7 embedded Provincial Reconstruction Team and the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division. Four guest speakers spoke to a crowd of more than 30 business owners from Arab Jabour, Hawr Rajab, Adwaniya, Sayifiyah, Zambraniyah, Khamasiyah, Busayefi, Sekhreechet and Maderiyah.

The economic summit served two purposes: It allowed regional farmers and business leaders to meet and share information about their industries, and it taught them about new programs created by the Ministry of Agriculture to promote growth.

Capt. Jeffrey Brizek, ePRT agriculture deputy, said MoA will offer loan programs to farmers with reduced interest rates of three

to five percent and subsidized fertilizer and feed to local farmers unions.

“We wanted to stress the importance of working relationships between the farmers unions in the area and their representatives to the MoA in order to achieve a unified goal of producing an economic means of stabilization and feeding the country,” said Brizek of Reading, Pa.

Mike Stevens, ePRT agriculture adviser, was one of the guest speakers at the summit. Stevens, a U.S. Department of Agriculture employee, helps link Coalition forces with the Government of Iraq.

Stevens told the business owners that in the United States, agriculture products are slowly replacing a dependency on fossil fuels.

“There are about 12 plants in my home state of Minnesota that refine corn into gas and soybeans into diesel,” Stevens said.

This shows a good example of how agriculture will have a major role in Iraq’s future, he said.

The economic summit also allowed business owners from different regions to come together and meet, which Stevens said could spark economic development between communities.

“They left the summit with a better idea and lots of information about the different topics covered by the speakers,” said Basil Razzak, ePRT economics adviser. “They were eager to cooperate with each other, exchange ideas, and focus on training and networking. Most importantly, they know now how and where to go for loans, registration of organizations and (non-governmental organizations), training and any other support.”

To keep area business owners abreast of economic developments and projects in other communities, members of the ePRT will produce and disseminate an economic-based newsletter to community councils.



Photo by Sgt. Jason Stadel

Southern Baghdad business owners and leaders take notes during an economic summit held at FOB Kalsu April 24. The summit brought business owners, local leaders, government officials and farmers together to educate them on how to create a better economy. Those in attendance were also educated on the availability of loans through the Government of Iraq and vocational schools where Iraqis can go to learn a skill and trade to be a part of the fledgling economic growth in Iraq. Members of the Baghdad-7 embedded Provincial Reconstruction Team hosted the event for the more than 30 attendees.

Soldiers work to repair Arab Jabour schools

Sgt. Jason Stadel
2nd BCT PAO

After months of fighting, Coalition forces in Arab Jabour have rid the area of al-Qaeda in Iraq and turned their attention to rebuilding the community.

Those efforts have opened numerous schools, water pumps and health clinics in Arab Jabour. The Islah School, Al'ula School and al-Alemia School are currently undergoing repairs in Arab Jabour.

Capt. James Anthony, commander of Company C, 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, and his Soldiers are overseeing the repair of the al-Alemia School in the Bayija village.

Anthony said the school was in disarray after AQI used it as a base of operations.

"The exterior walls were destroyed and whole classrooms were demolished," said Anthony, from Byhalia, Miss. "All of the electrical wiring had been removed to include the generators powering the water filtration system."



Courtesy Photo

Capt. James Anthony, commander of Co. C, 1-30th Inf. Regt., watches as children play at the al-Alemia school in Arab Jabour. Anthony and his company have helped to rebuild the school.

It was assessed that more than 50 percent of the area's AQI leadership lived near the school. The battalion conducted numerous combat operations in the area, resulting in many AQI members being killed, detained or fleeing. After the operations most of the AQI leadership was gone but they

left behind dangerous traps for Coalition forces and citizens.

"Multiple (improvised explosive devices) were found on the school grounds, as well as in several of the stairwells and classrooms," Anthony said.

Company C removed the IEDs and within two days nine teachers

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Safety Alert - MRAPs & BFVs

During the last couple of weeks several units have had accidents when their MRAPs or Bradley Fighting Vehicles have crossed bridges or culverts and have slid into canals because the ground around the bridges or culverts have eroded or washed out due to increased water flow into the canals due to recent rains. susceptible to reoccurrence in the same area.

Here are a few safety reminders to keep in mind when operating an MRAP or BFV:

- Conduct roll over drills
- Wear seat belt use
- Conduct risk assessments
- Expect the unexpected when crossing a bridge or canal



Construction projects improve Sayafiyah

1st Bn. 187 Inf.
Unit Public Affairs
Construction on numerous community buildings in Sayafiyah is nearing completion. A health clinic, middle school, elementary school and community center will be completed by the end of April.

The Sayafiyah Health Clinic will be fully-furnished, funded and controlled by the Mahmudiyah Qada.

A local contractor is also finishing the work on the Sayafiyah Community Center. The center has been completely renovated with the addition of two administrative rooms and four new restrooms.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers sponsored the renovation of the

al-Inbaath Elementary School. They expanded the school by six additional classrooms and two laboratories.

The Musab Bin Omir Middle School had new floor tiles installed, classrooms repaired and a new playground constructed.

The improved security developments in Sayafiyah's key infrastructure have made projects like this more prevalent.

"Because of the [al-Qaeda in Iraq] threat, the area was neglected," said 1st Lt. Jonathan Gerson, assistant operations officer for 1st Battalion, 187th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault). "Now that

AQI is gone the local government is beginning to communicate with Sayafiyah."

Gerson said the schools and clinic will be supported by the Government of Iraq while the community center will give the people of Sayafiyah a place to voice concerns to the local government.

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and more than 35 students began classes, Anthony said.

Company B, 1-30th Inf. Regt. Soldiers saw a similar trend at the Al'ula School in the village of Abd al-Salman. Since AQI was forced out of the area in late 2007 and early 2008, more than 800 children have returned to school.

When Anthony and his company saw residents' eagerness for their children to return to school they made it a priority to repair and improve the school.

Commander's Emergency Response Program funds were secured to finance the school's repairs, which serves as both an elementary and a primary school.

"When 1-30th Infantry (Regiment)

invests its time and energy into the repair of (school) infrastructure ... we are investing in the future leadership of a peaceful Iraq," Anthony said.

To turn their attention to rebuilding schools, it requires the combat Soldiers, most of whom are infantry, scouts or armor, adjust their focus.

"It gives many of the Soldiers a different look at the population," Anthony said, adding it was hard to believe just months earlier the school was uninhabitable due to the IED threat.

Capt. Cesar Santiago, Company B executive officer, said improving education is one of the first steps in rebuilding Iraq.

"Education is one of the most vital tools to improve quality of life in this community and that begins with providing the appropriate learning environment," said Santiago, from Coamo, Puerto Rico.

Most of the repairs at the three schools include installing new windows and doors, fixing wiring, installing new sinks and toilets and providing fresh water.



Courtesy Photo

Lt. Col. David Kennedy (left), commander 2-3 Brigade Troops Battalion, and Sgt. Rod Elrifai 2-3 BTB electrical projects deputy advisor, speak with Sayafiyah leaders about the ongoing projects in the community.

Success at Iraq farms not just a big-fish tale

Sgt. David Turner
2nd BCT PAO

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 micro-grant 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.



Courtesy Photo

Fish farmer, Abdul Jabar Abid Kasim, uses nets to catch carp from his fish farm pond. With the help of Coalition forces Kasim's fish farm is showing signs of progress with yields of large fish.

"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 micro grants, 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 micro grant," 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 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.

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.



Courtesy Photo

Capt. Christopher Flores holds a 45-day old carp that was taken from a fish farm in al-Buaytha. Flores, 2-3 Brigade Troops Battalion personnel officer, is the fish farm advisor for the Baghdad - 7 embedded Provincial Reconstruction Team.

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

Going home: The fight on the silent front

Capt. Eric Dean

1st Bn. 64th AR Chaplain



Dean

It seems as if everyday there is another article in the paper that discusses the strain

of deployments on families or the emotional trauma of multiple or extended deployment. Within 24 hours, I have read two such articles in major news publications. It seems as if the world is not just putting our mission and operations under the microscope, but our families and emotions as well.

There may be good reason for this. As is evident by now, the emotional strain of deployment, especially an extended deployment, tests the mettle of any relationship. Whether these emotions deal with the pain of separation, a sense of bitterness or resentment towards the Army, or the tension of unresolved issues, the effects these issues have on us and the relationships we hold dear do leave their mark. The issue we face, therefore, is not how to we avoid an emotional ambush, but rather, how we respond when overcome with emotion.

The silent front of the war is the battlefield of emotions – the

battlefield upon which every Soldier and family member will be called upon to sacrifice. Each carries his or her unique wounds; putting relationships on hold, missing out on the children's lives, not being there when something tragic occurs, the feeling of abandonment, anger, loneliness, burnout, etc.

It's not about you. Each of you have been through a very tough deployment. No one has had it any better or any worse than the other.

-Chaplain Eric Dean
1st Bn. 64th Armor

Each experiences a certain amount of fear, whether it be the fear of facing the enemy, the fear of "that knock on the door", the fear of infidelity, the fear of being asked to raise the kids alone, or the fear of how war has changed you and your relationship. Each responds differently to the "trauma" of this fight. Though not true in every case, women typically want to talk about all that has happened, share their emotions, and seek wholeness through that sharing. Women do not typically seek simple solutions, but rather emotional connections through sharing. Men typically do not want to talk about what has happened. It is unusual and uncomfortable for men to be asked to describe feelings and

emotions when they are used to being men of action, especially if it requires them to be vulnerable after having spent the past 15 months being tough. Furthermore, the more men are asked to share their feelings, the more they will emotionally withdraw.

How do we then find common ground? How can each receive the healing that he or she needs? How can relationships hope to move forward if men do not open up and share and women can not or will not give men the time and space they need to share in their own ways?

There is no cookie cutter answer that applies to every relationship. There are, however, principles that can be personalized and applied to each relationship that have proven to be successful. Though effective, they do come with a warning label. Here it is: these principles will result in a better relationship with the one you love, but they require absolute commitment to your relationship, lots of hard work, and the maturity to realize that there is no timetable for when your loved one should do this or that. If we understand and accept this upfront and apply these principles to our relationships, we will experience healing and restoration.

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It's not about you.

Each of you has been through a very tough deployment. No one has had it any better or any worse than the other. The only difference is, each has had different conditions under which you were required to live and work. Arguing about who had it worse will lead nowhere other than down a road of misery. It's wiser to recognize and appreciate the sacrifices each of you have made, understanding that both of you went through a difficult situation. You see, it can never be about you, your rights, your needs, etc. It can only be about your relationship, what your relationship needs, and how to improve your relationship if you are to be successful. It's not about you.

It is about what you can give, not get.

Maybe a listening ear, even though the thought of opening up like that would never cross your mind. Maybe words of encouragement and affirmation. Maybe an apology for some damage you caused. Maybe time and space to allow your loved one to come to terms with everything in his or her own way. Think of your relationship like a plant – what does it need to bloom and grow? What will cause it to wither and die? What can you give it?



Courtesy Photo

Editor's note: With redeployment fast approaching for the 2nd BCT, the brigade's ministry team will have a continued focus to help Soldiers with questions they may have about reintegration, as well as give advice to avoid common pitfalls in the process. In the coming weeks the *Spartan Chronicle* will feature articles from various chaplains in the brigade.

No pushing, no shoving.

Ladies, if you are frustrated at your men for not opening up to you, being more persistent will not help. You may feel that you need him to open up, but if you push the issue, you will push him further away. Let him do it in his own time and in his own way. Guys, I know that we—prefer to zone out, ignore it, or drive on, but keeping your ladies emotionally at arm's length or emotionally shoving them away when they try to get close is only going to create more problems. You don't have to share everything, but share something. If you don't know what to say or don't have anything to say, share

that, and then begin to talk with them about something important to them. Live sacrificially for the sake of your relationship.

Why do I share this now, before we are even home? Well, if you don't begin to think about this until after we are home, you will most likely start thinking about it much too late. Start thinking about and discussing these things with your loved one now. Prepare yourself and your loved ones for your homecoming, so that your transition back as a family is as smooth as possible; it will result in a much more enjoyable reunion later.

SPORTS & GAMES

Kalsu crowns basketball champions

Sgt. Jason Stadel
2nd BCT PAO

It took a span of four days but in the end Dem Dudes held off the Patriots 44-37 to claim the Forward Operating Base Kalsu basketball championship May 3.

Dem Dudes was made up of Soldiers from the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, 153rd Military Police Company, 5th Battalion, 5th Air Defense Artillery and 2nd Battalion, 69th Field Artillery. The Patriots were Soldiers from 4th BCT, 3rd Inf. Div.

The championship game began under a dust and cloud darkened sky on April 29. Both teams struggled offensively in the first half and the half ended with Dem Dudes leading 17-16.

In the second half the pace of the game changed from a poor

offense to stepped-up defense.

Dem Dudes had three quick steals and converted them into six fast-break points to take a seven point lead.

After the transition points, the pace of the game slowed down and the sky turned darker. Rain began to fall and for the safety of the players, officials stopped the game with nine minutes remaining in the second half. At the weather delay Dem Dudes clung to a five point lead.

The game continued where it left off four days later on May 3.

After the four day break, the Patriots were able to make a run when the game resumed, this time under a cloudless sky.

Dem Dudes started with a zone defense to clog the middle of the court and force the Patriots to take outside shots.



Photos by Sgt. Jason Stadel

Above: Dem Dudes' point guard Sgt. 1st Class Randy Parker drives for a layup during the FOB Kalsu basketball championship game May 3. Parker is an air defense Soldier from 5th Battalion, 5th Air Defense Artillery. **Bottom left:** A player from Dem Dudes drives the baseline against the Patriots April 29 in the second half of the FOB Kalsu championship basketball game. Dem Dudes, (made up of players from 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 153rd Military Police Company and 5th Battalion, 5th Air Defense Artillery) defeated the Patriots, (made up of players from 4th Brigade Combat Team) 44-37 to claim the championship. The game started on April 29 and was postponed halfway through the second half when it started to rain. The game resumed where it left off on May 3.



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“They had good three point shooters but they were a bit off,” said Sgt. 1st Class Deon Sparkling, coach of Dem Dudes.

Although the Patriots’ shots weren’t falling, Dem Dudes were not grabbing the defensive rebounds. The Patriots took advantage of the offensive boards to get within one; however that was as close as the game would be.

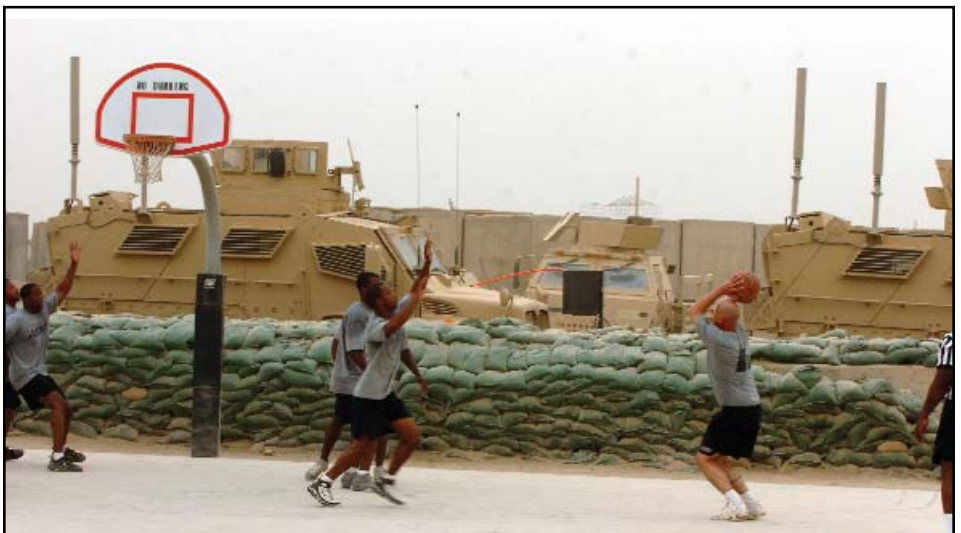
“They (the Patriots) played hard, today we were just the better team,” said Sgt. Mickey Campbell, Dem Dudes team captain.

In the last four minutes of the game Dem Dudes used the fast break to sustain the lead and a three point bucket by Sgt. 1st Class Randy Parker sealed the win.

“We won because of teamwork,” Parker said. “You’ve got to play team basketball to win.”

The FOB Kalsu basketball championship started with 10 teams. Dem Dudes won all of their games going 4-0. They finished the season with an 11-1 record and were also the preseason tournament champions.

Top Right: Sgt 1st Class Randy Parker, Dem Dudes shoots over a Patriots defender in the second half of the FOB Kalsu basketball championship game. Center: Dem Dudes pose with the FOB Kalsu basketball tournament championship trophy. Right: Staff Sgt. Timothy Eye, Dem Dudes, shoots a long jump shot in the second half of the FOB Kalsu basketball tournament championship game.



FEATURE

Challenger battalion keeps surge rolling

Sgt. David Turner
2nd BCT PAO

On a typical Saturday morning, back home in Ohio, Spc. Joshua Wahn might be washing his car or one of his two trucks. This Saturday, however, he's pressure-washing mine resistant, ambush protected vehicles and humvees as part of the 26th Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division's "maintenance day".

The 26th BSB keeps hundreds of various vehicles ready for constant use in the 2nd BCT, 3rd Inf. Div.'s area of responsibility. A year spent already in Iraq, however, has not been kind to these machines.

"Every day is maintenance day," said Capt. Carey Way, commander of Co. A., 26th BSB.



Photos by Sgt. David Turner

Above: Soldiers from 26th Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division prepare mine resistant, ambush protected vehicles for maintenance May 3 at Forward Operating Base Kalsu. Bottom left: Two 'Challenger' Soldiers refill the fluids on an MRAP. The battalion conducted maintenance on all of their vehicles to make sure the vehicles are ready for the road.

"But since we've been here a year, a lot of these vehicles have taken a beating."

Carey's company handles distribution, and is in charge of heavy vehicles like the tank-hauling heavy equipment transports. Much of the time, his vehicles drive on poorly paved or dirt roads, in a hot, dusty environment.

"Our vehicles get a lot more wear and tear over a year than you would just driving on city streets," he said.

"Historical data says that a year in Iraq puts ten years of wear and tear on our combat vehicles," said Maj. Henry Young, 26th BSB executive officer.

Having a battalion-wide maintenance day, he said, is the best way to make sure essential equipment will last until the brigade's mission is complete.

"We're recharging, maintaining the force," Young said. "And we're taking time to help sustain ourselves."

With a year's worth of hard miles on the odometer and more than two more months to go, it's a struggle to keep these machines in top working order, said Way.

"Our biggest challenge is that we are a surge brigade. A lot of equipment we got, it came in and needed repairs right away. We

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Challenger cont. from page 10

didn't always get top-of-the-line," he said.

Way added that while his Soldiers have done a great job in keeping their vehicles on the road, maintenance day is a way for them to fight complacency.

"We're here to make sure our vehicles are ready for the rest of the haul," he said.

Maintenance day is a mission for the entire battalion, said Bravo Co. commander Capt. Tim Page.

"We told everyone in the battalion, 'this is your place duty for today'."

During the day Soldiers performed routine maintenance checks and services, but also paid particular attention to repairing and maintaining air conditioning, radios and other mission-essential devices such as improvised explosive device defeating electronics and Blue Force Trackers (satellite position and communicating equipment).

The soldiers out on the road understand that equipment has to be up," said Young. "It has to be rolling because it's a lifeline."

Top: Spc. Joshua Wahn of Minerva, Ohio uses a pressure washer to clean the condenser on a Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicle, also known as an MRAP, May 3.

Center: Staff Sgt. Darrell Vangorkum works under the hood of an armored humvee. 26th BSB travels with humvees, MRAPs, HETs and HEMTTs. Bottom: Staff Sgt. Obbina Awusah of Brandywine, Md. pitches in to clean MRAPs during the 26th BSB's maintenance day, May 3, 2008. Awusah is a generator mechanic for the 26th BSB.



COMMENTARY

In ADAM cell, inter-branch cohesion is SOP

Staff Sgt. Daniel Venton
2nd BCT ADAM Cell

Working in the 2nd Brigade Combat Team Air Defense Air Space Management (ADAM) Cell is a unique experience. The ADAM Cell, which controls the brigade's airspace, is comprised of Soldiers from the Army's aviation and air defense branches.

The concept of combining two branches into one section is unique; not many sections in the United States Army are made up using two deviating branches. That is, being an Air Defender, I am trained to bring down aircraft. The air defense systems I have become so accustomed to operating, inform me of aircraft that have either violated airspace restrictions, or can not be identified by aircraft interrogators. Based on those results, my reports may result in aircraft being brought down by means of force, i.e. Patriot, Avenger, or Slammram missiles.

Aviators, on the other hand, utilize the airspace which has been manipulated by restrictions and advisories, and must equate themselves to those patterns in order to remain clear of airspace violations.

I had only heard about the incongruous concept that aviation and air defense Soldiers could operate together in a section from my comfy position as the assistant plans noncommissioned officer of an advanced individual training battalion at Fort Bliss,



Photo by Sgt. Luis Delgadillo

Texas. It was also there that I learned of my assignment orders to Fort Stewart, Ga. I was about to get a first hand account of how Soldiers from two very different branches could co-exist and run a combat team's ADAM Cell operations. I arrived at Fort Stewart only a few months before 2nd BCT deployed in support of the "surge" for OIF V.

When I arrived at Fort Stewart I knew very little about ADAM Cell operations. The ADAM Cell was still in its infancy at the time, and even now you can expect a confounded look when the response to "where do you work" is answered with "the ADAM Cell."

I was, however, fortunate enough to have a couple of subordinates and a chief warrant officer already in the section. They had prior ADAM Cell deployment experience, and I took in every opportunity to gain from their

experiences and lessons.

By learning from my peers' past deployments, I was able to quickly learn the section's. The success of the section is based on what each Soldier brings to the table. Now, as 2nd BCT's tour comes toward an end, it is standard operating procedure for these two branches to work together in order to achieve a common goal.

Without my aviation comrades, the ADAM Cell would not be able to reach the stratum it does with such high standards of excellence. The cohesion we have built has translated into everything we do: air defense Soldiers taking care of air mission requests, aviation Soldiers monitoring early warning systems, and so on. It has become second nature for each of us to learn and understand the other branches operations. Cohesiveness, you could say, runs in this section's DNA.

Word on the street

“Now that the NBA playoffs have started who is you pick to win the Finals?”



“It’s wide open, there’s no telling who’s going to take it.”

Sgt. Mickey Campbell
HHC, 2-3 BTB



“Detriot, I’m from Michigan. I’ve got to stick with Detriot.”

Sgt. 1st Class Deon Sparkling
2nd Bn., 69th FA



“The Lakers because of the addition of Pau Gasol.”

Sgt. 1st Class Randy Baker
5th Bn., 5th ADA



May FOB Kalsu MWR Calendar



SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
Unless otherwise stated, all events begin at 1930. Times and events are subject to change. Special events are in <i>red italics</i> .				1 Pool Chess	2 Basketball Spades Movie night	3 Texas Hold'em Hip-hop music night
4 <i>Talent show @ MWR, 9 p.m.</i> Halo 2: 2 vs 2	5 Ping Pong Dominoes	6 Foosball Darts Spades	7 Basketball Strongman comp.	8 Pool Chess	9 Basketball Spades Movie night	10 Texas Hold'em Hip-hop music night
11 Halo 2: 2 vs 2	12 Ping Pong Dominoes	13 Monopoly Darts Spades	14 Basketball Bench press comp.	15 Pool Chess	16 Basketball Spades Movie night	17 Texas Hold'em Hip-hop music night
18 <i>Talent show @ MWR, 9 p.m.</i> Halo 2: 2 vs 2	19 Ping Pong Dominoes	20 Foosball Darts Spades	21 Basketball Max Bench press comp.	22 Pool Chess	23 Basketball Spades Movie night	24 Texas Hold'em Hip-hop music night
25 Halo 2: 2 vs 2	26 Ping Pong Dominoes	27 Risk Darts Spades	28 Basketball Deadlift comp.	29 Pool Chess	30 Basketball Spades Movie night	31 Texas Hold'em Hip-hop music night