



Spartan Chronicle

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

Vol. 2, Issue 25

May 11, 2008



See page 16

Photo by Spc. Amanda McBride

Colonel Thomas James, commander of 4th Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, and Lt. Col. John Chadbourne, commander of 703rd Brigade Support Battalion, unveil the FOB Kalsu Distance Learning Center sign during the grand opening May 4 at FOB Kalsu, Iraq.



**Natives
return
to their
homes**

- page 2



**Iraqi
women
hold
meeting**

- page 4



**Payday
in Adil
helps
economy**

- page 10



Families return to their homes in Chalabi

Capt. Raymond Nutter

1-187 Unit Public Affairs Representative

Two years ago, al-Qaeda destroyed the Chalabi village in the Sayafiyah region. A Shia tribe in a predominately Sunni area, the Chalabis fled to Mahmudiyah, Baghdad and other surrounding areas.

About four months ago, Coalition forces entered the area and set up Sons of Iraq security and Iraqi Army checkpoints. Soon after, Soldiers from Company C, 1st Battalion, 187th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), discovered residents had returned to the area.

"These families had heard from word of mouth that the area was now secure so now they are back," said Capt. Joe Johnson, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1-187th Inf. Regt.

Now, Coalition forces are bringing aid to about 150 men and boys who came to rebuild and continue securing the area. Soldiers provided shovels, wood, bricks, mortar, cement and basic living essentials such as food and water May 5.

"This is just to get them a jump start and to keep the men

building and productive until the Government of Iraq comes and takes over," said Staff Sgt. Christopher Sloan, 1-187th Inf. Regt. psychological operations noncommissioned officer. "The government is already working the (electrical) power issue in the area and we just wanted to jump start the building process and make it a smoother transition."

The people were thankful for the assistance. Sheikh Jassim Mohammed Alawan al-Kalabi also

praised the supply delivery.

"The Iraqi government, the Americans and our families are all working together to make this place great again," he said.

Soldiers from Company C, 1-187th Inf. Regt., promised to return soon and check what progress has been made in the area.

"We will re-evaluate the situation and make sure progress doesn't get halted by al-Qaeda or any other terrorists," said 1st Lt. Justin Commons from Macomb, Ill.



Courtesy photo

First Lt. Austin Commons 1st platoon leader Company C, 1st Battalion, 187th Infantry Regiment, shakes hands with a Son of Iraq leader in the Chalabi Village. Commons and his Soldiers along with the Sol helped displaced families move back to their homes after they were scared away by terrorists.



The Spartan Chronicle is an authorized electronic publication for members of the U.S. Army produced weekly by the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division.

Contents of the Spartan Chronicle are not necessarily official views of,

or endorsed by, the U.S. Government, Department of Defense, Department of the Army or the 3rd ID.

All editorial content of the Spartan Chronicle is prepared, edited, provided and approved by the 2nd BCT public affairs office.

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

Black Knights Deliver Backpacks

1st. Lt. Tabitha Hernandez
1-64 Unit Public Affairs Rep.

On May 5, 1st Platoon, Company D, 1st Battalion, 64th Armored Regiment, met with the headmistress of the Al Abrar Primary School for Boys in the western Baghdad neighborhood of Washash. They were there to drop off school supplies for the over 350 student body.

The school currently has over 350 male students, ages seven-13. With such a large number of students, the school struggled to provide each child with the necessary learning aids and tools to aid in their education.

Soldiers distributed 175 backpacks filled with an assortment of everyday school supplies from pencils and pens, to scissors and glue.

Members of the Iraqi Army and a Washash Neighborhood Advisor were present when the backpacks were delivered to help build relations with the community's youth.

"We plan to deliver more supplies in the near future," said Platoon Leader, 1st Lt. Jeremy McCool, a native of Alamogordo, NM, "We can't resist the look on their faces when they see us come through the door. It is such a good feeling to know we are part of this."



Photos by 1st Lt. Jeremy McCool

Above: Students wait in line for backpacks that are being distributed by Coalition forces in western Baghdad.

Below: Boys from the Al Abrar Primary School for Boys in western Baghdad stand with their new backpacks. The Soldiers distributed more than 170 backpacks to students at the middle school.



Women's committee reps meet in Mahmudiyah

Sgt. David Turner
2nd BCT PAO

Representatives from four local women's committees in the Rasheed Nahia met in Mahmudiyah 20 miles south of Baghdad, May 5.

Among those attending the gathering were Soldiers of Multi-National Division – Center and the U.S. State Department's embedded Provincial Reconstruction Team Baghdad-7, who helped organize the committees.

Women's issues are nothing new to the Government of Iraq, and now, after years of turmoil and the rebuilding of the nation's institutions, the committees have provided many women a support channel, said Capt. Trista Mustaine, ePRT women's assistance group leader.

"It's trying to build connectivity that's been severed," she said.

A key goal for the meeting was to introduce committee members to one another, as well as link them to their representatives in the nahia and other organizations. Representatives of the Iraqi Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs and the Red Crescent attended the



Photo by Sgt. David Turner

Zaytoon Hussain Mraad holds photographs of wounded and orphaned children from her village during a meeting of women's committee representatives in Mahmudiyah May 5. Capt. Trista Mustaine (sitting), Baghdad-7 ePRT, and MND-C Soldiers attended the meeting to assess progress in the development of local women's committees.

meeting.

Mustaine, from Bradenton, Fla., said getting women involved in government and giving them better economic opportunities fosters stabilization and a return to normalcy. One of the ways ePRT achieves this is with microgrants, up to \$2,500 per person, to help women start businesses. Those businesses include anything from internet cafes to agriculture, but sewing cooperatives have been the most popular. These co-ops provide major employment opportunities in their

neighborhoods, giving women the means to buy materials and sell their goods collectively. Sewing co-ops, in turn, provide revenue for the women's committees, Mustaine said.

Chairwomen from the four committees addressed several issues at the meeting, but the foremost topics included the need for grass-roots level assistance from Coalition forces and the needs of widows and orphans.

Zaytoon Hussain Mraad, from Adwaniyah, showed a placard with

pictures of more than 30 children in her village orphaned by recent violence. Fifteen of the children, all from Shiite families in Sunni majority region, lost both parents to criminal activity and sectarian violence.

Aieda Hassan Aziz, chairman of the Busayefi women's committee, said her husband was kidnapped months ago and she doesn't know where he is. Insurgents also stole her livestock, depriving her of an income. There are 62

See WOMEN page 5

widows in her town and even more orphans, she said.

Education, she said, was what citizens in her village need most.

The chairwoman from the Hawr Rajab women's committee, Manal Najeeb Mahmood, offered some words of strength and hope.

"Al-Qaeda in Iraq killed, kidnapped and destroyed. We stood strong with the help of Coalition forces, Iraqi Army and the local councils. We're here to stay," she said.

Mahmood said that profits from her women's committee's sewing co-op would go to help the 215 widows and numerous orphans of her town.

Doctor Maha al-Hadithy, a Red Crescent representative, said assistance from Coalition forces was welcomed, but much more could be

done on the local level.

In the beginning, money spent on programs at the national level failed to reach them, she said.

Another big issue, al-Hadithy said, was the rise in divorces among religiously-mixed couples in her country. Sectarian strife has torn families apart, and legal assistance may help put

them back together again.

Al-Hadithy struck a positive tone in her remarks, however, saying that women's committees have nothing to do with religion or tribal loyalties. Only the improved lives of Iraq's women matter, she said.

Mustaine was pleased to see representatives come together, belonging

to committees she and others helped form.

"I think it's definitely been a success," she said. "The most productive stuff has nothing to do with the money we've spent. It's primarily relationship building. That's key, because that's the only thing that's going to be sustaining after we leave."



Photo by Sgt. David Turner

Doctor Maha al-Hadithy, a Red Crescent representative, speaks at a women's committee meeting in Mahmudiyah, May 5. Al-Hadithy thanked Coalition forces for previous assistance, but said more needs to be done on the local level to help the women of Iraq.

Safety Alert - Rollover Prevention

- Know the vehicle's maximum weight limitations and operate within them.
- Ensure the load is properly positioned and secured.
- Be mindful of the center of gravity, especially with a heavy load.
- Decrease maneuvering speeds and avoid drastic vehicle corrections.
- Approach turns with caution,

- and reduce speeds.
- Make every attempt to stay upright.
- Steer into the rollover direction.
- Don't be overconfident in your equipment or your abilities, err on the side of safety.
- When in doubt, use a ground guide to negotiate obstacles.
- Rehearse rollover and water rescue drills before each mission. Kalsu has a rollover simulator.
- Wear seat belts – they save lives.



Ceremony honors Holocaust victims

Sgt. Jason Stadel
2nd BCT PAO

The lives of German Jews changed forever on Nov. 8 1938. On that night, Nazis began a 48-hour period of anti-Semitic violence in which synagogues were burned and 7000 Jewish businesses, community centers and homes were vandalized or destroyed. Nazi-sponsored police helped to arrest 3000 Jewish men, all German citizens, and took them to concentration camps while witnesses stood by and did nothing.

The violence was intended as a punishment to the Jews for the murder of Ernst Von Rath, a German Embassy official in Paris.

Von Rath was killed by a Polish Jew who had received a letter from his sister that said his family and all Polish Jews had been deported to Poland from Germany.

It has been nearly 70 years since that two-day period of violence took place. The Nazis called it Kristallnacht.

Kristallnacht was initially a cynical reference to alleged Jewish wealth, but is commonly translated as “the night of broken glass,” because it refers



Photo by Sgt. Jason Stadel

Soldiers on Forward Operating Base Kalsu took time May 4 to remember victims of the Holocaust in World War II. More than 6 million Jews and 1 million non-Jews were killed during the Holocaust. May is Jewish American Heritage Month.

to numerous windows broken in Jewish homes and businesses.

May is Jewish American Heritage Month, and at Forward Operating Base Kalsu Soldiers took time on May 4 to remember Kristallnacht and the ensuing Holocaust.

Capt. Christee Cuttino, 703rd Brigade Support Battalion, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, was the guest speaker at the “Days of Remembrance” and said there is a connection today with the Holocaust and that connection is the

American Soldier.

“The Holocaust deprived over 11 million people of their basic right to live,” said Cuttino. “Not just to be alive but to live their lives. In some way, isn’t that really why we’re here now? So Iraqi citizens can be free to live their lives and build their futures with out fear? So our families back home can do the same?”

During Kristallnacht more than 100 Jews were murdered. They were the first of six million Jews and one million non-Jews that were murdered between 1938 and 1945. Seven candles were lit

at the ceremony to pay tribute to the lives that were lost during the Holocaust.

Cuttino said the candles were lit to remember history. She said the adage that those who don’t remember the past are often doomed to repeat it, applies to those serving in Iraq.

“If that wasn’t true then we wouldn’t be here,” said Cuttino. “And by here I mean the very soil we walk on day in and day out. The very reason we serve is to protect people from becoming victims of another holocaust.”

Citizen's tip leads Soldiers to cache

Sgt. Jason Stadel

2nd BCT PAO

Coalition forces discovered a weapons cache near Maderiyah May 9 on a joint mission with the Iraqi Army.

A tip from an area citizen led Soldiers from Battery B, 1st Battalion, 9th Field Artillery, to the home where two suspected weapons dealers were staying.

The suspects were detained and informed Battery B and IA Soldiers with Company C, 5th Battalion, 25th Brigade, 6th IA Division, of the location of four separate weapons caches during questioning.

One of the detainees led the Soldiers to the locations.

The cache contained 16 57 mm rockets in their original packaging, an operational 23 mm anti-aircraft gun, two PKC machine guns in excellent condition, two operational AK-47 rifles, one rocket-propelled grenade round, three full AK-47 magazines, 800 AK-47 rounds, 1,000 PKC rounds, nine ammunition vests and four ski masks.

Captain Richard Aaron, commander of Battery B, said he believed the weapons had been used against



Courtesy photo

A Soldier from Battery B, 1-9th FA, and an IA Soldier from Co. C, 5/25/6 IA Div., dig to find a weapons cache near JSS W-1 May 9. Two suspects were detained and led the Soldiers to the cache location.

Coalition and Iraqi forces last year when al-Qaeda in Iraq operated in the area.

“Although most of the AQI leadership was detained, killed or fled the area late last year, men who helped AQI and some of their lower-level fighters have blended back into the local population,” Aaron said. “They maintain the caches because they are prepared to fight U.S. and IA forces if AQI leaders return.”

Aaron, a native of Boston, said the IA played a major role

“We have worked hard to ensure citizens in the area trust the IA.”

**- Capt. Richard Aaron
Battery B, 1-9 FA commander**

in taking the weapons out of the hands of enemy fighters. “They ... have a gifted ability to obtain information by understanding the people,” he said. “We have worked hard to ensure citizens in the area trust the IA and are willing to work with both them and U.S. forces.”

Although not actively working with AQI right now, Aaron said

the detainees probably worked for AQI in the past.

“They were very dangerous because they were hiding weapons and most likely willing to facilitate attacks against Coalition forces in the future,” he said.

The detainees and munitions were taken to Joint Security Site W-1 for further questioning and investigation.

Soldier fights blindness to deploy again

Sgt. David Turner

2nd BCT PAO

Sergeant First Class Darin Melton knew something was wrong as he fired his M-4 carbine at a rifle range at Forward Operating Base Rustamiyah. Though his left eye, which he used to sight his rifle, was fine, his right eye throbbed with pain and became limited in vision.

“My vision was so bad in my right eye, I could not shoot at all,” Melton recalled of that fateful day. “All I could think about was my eyesight.”

As a Soldier, Melton had never failed to qualify on his weapon before. He left the range that day knowing he had to have his eyes checked.

They say that bad news always comes in threes. For Melton, two was plenty. Medics told him he was suffering from a retinal vein occlusion, which is sometimes compared to a stroke in the eye. Then, while waiting to be evacuated from Iraq for medical treatment, he received a Red Cross message informing him his father had died.

While still on emergency leave, Melton had his eyes examined at Hunter Army Air Field, Ga. There, he received a surprising diagnosis: In addition to the retinal vein occlusion, he had open-angle glaucoma.

“It blew me away because you never think about that,” said Melton, of Charlotte, N.C. “That was a tough pill to swallow – you get diagnosed at 35 that you have glaucoma. You think your eyes are okay because there are no



Photo by Sgt. David Turner

Sgt. First Class Darin Melton, 2-3 Brigade Troops Battalion, examines the bolt of his M-4 carbine. Damage to his eyes cut short his previous deployment to Iraq. Now, with regular treatment, he keeps his glaucoma in check and performs security missions daily.

symptoms.”

Glaucoma is sometimes called the “sneak thief of sight,” because sufferers are often unaware of their sight slowly diminishing until it’s too late. Once diagnosed, it can usually be arrested and treated, but currently there is no cure to restore

lost vision. Worldwide it is the second leading cause of blindness.

“All those years I didn’t know I had it,” said Melton. “I was damaging my eyes and didn’t even know it.”

See SIGHT page 9

Glaucoma is caused by a buildup of intraocular fluid in the eyes which causes pressure. This pressure can damage the optic nerve, reducing the sufferer's field of vision and eventually result in blindness. Though usually affecting the elderly, one in 200 people age 50 and younger suffer from it, often without even knowing.

"I was surprised by how many Soldiers were coming into the eye clinic at Fort Stewart who had never had their eyes checked, and their eye pressures were dangerously high," Melton said.

Melton's diagnosis with glaucoma caused him to educate himself about the causes and risk factors associated with the disease. Though sometimes caused by injury, it is often an inherited condition. Those with a family history have about a 6 percent chance of developing it, and diabetics and people of African American descent are three times more likely to develop open-angle glaucoma. Melton's grandfather had glaucoma, which most likely

caused his blindness, he said.

"If a Soldier knows they have a history in their family of glaucoma, they need to get it checked," he said. Except for pilots, the Army currently does not check all of its Soldiers for glaucoma, he said.

Though Melton's vision in his right eye remains diminished, he treats his condition daily with three different kinds of eye drops.

"It's like a cocktail," he said. "Before I go out, I make sure I take my eye drops."

Melton's 2005 deployment was cut short by having to return to the States for treatment. Afterward, he worried his condition would keep him from deploying again. Then he read an article about a Soldier with one eye who completed Army Ranger School training and re-deployed to Iraq. Melton took a simple vision exam and was classified as deployable.

Now on his fourth deployment (his first was during the 1991 Gulf War), Melton takes care of his eyes and sees well enough to perform his duties with confidence. He is

currently the noncommissioned officer in charge of the Battalion Security Detachment, 2-3 Brigade Troops Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, Fort Stewart, Ga. His job has taken him on more than 100 missions in the past year.

"Just recently, before I deployed, a doctor who saw me gave me reading glasses," he said. "She basically said I was getting old."

As far as his marksmanship goes, Melton still qualifies each time, though not at as high a score as he used to, he said.

Despite having reduced vision in one eye, he remains philosophical about the whole experience. If it hadn't been for the retinal vein occlusion, he says, he wouldn't have been aware he had glaucoma in time to treat it.

"Other than that, it's not a bad trade-off," he said. "I've still got my vision."

"When you've got all your senses," he added, "you can't imagine living without one."



Newly promoted sergeants Ashraf Martinez, Alshirify and Reduone Khoumri (left to right, rear row) are congratulated for their promotion May 7 by their peers. The trio work as linguists for the brigade's information operations section, providing critical translation skills that help aid their fellow Soldiers and spread good news to the Iraqi population.

Photo by Sgt. Jason Stadel

North Adil Secured by 12-foot wall

1st. Lt. John Morgan

1-64 Armor Regiment

The first week of work on the North Adil Wall was completed May 4. The citizens of Adil, a neighborhood in western Baghdad, eagerly anticipated the emplacement of the wall.

As part of the Coalition Forces “Safe Neighborhood Plan”, the wall will deter insurgent activity in Adil by blocking access from the north; and when complete, it will span the entire northern boundary of Adil.

During the first week of work, a local contractor surveyed the planned wall path, moved barriers to the start site, and emplaced approximately seventy 12-foot barriers.

The Iraqi Army has also



Photo by 1st. Lt. John Morgan

The northern boundary of Adil, a small western Baghdad neighborhood is being secured with 12-foot barriers. The wall is meant to deter insurgent activity in Adil.

embraced the construction of the Adil Wall, providing security throughout the construction.

Their most important

contribution, however, has been the handling of questions and concerns that have arose based on future wall construction.

Payday for Adil workers helps economy

1st. Lt. John Morgan

1-64 Armor Regiment

This past weekend the economy of Adil took a step in the right direction. Forty-four employees of the Adil Public Works Sub Station (PWSS) received payment for their first month of work where they clean, maintain, and beautify the neighborhoods of Khadra, Jamia and Adil in the Mansour District in western Baghdad.

The PWSS, which opened the first week of April, is currently operated and managed

by associates of the Belediyah and funded through monies from Coalition Forces; however, the Belediyah will begin funding the PWSS by the fall.

For many of the employees this was their first earned income in over three years and it was very well deserved as the fruits of their labor can be seen throughout the area. Regular trash collection and large debris removal projects have been the main focus of the PWSS during their first month of operation.



Adil's first paid PWSS employee smiles at his new source of income. The PWSS was opened just over a month ago and has already provided 44 new jobs.

Courtesy photo

They have also conducted area beautification projects such as tree planting in road medians and barrier painting along roadsides.

The Adil PWSS continues to hire employees with a goal of

employing seventy Iraqi locals by the end of May.

Employees of the PWSS are coached and mentored on their projects by the Soldiers from Company A, 1st Battalion, 64th Armored Regiment.

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

“Do You Wanna Take My White Puppy?”

Chaplain (Capt.) James Ramsey
3rd Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regt.

As I write this, I am looking at my favorite picture taken of my family when I was on leave in March.



Ramsey

My wife Jen, my 3 year-old son and my 5 year-old daughter were standing

at the top of the Harbor Town Lighthouse on Hilton Head. Jen is standing there with a big smile—happy that I’m home finally, after 10 months of deployment. I have a huge grin on my face as well, excited to be with them.

As I look at the kids, I see many lessons that I have learned over this deployment. My son is scared stiff—tightly holding onto my leg with both hands clasped. He doesn’t want to let go of Daddy for fear of what may happen. This is new for him. He now knows what it is like for me to be gone. When I got off the plane and walked into their arms a week before, he just grabbed on and wouldn’t let me go.

This is far different from his reaction to my leaving. At that time, surprisingly, he was the strong one.

I remember the day I left, I was crying, Jen was crying--and it was my kids who comforted us! My

son has a little stuffed dog he calls “my white puppy.” He cannot sleep without his white puppy. He takes it with him like Linus with his blanket, everywhere he goes.

When he saw me struggling with tears the day I left he said the sweetest thing any kid has ever said, “Do you wanna take my white puppy?”

God used him to bring comfort and humor in our lives when we needed it most. My daughter was also strong. She said, “It’s OK, we’ll be here for mommy.” Neither of my children understood how long Daddy would be away.

They didn’t know how many nights of crying and missing their Daddy were ahead of them. But they had a compassion and empathy for our sadness and they were willing to give up their most prized possessions to make me feel better. I learned that day that I was more important to him than even the white puppy! That he was willing to forego his own comfort in order to comfort me!

That day, my children fulfilled the commandment, “Honor your father and your mother.” How privileged I am to be their father!

During leave, I spent as much time as possible playing with them, rolling in the floor, sword fighting with the foam swords I bought from the toy store, camping in the back yard, riding bikes out front, going to school to pick up my daughter, dyeing Easter eggs, playing hide-n-seek—doing those

“As our days on this deployment come to a close ... remember to consider what your children have been through. Remember to invest time and effort in connecting and loving and teaching them.”

- Capt. James Ramsey
3-7 Cav. Chaplain

things that I wanted so much to do when I was gone. When I left again, at the end of leave, my daughter knew that it would be a while this time, she cried. We all cried. And the kids are still having a hard time getting used to Daddy being gone.

As our days on this deployment come to a close and as we begin to develop the expectations of our wonderful reunion, remember to consider what your children have been through. Remember to invest time and effort in connecting and loving and teaching them. We can never regain the time that we have lost away from them, but we can make every moment with them count. If you love them, they will offer honor to you—maybe in the form of a white puppy.

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.



Courtesy photo

Staff Sgt. Lasheeka Lee, a medic in Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, and her daughter, Kristen, pose for a picture while she was on vacation in Nov. 2007. This Mother's Day will be the fourth that Lee and her daughter have spent away from each other.

Despite deployment, mom, daughter stay close

Sgt. Jason Stadel

2nd BCT PAO

This Mother's Day is nothing new for Staff Sgt. Lasheeka Lee. Lee has had the same type of Mother's Day three times. On this Mother's Day, once again, Lee will not be with her daughter.

Lee, a medic in Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd

Infantry Division, has a 12-year-old daughter named Kristen.

"I've been to Korea three times," Lee said. "This time it was a little harder leaving her because she knew I was going to Iraq."

"She didn't want me to go, she was scared," said Lee, a native of Brooklyn, N.Y.

Kristen has seen the news and is old enough to know a deployment

to Iraq is not the same as going to Korea Lee said.

Although Lee has missed four of 12 Mother's Days, she said she has a great relationship with her daughter.

"My mom didn't really raise me," said Lee, who is a single mother. "I was adopted and I

See MOTHER page 13

always promised myself I'd be there for my kids. I may not always be with her because of my job, but my daughter understands that I do what I do for her."

Lee said because the Army offers such great benefits for families she has decided to stay in the military until she reaches 20 her years of service. Lee has been in the Army for 13 years. "I stay in for her and I know she appreciates what I do for her," said Lee.

Lee tries to speak with her daughter as often as possible to try to mitigate the effects of being away for so long.

"She says I'm a cool mom," Lee said with a smile. "She's a good kid; she gets all As and started cheerleading this year. I always tease her about having a boyfriend. Even though I've been gone a lot we have a great relationship."

Lee is hopeful she will be able to speak with her daughter this Sunday and have the best Mother's



Courtesy photo

Staff Sgt. Lasheeka Lee and her daughter at Myrtle Beach, S.C. prior to 2nd Brigade Combat Team's deployment May 2007.

Day she can.

"I'm going to be thinking about how I wish I was with her. I just keep reminding myself that I'll be home soon and we're going to make up for lost time," Lee said.

When asked what would be a perfect Mother's Day present Lee's answer was what one might expect.

"I hope everyone over here is safe and I want to be with my daughter."



Students at the Village of hope learn construction skills at Patrol Base Stone, May 1. The students, many of them members of the Sons of Iraq, graduated from their classroom training May 8. Airmen of the 557th REDHORSE Squadron will continue to train them in the field as they help rebuild their communities.

Photo by Sgt. David Turner

SPORTS & GAMES

Softball season opens on Kalsu

Spartan Chronicle Staff

2nd BCT PAO

The National Baseball League play is underway, and now on Forward Operating Base Kalsu, the Kalsu Softball League is in full swing.

On May 5, Soldiers gathered at the new softball field to prepare for intramural play amongst units fielded by the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 4th BCT, both of the 3rd Infantry Division, and the 3rd BCT, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault).

The Kalsu softball play will continue throughout the following two months. Continue reading the Spartan Chronicle for updates on how the Spartan brigade's teams fare.



Photos by Spc. Amamda McBride

A Soldier hustles down the first base line trying to beat out a throw and reach the base safely during opening day play at the Forward Operating Base Kalsu softball field on May 8. The season will take place over the next two months.



Left: A Soldier swings for the fence, hoping to send the ball out of the park. Despite his best efforts, the ball didn't go as far as expected.

Right: Defenders wait for the ball to drop and get another out.



See FIELD page 15



Photos by Spc. Amamda McBride

Above: A base hit up the middle advances a runner during opening day play at the Forward Operating Base Kalsu softball field on May 8. The season will take place over the next two months. The Spartan Brigade has several teams in the league play, two of which played opening day in a competitive match. In the matchup, the 26th Brigade Support Battalion Challengers defeated the Rough Riders, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 8 - 6. At lower left, one of the Challengers rounds third base to score one of the team's eight runs.



A Soldier takes aim at a pitch just hanging in the air waiting to be swatted for a base hit.

Distance learning center opens on Kalsu

Spc. Amanda McBride
4th BCT PAO

Soldiers stationed here have a new place to continue their education since the grand opening of the Forward Operating Base Kalsu Distance Learning Center May 4.

The center houses 20 computers, allowing Soldiers an opportunity to further their education with military and college courses.

Internet cafes are already available on the FOB but have a 30-minute limit and there is often waiting, said Lt. Col. John Chadbourne, commander of 703rd Brigade Support Battalion, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division.

Noticing this brought the decision for the distance learning center, which allocates Soldiers two hours per week to complete studies.

"Soldiers can sign up for a two-hour block up to a week in advance," Chadbourne said. "So they know in advance when they can go."

During the ceremony, Col. Thomas James, commander of 4th BCT, spoke about the

"The key thing here is to allow the Soldiers the opportunity when they are off to educate themselves."

- Col. Thomas James
Commander, 4th BCT, 3rd Inf. Div.

importance of education during deployment.

"Soldiers are always on the line, working every day," James said. "The key thing here is to allow the Soldiers the opportunity when they are off to educate themselves."

Sergeant Detra Sneed, assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2-3 Brigade Troops Battalion, said the new facility allows her to further both her military career and prepare for a career once out of the military.

"I feel this is the best thing they could have done," Sneed said. "Knowledge is power and with Soldiers leaving and going back home, it's great to be able to grow professionally."

Chadbourne said he hoped Soldiers would be able to utilize the facility.

"That way they don't have to stop their education just because they are deployed."

The center will be open seven days a week, from noon to midnight.

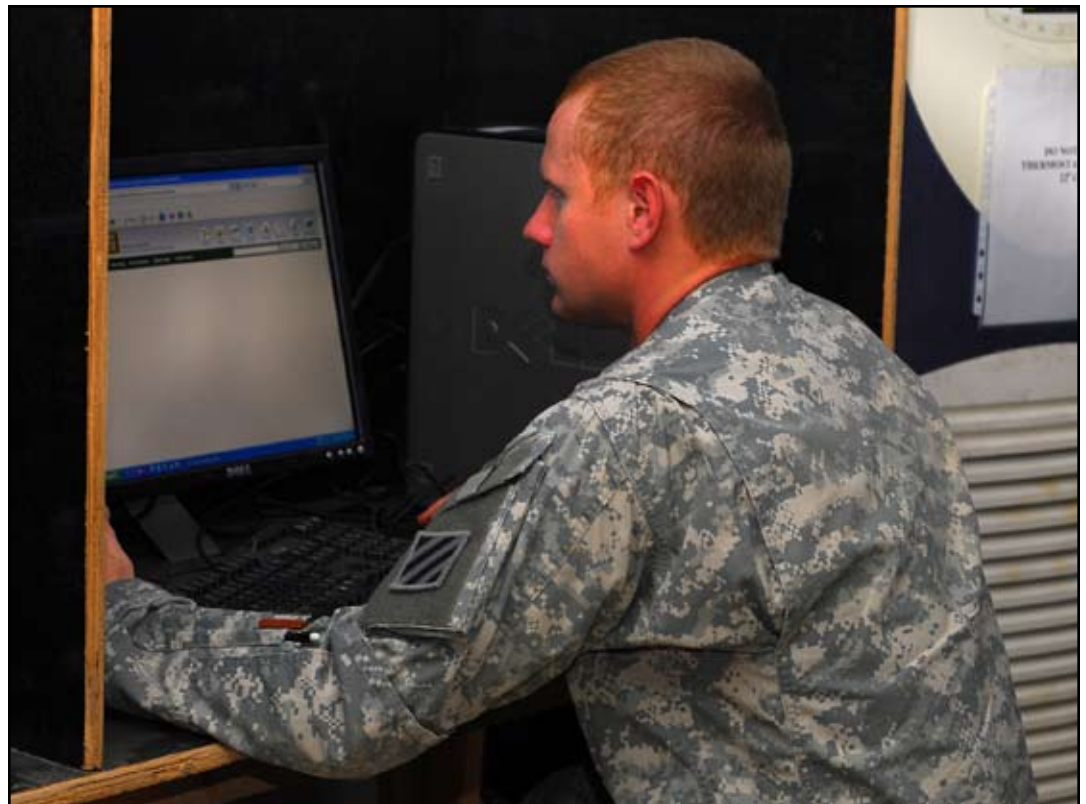


Photo by Spc. Amanda McBride

A Soldier takes advantage of the Internet at the Forward Operating Base Kalsu Distance Learning Center after its grand opening May 4. The center is open everyday from noon to midnight. Soldiers can sign up for a two-hour block for classes up to a week in advance.

Word on the street

“What did you do for your mother for mother’s day?”



“I called her, got her gift cards and sent them to her.”

Sgt. Ashraf Martinez
2nd BCT interpreter



“I sent her flowers.”

Spc. Melody Kline
2-3 BTB S1, personnel office



“I called her and told her Happy Mother’s Day.”

Pfc. Derek Dean
HHC, 2 BCT, S1 personnel office



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