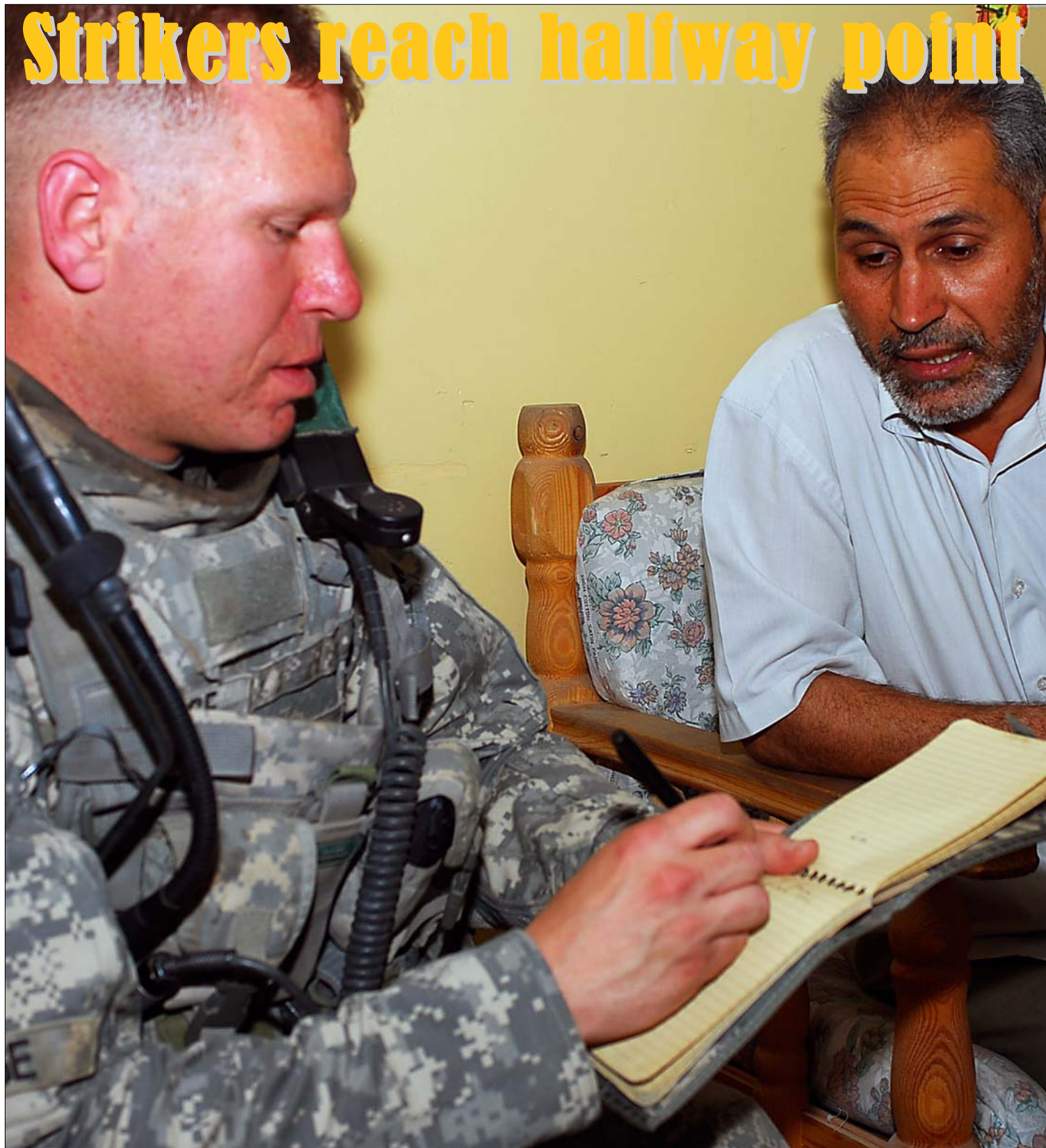




Strikers reach halfway point



Beacon's Light

Editor's Pen

If you're like me, you're lamenting the heat – and it still hasn't reached the apex of summer yet, either. I'm a cold weather guy.

But, the best part about the heat of the summer is this: we're halfway home! Many of you have already taken your 18 days of mid-tour leave and enjoyed the break from the nonstop pace in Iraq. Others, like me, have yet to get on that flight and put Iraq in the rearview mirror for a while.

These past few months have been some of the busiest of the deployment. Operations in Sadr City dominated much of that time. The Soldiers of the Striker Brigade, as well as those attached, continue to do great things for the people of Iraq and the Soldiers to their left and right.

These next few pages will hopefully highlight a few of the things going on within the Striker Brigade. As always, if you're not seeing something you want to read in the *Beacon*, let me know.

Thanks for reading,

Sgt. Zach Mott

3rd BCT Public Affairs NCOIC
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Recapping the first half of this 15 month deployment for the Striker Brigade.

See Pages 6&7



Adhamiyah celebrates the opening of the only community pool in this northern Baghdad district.

See Page 12



Scouts patrol streets around FOB Callahan to protect Soldiers and compound from attacks.

See Page 21



The latest Striker Top 10 tells why life really is better at FOB War Eagle.

See Page 30

On the Cover

1st Lt. Matthew George, a native of Los Angeles, who serves as a platoon leader with 3rd Platoon, Company A, 1st Combined Arms Battalion, 68th Armored Regiment, takes notes as the headmaster speaks to him during a visit to the Al Murooa School for Girls. The Soldiers are helping the school headmaster in finding ways to receive additional help from the Iraqi government.



Photo by Spc. Joseph Rivera Rebolledo

The Striker Beacon is published in the interest of Soldiers, Families and friends of the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division. The Striker Beacon is an Army-funded newsletter authorized for members of the U.S. Army under the provisions of AR 360-1. Contents of the Striker Beacon are not necessarily the official views of, nor endorsed by, the U.S. Government, Department of Defense or Department of the Army.

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HORT REPORT



Strikers, Family and Friends of the Brigade,

In the last month we've memorialized six more heroes to the Striker Brigade. SPC Justin R. Mixon, 1-2 Stryker was killed by an IED attack during operations in Sadr City, and a devastating attack at the District Advisory Council building in Sadr City took five of our friends and colleagues. Maj. Dwayne Kelly, 432nd Civil Affairs Detachment; Mr. Steven Farley from the embedded Provincial Reconstruction Team; Nicole Suveges, US contractor for the Human Terrain Team; bi-lingual, bi-cultural advisor Dr. Abdul al Sahlan; and one of our own Strikers, CW3 Robert Hammett were all killed making history by helping to stand up a responsible local government that will take Sadr City to the next step in the evolution of this country.

I know I speak on behalf of all Strikers when I say that we are extremely saddened by the loss, and our hearts go out to their friends and families. We are forever in the debt of these American heroes

I'm confident however, their sacrifices will not be in vain. It has been a hard road for this Brigade and we have a good distance to travel yet, but as we approach the half-way point on tour in Iraq, I feel I can say with certainty that we see the light at the end of the tunnel. I believe that Sadr City was the last great hurdle to peace in Baghdad and the sovereignty of Iraq. The enemy has been defeated here. Whether or not we talk about rogue elements of Jayish al Mahdi, al Qaeda in Iraq, criminals, extremist or other generally bad people, they are on the run here, disjointed, disorganized and in a fight for their lives.

The Strikers have had an enormous

part to play in the kinetic operations that have led to the current state. Our intelligence has helped us to identify the enemy; our reconnaissance and surveillance platforms have led us directly to their door and the professionalism and effectiveness of our Soldiers has allowed the Striker Brigade to roll-up the enemy like a dirty carpet. Those that are left have fled to places like Iran, or remain in hiding with no where to turn for support.

But what has been most reassuring is the incredible transformation of the Iraqi Army. Like Basra, Sadr City began as a tit-for-tat, cat-and-mouse game between special groups criminals and the Iraqi Army, seen as an arm of the disliked Government of Iraq. But almost overnight, the IA grabbed their bootstraps, put their Kevlar on straight and marched into Sadr City to lay down the law. Much to everyone's surprise, in most cases they were greeted by the people of Sadr City with open arms and a collective gratitude.

Now the rebuilding is underway. We've injected millions of dollars into the famous Jamilla market, the heart of Sadr City commerce and a critical economic factor for Baghdad. Daily we are paying out claims to citizens and micro grants to business owners to get their businesses back underway. We've stood up the Neighborhood Guard, a neighborhood security program modeled after the Sons of Iraq that we've seen mostly in Sunni dominated areas. Each one of the NG gets \$300 a month providing much needed jobs and a boost to the local economy. We're repairing sewer systems, and fresh water distribution facilities. We're putting in street lights and generators for power. We're refurbishing

schools and we are implementing a public service corps that will provide more jobs, keep the streets clean and provide an effective work force for the city government.

Our non-kinetic efforts in the Thawra and Jamilla neighborhoods of Sadr City will be a shining light for the rest of the district, for Baghdad and Iraq, but we are not resting on our laurels there. Just across the canal that splits the southern portion of our operational environment, Adhamiya is an explosion of progress. District leaders there have taken real ownership in their future. On 2 July, in a combined effort with local leaders, we opened a new swimming pool and recreation center in Adhamiyah that will provide a safe place for children to play and mature away from terror and extremist groups looking to enlist new recruits. Things were decidedly different two years ago in Adhamiyah. In the heart of Baghdad, this district was having serious sectarian issues and in chaos from terror and extremist organizations vying for power. Now, it's one of the most progressive regions in Iraq. Every day more shops are opening up. Buildings once abandoned are now getting a new coat of paint and a welcome sign on the door. Streets are clean, infrastructure and essential services are rapidly approaching pre-war status. And most notably, violence has all but ended here going from more than 700 attacks a week to less than two per week in just two years. The Striker Brigade has been a witness to and a steward of much of that success.

To the north in the rural region of Istaqlal, agriculture is booming thanks
See REPORT page 4

See **REPORT** page 4

to the work of our Strikers providing new irrigation systems, fresh water distribution and power production. Dates, citrus and other fruits and vegetables are essential cash crops to the people of Istaqlal and our work to improve the agricultural production there is essential to the economic success of the region. Additionally, we are assisting with an experimental local government there that promises to unite the people of the region long divided between sectarian lines.

In only seven months the Striker Brigade has made enormous gains in the economic, political and security challenges of our operational environment. In the final chapter of our nation's history in Iraq, the story of

the Striker Brigade will be prominent. But there is still much work to be done, and a real danger still persists. The most competent and capable special groups' leaders that have managed to elude us for so long are constantly seeking out new and improved ways to attack our Soldiers, the Iraqi Security Forces and Iraqi civilians. Better and more powerful explosively formed penetrators are still a risk, and the Improvised Rocket Assisted Mortar poses a very deadly threat if we let down our guard.

In the final half we have to play like we are down 7 to nothing. Our Soldiers have to remain vigilant and focused on the prize ... winning and never coming back. We can not give up any ground and I ask the Families

that have worked so hard for us not to either. The support and attention that our friends and Family have provided is truly the foundation of this Brigade's strength. This has been a hard and demanding deployment for all of us with as much to go as we've put behind us, but I am every day amazed at the morale and determination expressed by our Soldiers and I know that comes from a powerful support structure at home.

Thank you all for your great work and dedication. Together in the last half, we will win this fight and bring everybody home.

Strikers!

Steadfast and Loyal

John H. Hort

Commanding

Striker 6 meets 'Big Guns'



Improvements

ABOVE: Col. John Hort talks to Adm. Mike Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, as he leads him through the revitalized Jamilla Market in northeastern Baghdad.

RIGHT: Col. John Hort points out improvements in the Sadr City district of Baghdad to Multi-National Corps – Iraq Commanding General Gen. David Petraeus during a visit to Joint Security Station Thawra II in northeastern Baghdad.



Photos by Sgt. Zach Mott

One of the competitors in the talent show plays a song for the crowd during a talent show on Camp Taji.

INSET: Sgt. Scedric Moss performs his original recording of "Put My State on the Map" during a talent show competition at Camp Taji. Moss serves as a human resources specialist with Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 3rd Brigade Combat Team.

Strikers put talent on display

by Sgt. Zach Mott

Striker Beacon editor

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – What do you get when you combine the "Macarena," Lynard Skynard and an originally written rap performance?

Give up yet? The answer: a Striker Village Talent Show.

Soldiers from the 3rd Brigade Combat Team gathered at a makeshift stage on Camp Taji to sing, dance, perform and, as one of the competitors said, to take a break.

"It's all about the Soldiers and having a good time in Iraq. There's enough stress out here. It's good to just relax and let your hair down," said Sgt. Scedric Moss who performed an original rap of "State on the Map" for the contest.

Moss, a human resources specialist with Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 3rd BCT, finished third in the competition.

Staff Sgt. Freddie Hurt, who, along with Staff Sgt. Carl Buck, helped organize the event, said he wanted to give Soldiers an outlet not normally

afforded to those on the outer edges of this sprawling military compound.

"Most of the time Soldiers, once they get done with work, they don't want to catch a bus ride to go way to main post to do something. We figured that we'd set up a talent show here for the Soldiers," said Hurt, senior first cook with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 64th Brigade Support Battalion.

Hurt also competed, singing "Anything" by Jaheim. His performance earned top honors also.

"I didn't expect to win. There was some good competition up there," he said.

The second place winners, Sergeants Anthony Smith and Daniel Kobler, both from the Missile Section of Company B, 64th BSB, performed two songs. With Smith on guitar and Kobler singing, they covered Lynard Skynard's "Simple Man" for the first tune and tried something different for the second.

Smith strummed the chord to Bob Seger's "Turn the Page" while Kobler

sang lyrics he wrote himself and titled "Send Me Home."

"I've been trying to write it for a few months. I started writing it in January. It didn't take too much actual time once I started writing the words. But, it was just the way I've felt. I've loved the song my whole life," the Stockbridge, Ga., native, said.

Smith said the pairing came together rather easily.

"I can't sing and I just play guitar for him and he can sing and he can't play guitar so that made us the perfect duo," he said.

Other Soldiers performed songs and enjoyed the chance to entertain their friends for a short time. But, to kick things off properly, Sgt. Joshua Williams and Spc. Christopher Jackson chose to perform the traditional 90s dance.

This was the first planned event to help bring other morale-building events to this part of the Camp Taji. Hurt will begin hosting karaoke soon and plans to conduct another talent contest later this deployment.



630 direct-fire
engagements

Strikers reach

151 IEDs/EFPs
defeated

12,091 25mm
rounds fired

700 cri
kill



halfway mark

85 AWT
engagements

minerals
led

818 120mm
rounds fired

+\$33 million on
CMO projects



78 CIBs
awarded
19 BSMs
awarded

196 CABs
awarded
12 CMBs
awarded



Photos by Sgt. Zach Mott

ABOVE: Sgt. Bart Gammon enjoys a smoothie donated by local business back home in the Soldier's home town of Colorado Springs prior to conducting a mission in the nearly 100-degree temperatures. Gammon is a fueler with Company A, 64th Brigade Support Battalion. **RIGHT:** Sgt. Holly Krebs serves up a smoothie outside the Company A, 64th BSB Headquarters on Camp Taji. Krebs serves in the orderly room for Co. A, 64th BSB.



Smoothies from home help thaw hot day

by Sgt. Zach Mott
Striker Beacon editor

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – Temperatures in Iraq have begun their annual climb into triple digits in mid-April, and Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers seek out any number of ways to combat the heat.

In their endeavors to overcome the “heating up” challenges, the roadmasters of Company A, 64th Brigade Support Battalion sought relief in the form of smoothies donated by the Smoothie King in Colorado Springs.

“It’s real nice. It quenches the thirst,” said Sgt. Bart Gammon who serves a fueler with Co. A, 64th BSB.

The Co. A Soldiers are on the roads of Iraq nearly every day delivering supplies to Soldiers at outlying combat outposts and forward operating bases. The unit’s family readiness group partnered with the Colorado business to help provide the treat to the Soldiers.

“Everybody knows it came from the states. It’s just like a homemade cookie when you get it in a care package,” said Capt. Erik Corcoran who serves as the commander of Co. A, 64th BSB.

The smoothies were originally intended as an Easter treat. However, because of mission requirements, the smoothies were kept frozen until today.

“Everybody has been waiting for this day to come. Every day I’ve been asked, ‘When are we going to have smoothies?’” said Sgt. Evan Brooks, a petroleum supply noncommissioned officer with Co. A, 64th BSB.

Brooks, whose wife, along with her co-worker, helped get the smoothie ball rolling, has also been waiting for this day.

“It’s nice to know that there’s actual individuals, as well as companies, that are looking out for (Soldiers) and will do something for us,” Brooks said.

Phoenix Soldier recovers from neck surgery, deploys

by Sgt. Zach Mott

Striker Beacon editor

FOB WAR EAGLE, Iraq – Staff Sgt. Keith Reiss is a self-described patriot. So when crippling pain in his neck sidelined him from the most recent deployment for the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division (which was to be his third) he pushed to return with his comrades.

The pain, which first appeared in 2003 during Reiss' Operation Iraqi Freedom I deployment, brought the 3rd Special Troops Battalion supply sergeant to his knees while doing yard work in October. His wife rushed him to Memorial Hospital's emergency room where he was told – after an MRI and further evaluations – he had a ruptured disc in his neck.

After his initial consultation, the Colorado Springs, Colo., native was told his next appointment wouldn't be until January. Reiss told the doctors to either move his surgery up or he was going to deploy in December with his unit and have the surgery later. His surgery, which replaced his ruptured disc with a metal titanium one, was then scheduled for December 11.

After the surgery, which left him with an obscure two- to three-inch scar on his neck, Reiss was given 30 days of convalescent leave.

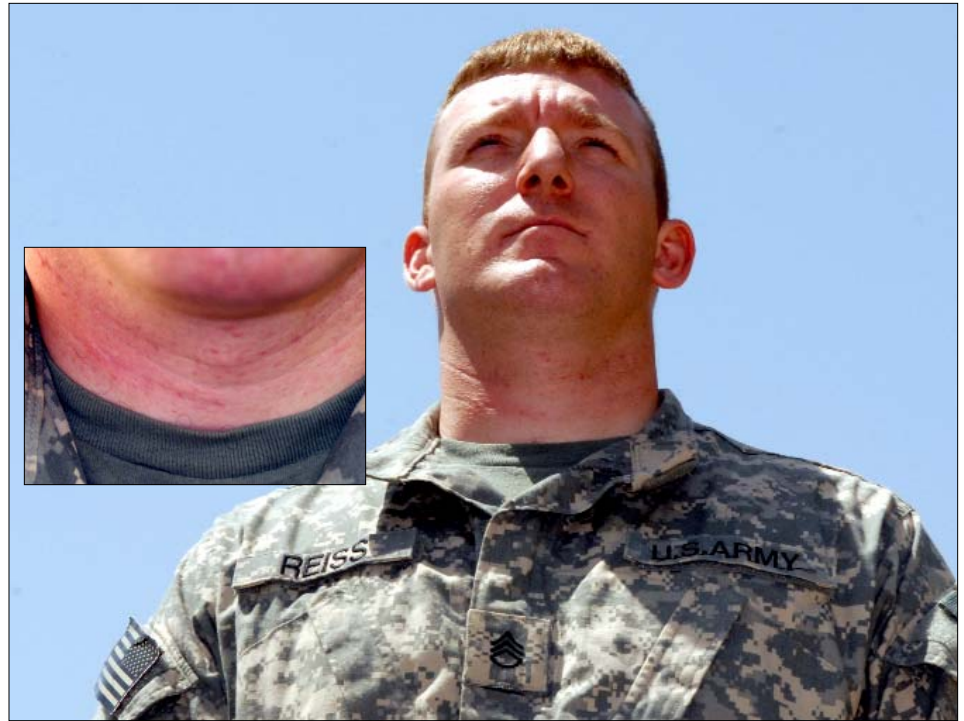
"I didn't do anything for 30 days con leave because I wanted to make sure I was healthy. Then the next 60 days, I started working," he said.

After that initial 90-days post surgery, Reiss was still not ready to deploy.

"Right around March when I was planning on deploying, wearing IBAS and Kevlar was still bothering me," he said.

But, he continued to work and push his body to recover and continued fighting to join his friends in Iraq.

"Probably about two-weeks after that decision was made – I was wear-



Photos by Sgt. Zach Mott

Staff Sgt. Keith Reiss, a supply sergeant with 3rd Special Troops Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, recovered from neck surgery, when he had a disc replaced, to deploy in April with his unit. Reiss is currently on his third deployment with the Striker Brigade.

INSET: The barely noticeable scar on Staff Sgt. Keith Reiss' neck is the only visible reminder of the surgery that helped eliminate five years of pain.

ing my Kevlar everyday, two, three hours when I got home just to strengthen the muscles in my neck – it felt great. I was like, alright, I'm ready to go. April 20 I got on the plane and came out," he said.

Reiss now operates the troop store on Forward Operating Base War Eagle. During his off time, he continues the one thing that he says helped his body keep the constant pain at bay: combatives.

"I fought through it for five years because doing combatives – I love it, you get to take aggression out in combatives – and I think that's strengthened everything up," he said.

The leaders within the Phoenix Battalion were excited to have an experienced NCO such as Reiss push to return to combat.

"I felt it very important for him to be out here with us. He's a very

mature, professional, competent guy.

He has a great attitude," said Maj.

Samuel Volkman, executive officer for the 3rd STB.

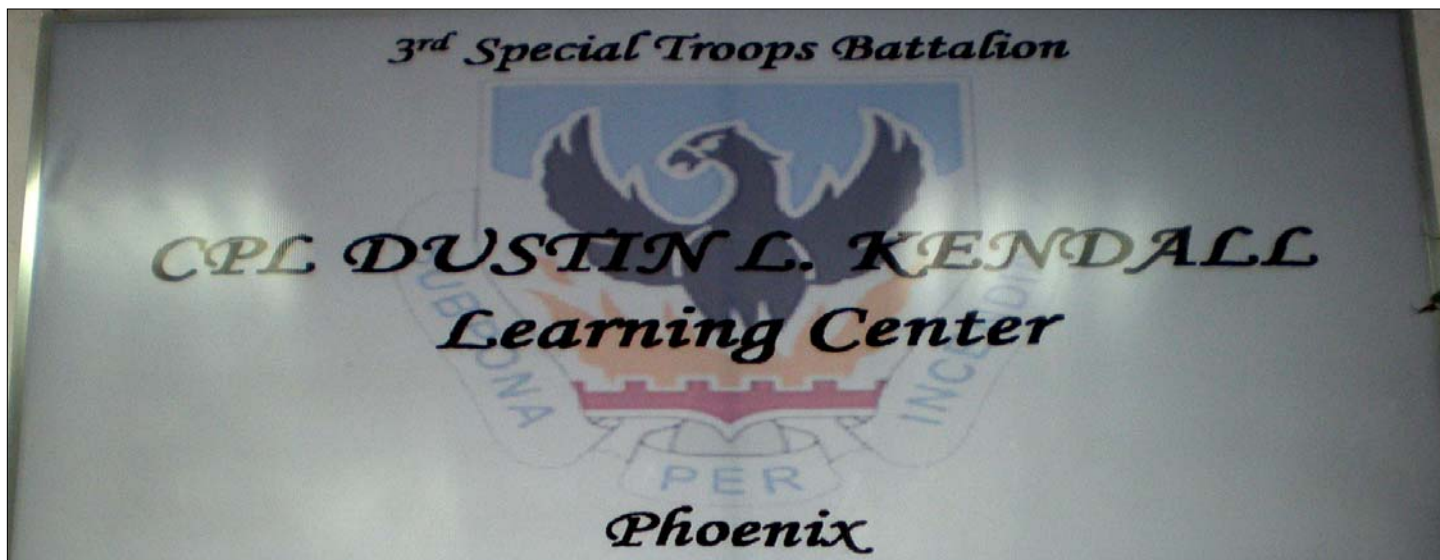
Reiss said he's a much happier person now that he's living pain free.

"Generally I'm just a happier person all around. I don't get so upset like I used to and that's because I'm living pain free now. It's amazing what it's done for me. I pretty much hated every day before. If I had an episode where I was in pain, I just didn't want to move. I didn't want to do anything," he said.

The one thing that allowed him to recover and rejoin his unit in Iraq, Reiss said, was his work ethic.

"Rehabilitation's going to hurt, as long as you're not injuring yourself. It's gonna hurt. You've gotta push yourself and that's what I did," he said.

Learning Center dedicated to CPT Kendall



by Sgt. Zach Mott

Striker Beacon editor

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – Cpl. Dustin Lee Kendall's legacy will continue to live on in the 3rd Special Troops Battalion.

In a fitting tribute on Memorial Day, the Learning Center at Camp Taji was dedicated in his honor.

"We used it because we wanted to recognize Cpl. Kendall and keep his memory and his thoughts with us by dedicating the learning center in his name," said Command Sgt. Maj. Gerald Kinloch, the senior enlisted leader for the 3rd STB, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, "to let him know that we'll never leave a fallen comrade on the battlefield and we'll never forget their sacrifices either."

The ceremony, attended by more than 70 Soldiers, was a fitting tribute to the first casualty in the Striker Brigade's previous deployment. Kendall died Jan. 15, 2006 while on a patrol in Diyala Province.

"I think he had honor, he showed great valor. It's a sad thing that it had to happen. But he did what needed to be done to keep this country free and I commemorate him for that," said Sgt. Willie Fout, a member of the Command Security Detachment who served alongside Kendall.



Courtesy Photos

TOP: The newly dedicated Cpl. Dustin L. Kendall Learning Center at Camp Taji will serve as a place for Soldiers to continue their education while keeping the memory of the first casualty of the 3rd Special Troops Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division alive.

BOTTOM: Sgt. Willie Fout (left) and Cpl. Patrick Neal, both members of the Command Security Detachment, 3rd BCT, 4th Inf. Div., pose before cutting the ribbon celebrating the opening of the Cpl. Dustin L. Kendall Learning Center on Camp Taji. Both Fout and Neal served with Kendall in the CSD prior to Kendall's death Jan. 15, 2006, in Diyala Province.



Photos by Sgt. Zach Mott

TOP: From left, Sgt. 1st Class Justin Hehs, Staff Sgt. Robert Lilly, Spc. Christopher Nelson and Maj. Will Downing, stand at attention after being presented with Bronze Star Medals.

MIDDLE LEFT: Maj. Gen. Jeffery Hammond presents a Bronze Star Medal to Spc. Christopher Nelson.

MIDDLE RIGHT: Maj. Gen. Jeffery Hammond pins a Bronze Star Medal to the chest of Staff Sgt. Nathan Hartzell

BOTTOM: Maj. Gen. Jeffery Hammond shakes hands with Sgt. 1st Class Justin Hehs prior to presenting 14 Bronze Star Medals to Soldiers with the 3rd Brigade Combat Team.

Community Pool opens in Adhamiyah

by Sgt. Zach Mott

Striker Beacon editor

ADHAMIYAH, Iraq – Backyard swimming pools are a staple of most American towns that few even think to wonder what life would be like without one nearby.

For most people in Iraq, a dip in the local watering hole is either impossible, or involves tempting fate in the ancient Tigris or Euphrates rivers.

“This is the only swimming pool in Adhamiyah district. All of the children go to the river and that’s very dangerous for them,” said Muhtad Hasan, a member of the Support Council of Adhamiyah who works with youth and education.

The project to refurbish the pool and recreation complex began in March under the direction of the 3rd Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment. That unit recently completed its 15-month tour in Iraq and was replaced by the 1st Squadron, 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment, who oversaw the project’s final days.

The \$150,000-venture helped re-open the pool after violence and the subsequent damage from criminals

left the facility uninhabitable more than three years ago.

During the opening festivities, children ran around the deck with smiles and happily showboated acrobatic feats to gain the attention of the ceremony attendees.

“It’s really money well-spent when you look at the thrill that it’s given these kids,” said Lt. Col. Daniel Barnett who commands 1st Squadron, 2nd SCR, which is currently attached to 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division.

The adjoining recreation center has a boxing ring, a weight room and wrestling mats for children to practice their specific sport of choice.

“It’s an ongoing project,” Barnett said. “One of the first things they asked for, as far as community projects, was to get this pool re-established so the kids didn’t have to swim in the river.”

Temperatures in Iraq historically surpass 130 degrees during the unrelenting summer. For the Soldiers who patrol these streets in northern Baghdad, the pool is a welcome sight to help the people they’re here to protect.

“This is a good example of what cooperation with the local government officials, the Iraqi Army, with the Coalition Forces -- what we can all do together to improve the quality of life here,” Barnett said.

“Every time a Soldier walks by on a patrol here he’s going to say, ‘Hey, you know, we helped facilitate that. We helped make a difference.’ ”



Photos by Sgt. Zach Mott

ABOVE: An Iraqi boy slides into the kiddie pool at the newly opened Adhamiyah Community Pool and Recreation Center in northern Baghdad.

BELOW: Col. John Hort (center) along with members of the Iraqi Army and the Adhamiyah District Advisory Council, cut the ribbon to signify the opening of the Adhamiyah Community Pool.



DFAC under new management

by Sgt. Philip Klein

Striker Beacon staff writer

COMBAT OUTPOST OLD MOD, Iraq – Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers stationed at Combat Outpost Old MOD have a few changes at the dining facility that are designed to help the staff excel at customer service and support the mission needs.

Task Force 1st Battalion, 6th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, based out of Baumholder, Germany, and now attached to 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, assumed responsibility for the Old MOD dining

facility June 6 and has continued to work to improve the service for Soldiers who roll out daily on to the streets of Sadr City to bring security to the people of Baghdad.

“The first thing I did when my crew took over was to expand the time we served chow,” said DFAC Manager Sgt. Patrick Hiebert. “We now serve food from 7 a.m. to midnight to meet the needs of the Soldiers whose missions each day don’t always allow them to sit down at normal meal times.”

Hiebert, a native of Belgrade, Maine, said the changes are about customer service and the missions Soldiers at Old MOD do every day.

“Expanding the hours of the DFAC is a simple and effective idea I learned from the sergeant first class who trained me back in Germany,” he continued. “Job requirements don’t always allow Soldiers to set regular schedules,

but with our expanded hours they can come in, sit down and eat a hot meal.

“Currently we are preparing between 1,500 and 1,600 meals a day and my crew is always in motion preparing meals and restocking plates, eating utensils and beverages,” said Hiebert.



Photo by Sgt. Philip Klein

Spc. Hector Ayvar, a cook with Task Force 1st Battalion, 6th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, based out of Baumholder, Germany, currently attached to the 3rd BCT, 4th Inf. Div., grills steaks for the nearly round the clock operations to feed the Soldiers stationed at Old MOD.

Ayvar, a native of Arecibo, Puerto Rico. Ayvar is proud of the work done as Task Force 1-6 has taken over operations at the Old MOD DFAC.

“Currently we are preparing food for about 300 Soldiers, but in the next few weeks we expect to expand our operations to feed 800 Soldiers,” he said.

Hiebert’s plans for the DFAC sometimes have to be adapted as, June 15, meals we scaled back due to shortages of plates and utensils.

“This is just a temporary measure until we get supplies back up, but once we do, we will be back on our DFAC’s regular schedule,” he said.

“Shortages in a combat zone happen and we will adapt to any situation we run into, but the bottom line is our team is committed to bringing the Soldiers here at Old MOD the best service we deliver.”

Hiebert gives all credit to the Soldiers who work for him, saying that because of their dedication to the job, together they are able to pull off the nearly constant meal preparations.

One of Hiebert’s crew is Spc. Hector

Soldiers celebrate Independence Day with games of all kind

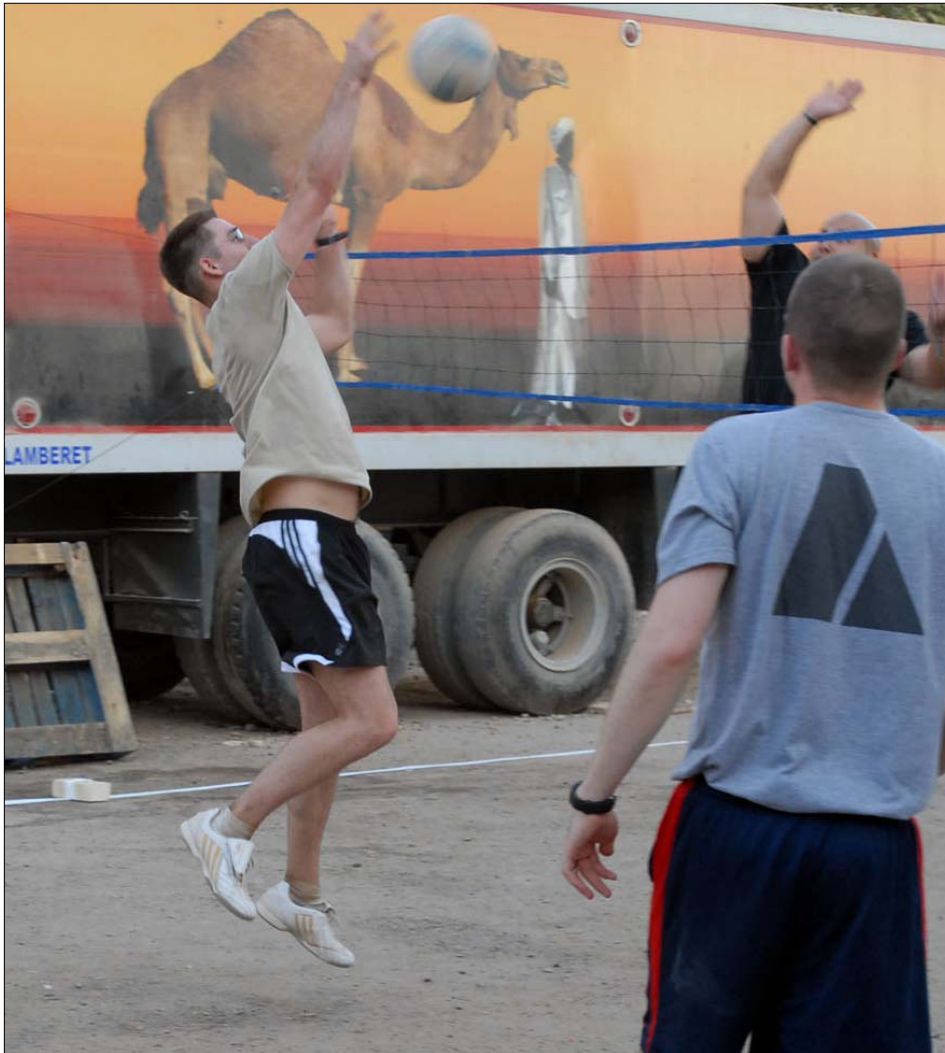


Photo by Sgt. Philip Klein
A Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldier goes up to spike the ball during a game of volleyball as Soldiers celebrate Independence Day July 4.



Strikers from the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, participate in festivities at Forward Operating Base War E.



Maj. Brian North, the chief for the 42nd Brigade Support Team, grills steaks, hamburgers and brats to celebrate Independence Day July 4.



Photo by Sgt. Zach Mott
Command Sgt. Maj. Gerald Kinloch, senior enlisted leader of the 3rd Special Troops Battalion, gives the peace sign while running during the 5K Fun Run.

4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, take to the streets during a 5K Fun Run to kick off the 4th of July Eagle in northern Baghdad.



Photo by Sgt. Philip Klein
ade, 11th Iraqi Army Division, Military Training on the grill for his Soldiers as the MiTT cele-



Photo by Sgt. Zach Mott
Soldiers with the 3rd Special Troops Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad play the game “Rock Band” during 4th of July activities at Forward Operating Base War Eagle in northern Baghdad.



Photo courtesy Sgt. 1st Class Theodore Howard

Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines filled the Al Faw Palace in Baghdad for the largest mass re-enlistment ceremony ever held July 4. Gen. David Petraeus, commanding general of Multi-National Force – Iraq, officiated the ceremony where more than 50 3rd Brigade Combat Team Soldiers took the Oath of Enlistment.

Striker retention leads Ivy Division

by Sgt. Zach Mott

Striker Beacon editor

Striker Retention NCOs are leading the way for the 4th Infantry Division for all three quarters of the current Fiscal Year.

Maj. Gen. Jeffery Hammond, the commanding general of the 4th Inf. Div. and Multi-National Division – Baghdad, has awarded the Striker Brigade for having the top re-enlistment program within the Ivy Division.

Additionally, more than 50 3rd Brigade Combat Team Soldiers participated in the largest mass re-enlistment ceremony ever which was conducted by Gen. David Petraeus, commanding general of Multi-National

Force – Iraq, and attended by 1,215 servicemembers at the historic Al Faw Palace in Baghdad.

For Soldiers who have been holding off on making that commitment to the Army, movement options are now available if you would like an assignment outside of Fort Carson.

Sgt. 1st Class Theodore Howard, the senior career counselor for 3rd BCT, said that bonuses have been holding steady but are expected to decrease with the Army closing in on its annual retention goal.

Within the Striker Brigade, retention numbers are as follows:

4th Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment: 117 total re-enlistees; 81

percent of mission goal

1st Combined Arms Battalion, 8th Infantry Regiment: 203 total re-enlistees; 73 percent of annual mission

1st Combined Arms Battalion, 68th Armor Regiment: 181 total re-enlistees; 74 percent of annual mission

3rd Battalion, 29th Field Artillery Regiment: 122 total re-enlistees; 115 percent of annual mission

64th Brigade Support Battalion: 126 total re-enlistees; 106 percent of annual mission

3rd Special Troops Battalion: 129 total re-enlistees; 93 percent of annual mission

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Regulars tour Jamilla Market, talk to owners

by Maj. Mike Humphreys

3rd BCT Public Affairs Officer

SADR CITY, Iraq – Nearly two months of fighting spurred by criminal and special groups elements in Sadr City left one of Baghdad's largest market areas in disarray, but recent calm has shops open again and Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers are in a hurry to provide valuable and necessary aid to business owners in the area.

The Regulars of Task Force 1-6 Infantry, 1st Battalion, 6th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armor Division, visited the economically critical Jamilla Market May 29 to inform shop owners of the possibility for rebuilding and improving their businesses through micro-grants.

Micro-grants can be issued to business owners in a sum up to \$2,500 and are generally used to supplement a claim for damage caused by the fighting in Sadr City, said Capt. Nicholas Cantrell of Topeka, Kan., fire support officer for TF 1-6, assigned to the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad.

"We have specifically been looking for lost revenues and minor damages or losses, like a small generator or a refrigerator," Cantrell said, of his door-to-door approach at educating business owners to the possibilities.

"The word is starting to get out ... we are experiencing people starting to ask us about the micro-grants now instead of us telling them," Cantrell said.

In four days, TF 1-6 handed out \$85,000 in micro-grants, and though the money is a lifeboat to the individual

business owner, Cantrell said TF 1-6 is leading the charge in concert with the Iraqi Security Forces, the Government of Iraq, and civil affairs operations, to fix Jamilla Market on a grand scale.

"It was operating at zero percent," said Lt. Col. Brian Eifler, a native of Farmington Hills, Mich., and commander of TF 1-6. "Now it's about 30 or 40 percent of what it used to be, and every day we see a marked improvement in there."

While micro-grants are being handed out to business owners pedaling everything from fruits and vegetables to hammers and nails, the work going on around them reads like an expensive shopping list as well. Cantrell said numerous small projects are underway to remove rubble, fix open sewers, improve power and install street lights and many other critical infrastructure improvements. "We've cleaned up many of the areas affected by the fighting and fires, and all of this has resulted in stores and businesses reopening and with the residents feeling a new sense of security," Cantrell said.

Mohammed Yasser, a local businessman, said he lost his business shortly after fighting began in another part of the market and 200,000,000 Iraqi Dinar. He was quick to assign the blame to those he felt were at fault. "The terrorists – they destroy everything. They take everything," he said, of the criminal elements that burned his business.

For now, Yasser runs a more modest shop than before, but said he vows to rebuild his old store with the help of the Government of Iraq and a micro-grant from Coalition Forces.

He emphatically defies the criminals to win over him.

"We are with the right," he exclaimed. "We are with the people. We are with the new world."



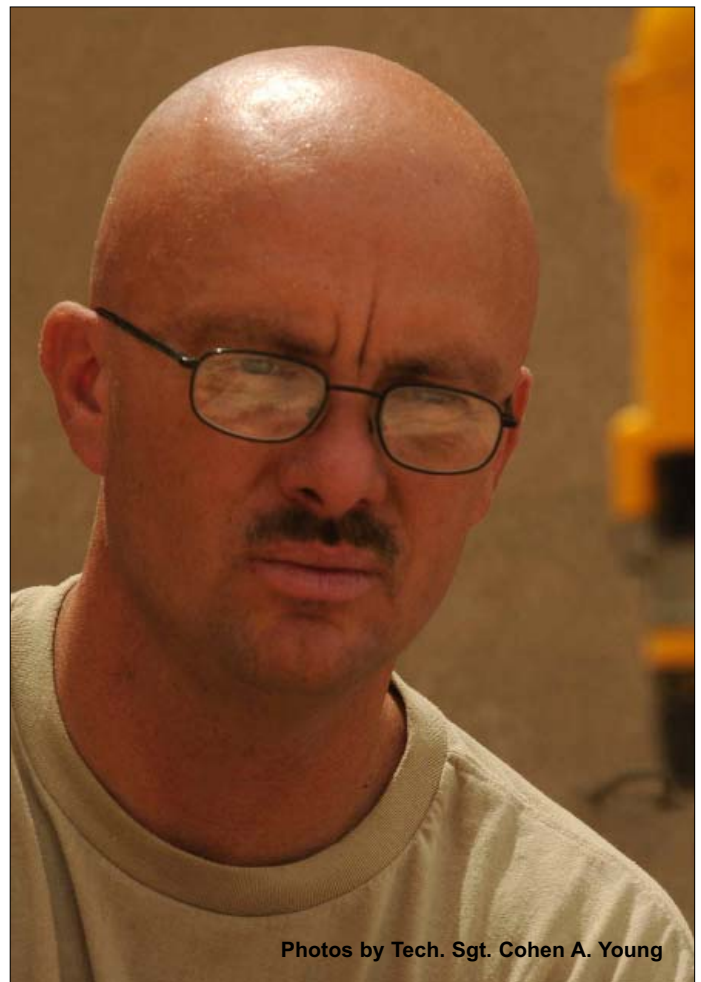
Mohamed Yasser, a local businessman, speaks with fellow residents from the front of his temporary shop in Jamilla Market in the Sadr City district of Baghdad. Yasser's business in another part of the market burned after a criminal attack shortly after fighting started in Sadr City in March. He said he vows to rebuild his old store with help from the Government of Iraqi and a micro-grant provided by Coalition Forces.



Photos by Maj. Michael Humphreys

Lt. Col. Brian Eifler and Capt. Nicholas Cantrell help an Iraqi shop owner in Jamilla Market in the Sadr City district of Baghdad fill out a micro-grant application. Business owners trying to get their businesses started again after nearly two months of intense fighting in Sadr City are eligible for grants up to \$2,500 from Coalition Forces.

Engineers build up JSS Sadr City

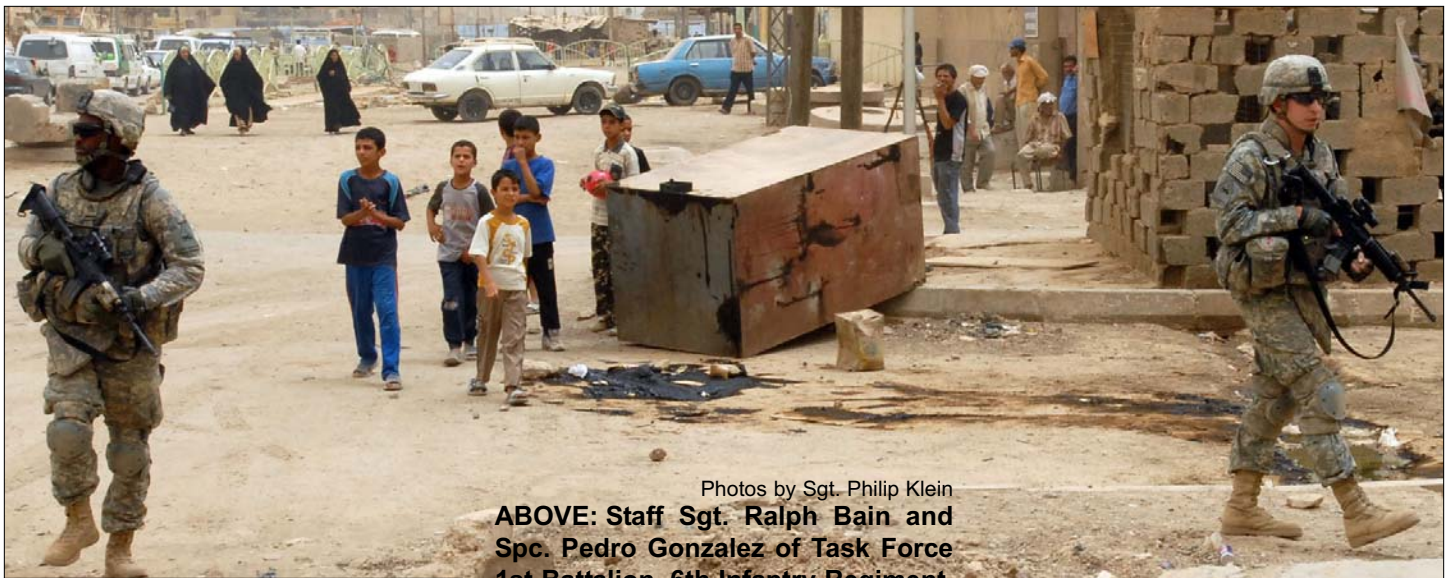


ABOVE: Pfc. Daniel Lodermeier installs a fuse box for the Containerized Housing Unit at Joint Security Station Sadr City. Lodermeier's is an electrician with the 851st Vertical Engineer Company in Minnesota and he is currently assigned to the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division.

RIGHT: Sgt. Bob Crandall, a carpentry-masonry specialist from the 851st Vertical Engineer Company, performs construction work at Joint Security Station Sadr City to improve the living conditions and survivability of the Soldiers assigned there.

TOP: Sgt. 1st Class Jeremy Frank, a construction supervisor, and Sgt. Bob Crandall, a carpentry-masonry specialist from the 851st Vertical Engineer Company perform vital construction at Joint Security Station Sadr City.

Photos by Tech. Sgt. Cohen A. Young



Photos by Sgt. Philip Klein

ABOVE: Staff Sgt. Ralph Bain and Spc. Pedro Gonzalez of Task Force 1st Battalion, 6th Infantry Regiment, patrol the streets of Sadr City while being followed by a group of Iraqi children, July 2.



LEFT: Spc. Pedro Gonzalez, TF1-6 Infantry, shares a smile with an Iraqi child.

RIGHT: Lt. Col. Brian Eifler, commander of TF 1-6 Infantry, along with Command Sgt. Maj. Dwight Dooley, the senior enlisted Soldier with Task Force 1-6, take on a group of children at a foosball table in the Sadr City district of Baghdad, July 2.



Regulars assess reconstruction programs

by Sgt. Philip Klein

Striker Beacon staff writer

SADR CITY, Iraq – Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers with 1st Battalion, 6th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, patrolled the Sadr City neighborhoods of Thawra 1 and Thawra 2 to assess reconstruction, security gains and ongoing projects that are revitalizing one of Baghdad's important districts, July 2.

Task Force 1-6, currently attached to 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, along with Iraqi security forces, is tasked with rejuvenating Sadr City, which suffered greatly due to the extremist activities in past months.

Lt. Col. Brian Eifler, commanding officer of Task Force 1-6, which is

based out of Baumholder, Germany, said he realizes the importance of the mission in a district that is critical to the general security of Baghdad and Iraq.

"People are happy when they have jobs and feel safe, and that is what we are trying to accomplish with our partners in the government of Iraq and the Iraqi army," said Eifler.

"With the government of Iraq, we are pumping money into the Sadr City community to create jobs, repair damaged infrastructure, and provide security to help get the lives of these people back to normal," he continued.

Eifler expanded on the efforts by singling out projects designed to get basic services in place such as reconstruction, electricity and sanitation.

"People are now feeling secure and

have a renewed confidence in the government of Iraq to help out with general repair and cleanup as well as provide security, and we are trying to facilitate the GoI in these endeavors," said Eifler.

Spc. Pedro Gonzalez, a Soldier with the personal security detachment of Task Force 1-6, said he has noticed a big difference in the response from the local citizens.

"We are welcomed in the streets whenever we do a patrol or stop by to visit a local business," said Gonzalez. "The people, and especially the kids, are always glad to see us when we come by. They know that we are trying to help improve their living conditions, and their response is because they are tired of the violence and want to live a normal life."

Destroyer helps return Sha'ab residents to community

by Sgt. Zach Mott

Striker Beacon editor

SHA'AB, Iraq – Upon fulfilling their obligation to the Government of Iraq, 10 residents of Sha'ab, a northern Baghdad neighborhood in the Adhamiyah district, were released to their family members during a ceremony June 27.

“The detainees are being released as part of their normal due process. They’ve served their time or they’ve been prosecuted and fulfilled whatever obligation they have,” said Capt. Kevin Kahre, an Evansville, Ind., native who serves as the commander of Company D, 1st Combined Arms Battalion, 68th Armor Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad.

Kahre, along with the Sha'ab Detention Council Chairman, Kais Alwah Hamas al-Moussoui, worked to get the men released and returned to be productive members of their community.

“Because they’re family,” Kais said.

Before being released, the men

were put through a program to help them return to society. Additionally, at the release ceremony, the former detainees along with family members, recited an oath to the Government of Iraq and later signed it before being released.

“The programs they have there

have a turnover rate of about 97 percent. These guys go through the system and when (they’re) released back to (their) hometown, 97 percent of the time he won’t go back to violence,” Kahre said.

Detainee release ceremonies occur nearly every month in Iraq. It’s becoming a process that Kahre said he hopes will become completely Iraqi-run.

“The goal is, to make sure the people are striving for normalcy, things are starting to return to a place where people don’t have to be in fear for their lives,” he said. “It’s also getting

to local councils, local government and police forces to take charge of their own areas. Eventually, we’ll be totally out of the process. Where the local police are policing their own people, the councils are governing and have the support of the people and are able to execute the will of the people.”



A former detainee (in white) is consoled by a relative after being formally released during a ceremony in the northern Baghdad neighborhood of Sha'ab.



A former detainee signs an oath pledging his allegiance to the Government of Iraq to conclude the detainee release ceremony in Sha'ab June 27. Ten former detainees were returned to their family members in this northern Baghdad neighborhood.



Photos by Sgt. Zach Mott

Capt. Kevin Kahre and Kais Alwah Hamas al-Moussoui, the Sha'ab Detention Council chairman, sign paperwork releasing 10 residents of this northern Baghdad neighborhood in the Adhamiyah district June 27. Kahre is the commander of Company D, 1st Combined Arms Battalion, 68th Armor Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division

Scouts make friends, keep community safe

by Sgt. Zach Mott
Striker Beacon editor

SHA'AB, Iraq – As the sun baked the urban Iraqi streets to a soul-melting 120 degrees, Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers continued a mission that has occupied much of the past four months for them in this northern Baghdad neighborhood.

Members of the Scout/Sniper Platoon from Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Combined Arms Battalion, 68th Armor Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, walk and drive the streets of the Sha'ab neighborhood in the Adhamiyah district of northern Baghdad to meet the people and to help deter extremists from conducting attacks there.

But, these Soldiers aren't the only ones on the front lines protecting the Iraqi people as well as American Soldiers. Members of the Iraqi Security Forces and Sons of Iraq play a vital role in the security here.

"It helps them to get involved and it lets them know exactly what they're looking for and work together with us to deter that threat as far as searching vehicles, helping with community and give their presence and have them put a face on the same mission that we're trying to accomplish over here which is to keep the neighborhood safe," said Sgt. 1st Class Lanny McLaughlin, platoon sergeant for the Scout/Sniper

Platoon.

McLaughlin stops at several checkpoints during his routine patrols in the area. Once there, he speaks to the men running them – be it National Police, Iraqi Army or Sons of Iraq (Abna al Iraq) – to ensure they have the proper uniform, enough ammunition and are properly checking vehicles.

This is also a time for McLaughlin to learn about the needs of the neighborhood. In talking to the people, it has opened up another source of information to keep the people safe.

"They will talk to us on a regular basis. If they do see something suspicious, then they'll stop us and let us know what's going on," he said.

He also noted an instance when a welder pulled up wires for an improvised explosive device and gave them to his patrol.

These improvements to what was once a bastion for terrorists are an encouraging site to the Soldiers walking the streets daily.

"When we first got here there was still a lot of trash lying around. It's cleaned up a lot. For the most part, from the time that we took over, the people that have lived around here, the majority of them have been all about us. They're very happy that we're around," said Cpl. Robert Stearns, a scout with the Scout/Sniper Platoon, HHC, 1st CAB, 68th AR.



Photos by Sgt. Zach Mott

RIGHT: Sgt. 1st Class Lanny McLaughlin reads a log book at an Iraqi National Police checkpoint in the northern Baghdad neighborhood of Sha'ab. McLaughlin is the platoon sergeant for Sniper/Scout Platoon, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Combined Arms Battalion, 68th Armor Regiment.

LEFT: Cpl. Robert Stearns climbs on a dump truck during a patrol around Forward Operating Base Callahan in northern Baghdad in the Adhamiyah district. Stearns is a scout with HHC, 1st CAB, 68th AR.



by Sgt. Zach Mott

Striker Beacon editor

FORWARD OPERATING BASE CALLAHAN, Iraq – Each Soldier at Forward Operating Base Callahan plays a vital role in the mission – from the Soldiers that patrol the streets of the northern Baghdad neighborhoods that surround the compound to those who protect the base itself.

Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers with Company F, 1st Combined Arms Battalion, 68th Armor Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, who typically perform duties ranging from vehicle maintenance to food preparation, have been called upon to provide the force protection element for FOB Callahan.

“It’s a big responsibility so I take it seriously,” said Spc. Matthew Herman, a Buffalo Grove, Ill., native who serves as a light wheel mechanic with Co. F, 1st CAB, 68th AR.

Herman stands watch at a rooftop position every other day to help keep the former shopping center compound secure.

Staff Sgt. Michael Turpin, the ammunition representative for the Silver Lions Battalion, works with his leadership to develop the security plan for the compound. His duties often mean long hours, but, he says, it helps the time pass quicker on his third deployment with the Silver Lions.

In the nearly four months since 1st CAB, 68th AR began operations at FOB Callahan, Turpin has helped oversee a number of improvements to the security of the compound. He helped bring in new barriers, the addition of what he calls a “homemade sniper screen” and fortification of the guard points.

“It helps the Soldiers coming on and off duty on the guard so that people on the outside can’t see what time they’re changing,” said the Medford, Ore., native.

One of the improvements that can’t be seen with the naked eye, but one Turpin is just as proud of, is the reduced schedule for those providing the eyes and ears at the guard points.

“Our guys do a great job with guard force. They’re up there constantly. Very little sleep sometimes. It’s a lot better now. When we first got here, the guys would work sometimes four-days straight on guard without a day off. We’ve cut that down quite a bit. The most they might work is two days straight,” he said.

Herman says the time he spends on guard duty allows him to spot irregularities that could be deadly if overlooked.

“You become real familiar with normal activities,” he said. “You can spot anything out of normal really easily.”



Spc. Matthew Herman uses binoculars to search the area around Forward Operating Base Callahan during his tour on guard duty.



Photos by Sgt. Zach Mott

Staff Sgt. Michael Turpin points through the netting used as concealment to help hide the movements on the roof of the four-story structure that is Forward Operating Base in northern Baghdad.

Fighting Eagles dedicate memorial

by Pfc. Adam Blazak

11th Public Affairs Detachment

MOSUL, Iraq – For many, Memorial Day is a time for barbecues, spending time with family and taking the first dip in the pool. For Soldiers with Company B, 1st Combined Arms Battalion, 8th Infantry Regiment, Memorial Day has a much more significant meaning.

“This is a day to reflect upon sacrifices our brothers and sisters have made,” said Lt. Col. Christopher Johnson, commander of 1st CAB, 8th Inf.

Since the company touched ground in late December, the Soldiers have fought for the freedoms of the Iraqi people. Those freedoms have come at

a price. On January 28, the company rolled out of Forward Operating Base Marez into Mosul to conduct a combat patrol. During the patrol, one of their vehicles was struck by an improvised explosive device killing five Soldiers of Company B.

“It was unreal at first,” said Sgt. Jason C. Staff, a Soldier formerly assigned to Company B. “I felt a lot of anger and grief. It hit home, hard.”

In wake of the deaths, Staff built a memorial inside the Fighting Eagles’ Headquarters to commemorate the company’s fallen.

On display are photos of the five Soldiers killed in January and the traditional fallen Soldier’s display; combat boots representing the final march

of the last battle, the inverted rifle signaling a time of prayer, and the helmet and identification tags signifying the fallen Soldiers.

Since Operation Iraqi Freedom kicked off in 2003, 15 Soldiers from 1st CAB, 8th Inf. have died in combat. Now, their ID tags dangle from the handle of the inverted rifle on display.

“I wanted to do something special for my guys,” Staff added. “I put a lot of extra work and detail into it.”

“I hold Memorial Day dear to my heart,” said Sgt. 1st Class John B. Guidry, a Soldier with Company B who worked with the five Soldiers. “They will never be forgotten with this memorial.”



Photo by Pfc. Adam Blazak

A Soldier with Company B, 1st Battalion, 8th Infantry Regiment, goes one-by-one through the identification tags of his fallen comrades, May 26, at Forward Operating Base Marez located in Mosul, Iraq. A memorial was erected for the five Soldiers who lost their lives during a combat patrol on Jan. 28. To date, fifteen Soldiers from 1-8 Inf. Regt. have died in combat since the start of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Father, son reunite ha

by Spc. Aaron Rosencrans
MND-B PAO

FORWARD OPERATING BASE MAREZ, Iraq – When a father teaches his son how to drive a car with a manual transmission, it usually happens at home in an empty parking lot. A Multi-National Division – Baghdad father however, took it one step further and taught his son in Iraq.

With military families, it's not every day when a father and son serve together in combat together, and it's less likely they have the opportunity to catch up and do those things parents normally do with their children back home.

Even though they may be separated by distance and areas of operation, the MND-B father, Capt. David Weber, found a way to travel from Baghdad to Mosul just to spend time with his son and even teach him how to "drive a stick" at Forward Operating Base Marez, June 3.

The trip was an exciting one for Weber, a native of Oak Park, Ill., who serves as the division liaison officer with the 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, MND-B. All he did was ask the question – and he was able to hitch a

ride with Command Sgt. Maj. John Gioia, the senior enlisted leader of Multi-National Division – Baghdad and the 4th Infantry Division, during a unit visit with a battalion that is detached from the division to assist in the Multi-National Division – North's mission on the eastern side of Mosul.

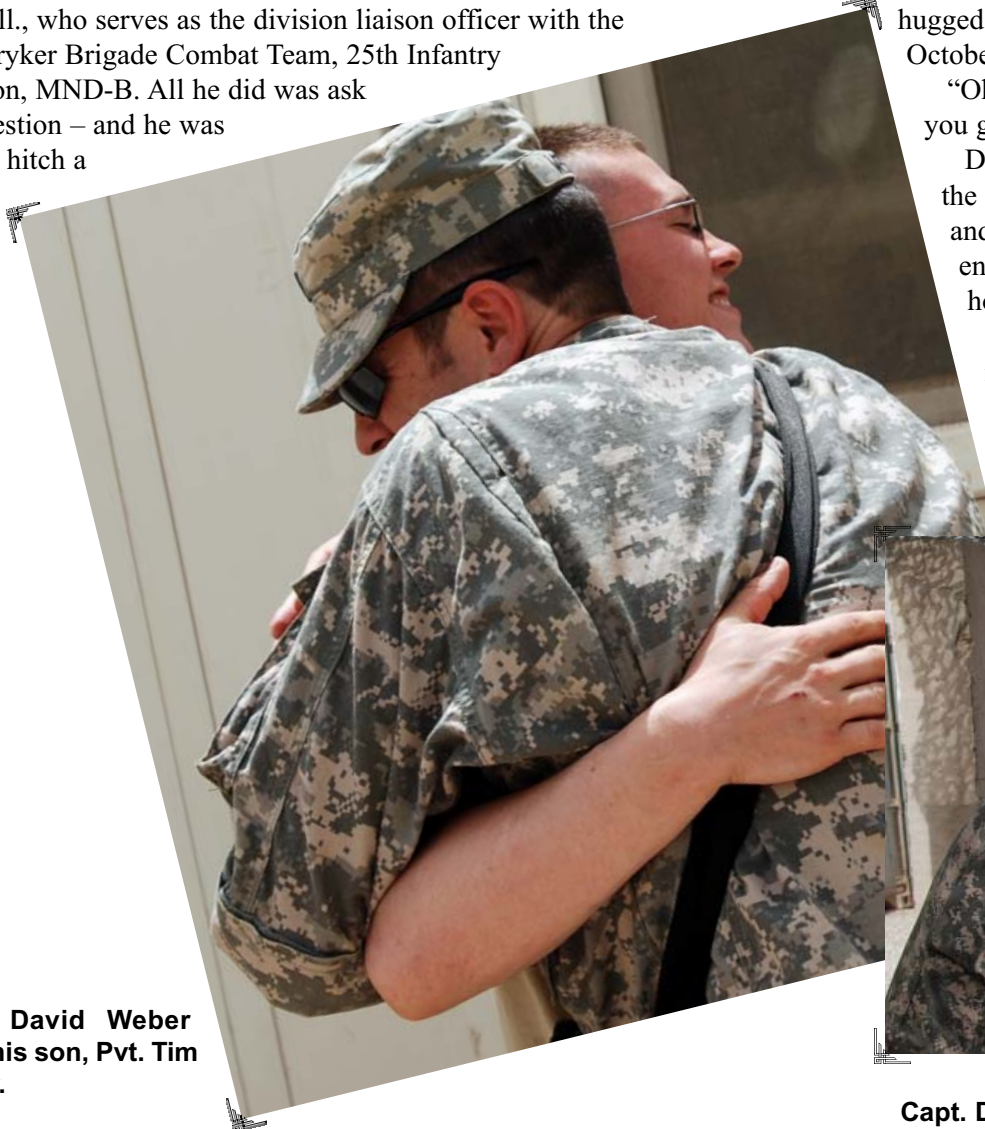
Weber said he knew he was going to be traveling to Mosul for two weeks, but he kept the trip a secret from his son, Pvt. Tim Weber, a native of Gatesville, Texas, who serves as a mortar man with 4th Inf. Div.'s Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 8th Infantry Regiment, which is currently attached to the 1st Armored Division, MND-N. Tim didn't find out his father was coming to see him until Dave was standing outside his door when he got back from taking a shower after a mission at an outpost earlier that day.

With wide eyes after the shock of seeing his dad in the unlikely place, Tim was all smiles when he hugged his dad for the first time since October.

"Oh my God," Tim said. "How ... did you get out here?"

Dave explained the process to Tim, and the two immediately started catching up and updating each other on what different family members were up to back at home.

Without much in ways of entertainment at FOB Marez, the Webers spent most of their time talking about what they've been doing in Iraq, catching up on lost time, enjoying one a bite



Capt. David Weber hugs his son, Pvt. Tim Weber.



Capt. David Weber spends time catching up

half a world from home

to eat at the new fast food shop and shopping at some of the locally-run shops on base.

Dave said it was a big surprise to him when he found out his son had joined the Army, but every time he looked at his son, it was apparent he was very proud of him.

"I never expected staying in long enough to have my kids join the Army while I was still in," Dave said. "It wasn't something that ever crossed my mind because I never had much interest in staying in so long."

When Tim was born, Dave had just joined the Army and was actually pulled from his basic training class so he could be there when Tim was born.

"My first day of basic training, I was called into the commander's office to have a talk with him," Dave said. "Immediately, I started thinking about all the stuff I may have done wrong and was worried about what was going on, but he informed me my wife was in labor and was about to have the baby. They gave me a three-day pass to fly to Chicago for his birth."

Even making it to his son's birth was a challenge for Dave. He had just joined the Army and didn't have any money to fly from his basic training post to Chicago, but his chain of command worked out a way for him to make it to his son's birth.

"I was just a new recruit so I didn't have any money," Dave said. "So the rest of the recruits pitched in money for a plane ticket. I flew to Chicago and made it to the hospital 15 minutes before Tim was born."

Now, almost 19 years later, Dave's chain of command helped him reunite with his son, and Tim said he couldn't be happier.

"It's pretty cool to have him out here," Tim said. "I didn't

expect him to come all the way out here from Baghdad just to see me. Now I have a day off to spend time with my dad, but I don't know what to do with myself. I'm one of a few privates in my unit, so I'm used to constantly working. It's been nice to have some time to spend with my dad though; I'll take it."

Even though Tim was ecstatic to see his father again after eight months, his dedication to his unit made him feel a little guilty for leaving the rest of his buddies at the COP.

"Initially, I didn't want to leave the COP because I'd have to get taken off the guard roster and someone else will have to take my shift and cover my duties on the ground, but it's worth it," Tim said. "It's not every day you get to spend time with your dad in the combat zone."

Although the trip only lasted a day, the two were very happy to have the opportunity to spend time with each other again.

Dave said it was hard for him to leave his son, but he felt good knowing his son was in the competent hands of his leaders.

Tim said he and his father have been trying to coordinate their leave dates together so they can spend more time together, but Tim's leave dates have not been set in stone yet.

In the end, Tim said the experience of having his father visit him was one of the best gifts he could receive in Iraq. He said it made his deployment and he hopes to one day do the same for his own child later in the future.

Opportunities do not always present themselves to visit family members in the combat zone, but for those fortunate enough to meet up, it's a precious way to catch up and reconnect with those who are always at the forefront of the hearts and minds of deployed Soldiers all over the world.



Capt. David Weber, who serves as the division liaison officer with the 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, (left), spends time catching up with his son, Pvt. Tim Weber, a mortarman with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 8th Infantry Regiment.

Photos by Spc. Aaron Rosencrans

with his son, Pvt. Tim Weber.

Soldiers help victims in Sadr City

by Sgt. Jerome Bishop
MND-B PAO

SADR CITY, Iraq – In the past weeks, fighting between insurgents and Iraqi Security and Coalition Forces has left hundreds of local residents with some sort of property damage or injury.

As a response, Multi-National Division – Baghdad civil affairs Soldiers have set up the Iraqi Assistance Center on Joint Security Station Sadr City in the Thawra 1 neighborhood of the Sadr City district of Baghdad and have been working seven days a week to ensure the victims of the escalation in violence have an opportunity to be compensated to some extent for their losses.

“The IAC is part of the [Civil Military Operations Center] staff. That’s where the local Iraqis come in for property damage or condolence payment or something about that nature or if they want to ask about a relative who might possibly be a detainee,” said Maj. Jonathon Price, commander for Company C, 404th Civil Affairs Battalion. “Their role is to handle the claims and inquiries of the people. The CMOC’s role is to coordinate between the [Government

of Iraq] officials and Coalition Forces.”

The CMOC, which is managed by the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, operates in Sadr City to help usher a return of normalcy to an area stricken with violence. CMOC Soldiers operating the IAC within JSS Sadr City are the first step for local-level compensation for the fighting.

“We set up the IAC to assist the Iraqi civilians in Sadr City,” said Spc. Joseph K. Brown, a claims specialist for the 432nd Civil Affairs Battalion. “They come to us with a claim, either property damage, shop damage, house damage, vehicle damage, detainee information request and injuries.

“We take their story and their claim, we verify that coalition forces were involved in the incident that they’re claiming and investigate it,” he added. “If it turns out to be correct and that CF did cause the damage or injury then we pay them a condolence payment of a certain amount that’s determined by us.”

Although no amount of money can ever truly make up for the injury, loss of family members or items necessary to maintain their livelihood, con-

dolence payments made to Iraqi citizens can help make life easier while taking time to adjust.

The process of filing a claim begins simply when an Iraqi civilian comes in the door of the IAC with an issue they need resolved.

“Say a person comes in and they’re claiming their vehicle was damaged by coalition forces,” said Brown. “We have to make sure they have a proper ID card, proper registration for the vehicle, we want pictures to help with their claim and show evidence of the damage, date and time of when it happened and a personal statement.

“We fill out a three-page packet with all that information and we verify that there was a significant activity in that area where they’re claiming the damage to their vehicle. We then sent it to our bosses and they verify it. Usually a claim can take from about two weeks to a month,” he added.

With six-day work weeks, Friday being the Muslim holy day, the IAC takes care of a variety of different cases which Iraqi locals bring to them just by walking in the door.

“On an average day we have about 40 walk-ins, which are either people who walk in and want to file a claim with us, who would like to give us information on certain activities going on in their area, or they actually have a claim with all their paperwork that we can file,” Brown said. “We have about 40 walk-ins and we file about 25 to 30 claims a day.”

The IAC office has seen about 900 people and processed about 500 claims as of May 23, he added.

While the security issue in Sadr City begins to improve and the violence diminishing, the IAC office is setting the standard in making sure Iraqi locals residing in the northern Baghdad district have at least something to help return their lives to normal.



Photo by Sgt. Jerome Bishop

Sgt. Nathan Leigh, Iraqi Assistance Center team leader with the 432nd Civil Affairs Battalion, talks with an interpreter while filing a claim for an Iraqi woman at the Claims Office at the IAC at Joint Security Station Sadr City.

Civil Affairs Soldier making a difference in Sadr City

Photos by Tech. Sgt. Cohen A. Young

RIGHT: Staff Sgt. Frank Lugo, a member of the Task Force 1st Battalion, 6th Infantry Regiment, Civil Affairs Team, writes down information of an Iraqi store owner in order for the man to receive a micro grant.

BELOW: Staff Sgt. Frank Lugo, Task Force 1st Battalion, 6th Infantry Regiment, Civil Affairs Team, gives a Blow-Pop to an Iraqi girl while patrolling the Jamilla Market area in the Sadr City district of Baghdad.

ABOVE: Staff Sgt. Frank Lugo, a native of New York City, and a member of the Task Force Regulars, 1st Battalion, 6th Infantry Regiment, Civil Affairs Team, gives a friendly pat on the head of an Iraqi boy after giving him and his friends Blow-Pops while patrolling the Jamilla Market area in Sadr City.



KEYS TO THE HEART

Commentary by Chaplain (Maj.)

William Nicholas

Striker Brigade Chaplain

We are at the mid point of our deployment. Experts call this the “sustainment” phase of deployment. It covers the second month of separation up to the last month before re-deployment. By now, most families have established a sense of *normalcy*.

However, should a family not be able to return to business-as-usual, the development of children can be impacted negatively(1). With this thought in mind, I would like to share some insights from a small book of John Eldridge’s(2). As children grow they seek the answer to two fundamental life questions. Watch little children play and act, when they want your attention, and you’ll see those underlying most of what they say and

do. For boys it’s “Do I have what it takes?” For girls it is, “Am I Beautiful?” Together these questions are really asking one thing, “Am I

Peace of Mind

worthy of your love, your respect?” As children become teenagers these questions undergo revision, but remain fundamentally the same. (And I submit to you that as adults these questions – and how our spouses and friends answer them - are still important to us.) And how one answers them will shape, or damage, one’s key to a child’s heart.

As our children play, help around the house (what?), work at school – as

you talk to your spouse – listen very, very, very closely. Do you hear them? Even in the voice of a grown-up – one may hear the same need to know, “I love you – you’re the best!” “I love you – you’re more beautiful than ever.” Listen, respond very thoughtfully – and shape your key of love which unlocks their hearts; speaks to their souls; and validates their worth and strengthens bonds. (Psalm 130:13 – look it up!)

1. COL D. A. Waldrep, MC, USA; COL S. J. Cozza, MC, USA; and COL Ryo Sook Chun, MC, USA. Iraq War Clinician Guide: Impact of Deployment on Family (p 83). VA NATIONAL CENTER FOR PTSD. http://www.ncptsd.va.gov/ncmain/ncdocs/manuals/iraq_clinician_guide_ch_13.pdf.

2. John Eldridge, *You Have What It Takes: What every Father Needs To Know*. Thomas Nelson, 2004.

CAPTION THIS!



Caption this goes as such: I’ll write some silly caption here and if you can come up with something better, while still remaining printable in a command information publication, I’ll burn the best submissions in the next edition of the *Striker Beacon*. Think you’re up for the challenge? Send your submissions to: zachary.mott@3bct4id.army.mil

My Submission: Translation, “The Americans stand right here.”



Land of the ‘Mista Mista’ children

by Sgt. Zach Mott

Striker Beacon editor

Soldiers often hang out in groups. Whether it's on duty or off duty, chances are you'll find Soldiers grouped together by the twos, threes and fours.

It's no surprise that, while in Iraq, Soldiers often develop a following there as well. However, the groups that follow them around on patrol aren't typically other Soldiers.

More specifically it's groups of children. These posses are virtually everywhere Soldiers are. Often accompanying the children are shouts – even demands – of, “Mista, Mista, give me ...”

Requests are made for anything that is visible: pens, watches, glasses, digital cameras. Very rarely will the child offer something in return. This is just part of life in Iraq. The “Mista Mista Children” are everywhere.

Striker Top 10

This issue's Striker Top 10 is inspired by the Brigade's relocation to Forward Operating Base War Eagle.

Without further adieu the **Top 10 Reasons Why Everything Really Is Better At War Eagle**

10. The beautiful riverfront property and majestic views offered by the Tigris River – that is, if we didn't have eight-foot T-Barriers blocking the way.

9. Forget to set your alarm, wake up five minutes before your shift starts and still make it on time.

8. Bunk beds remain a haunting memory of childhood, not a daunting reality of today.

7. Hajji Shops – missed out on the last season of your favorite show? Give him three days and he'll have anything you ask.

6. That smell that permeates your nostrils at odd hours throughout the day? That's the smell of freedom, baby!

5. That sound you hear? Oh, that's just the helicopters hovering 20 feet over your room as they leave the helipad that's conveniently located a stone's throw from home.

4. Not having to commute to your battlespace.

3. The best barber this side of the Euphrates! If he doesn't cut it right, don't worry, it'll grow back and he can try again.

2. CHUs, baby, CHUs!

1. Slushies and Ice Cream – nuff said!

If you've got a submission for the monthly 'Top 10' list, send it to zachary.mott@3bct4id.army.mil



Are you interested in finding more articles, photos and even video of 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division Soldiers?

If so, there are a few outlets for you to check.

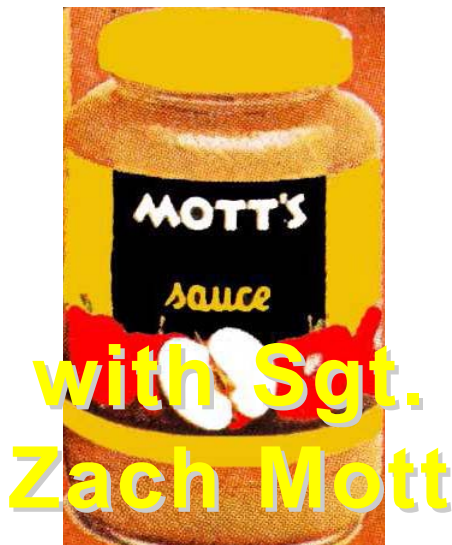
<http://pao.hood.army.mil/4id/index/html>: this site has links to the latest information regarding the 4th Infantry Division. This includes the latest edition of the weekly news program "Iron Horse Report," the daily

radio broadcast "Ironhorse Tracker" and other products from throughout the 4th Infantry Division.

www.dvidshub.net: this site requires an easily attainable log on (click register on the initial screen). Once registered you can search through thousands of archived images, articles and video products. For a more detailed look at the Striker Brigade Soldiers, simply search for 3rd Brigade Combat Team

and scroll through print, photo, audio and video products as well as archived issues of the Striker Beacon, Striker Bolt and the OIF 05-07 publication the Iron Brigade Chronicles.

www.armyfrg.org: This site is only for registered users who are affiliated with the 3rd Brigade Combat Team. This site archives content per unit and you will be able to access only information pertaining to the unit you are connected with.



Dear Sauce,

I'm a sergeant and I'm currently stop-lossed (a policy the Army enacted to keep me in uniform for the duration of this deployment) and I have less than one year left in the Army. I'd like to be promoted to staff sergeant, but I don't have enough time in service remaining to be eligible for promotion. I don't plan on re-enlisting, but maybe the challenges of being a staff sergeant will help change my mind. Is there anything out there that will allow me to be promoted without having to re-enlist? Please help! I feel like there's nobody taking care of me even though I'm still serving my country for the next 10 months.

Stuck Silver Lion Sergeant

Dear Stuck,

You're in luck! The Army recently announced a "Battlefield Promotion" program just for people like you. Provided you are currently filling (or are able to fill) a staff sergeant position, you can be recommended for promotion by your immediate supervisor. Under the provisions of this policy, the time-in-service requirements are waived. This means, you are not required to have one year of retainability to be promoted to staff sergeant. Talk to your supervisor or unit personnel actions clerk for more information.

The Sauce

Dear Sauce,

I work a 12-hour shift in the TOC and am forced to sit in front of a computer for the duration of that shift. My problem is this: what can I do to help the monkey butt that I get from sitting on my fourth point of contact half the day?

Sore Striker

Dear Sore,

First, try walking around a bit or standing up behind your computer, something to keep your body moving and give your monkey butt a break. If that doesn't help, talk to your medics

about getting baby powder and splash a little in that region before, during and after your shift – just remember: a little goes a long way. Oh yeah, and be sure to clean up after yourself. Nobody likes to walk in your baby powder mountain.

The Sauce

Dear Sauce,

My wife is due to have a baby when I go home on mid-tour next month. This is our first child and I'm worried about what it's going to be like to be in the delivery room. Help!

Nervous Fighting Eagle Dad

Dear Nervous,

Don't worry, The Sauce has been there. Speaking from that experience, just be there for your wife. She's going to need all the support she can get as she pushes out your precious bundle of joy. If she wants water, by God you make sure she's got the freshest, coldest water on this Earth. Hold her hand, coach her through the tough parts and always smile and tell her it's going to be alright. Keep to those simple rules – and do whatever the doctors, midwives and nurses tell you to do – and you'll have a healthy baby. Might I suggest Sauce as a great middle name. Congratulations!

The Sauce

LOST!

WHO: Don Juan de FECC

WHAT: Missing mojo

WHEN: Last seen today

WHERE: At the Striker TOC

WHY: Lost his mojo and needs his mustache and cool hat back to regain his mojo.



