

JOINT BASE BALAD'S EXPEDITIONARY TIMES

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Vol. 1, Issue 10

Resupply from the sky pgs. 8-9



Photo by Sgt. Gary Hawkins

Chief Warrant Officer Marica Lewis (left), Senior Airdrop Technician for the 3d Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) and Sgt. 1st Class David Hudson, 13th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, set up marking panels for a scheduled airdrop of supplies at Kirkush Military Training Base Aug. 12. The airdrop tested a new type of disposable parachute rigging that will cost less and saves more time and energy than trying to retrieve the more expensive airdrop rigging supplies.

Incoming

MQ-9 Reaper drops first
500 pound bomb

Page 3



Keep 'em Rolling

Maintenance company
works hard to provide
support

Page 7

Stay or go?

Airman considers the
pros and cons of
reenlistment

Page 10

Engineers work to rebuild, improve Iraq

by Spc. Michael Behlin

Expeditionary Times staff

FORWARD OPERATING BASE WARHORSE, Iraq

As Coalition Forces continue to establish their presence throughout Iraq, insurgents struggle to find areas with little or no military presence to house,



support and conduct their acts of terrorism. The results of insurgents fleeing to areas of a lesser presence has led to attacks on troops ranging from IED's, small arms and indirect fire attacks.

To battle this activity, Coalition Forces are busily building new Joint Combat Outposts throughout some of the more hostile areas of Iraq.

Working steadily throughout this construction effort is the 63rd Construction Support Equipment Com-

pany, 5th Engineer Battalion, from Fort Benning, Ga. Serving out of Forward Operating Base Warhorse, near Baqubah, the engineers work to help stabilize the immediate area of operations, as well as other areas throughout Diyala Province.

One of the new construction sites is that of JCOP Mullalah, which is not far from Baqubah and FOB Warhorse. This JCOP, while small in size, will be beneficial to Coalition Forces and citizens alike by provid-

ing security from a central location. The JCOP will provide other units passing through the area a place to stop and get a meal or to rest.

"This JCOP is being constructed here to insure that the routes in this area remain free and clear of IEDs and insurgent activities," said 1st Lt. Serena Seddio, 63rd CSEC. 2nd Platoon Leader and JCOP Mullalah project manager. "Not only do Coalition Forces use the routes in this area, but civilians do as well. They

were victims to the insurgency too and we're trying to eliminate that."

And eliminate the insurgency is exactly what the new site is aiming to do in an area formerly known for its small arms and IED attacks. Since construction began on the new JCOP, the area has been much quieter and less susceptible to attacks with the new presence.

See **REBUILD**, Page 6

PMO Blotter: 15 Aug. – 21 Aug.

Attempted Breaking-and-Entering: A female victim in H-4 (C Pod) noticed that the metal strip covering the locking mechanism on the door to her housing unit had been bent backwards in an attempt to gain entry to the room. The victim has had her room broken into on at least one other occasion in the last two months.

Sexual Assault: A female airman stated that she was cornered in the hygiene aisle at the Eastside PX by two Ugandan SOC guards wearing tan uniforms. One of the Ugandan guards licked her on the back of the neck while the other blocked her escape. Military Police Investigators weren't able to find evidence of the assault on the store's security cameras.

Stolen Vehicle: A black Nissan 4-door pick-up truck was stolen from the H-5 housing area between the hours of 2100-0730. The pick-up was located by Provost Marshal personnel roughly 24 hours after the crime was reported.

Fire Response: An electrical fire started in the breaker box of a housing unit in the H-3 (D Pod) housing area. The victim put out the fire with the room's fire extinguisher.

PMO Comment: Make sure your housing unit has a fire extinguisher and don't remove the fire extinguisher for any reason.

Intoxicated Driver Causing a Crash: An Army staff sergeant became inebriated on cans of dust-off before getting into a Ford F150 in the parking lot of the H-7 housing area near H Pod. The staff sergeant narrowly missed two Soldiers while driving through the parking lot before crashing into a wooden barrier. When the two Soldiers approached the vehicle, they found the staff sergeant passed out behind the wheel of the vehicle. PMO responded to the scene and found two cans of dust-off on the front seat next to the driver; one of the cans was ice-cold, indicating recent use.

Contact the Provost Marshal Office:

NIPR- 443-8602

SIPR- 242-9982

Email- PMOdesk@iraq.centcom.mil



2nd/402nd AFSB has change of command

by Spc. Anthony Hooker

Expeditionary Times staff

JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq – During a change of command ceremony held Aug. 15, Lt. Col. Robert L. Barnes, Jr., the outgoing commander of the 2nd Battalion, 402nd Army Field Support Brigade, took a moment from his closing remarks to wipe away tears, collect himself, and indulge the audience with a list of his unit's accomplishments.

As only the third commander ever to hold the position, Barnes shed the tears of a man grateful to have borne the responsibility of managing all of the Army's theater-provided equipment.

As his wife and son watched via satellite from Stuttgart, Germany, Barnes relinquished command to Lt. Col. Joe Louis Hart, Jr. With the handoff, Hart, a native of Orangeburg, S.C., received control of one of the more unique and significant military commands in Iraq.

More than 92 percent of the battalion's personnel are either Department of the Army civilians or government contractors. Shaking hands with many of his former co-workers, Barnes said it was a blessing to have served with this group.

"Many of these workers served in previous wars like Vietnam, Desert Shield, (Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom)," Barnes said. "They know what the warfighter is going through, the problems they encounter. That understanding makes them more capable to assist the warfighter."

Troy Bream, the theater property book officer for the 2nd Bn., 402nd AFSB, served as a colorguard during the change of command ceremony. He said working alongside the military, in particular, Barnes, was a great and unique experience.

The 2nd/402nd AFSB's primary function is to provide, install and redistribute property used specifically by units serving in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

"We are the theater property book own-

See **CHANGE**, Page 7



Photo by Spc. Anthony Hooker

Sgt. Maj. Steven Robertson, the senior noncommissioned officer of the 2nd Battalion, 402nd Army Field Support Brigade, leads the unit's colorguard during a change of command ceremony Aug. 15 at Joint Base Balad, Iraq.

EXPEDITIONARY TIMES

3^d ESC Commanding General, Brig. Gen. Mike Lally

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Expeditionary Times is a command information newspaper in accordance with Army Regulation 360-1.

Expeditionary Times is published weekly by the Stars and Stripes central office, with a circulation of 5,000 papers.

The Public Affairs Office is located on New Jersey Ave. building 4136, DSN 318-433-2154. Expeditionary Times, HHC 3d ESC, APOAE 09391. Web site at www.dvidshub.net. Contact the Expeditionary Times staff at: anaconda.times@iraq.centcom.mil

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Mission Statement: The Expeditionary Times Staff publishes a weekly newspaper with a primary mission of providing command information to all Servicemembers, partners, and Families of the 3^d Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) team and a secondary mission of providing a means for units on Joint Base Balad to disseminate command information to their audiences.



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Erik Gudmundson

An MQ-9 Reaper unmanned aerial vehicle prepares to taxi out of a hangar here Aug. 8. A Reaper employed a 500-pound GBU-12 laser-guided bomb against anti-Iraqi forces Aug. 16, marking the Reaper's first weapons engagement since it began flying combat sorties over Iraq July 18.

MQ-9 Reaper drops 1st bomb on anti-Iraqi forces

by Staff Sgt. Don Branum
332nd Air Expeditionary Wing

JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq -- An MQ-9 Reaper dropped a 500-pound bomb against an anti-Iraqi target Aug. 16, marking the Reaper's first weapons engagement in Iraq since it began flying combat sorties in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom July 18.

The successful airstrike, which destroyed a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device, demonstrates the persistent strike capability the 332nd Air Expeditionary Wing provides commanders on the ground, said Brig. Gen. Brian Bishop, 332nd AEW commander.

"We are here to integrate air power into joint operations in Iraq, and ensuring we make the most of our unmanned-aerial-system capabilities is just one of many ways we do that," Bishop said. "With our ability to provide per-

sistent stare and persistent strike, we provide a clear battlefield assessment and quick responses to commanders when they need it."

During an overwatch mission over southeast Iraq, Reaper operators with Balad's 46th Expeditionary Reconnaissance and Attack Squadron discovered a suspicious vehicle. The Airmen immediately relayed the information to personnel in a local ground unit, said Lt. Col. Micah Morgan, the 46th ERAS commander. After the suspicious vehicle was confirmed to be a VBIED -- a variant of the number-one killer of Americans on the battlefield -- a joint terminal attack controller cleared the Reaper to employ a GBU-12 laser-guided weapon against the vehicle.

"This was a great example of the Reaper's unique capabilities," Morgan said. "We searched for, found, fixed, targeted and destroyed a target with just one air-

craft." Unmanned aerial system aircrews' fusion of the warfighting domains of air, space and cyberspace enables them uniquely to share critical information with JTACs and other command and control elements, ensuring that they hit the right target, Morgan said.

"We go to great lengths to avoid unnecessary damage, and the Reaper's unique capabilities allow it to play a key role in our highly disciplined targeting process," he said.

The 46th ERAS flies both Reaper and MQ-1 Predator unmanned aerial systems. Its aircrews directly control all Reaper operations in Iraq and provide launch and recovery for Predator operations. During UAS missions, they can communicate with critical partners worldwide using a mix of radio, telephone and secure Internet systems.

'Hooah' of the week



Photo by Pfc. Amanda Tucker

Sgt. 1st Class Terry Dammann, a Glenrose, Ark., native and construction operations sergeant for the 3d Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), based out of Ft. Knox, Ky., is awarded a certificate of achievement for being the 3d ESC "Hooah of the Week" by Brig. Gen. Mike Lally, the commanding general of 3d ESC.

Volunteers Needed!!!

Joint Base Balad

Rock 'N Roll

1/2 Marathon

31 August 08

Holt Stadium - 0400

Individuals, Buddies, Teams, Squads, Platoons

Email Sharon.Day@jblab.af.mil with questions and to sign up!

Watch Weekly Bulletins for Date/Time of PreRace Meeting!

WORSHIP SERVICES

PROTESTANT – TRADITIONAL

SUNDAY 7:30 A.M.	AIR FORCE HOSPITAL CHAPEL
9:30 A.M.	PROVIDER CHAPEL
10:30 A.M.	FREEDOM CHAPEL (WEST SIDE)
11 A.M.	CASTLE HEIGHTS (4155)
5:30 P.M.	GILBERT MEMORIAL (H-6)
7:30 P.M.	AIR FORCE HOSPITAL CHAPEL

PROTESTANT – GOSPEL

SUNDAY 11 A.M.	MWR EAST BUILDING
NOON	FREEDOM CHAPEL (WEST SIDE)
12:30 P.M.	GILBERT MEMORIAL (H-6)
7 P.M.	PROVIDER CHAPEL

PROTESTANT – CONTEMPORARY WORSHIP

SUNDAY 9 A.M.	MWR EAST BUILDING
10:30 A.M.	GILBERT MEMORIAL (H-6)
2 P.M.	CASTLE HEIGHTS (4155)
8 P.M.	EDEN CHAPEL
7 P.M.	FREEDOM CHAPEL (WEST SIDE)
8:30 P.M.	FREEDOM CHAPEL (WEST SIDE)
WEDNESDAY 8 P.M.	GILBERT MEMORIAL (H-6)

PROTESTANT – LITURGICAL

SUNDAY 11 A.M.	LUTHERAN-PROVIDER CHAPEL
3 P.M.	EPISCOPAL- LUTHERAN GILBERT CHAPEL (H-6)

PROTESTANT --MESSIANIC

FRIDAY 8:30 P.M.	FREEDOM CHAPEL (WEST SIDE)
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PROTESTANT—SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST

SATURDAY 9 A.M.	PROVIDER CHAPEL
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PROTESTANT—CHURCH OF CHRIST

SUNDAY 3:30 P.M.	CASTLE HEIGHTS (4155)
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ROMAN CATHOLIC MASS

(SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION 30 MIN. PRIOR TO MASS)	
SATURDAY 5 P.M.	GILBERT MEMORIAL (H-6)
8 P.M.	FREEDOM CHAPEL (WEST SIDE)
SUNDAY 8:30 A.M.	GILBERT MEMORIAL (H-6)
11 A.M.	PROVIDER CHAPEL
11 A.M.	AIR FORCE HOSPITAL CHAPEL
MON-SAT 11:45 A.M.	PROVIDER CHAPEL
THURSDAY 11 A.M.	AIR FORCE HOSPITAL CHAPEL
MON,WED,FRI 5P.M.	GILBERT MEMORIAL
FRIDAY-HOLY HOUR 7 P.M.	PROVIDER CHAPEL

LATTER DAY SAINTS-(LDS)-(MORMON)

SUNDAY 1 P.M.	PROVIDER CHAPEL
3:30P.M.	FREEDOM CHAPEL (WEST SIDE)
7 P.M.	GILBERT MEMORIAL (H-6)

JEWISH SHABBAT SERVICES

FRIDAY 6 P.M.	GILBERT MEMORIAL (H-6)
SATURDAY 8 A.M.	GILBERT MEMORIAL (H-6)
6 P.M.	GILBERT MEMORIAL (H-6)

ISLAMIC SERVICE

FRIDAY 12:30 P.M.	PROVIDER CHAPEL
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PAGAN/ WICCAN FELLOWSHIP

THURSDAY, SATURDAY 7 P.M.	EDEN CHAPEL
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BUDDHIST FELLOWSHIP

TUESDAY 7 P.M.	EDEN CHAPEL
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PROTESTANT – SPANISH NON-DENOMINATIONAL

SATURDAY 7:30 P.M.	PROVIDER CHAPEL
SUNDAY 4:15 P.M.	GILBERT MEMORIAL CHAPEL
EASTERN ORTHODOX- DEVINE LITURGY	
SUNDAY 9 A.M.	PROVIDER CHAPEL ANNEX

*Please note, schedule is subject to change.

There's Voodoo in the air

Louisiana National Guard's Task Force Voodoo returns to Iraq

by Sgt. 1st Class Chris Seaton

Task Force XII

JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq - It's technically the battalion's second deployment in the past five years. The first began in December 2003 - in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom II. During that stint, the unit worked just across the street from their current location on Joint Base Balad.

But ask any member of the Louisiana National Guard's 1st Battalion, 244th Aviation Regiment, and they'll tell you this is deployment number three.

The battalion, organized in Iraq as Task Force Voodoo, left Balad in February 2005. In August, they began the fight of their lives - brought on by Hurricane Katrina.

The unit was mobilized to provide aviation support to the hurricane victims - many of whom were friends and neighbors of the Soldiers in the unit. For those critical six months, 83 National Guard aircraft and 40 active duty helicopters flew thousands of missions to help a state get back on its feet.

"That lasted about six months for us," said Slidell, La., native, Capt. Timothy Cleighton. "We count Katrina as a deployment, even though it was six months long. It was much tougher than our combat deployment."

Cleighton, the commander of Company B, was one of many in the battalion personally affected by the storm.

"I had roughly an inch of water in the house; I didn't have 10 feet like some of the guys," he said. "It was pretty tough for a lot of our guys. Probably 75 percent of the people I knew had damage."

"A lot of these guys were directly affected by the devasta-

tion," said Task Force Voodoo Command Sgt. Maj. Myron Creecy a native of LaPlace, La. "They were able to understand that they had a pretty big task - knowing that their homes were under 10 feet of water, they did what they had to do to get their families to safety, and then went on to perform a vital mission."

It's an experience that, coupled with the previous deployment, has created a battle-ready group of veteran aviators, said the battalion commander, Lt. Col. Patrick Bossetta, a New Orleans native whose own home and businesses were lost. The majority of the unit, about 70 percent, has remained unchanged since 2003.

"We have a group of aviators with a lot of experience, and we've got some young guys," he said, "but our core group has seen every mission set, both doctrinal and un-doctrinal. They know what 'right' looks like."

The majority of TF Voodoo hails from Louisiana. Another 81 are from the Florida National Guard. In Iraq, they come together to form an aviation task force that performs a full spectrum of utility aviation missions.

At Balad, the battalion flies air assault and general support missions, such as passenger travel and cargo transport. A separate company works from Basra, in southern Iraq, providing general aviation support.

The pilots who've been here before say the mission hasn't changed much, but after only a month back in theater, it's still important to continue learning.

"You have to fight over-confidence," said Bossetta. "Sometimes guys think they've been there and done it, but they have to understand that things change in a few years. We've opened



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Chris Seaton

A UH-60 Black Hawk, assigned to 1st Battalion, 244th Aviation Regiment, takes off for a passenger travel mission Aug. 7. The battalion, organized in Iraq as Task Force Voodoo, began flying missions in support of Multi-National Corps - Iraq in July. This is the unit's second Operation Iraqi Freedom deployment.



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Chris Seaton

Spc. Eric Snider, a door gunner for Company C, 1st Battalion, 244th Aviation Regiment, cleans the dust off his M240H machine gun Aug. 7. Snider, a native of Haughton, La., has been deployed since July as part of Task Force Voodoo, an assault helicopter battalion flying missions for Multi-National Corps - Iraq.

our eyes to a different way of flying."

"Knowing where to land and finding the places on the map is important, but you have to be ready for the new things," added Creecy, "I think we have the right personnel who understand that the mission has changed and that we have to change with that mis-

sion."

TF Voodoo is scheduled for nine months in Iraq - a welcome change from their first 14-month deployment. Most of those who've been in Iraq before said that Katrina, while sobering, did little to change the way they approach the mission here.

"My feeling is still the same

from the first time we were here until now," said Cleighton. "We're doing what we can to help out every little bit we can."

"No matter what, we've got to fly, fix and fly our aircraft safely," continued Bossetta. "Nothing else matters, because if we fly, fix and fly safely we'll bring everybody home."



Photo by Airman 1st Class Jason Epley

Angels of mercy

Army helicopters transport patients to and from the Air Force Theater Hospital here Aug. 18. Aeromedical evacuation allows wounded Servicemembers to be delivered quickly to the Air Force Theater Hospital, a key factor in the 98 percent survival rate of AFTH patients. Servicemembers, Department of Defense civilians and contractors volunteer to transport patients between the helicopters and the hospital.

76th IBCT Soldiers show UAV



Photo by Pfc. Amanda Tucker

Spc. Jeremy Boden, a Raven unmanned aerial vehicle operator for the 76th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, based at Fort Wayne, Ind., demonstrates the proper techniques to launch a Raven to 3d Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) Soldiers Aug. 13.

'Kips Bay' air assault brings security to Al Betra

by Pfc. Christopher McKenna

3d Bde, 101st Airborne

CAMP STRIKER, Iraq - Iraqi Army and Rakkasan Soldiers executed Operation Kips Bay, an air assault to establish a solid IA presence in Al Betra in the early morning hours of Aug. 8.

Al Betra is approximately 30 kilometers southwest of Baghdad and has had only a small presence of Coalition and IA forces in the area.

The 4th Company, 1st Battalion, 23rd Brigade, 17th Iraqi Army Division and Company A, 3rd Battalion, 187th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) conducted the combined mission.

Teams of Soldiers searched houses for any evidence of caches and insurgent activity, and assessed the area for terrorist threats during the sweep.

"This mission was good for the Iraqi Army; it shows that we are concerned about the area and here for the people," said 2nd Lt. Thaw Al Fkar, 4th Co. "The area we went into has been known for terrorist activity, and going in showed that the terrorists cannot have this area."

"Prior to even coming into the area, we spent five days (surveying), speak-



Photo by Pfc. Christopher McKenna

Soldiers with Co. A, 3-187th Inf., 3rd BCT, 101st Abn. Div. (AASLT) prepare to go to the pickup zone during Operation Kips Bay, a combined air assault in Al Betra, about 30 kilometers southwest of Baghdad, Aug. 8.

ing with the local sheikhs and leaders, gaining information on what to expect," said 2nd Lt. Jerry Wolfe, Headquarters Platoon, 3-187th Inf. Regt.

"We are making sure the IA stays focused in the area. They (play) more of a dominant role in the region, and the people see them and interact with them," Wolfe said. "The main thing is to keep the IA in the lead."

Coalition Forces are functioning in primarily a support role on missions like Kips Bay to prepare the IA for their transition to the lead security element in the area currently under 3rd BCT, control.

"(Kips Bay) helps with transition," Fkar said. "The Soldiers involved were well prepared, and there was good work between the Coalition and IA."

IA, U.S. engineers work together to rebuild Iraq

Courtesy Story

5th Engineer Battalion

DIYALA PROVINCE, Iraq - Conducting rapid crater repair is a daily mission for the Soldiers of the 63rd Construction Support Equipment Company, 5th Engineer Battalion. In only three months they have filled over 100 craters throughout Salah ad-Din and Diyala Provinces. In early July, they had the opportunity to train and conduct a crater repair mission with Soldiers from the 5th Iraqi Army Engineer Regiment. This teamwork is essential for overall success in transitioning engineer tasks to the Iraqi Army.



For three days, Soldiers from first platoon, 63rd CSE; and from the 5th Iraqi Army Engineer Regiment conducted a combined operation that included reconnaissance, training, rehearsing and executing a rapid crater repair mission on a heavily traveled route in Diyala Province, Iraq.

1st Lt. Jarrell Horsley, one of the platoon leaders in the 63rd, said "The Soldiers of First Platoon didn't know if it would be difficult for the 5th Iraqi Army Engineers Soldiers to learn our techniques, but we were prepared for anything."

By the end of the mission they were delighted with the ease and expertise the Iraqi Army Soldiers conducted the crater repair mission.

The mission was executed in three phases-similar to the "crawl, walk, run" teaching method that is used throughout the U.S. Army. During the crawl phase, the platoon leaders and noncommissioned officers worked together to plan the mission. Also during the crawl phase, the units conducted a route reconnaissance to take critical measurements and pictures of the craters so they could properly plan for material to execute the mission.

The second phase was a day of training and rehearsals. The Soldiers from 1st platoon arrived at Ghalibhya, Iraqi Army Engineer base camp, and set out to ensure the Iraqi engineers knew how to correctly establish jobsite security around the craters while properly using the materials required to repair the road.

After a few hours spent around a dry erase board and rearranging vehicles in an open lot, the Iraqi Army Engineers mastered the security formations and preparation work. In order to train, the Iraqi Soldiers dug hand-made craters on the base camp and practiced mixing and pouring the concrete. By the end of the day, the two units were thinking and moving alike and were ready for the mission that would test the Iraqi Army Soldiers' skills and the training abilities of First Platoon.

"The expressions on their faces were priceless; you could tell they were ready to get the job done," said Sgt. 1st Class Michael Camplejohn.

During the final phase of the mission, the execution phase, both units reached the assigned route and began filling craters.

After all craters were filled, each team walked away with a sense of accomplishment and pride for a job well done. For the Iraqi Army Soldiers, they received the training and skills needed to successfully conduct rapid crater repair missions on the roads in their area of operations. The Soldiers of 1st platoon finished the day knowing that the three days they spent working side by side with their Iraqi counterparts was time well spent and truly moved the team closer to being able to transition essential engineer functions directly to their fellow engineers in the Iraqi Army.

Formerly deaf signal Soldier reenlists in Iraq

by Sgt. Keith M. Anderson

16th Sustainment Brigade

CONTINGENCY OPERATING BASE Q-WEST, Iraq

When he was 3 years old, Walter Ashcraft got tonsillitis. The infection spread to his ears, and ate holes into his eardrums, causing him to lose his hearing.

In the following years, Ashcraft had to undergo eight surgeries, along with speech therapy classes, to learn to speak. Ashcraft was deaf until he was 8 years old.

Now a 22-year-old Army sergeant from Tucumcari, N.M., Ashcraft said teachers thought he was behind growing up because he couldn't hear very well, or speak without a lisp.

"It got to the point they thought I was mentally retarded," Ashcraft said.

Ashcraft, a network systems operator and maintainer, Bravo Company, 16th Special Troops Battalion, 16th Sustain-

ment Brigade, reenlisted in front of brigade headquarters at COB Q-West Aug. 15, his second reenlistment in "the desert," and another hurdle overcome for the resilient Soldier.

"Life is a like riding a bicycle," Ashcraft said, paraphrasing Albert Einstein. "In order to stay up, you have to keep moving forward."

Although Ashcraft had a high grade-point average in high school, enlisting in the Army proved to be difficult because of his significant hearing loss.

The friendly, six-foot seven-inch Soldier faced another obstacle when his first marriage failed during his first deployment. Much like his bicycle analogy, however, he kept moving forward. He remarried, and now has an 8-month-old daughter, Jade.

Ashcraft said his wife, Lindsay Buffalohead-Ashcraft, a Navaho, supports his decision to reenlist.

"She said that if that's what I wanted to do, she'd support it," Ashcraft said. "If she had her choice, though, I'd be at home all the time."



Photo by Sgt. Keith M. Anderson

Sgt. Walter Ashcraft, a network systems operator and maintainer, Bravo Company, 16th Special Troops Battalion, 16th Sustainment Brigade, reenlists in front of brigade headquarters at Contingency Operating Base Q-West, Aug. 15.

Ashcraft is grateful for his time in the service, and said the Army is a good career choice.

"I think people should join because it brings character," Ashcraft said. "It lets people know who they really are, and it

is an opportunity to progress, to get out in the world and experience it."

Ashcraft's reenlistment was part of the first reenlistment ceremony for the sustainment brigade from Bamberg, Germany, since arriving in Iraq, July 26.

Iraqi Army medical and dental clinic keeps Soldiers smiling

by Staff Sgt. James E. Brown, Jr.

1st Sustainment Brigade

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – The doors opened early at the Iraqi Army Troop Medical and Dental Clinic, but not until the clinic workers finished the daily task of cleaning the facility and conducting their daily vehicle maintenance.

By then, Iraqi Army Soldiers stationed on Taji begin to trickle in - sick call slips in hand - to be examined by one of the military nurses.

"On average, they see 60 to 70 patients a day," said 1st Sgt. Timothy Baker, a native of Liberty, Ind., and a logistics training advisory team member of 1st Squadron, 152nd Cavalry Regiment, 1st Sustainment Brigade. "They have a very nice facility here and they do very good work."

"The main things that our teams are focusing on is helping the Iraqi Army with their logistics piece, supply requisition, obtaining equipment, vehicle maintenance, those kinds of things," said Baker, "but I also get to participate with training on medical classes."

Like any medical treatment facility in the military, Iraqi Soldiers enter, check in, and take a seat in the waiting room. One by one, they are called into the office to get their vital signs checked and have their names input into the medical database. Then, they are either treated on the spot or referred to the emergency department on the other side of the building.

When entering the emergency department, one can see the Iraqi Army nurses treating fellow Iraqi Soldiers with everything from an intravenous injection, to reading an electrocardiogram, or administering an X-ray.

These Soldiers within the facility possess very critical and much needed skills that the Iraqi Army is in short supply of. For example, 1st Lt. Bahaa is the second dentist in the Iraqi Army, and sees approximately 10 to 15 patients a day. Their needs range from fillings, tooth reconstruction, cleaning, and



Photo by Staff Sgt. James E. Brown Jr.

Iraqi Army Soldiers arrive early for sick call operations at the Iraqi Army Medical and Dental Clinic, Aug 14. On average, 60 to 70 patients are processed each day at the facility. "I am very proud to serve in the Iraqi Army," said 1st Lt. Bahaa, one of the few dentists in the Iraqi Army.

various emergency cases. "I am very proud to serve in the Iraqi Army," said Bahaa.

Another part of the clinic, the Mortuary Affairs Department, just moved into a newly built facility where they can serve the Iraqi Army's needs. What makes this so significant is that this specific department is the first one to be built in Iraq and serves the entire region. The Soldiers of mortuary affairs also operate a "Wounded Warriors" program that cares for Iraqi Soldiers wounded or injured in combat.

These Iraqi Army Soldiers of the Troop Medical and Dental Clinic prove on a daily basis that they are committed and ready for the challenges that lie ahead.

REBUILD, from Page 1

While this is a great accomplishment so far, it didn't come easily. The construction of JCOP Mullalah has taken an area which was mostly farmland and transformed it into a small outpost to be used by all services. Doing so took chasing out one of the biggest problems in the area.

"Right out here, in one of the houses that still remain standing, lived one of the biggest insurgents in the area," said Seddio. "He was responsible for much of the activity in the area, but now that he's gone, (it has) been much different."

Constructing the new JCOP has not only meant chasing out insurgents, but having to relocate civilian land owners as well. While area citizens will be housed in safer areas while the construction process takes place, they are encouraged to return after the JCOP is completed. "We want to definitely bring civilians back to the area because with them here, insurgents have less places to hide," said Seddio.

Now that the citizens have been relocated, the engineers are hard at work. Whether it be operating a D7 Dozer to clear land, moving t-barriers with a crane, or using bucket loaders to fill Hercules Engineering Solutions Consortium bastions, the 63rd has been getting the job done.

Even though construction isn't quite finished on the JCOP, the engineers have noticed the difference of the area since their arrival. The unit's presence has brought about many new opportunities for some of the younger Soldiers.

"(It has) been nice to see the younger Soldiers get out and be able to do their actual jobs," said Seddio. "It sometimes doesn't happen that way in our field but it's been nice to watch them grow and become experienced on the machinery."

536th Maintenance Company keeps vehicles rolling

by Sgt. Aaron LeBlanc

1st Sustainment Brigade

CAMP TAJI, Iraq - If it rolls, the mechanics of the 536th Maintenance Company can probably fix it. The Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, unit plays an important role within the 165th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 1st Sustainment Brigade, and is vital to the overall mission of the Soldiers stationed at Camp Taji.

"I have a good team of professionals here," said East St. Louis native Sgt. 1st Class Phillip Foster, the noncommissioned officer in charge of the 536th's Automotive Base, a maintenance bay which represents a good chunk of the heavy-lift capacity of the company.

Foster's maintenance bay has completed 204 major jobs since December, all of which have been labeled as high priority.

"We handle mainly big-ticket items here, like engine replacement, and complete overhauls," explained Foster.

The unit isn't limited to repairing vehicles however, thanks to Sgt. Jamie Cadman, a native of Gallup, N.M., and an armorer with the 536th.

"We can repair any small arms in the Army's arsenal, and we even repair some weapons for the Iraqi Army on the other side of the base, such as their .50 caliber machine guns," she explained.

The 536th has completed thousands of jobs since they arrived in Iraq last year.

"The maintenance shops have averaged about 635 jobs a month since their arrival in December 2007," said Sgt. 1st Class Dennis Calvert, the noncommissioned officer in charge of the 536th's shop. "That's over 4,400 jobs, at least in the last seven months. Some jobs are definitely more time consuming than others, but in the end, every job has to be completed with the least downtime possible," he said.

Calvert explained that the shops of the 536th "provide direct support, as well as organizational support to 14 units within the 1st Sustainment Brigade and the 165th CSSB; and 33 external units, from various military transportation teams to special forces. We also provide 24-hour support to the convoy support center for any unit need-



Photo by Sgt. Aaron LeBlanc

Spc. Travis Kinsey of Provo Utah (left) and Spc. Tim Fure of Little Falls Minnesota (right) finalize the replacement of a support beam on the rear-end of an M-1088, or medium tactical vehicle tractor truck, at the 536th's Automotive Base. The 536th Maintenance Company, out of Schofield Barracks, Hawaii is currently assigned to the 165th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 1st Sustainment Brigade.

ing maintenance repairs passing through the greater Baghdad area."

The 536th excels in all areas of their operation and the Soldiers who make it happen take pride in the importance of their job.

"My Soldiers understand that the armor that they upgrade, the trucks that they re-

pair, and the electronic warfare kits that they install save lives, and they take pride in that," said Foster of his crew at the automotive base. "I can't tell you how many Soldiers have come back to us from off the road and told us about how something we did helped them to come home safe."

CHANGE, from Page 2

ers in Iraq," said Hart, who recently served in OIF from November 2006 to February 2008 as the III Corps Material Readiness Chief. "We are also responsible for accounting, maintaining and getting equipment back to an operable status."

The 2nd/402nd AFSB is one of seven field support brigades in the world. Assigned to the United States Army Sustainment Command, AFSBs provide ASCs with a single command structure in strategic locations around the world-including Iraq, Kuwait, Korea and Europe.

The 2nd/402nd, which is close to entering its third year of existence, provides synchronization and support to the fielding of new equipment. The unit is also responsible for helping U.S. Central Command provide repair services and supporting any actions involving the Counter Rocket Artillery and Mortar, or CRAM, which bases use to counterattack incoming mortar rounds. This year the unit has processed \$1.7 billion dollars in equipment; last year the amount was \$3.4 billion.

"We are strategically aligned with operational forces," said Hart. "Logistic planners work alongside combat planners to make sure we don't lose any combat power when we're engaging the enemy."

Hart said the goal of the battalion is to help incoming and outgoing units get the equipment they need to accomplish the mission. The 2nd/402nd AFSB makes that happen by putting the right commodities with the right

team.

"We have to forecast movement so we can effectively support the war fighter," said Hart. "Units need to have a seamless transition into and out of theater, we cannot afford to affect the mission in a negative manner."

In addition to working with a unit's operations section, the 2nd/402nd AFSB created Redistribution Property Accountability Teams. These RPATs eliminate units' excess equipment in theater prior to transfers of authority or reduction in forces. The RPATs can also assist in transferring excess equipment to other units.

The 2nd/402nd AFSB has six RPAT teams throughout Iraq; they have a total of 14 management sites, including one in Kuwait. Mobile fly-away teams were created last year to speed item turnover.

"Units usually build plans, which the reset fly-away teams can handle in theater," said Barnes. "Previously this was done after units had moved into Kuwait, forcing units to spend more time- up to two months -redeploying."

Closer to the fight, the 2nd/402nd AFSB employs units under the 3rd Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) to help field equipment. Whether it is sending troops out with the new improvised outer tactical vest or using mechanics to validate the humvees scheduled for transfer to Iraqi Security Forces, various means are taken by the unit to get theater material in and out of the hands of Servicemembers quickly.

Sgt. Maj. Steven Robertson, the senior noncommissioned officer for the

2nd/402nd AFSB, said the turnaround of equipment depends on how fast the paperwork is done.

"We get eyes on the equipment and make sure it's clean," said Robertson. "An inspection can be completed within a day."

Although turnaround of equipment is usually within 72 hours, some people believe it's as simple as walking in and putting in a request for an item. Robertson said his group can't arbitrarily give away equipment.

"We serve (Multi-National Corps - Iraq) so we can't assume ownership of equipment," Robertson said. "You would still go through your regular supply system first, which means going through a contractor. We come into play in reference to accountability."

That means that all of 2nd/402nd AFSB's personnel must keep an open dialogue with one another. Demetra Hayes, the unit's communication officer, is in charge of providing voice and data command to over 18 forward operating bases in Iraq. Hayes, a DA civilian, said people can't let their affiliations get in the way of the job.

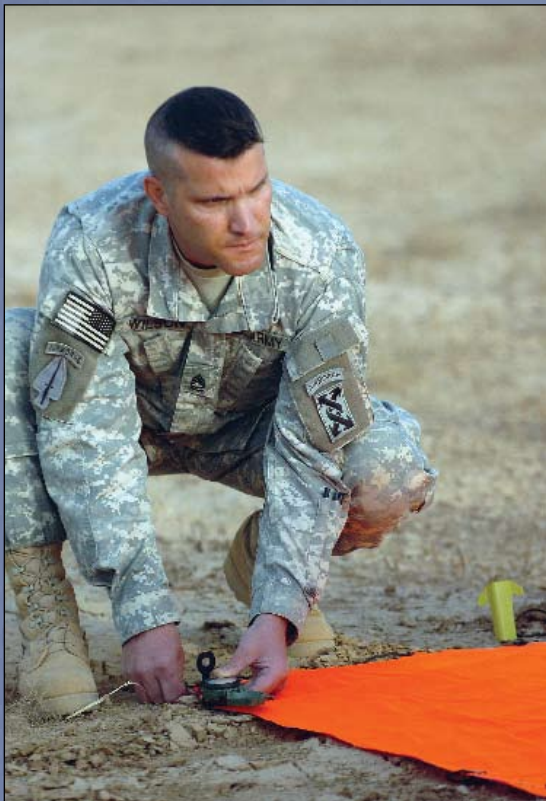
"In order to succeed, we must be able to talk to one another," Hayes said. "At a moment's notice, we can have a request come to us or an accountability issue that requires a quick response."

Barnes said whether they're a Servicemember or a civilian, the 2nd/402nd AFSB can be counted on to help get equipment out to those who need it.

"Our folks know the inner workings of the business and the people they are working for," he said.



Sgt. 1st Class David Hudson, a member of the 824th Quartermaster Company, sets the marker panels according to the heading the aircraft will use for a test airdrop of supplies.



Look out

Photos and story by Sgt. Gary Hawkins
Expeditionary Times staff

FORWARD OPERATING BASE CALDWELL, Iraq – “Ten Seconds,” “five seconds,” “GREENLIGHT!” These are the verbal warnings given by the navigator-and with a push of a button from the loadmaster-up to 16 Container Delivery System bundles are released into the air stream and sent gliding down to awaiting troops somewhere in the Iraqi desert.

Within five seconds, CDS bundles fly from the back of a C-130 Hercules and begin dropping to the ground, where military personnel are waiting to recover them. These supplies allow Coalition Forces to continue their mission with food, water and ammunition.

The 824th Quartermaster Company (Air Delivery), recently used a new type of CDS airdrop system at Forward Operating Base Caldwell, about 100 miles east of Joint Base Balad, to drop water and Meals Ready to Eat. The rigging used was a new disposable type of parachute and rigging system that cost much less than that of standard high strength rigging.

The new chutes are cheaper to manufacture and can do the job without the hassle of trying to recover the equipment.

“The new rigging is called a hi-velocity style rig that falls at more than 80 feet per second,” said Sgt. 1st Class Jack Wilson, a member of the 824th Quartermaster Company, based out of Fort Bragg, N.C. “The standard, more expensive rig is a low-velocity system that is designed for more delicate loads such as whole blood or breakable supplies and falls at just a little more than 30 feet per second.”

Resupplying a unit is a very important mission, but recovering the expensive chutes and valuable rigging, which cost more than \$4,500 dollars for each CDS bundle, becomes difficult in the vast deserts of Iraq.

“Units recovering supplies have to pack and carry the parachutes and rigging, which can take up a lot of room, then try to deliver it back to us by convoy or other means so it could be used again,” said Wilson.

Methods used to deliver supplies to troops on the ground continue to evolve and the 824th QM is actively using more efficient ways to quickly, safely, and economically deliver supplies using the CDS system. Even in this modern era of hi-tech capabilities, sometimes simpler is better.

“This drop was a practice drop of a new type of disposable parachute and rigging that cut the cost down, plus it tested the survivability of the supplies dropped with the new chutes,” said Wilson. “This drop had about 80 percent survival of the supplies, which is more than we expected. Now the units can save time and space by not having to recovery the rigging to get it back to us.”

The success of this drop decreased the amount of energy, money and time spent and allowed the receiving unit to carry on with the mission more effectively without having to pack and store rigging until it can be reused.



Container delivery system bundles land during a test of a new disposable type of parachute rigging Aug. 12.

below



Sgt. John Johnson, a member of the 13th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, inspects a supply bundle after a test drop using a new disposable parachute rigging system Aug. 12 at Kirkush Military Training Base. With more than 80 percent survival of the supplies, the drop was considered a successful test of the new rigging.



Boots on the ground



Photo by Pfc. Amanda Tucker

Left to Right: Sgt. Joseph Kloak, a gunner for the 1-19-5 Military Integration Transition Team and Fossil, Ore., native, looks through a care package while Staff Sgt. James Williams, a scout sniper for the 1-19-5 MITT and New Orleans native, sorts through a pack of Slim Jims on Joint Base Balad, Iraq, Aug. 8. The boxes were donated by the Swimmers Supporting Soldiers program of Roswell, Ga.

Airman joins Soldiers in real-life 'CSI: Iraq'

by Sgt. Philip Klein

4th Infantry Division

FORWARD OPERATING BASE WAR EAGLE, Iraq -- The fight to bring security to the people of Iraq requires all branches of the military to work together, bringing Airmen and Soldiers side by side.

Senior Airman Kathleen Gasque is one of many Airmen who fight alongside other Servicemembers for the freedom of both the United States and Iraq. As a part of the weapons intelligence team, Gasque works with explosive ordnance disposal teams for Multi-National Division - Baghdad to fight the threat of improvised explosive devices.



"We do crime scene investigations on bomb sites, conducting post-blast analysis to help us combat future attacks and track the IED cells where the deadly weapons originate," Gasque said.

Gasque, a network analyst, is a native of Marion, S.C., and is deployed from Langley Air Force Base, Va. She admitted to a little culture shock as she began working with the Soldiers of the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, but the Soldiers have made her welcome and a part of the MND-B team.

"It was a little different coming into this environment dominated by Soldiers, but we are all here for the same reason -- to serve our country," she said.

Gasque volunteered for a one-year joint source solution deployment. She said she doesn't regret any of it.

"I do a lot of analytical work with the Army intelligence guys and really enjoy the things I get to do here -- plus I get to do something for my fellow Servicemembers," she said.

Army Sgt. 1st Class Kenneth Stolp, the Brigade Intelligence Section noncommissioned officer in charge and a Denver native, said he is proud to have Gasque as a member of the team.

"There is no real difference between an Airman and a Soldier -- we are all professionals and take our work seriously," Stolp said



Should I stay or should I go?

by Master Sgt. Brian Davidson

447th Air Expeditionary Group

SATHER AIR BASE, Iraq -- One Airman's decision about her future has weighed heavily on her mind, and it reflects a dilemma that many first-term Airmen face as they reach the end of their first enlistments.



What keeps Senior Airman Erin Morit awake at night isn't the noise of the many aircraft that fly in and out of nearby Baghdad International Airport, it's the decision to either commit to a second enlistment or take her chances in the civilian job market.

Men and women join the Air Force for many reasons, whether those reasons are based on patriotism or a desire for education and self-improvement. Morit's twin brother, Jesse, is considering an Air Force career of his own back home in Frackville, Pa.



Senior Airman Erin Morit

However, for Airmen nearing the end of their first enlistment, the decision to either reenlist or separate can be tougher than the original decision to join.

Morit originally planned to reenlist Aug. 8 on the wing of a C-17 Globemaster III, but only hours before she was to renew her oath of enlistment, she got cold feet.

"I've loved being in the Air Force, and there are lots of reasons to stay, but I just don't know if staying will get me where I want to go in life," said Morit, who is deployed to the 447th Air Expeditionary Group from Offutt Air Force Base, Neb. "Another problem is that I don't quite know for sure where I want to go in life yet."

That's the dilemma Morit and many other Airmen wrestle with.

Air Force recruiters use something called the MATTRESS of benefits to explain the advantage of an Air Force Career to potential recruits. The acronym stands for money, advancement, travel, training, recreation, education, service and security -- but for Morit, those benefits are also a double-edged sword.

"Working in the command post, I have a career field that is an important part of the mission at all bases," she said. "The command post is like the nerve center of each base. It's critical in both daily operations and ... during an emergency."

Career security and a steady paycheck on are important considerations, but education is an area of concern, Morit said.

"We work rotating shifts, and the command post remains open and fully operational 365 days a year," she said. "It's very difficult to balance personal and professional responsibilities, and it's even harder to pursue education goals other than on-line classes."

Morit's concern with remaining on active duty is that she wants to attend college in a traditional classroom setting, something not easy to do in her career field. Every Airman has differing responsibilities based on their Air Force specialty and pay grade, making traditional college easy for some but difficult for others.

Chief Master Sgt. Ron Gallucci, the Personnel Support for Contingency Operations team chief, is responsible for helping all enlisted members, like Morit, with their career decisions. Deployed to the 447th Expeditionary Force Support Squadron from the Air Force Personnel Center at Randolph AFB, Texas, Gallucci has helped Airmen with such decisions since he first became a supervisor more than 22 years ago.

"The first question Airmen have to ask themselves before making the decision to stay or go is, 'Have I set myself up to be successful when I get out of the Air Force?'" he said. "Each Airman has to make an informed decision based on fact, not emotion. Once he makes his decision, he has to commit 110 percent to reaching his goals."

Gallucci worked with Airman Morit to help her learn about her options and make an informed decision.

"Her job is critical to the Air Force right now, and she may not have the choice to retrain into a different specialty," he said. "She's served with honor, and there is nothing wrong with deciding to move on to something else."

Airmen can also continue their careers in the Air Force Reserve or Air National Guard.

"Airman Morit is facing a decision all Airmen eventually face, and it's not easy," Gallucci said. "She's part of the Air Force family, and will remain part of that family regardless of her decision. She can be proud of her service, whether she serves four years or 30."

After talking with Gallucci and with only 27 days left in her initial enlistment, Morit reenlisted for another four years. She said she intends to apply to the New York Film Academy when she completes her Air Force career and that she looks forward to taking advantage of the benefits of the post-Sept. 11 G.I. Bill and the Air Force Tuition Assistance program to pay her tuition and school expenses.



Photo by Sgt. Keith M. Anderson

Staff Sgt. Terrence Bright, petroleum noncommissioned officer in charge and squad leader, 574th Quartermaster Co., 16th Sustainment Brigade, puts the combat patch on Spc. Nathan Sender, 24, during a combat patch ceremony at Contingency Operating Base Q-West, Iraq, Aug. 16. Bright, 36, Demopolis, Ala., said he was "honored and proud" to place the patch on Sender.

Right shoulder no longer bare for support

by Sfc. Adam V. Shaw

16th Sustainment Brigade

CONTINGENCY OPERATING BASE Q-WEST, Iraq

During the Revolutionary War, George Washington devised badges so that rank might be readily identified.

Since that time, military insignia has evolved according to the needs of each branch of service.

Soldiers from the 17th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 16th Sustainment Brigade, continued a combat patch ceremony tradition in the Morale, Welfare and Recreation building, COB Q-West, Iraq, Aug. 16.

After World War II, wearing a unit patch on the right shoulder was approved to denote service in combat with that unit. The patch is recognized as a means of building morale, camaraderie, and solidarity.

"The combat patch symbolizes

a bond that you may not realize yet — but you will one day — when you see someone you haven't seen in a few years wearing the same patch," said Lt. Col. Rodney D. Fogg, commander, 17th CSSB, during the ceremony. "It will be a story that you tell your grandchildren about."

Three units received combat patches during the ceremony. The 51st Transportation Co., Mannheim, Germany, and the 574th Quartermaster Co., Grafenwoehr, Germany, each earned the 16th Sustainment Brigade patch; the 266th Ordnance Det., Puerto Rico, earned the 1st Mission Support Command patch.

"It's pretty cool because you get a little more respect," said Spc. Frank Dix, heavy vehicle operator, 51st Trans. Co.

Dix, 22, from Augusta, Ga., is on his first deployment and understands the significance of the combat patch.

"It puts a little more pride in your heart because when you look down you see the flag and the (unit) patch on the same side," he said. "It shows that you are fighting for your country."



Photo by Sgt. RJ Gilbert

Trucks convoy from Camp Cedar II to Scania Convoy Support Center carrying much needed fuel under the escort of up-armored humvees Aug. 7.

Not just another convoy

by Sgt. RJ Gilbert

7th Sustainment Brigade

CAMP CEDAR II, Iraq — Foxtrot Company, 39th



Brigade Support Battalion, ran a two-day mission guarding fuel trucks traveling from Camp Cedar II to Scania Convoy Support Center and back Aug. 7 and 8.

The mission consisted of up-armored vehicles from F Company, 39th Brigade Support Battalion; and 142nd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 7th Sustainment Brigade, providing mobile security for the convoy of fuel tankers and its day-long journey.

"It was my first mission for this tour and it went real smooth. We were successful in transporting the fuel tankers without incident," said Spc. Arthur L. Bernhoft, mechanic with F Company.

Others upon the mission shared the sentiments of Bernhoft to a point.

"It was unusual having the two blown tires on the same vehicle, but other than that it was routine," said Staff Sgt. Gregory A. Schmidt, convoy

commander with F Company. "You are going to have things go wrong with air conditioners, tires and other stuff, but overall, (the mission) went pretty decently."

Though the overt objective of F Company was to guard fuel trucks to Scania Convoy Support Center from Camp Cedar II, the greater mission was sustaining the war fighter in his and her efforts.

"Ultimately, the convoys that we escort are getting needed supplies to troops in the North," said Schmidt. "We are helping to keep things running so everything functions. With the transport of this fuel, the generators work so 'joes' can have light and dining facilities can operate."

These examples are only a few of the many that Soldiers like those in F Company escort over the roads of Iraq daily.

Though it is unfortunate that the efforts of convoys and their security teams are not more widely recognized, the reduction of talk about convoys could well be a sign that the Soldiers and civilian contractors, like many heroes, are performing their duties effectively and seamlessly.

Nonetheless, this was not just another convoy, it was one step in the marathon effort of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Guiding lights



ALI BASE, Iraq -- Senior Airman George Carameta assembles a harness before climbing a 150-foot tower here to replace aircraft obstruction lights Aug. 2. The aircraft obstruction lighting keeps multi-million dollar aircraft from colliding into towers at night or during low-visibility conditions. Carameta, a network technician with the 407th Expeditionary Communications Squadron here, is deployed from Tinker Air Force Base, Okla.

Photo by Airman 1st Class Christopher Griffin

News around Iraq

Resident tips IA on cache location in Sadr City

BAGHDAD – Soldiers with the Iraqi Army's 3rd Battalion, 42nd Brigade, 11th Division, discovered a significant cache in the Sadr City district of Baghdad Aug. 14.

A concerned resident's tip led the IA Soldiers to an abandoned building where the cache was found hidden behind a false wall.

The cache consisted of 22 foam-encased explosively formed projectiles, 30 packets of one-quarter-inch steel ball bearings, 35 boxes of commercial one-quarter-inch steel ball bearings, three 12-inch plastic cylinders, two 5-inch plastic cylinders, six car alarms, 92 12-volt rechargeable batteries, 26 one-quarter C-4 demolition charges, 51 4-inch copper disks, 44 5-inch copper disks, 61 12-inch lengths of angle iron, 13 electrical blasting caps, two spools of electrical wire and various electrical and bomb-making components.

"To find a large cache with a big amount of EFPs like this, we are saving a lot of lives," said Maj. Gen. Muzir, commanding general of the 11th Iraqi Army Division. "We are saving the IA; we are saving the civilians. We are saving our ISF, and we are saving our friends, the Coalition Forces."

ISF find weapons caches in Rashid

FORWARD OPERATING BASE FALCON, Iraq – Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers reported the discovery of two weapons cache finds by Iraqi Security Forces in the Rashid district of southern Baghdad Aug. 16.

At approximately 2 p.m. in the Saydiyah community, Soldiers from the 4th Battalion, 64th Armor Regiment, attached to the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, reported Soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 24th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division, discovered a 60 mm mortar round.

The 4th Bn., 64th Armor Regt., also reported the 3rd Battalion, 5th Brigade, 2nd National Police Division discovered 28 82mm mortar rounds, five 60mm mortar rounds, four rocket propelled grenades and an anti-armor RPG round while conducting a canal cleanup operation in the Risalah neighborhood at approximately 5:45 p.m.

"The ISF are responsible for a significant amount of cache finds in the Rashid district of southern Baghdad," said Maj. Dave Olson, spokesman, for the 1st BCT "Their actions, with the support of the 1st Brigade, continue to provide a safe and secure environment for the 1.5 million residents of southern Baghdad."

Suspected terrorist leader detained in al Hillah

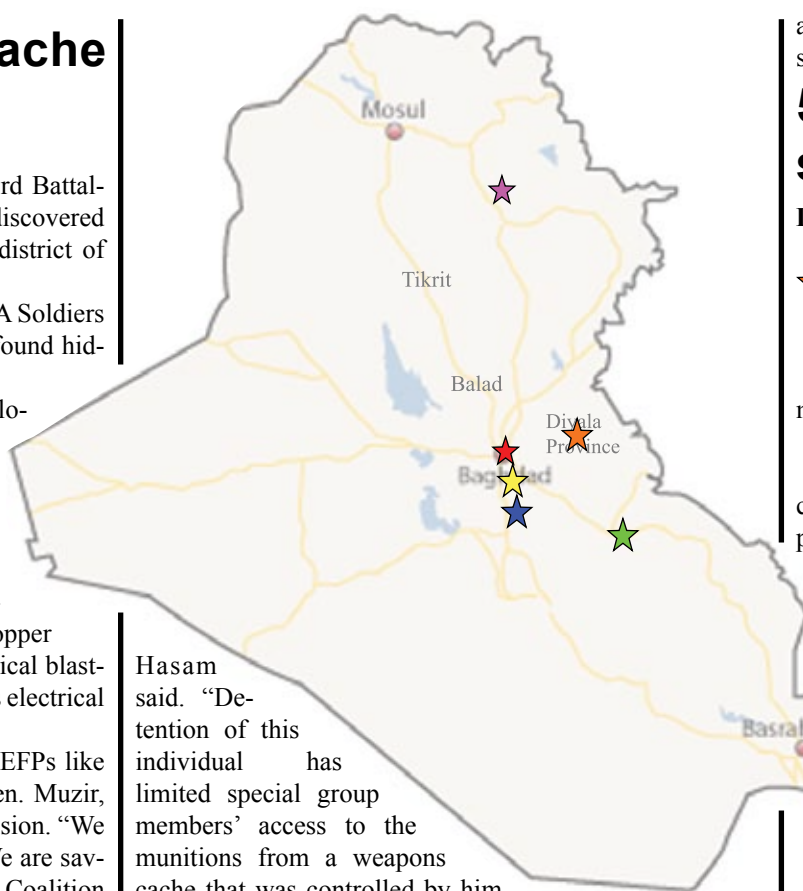
FORWARD OPERATING BASE KALSU, Iraq – Iraqi Security Forces detained a suspected terrorist cell leader during an early-morning raid in al Hillah Aug. 13.

The operation resulted from intelligence developed by al Hillah Special Weapons and Tactics Team and Coalition Forces, and was carried out with assistance from the local Iraqi Police.

The suspected terrorist is believed to be a supplier of weapons to special groups. With his capture, ISF aimed to disrupt the flow of weapons to special groups in the area.

This was the first time the Hillah SWAT conducted a mission in cooperation with the IP, according to Capt. Hasam, the assistant battalion commander for Hillah SWAT.

"We planned and conducted a successful operation,"



Hasam said. "Detention of this individual has limited special group members' access to the munitions from a weapons cache that was controlled by him and prevents future attacks that potentially result in the deaths of civilians."

Kirkuk Police Academy trains females

KIRKUK, Iraq – Thirty-seven females attended the first day of a four-week course at the Kirkuk Police Academy outside of Kirkuk city, Iraq, Aug. 16.

It's been a year since the academy has seen any Iraqi females in blue and never a class of this size.

"We need these females badly," said Lt. Col. Muid, a cadre at the academy. "It is our religious custom not to touch our women, so we cannot search females. Our female Iraqi Police will be extremely important to use at checkpoints and government buildings throughout the province."

The cadre also pointed out they would bring a different perspective to policing.

"Women think differently than men," Muid said. "They will bring fresh ideas to how we conduct business."

The 37 females are split into squad-like elements. Each squad will have a 1st Brigade, 10th Mountain female military police Soldier assist them.

"This is going to be a big challenge," said Spc. Jennifer Swierk, one of the assistants, referring to the cultural differences, "but I'm proud to be a part of this page in Kirkuk's, if not Iraq's history."

For Nowal, 30, the experience so far has her realizing she has a lot of work ahead of her.

"I am very tired," said Nowal of the first day of training. Nowal's brother is a member of the Kirkuk police force.

In lieu of the recent increase in female suicide bombers, these women are undaunted by the dangers of the field they have chosen. When asked what they would do if they were to spot one at a checkpoint, as a group they did not hesitate to answer "Man or woman, if you come through our checkpoint, we will stop you."

"Terrorists are not welcome in the province of Kirkuk," said Intesar, 29. She elaborated further regarding female suicide bombers. "They are not Iraqis. They are not Muslim. It is not our way."

The police force is also providing some women with much needed jobs.

"I have a 5-year-old son I have to feed," said Jinan, whose husband was killed by criminal elements. "I will be

able to take care of my son and also help ensure he has a safe future here."

5th IA Div. delivers food, supplies to Iraqi citizens

DIYALA, Iraq – Iraqi Army Soldiers with the 5th IA Division, 18th and 21st Brigades, delivered food and other supplies to the villages of Wahid, Soqaha, Mola-Ead, Bani-Sayd and Arab Jabar in South Balad Ruz and Buritz Aug. 11-17.

More than 310 bags of rice, flower, sugar, oil, lentils, vitamins and baby formula were distributed.

The 5th IA Div. is currently planning more drops in the area. "The Iraqi Security Forces and the Government of Iraq are committed to providing Humanitarian Assistance to the local populace to ensure their well-being," said Maj. Jon Pendell, a 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment spokesman.

Iraqi forces take over Georgians' missions

FORWARD OPERATING BASE DELTA, Iraq –

Iraqi Security Forces will partner with the 41st Fires Brigade and occupy several checkpoints and patrol bases previously manned by the 1st Georgian Brigade.

"We want to train and work with the U.S. Army," said Sgt. Namel Watak, 32nd Iraqi Army Brigade.

Namel is with a contingent of Soldiers from the 32nd IA Bde., who are working together with Soldiers from the 2nd Battalion, 20th Field Artillery Regiment at checkpoints in Wasit to keep the province stable and secure.

"We like our job here of running the traffic control point and providing security at the entrance of the patrol base," he said.

The plan is to have a complete partnership with the Iraqi Soldiers, said 2nd Lt Charles Hines, a members of the 2-20 FA Regt., and the IA liaison at the patrol base.

"Right now, the Iraqi Soldiers have taken over the responsibility of the traffic control point, but we are going to train them to be able to take over the entire patrol base, go and do presence patrols and set-up temporary traffic control points in our area," he said.

The 41st Fires Bde. established a very good working relationship with both the Iraqi Police and the IA, said Col. Richard M. Francey, Jr., 41st Fires Bde commander.

"We are integrating with the ISF to make us a better fighting force," he said. "They have stepped up to the plate, and their partnership is why we are able to take over the mission that the Georgians had to leave behind, with no change in the security and safety of the Iraqi people."

For Namel, working with the Americans is a chance to get better training, and learn as much from the U.S. Soldiers as he can.

"I want to fight fiercely alongside the U.S. Army," he said. By working with the Americans, "I get more training to be able to do the job."

NP, local resident help take weapons off streets

BAGHDAD – National Police seized a weapons cache, and a local resident turned in another in the greater Baghdad area Aug. 20.

At approximately 8 a.m., police with the 1st Battalion, 3rd Brigade, 1st National Police Division, seized 13 small rockets, two artillery shells, three mortar rounds and an assortment of ordnance in the New Baghdad area of Baghdad.

Later, at approximately 8 p.m., a local resident turned in three 120 mm mortars and two propellant grenade rounds to Soldiers with Company C, 1st Infantry Battalion, 27th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, at a Coalition Forces base west of Baghdad.

MESSAGES FROM HOME



Just wanted to say hello to CPT Kemp (Daddy)! We love you and are so proud of you!
We miss you so much, and can't wait to see you soon!!
Love you,
Stacey, Gracey, and Addison Stacey Quinn-Kemp



To Daddy (SSG Dustin Gothrup)
Daddy i wanted to tell you i really love kindergarden and i love you too! I fall asleep on the bus eveyday! Me and Addy and mommy took a walk tonight and i fell and hurt my leg, but i didn't cry! I miss you so much and i can't wait to fight you when you come home!
I Love you 20 sixty 5 nine (Cayden Gothrup age 5)

CPT Brian Costa
Hope this message finds you safe and well. We love and miss you a TON and can't wait for you to get home soon!
Love, June, Dylan and Keven
.....
"To Brian-David and all of our "sons and daughters" of the 164th MP Co there in Balad - We love you all and are keeping you constantly in our prayers. We are so proud of you!!! See you soon!!! -The Bellamys"



To Spc.Hernandez
I Love YOU and Miss You So Much!!!
I am really looking forward to seeing you soon.
Hugs and Kisses!!!
Your Wife Brenda

Shout Out from home

Show your Soldier how much you miss them by sending messages, pictures, or poems in the Expeditionary Times newspaper.

Contact the 3^d ESC Public Affairs Office to print your message.
E-mail Anaconda.Times@iraq.centcom.mil

Out for a spin

JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq -- A dust devil more than ten stories tall spins across the flightline here Aug. 15. A dust devil forms when hot air near the surface rises quickly through a small pocket of cooler, low-pressure air above it.



Photo by Tech Sgt Erik Gudmundson



SPADES TOURNAMENT

Hosted by 330th Transportation BN



MWR EAST
Double Elimination
Round 1 – 7 Sep 1600-1930
Round 2 – 14 Sep 1600-1930

16 two person teams plus one alternate
First come first serve

Registration begins 29 Aug and lasts until all spaces are filled

For Registration and Questions
Contact – PFC Beirne at amanda.beirne@iraq.centcom.mil

JB BALAD ACTIVITIES

INDOOR POOL

Aqua Training: Tuesday and Thursday- 7:45 p.m.

EAST FITNESS CENTER

Basketball League: Monday-Friday - 7 p.m.

Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu: Monday, Wednesday, Friday - 8 p.m.

Kyu Kyu Kempo: Sunday- 2 p.m.

Edged weapons and stick fighting combatives training: Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays 8 p.m.

Open court volleyball: Sunday- 6 p.m.

Shotokan Karate Do: Monday, Wednesday and Friday- 6 p.m.

Soo Bahk Do: 6 p.m.

Step Aerobics: Monday, Wednesday, Friday - 5:30 p.m.

Wrestling & physical fitness class: Tuesday- 6 p.m. and Saturday- 7 p.m.

Swing dance: Sunday- 7:30 p.m.

Abs-Aerobics: Tuesday and Thursday- 6 a.m. and 5 p.m.

EAST RECREATION CENTER

8-ball tourney: Monday- 8 p.m.

9-ball tournament: Wednesday- 8 p.m.

Game Console Tourney: Thursday- 8 p.m.

Country Dance Class: Thursday- 7 p.m.

Dominoes: Friday- 8 p.m.

Karaoke: Monday- 8 p.m.

Model building: Sunday- 1 p.m.

Poetry/ open mic: Sunday- 7:30 p.m.

Poker tourney: Sunday- 6 p.m.

Salsa dance class: Saturday- 8:30 p.m.

Swing dance: Tuesday- 7 p.m.

Ping pong tourney: Tuesday- 3 p.m. and 8 p.m.

WEST RECREATION CENTER

8-ball tourney: Wednesday- 1 p.m. and 8 p.m.

9-ball tournament: Monday- 1 p.m. and 8 p.m.

Dungeons & Dragons: Saturday- 8 p.m.

Friday- 8 p.m.

Friday nights in Balad:

Friday- 8 p.m.

Foosball: Tuesday- 1 p.m. and 8 p.m.

Green Bean karaoke: Wednesday and Sunday- 8 p.m.

Ice Ball Tourney: Thursday- 4 p.m.

Ping pong tourney: Tuesday- 1 p.m. and 8 p.m.

Salsa dance class: Thursday- 8:30 p.m.

Spades, Chess and Dominoes: Friday - 1 p.m.

Texas hold 'em: Saturday- 1 p.m. and 8 p.m.

Game Counsel Tourney: Thursday- 1 p.m. and 8 p.m.

WEST FITNESS CENTER

3-on-3 basketball tourney: Saturday- 7:30 p.m.

6-on-6 volleyball tourney: Friday- 7 p.m.

Aerobics: Monday, Wednesday, Friday- 7 p.m.

Body by Midgett Toning Class: Tuesday, Thursday - 7 p.m.

Dodge ball Game: Tuesday- 7:30 p.m.

Furman's Martial Arts: Monday, Wednesday, Sunday- 1 p.m.

Gaston's Self-Defense Class: Friday, Saturday- 7 p.m.

Open court basketball: Thursday- 7 p.m.

Open court soccer: Monday, Wednesday - 7 p.m.

Zingano Brazilian Jiu Jitsu: Tuesday, Thursday- 8:30 p.m.

CIRCUIT GYM

Floor hockey: Monday, Wednesday, Friday - 8 p.m.

SUSTAINER REEL TIME THEATER

Movie Times

Wednesday, August 27

5 p.m. The Incredible Hulk

8 p.m. Iron Man

Thursday, August 28

5 p.m. Wanted

8 p.m. The Incredible Hulk

Friday, August 29

2 p.m. The House Bunny

5 p.m. Hellboy 2

8 p.m. Hellboy 2

Saturday, August 30

2 p.m. Journey to the Center of the Earth

5 p.m. Hellboy 2

8 p.m. The House Bunny

Sunday, August 31

2 p.m. Hellboy 2

5 p.m. The House Bunny

8 p.m. Journey to the Center of the Earth

Monday, September 1

5 p.m. Wall-E

8 p.m. Clone Wars

Tuesday, September 2

5 p.m. Hancock

8 p.m. Iron Man

(Schedule is subject to change)

New Movies

The House Bunny



Fred Wolf.

When Playboy playmate Shelley (Anna Faris) is unceremoniously evicted from Hugh Hefner's lavish mansion in order to make room for some younger beauties, her quest for employment finds her serving as den mother to an unpopular L.A. sorority in this Happy Madison production directed by

Journey to the Center of the Earth



Eric Brevig makes his feature directorial debut with this adaptation of the classic Jules Verne fantasy starring Brendan Fraser. When an ambitious science professor (Fraser) develops a decidedly unconventional hypothesis, the mere mention of his name is enough to elicit laughter within the academic community. However, during a subsequent excursion to Iceland, the professor and his nephew make a major scientific discovery that sends them miles beneath the surface of the Earth, where they discover not only strange new worlds, but also encounter creatures so alien they appear to be from another world entirely.

Hellboy 2



For centuries, an ancient truce has kept the naïve citizens of the human race safe from the horrors of the invisible realm -- but that's all about to change, and fast. A ruthless leader has emerged in the invisible realm, a tyrant just as comfortable walking the surface realm as he is living in the land of

fantasy. When this power-mad ruler defies his bloodline to assemble an unstoppable army of fantastical creatures that he will use to wage a supernatural war on humanity, it begins to appear that humankind's days are numbered. But Hellboy (Perlman) isn't about to stand idly by as the planet is purged by a demonic despot, and with a little help from his team at the Bureau for Paranormal Research and Defense, he may just be able to send our otherworldly overlords packing. Of course, Hellboy's pyrokinetic girlfriend, Liz (Selma Blair), is always willing to conjure up an inferno or two when things get desperate, aquatic Abe (Doug Jones) is prepared to dive headlong into any battle, and protoplasmic mystic Johann (voice of Thomas Kretschmann) proves an invaluable companion in times of inter-dimensional conflict. Now, as the creatures who inhabit the spiritual realm gear up for an all-out attack on the human plane, the only one capable of saving the Earth is a tough-talking hellspawn rejected by both worlds

STUPID STATE LAWS

Ever wonder just how dumb things can be? Does your state have dumb laws? Read on and find out. In the upcoming weeks, the Expeditionary Times will have a series of dumb and stupid laws for each state. Many of the laws have been verified, but many have been taken from sources which do not include law citations. The laws cited below have been taken from news groups, web sites and city governments. Remember, something had to have happened to get these laws passed. Some laws have been repealed, but not all; some are still on the books.

New York

- You may not smoke within 100 feet of the entrance to a public building.
- Citizens may not greet each other by “putting one’s thumb to the nose and wiggling the fingers.”
- It is against the law to throw a ball at someone’s head for fun.
- New Yorkers cannot dissolve a marriage for irreconcilable differences, unless they both agree to it.

North Carolina

- The mere possession of a lottery ticket is illegal in North Carolina and may result in a \$2,000 fine.
- No one may be a professional fortune-teller, and if one wishes to pursue the practice as an amateur, it must be practiced in a school or church.
- Elephants may not be used to plow cotton fields.
- A marriage can be declared void if either of the two persons is physically impotent.

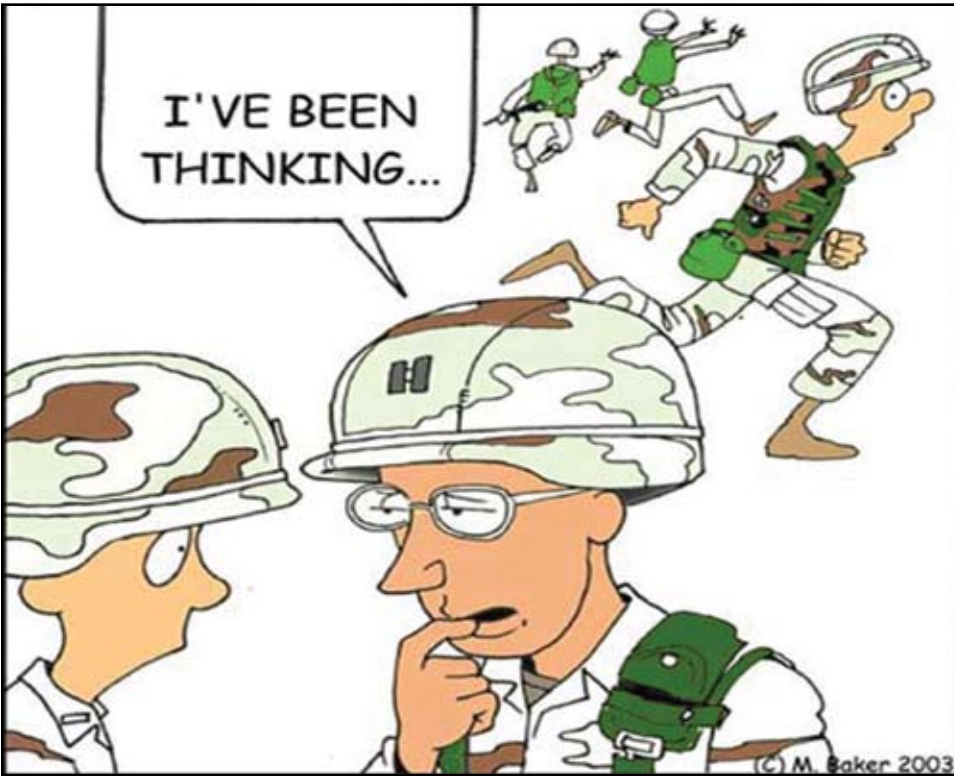
Sudoku

Level: Hard

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

The objective is to fill the 9×9 grid so that each column, each row, and each of the nine 3×3 boxes contains the digits from 1 to 9 only one time each.

PVT. MURPHY’S LAW



Iraq according to Opet



Do you have a story idea?
Contact the Anaconda Times
anaconda.times@iraq.centcom.mil



Upcoming sports on AFN



Wednesday 8/27/08

Tennis: 2008 US Open: Men’s and Women’s Opening Rounds (USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center, Flushing Meadows, NY), live 2 a.m. AFN/sports
MLB: Milwaukee Brewers @ St. Louis Cardinals, live 1 p.m. AFN/sports
Tennis: 2008 US Open: Men’s Opening Rounds and Women’s Second Rounds (USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center, Flushing Meadows, NY), live 6 p.m. AFN/sports

Thursday 8/28/08

Tennis: 2008 US Open: Men’s Opening Rounds and Women’s Second Rounds (USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center, Flushing Meadows, NY), live 2 a.m. AFN/sports
MLB: ESPN’s Wednesday Night Baseball: Boston Red Sox @ New York Yankees, tape delay 1 p.m. AFN/sports
Tennis: 2008 US Open: Men’s and Women’s Second Rounds (USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center, Flushing Meadows, NY), live 6 p.m. AFN/sports

Friday 8/29/08

Tennis 2008 US Open: Men’s and Women’s Second Rounds (USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center, Flushing Meadows, NY), live 2 a.m. AFN/sports
MLB: Texas Rangers @ Los Angeles Angels, live 6 a.m. AFN/xtra
NFL: NFL Preseason Week 4: Jacksonville Jaguars @ Washington Redskins, tape delay 10 a.m. AFN/sports
College Football: ESPN College Football Primetime: Oregon State @ Stanford, tape delay 2 p.m. AFN/sports
Tennis: 2008 US Open: Men’s Second Rounds and Women’s Third Rounds (USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center, Flushing Meadows, NY), live 6 p.m. AFN/sports

Saturday 8/30/08

Tennis: 2008 US Open: Men’s Third Rounds and Women’s Second Rounds (USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center, Flushing Meadows, NY), live 2 a.m. AFN/sports
College Football: ESPN College Football Primetime: SMU @ Rice, live 3 p.m. AFN/sports
MLB: Texas Rangers @ Los Angeles Angels, live 5 a.m. AFN/prime pacific
MLB: Minnesota Twins @ Oakland Athletics, live 6 a.m. AFN/xtra
College Football: ESPN College Football Primetime: Temple @ Army, tape delay 12 p.m. AFN/sports
College Football: ESPN College Football Primetime: Virginia Tech @ East Carolina, live 7 p.m. AFN/sports
College Football: Youngstown State @ Ohio State, live 7 p.m. AFN/xtra
College Football: Hawaii @ Florida, live 7:30 p.m. AFN/prime pacific
College Football: ABC College Football: USC @ Virginia, live 10:30 p.m. AFN/prime pacific
College Football: ABC’s Afternoon College Football: Utah @ Michigan, live 10:30 p.m. AFN/xtra

Sunday 8/31/08

College Football: ESPN College Football Primetime: Appalachian State @ LSU, live 12 p.m. AFN/sports
College Football: ESPN2 College Football Primetime: Mississippi State @ Louisiana Tech, live 1:45 a.m. AFN/xtra
College Football: ABC College Football Primetime:

Alabama @ Clemson, live 3 a.m. AFN/prime atlantic
College Football: ESPN College Football Primetime: Illinois @ Missouri, live 3:30 a.m. AFN/sports
College Football: ESPN Pac-10 Football: Washington @ Oregon, live 5 a.m. AFN/sports
College Football: Villanova @ West Virginia, tape delay 10 a.m. AFN/xtra
Tennis: 2008 US Open: Men’s Third Rounds and Women’s Second Rounds (USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center, Flushing Meadows, NY), tape delay 10 a.m. AFN/sports
College Football: ESPN Pac-10 Football: Oklahoma State @ Washington State, tape delay 1 p.m. AFN/xtra
College Football: ABC College Football Primetime: Michigan State @ California, tape delayed 1 p.m. AFN/sports
NASCAR: NASCAR Nationwide Series: Camping World 300 (California Speedway, Fontana, CA), tape delayed 4:30 p.m. AFN/xtra
MLB: New York Mets @ Florida Marlins, live 8 p.m. AFN/prime atlantic
MLB: Chicago White Sox @ Boston Red Sox, live 8:30 p.m. AFN/xtra
College Football: ESPN College Football: Kentucky @ Louisville, live 10:30 p.m. AFN/sports
PGA TOUR: PGA Tour 2008 Deutsche Bank Championship (TPC Boston, Norton, MA) (JIP), live 11 p.m. AFN/prime atlantic

Monday 9/1/08

MLB: Minnesota Twins @ Oakland Athletics (JIP), live 1:30 a.m. AFN/xtra
College Football: Big 12 Football: Colorado State @ Colorado, live 2:30 a.m. AFN/sports
MLB: ESPN Sunday Night Baseball: Los Angeles Dodgers @ Arizona Diamondbacks, live 3 a.m. AFN/prime atlantic
NASCAR: NASCAR Sprint Cup Series: CAS Sprint Cup 500 (California Speedway, Fontana, CA), live 3 a.m. AFN/xtra
IndyCar: IndyCar Racing Series: Firestone IndyCar Grand Prix at Detroit (The Raceway at Belle Isle, Detroit, MI), tape delay 7:30 a.m. AFN/xtra
MLB: Philadelphia Phillies @ Chicago Cubs, tape delayed 10 a.m. AFN/xtra
Tennis: 2008 US Open: Men’s Third and Women’s Fourth Rounds (USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center, Flushing Meadows, NY) (JIP), tape delayed 11 a.m. AFN/sports
College Football: 2008 MEAC/SWAC Challenge: Jackson State vs Hampton (Florida Citrus Bowl, Orlando FL), tape delayed 5 p.m.
Tennis: 2008 US Open: Men’s and Women’s Fourth Rounds (USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center, Flushing Meadows, NY), live 6 p.m. AFN/sports

Tuesday 9/2/08

College Football: ESPN College Football: Fresno State @ Rutgers (JIP), live 12 a.m.
College Football: ESPN College Football Primetime: Tennessee @ UCLA, live 3 a.m. AFN/sports
MLB: St. Louis Cardinals @ Arizona Diamondbacks, tape delayed 10 a.m. AFN/sports
College Football: ESPN College Football Primetime: Tennessee @ UCLA, tape delayed 2 p.m. AFN/sports
Tennis: 2008 US Open: Men’s Fourth Rounds and Women’s Quarterfinal (USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center, Flushing Meadows, NY), live 6 p.m. AFN/sports



Photo by Michael Macor/The Chronicle

American Vincent Hancock set a world record in skeet shooting in 2007, 150 out of 150, later equaled by Norway's Tore Brovold.

2008 Olympics: Army instructor holds off co-record holder in sudden death

by Peter Fimrite

The San Francisco Chronicle Staff Writer
(used with permission)

You don't shoot at flying disks in a fire-fight, but the skills of Olympic skeet shooting champion Vincent Hancock are being used every day by Soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The 19-year-old Army specialist won the gold medal Saturday at the Beijing Shooting Range in the event, in which competitors shoot down little orange Frisbee-like disks with a shotgun.

The competition came down to a thrilling shoot-off between Hancock and his Norwegian rival and co-world-record holder Tore Brovold, who had the added pressure of performing in front of the king and queen of Norway.

"I was just trying to wait till I saw the targets because I wasn't seeing the targets really well," Hancock said after missing only four out of 104 disks in the preliminary and final rounds and then the sudden-death shoot-off. "On the last couple of pairs, I was really focusing and really determined, and it paid off for me."

Hancock is a phenomenon in the shooting world, having won the world championship at the age of 16, but he is merely the latest in a slew of military marksmen to make their mark on the Olympics.

He is one of seven Olympic shooters stationed at the Army Marksmanship Unit at Fort Benning, Ga., where U.S. Soldiers are trained before heading off to war. Lt. Col. Frank Muggeo, the unit commander, said this is where the best and fastest guns in the West can be found.

"The Army marksmanship unit is comprised of the best shooters in the armed forces," Muggeo said. "It has 23 Olympic medals. That's more shooting medals in just one unit of the Army than any other country except China."

The shooters in the marksmanship unit make up more than half of the 13 American

Olympians who are in the military. They include three-time Olympian Glenn Eller, who won a gold medal in double trap shooting last week, connecting on an Olympic record 190 of 200 targets.

More important than the medals - at least in terms of long-term benefit - is the fact that these men are the experts who train America's troops, Muggeo said. More than 3,000 Soldiers who trained at Fort Benning last year have been deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan, he said.

Skeet shooting was developed in the United States in 1915 as a training tool for shotgun-toting hunters of waterfowl. It would seem at first that duck-hunting skills would be of little use in combat. But Muggeo said a good skeet shooter has developed fundamentals that apply in all situations.

"I've been in the Special Forces for 21 years and I thought I knew how to shoot, but in 20 minutes with these guys they taught me how to shoot better," said Muggeo, 43, whose unit has provided marksmanship training with rifles, service pistols and combat weaponry for 52 years. "If you look at the position these guys take when they are shooting, it has a direct correlation to the positions you take in combat."

Spc. Hancock works as an instructor for noncommissioned officers and squad leaders in urban warfare skills, including the point-and-shoot techniques used by skeet shooters.

"We train the sergeants and NCOs of the Army (so they can) help better prepare the younger Soldiers and themselves for going overseas," Hancock said. "With the shotgun unit we do close-quarter combat, which is clearing houses and various stuff that has to do with shotguns."

Hancock had a knack for the sport from the time he was a boy growing up in Bennington, Ga., said his father.

"When he was 12 years old, he told me he wanted to go to the Olympics, so I built him a skeet range in the backyard," said Craig Hancock, who taught his son to block out



Photo by Mike Hewitt/Getty Images



Photo by Michael Macor/The Chronicle

TOP: Vincent Hancock of the United States competes in the men's skeet shooting event at the Beijing Shooting Range Hall on Day 8 of the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games on August 16, 2008 in Beijing, China. Hancock went on to win the gold medal.
LEFT: Hancock, 19, is one of seven Olympians stationed at the Army Marksmanship Unit.

distractions by running sprinklers and letting the dogs bark during training sessions. "He trained every day and on weekends. You give him a challenge and he will not quit until he can beat it. He does everything like that."

Nearly half the men in Hancock's marksmanship unit have seen combat, but don't expect to see the gold medalist dodging bullets in the Middle East like his brother Mat-

thew, who has had two tours of duty in Iraq.

"I wouldn't be surprised if he asked to go, but we don't send individuals to combat. We send units to combat," Muggeo said. "Everybody in my unit is a trainer. If he went over there, he would be the best shot in the squad, but he wouldn't be training the thousands of other Soldiers who need to learn these skills."