



The Striker Torch

The Official Newsletter of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division

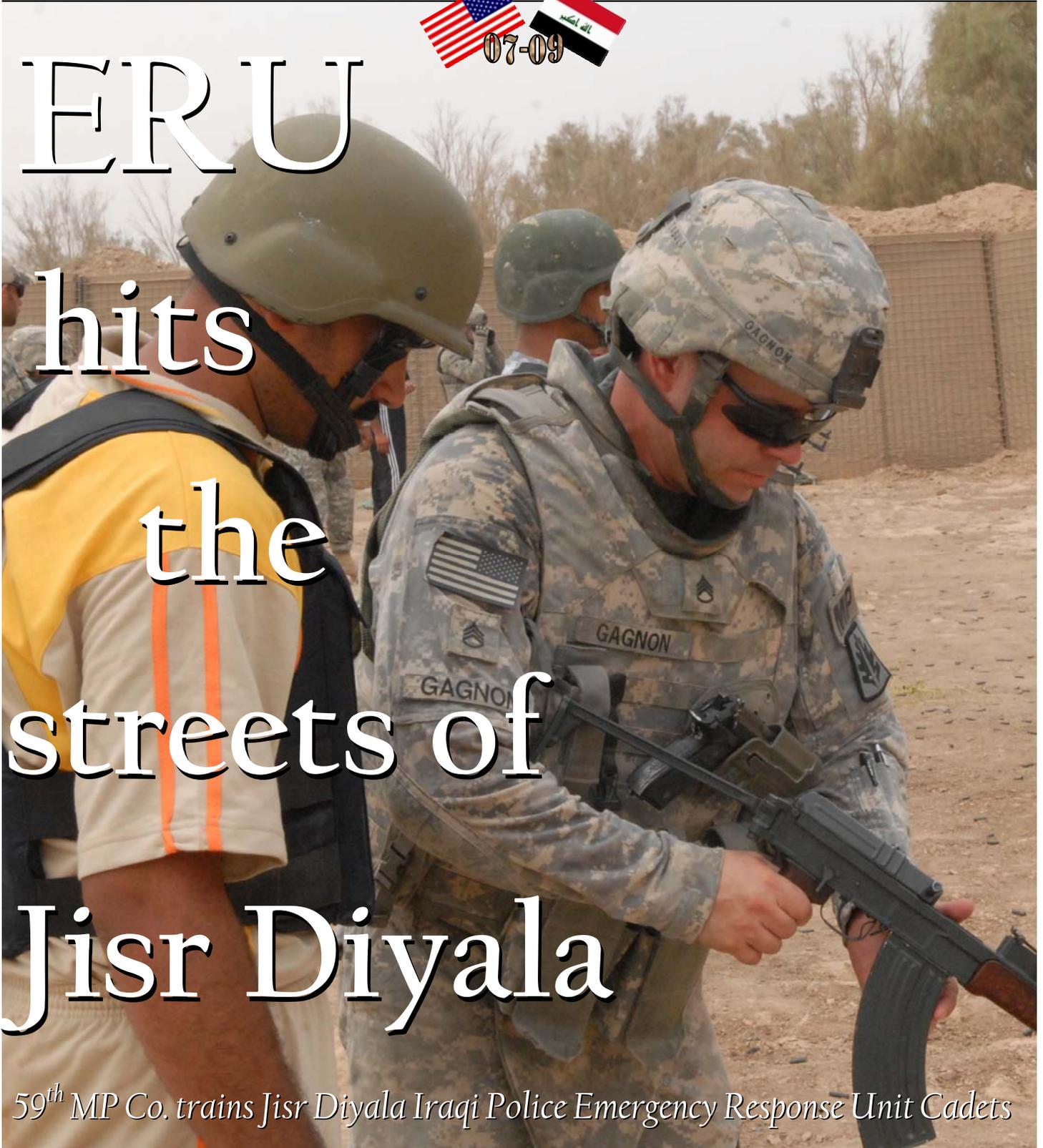
SEPT 2008

VOL. II NO. 46



ERU hits the streets of Jisr Diyala

59th MP Co. trains Jisr Diyala Iraqi Police Emergency Response Unit Cadets





Remembering 9-11

I'd like to spend a few minutes remembering – remembering the events of that day, seven years ago – remembering some of the most amazing accounts of heroism anyone has ever seen or heard – and remembering the sacrifices of some three thousand men, women and children of all different ages, races and nationalities. I'd also like to focus on how we've grown and changed as a nation, the advances we've made in the War on Terror, some of the many ways we now pay tribute to the lives lost that day and some of the heroic ways Americans everywhere are answering the Call to Duty to defend this great nation.

It was 8:46 a.m. in New York City – when our otherwise normal morning was quickly transformed into a day that will live in our hearts and minds forever. American Airlines Flight 11 slammed into the first of the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center. Unlike the attack on Pearl Harbor, the images of that day were instantly in the living rooms and on the computer screens of practically every American. At that time, no one could begin to grasp the remaining terror that would reveal itself over the course of that day. Soon to follow, a second aircraft, United Airlines Flight 175, crashed into the second World Trade Center Tower, and we witnessed the collapse of both towers. Shortly thereafter, terrorists used American Airlines Flight 77 as a weapon to attack the Pentagon. Then, United Flight 93, intended for the White House, crashed into a field in the Pennsylvania countryside. Many brave Americans aboard United Flight 93 chose to fight – and potentially saved thousands of lives in the process.

The images of that day will never leave us. But what also stands out is what we discovered about ourselves. In the face of so much terror, so many Americans rose above their fears. Their Call to Duty that day was to risk their own lives, to save others.

During President Bush's memorable address to the nation on September 11th 2001, he said "A great people have been moved to defend a great nation. Terrorist attacks can shake the

foundations of our biggest buildings, but they cannot touch the foundation of America. These acts shattered steel, but they cannot dent the steel of American resolve."

Seven years later, the American resolve is still evident, as hundreds of thousands of men and women continue to bravely answer their Call to Duty in today's military – to serve a nation at war.

We will never be the same as we were on September 10th, 2001. We are changed forever – but we are a nation of survivors, of fighters, of people who learn from our mistakes and march onward, always remembering.

We will never forget September 11th. But out of the darkness of that day, Americans everywhere have resolved to make this world a safer place. Today in Afghanistan, Iraq, and more than 120 countries around the world, Soldiers have responded to the Call to Duty. They have their boots on the ground, standing guard and helping to preserve peace and democracy. They are living each day with that same Call to Duty that was exemplified by the heroes of 9/11. On this day, as we remember the sacrifice, patriotism and the humanity that so many showed on that tragic day seven years ago, I'd like to take a moment to simply thank the thousands of men and women who

continue to bravely serve our nation and protect freedom and democracy each and every day.

I can't thank you enough for all your hard work, passion, and patriotism. Thank you for answering the Call to Duty and putting your Boots on the Ground. We are grateful for your service every day, but it truly stands out on this day, as we mark the seven year anniversary of the September 11th attacks.



COL Pat White
"Striker 6"





Don't Forget Nothing

The 2BCT 1AD TOC is the heart beat of FOB Hammer. This group of Iron Brigade Soldiers work in 12 hour shifts in order to keep communication, air support, intel, route clearance and artillery readily available. They gather and sort through a vast amount of information to advise the Brigade Commander and help the Iron Brigade run smoothly.

These soldiers work together as a team. The Battle Desk is the center of operation in the TOC. Having communications readily available throughout our battle space with our units is mission essential. Our battle captains are CPT Jones, CPT Pullen and CPT Radion who work to ensure the TOC runs smoothly, with the help of two Battle NCO's SSG Pelkey and SSG Adkins.

An RTO, CPOF operator, and Runner are also part of this team. Together they track the movement of units and develop a clear and concise operating picture.

The S2 Section contributes to the Brigade's fight as well. This group of Soldiers gathers and analyzes intelligence for our operations. Tracking enemy movement and activity is a large part of their job. This information makes its way down to commanders on the ground who use it to plan missions accordingly.

The Fire Support Element is there to support our Soldiers by providing pro-

active and reactive fires and coordinates all Fires through Higher Headquarters. The aviation detachment integrated into the FSE is responsible for coordinating all Fixed Wing Assets to support the Battalions in the Brigade. It serves as the Brigades' counterfire headquarters, synchronizing radars, Howitzers, FDC, and Ground Units to protect the Brigade from Indirect Fire Attacks.

The Brigade Aviation Element is a very important job. They monitor the Brigade airspace and they coordinate air transport for Soldiers. They support the Command Group by getting them timely flights for battlefield circulations. Most Soldiers are familiar with the Brigade Aviation Element because one of their main missions is to move Soldiers to BIAP for environmental morale leave.

So to the Iron Soldiers of the TOC thank you for your dedication and support in this fight. Keep up the outstanding work.

I would like say thank you to our families and friends for their continued support.



CSM Michael Eyer
"Striker 7"

Special Delivery

By CPT
Earl Tsuneyoshi



TF 1-6 IN

With over 100,000 gallons of fuel, thousands of vehicle parts and supplies, and thousands of pounds of water and food transported into the deployment, HHC 1-6 IN's Support Platoon continues to supply the lifeline to the Regulars.

In addition to the above are the countless hours spent preparing for their combat logistics patrols (CLP) has definitely pushed these men to the limits.

However, the support platoon continues to persevere through the ever changing logistical requirements of the battalion. In support platoon terms, this has resulted in some CLPs consisting of over 20 vehicles which have on occasion stretched for more than 1 kilometer on the routes to the numerous Regular locations throughout Sadr City.

In the civilian world, 1-6 IN's Support Platoon could be similarly equated to the delivery components of FEDEX or UPS with the variety of items that they supply to the numerous locations. These soldiers have been tasked with becoming a jack of all trades when it comes to handling, loading, and transporting the battalion's ammunition, food, water, ice, fuel, supplies, vehicle parts, and whatever else that may need at the combat outposts and joint security stations.

Basically, anything and everything that is necessary to sustain the battalion in their remote locations have been supplied by these men.

Unlike their civilian counterparts, they have had to transport a wide range of items including but not limited to shower

trailers, portable toilets, weapons caches, and all types of vehicles.

Maneuvering through the streets of Sadr City with their large vehicles and unique loads has truly shown that these men are highly proficient in their jobs and shows the flexibility of many of these men who often times are operating vehicles that they only learned to use upon their arrival here.



*HHC 1-6 IN's Support staging before a Combat Logistics Patrol (CLP)
(U.S. Army Photo)*





A support LHS vehicle is ready and staged for the CLP. (U.S. Army Courtesy Photo)

Other combat elements have also occasionally provided support to the battalion and have been included into the Regular CLPs. One of these elements are HETs (Heavy Equipment Transport Vehicles) that often time join the convoys hauling large vehicles that need to be repaired or delivered to the different elements of the task force.

In addition, the CLPs have been used as a type of taxi service with the additional task of transporting the Soldiers of the task force between the locations on the CLPs. As a result, this has allowed the different company elements to continue their primary missions without having to take the additional time to transport these Soldiers with their own resources in which they would have otherwise had to.

The countless hours on the road have definitely taken a toll on their vehi-

cles which is expected with the amount of hours on the road and load size that their vehicles endure. Looking at their task, it can be questioned as to how they continuously are able to sustain such operations.

However, their daily efforts and the stringent maintenance of their vehicles along with the expert help of the Regular Maintenance Team have allowed the Regular's Support Platoon to supply the Regulars 100% of the time.

These men have clearly shown their ability to supply the battalion without regard to the size or type of load that the Regular's have required and will undoubtedly continue to support the lifeline to the Regulars.



On the Road with



TF 2-6 IN

By 1LT

Mark Searles

The Spartans of Wolfpack

As the first quarter of the deployment passes into history, the Soldiers of HHC/2-6 IN, “Wolfpack”, continue to perform a myriad of tasks to sustain the operations of Task Force Gator. Spread across three locations, COP Cahill, COS Carver, and FOB Hammer, the “Wolfpack” provides sustainment, command and control, maintenance, administrative actions and the essential maneuver enablers of Scouts, Mortars, Medics and Engineers to allow the company teams to successfully execute counterinsurgency operations in the Salman Pak area.

It is a formation that sees its days of operation in the Army numbered as the legacy units are phased out and reconfigured into modular ones. One of the most critical pieces to the success of the task force operates across the brigade battlespace and is manned by Soldiers whose sole goal is to enable their brothers forward. It is the Support Platoon.



At FOB Hammer, the Field Trains Command Post (FTCP) integrates the Support Platoon “Spartans” and supply personnel into the brigade’s logistical center. Under the leadership of LT Ben Lee and SFC Clifford Jones, the platoon provides the logistical link from the brigade to the company teams forward. They deliver the essential classes of supply, cargo, and personnel movement to enable task force focus on

COIN, by executing combat logistics patrols (CLPs) several times a week. Coordination and external support is provided through the forward support battalion (FSB), Iraqi engineers and truck platoon, and contracted agencies such as KBR.

The CLP cycle begins immediately following completion of the previous CLP as vehicles are downloaded of cargo and personnel and then given their post operations maintenance checks. Crews then recover and account for their sensitive items, and conclude with an after action review of the patrol.

Over the course of the next few days, the platoon conducts maintenance on vehicles and weapon systems and begins to plan the next patrol. Initial requirements are forecasted from the S-4 at COS Carver, resourced with the FSB and initial linkups are made to program the loads. A training event is integrated into one of the non-patrol days and can cover a range of tasks from individual or crew served weapons qualification, combat lifesaver training, or battle drill rehearsals. Escalation of Force and rules of engagement training are constantly reinforced and enemy tactics, techniques, and procedures are reviewed.



On loadout day, final verification of the loads are configured and completed. Class I dry goods are loaded and tied down, equipment or vehicles are uploaded and bulk fuel and water requests are finalized with the FSB.

Communication checks are executed and maintenance works diligently to correct any last issues with the vehicles.



Personnel are manifested from various units and the final trip ticket is created for submission to the task force operation center at COS Carver. The platoon leader briefs the company commander on his patrol; they review any significant activities, threats and ongoing operations in the task force and brigade, and validate the manifest. The crews get a good night sleep as the mission begins early in the morning.

On the morning of mission, crews draw weapons, and conduct final PCC/PCI of their equipment. Linkup is made of all convoy elements in the motorpool at Hammer and roll call is executed. Following a Soldier pre-combat check/inspection by the truck commanders, the convoy assembles at the sandtable for the convoy brief. The convoy task and purpose is briefed and battle drills are reviewed. Once that is completed, loads are checked once again and the convoy begins moving toward the ECP. At the ECP, weapons are loaded, final vehicle “walk arounds” completed, and any loads that have shifted are adjusted. Each Soldier knows that “Murphy’s Law” can be riding on the convoy and they try to limit his devious activities by ensuring their gear is ready.

Rollout is executed, it will be several hours before the mission is done and the focus is now on successful movement down to COP Cahill and Carver. At the COPs they download all the supplies and upload equipment that needs to return to FOB Hammer for various reasons.

They pickup personnel who need to move about the theater for many reasons; they cycle interpreters; and pickup paperwork that needs to process through brigade.

All important to morale, mail is delivered. Handshakes are exchanged with friends from the line units they don’t see often enough. It is a hustle, for everyone is watching the clock to make linkup back at the assembly area – no one wants to be the guy that raises SFC Jones’ ire.

When the tasks are done, the brief is made again and the long line of vehicles begins its march back toward FOB Hammer. At the RP, the “Spartans” are tired, sweat



soaked, but proud of what they have accomplished. They have supported their brothers, they have given them what they need to be safe and accomplish their missions, and they know that they need to get ready to do it all again.



M1A1 Tank Demo

By 1LT
Aaron Tucker

At FOB Hammer



TF 1-35 AR

On August 17th, 2008 members of Company B, 1st Battalion 6th Infantry a part of Task Force Knight were given a once in a lifetime opportunity – to display and demonstrate the capabilities of the M1A1 Abrams Main Battle Tanks to the Iraqi Army.

Four M1A1 Abrams tanks from Combat Outpost Cashe South deployed to Forward Operating Base Hammer for the event. Once at FOB Hammer, 3rd Platoon firing crews worked hard to make sure that the tanks were ready and that the conditions were set to showcase our nation's technology.

The two tank demonstration began with Abrams tanks moving from a hiding position behind the audience and maneuvering around the soldiers from the Iraqi Army.

Both tanks quickly passed in front of the audience and simultaneously fired at targets to demonstrate the tanks shoot on the move capability. The tanks maneuvered, engaging targets 2000 meters



M1A1 Abrams tank (U.S. Army file photo)

away from stationary and moving positions.

The crews fired a salvo of smoke to mask their move back where they joined a joint Iraqi-US heavy weapons squad. The dismounts and tanks engaged machine gun targets before the Abrams simultaneously fired their last main gun rounds.

After the demonstration, Iraqi Generals were given an opportunity to have an up-close look at the tanks. 1LT Aaron Tucker, SFC Eric Ebert, SFC Christopher Albanese, and SGT William Zavaleta remained on the tank to answer any questions.

After a tour of the tank, SFC Ebert took two Iraqi Generals out to fire the main gun. "They hit the targets," said SPC Jeffery Thoman.

After firing the tank, one of the Iraqi generals approached SFC Ebert, gave him a thumbs up, and said "good tank!" It was a great feeling for both the tankers and our Iraqi partners.

For their work at the Besmayah Range Complex, Brigadier General Salazar recognized members of 3rd Platoon for their enthusiasm and support to this important mission. This demonstration for Iraqi senior leaders demonstrates the great cooperation between the Iraqi and U.S. Armed Forces as our coalition partnership becomes even stronger over time.



Bravo Battery

By 1LT
Joshua Light

Bears



TF 4-27 FA

Task Force 4-27's Bravo Battery Bears have accumulated a broad range of missions and operational experiences during this deployment. Their ability to handle diversity has placed the Bears at the top of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team's "go-to" units and resulted in the Bears being tasked to perform an air mobile operation on the 7th of August.

The Bears were tasked to inspect a potential weapons and ammunition cache sight. The pilots had noticed secondary explosions after a bombing run. The site was believed to be the remains of an Al Qaeda cache located on the Brigade's eastern boundary.

The Iron Brigade was given 24 hours to inspect the site, so they chose the Bears to conduct the air mobile mission for confirmation and destruction of the cache.

CPT Husted, 1SG Sanders, and the leadership of 3rd Platoon, B/4-27 had to plan and prepare their Soldiers quickly with such a short suspense.

Personal equipment loads, rehearsals for securing a cache, loading and unloading a UH-60 helicopter, and communication procedures for the mission were just a few of the pre-combat checks the platoon had to perform. Despite the obstacles of their short suspense preparation, the platoon was ready the next afternoon as they loaded two UH-60 Blackhawk helicopters.

Upon arrival, the Bears quickly secured the site. 1LT Daniel Duffy supervised site exploitation while SSG Jones retained control of 3rd Platoon's security perimeter.

The mission was completed quickly, as very little remained of the munitions the



SGT Raymond Reed, 3rd platoon, B battery, leaving FOB Hammer en-route to the mission. (photo taken by SGT Todd Barber)

enemy was storing in the cache. In order to deny the terrain as a future cache site the accompanying EOD team set charges to collapse the holes the enemy had created.

After a successful mission and a short flight home, 3rd Platoon was able to report, "Mission Complete," on its unique experience.

"The platoon is used to air-mailing rounds (artillery fire) down range, but not today. Today's mission was personnel delivery. It gave my guys a chance to test their flexibility and adaptability while still accomplishing their mission," said 1LT Daniel Duffy.

His enthusiasm was shared by his Soldiers. To a man the Soldiers of 3rd Platoon, B/4-27 were excited to get this mission and are proud of their ability to accomplish it on such short notice.

"This was awesome," said SPC Rigel Walker, a veteran of Bravo Battery's last OIF rotation. "It's something I know I've never done before, and we did it well."



TF 4-27 Radar

By 1LT
Joshua Light

Section



TF 4-27 FA

Mortars, rockets, and other forms of indirect fire weapons are the most dangerous threats to base security because they can fly right over fences, walls, and berms.

Even more importantly, without proper monitoring, these attacks strike without warning.

Protecting against this type of threat is one of the most crucial jobs on FOB Hammer, and it is a job entrusted to Task Force 4-27's radar section. The radar section not only provides advanced warning of an impending indirect strike, giving soldiers vital time to seek cover, but they also determine where the enemy launched the attack, so that the brigade can formulate an immediate response.

Task Force 4-27's radar section operates around the clock to protect FOB Hammer and its associated Combat Outposts.



(L to R) PFC Randall Alexander and PFC David Romanick perform maintenance and repairs on the Q-36 radar system. (U.S. Army photo taken by SPC James Cain)

The electronic shield is provided by two primary radars: the AN/TPQ-36, and the AN/TPQ-37.

Each radar system has unique characteristics which enable the radar operators to track mortars, rockets, missiles, and artillery. Though normally found in pairs, each radar can operate separately. Both are mobile and, should the situation arise, track several attacks at once.

The AN/TPQ-36 is small, and only requires six Soldiers to operate and maintain. The coverage it provides is very effective for tracking mortars. The other radar, the AN/TPQ-37, is bigger, and requires 12 Soldiers to operate and maintain. It is especially well suited for tracking missiles, rockets, and artillery. Combined, the two radars can track almost any indirect weapon insurgents can throw at them.

The radar section must operate as a well oiled machine, because in their arena, seconds count. When hostile fire is detected by the radars, an alarm is sounded. The radar section must then verify the data and target pass the point of origin, projected point of impact, and other information to the Brigade Tactical Operations Center. The information the radar section provides enables the Brigade Battle Captain to decide on a timely response.

Quick assessment and response by the radar section forces insurgents to think twice about attacking FOB Hammer or any of its associated Combat Outposts with indirect fire. The safety net they cast protects the Soldiers and equipment of the entire brigade, allowing them to bring the fight to the enemy, on our terms.



589th Signal Company



By 1LT

Dexter Smith

“Voice of the Rock”

40 EN

The 589th Signal Company “Voice of the Rock,” has transitioned smoothly from the rocky hills of Baumholder, Germany to the rock-like surface of the vast Iraqi desert.

Fortunately for the Soldiers of the 589th Signal Company, the heat and extremely dusty weather has been the biggest obstacle the 589th Soldiers have had to contend with thus far. Although, the heat and dust may not seem like much of a foe, they can have a huge impact on the 589th's mission to provide wide area network coverage for the 2nd Brigade Combat Team.

The 589th Signal Company is currently using the Joint Node Network (JNN) tactical communications system to provide the 2nd Brigade Combat Team with NIPR/SIPR voice and data services across 2BCT's footprint. What does all this mean?

Simply put, the 589th Signal Company is your mobile phone and internet service provider. Alongside the Brigade S6 communications section, the 589th Soldiers' are the ones that ensure that services are available for commanders within the brigade to communicate to whomever, wherever, and whenever. Not only are the communication services for commanders to communicate, but for everyone down to the youngest Soldier enabling them to send morale messages by calling over the phone or using the internet.

Since the equipment of the JNN is meant for tactical purposes, it was made to be outside and in the harshest conditions. The drawback is that no matter what brand of signal or electronic equipment used, the equipment will have adverse affects when functioning under extreme heat or dirty conditions. These are some of the obstacles Soldiers of the 589th face when performing their mission.

To combat the weather conditions, SGT Douglas Heir, Peoria, Az., a Satellite Systems Operator Maintainer, said that con-

stant maintenance and cleaning of air filters is a must to keep the systems going and the satellite links connected.

“Being that this is my first deployment, I wasn't sure what to expect. We hit the ground running and we are getting stuff done,” Heir said. “It makes me proud to be part of such an elite fighting force.”

Another aspect of keeping the equipment well maintained is the importance of the generators that provide power to the equipment. A majority of the responsibility for the generator service falls on the motor pool section of the 589th Signal Company.

The motor pool section headed by SFC Patrick Muse, is a diverse team of eight Soldiers with backgrounds in PLL, wheeled vehicles mechanics, heating/cooling systems mechanics, and generator mechanics.

In an effort to keep the communications lines open between the brigade's different task forces and our higher headquarters, the 589th Signal Company continues to work relentlessly against the heat and dirt and are winning the electronics war one step at time.



SPC Sheron Ervin works diligently on a generator in support of 589th Signal Mission. (Army photo by 1LT Dexter Smith)



Engineer Capabilities:



40 EN

By 2LT
Michael T. Hall

The Buffalo

Hollywood has glamorized the Buffalo in the movie *Transformers*, and while it may have changed into a giant, weaponized living robot in the movie, its real-world capabilities are nearly as impressive.

The Buffalo is a 23-ton mine-resistant vehicle. It has a sturdy hydraulic arm that is designed to interrogate possible IEDs. The arm of the Buffalo is equipped with a large, sturdy rake, known as the 'spork' by Route Clearance professionals, for uncovering trash and other debris that may be concealing an IED.

The arm is also equipped with a spotlight and a fully articulated camera. The camera allows the arm operator (who occupies the Buffalo's TC seat) to get a close up view of the IED. The arm operator can use the camera to zoom in on a suspect object in order to identify the munitions, initiating devices, and power sources. The job is much easier and less dangerous with the Buffalo arm.

Easy is relative when you are up close and personal with an IED. SSG Devin Johnson, is a Squad Leader in 3rd Platoon as well as that platoon's Buffalo Vehicle Commander, "It's a great responsibility operating the Buffalo. I thrive on the pressure that comes with knowing that if I call the suspected object clear, my leadership trusts me that it's clear," said Johnson. "Without the Buffalo, a Route Clearance Team is just another combat patrol."

The ability to identify an IED is key to the Route Clearance mission. A Combat Engineer unit may 'blast in place' with certain IEDs and UXOs without EOD intervention, however the Engineers cannot blast in place without properly identifying the ordnance used in the IED.

The Buffalo arm allows all of the Bravo Company Vehicle Commanders like SSG Devin Johnson to make the proper identification from the relative safety of his TC position.

"I like the Buffalo because it's big just like me," said Johnson.

The Buffalo, along with the rest of the Army's new and developing Route Clearance Vehicles such as the Husky and RG-31, are life-saving devices. The physical toughness and unique capabilities of the Buffalo make it a powerful force for finding and destroying roadside bombs off the dangerous roads and highways of Iraq.



Bravo Company, 40th Engineer Battalion, Task Force Ram's Buffalo interrogates a suspicious item utilizing the Buffalo's spork during one of their many route clearance missions. (U.S. Army Courtesy photo)



Direct Support Unit

By 1LT
Krystle G. Penaherrera



47 FSB

On the edge of Forward Operating Base (FOB) Hammer, about as far from the center of the FOB as a unit could be, lies one lonely maintenance company, many times unnoticed, but leaned upon heavily for maintenance support.

It is the 2nd Brigade Combat Team's unsung heroes quietly fixing the brigade's equipment and returning combat power to the fight.

It is a company made up of wheeled and tracked vehicle mechanics, electronic technicians, welders, recovery vehicle operators, missile repairers, armament specialists, air conditioning and power generator mechanics, as well as the clerks who assist in tracking everything. This unit is B Company, 47th Forward Support Battalion, the maintenance company.

Organic to B Company is the Direct Support Unit (DSU) where all upper-level maintenance repairs for the brigade are either managed or conducted under the guidance of 1LT Krystle Penaherrera, the maintenance control officer (MCO), and SFC Timothy Hagen, the maintenance control sergeant (MCS).

Four months into the deployment the DSU, with the assistance of its five maintenance support teams (MST) pushed out to all five of the brigade's organic battalions, have already completed in excess of 800 direct support maintenance jobs for both 2/1 AD and units traveling through 2/1

AD's area of operation (AO).

The DSU, along with its heavy task of supporting missions at FOB Hammer, often pushes maintenance support forward to the Combat Outposts (COP) and Patrol Bases (PB) throughout the brigade's AO.

"It's our job to provide support. We go where we have to go," said SPC Patrick Ferrence, a Soldier from the Engineer section regularly moving through the brigade's AO to fix air conditioning units. "AC is something we really need to keep the BCT rolling, and it makes me proud to do my job in support of others."

In addition to the regularly supported missions, a Forward Logistics Element (FLE) from the DSU, comprised of many different mission oriented specialties (MOS), was pushed forward to support operation Iron Pursuit in the Diyala province.

These Soldiers under the direct supervision of CW3 Kenneth Hounshell, SSG Michael Bradshaw, and the guidance of the MCO and MCS, assisted the brigade in maintaining its combat power, power generation, and air conditioning requirement throughout the brigade's main effort month long mission.

"Getting down and dirty with the vehicles is what the job's all about. Any job, any place, anytime," said SPC Jeremiah Meinders, who works in the Auto Base section of the DSU.

In addition, the maintenance FLE was tasked to recover all damaged or destroyed vehicles throughout the AO, which was no small task. The recovery team was constantly on the road assisting everyone from Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD), to Kellogg Brown and Root (KBR), to the 47th FSB's Spearheads, to everyone traveling in and around the 2BCT battle space.

"We were always ready to go, 24 hours a day," said SPC Charles Constant, a power generation specialist who took part in the operation. "Taking care of other units when they needed us most is what we're all about. It's a matter of pride for all the hardworking Soldiers out there."



B Company, 47th FSB - Same as inset, taken by 1SG Bundrant (U.S. Army Courtesy photo)





By Sgt.
Zach Mott

*CPT Justin Agostine (left) grasps the identification tag for CPL Carlo Alfonso while he and 1SG Brian Schoonover pay their last respects during a memorial ceremony at Camp Taji in northwestern Baghdad Sept. 1. Alfonso, a member of Company A, 40th Engineer Battalion, Task Force 1-6 Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, died Aug. 26 in the Sadr City district of Baghdad. Agostine commands Co. A, while Schoonover serves as the senior enlisted leader for the company which is attached to 3rd BCT, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad.
(U.S. Army photo by SGT Zach Mott, 3rd BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B)*

CPL Carlo Alfonso was memorialized during a ceremony in northwestern Baghdad by friends and fellow Soldiers Sept. 1.

Alfonso, a combat engineer with Company A, 40th Engineer Battalion, Task Force 1-6 Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, died from wounds suffered when his patrol was attacked Aug. 26 while on a route clearance mission in the northwest portion of the Sadr City district of Baghdad.

“Despite the tremendous efforts of our first responders, medics and doctors, the wounds of CPL Alfonso were too great for emergency life-saving measures to be effective,” said LTC Brian Eifler, commander of Task Force 1-6, which is currently attached to 3rd BCT, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad.

Alfonso was born in the Republic of the Philippines and joined the Army in July 2006. After graduating from advanced individual training at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., he joined the Earthquakes of Co. A, 40th Eng. Bn., in December 2006.

“It seemed like just yesterday he was being introduced to 3rd Squad, 3rd Platoon,” said SPC Paul Kromschroeder, a squad-mate with Co. A, 40th Eng. Bn. “He was a terrific family man and his wife and son would be all he talked about. He was so proud of them. He knew many things and would share any information with you. All you would have to do is ask.”

Soldiers who spoke at the memorial remembered Alfonso’s innate ability to find humor in almost every situation and his knowledge and ability as a Soldier.

“He is the guy that everybody is friends with,” said CPT Justin Agostine, commander of Co. A, 40th Eng. Bn. “He was a positive-minded Soldier and to call him such would be a great understatement.”

Alfonso’s squad leader, SSG Levon Sains, recounted tales of Alfonso’s love for his family and his desire to add its ranks.

“He would always talk about his family and how excited he was to have more children. I recall one day he was going on and on about getting a minivan and wanted the squad to help him find one. We couldn’t understand at the time why someone his age would want a minivan,” Sains said.

As Soldiers solemnly remembered their comrade, Agostine reminded them what Alfonso would do in this situation.

“I know this, if CPL Alfonso were here he would crack a joke. He would crack a joke at his expense to make you all feel better. When this is over, remember that he showed us how to laugh,” he said.



A memorial erected at the Camp Taji Ministry Center in northwestern Baghdad pays tribute to CPL Carlo Alfonso who died Aug. 26 while on a route clearance mission in the northwest portion of the Sadr City district of Baghdad. Alfonso was a member of Company A, 40th Engineer Battalion, Task Force 1-6 Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, which is currently attached to 3rd BCT, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad. (U.S. Army photo by SGT Zach Mott, 3rd BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B)

Two Soldiers from Task Force 1-6 Infantry Regiment render their final salute to the memorial for CPL Carlo Alfonso during a ceremony at Camp Taji in northwestern Baghdad Sept. 1. Alfonso, a member of Company A, 40th Engineer Battalion, Task Force 1-6 Inf., 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, which is currently attached to 3rd BCT, 4th Inf. Div., Multi-National Division – Baghdad, died Aug. 26 in the Sadr City district of Baghdad. (U.S. Army photo by SGT Zach Mott, 3rd BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B)



Medical clinic nears completion in Araifiya

By PFC
Michael Schuch

Khalaf Assad, a local Iraqi contractor, spent more than one month building a new primary care medical clinic in the small area of Araifiya.

The work began on little more than a piece of property, but Assad's vision drove him to continue. This clinic, with its prime location within the local village, will provide an immense boost to the health care system of the area. The surrounding area has several medical clinics, but only one is fully operational.

Assad employed local citizens with specialized skills to assist him with the project, which was originally funded by Coalition forces.

"I wanted to create jobs for my people," Assad said. "I wanted to make sure there was money flowing into my village, to help our economy."

The new medical center boasts solid marble floors, new electrical wiring, a full-scale fire alarm system with siren, air conditioning, two fully-operational bathrooms, four offices, treatment rooms and a large lobby. The outside of the facility displays tall, brightly-painted cement pillars, a concrete gate surrounding the structure and a beautiful view of the flourishing fields and village in the distance.

"Working on this project is a dream-come-true for us," Assad said. "This clinic will help improve the health and lives of over 2,000 people in the area."

Upon completion of the Afaiifiya Medical Clinic, the facility will employ two female nurses, one male nurse, one physician's assistant and one doctor.

The Government of Iraq is planning to take over funding for the facility in the near future.



A local Iraqi worker demonstrates the new fire alarm and siren to Soldiers from the 415th Civil Affairs Battalion during a walk through of the Araifiya Medical Clinic currently under construction in Araifiya, Iraq, August 21. (U.S. Army photo by PFC Michael Schuch)

Jisr Diyala ERU hits the streets



A cloud of dust rises from behind a target after being hit center-mass by the AK-74 assault rifle of a trainee of the Jisr Diyala Iraqi Police Emergency Response Unit on a rifle range in Jisr Diyala, Iraq, August 25. (U.S. Army photo by Pfc. Michael Schuch)

*By PFC
Michael Schuch*



2LT Mohmed, Executive Officer of the Jisr Diyala Iraqi Police Emergency Response Unit, demonstrates the proper sight picture and aiming techniques of the AK-74 assault rifle to trainees while on a range in Jisr Diyala, Iraq, August 25. (U.S. Army photo by Pfc. Michael Schuch)

For four weeks, 140 Iraqi citizens from Jisr Diyala, Iraq, and Sadr City, Iraq, have undergone rigorous training to become part of the elite Emergency Response Unit.

The ERU team, similar to the American Special Weapons and Tactics and Specialized Response Teams, are a specialized detachment of the Iraqi Police.

The training, meant to prepare the men for any challenges they may face, was daunting, consisting of classes, ranges and vigorous physical training sessions, all led by the Soldiers of the 59th and 340th Military Police Companies.

A particularly challenging and great team building event was the daily company formation runs up the 40 meter berm surrounding the Cashe combat outposts.

Along with group runs, the trainees were given daily physical fitness routines consisting of push-ups, sit-ups, flutter kicks and jumping jacks. Push-ups and flutter kicks were also used for on-the-spot corrective training to ensure the men learned from their mistakes.

Week one was a shocking change of environment for the trainees using physical training and strong verbal commands to force the trainees to strive for perfection on the first try. The participants

were also taught the importance of using urgency and accuracy in every task, performing their duties properly the first time.

During the first week, the men attended classroom training. This is where they were taught the basic foundation to their elite professions, developing their knowledge of professionalism, ethics and the police code.

While transitioning from week one to week two, the trainees developed an understanding of what would be asked of them daily in the streets of Iraq as well as what their instructors from the 59th MP Co. and 340th MP Co. go through each day they don their uniform.

"The training has taught me to be patient, especially after I realized just how organized the U.S. Soldiers really are," said Falah Athaib, a Sadr City citizen training to be part of the Jisr Diyala ERU.

Week two allowed the men a chance to develop their military skills, teaching them the proper techniques and practices used during searches and raids. The men were also introduced to fire and maneuver drills, allowing them to familiarize themselves with their new weapons, teaching them how to react in hostile situations.

As the men entered week three, they were introduced to training on combative and survival skills which may very well save their lives as they operate in their assigned areas. Through hours of hand to hand combat training, the men were able to eliminate their apprehension while mastering dynamic takedown techniques.

After three long weeks crammed with the information and skills every ERU member must master, the men entered week four, Range Week. After completing numerous hours of familiarization with their weapons, the trainees attended two ranges in Jisr Diyala, Iraq.

Trainees filed in groups of 10 to receive the 9mm ammunition for their Glock 17 pistols before lining up on the firing line. Each man fired a total of 20 rounds standing and kneeling, as well as practicing reactive fire drills.

The following day, trainees filed back onto the range for their last training event, the assault rifle range. Participants were then split into two groups of ten before handing out twenty AK-74 assault rifles and 30-round magazines.

Once on the firing line, shooters fired their

rounds from 25 meters away while both standing and kneeling. When the day came to a close and the targets had been reviewed, 3rd Platoon, the Black Scorpions, had earned the marksmanship streamer by shooting a total of 739 lethal shots out of 1000 possible on the targets.

"You can notice a huge difference since the time they got here," said SPC David Whitescarver, of Chicago, Ill. "If they can take this experience and practice what we have taught them on their own, they'll be much better."

On August 27, the trainees earned the title of elite members of the Jisr Diyala ERU as they participated in a graduation ceremony at the 3-1 National Police headquarters in Tameem, Iraq.

Graduates marched in a company formation for a pass and review, allowing BG Emad, Commander of the 3-1 NP, to inspect the unit before declaring them worthy of graduation.

"I chose to do this because I go out onto the streets every day, I see the problems and I want to help my people," said Athaib. "I am very proud and feel I am very ready for the tasks ahead."

BG Emad, Commander of the 3-1 National Police, salutes the graduating Jisr Diyala Emergency Response Unit as they perform a pass and review during their graduation ceremony at the 3-1 National Police headquarters compound in Tameem, Iraq, August 27. (U.S. Army photo by PFC Michael Schuch)



Sheik Support Council meeting

By PFC
Evan Loyd

Discusses problems and solutions



COL Pat White, commander 2nd BCT, 1st Armored Division, from Apple Valley, Calif., speaks with Sheik Kaies Shether Guwd al-Jabalawei President of the Support Council of the Mada'in Qada before the Sheikh Support Council meeting at FOB Hammer on Aug. 27. (U.S. Army photo by PFC Evan Loyd)

A Sheikh Support Council meeting brought Sheikhs and leaders of the Mada'in Qada together with their Coalition counterparts at Forward Operating Base Hammer Aug. 27.

Col. Pat White, commander of 2nd Brigade, 1st Armored Division, started the meeting by thanking those present for attending and saying that facilitating such meetings was a very important part of the Iron Brigade's mission.

White also discussed the redeployment of the Georgian soldiers and how the Iraqi Security Forces assumed the role of securing Wahida, the town where the Georgians once operated.

"The Mada'in is going to set the example in how Iraq can move forward in

the Iraqi Security Forces conducting operations and Coalition Forces pulling back and assisting them," said White, a native of Apple Valley, Calif.

White spoke about the Sons of Iraq and future plans for them.

"We will continue to work (to) transition those Sons of Iraq who want to move into a job outside the Sons of Iraq," said White. "We have no time set for when the Sons of Iraq will be disbanded."

Brigadier General Emad, commander of the 3rd Brigade, 1st National Police Division briefly discussed the Iraqi Security Forces presence in the Mada'in Qada and their eventual transition to Combat Outpost Salie near Narhrwahn, Iraq.





BG Emad, commander of the 3rd Brigade, 1st National Police Division discusses the security-related issues in the Mada'in Qada with LTC Matthew Mckenna, from Pittsburg, Penn., the deputy commander of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, before the Sheik Support Council meeting on Aug. 27. (U.S. Army photo by PFC Evan Loyd)

Sheikh Kaies Shether Guwd al-Jabalawei, president of the Support Council of the Mada'in Qada, who also spoke on the importance of people of the Mada'in Qada getting back to work

"Since the problem of the insurgents is down, let us continue to work on projects to improve the quality of life in the Mada'in," said Kaies. "Let us also hope that the Iraqi Security Forces are up to the challenge of filling the vacuum left by the Georgian Forces in their withdrawal."

These meetings allow the Sheikhs, who serve as spokesmen for the citizens, to bring the problems of the Mada'in Qada to the attention of the Qada mayor, IS-Fleaders and Coalition forces leaders.

"The Sheikhs actually meet once a week to solve many of their own prob-

lems," said Lt. Col. Matthew Mckenna, from Pittsburgh, Pa., the deputy commander of the 2nd BCT 1st AD. "It's great to see them taking the lead on many issues."

These meetings provide a forum for reconciliation between feuding tribes. Recently, the Iron Brigade created a patrol base in an area between two tribes in an effort to facilitate reconciliation, an idea generated during a Sheikh Support Council meeting.

"Once we established the patrol base, we gave the tribes a place to meet, talk about their differences and solve their problems," said Mckenna. "Because of that, more than 150 displaced families were able to return to their houses in the area."

Schools open for

Children in She Shon

By PFC
Micheal Schuch

A kindergarten and primary school opened in the She Shon area during ribbon-cutting ceremonies Aug. 21.

Soldiers from the 415th Civil Affairs Battalion helped local contractors renovate two schools in She Shon to ensure the children of the area have the opportunity to receive a formal education.

"We are very thankful this project is now complete," said Fatema Rhady, the headmistress of the kindergarten. "I hope that this will show Iraqi contractors that here, just like in America, they shouldn't be scared of anything by helping us. We are all just trying to help the children."

Participants cut the kindergarten's ribbon first, marking the school's opening and ability to begin classes in September. Children in the area received cookies, a special treat in celebration of the momentous day.

The school repairs took six weeks to complete. A local Iraqi contractor hired skilled citizens from surrounding towns to perform the work. This helped create jobs and increase the flow of money for the small urban village.



CPT Sean Nolan, of San Antonio, Tx., and a soon-to-be student of the newly refurbished primary school in Jisr Diyala, Iraq, sit upon his future desk as they await cookies and cake in celebration of the ribbon cutting ceremony August 21. (U.S. Army photo by PFC Michael Schuch)



A friend of the headmaster, Muhmod Husein, Headmaster of the primary school, and Staff Sgt. Chris Kramb, of Kalamazoo, Mich., participate in the ribbon cutting ceremony for the recently refurbished primary school in Jisr Diyala, Iraq, August 21. (U.S. Army photo by PFC Michael Schuch)

The school received new doors, windows, paint and remodeled bathrooms. The school boasts the only playground in the area, in addition to the numerous classrooms.

The children are put through two classes: a starter class, which introduces them to the educational system in slow, smooth steps, and a preparatory class, which ensures children are ready to move on to the grade school that follows.

Following the Kindergarten's opening, Soldiers from 415th CA Bn. made the local primary school their next stop.

The Maka al-Mukarama Primary School, run by headmaster Mahamed Muhmod Hussein, received fresh paint, new doors and windows, remodeled bathrooms and minor structural repairs.

This two-story school boasts nearly two dozen classrooms and offices, a large courtyard and a court with soccer nets and basketball hoops.

The two remodeled and operational schools provide a significant advantage to the children of She Shon, further demonstrating the commitment of the Iraqi people, Iraqi Security Forces and Coalition forces to improve the health and welfare of the Iraqi children.



ISF and CF partners meet at

By PFC Evan Loyd FOB Hammer to discuss security issues

Leaders from the Iraqi Army, National Police and Iraqi Police met with Coalition forces leaders at Forward Operating Base Hammer Aug. 28.

Major General Jassem Nazal Qassim, commanding general of the 9th IA Div., General Abdullah, commander of the 35th Bde., 9th IA Div., Brig. Gen. Emad, 1st Battalion, 3rd National Police Brigade commander, and other ISF leaders attended the conference, which focused on the security measures and strategy they plan to enact during the upcoming month.

In 2007, attacks by anti-Iraqi forces against Iraqi Security Forces and Coalition forces in the Mada'in Qada averaged two and a half per day; in 2008, attacks are fewer than one per day.

The presence of CF in the Mada'in, the increasing professionalism of the ISF and the contributions of the Sons of Iraq all contribute to the reduction in violence.

The current concern, as Lt. Col. Matthew Eichburg, from Warren, Mich., the operations officer of the 2nd Brigade



MG Jassem Nazal Qassim, Commanding General of the 9th Iraqi Army Division, listens to a brief on security in the Mada'in Qada during a meeting Aug. 28 at Forward Operating Base Hammer, Iraq. (U.S. Army photo by PFC Evan Loyd)

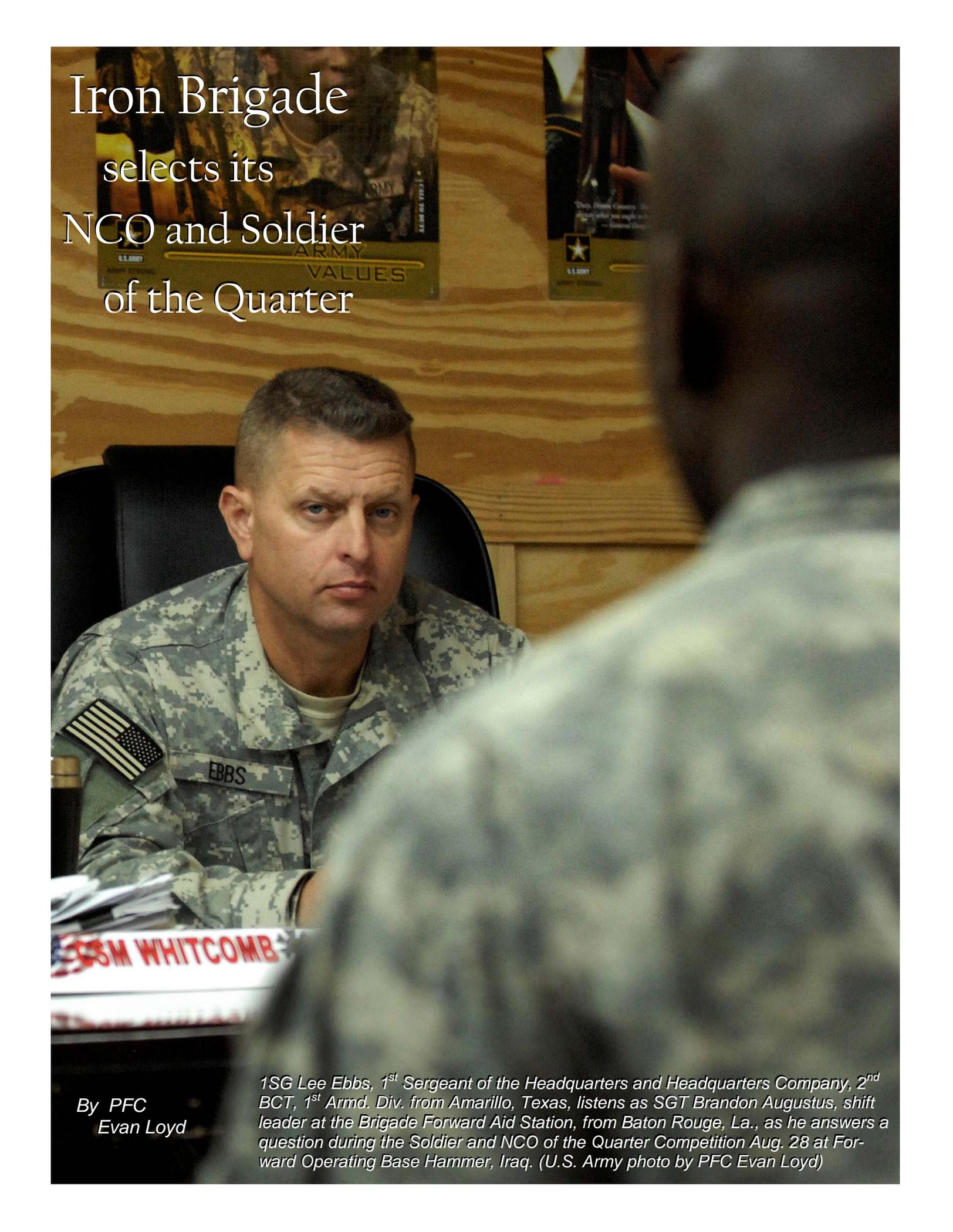
Combat Team, 1st Armored Division addressed, is a potential movement of insurgents from the Diyala region.

The council discussed several partnering initiatives in response to security concerns. The ISF are taking on additional responsibility throughout the Mada'in Qada, especially with two new battalions moving into the Qada- the 1st BN 3-1 National Police into Nahrwahn and the 4th BN, 34-9 Iraqi Army into Wahida.

Col. Pat White, commander of the 2nd BCT, 1st Armd. Div., Apple Valley, Calif., listened to the plans and concerns of the Iraqi forces. White said it is important for CF to be working with the ISF to provide a safe and secure environment for Iraqis registering to vote. "Our role is to support and assist the Iraqi forces," said White.



BG Emad, 1st Battalion, 3rd National Police Brigade commander and a translator go over security issues before a meeting on security in the Mada'in Qada, Aug. 28 at Forward Operating Base Hammer, Iraq. (U.S. Army photo by PFC Evan Loyd)



Iron Brigade
selects its
NCO and Soldier
of the Quarter

By PFC
Evan Loyd

1SG Lee Ebbs, 1st Sergeant of the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd BCT, 1st Armd. Div. from Amarillo, Texas, listens as SGT Brandon Augustus, shift leader at the Brigade Forward Aid Station, from Baton Rouge, La., as he answers a question during the Soldier and NCO of the Quarter Competition Aug. 28 at Forward Operating Base Hammer, Iraq. (U.S. Army photo by PFC Evan Loyd)



CSM Michael Eyer, Command Sergeant Major of the 2nd BCT, 1st Armd. Div., from Houston, Texas, listens as a participant answers a question during the Soldier and NCO of the Quarter Competition Aug. 28 at Forward Operating Base Hammer, Iraq. (U.S. Army photo by PFC Evan Loyd)

Ten Soldiers competed for the title of Iron Brigade Noncommissioned Officer of the Quarter and Soldier of the Quarter at Forward Operating Base Hammer Aug. 28.

The focus of the competition was on the Soldiers' knowledge of actions on a raid, field sanitation, current events, Army history and drill and ceremony.

The board of Iron Brigade Senior NCOs headed by Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Eyer, of Houston, Texas, selected Sgt. Brandon Augustus as the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division NCO of the Quarter and Spc. Justin Santana,

from East Stroudsburg, Pa., as the Soldier of the Quarter.

"Before I stood in front of the board, I was beside myself with nervousness," said Augustus, from Baton Rouge, La., assigned to the 47th Forward Support Battalion. "I'm relieved; I did the best I could."

Sergeant Justin Mclain, an NCO in Task Force 40th Engineers, was the runner-up in the NCO of the Quarter competition and Spc. Carlos Cordero, a Soldier in Task Force 47th Forward Support Battalion, was the runner-up in the Soldier of the Quarter competition.



Participants first challenged fellow Soldiers at a company level board, then a Task Force level competition to reach the brigade's Soldier and NCO of the Quarter competitions.

The boards are similar in Iraq to the boards in garrison. Generally, the qualifications, topics and questions are the same, but due to being in the combat zone, the uniform is changed.

The winners of the Iron Brigade Soldier and NCO of the Quarter will go on to compete at the division level. Winners of the division competition are eligible for the All Army Soldier and NCO of the Quarter boards.



SGT Brandon Augustus, shift leader at the Brigade Forward Aid Station, from Baton Rouge, La., 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division NCO of the Quarter. (U.S. Army courtesy photo)



SPC Justin Santana, a soldier in Task Force 4-27, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division Soldier of the Quarter (U.S. Army courtesy photo)

"The competition gives us the chance to recognize outstanding Soldiers in our Brigade," said 1st Sgt. Lee Ebbs, of Amarillo, Texas, Headquarters and Headquarters Company first sergeant and a member of the board. "It is great to reward them for their hard work."



DoD Announces Installation Realignments In Germany

The Department of Defense announced today that the United States will cease operations at 15 U.S. Army, Europe, sites in Idar-Oberstein, Dexheim and other locations in Germany.

Due to U.S. European Command force structure realignment and transformation, and the attendant reduction in installation and personnel support requirements that have occurred during the past several years, the Department of Defense has determined the following facilities are excess to its needs:

The sites and timeframes for return are as follows. Closure of sites noted with a return date to be determined (TBD) are contingent upon the availability of facilities for relocating tenant activities:

U.S. Army Garrison Baumholder

- Birkenfeld Family Housing Area (Baumholder area) NLT Summer 2008
- Neubruecke Hospital Kaserne (Baumholder area) NLT Summer 2009
- Strassburg Kaserne (Idar-Oberstein) NLT Summer 2009
- Idar-Oberstein Family Housing (Idar-Oberstein) NLT Summer 2009

U.S. Army Garrison Wiesbaden

- American Arms Hotel – Return Date TBD
- Dexheim Family Housing NLT 1st Quarter 2009
- Dexheim Missile Facility NLT 1st Quarter 2009
- Anderson Barracks NLT 1st Quarter 2009
- Camp Oppenheim NLT Summer 2008

U.S. Army Garrison Mannheim

- Friedrichsfeld Quartermaster Service Center – Return Date TBD
- Friedrichsfeld Storage Area – Return Date TBD
- Dannenfels Communications Station – Return Date TBD

U.S. Army Heidelberg

- Stem Kaserne – Return Date TBD

U.S. Army Giessen

- Dautphe Boy Scout Camp NLT 1st Quarter 2009
- Hommertshausen Girl Scout Camp NLT 1st Quarter 2009

In addition to previously announced force structure changes, closure of these sites will affect 49 military, 350 U.S. civilians, and 140 local national employees with agencies such as the Installation Management Command-Europe (IMCOM-E), Europe Regional Medical Command, and Department of Defense Dependents Schools.

IMCOM-E will begin the process of returning facilities affected by this decision to the host nation. Current annual operating costs for these sites are approximately \$15 million.

The United States coordinated this action with host nation officials before announcement.



Army releases message announcing new service uniform

By
C. Todd Lopez

Out with the old, in with the blue. The Army has made it official, the green service uniform, which has defined the service since the mid-1950s, is on the outs.

In place of the green uniform will be a variation of the blue uniform, something many Soldiers already own. Official word on the new "Army Service Uniform," or ASU, was released Aug. 20 in a message to all Army activities. The message defines the wear policy and the "bridging" strategy for transition to the new uniform.

"It's a culmination of transformation efforts that started in 2004," said Sgt. Maj. of the Army Kenneth O. Preston of the new ASU. "We had three 'Class A' style uniforms, all the same style jacket, with just a different color -- the policies on how we wore accoutrements on them were different. We asked the question -- if we wear one only, which would it be? And the blue uniform was the most popular of the three."

The new ASU coat, similar to the existing blue coat, will be made of a wrinkle-resistant material and will have a more "athletic" cut.

Other changes to the uniform include authorization of a combat service identification badge to recognize combat service, overseas service bars authorized on the jacket sleeve for both enlisted Soldiers and officers, the wear of distinctive unit insignia on the shoulder loops of the blue coat for enlisted Soldiers, authorizing paratroopers to wear the black jump boots with the blue ASU, and the decision to transition to a new short sleeve and long sleeve white shirt with shoulder loops.

It is also permissible for enlisted Soldiers to wear both overseas service bars and service stripes on the new blue ASU coat. Officers and Soldiers in the grade of corporal and above will additionally wear a gold braid on their slacks to indicate leadership roles.

"That is kind of a rite of passage as you transition from being a (junior) enlisted soldier to a noncommissioned officer," Preston said of the gold braid.

New items for the ASU will be available in military clothing sales after July 2009.

Soldiers will be expected to possess the entire uniform by July 2014. The two key components of the uniform, the coat and slacks, are expected to cost around \$140, with modifications bringing the total cost to \$200. Enlisted Soldiers will receive an increase in their annual uniform allowance to help offset the cost of the uniform.



Soldier's Musings

Where were you on September 11th, 2001?



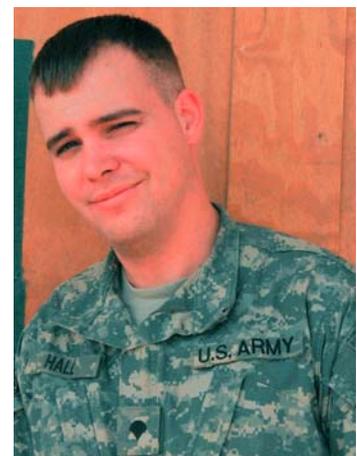
"When the towers were struck, I was taking a train from my house to Long Island University, in Brooklyn New York. They stopped the train, but didn't say why. We exited the train just in time to see one of the towers fall. At that moment I didn't know it was an act of terrorism, but after getting home and seeing the news and my friends and family crying, I felt shame and anger," said SSG Khalid Bouassel, from Morocco, North Africa, a Mechanic/Translator in the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division

"I was on my way into my job in the wall street district of New York City. I was less than 20 miles away from the towers," said SPC Jamal Smalls, now from Woodbridge, Va., a Soldier in the TOPO section of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division.



"I was in science class in 7th grade when I heard the news. It really made me feel confused about everything that was going on and what to do," said PFC Kathleen Shola, from New Haven, Mo., in the Military Intel Analyst in the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division.

"I was at work at a Speedy Lube when I heard the news. I walked in to the office from the garage and saw everyone huddled around the T.V. I walked over to figure out what was going on, and that was when a coworker told me. It made me feel really angry," said SPC Deven Hall, from Sturgis, South Dakota, CPOF operator in the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division.



S1 Personnel

By CPT Ashley Salkowski



Be Smart, Do your Part—Vote!

Would you like to have your vote counted in determining who the next President of the United States is? It's not too late. Voting is the right of every American citizen no matter where you are located. Both family members and Soldiers are given the opportunity to request an absentee ballot and have their vote counted in the 2008 elections. November 4, 2008 is quickly approaching in order for you to participate, a Federal Post Card Application (FPCA) SF-76 must be filled out and sent to your registering county before September 7th. The SF-76 can be used for both registering to vote and requesting an absentee ballot. The earlier you send your SF-76 out, the earlier you can receive your absentee ballot.



Don't know where to send your ballot to? The Federal Assistance Voting website has all the information you need on how to fill out your where to get your SF-76, how to fill it out, and where to send it to. Just go to <http://www.FVAP.gov> or see your voting assistance officer for more information.

Most states send their absentee ballots out 30-45 days prior to an election. If you have not received your absentee ballot two weeks before the election, then there is a backup program for select states. The back-up Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB) is only for personnel who sent in an SF-76 prior to the elections. You can receive a copy of the FWAB off the voting assistance website, <http://www.FVAP.gov>. For your absentee ballot to be counted, your absentee ballot must be sent in no later than the date established by your state to be postmarked. A postmark is a postal marking made on a piece of mail indicating the date and time that the item was delivered into the care of the postal service. For further questions about voting see the Federal Voting Assistance website, <http://www.FVAP.gov>, or your Company/Battalion Voting Assistance Officer.

Safety Bulletin

By Jerrold Scharninghausen



Material Safety Data Sheets

Material Safety Data Sheets, commonly called MSDS's, have come to be very important documents. Every workplace should have readily-accessible MSDS's for all the hazardous materials which are used or stored there.

First of all, the time to become familiar with a material's MSDS is **before** you begin using the material. If you have responsibility for procuring hazardous material, you should obtain an advance copy of the MSDS to review the safety information before the order is placed. Many products have specific storage requirements. The MSDS contains information which can be used to determine these requirements prior to the material being ordered. Most companies will have their products MSDS available on-line.

Once a material is brought into the workplace, everyone who uses it should review the MSDS. You wouldn't want to wait for an emergency to learn about the material's hazardous properties! Suppose the material catches fire. The MSDS specifies fire-fighting procedures for the material. However, your chances of successfully extinguishing the blaze are very small if you waste valuable time running to review the MSDS.

There are also other very good reasons to review the MSDS before using a material. By doing so you will learn what personal protective equipment is required when using the material. You will also learn what conditions to avoid when working with the material, such as heat and sparks. MSDS's also tell you what materials should not be brought into contact with the hazardous material. The MSDS also provides valuable information for storage and disposal of the material.

The information on an MSDS is typically grouped into these categories:

- Hazard ratings, such as NFPA (National Fire Protection) ratings
- Name and address of the material's manufacturer or importer
- Identity; by common name, synonyms, and chemical abstract number of the material
- physical and chemical characteristics, such as the material's appearance, odor, specific gravity, and melting point
- Fire and explosion data, such as the material's flash point, explosion hazards, and recommended fire extinguishing media
- Physical hazards, such as the material's stability, incompatible material information, and hazardous decomposition products
- Health hazards, such as inhalation and ingestion hazards, carcinogen classification, and basic first aid information

•Special precautions and spill or leak procedures such as storage, clean-up, and disposal information

Special protection information such as personal protective equipment recommendations

MSDS's contain a wealth of useful information for you to use when working with a hazardous material. Remember, the best time to learn the content of the MSDS is before you use the material. Another thing to be aware of is that mistakes can and do happen. If you are using a material that doesn't seem to fit the description on its MSDS, do not use the material but contact your TF safety personnel immediately. There could have been a mix-up in the labeling or the information on the MSDS. The material may also be out-of-spec and could be dangerous to use as you were planning

MSDS's have proven to be very valuable tools in protecting people from hazards. They provide a wealth of information in a convenient form. But MSDS's are only as useful as you make them. Take the time to review the MSDS's for every hazardous material you use.

Chaplain's Corner

By CHAP (MA) NANA BASSAW
2nd BCT Chaplain



Rules for Life

One of the fascinating things for me in life is the changing seasons. And of the four seasons, the most dramatic is fall, with its beauty characterized by the changing leaves. Then winter sets in, and somehow strips everything of its beauty and life.

These changing seasons, with their unpredictability, remind me of life itself. That is, what seems constant and straight has detours and contours, and that we can approach life only in the spirit of humility and thankfulness.

William Barclay, one of the prolific writers of our time and a New Testament Scholar of distinction seems to have wrestled with the same issues of life with its uncertainties, and came up with what I consider to be, his rules for life. I believe these rules are as appropriate for us as it was for his audience.

We must never be self-centered in our happiness. Even while we are happy, there are so many people in pain and unable to cope with the burdens of daily living. The time when we want to laugh is for others a time for fears.

A baptism is a time of joy. A new life is being blessed. But for

someone, that new life may be a reminder of sadness--a new life taken away all too soon, a little loved one lost through disaster and death.

In our happiness, we must never be so self-centered that we forget others' pain.

We must never be selfish in our prosperity. The Romans had a proverb, which said that riches are like salt water--the more you drink the more your thirst. How true! Those fortunate enough to be blessed with much do not always find it easy to give away. It is always wrong for prosperity and selfishness to go together.

We must never be self-righteous in goodness. How harmful is the so-called "righteous" person who harps on about his/her goodness. How little does one realize that the person who is furthest from God is the one who thanks God he is not like others.

Goodness implies humility. It is the one who can say, as the publican in the parable did, "God be merciful to me, a sinner," who truly is justified before God.



Striker Justice

By SPC Ciaran Cupples
2nd BCT Legal



The Importance of Fiscal Responsibility

Keeping track of sensitive items is not only vital to the mission here in Iraq, but it can also save you money. If you misplace or damage military property, you will likely have to pay for the replacement or repair. You will definitely find yourself in the middle of a Financial Liability Investigation for Property Loss, commonly referred to as a FLIPL.

Under AR 735-5, you can be held liable for many types of damage and loss of military property. We would normally think of this as losing a M4 rifle, or night vision goggles. However, this also applies to situations where you damage a military vehicle. If you crash a NTV or even a gator while driving recklessly or exceeding the speed limit, you could possibly be found liable to pay for the damage, which could be as high as your full base pay for one month.

Company commanders, platoon sergeants and section leaders can also be held liable for the loss or damage of property by one of their Soldiers. This is clearly stated

in the above regulation under the heading of supervisory responsibilities. If a senior leader could have or should have prevented the loss, this is still negligence and it is possible that he or she will be receiving a letter from Uncle Sam asking for money.

Keep all of this in mind the next time you leave your gear unattended and walk to the latrine or see one of your Soldiers doing the same. Also, be aware of this the next time you're driving around your FOB, COP, or PB. It could save you money!



Doctor's Desk

By CPT (Dr.) Joseph May
2nd BCT Surgeon



The less bad Tobacco

I've had a number of Soldiers ask me, "Doc, which is better for me: dip or cigarettes?" My answer is always simple—*neither, really*. While cigarettes are more likely to kill you, each has its own set of potential health risks that are worth understanding.

Everyone knows that cigarettes can cause lung cancer, but many people overlook other effects of inhaled tobacco. Smoking cigarettes affects nearly every organ system in some way, and impairs your body's immune system's ability to fight off infections. Cigarette smoking also affects your outward appearance, and can cause your skin to look 10 years older than you really are. Most significantly, cigarette smokers have a shorter lifespan—whether they get cancer or not.

Unfortunately, smokeless tobacco (chew and dip) has its own set of problems, as well. Its local effects can lead to mouth and throat cancers, tooth discoloration and decay, and bad breath. Furthermore, the harmful byproducts that are absorbed through the mouth and swallowed in saliva can lead to esophagus, stomach, and pancreatic cancer.

Both cigarettes and smokeless tobacco contain the drug nicotine, which gives the body a pleasurable but addictive feeling. One dip delivers 3-4 times higher nicotine doses to the body than one cigarette does—though people often smoke more cigarettes per day, leading to a similar total daily dose of nicotine. In either case, people will find that over time they want more nicotine in their system, and that quitting becomes harder and harder.

The bottom line is that dip and cigarettes are *both* habits worth quitting. To do so, here are some tips from the American Cancer Society:

- Pick the date and mark it on your calendar.
- Tell friends, family, and co-workers about your Quit Day, and let them know how they can help.
- Stock up on oral substitutes -- sunflower seeds, sugarless gum, carrot sticks, beef jerky, cinnamon sticks, and/or sugarless hard candy.
- Decide on a plan. Will you use nicotine replacement therapy? Will you attend a class or program? If so, sign up now. Find out where and when they meet, so that you are ready.
- Consider seeing your doctor or dentist. Have them check your mouth, and discuss your plan for quitting with them.
- Set up a support system. This could be a group class, Nicotine Anonymous, or a friend or family member who has quit and is willing to help you.
- Make a list of your "triggers" -- situations, places, or emotions that make you more likely to chew or dip. Being aware of these can help you avoid them or at least be ready for them.

Think back to your past attempts to quit. Try to figure out what worked and what did not work for you.

The 2BCT Medical Team has a number of resources on hand to help make quitting a reality, including nicotine replacement therapy products and tobacco cessation programs run by our mental health professionals. For more information, stop by your local aid station.



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