

IRON STRONG DAILY

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New unit, new weapons

**Story by Pfc. Alisha Nye
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As King Battery, 1st Battalion, 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment starts to filter out of the Diyala Province of Iraq and Alpha Battery, 2nd Battalion, 8th Field Artillery, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division replaces them, a weapon switch from Paladins to M777A2 howitzers takes place as well.

While the Paladins are mechanized and M777s are not, the M777s are just as capable at helping artillery Soldiers complete their mission.

"It's a very good system," said Capt. Renaldo Rivera, field artillery commander for King Battery, 1-3 ACR. "It's just employed in a different way. Once we have all the systems in place, it's pretty much an even swap."

The biggest challenge of switching these weapons out, said Rivera, is the undertaking of their placement in three separate locations throughout the province.

"It is very challenging," Rivera said. "Given the recent rains and such, it has been (demanding). The mud is incredible and some of the surfaces we are using, such as concrete pads, are not suitable for the triple sevens, so a little bit of site preparation is needed and we're doing pretty well on that right now. We're on our way to getting it completed."

There are several assets employed in this task, Rivera said.

"We have several engineer assets here," he said. "Also, we have Kellogg, Brown and



Artillery Soldiers from King Battery, 1st Battalion, 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment, fire a Paladin in the Diyala Province of Iraq before the weapons were replaced by M777A2 howitzers for the new unit, Alpha Battery, 2nd Battalion, 8th Field Artillery, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division.

Root contractors preparing the sites; laying the gravel, leveling the ground, erecting hesco barriers and such."

Off the three locations where the weapons are being placed, two of them are proving to be more challenging.

"It's a difficult undertaking given the distances," Rivera said. "The points at the Diyala Media Center and at Forward Operating Base Normandy are a bit more challenging because we have to move all of our assets up there to level that ground, mix that soil and prepare the sites for shooting."

Despite the recent inclement weather creating more work for these weapons being placed, the process is actually very simple, said Staff Sgt. Scott U'Ren, alpha Battery, 2nd Bn. 8th FA, 1st SBCT, 25th Inf. Div.

"It's really very simple," he said. "It's the same thing you have to do everywhere. You come up to a position, you find out whatever you're obstacles are so you can figure out where you can lay the gun and the Soldiers

who place the spades can get a point of contact."

However, it is because of the recent inclement weather that this normally simple process, which usually takes a couple of days, has been dragged out for nearly two weeks.

"We've been working on this project for the past week or so," Rivera said. "We expect to be finished in the next couple of days in all our locations. Once it is complete, 2-8 will be taking over and we can then retreat our battalions."

The most important part of this weapon switch, said Rivera, is that it is done proficiently in order to set up the new artillery unit for success.

"We're trying to do this right to make sure the Soldiers of Alpha Battery are taken care of and that the guns are taken care of," Rivera said. "That way they can be as successful at completing their mission as we have been."

Mosul, IP Recruiting drive gets big turn out

**Story and photo by
Spc. Cynthia Teears
11th Public Affairs Detachment**

The Iraqi National Police were collecting applications of potential new police officers for a new unit during a recruiting drive at the Iraqi Police Station in Badush, a village on the outskirts of Mosul.

National Police from the 3rd Brigade in Mosul is creating a new battalion, said Maj. Gen. Mohammed Sabree Latif, commander, 3rd National Police Division. They currently have two battalions in Mosul.

"We are looking for fifteen hundred people from the surrounding areas of Mosul during this recruitment for the next few days," said Mohammed.

One of the goals of the recruiting drive is to get a variety of recruits from the surrounding areas, which will give the new battalion diversity.

"Today's recruiting drive in Badush was significant because it showed that

the National Police are a just (and) fair organization that has the best interests of all Iraqis in mind," said Col. Geoffrey Ellerson, National Police Transition Team commander in Mosul.

During a recent operation in the village, Mohammed promised the Badush citizenry that he would be back to conduct a recruiting drive for the National Police to provide jobs ... to the men of Badush.



Citizens from the surrounding areas of Badush, a village on the outskirts of Mosul, line up to apply for a position with the Iraqi National Police during a recruiting drive in the village

"Today's recruiting event was the manifestation of Major General Mohammed's promise and the turnout was truly impressive," Ellerson said. "Over two hundred and fifty men of Badush turned out today to be screened by National Police and one hundred and thirty five were accepted as candidates for initial training."

"The Shurta of the 3rd National Police Division are to be commended for their efforts in the town of Badush over the past few days, he said. "They acted out of national pride and duty, not for sectarian or political reasons."

The Iraqi National Police division commander had a message for the citizens that live in Mosul.

"Be our friends and cooperate with the authorities," Mohammed said. "Report and call in if you see any bad guys or insurgents. The reason is so we can clear the areas and set up security. We have to keep the insurgents away. They don't have to stay in our country. God willing, Mosul will be peaceful in a short time."

727 Iraqi Police graduate in Diyala Province



An Iraqi female police officer demonstrates how to perform a body search on another female while a male police officer provides security at the Iraqi Police graduation in the Regional Training Center of Ashraf, Iraq.

An Iraqi Police Academy graduation ceremony took place in Ashraf in the Diyala Province of Iraq.

The academy graduated 727 new Iraqi Police officers; 27 graduates were women. The ceremony marked further the security improvements that have been taking place in the province.

Coalition Forces leaders were in attendance to show their support.

"This ceremony marks a huge, bold step forward for the people of Diyala," said 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division spokesman Maj. Chris Hyde. "Now the citizens of this great province can rest a little easier at night, knowing that there are qualified, talented, and motivated police officers making their communities safer."



Photos by Spc. Bobby L. Allen Jr.

An Iraqi police officer demonstrates his police skills at the Iraqi Police graduation at the Regional Training Center in Ashraf, Iraq. The IP ceremony celebrates 727 graduates with 27 being women.

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HEALTH NEWS



(HealthDay News) Women's hands have a veritable United Nations of germs compared to men's, a new study finds.

But both genders house vastly more bacteria on their palms than previously suspected, according to a new study from University of Colorado researchers that appears in this week's issue of the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*.

The information may enable scientists to figure out what a "healthy" level of bacteria is, diagnose diseases more precisely, and perhaps even get advance warning that something is going wrong.

"The findings of the last few decades suggest that many diseases are due to many organisms, and it's the concerted change that leads to disease," noted Robert E. Marquis, a professor of microbiology and immunology at the University of Rochester Medical Center.

Microbes are one of the last frontiers for human exploration. In fact, the National Institutes of Health has initiated the Human Microbiome Project, with the objective of mapping human microbiota, most of which is currently unknown.

"With all the bacteria in the world, we probably know of less than 1 percent of them," Marquis said.

The technology used in this study, already used to study ocean waters, will help enable scientists to encounter the other 99 percent, he said.

The skin, particularly the palms of the hands, house thriving bacterial communities. To get a sense of the flora residing there, researchers scrutinized the palms of 51 undergraduate students for bacteria, just after the students had finished their academic exams.

A sampling of the entire DNA of microbes (known as metagenomics) revealed some 332,000 gene sequences, or about 100 times more than was found in previous studies of skin bacteria.

On average, each hand was home to about 150 different species of bacteria. Overall, more than 4,700 bacterial species were identified on all hands, only five of which were common among all volunteers.

Only 17 percent of bacteria types were shared between right and left palms, while volunteers shared just 13 percent of bacteria species with each other, probably due to "environmental" conditions, such as oil production, skin dryness, and what surfaces the hand had previously touched.

Skin bacteria was more diverse than bacteria found on the forearm or elbows or, indeed, other parts of the body including the mouth and gut.

Women had more germ diversity than men, possibly due to different acidities on the hands, different hand-washing regimens, differential production of sweat, variable hormones and how often moisturizers or cosmetics are applied.

In general, hand washing did not seem to affect the diversity of bacteria (though it's still a good practice, the researchers stressed). Either the bacteria come back quickly after hand washing (at least the kind of hand washing practiced by these volunteers) or hand washing just doesn't dislodge bacteria, they said.

NEVADA

(AP) A man named by authorities as a figure in the drug ring kidnapping of a 6-year-old Nevada boy was indicted on an immigration charge Wednesday by a federal grand jury, the U.S. attorney's office said.

Jose Luis Lopez-Buelna, 48, was charged with being a deported alien found unlawfully in the United States, said Natalie Collins, spokeswoman for U.S. Attorney Gregory Brower. No arraignment date was immediately set.

The charge keeps Lopez-Buelna in federal custody following his release from state custody last week. He spent more than a week in the Clark County jail following his Oct.

17 arrest by police investigating the Oct. 15 abduction of first-grader Cole Puffinburger.

The boy became the focus of Nevada's longest Amber Alert and an intensive search in neighboring states before he was found unharmed late Oct. 18 on a Las Vegas street.

Las Vegas police characterized the abduction as a message from "Mexican nationals" and methamphetamine traffickers to the boy's grandfather, Clemens Fred Tinnemeyer.

Tinnemeyer, 51, and his girlfriend, Terri Lynn Leavy, 42, were arrested last month in Southern California and are being held by federal authorities in Las Vegas pending a preliminary hearing this month on federal racketeering charges.

Federal prosecutors allege Tinnemeyer stole millions of dollars in drug money from a U.S.-Mexico smuggling operation using a hidden compartment in a recreational vehicle.

Lopez-Buelna is named in the complaint against Tinnemeyer and Leavy as one of two men from whom Tinnemeyer and Leavy allegedly stole \$300,000 to \$400,000 in drug money.

Police have identified Lopez-Buelna as an illegal immigrant and convicted drug trafficker who was deported to Mexico in 2003.

No one has been charged in the abduction, and a police representative said Wednesday that a fourth "person of interest" was still being sought. He has been identified as Jesus Gastelum, 35, a Mexican citizen who also used the name Ferdinand Gastelum.



BASKETBALL

(AP) Reserve Ben Gordon scored 23 points, rookie Derrick Rose had 18 points, six assists and several dazzling plays, and the Chicago Bulls beat the Phoenix Suns 100-83 on Friday night.

The Suns played without Shaquille O'Neal, who got the night off as part of a plan to rest him periodically throughout the season. O'Neal is expected back in the lineup Saturday at Milwaukee.

A m a r e Stoudemire, coming off a 49-point performance against Indiana on Wednesday, finished with 26 points and seven rebounds for the Suns.

O'Neal, dressed in a suit, watched on the bench as Chicago center Joakim Noah had nine points and 14 rebounds. He came averaging three points and 4.6 rebounds.

The Bulls pulled away in the first half, scoring 16 unanswered points to jump out to a 31-17 lead in the second quarter. Gordon scored seven points during the span.

Rose hit a jumper to put the Bulls up by 20 early in the third quarter, and Gordon nailed a 3-pointer to make it 72-45 late in the third. Rose brought the fans to their feet with a dunk over Leandro Barbosa in the fourth quarter.

Before the game, Bulls coach Vinny Del Negro shuffled his starting lineup. He moved Thabo Sefolosha and Tyrus Thomas to the bench and started Kirk Hinrich and Aaron Gray.

Thomas gave the Bulls energy off the bench with 14 points and seven rebounds.

With the Suns playing four games in five nights, Steve Nash and Stoudemire sat the entire fourth quarter. Nash played only 24 minutes and finished with six points and five assists.

Del Negro got a little payback at the Suns, who spurned him as a head coaching candidate in the offseason.

Del Negro spent the past two years in the Suns' front office after a three-year stint as a radio analyst. He got promoted to assistant general manager from director of player personnel and was interested in replacing Mike D'Antoni after he left for New York, but a lack of experience kept Del Negro off the list of finalists and the Suns hired Terry Porter.



HOCKEY

(AP) Jason Williams scored his second goal of the game 48 seconds into overtime, and Bryan Little had two goals and an assist in the Atlanta Thrashers' 5-4 victory over the Buffalo Sabres on Friday night.

On a power play, Williams lifted a rebound off a shot from Ilya Kovalchuk over goalie Ryan Miller to give the Thrashers their third straight victory.

Todd White also scored for the Thrashers, who last won three straight in February. Atlanta (5-7-2) won for the first time in seven road games this season.

Slava Kozlov extended his points streak to five games with three assists for the Thrashers.

Thomas Vanek scored his NHL-leading 12th goal, and Clarke MacArthur, Ales Kotalik and Maxim Afinogenov also scored for the Sabres.

Atlanta goalie Johan Hedberg finished with 28 stops in making only his third appearance of the season.

Miller, coming off consecutive shutouts of Washington and New Jersey, made 21 saves to fall to 7-1-2.

Buffalo welcomed back center Jochen Hecht, who had missed the last 10 games because of a broken right middle finger.

With Atlanta down a goal after 40 minutes, White tied it on the power play 8 minutes into the third, lifting a shot over Miller from the slot to make it 4-4.

The Thrashers opened the scoring just over 4 minutes in, as Williams snapped Miller's 149-minute, 12-second shutout sequence with a wicked wrist shot from the slot.

MacArthur tied it 4 minutes later, and Kotalik put Buffalo ahead 2-1 with a power-play goal while Atlanta was down two men with 1:20 left in the first period.

Little tied it with his first of the game just under 4 minutes into the second period, sliding the puck underneath Miller while being hauled down by Sabres defenseman Toni Lydman.

Afinogenov notched his first of the season at 7:30 before Little knotted it at 3 with his eighth of the year with 5 minutes to go in the middle period.

Fifty seconds season, Vanek gave the Sabres a 4-3 lead after two periods when he deflected Tim Connolly's slap shot from the middle of the blue line.



HAITI

(AP) Rescue crews working under the glare of floodlights dug through the rubble of a collapsed school early Saturday in a frantic search for students who may still be trapped in a disaster that has already killed at least 47 people.

It is not known how many students were in the school when it collapsed Friday morning. But authorities said roughly 500 children and teenagers typically crowded into the three-story concrete building of College La Promesse, which served classes from kindergarten through high school.

The chaotic rescue effort by Red Cross workers, U.N. peacekeepers and Haitian authorities was inhibited from the start by thousands of grieving neighbors, who blocked the steep, narrow street and fought with school officials to enter the collapsed building in search of their children and friends.

U.N. peacekeepers and Haitian police were able to establish some order by setting up human chains and checkpoints along the road in the hills above Port-au-Prince. But they have been unable to get heavy equipment through the crowds and to the scene, leaving rescuers to essentially work

with their hands.

At least 39 bodies were brought to the morgue at Port-au-Prince's General Hospital, Haitian police spokesman Garry Desrosier said.

Another eight people died in a trauma center run by the aid group Medecins Sans Frontieres, or Doctors Without Borders, spokesman Francois Servranckx said. More than 80 others were being treated for injuries by the aid group.

Several nearby houses were also damaged in the collapse.

Neighbors suspected the building was poorly rebuilt after it partially collapsed eight years ago, said Jimmy Germain, a French teacher at the school. He said people who lived just downhill abandoned their land out of fear that the building would tumble onto them, and that the school's owner tried to buy up their vacated properties.

The concrete building's third story was still under construction, and Petionville Mayor Claire Lydie Parent told The Associated Press she suspects a structural defect caused the collapse, not the recent chain of tropical storms that swept devastation across Haiti.

Police commissioner Francene Moreau says the minister who runs the church-operated school could face criminal charges. Efforts to reach the preacher were not successful.

U.N. military commander Maj. Gen. Carlos Alberto Dos Santos Cruz said the accident is the worst he has seen since coming to Haiti almost two years ago.

The building collapsed into little more than a twisted mountain of concrete, out of which protruded the mangled, bloody bodies of students killed in the collapse.

Thousands looked on from beside the school and across the valley, cheering each time a live student was extricated from the debris. One student who emerged and was lifted on a stretcher cried and made the sign of the cross over and over.

Outside on the street, a swelling crowd erupted with wails and prayers



as the injured were carried away and emergency vehicles raced up a winding hill to the school.

"My child, my child!" one mother yelled.

"There are no words for this," the mayor said as the search for survivors intensified.

Haitian President Rene Preval visited the scene to offer his sympathy. He asked onlookers to come down from surrounding buildings that engineers feared might have been destabilized by the collapse.

The Dominican Republic, which shares the island of Hispaniola with Haiti, was sending two helicopters to help, Dominican Health Minister Bautista Rojas said. French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner promised to send a rescue team as soon as possible.

Haiti, the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, has been struggling to recover from widespread riots over rising food prices, a string of hurricanes and tropical storms that killed nearly 800 people.

Thousands of Haitian menial laborers live in collapse-prone hillside slums around the capital, Port-au-Prince, to be near the mansions of the foreign diplomats, U.N. staff and wealthy elite for whom they work.

Parents said they toiled endlessly throughout the year to afford the school's \$1,500 tuition in hopes of empowering their children to someday escape poverty.

The U.N. peacekeepers were sent to Haiti following the bloody ouster of former President Jean-Bertrand Aristide in 2004 and have improved security by fighting gangs and training local police.

