



LOUISIANA
NATIONAL GUARD

**225TH
ENGINEER BRIGADE**



MARCH 25, 2009

VOLUME II, ISSUE II

COMMANDER'S COMMENTS

BG Owen W. Monconduit

Hooah! Engineers, thanks for another month of outstanding engineering contributions, March 2009, FIRST TEAM! The 225th En Bde and its 4th and 46th En Bn's are performing outstandingly because of the hard work and determination of every engineer, a FIRST TEAM effort in working together (the battalions, brigade and division) and tremendous support from family and friends at home. Soldiers, continue to remain mission focused as we make significant contributions in partnering to protect the people of Baghdad and build Iraqi civil capacity.

Fellow Soldiers, our operating rhythm is essentially set from this point forward. We are executing operations in support of 1st Cavalry



Division objectives by providing assured mobility, partnering with the Iraqi Army Engineers, conducting engineering missions, traveling in ground assault convoys, holding weekly commander calls, etc. This

continuous rhythm places the unit in phase III of our engineer campaign, Sustained Operations (OPs). Sustained OPs creates our overarching environment. Within our Sustained OPs environment lays our tactical sphere. On the tactical level, you can shape your immediate surround-

ings by managing your duty time to conduct physical fitness, cleaning your weapon, maintaining your gear, improving military techniques, communicating with your family, etc. My

point to all engineer Soldiers is that tactical sustainment is critical to Sustained OPs. Implement a productive tactical sphere to keep you in synchronization with our operational rhythm.

We are all doing our part to keep the entire unit safe. Remember to mentally prepare yourselves for the next day's activities and reduce risk by applying mitigation measures and wearing your Personnel Protective Equipment (PPE). I charge every Soldier to check and examine their PPE before 31 March. Get with your first line supervisor and/or supply sergeant to replace any unserviceable PPE. Enforcing safety daily will contribute to a Safe Deployment ≈ Safe Return.

CASTLE 6

MESSAGE FROM CASTLE 7

CSM Joseph Major

Greetings Engineer Soldiers,

As a continuation from the last *Engineer Express*, I will conclude my session on Command Leadership Philosophy. Remember, Leadership is an art, not a science.

- e. Appearance, Bearing, and Discipline: Military appearance, bearing, and discipline must always be on your mind. You will maintain a neat, trim, and disciplined appearance. I expect you to enforce regulations and not to tolerate soldiers not meeting the standards. No Soldier of lesser rank is to refer to his/her Leaders by their first name as this sets a bad example for Soldiers. Discipline is the foundation of all that we do as an Army. Soldiers expect discipline and expect their Leaders to enforce the standards. If I see undisciplined soldiers, I will seek the undisciplined Leader and redefine my Leadership Philosophy for that Leader. Discipline is

the bedrock of our profession.

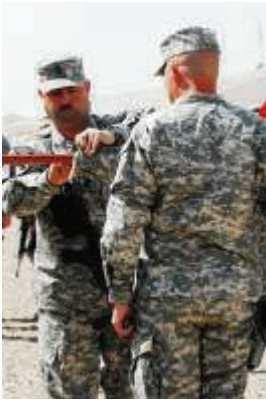
- f. Loyalty: I expect loyalty not only between the Officer and NCO but to the Soldiers who serve us as well. If we treat all with dignity and respect, we will see loyalty from within the command.
- g. Honesty: I expect all Leaders to be honest with their soldiers. Soldiers would rather hear the honest bad news from their Leaders than untrue gossip from other Soldiers.
- h. Training: There are few things more important. I firmly believe that we retain our position as the world's best army due to steadfast focus on quality training. I believe that the focus of individual training needs to be at squad/sections level and taught by NCOs. Train as we fight must always be a part of the process. Rehearsals and hands-on training are paramount.
- i. Counseling: I will insist all Sol-

diers receive counseling, and I will inspect that counseling with no notice. If an Officer or NCO rater/supervisor is responsible for the counseling, I expect it to be completed in the proper time.

- j. Awards: Every Soldier is deserving of awards during everyday performance and during special missions. I expect all Leaders to recommend Soldiers for awards and once approved, presented in the right fashion.



The Command's intent is clear: "Take care of Soldiers, Take care equipment, Pay attention to detail, and have fun." Lead your Soldiers all the time. Do the right thing all the time. Remember our soldiers are always watching us as we watch them. Again, we must think as a team, mentor our soldiers, and take care of each other.
Safe Deployment = Safe Return
CSM Joe Major



On the Cover:

277th Eng. Co., completes a transfer of authority ceremony from the 955th Eng. Co.

(U.S. Army Photo by Sgt. Rebekah Malone)

Editor: Sgt. Rebekah Malone

Contributing journalists: Scott Flenner

1st Lt. Janeene Yarber * Sgt. Catherine Graham

LOUISIANA
NATIONAL GUARD



The Semi-Monthly Newsletter for the
225th Engineer Brigade

—Vol. II, Iss. II—

- 2 [Comments from Castle 6](#)
- 2 [Message from Castle 7](#)
- 3 [Chaplain's Corner](#)
- 4 [Miss. Stingrays end mission](#)
- 5 [I AM STRONG](#)
- 6 [Soldiers in Focus](#)
- 7 [Safety](#)
- 8 [Clydesdales end mission](#)
- 9 [Where in Baghdad is CSM?](#)
- 10 [Reenlistment](#)
- 11 [Ziggurat](#)
- 12 [NCO\SM of the Month](#)
- 13 [Earth movers remove remnants](#)

Cpt. Robert Rogers proudly shows off his newborn son, James Martin Rogers, born March 16 at 12:54 p.m. The newest Rogers' weighed in at 9 lbs. 11 oz. and was 21 inches. Congratulations Cpt. Rogers from the 225th Engineer Brigade!



Chaplain's Corner

By Chap. (MAJ) Jeff Mitchell

Spiritual DUI's

I would like to use to metaphor of driving as how we live our lives. Jesus, says come drink and drive-live. John 7:37-39 speaks to the matter of what really satisfies; where we believe, and effective results. If we take the invitation of this passage says we will (drive-live) under the influence of the right SPIRIT. "I f a n y man/woman is thirsty, let them come to Me and drink, for he who believes in Me as the Scriptures said, from his innermost being will flow rivers of living water." Even if you don't realize how thirsty your inner man is, come to Me and drink anyway. What satisfies and quenches our thirst in this life is drinking from a person; Jesus Christ-the Fountain of Life. Not only do you drink from Him, you believe in Him. Believe/trust that I am who I



say I am; Bread of Heaven, the Vine, the Way, the Truth, the Life, etc... When you come and drink and believe in Me, look at the results. What your innermost being drinks of, will flow out of you.

"From your innermost being will flow rivers of living water." Most of us get so close to this but miss the mark all together. Jesus did not say come to a church or a pastor or even to the Bible or to a particular ministry or program or denomination to drink, but come to Me and drink. Jesus was speaking of the Holy Spirit that was to be given after Jesus bodily would be going back to heaven after His resurrection. Let us come to the person of the Christ, drink, believe in, and watch the rivers of Living Water flow from us to a thirsty world around us everyday! Drink and drive/ live under the influence of the Holy Spirit!

CH (MAJ) Jeff Mitchell

Joke

As a group of soldiers stood in formation at an Army Base, the Drill Sergeant said, "All right! All you idiots fall out."

As the rest of the squad wandered away, one soldier remained at attention.

The Drill Instructor walked over until he was eye-to-eye with him, and then raised a single eyebrow. The Soldier smiled and said, "Sure was a lot of 'em, huh, sir?"

Mississippi 'Stingrays' end missions in Baghdad

Story and photo by Sgt. Catherine Graham

BAGHDAD - On March 18, another chapter came to a close in the history of the 890th Engineer Battalion, 225th Engineer Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, Multi-National Division—Baghdad, as the 'Stingray' leaders assembled their Soldiers to hand over their mission in the Baghdad area to the 4th Engineer Battalion from Fort Carson, Colo., in a transfer of authority ceremony.

The ceremony marked the official transfer of operations to the 4th Eng Bn. and signified the end of a 12-month deployment for the Soldiers of the 890th Eng. Bn. in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom 08-10.

"The Soldiers of the 890th Eng. Bn. have performed magnificently. They have overcome many challenges and contributed to the success of not only the Coalition Forces, but also have assisted in adding to the legitimacy of the Government of Iraq," said Lt. Col. Joe D. Hargett, commander of the 890th Eng. Bn. "I would like to wish the 4th Eng. Bn. the best of luck and Godspeed as they take over this very important mission."

This is not the first Iraq deployment for the 890th Eng. Bn. from Gulfport, Miss., but it is the first under the Army's modularity concept. The battalion consisted of the Headquarters Support Company and A Co., Forward Support Company, of the 890th En. Bn., from the Mississippi Na-

tional Guard, the 836th Engineer Sapper Company from the Texas National Guard, the 688th Engineer Mobility Augmentation Company from the Army Reserves out of Arkansas and the 848th Engineer Sap-

ment to the 4th Engineers to create a seamless transfer.

The 'Stingray' battalion's mission began with their arrival to Camp Liberty, Iraq in June 2008. The battalion assumed control over the route clearance missions and assured mobility from the 107th Engineer Battalion of the Michigan Army National Guard serving under the 926th Engineer Brigade, 4th Infantry Division.

The Stingrays made several improvements to their operations in theater throughout their tour. One of the significant milestones was by working with the 6th Iraqi Army Regiment's leadership to establish a dynamic partnership with the IA to initiate an aggressive training program that would prepare the IA as a self-sustaining route clearance team.

U.S. Soldiers instructed their Iraqi counterparts in counter-insurgency operations and supervised their progress. Following the graduation of the initial class of IA Soldiers, the (continued on next page)



CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – On March 18, dignitaries from the 225th Engineer Brigade, the 46th Engineer Battalion and the 6th Iraqi Army listen to Lt. Col. Joe D. Hargett, commander of the 890th

per Company from the Georgia National Guard.

For the last two weeks, Soldiers of the 890th Eng. Bn. imparted the knowledge of what they have learned throughout their deploy-



CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – Soon to be departing theater, company commanders and first sergeants of the 890th Engineer Battalion, from Gulfport, Miss., case their guidons during the transfer of authority ceremony on March 18, in front of the battalion tactical operation center on Camp Liberty, Iraq.

890th

I. A.M. STRONG: Intervene, Act, Motivate

By Lt. Col. Curtis Smith, sexual assault response coordinator

(continued from page four)

IA Regiment introduced their first piece of route clearance equipment into patrols and conducted numerous combined missions that resulted in increased proficiency of the Iraqi Soldiers.

This in turn, protected the people of Iraq from insurgent activity and improved the confidence of the local population in their leadership and local Iraqi Security Forces.

Another mission target was the inception of route sanitation missions. Though a partnership with a sister battalion, the 46th Engineer Battalion from Fort Polk, La., route clearance patrols began using construction assets to remove debris off the routes. The route sanitation partnerships reduced the amount of repetitive improvised explosive device interrogations and contributed to the beautification of the Baghdad area.

The tactics and practices for this operation were published to the Center for Army Lessons Learned for future leaders to benefit from.

The 890th had many other key innovative successes throughout its deployment in its area of operations with numerous munitions finds, the capture of insurgents, use of experimental surveillance technology, equipment improvements and the establishment of a combat recovery course.

The 890th Eng. Bn. will depart the theater for re-deployment with its many successes and zero casualties to add to its books.

"The Soldiers of the 890th Engineer Battalion have set the standard for route clearance missions in the Multi-National Division-Baghdad area. The equipment that Congress approved and delivered for our missions has saved many lives and gave the Soldiers the tools needed to perform their missions safely," said Command Sgt. Maj. Larry Mergenschroer. "I also would like to thank each Soldier of the 890th for their hard work and also the hometowns of Mississippi,

Texas, Georgia, and Arkansas that gave much needed support to the Soldiers."



By Lt. Col. Curtis Smith

The Army has a new program to fight the war on Sexual Assault called the "I AM Strong" campaign. This approach empowers Soldiers to Intervene, Act, and Motivate to prevent sexual assault, Sgt. Maj. of the Army Kenneth O. Preston said in a recent interview. This new program has the support of the leadership at the highest levels of the Army. Preston said, "Sexual assault goes against our Army Values and Warrior Ethos. I need you to intervene before an assault occurs."

Soldiers may have seen these new posters around their office areas and operation centers throughout the 225th Engineer Brigade due to the very real threat of sexual assault. Within the Division, a sexual assault occurred recently that opened the eyes of every Soldier; bringing home the need to always travel with a battle buddy wherever you go, especially in hours of darkness.

In addition to campaign posters, literature, and leadership guides, 150 Soldiers were able to attend a Sex Signals program sponsored by the 1st Cavalry Division. This program presented an approach to sexual assault in a unique and entertaining way. Professional

actors played out roles in situations that were realistic.

"It was funny and let you know at what part a girl would let you know when to stop," said Spc. Jeramie Benjamin from HHC 225th of Natchitoches, La., who attended the program. Benjamin went on to say it was a good program that warned people about how to act at parties and when to stop in situations that could lead to sexual assault.

Sexual Assault is a crime and will not be tolerated by the leadership at all levels within the 225th Eng. Bde. It erodes the very fabric of the unit and makes it ineffective as a fighting force. Sexual Assault is one of Brig. Gen. Monconduit's Commanders Critical Information Requirements (CCIRs) and wants to be notified immediately if a sexual assault happens within the 225th Eng. Bde. He takes this very seriously and supports this program completely.

In the event of a sexual assault, please contact the Sexual Assault Response Coordinator or your Unit Victim Advocates. Lt. Col. Curtis Smith (SARC) can be reached at the 225th Engineer Brigade operation center at 242-4948 or 847-2613. The Unit Victim Advocates (UVAs) are Cpt. Yvonne Davis at 847-2422 and Sgt. 1st Class Janis Smith at 847-2607. These Soldiers are available to any Soldier 24/7 no matter what unit they belong to. Additionally, Soldiers can go to their chaplain and a medical provider with complete confidentiality. Reports of sexual assault can be restricted where support is provided without disclosure as long as the above mentioned individuals are notified first. A report becomes unrestricted if reported to the chain of command or law enforcement.

Soldier in Focus

Story by Sgt. Rebekah Malone, photo by Scott Flenner, 225th Eng. Bde. PAO, 1st Cav., MND-B

Duane Gonzalez of San Diego, Calif., was interviewed due to his stand-out contribution to the intelligence section as a geospatial analyst and his promotion to staff sergeant. Gonzalez served four years on active duty in Korea. Seven months after getting off active duty, Gonzalez returned from vacation with a yellow manila envelope on his door with the 'go to war or go to jail' letter so commonly joked about in military cadence. He deployed with the 225th Engineer Brigade from Louisiana and works on the multi-million dollar digital topographic support system. His section recommended him for a Soldier in Focus in appreciation of the talent he brings to the deployment.

Tell me about life in San Diego?

"I've lived in San Diego for 12 years. I love it. The people are really laid back, it's easy to meet people, the weather is great, and it's sunny all the time. There is so much there to do."

Do you surf?

"A little bit. The hardest part is standing up."

Where did you go to school?

"I went to college at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. I got a degree in geo sciences. I didn't start off in geo-sciences but I met a professor that actually published four or five atlases. I got to know him and he let me work on some with him. That really got me into it."

So is your name on the atlases?

(Laughing) "No! And I'm kind of upset about that! But it's on Amazon, I looked it up and only his name is on it."

If you could draw any map what would it be of?

"Mars! I've always wanted to do that because they are starting to map Mars. It's always been my dream to work for National Geographic. I think it would be a cool to do some mapping for different planets."

You grew up in Massachusetts, spent four years in Korea and have

lived in San Diego for 12 years. So what's it like to deploy with a bunch of rednecks and coon asses from Louisiana?

"It's pretty different. I've met a lot of different people and I think it makes you a better person to interact with different kinds of people than just to be in one place all your life."

from Korea after being gone for four years."

What's your advice for road-trips other than taking plenty of time?

"Don't stop at the tourist spots. I try to find out where the locals hang out and go there. Also, try to get off the highway as much as you can. That's where you really see stuff or all you will see is McDonalds."

How many states have you been to?

"I'm only missing the Pacific Northwest states and Dakotas."

Will you do it again?

"Oh yeah, as much as possible."

What is an odd job you've had?

"One of my first jobs in high school was as a machinist. I thought cool, a machinist. After getting the job, I found out it was a

tampon factory! So, I only lasted two weeks there because my friends got word of it. My girlfriend said, 'Why did you quit?' I was like, 'What do you mean why did I quit?'"

On being an IRR Soldier called up ...

"[Sgt. Danny]Diaz [other IRR Soldier called up to be a topographical designer] and I help each other out. We try to keep a sense of humor about the whole thing and we're real good friends so we get through it."



What's something funny that has happen to you?

"I've been thrown out of the San Diego Zoo for making Howler Monkey sounds. I can do an exact replica of their call. The monkeys were freaking out so they kicked me out."

What's an interesting place you've been to?

"I've driven across country five times, twice for necessity. The best time was when I took three weeks to drive from Boston to San Diego after returning



FIRE



POLICE



EMS

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY, CALL

485-4070

IRAQNA 0790-194-2960

SVOIP - 243-4407

NON EMERGENCY 485-2758

FM 902 – GATEKEEPER

Safe deployment = safe return

S1 Tidbits!

Red Cross Contact info:

Louisiana Offices:

- American Red Cross Central Louisiana Chapter, 1104 Billy Mitchell Blvd, Louisiana 71303 Telephone: (318) 442-6621 / 1-800-259-2777 Fax: (318) 487-8936 Email: help@cenlaredcross.org
- American Red Cross of Acadiana Area(Lafayette), 121 W. Pershing St Ste A310, New Iberia, LA 70560 Telephone: (337) 364-0423 Fax: (337) 367-2286 / or Acadiana Area 101 N Pat Street, Scott, LA 70583 Telephone: (337) 234-7371 / 1-800-960-2356 Fax: (337) 234-7694
- Louisiana Capital Area Chapter Celtic Drive, Baton Rouge, LA Phone- (225) 291-4533 Fax- (225) 292-4692
- Northwest Louisiana Chapter of the American Red Cross. 4221 Linwood Avenue Shreveport, LA 71108 (318) 865-9545. fax (318) 868-4111 redcross@louisianaredcross.org

All Soldiers are reminded to please ensure their family's have all pertinent information – if an emergency is to arise, they should call their local red cross with the information provided below. They should also include names / numbers for doctors / funeral homes / hospitals, etc

RANK / FULL NAME / SSN / UNIT

DSN – (318) 847-2613 or (318) 847-3057

The goal is to expedite any messages received to ensure the Soldier is notified and taken care of ASAP.

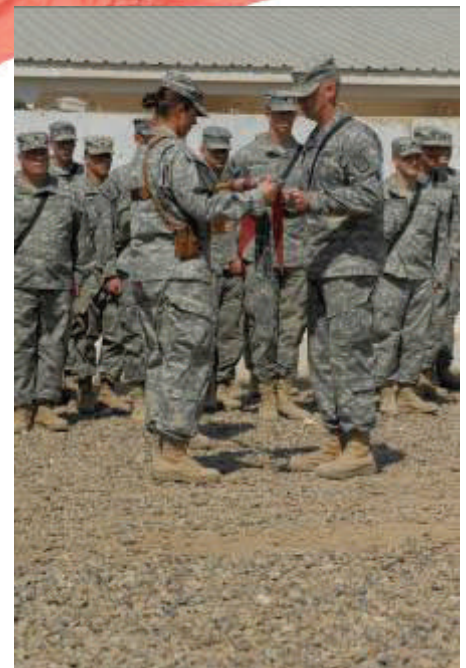
Club Fumee de Cuvee

Anyone interested in joining a cigar of the month club please contact Staff Sgt. Richard Hebert at:

EMAIL: Richard.hebert@mnd-b.army.mil

Cost: \$25 per month and for 8-10 cigars

Clydesdales end mission



Where in Baghdad



CSM Joe Major enjoys the music from Charlie Wilson and the Gap Band with Staff Sgt. Garcia Wilkins.

Camp Liberty



Spec. Derrick Gomez, 848th Eng. Co.

Camp Taji



JSS Knight



Command Sgt. Maj. Joe Major speaks with Soldiers working on a roof at JSS Knight

JSS Zafarynia



Sgt. Sweet, A Co. 46th Eng. Bn. talks construction at Zafarynia.

is Command Sgt. Major?

Reenlistment

I AM AN **AMERICAN SOLDIER**.

I AM A **WARRIOR** AND A MEMBER OF A TEAM.

I SERVE THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES AND **LIVE** THE ARMY VALUES.

I WILL **ALWAYS** PLACE THE MISSION FIRST.

I WILL **NEVER**

ACCEPT DEFEAT.

QUIT.

LEAVE A FALLEN COMRADE.

I **AM** DISCIPLINED, PHYSICALLY AND MENTALLY TOUGH, TRAINED AND PROFICIENT IN MY WARRIOR TASKS AND DRILLS.

I ALWAYS MAINTAIN MY ARMS, MY EQUIPMENT AND **MYSELF**.

I AM AN EXPERT AND I AM A PROFESSIONAL.

I **STAND READY** TO DEPLOY, ENGAGE AND DESTROY THE ENEMIES OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA IN CLOSE COMBAT.

I AM A GUARDIAN OF FREEDOM AND THE AMERICAN WAY OF LIFE.

I **AM** THE ARMY NATIONAL GUARD.

225th



A series of historical places in Iraq: The Ziggurat at Ur

By Foy Hartman, media engagement officer

Tallil Air Base is a large base by Iraq standards. At one time in 2005 eight thousand US Soldiers, Marines and Airmen, along with some 300 Japanese and 200 Australian Soldiers and an Italian EOD unit were assigned to the base located in Southern Iraq.

This area, 23km south of the city of Nasiria or approximately 200 miles from Baghdad, was once known as Ur. To the northeast of the base on an otherwise flat horizon, you can see a pyramid like structure known as a Ziggurat.

Ziggurats were huge "stepped" structures with a temple on their summit far above the ground. This temple would have been to the city god. The city ziggurat, anciently as now, would dominate the horizon and easily be the most conspicuous building in the city, towering above any visitors coming to their city. Therefore the ziggurat was not just a religious center, but also a center of civic pride. Any approaching visitor could not help but see the ziggurat.

The Ziggurat at Ur is the best preserved of its period found in Iraq. With some reconstruction, the three main levels are intact and while filled with sand, the

lower level still contains accommodations for the priest which worshipped there.

This Ziggurat in Ur is three levels, with only the temple missing



from the top, indicative of the time period some 5000 years ago built by Ur-Nammu (2112-2095), a Sumerian king of Ur. These were generally built with three "steps" while later Ziggurats had as many as seven steps.

Ur is also the accepted birthplace of Abraham or in Arabic, Abrihim. At the Ziggurat site some of the city where Abraham originated has been excavated and gives an accurate picture of the lifestyle of this ancient civilization.

What part did Ziggurats play in Religion?

Ziggurats were built to reach nearer the heavens. This was so the gods could be contacted and worshipped. Obviously the same can be done on ground level but

on top of the ziggurat they would be closer to the god.

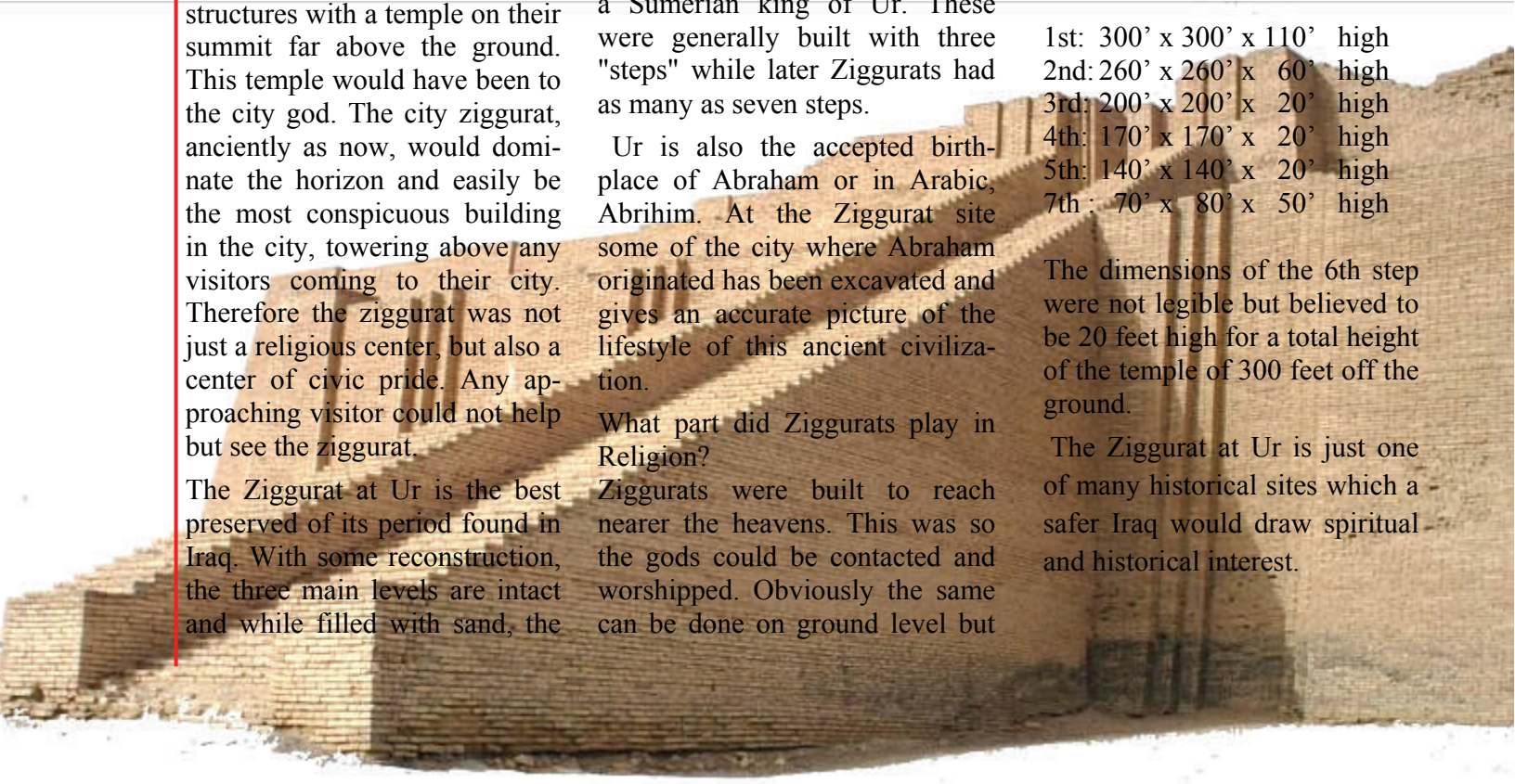
The citizens of Ur, and other city states of their religion, gave rich offerings to the gods and the size and splendor of a ziggurat would show the city and king's devotion to the particular city god being worshipped. They might have temples to other gods but they would only have a ziggurat to the primary city god and while we have little information on most structures, an ancient Babylonian tablet gives

us the dimensions of the ziggurat at the time of Nebuchadnezzar II.

1st: 300' x 300' x 110' high
2nd: 260' x 260' x 60' high
3rd: 200' x 200' x 20' high
4th: 170' x 170' x 20' high
5th: 140' x 140' x 20' high
7th: 70' x 80' x 50' high

The dimensions of the 6th step were not legible but believed to be 20 feet high for a total height of the temple of 300 feet off the ground.

The Ziggurat at Ur is just one of many historical sites which a safer Iraq would draw spiritual and historical interest.



February NCO and Soldier of the Month

The 225th Engineer Brigade NCO and Soldier of the Month is open to all 225 Soldiers and NCOs. If you would like to make a recommendation (and ~~anyone~~ can make the recommendation!), please send your nominee up the chain of command with a short explanation of why the Soldier or NCO should be chosen as the month's outstanding brigade Soldier. This is an easy way to make sure the amazing efforts of our Soldiers are recognized at the brigade level; remember this is the Year of the NCO. The winner will be highlighted in The Engineer Express. Please submit your nominee by April 1.

These individuals were picked by their peers and selected as the most outstanding NCO and Soldier of the Month. Their relentless dedication to the Units mission and success is the lantern in the watchtower that all Soldiers in the 225th Engineer Brigade follow.

Spc. Kyle Clark

Former Marine, present Soldier, future history teacher. Spc. Clark's life cannot be summed up in few words as I have just tried, because this 26-year old survey engineer who is assigned to the 225th personal security detachment is wise beyond his years.

"He has helped with the younger troops and has been a great addition to the team," said one of his fellow non-commissioned officers. "He brings a lot to the team."

As a former Marine infantryman, Clark possesses the tactical know-how; being an educated history buff he possesses the cultural knowledge. Put those two together and you have a Soldier of the Month who excels at his duties and responsibilities while here in Iraq. "Protecting whoever it is that has business out-

side the wire" as Clark eloquently puts it.

When not protecting the passengers he helps escort outside the wire, Clark enjoys catching up with family via email, reading a good book, and learning the local language of Arabic, which he practices every night. Clark may not be fluent in Arabic yet, but next time you see him ask him to share a little bit of his knowledge and you might hear him say his favorite Arabic phrase, 'stop or I will shoot!'

Clark looks forward to finishing his tour in Iraq later this year and returning home safe and



Spc. Kyle Clark of Greensburg, La., reenlisted for six years at Al Faw Palace, March 24. A former Marine, Clark makes use of this tactical knowledge in his current position on the personal security detachment..

sound to see his new niece, and to continue his military career with the Louisiana National Guard for at least the next 6 years (that is what the re-enlistment papers stated.)

Sgt. 1st Class Sandra Lachica

This month, Sgt. 1st Class Lachica will celebrate 30 years of service in the Louisiana National Guard — most of which has been with a smile

on her face.

The petite black-haired, wirey woman can be described as silly, and quick to laugh.

Lachica works in the personal readiness section as the NCOIC. Her day-to-day duties involve managing JPERSTAT, DTAS and EML.

"As NCOIC over the brigade's environmental morale leave, Sgt. 1st Class Lachica has done an exceptional job managing the brigade's allocations and percentages," Maj. Andy Magee, personnel officer for the 225th Engineer Brigade said. "During this past month, she also played a part in the extremely successful Engineer Call. Sgt. 1st Class Lachica is a conscientious and hard worker."

Two weeks after returning from basic training, Lachica got a job with the Louisiana Army National Guard and has been employed either as a state or federal technician or active guard reserve ever since.

"The Guard is like a family to me. It's what I have known since I was 18 years old," Lachica said. "I enjoy the work and the people with whom I have pretty much grown up around."



Sgt. 1st Class Sandra Lachica throws beads during the parade at Engineer Call March 7.

'Earth movers' remove remnants of war

By 1st Lt. Marvin Nelson

Things are back in full swing these days on the outskirts of Salmak Pak in the Mada in Qada district of Iraq. One month after the Soldiers from the Earth Moving platoon, Company A, 46th Engineer Combat Battalion (Heavy), 225th Engineer Brigade and security elements from the 2-6 Infantry, 1st Armor Division and the 6th Iraqi Army worked together to complete an eight day mission in the south-east area of Baghdad in an effort to remove remnants of old fighting positions no longer deemed necessary in a more stable Baghdad.

According to Cpt. Jeremy Korth, a native of Oxford, Wis., and the 2-6 Infantry Task Force Engineer, "The work that was conducted out here a month ago has definitely improved the living conditions for everyone in this area. The local Iraqi people can once again easily access the local businesses and resources and Coalition Forces now have increased mobility enhancing their ability to quickly respond to threats in the area. I believe the Iraqis are excited about having their town look like a town again."

The removed concrete barriers and HESCO bastions, a collapsible wire mesh container and heavy duty fabric liner filled with earth, gravel, or sand and used to shield against blast or small-arms fire. Along with the usual equipment of loaders and 20-ton dump trucks, the engineers also deployed two cranes to move concrete walls, bunkers, and jersey barriers so that they could be collected at a barrier yard or used to fortify other checkpoints.

Working under the cover of night, the mission involved Soldiers removing almost 200 jersey barriers, 40 other concrete wall sections and two bunkers. Two cranes and one five-yard loader were used to place the walls on tractors and trailers. In addition to the walls being removed, the engineers worked diligently to remove HESCO barriers and concertina wire located throughout various locations along the route.

"The mission was an all around endeavor by both Iraqi and US Soldiers. The Iraqi Army assisted us by providing site security across numerous points on the route and the 2-6 INF Soldiers provided both site security and convoy security," Staff Sergeant Lawrence R.J. Willeford, Lawton, Okla., native and EM platoon non-commissioned officer in charge said, "Together we moved and removed hundreds of walls and barriers to open up

parking lots to businesses and access to the elementary school."

He continued, "We removed concertina wire along the route with the help of the IA and 2-6 INF Soldiers making it safer for everyone to travel the route. It was a concerted effort to remove countless tons of materials along the route to show the people of Iraq that a return to normalcy is on the horizon."

The work accomplished along the route was an important step for both Coalition and Iraqi Forces in signifying that conditions in Iraq have steadily improved. With the overall violence in Baghdad down nearly 70 percent, fighting positions set along the route were no longer necessary. With the majority of the walls and barriers removed, traffic along the route has improved which supports greater economic activity in the area, which also makes it for difficult for insurgents to emplace roadside bombs, and improved the remaining checkpoints along the route. The existing

checkpoints that were not removed along the route were reduced in total overall size, but improved in total protection stature. The engineers also worked on removing barriers from in front of schools and businesses making access to the locations much easier for the local population. Once completed, the route looked as if it could be an everyday road in any town, U.S.A.



Spc. Joseph Cropprue, 46th Engineer Combat Battalion (H), 225th Engineer Brigade, a native of Shreveport, La., emplaces jersey barriers on a M870 trailer.



Sgt. Ross Maki, 46th Engineer Combat Battalion (Heavy), 225th Engineer Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, Multi-National Division - Baghdad, a native of Lake Linden, Mich., utilizes the loader and chains to yank jersey barriers from a trailer for disposal in the barrier yard.