



HESTER

LOUISIANA
NATIONAL GUARD

**225TH
ENGINEER BRIGADE**



MARCH 11, 2009

VOLUME II, ISSUE I

COMMANDER'S COMMENTS

BG Owen W. Monconduit

Engineers,

Our first thirty days here at Camp Liberty have been outstanding in engineering operations to support Multi-National Division—Baghdad.

Hooah to the 4th En Bn as their TOA approaches and God Speed to the 890th as they depart. FIRST TEAM, 1st Cavalry Division has set clear operational objectives for us: assured mobility, partnership, and full spectrum engineering effects. Our challenge is to deliver the same or higher level of outstanding engineering performance every month.



Continuous improvement is a model for delivering an outstanding performance every month. I charge every engineer to review his or her military occupation specialty and consider a method of improvement. Provide your recommendation for improvement to your first line supervisor by 13 March. Your supervisor will analyze your recommendation, and an implementation may begin by 20 March.

That's it, a simple improvement process occurring every two weeks to keep the Brigade outstanding. So, mark your calen-

dars to actively participate in this improvement model beginning 13 March and continuing every two weeks through our deployment.

As we look forward to our second full month of operation, all Soldiers should be aware that the Brigade's comprehensive "Accident Prevention Plan" is in full effect. The plan's purpose is to identify opportunities and initiatives to manage risk, prevent accidents, execute missions to our fullest capability and protect the force! With 2009 being The Year of The Non-Commissioned Officer, I am fully confident our plan will be successful, SAFE DEPLOYMENT = SAFE RETURN

CASTLE 6

MESSAGE FROM CASTLE 7

CSM Joseph Major

Greetings Engineer Soldiers, During the next couple editions of *The Engineer Express*, I would like to cover my Command Leadership Philosophy.

Leadership is an art, not a science. Therefore, we, as Senior Leaders, must professionally develop Junior Soldiers through experience, counseling, and mentoring. We must mentor Soldiers to be ethical standard bearers and to live up to and enforce Army values.

The following statements represent my Leadership Philosophy that we must ensure as Non-Commissioned Officers and Leaders of Soldiers so that we are working as one team to produce the best trained Soldiers in the Army.

a. Proficient Caring Leaders: I expect proficient Leaders to demonstrate caring attitudes toward the Soldiers in their charge. We must lead from the front and set

the example at all times. Caring for Soldiers is the foundation of the Army. The most precious asset we have is each other, and above all, our Soldiers in the organization must truly know we care for them and their families.

b. Teamwork: As Leaders we must work as a team in every aspect of training. Soldiers need to cooperate with each other and become one. A well-disciplined caring team will build cohesiveness, which is a bond that no force can break. Soldiers will not play the Officer against the NCO if they truly understand you are one. I will personally be involved in individual training and will insist we are trained.

c. Communication: Along with teamwork, communication is what Soldiers normally see as a command failure. Soldiers must be able to use the chain of command and chain of

support, both formal and informal. I expect every Soldier to utilize communication to its fullest extent. As soon as a Leader gives directives to



Soldiers, I expect the details to be worked out and Soldiers to receive the information rapidly.

d. Leadership: This is in no way a zero defects business. I expect Soldiers to make honest mistakes and learn from the experience... you can

expect me to make honest mistakes as well... we will learn together. Leaders are positive, proactive, and look for problems and solutions in their area of expertise.

SAFE DEPLOYMENT = SAFE RETURN

CSM Joe Major



On the Cover:

Pfc. Jacob Hester of San Jose, Calif., uses an interpreter to explain the field 'slump' test for concrete to Soldiers from the 6th Iraqi Army Engineer Regiment, March 4.

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

Editor: Sgt. Rebekah Malone

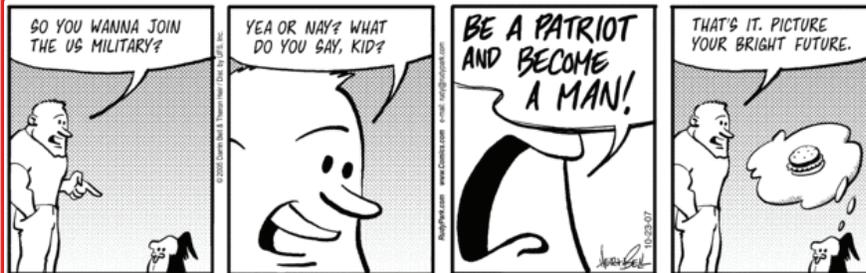
Contributing journalists: Scott Flenner

2nd Lt. LaVerne Taylor * Sgt. Catherine Graham

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NATIONAL GUARD



The Semi-Monthly Newsletter for the
225th Engineer Brigade



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Chaplain's Corner

By Chap. (MAJ) Jeff Mitchell

Your THREE Greatest Needs!

God hot wired us all with three great needs. All of us are on a quest to have them met. We will either have them met in legitimate ways or illegitimate ways. These three needs are security, significance, and acceptance. All of us are asking three driving ?'s, whether we are aware of it or not. Am I loved? Is someone proud of me? Do I have what it takes? Jesus had these three needs met through the voice of His Father. An ole' proverb says, "life and death are in the power of the tongue." The Father spoke words of life to His Son in this matter of His three greatest needs. Jesus received them and lived in light of them. Should we not do the same? Matthew 3:16, 17 and Matthew 17:5 proclaim, "This is My beloved son, in whom I am well pleased, listen to Him." In



other words, "I dearly love Him (security), and I am very pleased and proud of Him (acceptance), and the dude has what it takes, so listen to Him (significance)." The reason illegitimate lust or pleasures pull us away and drag us down is that the greatest pleasure of the Father's love has not been received. On the basis of Christ's high priestly intercessory prayer in John 17:23, 26 the Fathers' words are ours, just as they were Christ's. "You (Father) love them (Us), even as You have loved Me (Jesus)." "So that the love with which You (Father) loved Me (Jesus) may be in them (Us), and I (Jesus) in them (Us)." If your search significance, security and acceptance has come up short, then ask the Holy Spirit to come upon you to allow you to hear the voice of the Father speak these words above. When this happens, you will no longer be driven, but called.

CH (MAJ) Jeff Mitchell

Joke

Saddam's Body Doubles

Last summer an Iraqi general summoned Saddam's 48 body doubles to a safe house in Iraq.

"I have good news and I have bad news" he told the doubles. "The good news is, Saddam is alive!"

Everybody in the room gave a big cheer, "Saddam!" "Saddam!" "Saddam!" "Saddam!"

The Iraqi general then turned to the doubles and said, "The bad news is, he's lost an arm."

Vigilant hunters find IED

By Sgt. Catherine Graham

BAGHDAD – Since the peaceful elections Jan. 31, IED hunters from the 836th Engineer Company, 890th Engineer Battalion, 225th Engineer Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, Multi-National Division - Baghdad, from Kingsville, Texas, have increased their focus when searching for roadside bombs. Over the course of one week, several IEDs has been positively identified and found. Each positive find means one less threat to all who travel the streets of Baghdad.

The Gulfport, Miss., engineers' mission is coming to an end in the next couple of weeks, but the Soldiers still conduct their missions daily, with impressive accuracy and attention to detail. This vigi-

Helzer, a native of Laredo, Texas, was moved forward to complete the interrogation. After removal of plastic exterior, a cylindrical object was found to be inside, it was wrapped heavily in tape with a red wire, attached was a project box and a battery box.

“Military training and experience kicked in and it was like second nature. You see something suspicious and you interrogate it. If you're lucky, it turns out be a positive IED find and we've managed to intercept the insurgents before any damage can occur,” said Helzer.



BAGHDAD – Soldiers of the 836th Engineer Company, from Kingsville, Texas, use the Husky and Buffalo to interrogate a possible improvised explosive device on Feb.11. The 836th Eng. Co. is attached to the 890th Engineer Battalion, 225th Engineer Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad.

(Photo by Sgt. 1st Class, Antonius Vanboekhout, 836th Eng. Co., 890th Eng.)



CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – Cpl. Edward Helzer, a native of Laredo, Texas, receives the Army Commendation Medal on Feb. 9. Helzer's skills were put to good use when he used the Buffalo arm to interrogate a possible improvised explosive device and discovered that it was a positive find. Helzer is with the 836th Engineer Company, 890th Engineer Battalion, 225th Engineer Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad.

(Photo by Sgt. Carmen Guerrero, 890th Eng. Bn.)

lance is the main attribute that has contributed to the success during the deployment of positively identify IEDs before they has the chance to inflict human or collateral damage.

Recently while on route, a patrol conducted an interrogation that resulted in a positive find. The lead husky driver, Spc. Justin Hayse, a native of Indianapolis, Ind., identified an object approximately 8-10 inches in diameter wrapped in a black trash bag. After repeated attempts to roll the object, remove the bag and try to crush the object inside of the bag with the interrogation arm, the object shifted out of reach of the arm.

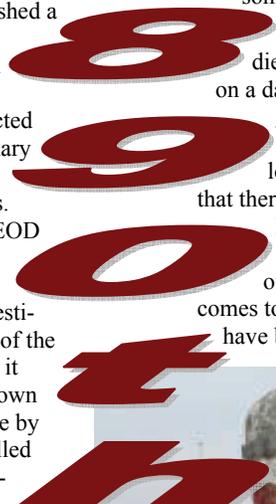
The buffalo, operated by Cpl. Edward

tion. The patrol then continued their mission for the day.

“We try to find them before they find us. Hours can be long, but the success rate for everyone has just climbed the ladder a little higher because we've done our part to assure that the streets of Baghdad are safe by removing potential threats,” said Spc. Justin Hayse, a native of Indianapolis, Ind.

The off ramp, on which the IED was found, had been recently sanitized by Iraqi citizen clean-up crews, which helped to positively identify the IED. Keeping the streets free of trash and debris, patrols are quicker to identify

Explosive Ordnance Disposal and quick reaction force teams were called out. The 836th Eng. Co. patrol established a secure cordon and conducted secondary sweeps. After EOD conducted an investigation of the object, it was blown in place by controlled detona-



something out of the ordinary. “I'm very proud of my Soldiers and the job that they perform on a daily basis. On route there is going to be trash, but you have to remain vigilant enough to look past the rubble and realize that there could be the possibility of an IED being in that rubble,” said 1st Sgt. Sean Maguire, a native of San Antonio, Texas. “When it comes to route clearance, my Soldiers have been taught to never question



CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – Spc. Justin Hayse, a native of Indianapolis, Ind., receives the Army Commendation Medal on Feb. 3. Hayse's knowledge of route clearance procedures helped to positively find and indentify an improvised explosive device. Hayse is with the 836th Engineer Company, 890th Engineer Battalion, 225th Engineer Brigade.

(Photo by Sgt. Carmen Guerrero, 890th Eng. Bn.)

Eng. Improve quality of life at Joint Security Station

By A. Co., 46th Eng. Bn. Unit Public Affairs Representative

Joint Security Station Hurriyah II – In late October 2008, 2nd Platoon, A Company, 46th Engineer Battalion, 225 Engineer Brigade was dispatched to Joint Security Station (JSS) Hurriyah II to enhance the life support facilities of the Joint Security Sta-



Spc. Ian Farnes, a native of Laural, MT, nails a ceiling joist in place on the second floor of build #3.

tion. 2nd platoon constructed a gym, Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) facility, kitchen, DFAC, and living quarters for the Soldiers of 1/502 Infantry Regiment-2/101 Brigade Combat Team. This mission was the first platoon-sized mission for the “Dirty Deuce” platoon, and the largest mission of its kind in the 225th Engineer Brigade. On this project, interior electricians ran over 3,000 feet of electrical wire, installed more than 150 lights and receptacles and emplaced over 30 air conditioners to combat the extreme Iraqi weather. The carpentry masonry specialists emplaced more than 15,000 square feet of plywood and installed over 6,000 square feet of insulation.

The platoon leader, 1st Lt. Kewanda Tate, a native of Northport, Ala., and platoon sergeant, Sgt. 1st Class Anthony Wright of Jacksonville, Fla., used this project as a tool to enhance the platoon’s cohesion and foster the development of junior leaders. Their plan was simple: break the Soldiers into crews according to their military occupation specialty and work experience. Each crew consisted of one NCO and four Soldiers. Staff Sgt. Gary Butler of Fort Worth, Texas, supervised the crew leaders, and with this type of structure and leadership, the Soldiers acquired invaluable technical skills in addition to honing their leadership skills.

Despite the magnitude of the scope of work, the Soldiers of 2nd platoon remarkably found time to construct several smaller projects to enhance the JSS. Pfc. Benjamin Livsey of Terilton, Okla., constructed two swings and an entertainment system for the

MWR. A crew consisting of Cpl. Corey Pratt of Overland Park, Kan., Spc. Rodney Duvall of Casey, Ill., and Pfc. Kevin Behnke of Bonduel, Wis., constructed phone booths, sitting benches and computer stations in the MWR facility. The phone booths and stations of the MWR facility will not only enhance the quality but will also provide privacy when the Soldiers communicate with their loved ones back home. The project enhanced the morale of the Infantry Soldiers who greatly appreciated having a place where they can sit and relax after coming off long hours of patrol.

“When we started construction on this project it was nothing more than an open warehouse, but the Soldiers converted the facilities into multi-functional spaces that will be cherished by Coalition Forces, local nationals, and Iraqi Forces long after we have redeployed,” remarked 1st Lt. Tate.

After a brief refit period, the platoon returned to Hurriyah II to begin the second phase of construction. The second phase of the construction consisted of living quarters and office space for American and Iraqi forces. These facilities would allow the partnered forces to plan, execute, and recover from their joint operations.

In addition to increasing the administrative and living space for the US forces at the JSS, the 2nd phase also fostered goodwill between the maneuver element and its Iraqi Army counterparts. In appreciation of the platoon’s efforts, in early December 2008 the Iraqi Army’s leadership located at JSS Hurriyah II organized a feast and an organization day for the Soldiers. The Soldiers enjoyed various local dishes and enjoyed a game of basketball with their Iraqi Army counterparts.

This second phase of construction was not without challenges. The landowners requested that the living quarters be completed two weeks ahead of schedule because of a surge in population which would occur during the relief in place of 2-101 Brigade Combat Team by 2-1 Infantry Division. The “Dirty

Deuce” platoon began 24-hour operations and was able to complete living quarters that could house more than 50 Soldiers in less than 10 days. “Never in my life have I ever seen Soldiers so eager to hammer lumber and drill at 0300 [3 am],” lamented Cpt. Jeremy Ussery, Commander of B. Co. 1/502nd Infantry Regiment.

The third and final phase of construction required the creation of additional living space to support forces repositioning in accordance with the United States and Iraqi Governments Security Agreement. This phase was projected for 42 days of construction; however, the dedicated Soldiers of 2nd Platoon completed the project almost three weeks in advance, in order to provide new billets for their fellow Soldiers before the holiday season.

In total, the mission increased the total living space on the JSS by over a staggering 23,000 square feet. For their outstanding work and dedication, the Soldiers received Certificates of Appreciation from the battalion commander and battalion command sergeant major of 1-18th Infantry Regiment.

“Hurriyah II was our second home and we will not forget the friendly faces and support that were shown to us during our operations,” stated 1st Lt. Tate. “The soldiers will take the memories and lessons learned to future projects.



Cpl. William Watson, native of Kimball, MI, cuts masonry wall for the frame of the rear door of building #3.

Soldier in Focus

46th Engineer Battalion

PV2 Brandon Sharper

PV2 Brandon Sharper is a native of Camden, S.C., and entered the military immediately after he graduated high school because "I was looking for a challenge and a place that I could advance my ca-



PV2 Brandon Sharper checking
out crew system

reer goals."

Sharper currently serves HSC, 46th Engineer Combat Battalion (Heavy) as a communications specialist. The Commo section has been a driving force in keeping the entire battalion communicating with conducting over 10 lines of effort across MDN-B at one time. Sharper is new to the Army so deployments are an effective means to get new Soldiers the experience and training they lack. Sharper

has done everything from running network internet lines, trouble-shooting computer systems, inter-facing with Division on re-imaging systems, CREW systems, training the force, and VTCs just to name a few.

"I love to trouble-shoot and figure out equipment. It's fun to get issued a high speed piece of equipment, learn it and then teach others. I like dealing with technology in general."

In his free time, Sharper still finds the time to relax through working out. He vows to increase his APFT score from 280 to 300 points. Sharper has started his own fitness initiative called, "The Campaign." His moniker is "I am the dedication".

Sharper's future goal is to get a degree in sports medicine while he continues to serve as a communications specialist.



Medical Moment

By Lt. Col. 'Doc' Miller

REMINDER! 'Kidney stone season' is almost upon us. Believe it or not, it is one of the top five medical reasons Soldiers are lost from theatre. And, having a kidney stone once, makes you more likely to have them in the future (once a stone former, always a stone former).

But, there are things one can do to minimize the risk of developing 'stones.' Almost all Soldiers know that being well hydrated and keeping one's urine a pale- light color is the first step in prevention. But, many service members are unaware that excess nutritional supplements (muscle "building" products), excess vitamins (two or three "Flintstones" is not better than one) are also risk factors because they must be excreted by the kidneys. So, bear this in mind, especially as the weather starts heating up, as it will shortly. Give your kidney's a break---drink plenty of water and remember to avoid "dumping" extra ingredients into your body that your kidneys must then work hard to excrete.

A MEDICAL MOMENT ...
brought to you by your BDE
"Doc"



FIRE



POLICE



EMS

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY, CALL

485-4070

(VOIP OR DSN)

IRAQNA 0790-194-2960

NON EMERGENCY 485-2758

SVOIP - 243-4407

FM 902 – GATEKEEPER

Recognizing this month’s outstanding safety program Soldiers



**2nd Lt. Susie Hubbard,
HSC 890th Safety OIC**



**Staff Sgt. Stephen Tutor
HSC 890th Safety NCOIC**

Safe deployment = safe return

Prepare for troop reduction:

Story and Photos by Sgt. Rebekah Malone

As security stabilizes, the Iraqi Army engineers are asking questions only a year ago seemed far from anyone's thoughts.

How will we get the hundreds of new engineer troops trained? When will we get our equipment fielded?

On March 4, the 225th Engineer Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, met with the 6th Iraqi Army Engineer Regiment Commander Col. Ahmed Saddam at Al Muthana Airfield, Baghdad to begin a dialogue to address the issues that will either hinder the success or establish credibility in the days after the Coalition Forces withdraw.

Brig. Gen. Owen Monconduit, commander of the 225th Eng. Bde. told Ahmed his concerns were very important to him.

"These questions are very important to you, so they are very important to me," Monconduit explained.

Ahmed briefed Monconduit on some of his missions since their last meeting, highlighting gains in mobility the people of Baghdad appreciate.

"We've been focused on opening a lot of roads in Baghdad due to improved safety," Ahmed explained. "The list of roads, some are already finished, some are still being worked on." Ahmed explained collaboration between the Baghdad Provincial Council provided a crane to lift the concrete barriers from the roads because the crane he

had was too small to lift the barriers.

Struggles any military faces, including funding, equipment shortages and transportation of supplies were emphasized repeatedly by the Iraqi commander.

"We relied on American's to provide the parts," he said. "What is our next step, instead of having the American's provide the parts?"

With the 19-month timeline on everyone's mind, Ahmed intends to maximize training opportunities on construction missions before the American forces are significantly reduced next August.

"I've spent 26 years in the Iraqi Army. I have gained more experience in the last four or five years, than in the previous 20," the colonel stated.

Within the month, the IA Eng. plan will add an additional 400 new Soldiers to their ranks he explained.

Training the Soldiers on carpentry, masonry and other engineering skills is crucial to the long-term success of the IA engineers.

"I taught the Soldiers to do things on their own without supervision. I've shown them how to

work, like the Americans," Ahmed said.

Training needs have not gone unnoticed by Lt. Col. Matthew Zajac, commander of the 46th Engineer Battalion from Fort Polk, La. Since last July, Zajac's Soldiers have worked side-by-side with the Iraqi Engineers to give hands on training to Soldiers that have limited experience and formal training.

Zajac explained the Iraqi Army has only recently had the luxury to concern themselves with jobs other than security missions, such as building maintenance and concrete operations. He said significant progress will be made once the unit receives the authorized engineering equipment package in August 2009.

"The greatest boost will occur August 2009 when they receive unit sourcing of equipment ... they will be able to do their job," said Zajac. "There's a lot of latent skill within the IA Engineers."

"The willingness to work with us has always been there," he continued. "With respect to the Security Agreement and troop withdraw ... newer units realize there's a limited time to benefit from our experience and example."

Monconduit told the Iraqi engineers that training on the equipment they will receive in August is paramount to their success.

"Partnership is a team effort; ... we want to enable you to be highly capable to perform engineering operations," Monconduit said. "Like an agreement, you send Soldiers to [training], and fielding [of engineer equipment] will be realized in August."

The partnership between Iraqi engineer and U.S. engineer have the same goal: solve the training and equipment tribulations restricting growth of IA's skill set in engineering capacity.

"If you are trained as a plumber, but don't have a plumber's tool kit ... your new skills will fade quickly," Zajac said.



BAGHDAD – Pouring concrete cements a strong partnership between the 6th Iraqi Army Engineer Regiment and the 225th Engineer Brigade March 4 at Al Muthana Airfield, Baghdad. Command Sgt. Maj. Francis Thibodeaux of Detroit, Mich., senior enlisted advisor for the 46th Engineer Battalion from Fort Polk, La., shows U.S. and Iraqi Engineers the process of proper foundation lying. (Photo by Sgt. Rebekah Malone, 225 Eng. Bde. PAO)

6th IA eng. discuss training, equipment with eng. cdr.



LEFT: A 46th Engineer Battalion Soldier helps an 6th Iraqi Army Soldier with a machine that helps bring air out of the concrete mixture in order create a strong bond.

TOP RIGHT: Command Sgt. Maj. Joe Major presents a 225th Engineer Brigade patch to an Iraqi Soldier for his hard work on the project site pouring concrete.

MIDDLE RIGHT: Sgt. Daniel Bettes of Lebanon, Miss., knows only one way to demonstrate leveling concrete techniques to the 6th Iraqi Army Engineer Regiment, by jumping right in the mix, March 4. Bettes is a member of the 955th Engineer Company, 46th Engineer Battalion, 225th Engineer Brigade



LEFT: Soldiers work together to move the spout of the cement truck into position in order to pour concrete in the proper place. The Engineers have been working with the 6th IA

Mardi Gras—two weeks late or 50 weeks early?

Soldiers of the 225th Engineer Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, from Pineville, La., didn't get enough of Mardi Gras on the actual holiday – so they celebrated two weeks late with their Iraqi engineer part-

ners in Baghdad Saturday.

Or some might say, 50 weeks early.

Engineer Call, a monthly social intended to bring both U.S. and Iraqi Army Engineers together in a casual atmosphere, is aimed at forging a

strong relationship as the Soldiers generate a lasting partnership that will lead to the success of the Government of Iraq.

This month's social was the first held by the Louisiana engineers; and it did not disappoint. Gumbo, the 1st Cavalry Division Jazz Band, hundreds of colored beads and an indescribable, almost electric spirit, created a night in Iraq the 6th Iraqi Army Engineers will not soon forget.

“When everybody got there, they could feel the atmosphere was different,” Lt. Col. LaDenna Piper, originally from New Orleans said. “We shared a part of our state with everyone and they got to see the best Louisiana has to offer; the joy of friendship, the joy of song, and the joy of life. That's what Mardi Gras is all about.”

Louisiana



Piper explained Iraqis have the same love of family and religion that is celebrated during Mardi Gras.

“We should use that sameness to bridge our differences. We’re more alike than you think we are and that’s what we need to focus on,” she said.

Col. Ahmed Saddam, commander of the 6th Iraqi Army Engineers told the crowd of several hundred Soldiers he would never forget the Mardi Gras experience and it had touched his heart in a special way.

He also said it is a life goal of his to make it to a genuine Mardi Gras in Louisiana one day.

Donations from Operation Overseas Mardi Gras, established by Soldier’s Angels assisted in transforming the

plain courtyard area on Camp Liberty into Bourbon Street for the evening. Hanging lights, street signs and colorful décor created an ambiance reminiscent of many evenings spent in the French Quarter.

“The street signs were perfect, they gave it a New Orleans feel to it,” said Piper. “Putting the jazz combo next to one of the lamp posts struck a cord. The sunset was beautiful and the music just touched me.”

Far page, top: Sgt. Danny Diaz of Chicago, Ill., models a mask.

Ssgt Heath gets funky with green hair!

Brig. Gen. Monconduit dances with the Soldiers from the 6th Iraqi Army Engineers.

Current Page: A Soldier enjoys the entertainment while wearing festive beads.

Sgt. Marion Weston of Ball and Maj. Chris Ewing enjoy the parade.

Soldiers from both U.S. and Iraqi Army’s dance together during Mardi Gras festivities.

