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**FRIENDS REMEMBER
FALLEN SOLDIER**

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*Combat Medics
Train IA*

9



**225TH
ENGINEER BRIGADE**

MAY 20, 2009

VOLUME II, ISSUE VI

COMMANDER'S COMMENTS

BG Owen W. Monconduit

HOOAH to every Engineer Soldier. "Thank You" for your significant military contributions in partnering with Iraq to protect the people of Baghdad and increase civil capacity. Your attention to detail and mission focus postures are extremely important to our total success. Remain vigilant in performing your military occupational specialty (MOS).

Everyday here at Camp Liberty offers opportunity for advancement of Iraqi Army Engineering capacities. Ranging from Class IV yard operations, vehicle maintenance, Route Clearance patrols, engineering con-



struction projects for the BCTs, Joint Reconstruction Operation Center actions, to direct training and combined operations with the Iraqi Engineers, every aspect of the 225th

is vital to increasing capacities of Iraq Security Forces (ISF). For example, Wednesday, 13 May 2009, was a full day of Route Clearance and medical training at the 11th Iraqi Army Engineers headquartered in Rusafa. This successful partnership was possible due to the accomplishment of several preparatory tasks such as: Preventive Maintenance Checks and Services (PMCS), Pre-Combat

Checks (PCC), Pre-Combat Inspections (PCIs), etc. Yes, every Engineer Soldier performing his or her MOS makes us successful in increasing the capacities of the Iraqi Army Engineers. Keep up the great engineering work!

As we extend further into continuous operations (CONOPS) include safety in your duty day. Inventory your personal protective equipment (PPE) and associated gear for accountability and serviceability. Get with your first line supervisor should you need to replace unserviceable or loss equipment. Working safely will enhance our accomplishments and make our Engineering team strong.

Safe Deployment = Safe Return!
Castle 6

MESSAGE FROM CASTLE 7

CSM Joseph Major

Greetings Engineer Soldiers,

This week's subject regards maintenance of your assigned weapons and vehicles.

It's extremely important that we maintain our weapons and equipment. First and foremost: Preventive Maintenance Checks and Services (PMCS) on your assigned weapons is a must for your safety and security. Weekly we must ensure that our weapons are cleaned and serviced. Your weapons could possibly save your life, so keep them in good working condition. Conduct function checks often or each time you go outside the wire. Visit the range as often as possible to check your zero and optic

sights. Also, make sure you have full accountable of your weapons by serial number. Visually check your weapons serial number every time you pick it up in the dining facility, CHU, office area, vehicle, and equipment.

The second subject I'd like to address is vehicle maintenance and services. We do a lot of traveling outside the wire with trucks, trailers, Huskies, Buffalos, and MRAPs. Conducting daily PMCS is a must. Checking lugs nuts, tire inflation, and fluid levels could also keep you safe. A break down outside the wire could call for unnecessary risk to be taken. Nothing is

worse than sitting in a broken down MRAP in the middle of Sadar City. Think about the hazards and potential of attack while you are waiting on recovery asset (not a good feeling). Conduct PMCS daily when operating vehicles and equipment.

In closing, stay safe, work hard to support the BCTs and watch out for your "Battle Buddy." Keep your families informed and share your true adventure with them as often as possible.

Safe Deployment = Safe Return
CSM Joe Major





On the Cover:

Photo by Sgt. Rebekah Malone

Spc. Jason Rhodes of San Bernardino, Calif. Tosses a pencil to his teammate. Rhodes is in charge of building a b-hut on Combat Outpost Carver. The increased housing is a necessity to meet the needs of troops moving to the outskirts of Baghdad.



Public Affairs Officer

Lt. Col. Pat Simon

Editor:

Sgt. Rebekah Malone

Staff Writers

1st Lt. Janeene Yarber

Scott Flenner

Contributing

Journalists

Foy Hartman

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Chaplain's Corner

By Chap. (MAJ) Jeff Mitchell

Called vs Driven

Being called vs driven has to do with our reference point of motivation. Is your launching dock towards or from? Let me explain! A driven person is one whom has as their focal point to or towards a particular thing, goal, possession, person, position, etc. that is always out in front of them. A sense of peace and worth is obtained when those items are finally accomplished.

The problem with a driven person is that they rarely obtain all the things they feel they should or if they get close to the accomplishment they move the goal or add one to it; because their worth is tied to the sense of being driven. When a driven person drives others, it might be good for their goal, but very damaging to an organization and especially their significant relationships, such as their spouse or children or fellow-workers.

Being called however has to do moving from. In God's economy the Father, Son, and Spirit love us fully on the basis of a different currency. Our meaning,

dignity, value, worth, and identity are full and complete on the basis of what Jesus Christ accomplished on the cross and our receiving it in order to become children of God. We are called from that vantage point.

"For as many as receive Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name," John 1:12. We receive the full security and worth of that relationship and move from there. If you have received Jesus Christ and have become a child of God, nothing in this world can make you any more royal or valuable. From that calling which is finished, complete, full, and rich, we go live my life as a love gift back to the Ones that have so fully loved me.

Now in organizations or relationships I don't have to prove myself or use you or step on you to go higher. We are co-heirs on a journey. I am not driven towards, but called from. Now, does a statement like, "My sheep hear Me and know My voice and they follow Me," make sense? You never beat or drive sheep; you lead, feed, nourish and care for them and they follow the call.



Joke of the week

Submitted by Sgt. Rokeiser Berymon

I was packing for my business trip and my three year old daughter was having a wonderful time playing on the bed. At one point she said, 'Daddy, look at this', and stuck out two of her fingers.

Trying to keep her entertained, I reached out and stuck her tiny fingers in my mouth and said, 'Daddy's gonna eat your fingers,' pretending to eat them.

I went back to packing, looked up again and my daughter was standing on the bed staring at her fingers with a devastated look on her face.

I said, 'What's wrong, honey?'

She replied, 'What happened to my booger?'



FOOD CHECKLIST

Below is the list of foods that are favorites of Louisianans that we can all relate to even if visiting the state for more than one day. Sgt. 1st Class Russell Seamans, of Lafayette, La. started this list and a few others have added to make it truly a Louisiana Cuisine must while visiting home during EML.

- Fried Boudin Balls
- Blooming Onion (Outback)
- 12 oz Outback Special medium rare w/Aju sauce
- Red Beans and rice
- Cheese burger from Ground Patti
- Pizza from Deano's
- Cracklins from Don's specialty meats
- Breakfast at Cracker Barrel (Eggs over easy)
- Breakfast at Café Des Amis
- Waffle House Waffle with all the trimmings
- Boiled Louisiana Crawfish
- Boiled Louisiana Shrimp
- Fried Catfish from anywhere in Louisiana (or Crappie, Bass, Bream, etc.)
- Fried Alligator tail
- Chicken Fried Steak with white gravy (Hub City Dinner)
- Stuffed Shrimp (Landry's Seafood)
- Fried Seafood Platter (Pat's Fisherman's Wharf)
- Tex-Mex with cooks from Texas or Mexico
- Jambalaya
- Good bowl of Gumbo made especially for you by your aunt, me-maw, mimi, or nana
- Abita Beer (day one and counting or anything but near beer)
- Baja Shrip Wraps from Beef O'Bradys
- Mama's Deviled Eggs
- Catfish Becky (Fried Catfish, covered with crawfish étouffée) from Not Your Mama's
- Deer Meat Saucepicon made by CSM Major
- Fish balls (shoepick), shrimp and brown gravy by Mrs. Major



RECUZIMER GAC ELITZHO

To quote Charles Dickens, "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times..." Congratulations to all to the Soldiers who have become new fathers since being deployed: Sgt. Hopkins for the birth of his daughter, Victoria Marie, on Dec. 11; Capt. Rogers for the birth of his son, James Martin, on March 16; Sgt. Jones for the birth of his son, Luke Michael, on April 23. Spc. Anderson, Sgt. Riva, and Sgt. Cowsar are all to become fathers within the next two months. These are the best of times for these proud Soldiers. At the same time, we mourn the passing of PFC Jacob Barton of the 277th Engineer Company on May 11 as the worst of times. All of these events point to the need for you to proactively ensure that your legal affairs are in order.

Soldiers should confirm that

their DD Form 93, Record of Emergency Data, is correct. This form identifies the persons you would like to be notified in the unlikely event that there is a need. The form further identifies who will receive the death gratuity and unpaid pay and allowances and who is authorized to direct disposition of remains. Unfortunately delays occur if this very important form is not accurate and current.

Equally important, the Servicemembers Group Life Insurance benefits will be paid to the person listed as the beneficiary, regardless of any change in your situation. Thus, you need to ensure that the SGLI beneficiary designation is as you desire, particularly if your situation has recently changed through a marriage, birth, or divorce.

Now might also be a good time

to reconsider the benefits of a will. What may have seemed unnecessary previously may look different in light of changed circumstances. If you have a child, a will can provide for a minor through a trust. You can also designate who you want to take care of your minor children in the event that something happens to both caregivers. If you have married or divorced, then different motivations for drafting a will may be present.

Finally, my S1 admin friends ask that you ensure that iperms is current with awards, schools, promotion orders, and the like.

Life changing events such as births and deaths cause us to take stock and re-evaluate our situation. Ensure that your personal affairs are in order now. The legal office is available to assist you.

Story and photos by Scott Flenner

Builders by trade, Army specialists from the 46th Engineer Battalion, 225th Engineer Brigade, were recently given the chance to build their leadership skills by managing the construction of 30 'B-Huts' in Iraq, May 4. B-huts are wooden structures that house 10 Soldiers per structure.

The 46th Engineers work from sun up to sun down expanding and improving Combat Outpost Carver, located in the southeastern outskirts of Baghdad, in preparation for troop movement from the cities by their June 30 deadline.

"[Soldiers] are moving out of the cities and turning over the inner establishments that we have over to the Iraqis because we are at that point here in this war,"

said Calvin, La. native, Sgt. 1st Class Haden Hobbs, 225th Eng. Brigade liaison at COP Carver.

During this time of transition, engineers must lead the fight to ensure that the outskirt bases have the facilities to house and feed the newly arrived Soldiers at places such as COP Carver. The building of the B-huts is the first step in this process.

"We are building better lives for the troops. The Soldiers out here on this COP are living in tents and are building a hard structure for them to live in with [air conditioning] and of outlets to their computers said Spc. Bailey, a carpenter with the 46th Eng.

Bn. from Kilgore, Texas.

And the leadership of the 46th feels no one is more capable of making sure this mission is accomplished than the Army's future noncommissioned officers like Spc. Bailey.

"Our Soldiers have consis-

tently excelled and worked above their pay grade throughout this deployment. The senior specialists have been asking for the opportunity to take responsibility for a building," said platoon leader 1st Lt. Virginia Brickner from Van Wert, Ohio.

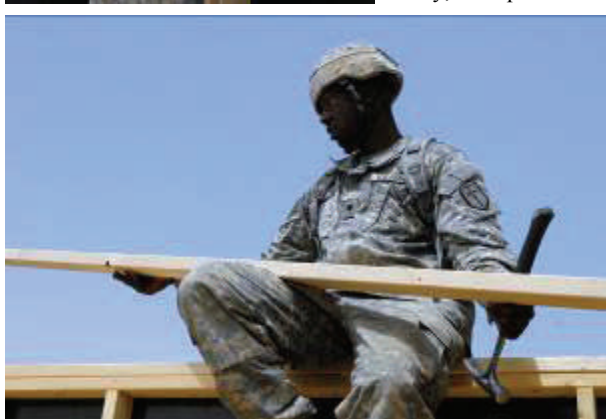
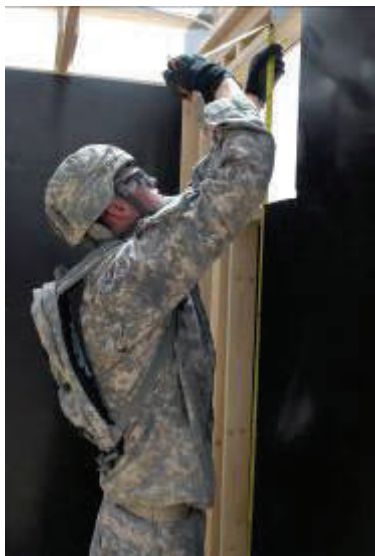
"This project provided the perfect opportunity. The specialists are each in charge of their own work crews and pace of construction. If an issue or obstacle arises they have to work through it on their own," she continued.

Given a crew of their fellow Soldiers, and Soldiers from the 1st of the 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division, who hold ranks below and above their own, does cause some adjustments to be made as seen by some of the senior non-commissioned officers.

"The first few days were a little interesting because he wanted to stand at parade rest and give me direction, but now I am nothing more than a worker bee to him," Hobbs said with a smile about working for Bailey. "I am learning a lot from him and the Soldiers out here."

The 'specialist in the lead' project will continue for the next two months. It is enough time to meet the deadline for constructing a dining facility extension, food prep area and more living quarters.

"Our hope is that this experience helps them to continue to develop both their leadership and construction skills, making them stronger future noncommissioned officers," said Brickner.



TOP: Spc. Miles McFarland from Portland, Ore., measures the opening for an environmental control unit before he cuts plywood sheathing for the wall section. Highland BOTTOM: Park, Mich. native, Spc. Issiah White from Highland Park, Mich., prepares to install a double top plate to lock in the walls of his B-Hut at Combat Outpost Carver.



46th

Soldier & NCO of the Month

BG Owen Monconduit, commander of the 225th Engineer Brigade is pictured with the Soldier, Spc. Dodge and NCO, Sgt. Thomas of the Month for the 46th Engineer Combat Battalion (Heavy).

Steel Spike!

Clearing roads together: US, IA partner for training mission

By Sgt. Rebekah Malone



In the hot mid-day sun, Iraqi Army Soldiers stood proud in their protective gear as they prepared for a route clearance training mission, May 13 with their counterparts from the 515th Engineer Sapper Company, attached to the 225th Engineer Brigade, in the northeastern Baghdad district of Adhamiyah.

A sand table diagram made to scale charted the planned route with roads in bright colors exactly where the route clearance mission would take place as 1st Lt. Kyle Poppe of Polland, N.Y. explained the concept of the mission as more than 30 IA Soldiers prepared for their first mission in U.S. vehicles.

Lt. Col. Hatem Hameed, commander of the 11th Iraqi Army Engineer Regiment, told Brig. Gen. Owen Monconduit, commander of the 225th Engineer Brigade, that training is vital to preparing the IA engineers.

"We are ready and willing for any task that will make my training requirements," Hatem said, regarding training requirements before his equipment fielding is realized in June. "We always ask for more training, and this is a good opportunity."

With only a year in the Iraqi Army, Sgt. Bassam's eyes were wide open as the 515th Eng. Co., pulled onto the street near the regiment's headquarters in Adhamiyah. Curiosity and confidence, more than fear, exuded from the 21-year-old.

"Before this was a very bad area, now it has improved since the headquarters of the 11th IA came over," Bassam said.

Bassam asked the U.S. Soldiers questions about capabilities of the

equipment, speed of the convoy and how they handled situations. Questions were then fired back at Bassam.

"What are tale-tell signs of IEDs you look for?" Sgt. Daniel Denny of Ridgecrest, N.C., asked through an interpreter.

Without hesitation, Bassam spouted off all the answers.

"That's pretty good!" Denny said.

Before long, the Soldiers exchanged stories about what they had experienced and discussed differences between the specialized roadside bomb hunting vehicle, the IA's Badger, and the U.S. version of the same vehicle, the Buffalo.

"This is the first time ever 3rd Platoon has taken Iraqi Soldiers in

our vehicles," Poppe said. "They enjoyed it and allowed for them to see how we accomplish our mission. It's a good training opportunity for the IA Soldiers and it went well."

515th engineers have cleared roads of improvised explosive devices all over central Iraq for the past 13 months. And while they have conducted numerous training classes, this

was the first time the IA engineers had ever been on the

streets of Baghdad in the 515th Eng. Co.'s vehicles, watching U.S. techniques in action.

"The training is very useful for the IA to work together with the U.S. Army to see how they do their job," Bassam said. "We want to learn as much as we can to save lives of Iraqi civilians."



1st Lt. Kyle Poppe, of Randolph, Neb., briefs U.S. and Iraqi Army Engineers on the training route clearance mission to be held in the northeastern Baghdad district of Adhamiyah.

By 1st Lt. Jerry Rodriguez

Note from the Editor

In the 1st Letter from the Editor, I want to encourage you to write a letter *to* the editor. Of course letters must be respectful, without profane or offense language. We want to hear from our Soldiers. Maybe you saw an amazing story you want to share, highlight an accomplishment or express an opinion about a better way to do something — Send them my way!

~ Editor







FIRE POLICE EMS

EMERGENCY CALL

485-4070

(VOIP OR DSN)

IRAQNA 0790-194-2960 NON EMERGENCY 485-2758

SVOIP - 243-4407 FM 902 – GATEKEEPER



225 EN BDE TOC: 242-4407 / 847-2613

HHC, 225 EN (GOAT HOUSE): 242-4150 / 847-2382

Safety Spotlight

For the Soldiers of Direct Support Unit, 46th Engineer Combat Battalion (Heavy), Sgt. Amanda Kerr is more than just an Automated Logistics Specialist that supervises the maintenance clerks. She's also a stickler for Soldiers obeying the standards safety SOPs.

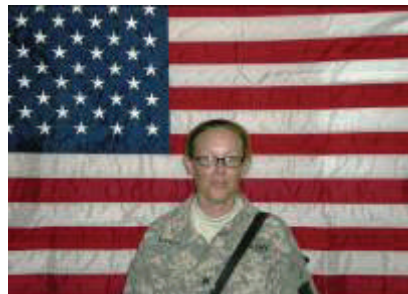
"It's not just about getting the job done or the parts picked up fast, it's about doing it right," Sgt. Kerr explained. "Doing it right is not merely filling out the paperwork properly, but also making sure that her logistics operations follow Army and unit standards from conception to completion.

When it comes to operating military vehicles, Sgt. Kerr cuts out the lazy habits first.

"Don't even think about wearing PTs in one of my vehicles. When my Soldiers or me need to go somewhere, we'll change out of PTs and into the ACUs to ensure we meet the

Safe Soldier!

standard. Helmets are a must. "Before she or her Soldiers open the door, she checks the dispatch book and licenses of those involved to make sure everything is in order.



Sgt. Amanda Kerr

The wear of seat belts is fastidiously enforced, and the vehicle commander must be awake and alert. Besides these small things

that add up to good order, she takes no risk when it comes to moving heavy materials.

"We once turned in a completely dead Bobcat, and while the LMTV we were transporting it on has small rails to keep in materials, that simply was not enough," she said. "We strapped it down generously, then put chock blocks beneath the tires to make sure that thing was not going to move at all."

So Sgt. Kerr ensures with all parts moves, and DSU often transports entire engines to and from the parts supply centers, safety is considered. It is her attention to possible risks and dedicated enforcement of safety standards that makes Sgt. Amanda Kerr a leader in Soldier safety!

Memorial Ceremony in Baghdad allows friends, comrades to say goodbye

By 1st Lt. Janeene Yarber

'Modest, innocent, humble, cheerful, generous, respectful, and selfless' were the words repeated over and over by those who spoke of 20 year-old Army Reserve Specialist Jacob Barton, during his Memorial Service held in the packed, standing room only chapel on Camp Liberty, May 14. As the kind words poured forth from those Barton touched, you could hear the grief and sadness felt for the young man whose life ended so abruptly earlier this week in a tragic shooting incident.

"Barton was very innocent. He was just a boy - still a kid. We finally got him to start standing up for himself and he was really starting to develop," stated Sgt. Alexis Hernandez, Spc. Barton's squad leader, 277th Engineer Company, a native of San Antonio. "Wish he could've experienced so much more in life."

Spc. Barton was raised in Lenox, Mo., a town with a population of only three families. His friends say that small-town upbringing, coupled with his kind heart made him seem a bit naïve, sheltered, and quite innocent.

"[Barton] often found himself being tricked by his peers because of his trusting nature and very limited exposure to the corruption of the outside world," stated Capt. Gordon Robbins, commander, 277th Eng. Co., a native of Junction, Texas, during the eulogy. "It was his purity and trusting nature that allowed him to take the pranks without ever holding a grudge against his buddies."

Barton was stationed with the 955th Eng. Co., based in Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., but was cross-leveled to the 277th and deployed with them. Members of his platoon

say when Spc. Barton first arrived from Missouri to San Antonio, he was eager to learn as much as he could about the maintenance field and explore the city around him.

"He came to this unit as green as a blade of grass," stated Spc. Jason Mata, close friend, and fellow mechanic, 277th Eng. Co. "It was his first time since basic training that he had been away from Missouri. [Barton] didn't know what the feel of a big city was like."

"I was determined to change that," Mata continued. "We were granted an overnight pass, and I was going to make sure he saw the bright lights of San Antonio. He had the time of his life that night and thanked me tremendously for taking him out with the other Soldiers."

Spc. Barton also had a strong sense of duty. He worried frequently about taking care of his family back home and was constantly chatting online with his sister.

"The reason Spc. Barton served his country and volunteered for this deployment was to provide financial benefits for his family back home in Missouri," stated Robbins during the eulogy. "While most Soldiers dream of using their pay for things which directly benefit only them...Spc. Barton only wanted to provide for his family."

Trying to juggle a new career, his first deployment, and the death of his mother prompted him to seek help from professionals at the Combat Stress Center on Camp Liberty.

"[Spc. Barton] was at the Combat Stress Clinic voluntarily, because he had the personal courage to recognize Mother's Day had brought forth strong emotions of the recent loss of his mother," stated Lt. Col. Matthew Zajac, commander, 46th Engineer Combat Battalion (Heavy), a native of Schaumburg, Ill. "He simply desired to talk with someone trained to listen."

Barton died from a gunshot wound inflicted by another Service Member at the medical facility. The shooting suspect was taken into military custody and the incident is under investigation by the U.S. Army.

"Barton was very generous and never thought of the cost to himself," stated Spc. Daniel Castillo, 277th Eng. Co., close friend to Spc. Barton, and a native of San Antonio. "He was just a simple guy, didn't complain about this or that, and always tried his best. It's just as simple as that."

As the Soldiers said goodbye to a friend and comrade they knew only briefly - but had impacted their lives so strongly, they tried to make sense of such a senseless tragedy.

"Through his eyes life was pure and innocent, but the good Lord saw cruelty and deception in his path and decided to send the angels for him," stated Hernandez. "The Lord made a decision to keep him pure and innocent in heaven forever. Our Maker has bigger plans for a person with a heart as pure as Spc. Barton's."

Man on a Mission

By Sgt. Rebekah Malone

Even after 4 hard years, the work is not done for Brad Blauser of Wheelchairs for Iraqi Kids. Unemployment, lack of resources and an estimated 500,000 disabled children needing the gift of freedom of movement face the 43-year old, but still he forges on, asking for donations to make one wheelchair at a time.

In late 2005, an Army battalion surgeon, Maj. David Brown shared with Blauser, who was in Iraq working as a safety contractor, the need for wheelchairs. He explained that he regularly saw disabled children either confined to their home, a shame to their family or dragging themselves through the streets.

"Driving around Mosul, in a city of two million people, there were so many children they saw dragging themselves on the ground with deformed legs, missing their legs or their legs just didn't work [due to birth defects]," Blauser explained about his conversation with Brown.

"Their only method of getting around was to drag themselves," he continued. "If you understand what is on the streets

cock, executive director of non-profit organization Reach Out and Care Wheels (ROCwheels.org), an association that provided a specially designed wheelchair that could be made for only \$350 per chair.

It was truly a grassroots project," Blauser said. "It was at that point we decided to start fundraising."

With more than 600 pediatric and 240 small adult wheelchairs distributed since 2005, Blauser explained the progress he has made is painstaking; each step requires the changing of a culture's mentality toward disabled children, in a country that didn't even know what a pediatric wheelchair was. He said getting the Iraqis to under-

Blauser said that according to UNICEF, one out of seven children in Iraq is disabled. By these estimates he said, "I've affected one tenth of one percent of the disabled children in Iraq. One person cannot help all of the people."

Blauser has received help from numerous Army generals including the former commander of Multi-National Force – Iraq, Gen. David Petraeus. Currently, when shipments of wheelchairs arrive, he works with brigade combat teams to distribute the chairs. The next mission, scheduled for this month, is being coordinated by the 225th Engineer Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, and will distribute an additional 30 chairs.

An additional 100 chairs will be shipped after the distribution next month. Without additional funds, those will be the last chairs Blauser will help bring into the country.

"If we don't get more donations in a big way, I'm finished," he said. "We need donations from individuals, corporate sponsors, nongovernmental organizations, the Iraqi government or others in order to take this effort to the next level and make a true, significant difference for disabled Iraqi kids."

Plans have been made for an existing Iraqi factory to make the wheelchairs that would provide 50,000 to 75,000 chairs over five years; a significant injection of capital into an economy plagued by unemployment, but red tape and lack of funding has the hope of the project seriously in doubt.

"We found a factory in Mahmudiyah, the National Medal Bicycle Company. At one time they employed up to 1500 people and were the largest factory in the Middle East.

Currently they only employ 75 people," Blauser said. "They built a prototype off of pictures and drawings and did a great job. They're ready to go, we just need funds to help them finalize production details and purchase wheelchairs from them."

Providing freedom to Iraq's disabled children one wheelchair at a time is a mission Blauser never foresaw, but has learned it is a form of service no different than freedom Soldiers give fighting on the battlefield. For more information about how you can help, please go to Brad Blauser's website at: www.WheelchairsForIraqiKids.com/.



Right: Ben, a 10-year old boy in California plays to raise money for Wheelchairs for Iraqi Kids. He has raised more than \$10,000 so far and plans to continuing until he reaches one million dollars. Top right: An Iraqi boy eager to start seeing the world around him after being fit for his new chair. Bottom left: Brad Blauser patiently assembles a wheelchair that takes 15-30 minutes per child to adjust.

due to the open sewer system, the kids dragging themselves in that environment is really unsanitary."

Without much direction or guidance, Blauser sent emails to his friends and family, asking for help with donations and thoughts on how to proceed.

"In 30 days, we had 31 children and small adult wheelchairs on the ground that we didn't pay anything for," Blauser said. "People who didn't know each other started working together."

As the humanitarian mission expanded, Blauser was contacted by Andrew Bab-

stand the need for his cause is a challenge, but it is changing, one wheelchair at a time.

"In this culture, disabled children are sometimes viewed as a curse from God. Often they are left in the home out of public view," Blauser said. "But when the parents see the wheelchair, they realize it's an easy way to transport their children without having to carry them – to the market, or in the neighborhood; the wheelchair becomes an invaluable tool to help them with their child."

Looking for a long term solution

Combat medics train Iraqi engineers

by Scott Flenner

Soldiers from the 225th Engineer Brigade, Multi-National Division – Baghdad gave medical training to the Iraqi Army route clearance team members of the 11th IA Engineer Regiment located in the north-eastern Baghdad district of Adhamiyah, May 13.

Thanks to training provided by the

'Castle' engineers, what to do in the aftermath of a fellow soldier becoming injured is no longer a fear or cause for concern for the IA Soldiers.

"The mission today was to reinforce basic life saving skills, basic

first aid, and show them new methods and new ways they can improve upon rendering medical care to each other," said 225th combat medic, Sgt. Mark Jackson, who hails from Alexandria, La.

There are many skills that a Soldier must master to become proficient in medical first aid, but none being more important than

controlling bleeding.

"You have to control the bleeding," said Jackson.

To control bleeding in a combat zone usually means the application of a tourniquet, a device that constricts blood vessels to slow the bleeding; and being able to apply that tourniquet can be the differ-

ence between life and death for a Soldier. "We showed the IA how to apply improvised and CAT II tourniquets, going in depth with the improvised," said Staff Sgt. Adam Sanchez of the 225th Eng. Bde., who is a native Pineville, La.

"An improvised tourniquet is not a commercial tourniquet. It is a tourniquet

that is using the available materials that you may have with you such as rags, sticks, and such," he continued. The Soldiers from the 11th IA quickly took note of the training and began practicing putting bandage wraps and the all important tourniquets on each other's arms and legs to practice what was just taught.

As the lead instructor Sanchez noted, "They were very excited to learn and I was surprised at the amount of knowledge (first-aid) that the IA

Soldiers already had. Even some of the senior guys there were former med students."

The combat medics of the 225th Eng. Bde., will continue to provide instruction to its Iraqi Army partners for many months to come.



Left: Staff Sgt. Adam Sanchez demonstrates bandaging a wound. Middle: Sgt. Mark Jackson instructs Iraqi Army Soldiers on how to apply a tourniquet. Right: Maj. Frederick Hall, the brigade doctor, plays patient for Sgt. Jackson as Soldiers from the 11th Iraqi Army look on.

Engineer Call celebrates:

Cinco de Mayo



Each month engineers from all over Multi-National Division—Baghdad come together to social, including our Iraqi partners. This month, the theme was Cinco de Mayo and was put on by the 277th Eng. Co., 46th Eng. Bn, headquartered in San Antonio. Thanks to some amazing chefs, the engineers were able to eat more than 800 homemade tortillas! The Unique and fun party favors included snow cones and a 'margarita' bar! Thanks 277th!

Next month the 6th Iraqi Army Engineer Regiment will host the event at al-Muthana Airfield. More to follow!

Photo by Scott Flenner

Photo by Scott Flenner

Photo by 1st Lt. Janeene Yarber

A series of historical places in Iraq: Dair Mar

Article by Foy Hartman, engagement coordinator

Northeast of Mosul about 20 miles is Dair Mar Mattai. The monastery is built on the Maqlub Mountain and overlooks 3 small Christian villages which have a long history of lending support to persecuted people. Perhaps due to its own history the Assyrian Church continued this tradition by offering sanctuary to Muslim families threatened by Al Qaida in Mosul in 2005 through 2007.

Dair Mar Mattai is considered to be the most important Assyrian monastery in Iraq due to its religious, historical, and geographical significance. Located at the top of the famous 'Maqloub' Mountain, the monastery overlooks the magnificent fields of the Nineveh plains. To the left of the monastery is a large cave with natural mountain spring water dripping from the ceiling of the cave. The monastery has over 50 rooms, 3 halls for gathering, a church, A saints' room (Baith Qadisheh) believed to hold the remains of Mar Mattai, Mar Zakkai, Mar Abraham, Bar Ibraya among others*

Considered the only monastery remaining with its original building since its establishment. the only accurate date for the monastery actually belongs to the building of the church within it, and dates back to 361. It was founded by Christian monks who were fleeing persecution by the Roman Empire and Emperor Julian. Persecution

of Christians resulted in the displacement of thousands of Christians migrating south from the Eastern empire in Turkey into what is modern day Iraq.

Mar Mattai, the founding Monk, is believed to have been born in Amid, Diar Bakir (present day South Eastern Turkey). The number of refugees continued to increase to over 7000 which brought about the

present, the monastery became a well known learning center except during the 12th century when many of its monks had to flee during the Salah Al-deen Al-ayoobi battles which threatened all the Christians living in Nineveh. The monastery returned to its past splendor in the thirteenth century until its partial destruction by the Mongols.

The monastery remained abandoned till 1795 AD when Basil Gargis II Al-Mosuli renovated it and built the fence walls around it. In 1845, additional wings were added. The monastery is still considered to one of the most sacred places of Christian worship in the Middle East. Christians belonging to the Assyrian church



Dair Mar Mattai

new name of the mountain, Tura D'alpayeh, or the Thousands Mountain. in 484 AD, the mountain monks continued to teach and support the local populace as well as the Turkish refugees many of which settled into the Nineveh area. Since then, its bishop was given the title 'Bishop of Athur and the N i n e v e h P l a i n s ' . Since the beginning of the 6th century and continued to the

of the East, the Chaldean Church, the Syriac Orthodox Church, and well as other Assyrian churches frequently visit Dair Mar Mattai for spiritual healing and meditation.

The Assyrian Christians living in the area continue to support the persecuted of all religious and ethnic backgrounds and have lived in relative peace with the Kurdish populace for hundreds of years.

Castle Brigade April NCO, Soldier of the Month

By Lt. Col. Pat Simon

Spec. Michael Hanks

Soldiers that know Spec. Michael Hanks describe him as hyper, but that may very well be to his advantage as this month's "Soldier of the Month."

Hanks, 20, is from Lecompte, La. where he resides with his wife Katie.

Here in Iraq, Hanks is a Technical Engineer in CEOC and these days, he is really busy making sure fellow Soldiers have a good place to stay, eat and maintain their fitness levels.

"My main job is designing buildings, DFACs, gyms and TOCs for support of the troops," Hanks said. "That's especially true now since more Soldiers are moving to the outskirts of Iraq, I design for their life support. I'm pretty happy about that."

Hanks' most recent mission was to conduct a site assessment and survey the grounds for COP Four Corners located about 26 miles east of Camp Liberty, another area that will soon see more Soldiers as the June 30th Security Agreement deadline approaches.

Projects like these make Hanks feel like he is playing a major role in the future development of Iraq and in helping his fellow Soldiers.

"I feel like I am needed. It's a long and tedious process, but when it's done, Soldiers are really happy," he said.

They're not the only ones. Hanks is thrilled about his new honor. "I'm dead gum happy about it," said Hanks excitedly. "It shows that I am being noticed in my field and work that's being done, but there's a lot left over,"

What is in short supply however, is candy like Whoppers and Raisinettes around Hanks' work area. Hanks said Master Sgt. Cole and

Sgt. 1st Class Seamans take sweets away from him because he gets too hyper. "It's hard to be calm, especially if I eat sugar," Hanks admitted. Now Hanks is going to have to explain how he managed to keep a stash of Thin Mint Girl Scout cookies tucked away in his desk to get his sugar fix.



Spec. Michael Hanks gets into his stash of sweets, Thin Mint Girl Scout cookies!

the NCO of the month. "It's something to tell the Missus!"

One thing you might not know about Sanchez is that he earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Graphic Design from North-

Staff Sgt. Adam Sanchez

Experience and dedication to Soldiers are some of the main attributes of Staff. Sgt. Adam Sanchez - the 225th Engineer Brigade "NCO of the Month."

Sanchez, a 36 year old father of four, is married to wife Renee and said he is ecstatic about receiving

his work as a Medical Treatment NCO on the battlefield, there are some aspects that do come in handy.

"I can take a good photo and make PowerPoint slides," Sanchez said with a chuckle.

Sanchez joined the active component of the Army in 1991 because he wanted to help people but not be in a combat arms unit. Ironically, Sanchez's first assignment was working as a medic in a light infantry company. In 2004, he served with Louisiana's 256th Infantry Brigade here in Iraq.

Five years later, he is passing along combat lessons learned to 225th engineer Soldiers.

"Always be prepared," said Sanchez, recalling one time during his first deployment when his weapon malfunctioned because it needed cleaning. "If something really happens, make sure you have done everything ahead of time so that you can handle the situation."

Sanchez said that is as true today as it was five years ago when the combat environment was much livelier.

It's odd going down the same routes today and we're no longer seeing the same explosions as we

did back then," said Sanchez. "It's not as bad today as it was back then."

Yet Sanchez trains his Soldiers not to let their guard down. That is one reason he is the 225th Engineer Brigade's "NCO of the Month," and if he is ever looking for a different MOS, maybe

we could use his picture taking skills in the public affairs office.



Staff Sgt. Adam Sanchez (left) write pertinent information on a role player Maj. Hall's head during a medical training exercise with the 11th Iraqi Army Eng. Reg.

western State. Sanchez said although his degree does not have a direct impact of

2009: Year of the NCO

Brigade Contact Info

LTC Patrick Simon

patrick.a.simon@
mnd-b.army.mil
DSN: 847-2547

Sgt. Rebekah Malone

rebekah.malone@
mnd-b.army.mil

Scott Flenner

scott.flenner@
mnd-b.army.mil

Mailing Address

225 EN BDE
APO AE 09344

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-PAO Team

"Four hostile newspapers are more to be feared than a thousand bayonets."

United States Army Non-Commissioned Officer Creed

No one is more professional than I. I am a Noncommissioned Officer, a leader of soldiers. As a Noncommissioned Officer, I realize that I am a member of a time honored corps, which is known as "The Backbone of the Army". I am proud of the Corps of Noncommissioned Officers and will at all times conduct myself so as to bring credit upon the Corps, the Military Service and my country regardless of the situation in which I find myself. I will not use my grade or position to attain pleasure, profit, or personal safety.

Competence is my watchword. My two basic responsibilities will always be uppermost in my mind -- accomplishment of my mission and the welfare of my soldiers. I will strive to remain tactically and technically proficient. I am aware of my role as a Noncommissioned Officer. I will fulfill my responsibilities inherent in that role. All soldiers are entitled to outstanding leadership; I will provide that leadership. I know my soldiers and I will always place their needs above my own. I will communicate consistently with my soldiers and never leave them uninformed. I will be fair and impartial when recommending both rewards and punishment.

Officers of my unit will have maximum time to accomplish their duties; they will not have to accomplish mine. I will earn their respect and confidence as well as that of my soldiers. I will be loyal to those with whom I serve; seniors, peers, and subordinates alike. I will exercise initiative by taking appropriate action in the absence of orders. I will not compromise my integrity, nor my moral courage. I will not forget, nor will I allow my comrades to forget that we are professionals, Noncommissioned Officers, leaders!

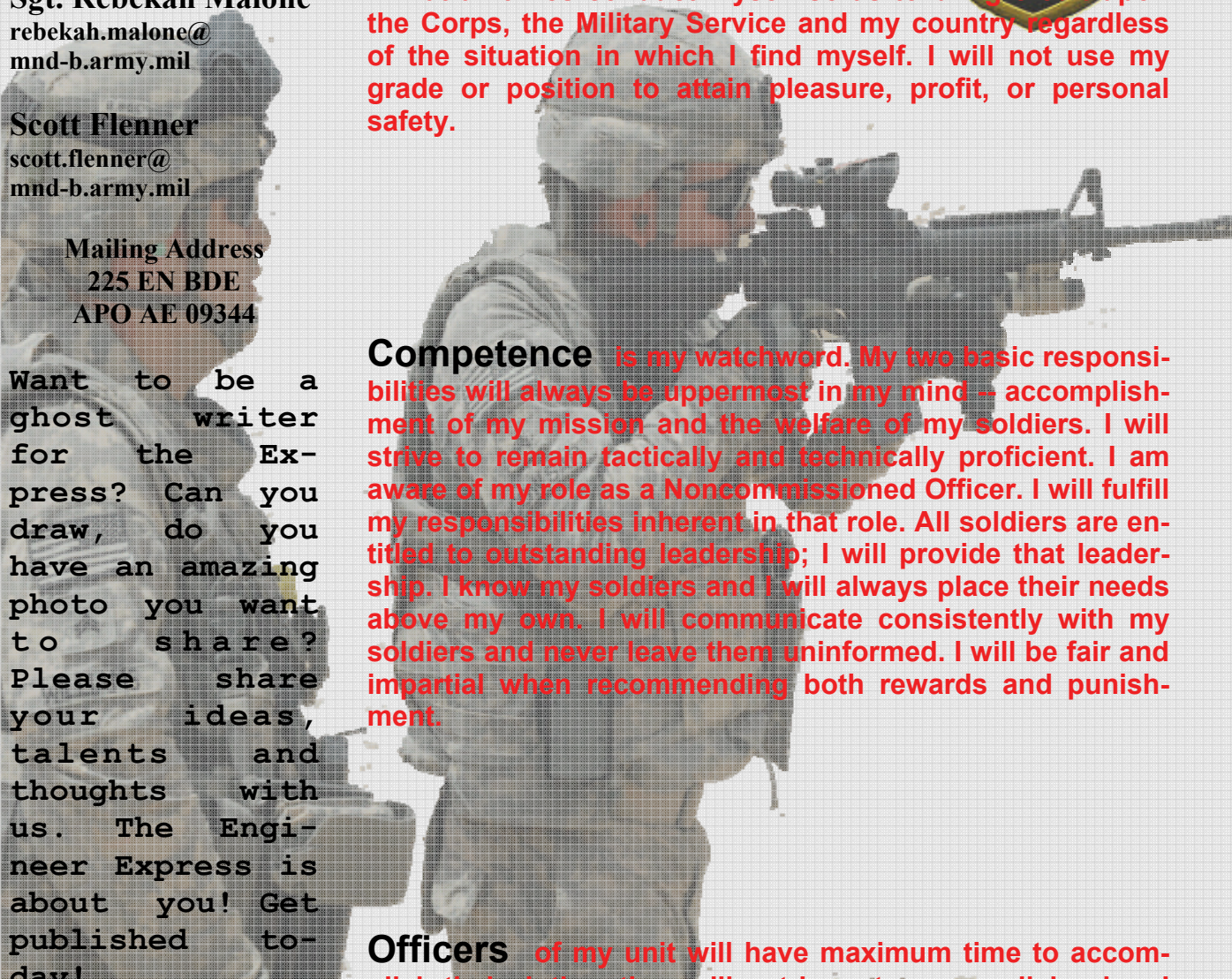


Image of PSD members Sgt. Timothy Cowsar & Sgt. Charles Williams., 225th En. Bde.

Know a high-speed Soldier that should be featured in the Express? Recommend them today!