

227th Engineers build bridges in Iraq

By Staff Sgt. Mark Burrell
MND-B PAO

BAGHDAD — On the banks of a rushing river in northeast Baghdad, clouds of dust hang in the air and hulking machines transform the landscape in preparation for a new bridge being built by Army Reserve Soldiers of the 277th Engineer Company, July 30.

Though a suspension bridge already spans the fast-flowing river, it won't support most Coalition forces vehicles, explained Spc. Shane Brassell, a heavy equipment operator from Whitney, Texas, assigned to the 277th

bridge that's going to be stronger and safer for our guys.”

Being able to move through the area safely and quickly is imperative for the Soldiers stationed on either side of the river as well as for Iraqi Security Forces located here.

“It's a main thoroughfare for Iraqi Army and Iraqi Police and it's right next to Taji, which is a big base for them and it will help them get their equipment through much easier,” added Brassell about the importance of the bridge for his ISF partners.

Maj. Andrew Hilmes, the executive officer for the 1st Squad-

threats.”

“It will also give future units the capability to rapidly haul a lot of equipment through Baghdad,” continued Hilmes, a native of Sarasota, Fla.

Though the implications behind the success of a new bridge are easy to be seen, the coordination, effort and sweat that go into a project such as this in a combat zone aren't taken lightly.

This portion of the river is deceptively deep, with a fast and deadly current that could easily swallow a piece of equipment, explained Brassell as he ground-guided a crane just a few feet from the 10-foot drop into the river.

Along with the treacherous terrain, it was riddled with large concrete blocks buried deep within the soil that needed to be moved, he added.

“We're lucky enough to use the D-9 dozer. It's the biggest engineering piece of equipment in the Army and because they're so big and it's a weight issue, we don't always use them,” Brassell said. “We still struggled a little bit, but we got good operators.”

One of those operators, Spc. Franklin Cardenas, marveled at the size of the concrete blocks. “A lot were buried in the ground and we had to work them up and push them out...they weigh more than a Volkswagen Bug,” added the Luling, Texas native as he pointed to a colossal pile of broken concrete slabs.

“It's dangerous,” said Cardenas, a heavy equipment operator, also assigned to the 277th Eng. Co. “But I have a lot of belief in

our security force and we really rely heavily on them. I have a lot of trust in them...but we have to stay vigilant too and you need to know what's happening and keep your head on a swivel.”

A rotating security element of 1st Cav. Div. Soldiers keeps a watchful eye on the engineers every minute of the day.

“Since day one, we've closely coordinated their security,” explained Hilmes. “Not only is the 277th an external unit, but also a Reserve unit...we've worked with them a few times already on the JSS [Joint Security Station] and they've offered to help out anyway they can...as far as we're concerned they're members of the team.”

The teamwork between the cavalry Soldiers and the engineers is apparent and just another example of Soldiers helping Soldiers get the mission accomplished.

“It brings a feeling of comfort knowing that my guys are going across there safe and the ISF will be safe too,” said Brassell as he tried to remove dirt from his brow but only succeeded in adding another layer of mud.

“There hasn't been a lot of griping from the troops because I think they understand the long term benefits of this bridge,” said Hilmes with a smile. “This is another one of those things to better protect the force and keep Soldiers out of harm's way.”

In order to do that, Reserve Soldiers help active duty Soldiers, cavalry scouts protect engineers and troops keep troops out of harm's way.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Mark Burrell, MND-B PAO

Spc. Shane Brassell, an Army Reserve Soldier from Whitney, Texas, and a heavy equipment operator assigned to the 277th Engineer Company, 46th Eng. Bn., 225th Eng. Bde., provides security and ground guides his fellow engineer near the river where the Soldiers are building a bridge in northeast Baghdad, July 30.

Eng. Co., 46th Eng. Battalion, 225th Eng. Brigade.

“The bridge they have now is not big enough and not strong enough to get our MRAPs [Mine-Resistant Ambush-Protected vehicles] through,” said Brassell. “So we're helping put up another

ron, 7th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division based just south of the river that resupply at Camp Taji, agreed with the assessment. “It shortens the distance and travel time,” he said. “Less time on the roads is less exposure to

Aircraft recovery team trains on saw

By Staff Sgt. Catrina Dors-ey and Capt. Jeff Hamer
1st ACB PAO

CAMP TAJI, Iraq — The early morning stillness is broken by the growl of a chainsaw-like engine and the screech of tearing iron.

The growl belonged to a gas operated chop saw, the training focus for the Downed Aircraft Recovery Team of the 615th Aviation Support Battalion, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, July 30, on the outskirts of the Camp Taji airfield.

“Our purpose today is to help the team members be more confident using the chop saw,” said Staff Sgt. Jeremy McNichol, of Lockeford, Calif., a technical inspector with B Company, 615th ASB, and the noncommissioned officer in charge of the DART team.

Pvt. Joshua Tompkins, from Enterprise, Ala., a member of the DART team, said the focus is to recover a downed aircraft.

“We call a downed aircraft a fallen angel,” said Tompkins. “A fallen angel is outside the T-barriers or outside the wire. There has to be a specified team to go out and recover the aircraft.”

“The important thing today is for us all to know how to use the equipment,” he added.

Spc. Rebecca Evans, from Dorrance, Penn., an AH-64D Apache attack helicopter mechanic, said she attended the training to learn how to use a chop saw in the event of a DART mission.

“I could feel the heat from the sparks through my ACU’s (Army Combat Uniform),” Evans said of her initial experience with the chop saw. “At first it’s just metal grinding on metal. Then after the first cut it’s like a

hot knife through butter.”

Evans said it is vital she and the rest of the DART team know how to operate the machinery.

“We need to know what we are doing in case we have to chop-up an aircraft –[in case] we need to get it back on base,” Evans said.

The training is something Evans said she hopes she never has to put to practical use.

“It means something bad has happened, but it may be the only way to get to an aircraft back,” Evans explained. “Then we would have to use what we learned today.”

McNichol said he was pleased with the outcome of the training.

“The training could not have gone any better. Everybody got the opportunity to use the equipment,” McNichol said. “All my goals were met today. If my Soldiers are called out on a DART



Photo by Capt. Jeff Hamer, 1st ACB PAO

Spc. Rebecca Marie Evans, from Dorrance, Penn., an AH-64D helicopter mechanic and member of Aircraft Recovery Team performs preventive maintenance checks and services (PMCS) on a chop saw, July 31.

mission they all could operate the equipment safely.”



Photo by Capt. Jeff Hamer, 1st ACB PAO

Maj. Marcus Gengler of Ontario, Calif., commander, Company B, 615th Aviation Support Battalion, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, observes one of his Soldiers operating a chop saw, July 30. This training event focuses on teaching Soldiers from the Downed Aircraft Recovery Team how to properly handle the powerful saw in case of a downed aircraft situation.

Paxton Rangers teach marksmanship

By Sgt. Philip Schratwieser
2nd HBCT, PAO

BAGHDAD — In spirit of the cooperation that has continued well past the June 30 Security Agreement deadline, which de-



Photo by Sgt. Philip Schratwieser, 2nd HBCT PAO

Sgt. Joseph McGowan, of Carlisle, Pa., a sniper from the 2nd Battalion, 112th Infantry Regiment "Paxton Rangers," 2nd HBCT, 1st Inf. Div., demonstrates marksmanship July 31.

tailed the changeover in responsibility for the security of Iraq, U.S. Soldiers are working with their Iraqi partners.

U.S. snipers and squad-designated marksmen worked with their counterparts; giving tips, teaching lessons and allowing the Iraqi Soldiers from the 24th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division to improve their skills as marksmen at Forward Operating Base Constitution July 25-31.

For the past week Soldiers split their time between the classroom and the shooting range.

"Trying to communicate what we expect of them is the biggest problem," said Staff Sgt. Matthew Lynch, a native of Mifflintown, Pa., the lead sniper from the 2nd Battalion, 112th Infantry Regiment "Paxton Rangers," 2nd Heavy Brigade Com-

bat Team, 1st Infantry Division, Multi-National Division-Baghdad, who are training the IA.

"They're just like American Soldiers; they'll do really well, then they might forget a step. They just need repetition."

The class is one of the U.S. Army's "train-the-trainer" classes.

The class is designed to saturate the students with knowledge and experience with the intent of having them go back to their units and train their Soldiers.

"The instructors are very knowledgeable and have given us so much to help make us better Soldiers," said Sgt. Mustafa of the 24th Bde., 6th I.A. Div., who shot 37 of 40 targets on his first try.

The targets are 25 meters from the shooters and are sized

down to appear they are between 50 and 300 meters away.

"We have a good group of instructors here. We have snipers, squad-designated marksmen and certified instructors.

They know what they are talking about," said Lynch.

"With the help of some pretty good interpreters we can pass this knowledge onto the Iraqi Army."

The class culminated with every student having passed the class, demonstrating proficiency with the M-4 rifle.

"I'm excited to be part of this," said Sgt. Joseph McGowan of Carlisle, Pa., also a sniper from the Paxton Rangers.

"I feel this mission helps cultivate a good joint-forces mindset especially when considering our future together.

Operation Mufa Ja'ah yield strong partners

By Pvt. Jared N. Gehmann
3rd BCT PAO

SHAKKAT, Iraq — U.S. Army Paratroopers and Iraqi Army Soldiers took to the skies in the hopes of finding weapons caches during a combined air assault opera-

tion, July 31.

The mission dubbed "Operation Mufa-Ja'ah" paired Paratroopers assigned to Company D, 1st Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division,

Multi-National Division-Baghdad and Iraqi soldiers from the 9th Iraqi Army Div. together in order to conduct a helicopter insertion to deny enemy forces from storing any weapons in a small town in the Ma'dain region, located outside of eastern Baghdad.

"The main objective of this mission was to search for weapons caches and gather information in the town of Shakkat," said Capt. Kip Kowalski, of Seattle, the commanding officer for Company D.

During the hours-long mission, Iraqi soldiers cleared more than 60 buildings, many of them abandoned, and asked nearby residents about any suspicious activity in the area.

A majority of the civilians were cooperating with the ISF as their U.S. counterparts provided security on the perimeter of the buildings.

After searching the remote

town and battling the bumpy terrain, the combined forces left empty handed.

However, despite not finding any weapons both U.S. and Iraqi Soldiers deemed the mission a victory because it allowed them the opportunity to continue to grow as partners.

"Even though we didn't find any caches, the operation was still a success," said Sgt. 1st Class Aldo Delgado, of Los Angeles, a platoon sergeant with Co. D.

"The mission gave us an opportunity to work alongside the IA, and it help them improve on some weak points."

Delgado added that everyone understood their role in the operation and executed the objective effectively.

"The overall purpose of this operation was to ensure the population of Shakkat was safe and to put an Iraqi face in our operations, I feel we did exactly that," he said.



Photo by Pvt. Jared Gehmann, 3rd BCT PAO

Seattle native, Capt. Kip Kowalski walks alongside Iraqi village elders and an Iraqi Army officer as they walk the town of Shakkat, a rural area outside of eastern Baghdad, during Operation Mufa-Ja'ah, a combined air assault mission, July 31. The combined forces searched the small town in order to seize potential weapons caches from the enemy.

On This Day In Military History



CUSTER

1873 — While protecting a railroad survey party in Montana, Custer and his 7th Cavalry clash for the first time with the Sioux Indians, who will defeat them three years later at Little Big Horn.

Custer was pleased when the 7th Cavalry was ordered to help protect a party of surveyors laying out the route for the proposed Northern Pacific Railroad.

On this day in 1873, Custer was far ahead of the rest of the force, camping along the Tongue River in southeastern Montana. Suddenly, a large band of Sioux warriors appeared on the horizon and attacked. The Indians were led by Crazy Horse and Sitting Bull, but the young braves seemed to have attacked impetuously and with little planning. Custer, who had been taking an afternoon nap, reacted quickly and mounted an effective defense. After a brief skirmish, the Indians withdrew.

FAMOUS FEATS OF CHUCK NORRIS



DID YOU KNOW?

The air around Chuck Norris is always a balmy 78 degrees.

MND-B Pic of the day!



Photo by Lt. Col. Pat Simon, 225th Eng. Bde. PAO

BAGHDAD — Sgt. 1st Class Chad McNeal, 225th Command Security Team noncommissioned officer-in-charge, Marksville, La., gives a bottle of water to an Iraqi child who lives along the newly paved Maya Road just outside of Victory Base Complex, Aug. 1.

Pvt. Murphy

by Mark Baker



Quote For Today

"There are many things that are essential to arriving at true peace of mind, and one of the most important is faith, which can not be acquired without prayer."

— John Wooden, 1910-
American Coach, Author, Statesman

Iraq 3-Day Weather Report



Today
105° F | 78° F



Tomorrow
105° F | 80° F



Thursday
105° F | 80° F

TRIVIA TIME!!

What English King introduced death by boiling and legalized the killing of gypsies?

Last Issue's Answer: Vladamir Lenin

Cav Round-Up radio newscast available

MND-B PAO

BAGHDAD — The Cav Round-Up is a three-minute radio newscast from Baghdad covering military units and events across Multi-National Division — Baghdad.

Today's Cav Round-Up # 124 was produced by Sgt Erik Fardette, MND-B Public Affairs Office.

The Aug. 3 newscast includes the following two stories:

1. A changing of the guard at Camp Victory.

The Texas National Guard's 56th IBCB had handed over operations to Oregon's National Guard.

TF Jayhawk and TF Arrowhead have made the transition a seamless one.

VBC's defense is in good hands.

2. Soldiers staying sharp and keeping their area of operation safe.

Same way we train is same way as we fight, from Frago to Op order. EOF vignettes help preparation.

Standards are enforced; keeping the community safe, keeping security and disrupting the enemy.

NIPR LINK: Cav Round-Up

SIPR LINK: Cav Round-Up

Check out more news at the 1st Cavalry Division's homepage:

www.hood.army.mil/1stcavdiv/

Trigger's Teasers

The objective of the game is to fill all the blank squares in a game with the correct numbers. There are three very simple constraints to follow: **Every row of 9 numbers must include all digits 1 through 9 in any order. Every column of 9 numbers must include all digits 1 through 9 in any order. Every 3 by 3 subsection of the 9 by 9 square must include all digits 1 through 9.**

Every Sudoku game begins with a number of squares already filled in, and the difficulty of each game is largely a function of how many squares are filled in. The more squares that are known, the easier it is to figure out which numbers go in the open squares. As you fill in squares correctly, options for the remaining squares are narrowed and it becomes easier to fill them in.

Yesterday's Answers

3	1	9	8	6	2	5	4	7
4	6	7	3	1	5	2	8	9
8	2	5	9	7	4	1	3	6
6	7	1	5	9	3	8	2	4
5	3	8	4	2	6	9	7	1
9	4	2	7	8	1	6	5	3
7	5	6	1	3	8	4	9	2
1	9	4	2	5	7	3	6	8
2	8	3	6	4	9	7	1	5

	4	6						
9		2		6				8
		8	4			2	5	
			8				7	
5			7		2			3
	1				6			
	6	4			3	9		
3				8		1		2
						7	3	



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