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Iraqis are Back in Bees-ness















Iraqi Farmers "Buzzing" Their Way to Work



STORY AND PHOTOS BY
Pfc. Justin Naylor
2nd HBCT, 1st Cavalry Division

FORWARD OPERATING BASE WARRIOR,

KIRKUK, Iraq— Hundreds of bees fly back and forth inside a farmer's pavilion in a Kurdish village in Iraq. The wooden boxes that act as their hives seem out of place, but they remind the farmer who owns them that better times are still to come.

Sana Rajah, a representative for the United States Agency for International Development, along with Jim Vancura, the senior agricultural advisor for the Kirkuk Provincial Reconstruction Team, visited local farmers in the village of Qaytul, Iraq in late August, who had received bee farming equipment as part of a yearlong project designed to increase the income of small farm owners.

"The Honey Bee Hive Development Project intends to help farmers in Kirkuk province increase household income through the inclusion of honey production," said Rajah.

The project began in May of 2008, when 159 farmers, five of which were women, from throughout Kirkuk province, were each given four modern hive boxes and 30 hours of training on how to properly care for, breed and collect honey from bees. The project was initially identified by the Kirkuk PRT and funded by USAID.

The training was hosted by the Honey Keeper in Kirkuk and Kurds Farmer Union organization, which now works closely with the bee farmers by sharing equipment and continuing to educate them on new ways to increase bee productivity.

According the Rajah, the goal of the project is to give farmers a way to raise their income by consistently producing honey, which sells for about \$25 U.S. dollars a kilogram on the local market. Although Rajah does not expect these farmers to become full-time bee keepers, he hopes their income will continue to increase as they produce more honey.

Rajah and Vancura visited several farmers throughout the village during the trip, and noticed many of the farmers had managed to turn four hives into multiple hives through breeding and splitting them.

"At the beginning, we did not know anything about keeping bees," said Saier Bibi, one of the farmers who attended the bee training and who now owns half a dozen beehives. "Now it is easy."

"The association helped us with training and gave us lots of good information about the bees," he said.

"The important thing is giving the farmers training on management of the hives," said Khalid Hameed, the grantee representative and the bee keeper association president that works with the farmers.

"The farmers have increased their number of bees," said Khalid. "Many have even shared with other farmers."

Although the bee farmers themselves have done well, Rajah and Vancura had to speak with Khalid about developing a good business plan for the beekeeping association, which it currently lacks, to ensure its sustainability.

According to Rajah, this requires the association to continue training the beekeepers on the most up-to-date techniques, thereby increasing their yields and allowing them to contribute more back to the association in the form of membership fees.

This year the hives did not yield as much honey as expected. According to the PRT, a beehive should produce about 5 kilograms per year and many of them have produced less. But, the farmers and beekeeper's association expect that it will improve in the coming years.

"This is a very good project," said Saier. "We can earn money for our families, and it is something we can pass on to our children one day."



Sana Rajah (right), a representative from the United States Agency for International Development, and Jim Vancura (left), the senior agricultural advisor from the Kirkuk Provincial Reconstruction Team, examine bee wax during their visit to a farm in Qaytul village in Kirkuk province, Iraq, August 20.

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CUB Scouts, USF Support Iraqi K-9 Unit





Maj. Shamel, kennel master for Mosul's Iraqi Police K-9 unit, walks Diago, an IP working dog, and Soldiers from Forward Operating Base Marez Aug. 24, to give the Soldiers a demonstration on the effectiveness of using dogs when conducting vehicle searches.



Members of the Iraqi Police K-9 unit in Mosul, Iraq, carry boxes of dog food that was donated by Cub Scout Pack 5 of Goldthwaite, Texas, into their dog kennel Aug. 24





STORY AND PHOTOS BY Pfc. Sharla Perrin 3rd HBCT, 1st Cavalry Div.

FORWARD OPERATING BASE MAREZ, MOSUL.

Iraq – Mosul's Iraqi Police canine unit received a helping hand from a Cub Scout Pack in Texas and U.S. Soldiers based at Task Force Lightning's Command Post-North, near Mosul, Iraq, in the form of more than 225 pounds of dog food, Aug. 24.

Cub Scout Pack 5 of Goldthwaite, Texas donated more than 400 pounds of dog food to an Iraqi Police K-9 unit in Mosul. The scouts also raised money for shipping, and the Soldiers from the 269th Military Police Company of the Tennessee National Guard and the Ninewa Provincial Police Prevention Team, 3rd Brigade, 1st Calvary Division, delivered the first shipment.

The group, led by Maj. Chris Medina, deputy provost marshal for CP-North, loaded the first delivery of dog food from the scouts, of which Medina's nephew is a member, packed into approximately 15 flat-rate boxes in the back of a mine resistant ambush protection vehicle.



Mosul Iraqi Police K-9 unit dog handler walks Diago, an IP working dog, around a vehicle in search for some pre-placed explosive material

"The Cub Scouts started this idea back in April. They asked me what they could do for us over here, for troops in general. At first I told them they could send care packages," said Medina.

"Then, after I had gone to see the kennels, I knew that the kennel master, Maj. Shamel, was going to be giving out money from his own pocket to support the dogs until their supply system got on track." So I thought, "Why don't I see if we can get these Cub Scouts to sponsor the dogs and the kennel?"

The Scouts of Pack 5 took up donations of dog food and spent their summer doing fund raisers to pay for the shipping costs of more than 400 pounds of dog food for the Iraqi Police K-9 unit. Additionally, a story was run in the Scout's local paper, The Goldthwaite Eagle, telling how the Scouts and community could help support the dogs.

"They got the community's support. They asked me for a picture of one of the dogs for their paper," said Medina. The Scouts put the photo in their local newspaper saying 'Cub Scouts seek sponsor to support K-9.' Medina added that he gave them an overview of how the food would be helping, what the dogs do, and how they could help Iraq and the community.

Since arriving at the K-9 unit nearly two months ago, following their extensive training in Baghdad with their handlers, the dogs have been a definite advantage to the Iraqi Police while out on patrols.

"One of the dogs just last week, while out with the Iraqi Federal Police sent to a suspected IED factory, hit on a vehicle where they found lots of explosives," stated Medina. After unloading the dog food into the kennel, Medina and the other Soldiers were given a demonstration using two of the dogs, Cash and Diago, to show their capability in "sniffing out" explosives and narcotics as they searched a vehicle and located some pre-placed substances used for training the dogs.

The Soldiers also had the opportunity to talk with the handlers and veterinarian who oversee the dogs while at the kennel, and were able to make a list of items that they could get for the kennel to further aide in training and caring for the dogs.

Medina took video and photos of the delivery and demonstration to send to the troop master of Pack 5 to show how the hard work of the 23 young Cub Scouts is paying off. The troop plans to send the remaining 200 pounds of donated dog food, which Medina will deliver to the kennel upon its arrival in Mosul.

Sgt. 1st Class Olene Togiailua, operations non-commissioned officer-in-charge for Command Post-North, Task Force Lightning, unloads boxes of dog food from the back of a mine resistant ambush protection vehicle into an Iraqi Police K-9 vehicle Aug. 24. The dog food was sent to Mosul, Iraq, by Cub Scout Pack 5 in Goldthwaite, Texas.

Iraqi Children show their new "Wheel Power"



STORIES and PHOTOS BY By Spc. Anthony Jones 1st SBCT, 25th Infantry Division

Diyala, Iraq – Nine disabled Iraqi children in Diyala province received a precious gift from the charity group "Wheelchairs for Iraqi Kids", August 19.

The group, headed by Brad Blauser, has provided wheelchairs to disabled Iraqi children since August 2008 recently made a stop in Diyala to bring much needed assistance to several families.

Blauser said after conducting research he discovered lraq had plenty of adult sized wheelchairs but that there was still a need for wheelchairs designed for children. Since 2008, he has brought just under 650 specially-made wheelchairs that are fully adjustable to accommodate a growing child.

After seeing a story on CNN, Capt. John Turner, of Battery A, 2nd Battalion, 8th Field Artillery, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, contacted Blauser; telling him of several children who needed wheelchairs.

Turner and Blauser worked together to organize the delivery of the wheelchairs to the families; during the drop-off, Blauser gave instruction to 2-8 Soldiers on how to make adjustments to the wheelchairs, fitting the chairs to each child in need.

When the chair is delivered to a family, Blauser provides a demonstration to the parents on how to adjust the wheelchair when the child grows too large for the initial adjustment.

The chairs themselves come from Hope Haven International Ministries, an organization that works with inmates from several prisons to manufacture wheelchairs. From there the chairs are purchased by



Pfc. Joseph Ricci a U.S. Soldier attached to A Battery, 2nd Battalion, 8th Field Artillery adjusts a wheelchair to fit the Iraqi girl it is being given to at forward operating base Lion near Baguba, Irag, Aug 19, 2009. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Kirk Worley)



Capt. John Turner (left) of Battery A, 2nd Battalion, 8th Field Artillery (A Btry. 2-8 FA) exchanges smiles with an Iraqi child after this child and 7 others received wheelchairs from a charity called Wheelchairs for Iraqi Kids. The wheelchairs were adjusted to fit each individual child with the help of the U.S. Soldiers from 2-8 FA at forward operating base Lion near Baquba, Iraq, Aug 19, 2009. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Kirk Worley)

Reach Out and Care Wheels, the non-profit organization where Blauser receives the wheelchairs he provides to children in need.

For more information on Wheelchairs for Kids, the organization can be found on the internet at http://www.wheelchairsforiraqikids.com.



Iraqi soldiers from 2nd Battalion, 18th Iraqi Army Brigade, pose for a photo with Iraqi children who received wheelchairs and their families at forward operating base Lion near Baquba, Iraq, Aug 19, 2009. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Kirk Worley)

3-10 GSAB Climbs High in New Gymnasium



STORY AND PHOTOS BY Sgt. Stephanie van Geete 10th Combat Aviation Brigade

CONTINGENCY OPERATING BASE SPEICHER.

Iraq – The Soldiers of 3rd General Support Aviation Battalion, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade have a new facility to use while trying to stay fit on deployment. The unit's new clamshell gym officially opened its doors for the first time July 11, giving the Phoenix battalion a local, high-speed fitness center outfitted with the most up-to-date workout equipment.

Lt. Col. Joseph Orrechio, 3-10 GSAB commander, said having a physical fitness facility within the unit's footprint is essential to improving the battalion's fitness and morale. Before this gym was created, Soldiers had to travel long distances to work out, or else make do with lean-to facilities and poor equipment.

"Existing fitness facilities on COB Speicher are really out of reach for our Soldiers," Orecchio explained. "The main gym is 2.8 miles away, and the Brigade gym is also 2.8 miles away. We needed a facility that enabled our Soldiers to remain close to their life support and work areas, especially for our MEDEVAC crews who must remain on a short string."

"The lack of convenient and central work-out facilities really equated to fewer Soldiers engaged in performing routine physical training," he added. "There were a few hodge-podge, makeshift gyms created out of necessity by the companies, but for the most part they were unsafe and had sub-standard equipment."

Orrechio was determined to change that, even if it took half the deployment to make it happen.

"Quite frankly, two months after we got here we had the equipment list broken out of all the things we needed, but it took a while to get that request pushed through," he explained. "Then we were told 'you can have the equipment you ordered, which will come in late August, or you can receive equipment a little earlier but it will be less quality.' Well, we were not about that. We had an eye toward the future and we know our Soldiers deserve better quality equipment than what was going to be given to us."

The wait paid off, and the new gym is now stocked with high quality name brand equipment. Orecchio also commissioned several structures to be built for the new gym, including a modular, moveable pull-up cage and a tower offering a vertical rope climb, a supported rope climb, heavy bags, gymnastic rings and walls for handstands and medicine ball workouts.

The beautiful part of this gym is that there is something for everybody there; you can perform almost any workout imaginable," Orecchio said.

Another point of pride for the unit is that, unlike other facilities on COB Speicher, this gym was built, operated and maintained for Soldiers, by Soldiers.

"There are no outside influences, no other people like MWR telling us 'I don't like this," said Staff Sgt. Jeffrey Kilgo, noncommissioned officer in charge of the facility. "



Spc. Stephen Porter, Company E, 3rd General Support Aviation Battalion, 10th Combat Aviation Brigade, practices the rope climb at the new 3-10 GSAB gym Aug. 24. The rope climb is part of a structure built by Soldiers and designed specifically for use with the Cross Fit exercise program.

We – the Soldiers who work here – pretty much put everything together. The Soldiers take care of the towels, the Soldiers take care of cleaning the facility, the Soldiers take care of the maintenance of the equipment and the Soldiers use it. We don't have any outside help, so there is a great sense of pride."

Orecchio agreed, saying, "It's ours, something we put our heart and soul into that is central to our footprint, and it brings our family, our team, together."

The new facility has been a hit, not only with 3-10 troops but also with other Soldiers and civilians throughout the COB who want to take advantage of the variety of equipment the gym offers.

"Everyone is talking about it," Kilgo said. "When we first put it together, it was really slow. There would only be about 10 people a day, but now we get over 100 people a day, which is a big number...and I'm pretty sure it's going to grow as word of mouth gets around."

The Division Surg' Corner:

Tips for a better night's sleep.

There is a lot you can do to get a better night's sleep, wake up refreshed and stay alert throughout the day. It's called "sleep hygiene" and refers to those practices, habits and environmental factors that help you sleep. Most of it is under your control. Develop a pre-sleep ritual to break the connection between all the stress and bedtime. Your ritual can be as short as 10 minutes or as long as an hour. You can try making a list of all the stressors of the day and a plan to deal with them serves to end the day. Combining this with a period of relaxation, perhaps some light reading, meditating, or talking with a friend can also help you get better sleep. Here are some other SLEEP HYGIENE TIPS to help you relax, fall asleep, stay asleep, and sleep better.

- 1. **Do not read, study, watch TV or perform any other work in bed.** Your bed should only be used for sleep or intimate encounters. Performing "waking hours" activities in bed conditions your body to remain awake.
- 2. **Get comfortable.** Minimize noise, light, and temperature extremes during sleep with ear plugs, window blinds, or air conditioner/heater. Even the slightest nighttime noises or temperature changes can disrupt the quality of your sleep.
- 3. **Avoid naps.** If you do nap, make it no more than about 25 minutes about eight hours after you awake. But if you have problems falling asleep at night, don't take naps.
- **4. Turn down the lights.** Use a small, low-watt night-light. Avoid LED nightlights. Even the smallest luminescent

light level can disrupt the quality of your sleep.

- 5. **No smoking at bedtime.** Nicotine is a stimulant and should be avoided particularly near bedtime and upon night awakenings.
- 6. Control your caffeine intake later in the day. Caffeine is also a stimulant and is present in coffee (100-200 mg), soda (50-75 mg), tea (50-75 mg), Monster (240 mg), chocolate and various over-the-counter medications. Don't take caffeine within at least four to six hours of bedtime. If you consume large amounts of caffeine and you cut yourself off too quickly, you might get headaches that could keep you awake. Try to taper yourself from caffeine over a few weeks.
- 7. **Put that beer down.** Alcohol is prohibited in theater so should not be a problem with sleep hygiene in theater. However, because alcohol is available back home, it's important to know its effects on sleep. Although alcohol is a depressant and may help you fall asleep, as your body clears the alcohol while you sleep causes a withdrawal syndrome which is often associated with nightmares and sweats. You will not get quality sleep with excessive alcohol intake.
- 8. Eating is OK, but not too much. A light snack may make you sleepy, but a heavy meal too close to bedtime interferes with sleep. Avoid protein and stick to carbohydrates or dairy products. Milk contains the amino acid L-tryptophan, which has been shown in research to help people go to sleep (just like turkey on Thanksgiving). So milk and cookies or crackers (without chocolate) may be

useful and taste good as well.

9. **Adjust your workout schedule.** Do not exercise vigorously just before bed if you are the type of person who is "energized" by exercise. If this is the case, it may be best to exercise in the morning or afternoon (preferably an aerobic workout, like running).

Try these sleep hygiene tips and anticipate better sleep within a month. Keep a "sleep journal" to document what time you went to bed, how long you slept, when you woke, how well you slept (or didn't), and which of the sleep hygiene tips you were able to maintain and which ones you didn't. Finally, remember that when you redeploy, you will require 1 to 1.5 days per time zone (8 time zones from Iraq to Ft Drum, 9 to Ft Hood, 12 to Alaska and 13 to Hawaii) before your body's clock is truly synchronized with the actual local time. **Good luck!**

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LIGHTNING HERO OF THE WEEK



NAME: SPC JOSE A. IBARRA UNIT: PSD/HHC/3-21 IN, 1/25th SBCT HOMETOWN: ATHENS, GA. DATE: 04 SEPTEMBER 2009

SPC Ibarra has performed exceptionally since being transferred at the beginning of the year to the PSD Section. He quickly proved to be highly effective and displayed outstanding total Soldier qualities. Because of his above average leadership traits, he was moved into a key dismount position; directly protecting the Battalion Commander during dismounted patrols and missions. This past week SPC Ibarra rapidly surpassed his peers by being selected over six other Soldiers to serve as the new Bravo Team Leader for 2nd Squad. Throughout this week he has led Physical Training for 2nd squad, completed all initial counseling, and performed all Pre-Combat Inspections on time and to standard. He constantly provides his Soldiers with purpose, direction and motivation and maintains a positive attitude towards every mission sent his way. SPC Ibarra is truly an asset to his platoon and this Battalion. His excellence reflects great credit upon himself, HHC 3-21 IN "GIMLET" and 1/25 SBCT!

IRAQ FACTS

SALAH AH DIN محافظة صلاح الدير



Salah Al Din is a goverate in Iraq, north of Baghdad. Capital: Tikrit. The province has an area of 24,363 square kilometers (9,406.6 sq mi). The estimated population for 2003 was 1,042,200 people. The provincial capital is Tikrit, the province also contains the significantly larger city of Samrra. Before 1976 the province was part of Baghdad Governorate.

The province is named after Saladin (written Salah ah Din in modern Arabic Latin transcription), an ethnic Kurd and hero of the 12th century.

Information taken from wikipedia.org, www.history.com

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

RAMADAN AND THE PROPRET MUHAMMAD

The Muslim fast means a complete abstention from eating or drinking between daybreak and sunset. The sighting of the thin sickle of the new moon of Ramadan heralds for the Muslim the beginning of a month of glory and of spiritual elevation, when, at Allah's command, he voluntarily and of his own free will, denies himself between day-break and sunset, the blessing of food and drink, and surrenders himself up wholly to Allah, observing the same abstention throughout the whole month in his thoughts, his speech, his behavior, his every act.

For this month, for the Muslim, means the triumph of the spiritual and the pure in his nature over all the grossness and carnation, which is an inevitable component of our human make-up. The Holy Prophet Muhammad (SAW) in the following words beautifully explains the actual significance of the fast: -

"One who, while fasting, does not guard his tongue from telling lies, does not refrain from doing bad deeds, is not respecting his fast and Allah does not approve of mere abstention from food".

When you are keeping fast, you should not speak ill of anybody, nor should you be boisterous and noisy. If anybody speaks ill of you or tries to pick a quarrel with you return him not, but say unto him that you are fasting. QURAN:

Greywolf prepares to take over western Ninewah

STORY AND PHOTOS BY Sgt. Christopher Kozlowski 3rd HBCT, 1st Cavalry Div.



MOSUL, Iraq — The senior commander for U.S. forces in Ninewah province and the command sergeant major toured the edge of the province, Aug. 17, to get an overview of the region in preparation for assuming responsibility of the area from the Marines in the coming weeks.

Col. Gary Volesky, commander, 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division and Command Sgt. Maj. James Pippin, brigade command sergeant major along with several brigade staff officers, conducted a threestop introduction and information gathering mission for key areas in western Ninewah to gain situational awareness and an appreciation of the critical infrastructure with this desert terrain.

"We flew into western Ninewah province so that we could see the area we are expanding our forces to in the next few weeks, as well as take the opportunity to meet with our Iraqi counterparts from the 3rd Iraqi Army Division and the U.S. Marines that are currently operating in the region," said Maj. Randy Smith, one of the staff officers in attendance.

The "Greywolf" brigade is set to assume control of western Ninewah from another "Wolfpack" in the coming weeks. The "Wolfpack", 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion (LAR), 1st Marine Division, which took control of western Ninewah in early 2009, are set to redeploy to Twentynine Palms, Calif. in mid-October, leaving their area of operations in the capable hands of the 3rd Bde.

"We are really considering this as an expansion of our current operations," said Maj. Steven Cho, operations officer for 3rd Bde.

The 3rd Bde. has been operating in areas in and around Mosul since their arrival to Iraq in January. Their areas of focus have been partnered relationships with Iraqi Security Forces to improve security and stability in the region and capacity-building projects in order to improve quality of life for the people of Ninewah

With tangible successes in their current area of operations, 3rd Bde plans to apply the same model for success in western Ninewah as they develop a strategy to expand operations along the brigade lines of effort prior to their assumption of responsibility in mid-September.

"We are going to partner with Iraqi Security Forces in the region, employ provincial reconstruction teams and civil affairs teams to develop special projects that are needed in the area and get out and talk to the people in the region," said Cho.

"We are going to make it a daily goal to talk to the Iraqis on the ground to find out what they need and to find out what their concerns are regarding security in their communities. This is what we've done in Mosul and its surrounding areas, and it has been successful."

As the helicopters landed in the operating base known as TAO Tripoli, Volesky and Pippin were greeted by the 3rd LAR commander, Marine Lt. Col. Kenneth Kassner, and the 3rd LAR sergeant major, Marine Sgt. Major Michael Parks, who seemed happy to see their future replacements as they prepare for their redeployment.

Kassner and Parks escorted the 3rd Bde. group for a short tour of the installation and then broke into groups so that each of the staff members could interact with their counterparts and discuss operations in the area.

The 3rd Bde's representatives then moved to an Iraqi Army operating base and broke bread with a deputy commander of 3rd Iraqi Army Division assets operating in the region. The staff was able to ask questions and address questions from the Iraqi Army representatives on how to best partner in the region. Both 3rd Bde. and the IA seemed satisfied with the outcome of the meeting.

"We were able to listen to our Iraqi counterparts from the 3rd Iraqi Army Division brief us on their current and future plans for operating in the area as well as share significant ideas on how we could better assist and complement one another with our joined assets," said Smith. "In addition, anytime we have the opportunity to sit down and meet with our Iraqi brothers, it almost always leads to a meal, which all of us enjoy. The sharing and friendship is where we make the most from these meetings. These meetings allow us to share information amongst one another as well as define the transparency we are striving for."

The mission ended near the border between Iraq and Syria, where the brigade staff got a tour of the point of entry between the two countries.

The 3rd Bde is set to move into western Ninewah province as the 3rd LAR begins their redeployment process in mid-September. As the Marines leave, 3rd Bde will ramp up and continue improvement of essential services and quality of life for the population in this region.

The focus for the brigade is continued forward momentum on improving security, stimulating economic growth and improving stability throughout the Ninewah province.



Col. Gary Volesky, commander of 3rd "Greywolf" Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, talks with Lt. Col. Kenneth Kassner, commander of Task Force 3rd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, during a visit to his area of operations in Iraq, Aug 17.



A deputy commander for 3rd Iraqi Army Division assets near Sinjar shakes hands with Maj. Dominic Kusumoto, the civil military operations officer for 3rd Bde., 1st Cav. Div., while Col. Gary Volesky, commander for 3rd Bde., introduces the rest of his staff officers, Aug. 17.



3rd Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division Soldiers take a tour of the Alyaroubia Border Center, the point of entry into Iraq from Syria, Aug. 17. The border center will become part of 3rd Bde.'s responsibility as they assume responsibility of western Ninewah province in the coming weeks.

"Tomorrow we have one less day to make a difference," said Volesky. "We've been given an opportunity to create the same successes in this region that we have throughout the rest of Ninewah. We are honored to have that opportunity."

AUGUST 31, 2009

Mortar Training - THROUGH THE LENS



U.S Army Soldiers of the 48th Iraqi Army Military Transition Team assists Iraqi Army soldiers from the 48th Iraqi Army Brigade Light Mortar Battery with computing firing data as mortar teams set up their emplacements during a training exercise conducted at Al Siniyah Air Base, Al Siniyah, Iraq, Aug. 17.

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3rd Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division at Forward Operating Base Marez in Mosul, Iraq will be hosting the first ever professionally sponsored MMA (Mixed Martial Arts) event. The event will host professional MMA competitors from the U.S. as well as 24 Soldiers deployed throughout Iraq that will be competing in martial arts style fighting. This will be an International Sport Combat Federation sanctioned event. MMA's first professional female referee, Kim Winslow, will referee the fights.

We would like to invite you to attend the first professional MMA fight in Iraq. WHEN: Saturday, September 5th from 5:30 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.

Beating Up *Bronco* Battle Buddies

Story and Photos by Spc. Jazz Burney 3rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team



CONTINGENCY OPERATING BASE SPEICHER,

TIKRIT, Iraq – The United States Army Modern Combatives Program combines correct grappling techniques, proper positioning and the use of body energy in a disciplined manner to strive toward one thing -- ending a fight quickly.

Soldiers of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, "Horsemen," 3rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division completed 40 hours of level one combatives training to become certified assistant instructors during a weeklong train-the-trainer session, Aug. 17-24.

The combatives program, which is centrally located at Ft. Benning, Ga., is founded on understanding the value of realistic combatives training. The program emphasizes realistic training, for realistic results. During the weeklong training, 16 Horsemen experienced this philosophy as they learned different defensive holds, take down and submission techniques to gain an advantage over an opponent.

Once the Soldiers grasped the techniques, they moved into the three main requirements of becoming certified assistant instructors: a written exam, a hands-on technique demonstration, and "the clinch."

The Soldiers completed a five question written exam that tested the amount of combatives knowledge learned during the training.

A technique demonstration allowed the

Soldiers to show and explain step-by-step how to safely perform the holds and take down techniques they learned.

The most grueling of task, called "the clinch," challenged the Soldiers to successfully perform one of three defensive holds to stop an attacking opponent. The only stipulation for the Soldiers was they could not punch their opponents back; but could only use the defensive holds to end the barrage of pounding fists.

During the training a curious onlooker commented that it is a nerve-racking experience knowing you're about to be hit. "Inspite of the bumps, cuts and bruises sustained in the clinch, every Soldier was able

to realize their self confidence and get someone to the ground and effectively take them out of the fight," said Sgt. 1st Class Willie Coleman, 37, of Fort Lauderdale, Fla., level four combatives instructor, 8th Theater Sustainment Command.

The brigade command sergeant major requested a combatives training team come to Iraq and train the Soldiers of the brigade before returning back to Hawaii. By completing the training in Iraq, the Soldiers will have additional time to spend with their loved ones upon redeployment to Hawaii. "The training we do here will save these Soldiers one week or two weeks of being away from their families...and going all the way to

Soldiers one week or two weeks of being awa from their families...and going all the way to Ft. Benning to receive this combatives training," said Sgt. 1st Class Don Earl Quiambao, 37, of San Diego, Calif., a combatives instructor, and a brigade operations noncommissioned officer on rear detachment back in Hawaii.

The Soldiers selected for the training hold many different Military Occupational Specialties in the brigade and represent the wide spectrum of Soldiers who make up the Headquarters.

"The importance of all job specialties in the Army knowing these combatives techniques can show itself at anytime," said Staff Sgt. Joe Stanfield, 30, of Del City, Okla., the brigade Chaplain's noncommissioned officer in charge. "You never know, your primary weapon might malfunction and you might have to engage your enemy in hand-to-hand combat; with these techniques you have a chance to still win the fight," he continued.

"These are basic needed skills...as an aviator you would think that I don't need to know combatives because I fly helicopters, but that is not true...once I'm on the ground I will be in the same boat as everyone else," said Capt. Keira Zimmerman, 25, of Wakakilo, HI, assistant Brigade Aviation Officer. "Having the confidence of knowing that in any given situation I will be able to defend myself and others is also rewarding," she continued. With completion of the training course, the Soldiers are now able to assist level three combatives instructors pass on the valuable techniques to their fellow comrades. Coleman described the outlook that those teaching and participating in the combatives program should have.

"Teach these combatives techniques safely, and make it enjoyable and have fun with it...combatives should not be like regular Army training such as marksmanship or physical training, but it should be fun, to the standard and safe," he said, giving his charge to the Soldiers.



Sgt. 1st Class Willie Coleman, 37, of Fort Lauderdale, Fla., level four combatives instructor, 8th Theater Sustainment Command, demonstrates a ground take down technique to the Soldiers of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 3rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division during a weeklong training program where the Soldiers completed 40 hours of level one combatives to become certified assistant instructors, Aug. 17-24. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Jazz Burney, 3rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division Public Affairs)



Pfc. Nestor Batiz-Velazquez, 24, of Ponce, Puerto Rico, brigade logistics clerk, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 3rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division successfully performs a submission technique on Sgt. Francis Wilson-Esler, 30, of Levittown Toa Baja, Puerto Rico, paralegal noncommissioned officer, 2nd Battalion, 27th Infantry Regiment, of the brigade as they practiced the United States Army level one Combatives Program during a weeklong training to become certified assistant combatives instructors, Aug. 17-24. (

