



Anbar leadership prep for elections

Story by Capt. Lou Guzman
1st AAB, 82nd Inf. Div., USD-C

HIT, Iraq – Senior Iraqi provincial government and military leaders visited polling sites in Hit, Iraq, Feb. 17 to assess security plans in preparation for next month's Iraqi national elections.

The leaders, which included Staff Maj. Gen. Baha Husayn Abd Hassan, the director of police for Anbar, and Dr. Jassim al-Halbusi, the chairman of the provincial council, toured the Ibn Sina Primary School, one of 26 polling sites in the Hit district.

Col. Muhammad Faysal Neiris, the chief of police for the Hit district, and Col. Fadhil Muhammad Rakhet, the commander of Provincial Security Force-5, hosted and facilitated the visit.

The Ibn Sina School's faculty and children welcomed them as the visitors arrived.

The group of Iraqi Security Force leaders explained their intent to provide security for both voters and the polling site, placing special emphasis on the force protection measures they will use to ensure that the citizens in the area choose the political process rather than violence to settle their differences.

Both the provincial and local leadership were satisfied with the arrangements planned for the polling sites, stating that Hit's ISF are prepared for the upcoming elections.



Photo by Spc. Michael MacLeod, 1st AAB, 82nd Abn. Div., USD-C

Paratroopers with 1st Advise and Assist Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division, exit a C-130 aircraft Feb. 12 at Al Asad Air Base, Iraq, as part of the largest airborne training exercise conducted by U.S. forces in Iraq since the beginning of Operation Iraqi Freedom. A jumper's parachute is opened by the yellow universal static line along the fuselage of the aircraft.

Airborne training operations begin in Iraq with goal of joint jump

Story by Spc. Michael MacLeod,
Spc. Kayleigh Cannon
1st AAB, 82nd Abn. Div., USD-C

AL ASAD AIR BASE, Iraq – U.S. Army paratroopers took the first step toward a combined U.S. – Iraqi airborne training exercise when 183 paratroopers jumped onto Iraqi soil Feb. 12 as part of their sustained airborne training.

Paratroopers with 1st Advise and Assist Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division, began "currency jumps" to refresh their airborne skills follow-

ing weeks of ground-based refresher courses in an effort to partner with Iraqi Security Forces during combined airborne training exercises.

"This is a really important day for the paratroopers of the 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment," said Col. Mark Stammer, commander of 1-82 AAB, referring to the legacy regiment of the brigade. "More importantly, it's an important first step in a training evolution for the Iraqi armed forces."

"We're training today to refresh ourselves on airborne safety procedures so that after the elections, we can train with our Iraqi Army part-

ners and conduct a combined airborne training operation with them here," he said.

Stammer said the combined training will allow U.S. and Iraqi forces to share not only the camaraderie of being paratroopers, but also the capability and capacity of a modern military force; another stone in the foundation of an enduring strategic partnership.

Stammer led the operation from the front as the first out the door of the C-130 aircraft, but not without a little humor.

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Please, do not feed the animals

Story & photo by Sgt. Phillip Valentine
366th MPAD, USD-C

BAGHDAD – “For everything, there is a season.”

In the right circumstances, bending down with a fistful of food to feed a cute, cuddly creature can be a joy. In a combat environment, it can get you bit, sick or even busted by the military police.

Soldiers may encounter animals in one of the many traps that have been strategically placed around Camp Liberty for their safety and welfare. The deputy mayor and operations officer for the East Liberty mayor’s cell, Maj. Steven Ross, from 561st Regional Support Group, Garrison Command, U.S. Forces – Iraq, said he has concerns about the traps.

“We’ve had animals trapped and Soldiers [will] feed them,” said Ross. “They open the traps and let [the animals] go.”

There have also been issues in the past with people stealing the traps, said Ross.

“The traps are government property,” he said. “Military police file reports, and traps are replaced at the cost of the government and taxpayer.”

Ross has noticed increases in vandalism and theft of traps in East Liberty with the arrival of new units. He said he believes Soldiers are unaware of what the traps do and the dangers they represent.

Some people see a trap that contains an animal and may believe that the traps are cruel, something Ross said he understands. But he reiterates the traps are a necessity.



Many types of traps can be found on Camp Liberty and the surrounding area, like the one pictured here.

“I am an animal lover too – my heart goes out to them,” he said. “We have to do what we have to do. We don’t know anything about these animals – rabid or whatever.”

One last piece of advice: “Just let [the traps] do their job and you guys do yours,” said Ross.

To help avoid future trap issues, there are three tips Ross said everyone should remember and understand, particularly as bases shut

down, and more units are move to the Victory Base Complex:

- Don’t bring animals from outlying bases or other areas inside VBC.
- If you see a trap, leave it alone. It is there for a reason: to protect you.
- If you see an animal in the trap, call the mayor’s cell. A person from there will call animal control. 🚩

Basic Arabic greetings, introductions, helpful words

PHRASES					
ENGLISH	ARABIC				
Welcome	ahlan wa sahlam	My name is _____	ismee_____	Thank you	shukran
Hello	marHaba	What is your name	shismek	Excuse me	il’afu
Good morning	SabaaH il Khayr	I’m pleased to meet you	tasharafna	I’m sorry	anee mit-asif
Good night	tiSbaH ‘ala Khayr	Where were you born	weyn mawlood	Yes	na’am
Good bye	ma’a as salama	What is your job	shinoo shughlek	No	Iaa
How are you	shlonek	Where are you from	minwayn inta	Maybe	yemkin
		Do you speak english	ta’ruf tiHchee ingleezee	No problem	maku mushkila
		Please	rajaa-an	Ok	zayn



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"You have to learn to talk to each other. You can't hold anything in, with such close living quarters. If we can make it in these rooms, we can make it when we get to our house."

– Spc. Adriane Butler



Staff Sgt. Kira Welch, a french horn player and Staff Sgt. Daniel Welch, a trombone player, both band members assigned to 1st Armored Division, U.S. Division – Center, and natives of Long Island, N.Y., look over sheet music Feb. 9 in preparation for a practice session inside a rehearsal studio at Camp Liberty.



Sgt. Carlos Vega and Staff Sgt. Valerie Vega, III, natives assigned to 362nd Psychological Operations Company, Division Special Troops Battalion, 1st Armored Division, U.S. Division – Center, at Camp Victory, sit side-by-side. This is their first deployment together as a married couple, but they met on a previous deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.



Married couple, Sgt. Zachary Butler, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 41st Special Troops Battalion, 1st Armored Division, U.S. Division – Center and Spc. Adriane Butler, 362nd Psychological Operations Company, 1st Armored Div., USD-C, both of Springdale, Ark., share their story of being a dual military couple.

Love in a battlefield ...

Married Soldiers celebrate Valentine's Day in Iraq

Story & photos by Sgt. Phillip Valentine
366th MPAD, USD-C

BAGHDAD – According to legend, Emperor Claudius II determined that single men made better soldiers than those with wives, so he outlawed marriage for all young men – his pool from which to draw potential soldiers.

Valentine, a priest at that time, saw the injustice in the decree and continued to wed young lovers in secret. When Valentine was discovered, Claudius ordered that he be put to death.

If the emperor was alive today, he might be shocked to see that combat zones now include married couples who also serve as Soldiers. They share last names, living quarters, and the responsibility of helping create a better environment for the citizens of Iraq.

Married Soldiers assigned to 1st Armored Division, U.S. Division – Center, are afforded a unique opportunity compared with most Soldiers: they get to celebrate Valentine's Day with their loved ones, even if it means doing so in an austere location.

French horn player Staff Sgt. Kira Welch and trombone player Staff Sgt. Daniel Welch are assigned to the 1st Armd. Div. Band. Married for more than two years, they volunteered to join the division in Wiesbaden, Germany, so they could deploy together.

"It was the first deployment for either of us and we got the chance to go together," said Daniel. For Valentine's Day last year, Daniel and Kira traveled to Portugal. This year, their travel plans may include a dinner at one of the international restaurants within Victory Base Complex. As for the rest of their plans, they're keeping them a secret from each other.

Kira believes if you can deploy with your spouse and make it, you can make anything else work.

"It brings a new honesty to a relationship," Kira said. "You can't hide any troubles from the others in your unit. You have to work things out; you don't have a choice."

They agreed they have had to make some adjustments; everything from being aware of the thin walls of their living quarters to not calling each other by their first names. They also find ways of separating work life from their personal life.

"We have to find time to take care of Soldiers and one another," Kira said.

Another couple assigned to USD-C, Staff Sgt. Valerie Vega and Sgt. Carlos Vega, natives of Illinois, will also share their Valentine's Day holiday together in Iraq. They plan on spending the holiday watching movies and just hanging out, said Carlos.

The Vegas are assigned to the 362nd Psychological Operations Company and have been married nearly a year. They credit their happiness with this piece of advice: "Leave your rank at the door," said Carlos. "Keep the job and the relationship separate."

Keeping relationships separated from work is sometimes a bit easier if your spouse is assigned to a different unit, said Sgt. Zachary Butler.

Assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 41st Special Troops Battalion, 1st Armored Div., Butler, deployed separately from his wife, Spc. Adriane Butler, with 362nd Psychological Operations Co., 1st Armored Div.

Although arriving separately, they not only were assigned to the same base, they ended up in the same "neighborhood."

"We lucked out," said Zachary. "Originally, we expected to spend a year apart."

When he found out that Adriane was deploying, Zachary volunteered to deploy with another unit.

The Butlers have also been married nearly a year. Adriane's advice to future deploying married couples: Communication.

"You have to learn to talk to each other," she said. "You can't hold anything in, with such close living quarters. If we can make it in these rooms, we can make it when we get to our house."

Zachary said he could not sit at home alone for a year without her.

"I would go nuts," he said about how his outlook on life has changed since his marriage.

Valentine's Day for the Butlers will be a challenge – they both will be pulling duty on that day, but they still have plans to spend time together, even if only sitting on the front steps of their living quarters or watching movies, said Zachary.

He suggested what might be in store for Adriane on a future Valentine's Day.

"I always wanted to have the house set up with thousands of flowers," Zachary said. "I can't tell her enough how much I love her."

Adriane stayed focused on this year's celebration, especially after she gets off duty: "It's nice to come home to your best friend."

Whether the legend of St. Valentine is true or not, deployed couples are finding ways to celebrate the holiday of romance where romance can be hard to find. ▲

'Red Devils' open joint training range at Camp Hamza

Story by 1st Lt. Joshua Stuart-Shor
1st AAB, 82nd Abn. Div., USD-C

CAMP HAMZA, Iraq – Sharp gunfire cracked the mid-morning silence at Camp Hamza Jan. 21 as U.S. paratroopers from 1st Advise and Assist Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division, tested their skills at a new firing range.

Next to them, Iraqi officers from 28th Bde., 7th Div. of the Iraqi Army, shouted instructions to their Soldiers as they, too, tested their skills, signifying the official opening of Freedom Range. The range was a gift from the 1st Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment "Red Devils" to the 28th Bde.

Officials broke ground on the range in early January but had to postpone its completion on several occasions due to weather, mechanical issues with heavy equipment and a high operational tempo, before finally completing the project Jan. 20 – three weeks later.

"It seemed like this range was destined to never be finished, but we got it done through broken equipment, sand storms and missions," said Spc. Marquis Ross, senior radio telephone operator for the scouts. "We all worked together to complete it."

The Red Devil paratroopers received assistance from the scout and mortar platoons and 28th Military Transition Team, as well as contributions of heavy equipment and operators from 1st Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 1-82 AAB.

Staff Col. Ismail Abed Muhammed Al-Hayana, his staff, and the brigade Commando company moved to the firing line alongside Capt. Christopher Duprey, of 28th MiTT, to try his hand at the range.

"We are very thankful for this range and the opportunities it provides," said Ismail. "In God's will, this will help our Soldiers to shoot true when their country needs them."

After the ceremonial first rounds were fired downrange, it was handed over to the noncommissioned officers of Iraqi Commando company and Red Devil scout platoon, who arranged to shoot a close quarters "marksmanship table" together.

"It is really great to be able to conduct live-fire rehearsals and training with our Iraqi counterparts, allowing us both to build confidence in each other's abilities for future partnered operations," said Staff Sgt. Seanessey O'Dowd, the scout platoon sergeant from Fort Bragg, N.C.

Standing by O'Dowd, Commando platoon sergeant Staff Sgt. Akmed, smiled: "This range helps us build a partnership based on mutual respect, and building trust in each other's war fighting skills." ▲

ISF turn accuracy into muscle memory

3ID Soldiers conduct reflexive, stress-fire training with Iraqi strike force

Story & photos by Spc. Jared Eastman
1st BCT-A, 3rd ID, USD-C

BAGHDAD – Soldiers of 5th Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team-Augmented, 3rd Infantry Division, conducted reflexive and stress-fire training with Iraqi Security Forces Feb. 4 at Contingency Operating Station Falcon to support them in their operations.

B Troop Soldiers trained alongside Brig. Gen. Faisal Malikmhsen Al Zamili's strike force, 5th Brigade, 2nd Iraqi Federal Police.

"We're just getting here on the ground and we're not as familiar with the terrain and the cities, and they are not as experienced with some of the techniques we use with shooting," said Lt. Col. Kirk Dorr, 5th Sqdn. 7th Cav. Regt. commander. "So we're sharing with one another, and what we're trying to do is build relationships and start to do some combined training."

The ISF and U.S. Soldiers will not only partner up for the training, they will also be partnered for day-to-day activities.

"Everything is going fantastic," said Dorr. "This is one of the first times we've partnered them up with a cavalry scout platoon and have a habitual relationship. If there are any time-sensitive target missions, these two platoons will go out on that target together in a combined fashion."

The main goal of the training was to convert accuracy into muscle memory, he said. Soldiers practiced this by turning their side, or even their back, to targets and then swiftly turning toward the target and firing at them

on command.

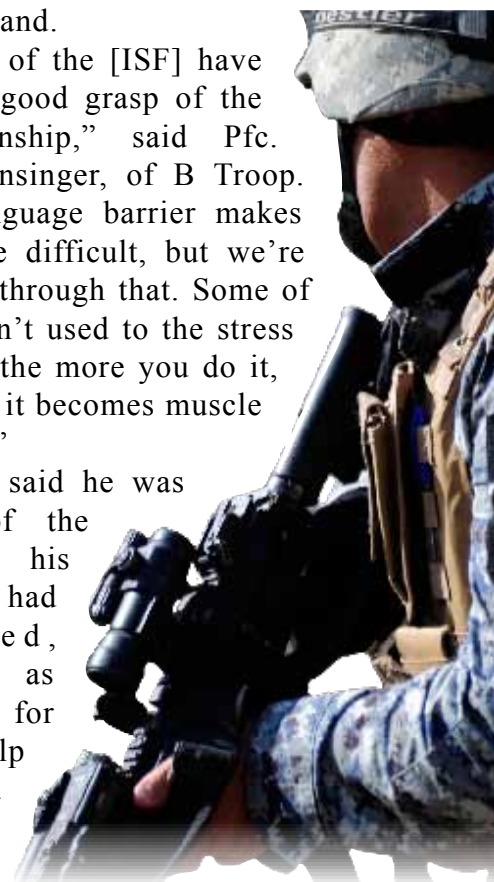
"Most of the [ISF] have a pretty good grasp of the marksmanship," said Pfc. Kyle Hunsinger, of B Troop. "The language barrier makes it a little difficult, but we're working through that. Some of them aren't used to the stress fire, but the more you do it, the more it becomes muscle memory."

Faisal said he was proud of the training his Soldiers had received, as well as thankful for the help the U.S. Soldiers provided.

"The Soldiers are doing well, are doing an excellent job, and I look at them as professional Soldiers," he said. "All of them are one team."

The training also helped at removing some of the language barriers between the two forces.

"The greatest benefit is when they conduct some of these direct action missions where you have to have everything synchronized," said Dorr. "With such short notice, you don't have to rely so much on interpreters because they know one another and have trust in one another." ▲



Hussein Enkntaal Abel, part of Brig. Gen. Faisal Malikmhsen Al Zamili's strike force, shoots a target during a reflexive-fire range Feb. 4 at Contingency Operating Station Falcon.

Paratroopers assist with Iraqi-led clinic

Story & photos by Spc. Michael MacLeod
1st AAB, 82nd Abn. Div., USD-C

UWESAT, Iraq – Medical doctors with 1st Iraqi Division set up a temporary clinic Feb. 11 in Uwesat, Iraq, and treated 312 villagers for a variety of common maladies in a partnered operation with U.S. Army medics.

Two Iraqi physicians, with support from the 1st Advise and Assist Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division, brigade surgeon and medics, treated 144 males and 168 females during the clinic's five hours of operation at a primary school in an east Anbar village to provide medical service and win the goodwill of locals.

Capt. Ahmed Zyara, who treated patients for conditions that included ulcers, hernias, tonsillitis, diabetes, rheumatoid arthritis, and the aches and pains of old age, said not only did the operation provide a much-needed service for the villages, it also provided excellent training for him and the other medical professionals.

"The people get to see that the Iraqi Army is here to help them," said Ahmed, a doctor of six years. "Plus, I get to see cases that are not the usual cases I see in the Army."

"We hope this will encourage the people to cooperate with the Iraqi Army because the Iraqi Army is the only savior from the terrorists," said Ahmed. "Hopefully, the charity will reverse the brain-

washing [the terrorists] do on the people, and this will help get them back on the right path."

For five hours, the four examination rooms and Iraqi-run pharmacy were constantly busy, he said.

Given the opportunity for free, local medical care, many mothers came in with their entire broods, seeking to eliminate common colds, toothaches, sore throats and other common childhood ailments, according to Sgt. Bethany Smith, a medic with Company C, 307th Brigade Support Battalion, 1/82 AAB.

Amel Hussyin, a mother of five who lives near the school where the clinic was operated, said there was only one medical clinic nearby and no doctor.

For the 7,000 residents of Uwesat and the surrounding area, there should ideally be three clinics, each with a resident physician, according to Ahmed.

"I have to drive two hours to see a doctor," said Amel.

Three of Amel's children exhibited cold symptoms, and a fourth was having bed-wetting issues, she said.

"We thank the Iraqi Army doctors for seeing us here today," said Amel.

Since 2007, the IA has set up 48 such medical clinics and has seen 14,600 patients in and around the Habaniya area while working with the Americans as a team, according to the Iraqi doctors. ▲



Sgt. Bethany Smith, a medic with 1st Advise and Assist Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division, examines a young boy with cold symptoms Feb. 11 in a one-day medical clinic operated by Iraqi and U.S. military medical staff in the village of Uwesat, Iraq. The mother of the boy explained to Smith that they must travel two hours to see a doctor.



Capt. Ahmed Zyara, a physician with 1st Iraqi Division, examines an Iraqi boy complaining of joint pain ... the prognosis: growing pains.



Capt. Shoothib Hussein, assistant division physician for 1st Iraqi Division, hands a prescription to a young Iraqi girl. The girl was able to fill her prescription at an Iraqi-run pharmacy stocked by U.S. forces minutes later.



Capt. Joseph Matthews, brigade surgeon with 1st Brigade, examines an Iraqi mother's infant. Providing medical services to Iraqis living in rural areas is one way to help win the goodwill of the people, their leaders said.

Mobile patio chairs to enable Iraqi disabled

Story & photos by Sgt. Samantha Beuterbaugh
366th MPAD, USD-C

BAGHDAD — Soldiers from 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, rolled two handcrafted wheelchairs up a worn road and into the foyer of a small building before a Feb. 10 shaykh council meeting in the Aqur Quf area.

The Aqur Quf weekly shaykh council meeting is open to all local shaykhs, and includes both Sunni and Shi'a shaykhs, who discuss local issues, said 1st Lt. Steven DeWhitt, a San Jose, Calif., native and platoon leader with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 38th Infantry Regiment. The meeting was designed to get local tribes involved in the Iraqi government.

"It basically gives the tribes a forum to talk to each other," DeWhitt said.

The 1st Bn. commander, Lt. Col. John Leffers, attends the weekly meetings to assist in any way he can.

"The colonel usually walks away with some pretty good information from the meeting because he's talking directly to local leaders instead of [Iraqi Security

Force] leaders," said Spc. Thomas Martinez, a native of Bartlett, Ill., and infantry all-source intelligence analyst with HHC.

Three weeks ago two disabled Iraqis, who lacked mobility due to being paralyzed, were identified by local shaykhs, said DeWhitt. Members of the embedded Provincial Reconstruction Team and the U.S. Agency of International Development helped the shaykhs coordinate with U.S. forces to arrange the exchange of two wheelchairs.

The recipients of the wheelchairs were a former Sons of Iraq member and a farmer in the northern part of the Aqur Quf area, both of whom had been severely injured in improvised explosive device attacks.

Leaders from HHC received the donated wheelchairs through a series of channels stemming from a nonprofit organization, said DeWhitt. The parts for the chairs were bought and assembled in the U. S. with the objective of enabling the recipients with easy access to low-cost replacement parts.

"Often times, we provide the supplies, the Iraqis do the organi-



Sgts. Joe Gray (left) from Lake Dallas, Texas, and Andrew Whitesand, from Pueblo, Colo., roll two handcrafted wheelchairs up a road Feb. 10. The infantry team leaders with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 38th Infantry Regiment, 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, delivered the chairs before the weekly shaykh council meeting in the Aqur Quf area.



Lt. Col. John Leffers, a native of Utica, N.Y., and the commander of 1st Battalion, offers a uniquely designed wheelchair to a former member of the Sons of Iraq Feb. 10 in the Aqur Quf area. The chair was designed to enable recipients to buy inexpensive replacement parts at a local market.

zation," said DeWhitt.

Each wheelchair was uniquely designed with bicycle tires and white plastic patio chairs, only costing \$58.20 to make, which permit all of the parts to be bought in local Iraqi stores, said DeWhitt.

The Soldiers here have been eager to help out in the Aqur Quf area, whether by providing school supplies for the local children or enabling mobility to underprivileged individuals. And the locals have become much more receptive to the presence of Soldiers as a result.

"The locals know that when we come around, we're not here for war," said Staff Sgt. Aldo Gonzalez, a native of National City, Calif., and an infantry platoon sergeant with HHC. "We're here to help them out and provide them with any assistance that we can." ▲

The new road to Taji

Engineers provide safe passage for Iraqi detainees' family members

Story & photos by Sgt. Tracy Knowles
101st Eng. Bn., USD-C

BAGHDAD – As the orange sun rises above Camp Taji, Soldiers of the 1192nd Engineer Company (Vertical), a National Guard unit based out of Ohio, bustle around, gathering protective equipment and tools to begin another day of work on a new, safer road through Taji.

Taji, once an Iraqi military base located approximately 15 miles north of Baghdad, is now considered one of fourteen remaining “enduring bases” providing U.S. and Iraqi forces with air travel, barracks for troops that provide security and housing for Iraqi detainees.

Camp Taji Theater Internment Reconciliation Center provides detainees with programs to help learn new skills; it also provides family visitation. What it doesn't provide is a direct route to the facility.

Detainees' family members had to be brought through a gate on the east side of Taji in order to visit with

them. This method of getting families into the facility raised many concerns about not only the safety of the visiting families, but also the safety of forces stationed on the base.

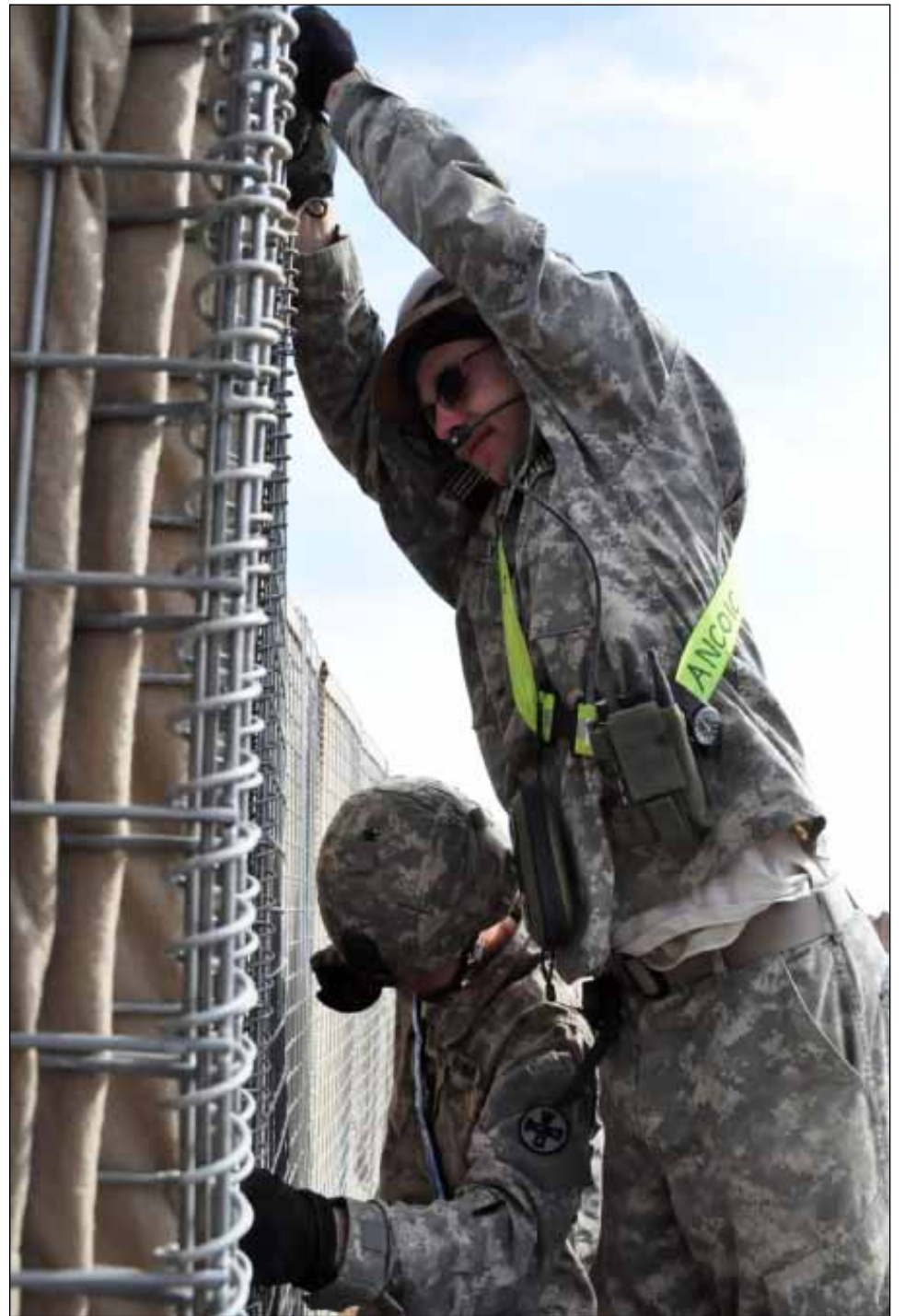
The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers recently tasked 101st Engineer Battalion with constructing a new passage directly to the detention facility from outside the camp.

After a month of grading, leveling, and many soil compaction tests, the first phase of the road is complete and the engineers are awaiting gravel to be laid and T-walls to be positioned around the detention facility.

Spc. Mark Staten, an Ohio native, moves to a long row of empty Hesco barriers to assist in the set-up of a perimeter wall leading to the Camp Taji Detention Center.

In the meantime, the Soldiers have set and filled more than 9,000 feet of Hesco barriers around the perimeter and re-

moved the old Hescos, which have been in place around the camp for more than seven years. ▲



Sgt. Jeffery Joslyn, a native of Sandusky, Ohio, lends a hand to a fellow Soldier of 119nd Engineer Company Feb. 2 in setting Hesco barriers, used as base defense measures. The Hescos are expected to help ensure the safety of Iraqi family members visiting their loved ones at a detention center at Camp Taji.

Surveyors help to ensure quality construction

Story by Spc. Brian Johnson
1434th Eng. Co., 101 Eng. Bn., USD-C

BAGHDAD – When Army engineers build, quality assurance is an important part of the job to ensure their construction is performed to a specific standard.

Ensuring those standards are reached are the members of 621st Survey and Design team. They have been working alongside 1192nd Engineer Company, 101st Engineer Battalion at Camp Taji, north of Baghdad, to create an important access road into part of the camp.

When complete, the road will provide direct access for Iraqi workers and prisoners' family members to the Camp Taji Theater

Internment Reconciliation Center without forcing them to travel across the U.S. side of the base.

The 621st has been ensuring the engineers construct the road according to plan.

“After we do the initial survey and the construction crews begin their work, we help to ensure that the elevation and construction of the road meet the original design specifications,” said Spc. Micah Mahadeo from Stanley, N.C.

Factored into the original design is a safety concern – ensuring the road is solid enough to withstand a daily flow of traffic from heavy vehicles. Members of 621st measure this capability with a compaction test.

The test involves hitting the ground three times with a 20-pound

hammer. Measurements are taken at the site and calculated to ensure the road is compacted enough to support any vehicles traveling along it.

Sgt. Jason Andrews, from Akron, Ohio, serving with 1192nd, observed how well the road was constructed.

“With the 621st's help, we have built the road to even higher standards than what was required,” said Andrews. “One of our construction scrapers, fully loaded, weighs over 45,000 pounds. The road has no give when the scraper is driving on it.”

The original specifications required the road to support nearly half of that weight, but soil conditions made their work more challenging.

“The soil that was here was not a good quality for a road base. The 1192nd Soldiers have had to take out almost three feet of that soil to just get to a good base that we could work, pass compaction tests, and begin construction,” said Mahadeo.

They faced other challenges, including rain, wind and curious children.

“During part of our construction mission, we have had many Iraqi children come over and observe what we are doing,” said Spc. Phillip Ford of Gastonia, N.C. “As much as we enjoyed reaching out to the children and giving them things, they became a bit of a distraction.”

Leaders expect to complete the project in late February. ▲

Air Cav medics engage in mass casualty exercise

Story & photos by Sgt. Alun Thomas
1st ACB, 1st Cav. Div., USD-C

TAJI, Iraq – Everywhere the medics looked, another casualty was found; some missing limbs, others suffering penetrating chest wounds or head trauma.

While the injuries were simulated, the sense of urgency wasn't, as medics from 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, U.S. Division – Center, frantically sought

to deliver essential first aid to patients, just one part of a mass casualty exercise Feb. 5 at the Forward Arm-

"They really needed this experience and overall, I think it's going to benefit them."

– Staff Sgt. Misty Spencer

ing and Refueling Point located at Camp Taji.

The exercise was devised by Spc. Jennifer Sybert, from Morrisville, Vt., and a medic for 3rd Battalion, 1st ACB, who said the training was based on a presentation she created about potential mishaps at the FARP.

"This exercise demonstrates some of those mishaps, while at the same time getting the medics out of their chairs at the [troop medical clinic]," Sybert said. "Having it at the FARP was intended to make it more realistic."

After a short foot march in full combat attire, the medics were put to the test by imaginary mortar rounds which had exploded at the FARP, leaving a slew of casualties, Sybert said.

"Mortar attacks are something we always have to be mindful of, so it was a good chance to have different types of casualties for a broader range of practice," Sybert explained.

Some of the injuries medics faced included burn and blast injuries from an exploded fuel truck, ranging from minor to severe.

"Considering we haven't had hands-on practice in quite a long time, our medics still remembered a remarkable amount," Sybert continued. "As with anything ... if you don't use it, you lose it."

Following initial treatment of the casualties, medics evacuated them onto waiting medical evacuation helicopters, which Sybert said had been practiced earlier in the deployment.

"We had a full day of practicing [medical evacuation] rescue back in August, so we already knew our flight medics and what we had to do," she explained. "Nobody was



Spc. Joel Stanley, from Livingston, Texas, a medic for 4th Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, U.S. Division – Center, carries a mock casualty to safety Feb. 5 following a simulated mortar attack, part of a mass casualty exercise at the Forward Arming and Refueling Point.

dropped or injured further, which was beneficial to everyone."

Many senior medics have been through training scenarios and real-life situations similar to this exercise, but medics new to the Army haven't, making it more crucial for them, Sybert said.

"For most of us at the TMC, we haven't seen anything like this, so it's not going to come to us," she said. "Unless something really goes wrong, we won't be involved in something like this."

While the training was successful as a whole, there were still things that needed improvement, said Staff Sgt. Misty Spencer, from Reno, Nev., senior medic for the 615th Aviation Support Battalion, 1st ACB.

"One of the biggest things we need to improve is our command and control," Spencer said. "We didn't have control of everything that was going on, and there wasn't one designated person in charge."

Despite the mistakes, the training was a good learning experience, she said.

"Now [the medics] realize that someone needs to be in charge," she added. "Someone needs to know what's going on, how many patients we have, who's going in the bird first, and who's calling it in."

Those involved in the exercise provided efficient aid to the casualties, with one minor discrepancy, Spencer said.

"Once they got to the patients and figured out what was wrong with them, there were no issues," she continued. "There were a few problems with the casualty collection point and where they were meeting but overall, the treatment went well."

Spencer also agreed the training was a valuable opportunity for the junior medics, who will learn from their mistakes.

"They're going to say, 'Okay, I remember this from last time and what went wrong and what we should have done,'" Spencer said. "I think that's going to kick in next time ... they really needed this experience and overall, I think it's going to benefit them." ▲



Medics prepare to load a mock casualty onto a waiting medevac helicopter following a simulated mortar attack. The medics conducted a mass casualty exercise as part of continued training in their field.

Stirring up Justice

Artillerymen turn paper plates into targets

Story & photo by Sgt. Samantha Beuterbaugh
366th MPAD, USD-C

BAGHDAD – A 20-foot high dune rises from the sand at Contingency Operating Location Justice, partially masking the bustling life of Baghdad in the distance.

Soldiers hike to a quiet corner of the lifeless landscape.

“Let’s go!” a Soldier shouts. “The faster we get the range set up, the sooner we get out of here.”

Soldiers spring from the right and left sides of the mound, equipped with two-by-fours, large pieces of cardboard, thumbtacks, tape, paper plates and plastic bottles.

Their intent: to construct a rifle range.

With limited resources, the Soldiers assigned to Battery B, 2nd Battalion, 12th Field Artillery Regiment, 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, have been forced to find innovative ways to build a rifle range so they can hone their marksmanship skills. Their creativity has become a weekly ritual.

Since arriving at Justice in December 2009, the unit found there was not only a lack of supplies to work with, but they were unable to coordinate with other units to provide range safeties, said Sgt. Jorge Olea, a Fontana, Calif., native and squad leader with Btry. B.

So they decided to take matters into their own hands.

The Soldiers have had to improvise ways to safely and effectively operate the range, said Sgt. Roy Vital, a squad leader for Btry. B, from Lake Charles, La.

The unit managed to scrounge up two-by-fours from the military materiel and supply yard. The repair and utility representative and Bedford, Va., native, Spc. Benjamin Willis, constructed square-shaped stands to hold targets, as well as paddles crafted by attaching a simple, square piece of plywood to a two-by-four, Vital said.

“If the stands get shot up, [Wil-

lis] builds new ones,” said Vital.

Once the target stands and paddles were constructed, Soldiers who would act as the range safeties were identified and additional tasks divided out for the setup of the range.

Upon arriving, the Soldiers lugged previously filled sandbags to the firing line. The sandbags served as an aid while in prone and supported positions.

The Soldiers dragged the assembled target stands to the edge of the sandy berm and situated them, 25 meters directly in front of the sandbags.

They pried rusty nails from the wood frames and reused them to hang the cardboard, on which the paper targets were attached. The cardboard was then gathered from empty packing boxes, with the intent to be reused, if possible.

Additional Soldiers spray-painted the handcrafted wood paddles – red on one side, black on the other – to be used when the range was functioning, indicating to the noncommissioned officer in charge of the range whether each firing order was ready to put bullets down-range.

Battery B noncommissioned officers have learned to use everything they can get their hands on, from tape to thumbtacks to paper plates in constructing the targets, said Olea.

“Our staple gun quit working properly, so we used thumb tacks to hang the targets,” said Vital.

The squad leaders have tried to be creative with the training as well, in order to keep the Soldiers on their toes, said Olea.

“We try to make [the range] competitive,” said Olea, “to get everyone to strive to shoot better and really push themselves.”

At a previous range, the Soldiers conducted what they call a “stress shoot.” During the shoot, Soldiers

“Warrior tasks are very important because they’re what keeps [Soldiers] alive.”

– 1st Lt. Jeremiah Faught



Sgt. Jorge Olea, a Fontana, Calif., native and squad leader assigned to Battery B, 2nd Battalion, 12th Field Artillery Regiment, 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, spray paints the range safety paddles with the only two colors he had available: red and black. The rifle range training was conducted Jan. 17 at Contingency Operating Location Justice.

team up in pairs and are timed and graded on their performance while negotiating various obstacles.

Olea said the intent of the stress shoot is to simulate what Soldiers’ reaction times and accuracy might be during combat.

Soldiers must sprint from obstacle to obstacle, shooting in various positions at different types of targets – in this case, paper plates and plastic bottles. Each team must communicate throughout, sometimes carrying a litter full of water bottles to simulate carrying a casualty.

Extra stress is added into the mix as Soldiers are given point deductions if they are caught performing an unsafe act, such as not putting a weapon on safe when loading a new magazine, not carrying a litter correctly, and even shooting out of order.

First Lt. Jeremiah Faught, a section leader with Btry. B, and native of Sotin, Wash., said these training exercises are critical because the Soldiers regularly run intense missions outside of the wire that last four to six hours, and they serve on quick reaction force teams every other week.

“Warrior tasks are very important because they’re what keeps [Soldiers] alive,” Faught asserted.

Another important task is preserving the environment after a range concludes.

Soldiers conduct a “police call,” raking through the sand to collect all of the expended brass casings. Others repack their improvised supplies, determined to leave the area the way they found it: a 20-foot high dune rising from a sandy lot, partially masking the bustling life of Baghdad. ▲

'DIRTY HESCOS' ROCK CAMP VICTORY



Sgt. Lester Simpson, a native of Garland, Texas, and bass player for *The Dirty Hescos*, slaps the strings of his five-string bass.



Sgt. Brandon Boron, a Las Vegas native and guitar player for *The Dirty Hescos*, belts out tunes for the crowd.



*Photos by Sgt. Phillip Valentine,
366th MPAD, USD-C*

BAGHDAD – Soldiers assigned to 1st Armored Division Band, U.S. Division – Center, calling themselves *The Dirty Hescos*, perform for Soldiers Jan. 29 at Camp Victory. This was the first performance for the band at Camp Victory, but they have previously performed in theater.

Generating power for the war fighter

Mechanics do more than keep the lights on

Story & photos by Spc. Daniel Schneider
366th MPAD, USD-C

BAGHDAD – The Army relies heavily on electrical energy, and a group of five enlisted Soldiers have the heavy task of maintaining this vital commodity for many people at Victory Base Complex.

The generator mechanics, assigned to Company B, Division Special Troops Battalion, 1st Armored Division, spend all their time inside the walls of the complex, maintaining more than 70 generators.

“We’re not outside the wire, but we’re vital to the safety of Soldiers here,” said Spc. Derek McCarthy, a mechanic with the group.

McCarthy has deployed before, a few times. He said his mission during this deployment has been his most crucial one to date.

“Out of four deployments, this one has been the busiest, and the most

important,” McCarthy explained. “My last deployments were as an air conditioning technician, but this one is ensuring communication and safety features continue to function properly.”

Maintaining reliable electricity involves more than just keeping the lights on and ensuring the Internet stays up and running; it also fuels the equipment needed to provide security to Soldiers, said Spc. Jeremy Simmons, lead generator mechanic for the team.

The crew must remain on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Whenever a generator goes down, they have to get it running again quickly because some of the generators they service provide electricity for vital equipment.

This posed a problem for them in the beginning because the majority of them are not specialists in generator repair. In fact, Spc. Jose Barrera and Simmons are the only members of



Spc. Jose Barrera, a generator mechanic, examines the wiring of a non-functional generator while troubleshooting what is keeping it from starting.



Spc. Jeremy Simmons, the lead generator mechanic assigned to Company B, Division Special Troops Battalion, 1st Armored Division, uses a voltmeter to find the problem with a generator at Camp Liberty Feb. 3.

the team who have actually received specialized generator repair training.

They have been able to overcome this challenge, however, by conducting classes, sharing knowledge and learning from each other in order to improve the team’s overall capabilities.

“We’re all maintenance technicians, but we have a broad split of specialties,” said Simmons.

Those specialties come into play when faced with a problem.

The team has learned to work through tough problems by troubleshooting them; a technique that involves understanding schematics, said McCarthy, a Chicago native.

“If you can read schematics and blueprints, you can pretty much figure out the path of electricity and find out through troubleshooting where

the problem is,” said McCarthy.

The Soldiers said they are proud of their role in achieving their vital mission, especially when they get the opportunity to tackle difficult problems.

“It’s exciting to troubleshoot a problem and find out how to fix it,” said Pfc. Jonathan Warden, a maintenance technician. “The feeling of accomplishment is an awesome feeling.”

Generator maintenance may seem unglamorous to many, but to the five mechanics of Co. B working behind the scenes to help keep other Soldiers’ missions running smoothly, it is a quiet burden they are more than willing to shoulder.

“If we can support other Soldiers to succeed in their jobs,” said McCarthy, “then we succeed in ours.” ▲

Engineers staff tour Iraqi training center at Besmaya

*Photos by Spc. Brian Johnson,
1434th Eng. Co., USD-C*



A type of robot Iraqi Soldiers learn to use at the Iraqi Explosive Ordnance Disposal School.



Watching from above, the command team of 16th Engineer Brigade observe Iraqi Soldiers clearing a room. The command team toured the training facilities to learn about the types of training offered to the Iraqi Army.



Brig. Gen. Glenn Hammond, 16th Engineer Brigade commander, examines protective gear used by Iraqi Explosive Ordnance Disposal Soldiers, to learn more of the facility's mission and capabilities.

Engineers walk to raise awareness

Story & photo by Spc. Brian Johnson
1434th Eng. Co., 101st Eng. Bn., USD-C

BAGHDAD – In order to raise awareness of sexual assault and to send a clear message that sexual assault will not be tolerated, Soldiers of 16th Engineer Brigade took part in a 2-mile walk sponsored by U.S. Division – Center and U.S. Forces – Iraq Feb. 12 at Camp Victory.

The Sexual Assault Prevention and Response walk provided an opportunity to educate and raise awareness about sexual assault through brochures, skits and discussions at various points along the route.

According to Lt. Col. Jane Lengel, the Equal Opportunity advisor for the 16th Eng. Bde., the SAPR program works to eliminate incidents of sexual assault.

“The program focuses on education, prevention, integrating victim support and rapid reporting,” said Lengel.

Many Soldiers are unaware of the consequences and residual effects of sexual assault, said Lengel. Progress has been made recently in increasing awareness of sexual assault as a criminal offense.

“Not every Soldier may understand why they are there for the walk, but their presence will help bring awareness, and that’s a start,” said Command Sgt. Maj. Verna Henderson, command sergeant major for the brigade.



Soldiers of 16th Engineer Brigade participate in a 2-mile walk Feb. 12 at Camp Victory. The walk, sponsored by U.S. Division – Center and U.S. Forces – Iraq, provided an opportunity to educate and raise awareness about sexual assault through brochures, skits and discussions at various points along the route.

According to Henderson, more than 50 percent of the unit signed up to participate in the walk.

“The purpose of the walk is to increase knowledge and raise awareness of sexual as-

sault,” said Henderson. “We would like this to serve as an empowerment tool to ensure that all service members and civilians are educated about sexual assault prevention and response.” ▲

I.A.M. S'TRONG
U.S. ARMY
INTERVENE • ACT • MOTIVATE

Sexual Assault and Sexual Harassment Prevention

INTERVENE
When I recognize a threat to my fellow Soldiers, I will have the personal courage to **INTERVENE** and prevent Sexual Assault. I will condemn acts of Sexual Harassment. I will not abide obscene gestures, language or behavior. I am a Warrior and a member of a team. I will **INTERVENE**.

ACT
You are my brother, my sister, my fellow Soldier. It is my duty to stand up for you, no matter the time or place. I will take **ACTION**. I will do what's right: I will prevent Sexual Harassment and Assault. I will not tolerate sexually offensive behavior. I will **ACT**.

MOTIVATE
We are American Soldiers. **MOTIVATED** to keep our fellow Soldiers safe. It is our mission to prevent Sexual Harassment and Assault. We will denounce sexual misconduct. As Soldiers, we are all **MOTIVATED** to take action. We are strongest...together.

www.preventsexualassault.army.mil
Military OneSource • 1-800-342-9647

'Devil' paratroopers train for com

Story & photos by Spc. Michael MacLeod
1st AAB, 82nd Abn. Div., USD-C

CAMP RAMADI, Iraq – “Black hat” instructors from the U.S. Army’s elite Advanced Airborne School refreshed the parachuting skills of paratroopers Feb. 5 to prepare them for a tactical airborne exercise soon to follow.

Three jumpmaster instructors from the Fort Bragg parachuting school recently traveled to Camp Ramadi, where they taught a one-day basic airborne skills refresher course to paratroopers of 1st Airborne Division and Assist Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division.

“You want to knock the dust off [airborne] skills and bring them to the level of proficiency where they need to be,” said Sgt. 1st Class Robert Shultz, air movement operations committee chief for the Advanced Airborne School and lead instructor conducting the training at Camp Ramadi.

“It’s a perishable skill, like marksmanship or physical training. It’s something you need to be on top of all the time,” he said.

Instructors led the paratroopers in a series of exercises, simulating every movement that a paratrooper must make before, during and after a jump to exercise muscle memory, said Shultz.

Paratroopers practiced parachute landing falls – a way to safely roll when landing to dissipate the energy of impact. They also received a brief on how to exit the aircraft under various scenarios, and then practiced mass exiting from a training apparatus; designed to simulate a C-130 aircraft.

The last skill paratroopers reviewed was rigging their packs with a harness that allows them to lower their packs to the ground before they land, preventing injury and protecting equipment.

“To get these guys out here touching their equipment – rigging their stuff up, putting their parachute on – makes them feel like paratroopers again,” said Schultz. “They’re out here [in Iraq] doing different things.”

Sgt. Brandon Reynolds, a mortarman with 2nd Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment, is

looking forward to the jump. A paratrooper since 2006, Reynolds said he loves being with the 82nd because of the high standards of soldiering they uphold.

“It’s a once in a lifetime opportunity to come out here and jump and show the Iraqis exactly what an airborne division can do,” he said.

The legacy unit of 1-82 AAB, 504th PIR, has five jumps into combat zones under its belt, including four during World War II and one into Panama in 1989.

If executed as planned, the 1-82 AAB training exercise could be the largest mass parachute jump into a combat zone since the paratroopers of 173rd Airborne Brigade dropped onto Bashur Airfield in northern Iraq Mar. 26, 2003; a combat jump known as Operation Northern Delay.

According to the 173rd Web site, nearly 1,000 paratroopers took part in that operation. More than 500 devil paratroopers are expected to jump at this one. ▲



Dirt flies off a paratroopers boots as he finishes a parachute landing fall with other paratroopers during a training exercise, at Camp Ramadi, Iraq, Feb. 5, 2010. The paratroopers are participating in a basic airborne skills refresher course from Fort Bragg’s Advanced Airborne School in preparation for airborne exercises later in the year.



Sgt. Tige Phyfer, an infantry team leader with 2nd Battalion, follows instructions during mock-door training.

ning mass Airborne jump in Iraq



Paratroopers of 1st Advise and Assist Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division, participate in a refresher course being taught by instructors visiting the month.



Staff Sgt. Victor Vasquez, a jumpmaster instructor, describes how to properly fit protective padding in a helmet.



Staff Sgt. Timothy Rojas, a jumpmaster instructor, describes the proper way to grip a universal static line as Staff Sgt. Victor Vasquez, also a jumpmaster instructor, demonstrates for a group of paratroopers.



Troopers hold static lines and sit in a mock door.



A paratrooper helps to attach a reserve parachute to a fellow jumper's parachute harness.

Valentine's Day; celebrating African-American history in a special way

Story by Spc. Luisito Brooks
4th SBCT PAO, 2nd Inf. Div., USD-C

BAGHDAD – In celebration of African-American History Month and Valentine's Day, leaders from 4th Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division hosted a special ceremony Feb. 14 at the Camp Liberty Field House.

Guest speaker Col. Carlton Day, chief of National Guard Affairs, U.S. Forces – Iraq, emphasized the importance of embracing Black history as an integral part of Americana.

"The purpose of Black History Month is not something just to talk about, but it is an opportunity to learn and educate ourselves on the accomplishment of African-Americans," said Day. "African-American history is American history."

The ceremony brought together deployed Soldiers from every racial background, gender and age to participate in the event. Organizers spent two months planning it and many who attended felt the effort reaped a reward.

"I really enjoyed the ceremony because I learned a lot about some inventors and other African-Americans who impacted the world," said Spc. Douglas Maltese, a Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 702nd Brigade Support Battalion, 4th Bde., 2nd Inf. Div., personal security detachment Soldier from Lebanon, Maine. "The choir sang great, the poet was very clever, and the band was awesome."

The choir, made up of 15 Soldiers from different units, brought the crowd to their feet with loud applause. Scott Free, a civilian contractor, performed "spoken word," considered a form of free style poetry.

"We all must stand to make history in the present in order to present a better future," spoke Free. "United we stand and divided we fall."

Col. John Norris, the Raider Brigade commander, introduced Day.

"Today, we gather to recognize the many accomplishments of black Americans," said Norris. "There has not been a war fought away or in the United States in which black Americans did not participate, including the Revolutionary War, where over 5,000 black Americans joined the fight for independence."

Norris said Day is part of that same long history of service to our nation.

With a mixed crowd sitting in aluminum seats, Day stated his principles on black history.

"When I reflect on black history, I identify four principles that I would like to share with you," said Day. "The four principles are faith, hope, love and sacrifice."

The fiber of the country's history is tightly woven with that of African-Americans, Day said.

"We are celebrating Black History Month in a warzone: that's history," said Day. "We are here today because of our ancestors, and our tomorrow is up to us today."

Sgt. 1st Class Craig Brown, the brigade equal opportunity advisor and Black History Month organizer, said he saw the celebration as an opportunity to share with fellow Soldiers an important heritage of which they may not be aware.

"I wanted to make as many people as I can aware of this country's past," said Brown, a Milwaukee native. "I wanted to open the eyes of this generation that may have never heard this part of history." 🇺🇸



U.S., ISF plan for elections

Story by Pfc. Kimberly Hackbarth
4th SBCT PAO, 2nd Inf. Div., USD-C

CONTINGENCY OPERATING LOCATION JUSTICE, Iraq – What started as light humor soon turned serious as Lt. Col. Robert Fruehwald and Staff Maj. Gen. Shakir met at the 2nd Federal Police Division headquarters Feb. 7 to discuss upcoming election security plans.

Fruehwald, the 2nd FP Div. Transition Team commander, and Shakir, the 2nd FP Div. commander, have been working together to prepare for the Mar. 7 national elections.

People will be watching to see if the Iraqi Security Forces can provide a safe election, and it's up to Shakir and his men to accomplish this task.

Because of the Security Agreement, enacted Jun. 30, 2009, U.S. forces will not have a presence around polling stations during the elections. However, U.S. Soldiers have made an impact on the ISF through extensive training, mentoring and guidance.

"We want to make them as good as they can be," said Fruehwald, a Wayne, N.J., native, whose transition team helped mentor FP officers.

Since Shakir assumed his position as commander nearly one year ago, he arranged the placing barriers around the area to disrupt insurgent activity and conducted combined patrols with U.S. forces, gaining the trust and respect of the local populace by showing them security is sustainable in Kadhimiya.

"We work for one target and one destiny," said Shakir, who refers to his American counterparts as brothers in arms.

The relationship between the American troops and the Iraqi people has also improved, as seen when they conduct combined patrols, Shakir explained. He said there are no negative feelings from the local populace.

"Iraqi people in Kadhimiya are not the Iraqis from yesterday's mind," said Shakir. "They start understanding the U.S. units are there to help."

During the many months working with Fruehwald, Shakir said that planning has become his favorite part of working with Americans because of their combined effort toward a greater goal.

"In [a] room full of different ideas and views [from] both the Iraqi side and the American side, the result of the plans is always the right answer," said Shakir.

The results of this U.S., ISF partnership will be revealed during the elections in March. Iraqi and U.S. officials say they are confident the elections will show, at the very least, the effectiveness of this partnership. 🇺🇸



Soldiers distribute care packages



Photo by Sgt. Samantha Beuterbaugh, 366th MPAD, USD-C

BAGHDAD – Command Sgt. Maj. Samuel Murphy, of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 38th Infantry Regiment, 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, places his hand over his heart as a sign of respect, at Aqur Quf village Feb. 10 as a local Iraqi who received some of the care packages he distributed, salutes him. The care packages included school supplies, stuffed animals and other goods for parents to distribute to their children.



Soldiers assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 38th Infantry Regiment, 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, pull with all their might during a recreational day tug-of-war competition at Camp Liberty. Feb. 5 marked the unit's 138th consecutive day spent "boots on ground" in Iraq.

1-38th commemorates 138th day 'boots on ground'

Story & photos by Sgt. 1st Class Kristina Scott
366th MPAD, USD-C

BAGHDAD – For Soldiers who are in the habit of patrolling the streets of Baghdad up to eight hours each day, meeting with key Iraqi leaders and training members of the Iraqi Security Forces, taking a day off now and then comes as a much-welcomed break.

For Soldiers assigned to 1st Battalion, 38th Infantry Regiment, 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, that day arrived Feb. 5. But the idea was not simply about taking the day off.

Leaders decided that tying the numeric designation of the unit into the 138th day of "boots on ground" – a term which refers to how many days the Soldiers have been in Iraq – was a great way to remember the heritage of the 1-38th Inf. Regt., and to build esprit de corps by bringing the troops together for some friendly competition.

"Today is primarily to honor the service of the regiment, but it also gives a little bit of a break to get re-motivated," said Lt. Col. John Leffers, 1-38th commander and a native of Utica, N.Y.

The festivities started with a somewhat informal ceremony during which two Sol-

diers were promoted in rank and several awards were given out; one for expertise of marksmanship. There was also an historical account of the battalion's involvement at Omaha Beach, during the Normandy Campaign, in July 1944.

After the formation, the Soldiers moved on to compete in various tournaments, such as 3-on-3 basketball, an Ultimate Frisbee game, a classic tug-of-war competition and an intense game of dodgeball. The Soldiers were also treated to a picnic-style lunch.

"It's good for everyone to come together," said the battalion chaplain, Capt. Steven Thomas, a native of Oscoda, Mich., of the operational tempo, which forces

Soldiers to often go several different directions, seldom seeing each other.

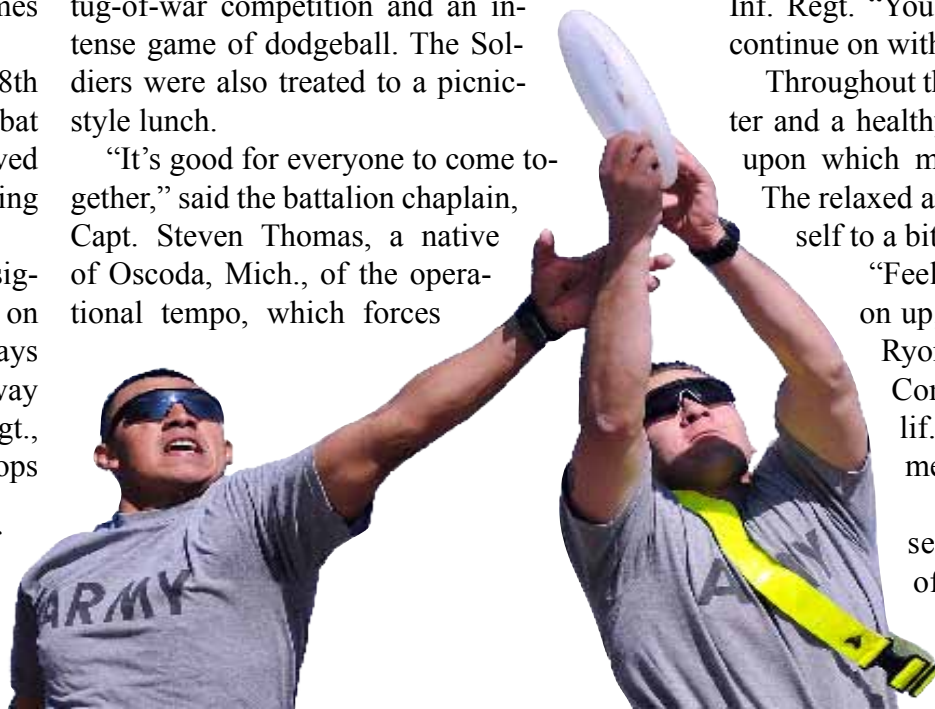
Soldiers said they also enjoyed having a change of scenery.

"It's a nice break in the routine, which helps us with not getting burnt out," said 1st Sgt. James Arnett, a native of Marianna, Ark., assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1-38th Inf. Regt. "You can take a step back, and then continue on with business."

Throughout the day, there was plenty of laughter and a healthy dose of old-fashioned ribbing, upon which many Soldiers seemed to thrive. The relaxed atmosphere of the day also lent itself to a bit of goofiness.

"Feel the rhythm, feel the rhyme, get on up; it's Frisbee time!" chanted Pfc. Ryon Carrillo, an infantryman with Company B, and native of Brea, Calif., as the Ultimate Frisbee tournament began.

Overall, the relaxing day seemed to be a success and most of the Soldiers agreed they are looking forward to the celebrations that are scheduled to take place on the 238th day of boots on ground, and the 338th day ...



Sergeants Baltazar Salazar (left) and Hilario Cantu jump to catch a Frisbee during a recreational day at Camp Liberty.

Air Cav fuelers over two million gallons pumped

Story & photos by Sgt. Alun Thomas
1st ACB PAO, 1st Cav. Div., USD-C

Taji, Iraq – The relentless nature of the 1st Air Cavalry Brigade aviation mission requires aircraft to be in the air at all times.

Keeping the aircraft flying requires massive amounts of fuel and a 24-hour operation, which is maintained by fuelers at a non-stop pace.

This pace by the fuelers of Company E, 2nd Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, 1st ACB, 1st Cavalry Division, U.S. Division – Center, has added up to more than 2.5 million gallons of fuel pumped since the beginning of the unit's deployment more than nine months ago.

The figure is significant because of the limited resources the fuelers often work with, said Sgt. Nathaniel Washington, from Little Rock, Ark., a petroleum supply specialist for Co. E.

"With the small amount of people and equipment we have, it's a big achievement to have pumped so much fuel," Washington said. "We work 24 hours a day with roughly 10 to 12 personnel."

Washington said his duties involve supervising the fueling of CH-47 Chinook and UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters, both which are flown by 2-227th.

"I make sure the equipment is up and ready



Pvt. Maurilio Renteria, rounds up the fuel hose after refueling a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter on the flight line.



Pvt. Maurilio Renteria, from Boca Raton, Fla., an aircraft fuel handler assigned to Company E, 2nd Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, U.S. Division – Center, refuels a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter on a brisk morning Jan. 29. His company has pumped more than 2.5 million gallons of fuel during this deployment, which began more than nine months ago.

to go and that I have complete coordination with the motor pool and flight companies," he said. "It's important to know when they're going to need fuel and the amount of fuel necessary."

The deployment has been a busy one for the company, Washington said, with thousands of gallons being pumped every night.

"On an average night we pump six to seven thousand gallons," Washington said. "One night, we had a record amount, which was close to 12,000 gallons of cold fuel pumped."

This indicates just how much the Air Cav has flown, he said, with some aircraft requiring more effort than others.

"The demands of the Chinook, especially—they take a lot of fuel," Washington said. "It's a good thing; we're keeping them in the air and keeping people safe. The more fuel we pump, the better for the mission."

Washington said he is proud of his Soldiers, who have risen to the challenges presented to them, as reflected by their numbers.

"The guys are hard workers ... with the demand for more flight hours and fuel, they've stayed dedicated to the mission," Washington said. "They know they have to keep these birds in the air. To accomplish what we have is amazing."

Working alongside Washington is Staff

Sgt. Bryan Funyak, from Pittsburgh, a truck driver for Co. E, who said the commitment shown by the fuelers makes it easy for him to supervise them.

"This is a very good operation," Funyak said. "These guys know their mission and are extremely good at it."


Funyak said he was bought in to assist with the fueling mission due to the lack of fuelers, but added that working outside his normal job of transportation has been a good experience.

"When I came up here, it was easy to step in because these guys know their role and the mission always gets done," Funyak said.

Besides the ongoing mission at Camp Taji, fuelers for the company are also based in Kal-su and Balad.

"Those missions have been going on the entire deployment and we've had to cross-train Soldiers as fuelers to replace the ones that have joined the missions there," Funyak said.

The gallons of fuel pumped in those locations are not figured into the total amount at Taji, Funyak said, which makes the scope of the 2.5 million gallons even more impressive.

"It's a pretty good number," he said. "It's one of those things where you could sit back and say, 'Yeah, we out-pumped pretty much everyone.'" 

"It's a good thing; we're keeping them in the air and keeping people safe. The more fuel we pump, the better for the mission."

— Sgt. Nathaniel Washington

1st Air Cav aviator reaches 2,000 combat hours in flight

Story & photo by Sgt. Travis Zielinski
1st ACB PAO, 1st Cav. Div., USD-C

TAJI, Iraq – Ask Chief Warrant Officer 3 Anthony Potter what it takes to reach 2,000 combat flight hours and he'll tell you it requires the support of a loving family and fellow Soldiers.

Before being a senior in high school, the UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter instructor pilot from Company C, 3rd Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, U.S. Division – Center, said he always knew that he wanted to fly; that he wanted to be a pilot.

So when it came time to choose a college, he made it abundantly clear aviation would be in his future.

After graduating from Embry Riddle Aeronautical University with a degree in aeronautical science, a prospective employer told the Waldorf, Md., native, he lacked the maintenance experience required for the job. The comment later became the push which led Potter to the military.

Enlisting in the Army as an aircraft engine mechanic, Potter felt flying rather than fixing helicopters would be a better fit for him, so he decided to turn in a flight packet for warrant officer school.

"My maintenance platoon leader helped me put a packet together. I guess he saw the potential," said Potter. "In 2000, I got picked up for warrant on the first look; it was just the luck of the draw."

After four deployments and 52 months spent in a combat zone, Potter enjoys the notoriety of having logged 2,000 flight hours in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. To date, he actually has a total of 2,700 hours.

He sees the 2,000 hours as a symbol of not only the work he has done in Iraq, but the work done to protect his son from harm. Potter said it also symbolizes the special dates missed, to include anniversaries, birthdays and holidays, as well as his son growing up.

"I have not been home for Thanksgiving once in the last six years. I saw my son take his first steps via webcam: the potty training, I didn't have any part of that," said Potter. "It is just the little things like that I have missed and I will never get back."

The support his wife has shown him over the years, has kept Potter at a point where he can focus on his mission at hand and not have to worry about affairs back home.

"I could not deal with issues out here and deal with issues back home; my wife shelters everything that is happening back home from me," said Potter. "She handles everything. She



Chief Warrant Officer 3 Anthony Potter, from Waldorf, Md., a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter instructor pilot in Company C, 3rd Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, U.S. Division – Center, has spent 52 months and four Iraq deployments accumulating more than 2,000 hours of combat flight time.

has basically been a single mom for the last four years, I have the best wife in the world."

Having been away from home for the majority of his 5-year-old son's life, Potter takes every opportunity to talk with him and hopes to never take those moments for granted.

"I call my wife every night; she tells me what is going on and how my son is doing and I talk to my son as much as I can so he gets to know me," said Potter.

Potter's first and second deployments were spent working as a medical evacuation pilot, dealing with routine calls for patient transfers to urgent assistance of casualties resulting from a combat engagement.

"In the first nine months of being a deployed [medical evacuation] pilot, my crew had done 189 urgent calls and transferred over 400 patients," said Potter. "I brought back seven dead Soldiers, and that sticks with me ... I can still see all of them."

One of the most horrific memories of his time as a medical evacuation pilot was the aircraft washes, which had to be done on a frequent basis because of all the blood remaining inside the aircraft from their patients, said Potter.

"The year was set at a fast pace because of the short number of crews and the amount of calls, it basically became a year without sleep," said Potter.

Despite the hard memories, Potter still has solid reasons to enjoy flying in a combat zone as compared to flying in the U.S.

"I actually like flying in Iraq better, other than the part of being shot at," he said. "To me, it is easier to fly out here; the flying is more tactical versus the technical flying in the states."

Filling the role of an instructor pilot in an assault helicopter battalion on this deployment, Potter's duties include making sure the aviators within his company maintain their abilities to pilot a Black Hawk to the highest standards.

"My job is easy to help train these guys; they are better pilots than I was when I was at their level," said Potter. "My job is to make sure they take care of the mission, but they are the ones actually doing the mission."

Potter said the ability to help mentor younger pilots while being deployed, hopefully making them better and safer, may also allow him to move to different positions where he can spend more time with his family.

"I feel guilty about being gone for so long. I just want my son with me all the time when I am home," said Potter. "My wife tells me I spoil our son, but I can't help it because I am gone so much."

"I have not been home for Thanksgiving once in the last six years. I saw my son take his first steps via webcam: the potty training — I didn't have any part of that ... It is just the little things like that that I have missed and I will never get back."

— Chief Warrant Officer 3 Anthony Potter

Gone or not, Potter still has high hopes for his son, as do most fathers: "I can't wait until my son is old enough to reach the pedals so I can teach him how to fly." ▲

ISF uses U.S. dog team for foot patrol in Baghdad

Story by Spc. Jared Eastman
HHC, 1BCT-A 3ID, USD-C

BAGHDAD – The “Dog Faced Soldiers” of A Troop, 5th Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment, added a dog face among their ranks Feb. 1 when they conducted a joint patrol with Iraqi Security Forces.

As the Iraqis led a ground mission through the streets of Muhalla 830, Sgt. 1st Class Xanny followed close behind on four legs.

The 4-year-old working dog, handled by Staff Sgt. William Morton who serves as the kennel master at Contingency Operating Station Falcon, joined the search for weapon caches at the request of the Iraqis.

“The dogs are phenomenal,” said Capt. Evan Davies, the A Troop commander. “It is the first thing that the Iraqis request.”

The ISF requested the dog team to not only check key locations that have been troublesome in the past but to aid them in searching for weapons caches.

“We’re handing everything back over to the Iraqis, so we are utilizing the dogs to search for weapons caches, [road-side bombs] and [car bombs] along the routes,” said Morton. “Today, we went out and they pointed out some key places where they have found stuff prior.”

The dogs serve another purpose while they are searching for bomb materials.

“Their presence out there, whether they are searching for something or not, is important,” said Davies. “The ISF understands why those dogs are out there, but the civilians just see an American dog out there and they know it’s going to find something.”

While the ISF and A Troop Soldiers worked the streets, sometimes stopping to talk with people, Morton and Xanny “played.”

“This is how [dogs] have fun,” he said. “Every time we start to get our gear on, they know it’s time to go out and do something. The ISF think these dogs are the best thing in the world. They love how trained they are and how they listen very well.”

The Iraqis see Xanny as a useful tool to be used for their patrols; Morton sees Xanny as something more, he sees him as a good friend.

“Sometimes he can be hard-headed, but it’s great having him around,” Morton said. “He’s always there whenever you need someone to lean on or anything else. He’s a great tool, a great asset, but a great friend at the same time.”



Pfc. Lata Pitoulu, a unit supply specialist assigned to 1st Brigade Combat Team-Augmented, 3rd Infantry Division, raises her right hand to become a U.S. Feb. 15 citizen at Al Faw Palace. Pitoulu became a citizen during the 16th naturalization ceremony conducted in Iraq.

American Samoan to American Pacific Islander raises hand for U.S. citizenship

Story & photo by Sgt. Phillip Valentine
366th MPAD, USD-C

BAGHDAD – Service members gathered in Al Faw Palace Feb. 15 to witness 107 Soldiers from 44 different countries take the oath of U.S. citizenship; the 16th such naturalization ceremony that has taken place in Iraq since 2003.

One Soldier considers the 16th the most important.

For Pfc. Lata Pitoulu, a unit supply specialist assigned to 1st Brigade Combat Team-Augmented, 3rd Infantry Division, becoming a U.S. citizen in the ceremony has provided her with some additional rights.

The American Samoa native grew up enjoying many of the rights that U.S. citizens have because the country is a territory of the U. S. One of the rights Pitoulu did not get to enjoy, however, was the right to vote.

“When I came into the Army, I wanted to be an American so I could vote,” said Pitoulu. “Now I can vote for our president, our leaders.”

Pitoulu left American Samoa after graduating high school. She then went to Utah, where she attended Brigham Young University. While there, she decided to join the U.S. Army even though she was not a full U.S. citizen.

Shortly after she joined, Pitoulu deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom in January 2007. She returned to Iraq for a second deployment in December 2009.

Not only could Pitoulu not vote as a non-U.S. citizen, she discovered she could not be an Army officer either.

Now that she has become a citizen with full rights, Pitoulu plans to participate in the Army’s “Green-

to-Gold” program, which allows enlisted Soldiers to become officers. She also plans to pursue her career goal – law.

“I would make a good lawyer,” said Pitoulu. “If I don’t think something’s right, I don’t back down.”

Pitoulu’s supervisor, Sgt. 1st Class Mesahchai Freeman assigned to 1st BCT-A, 3rd Inf. Div., and a Newark, N.J., native, attended the event. She said she could back that statement up from personal experience.

“[Pitoulu] is dedicated, focused, and like a sponge. She absorbs and retains everything,” said Freeman. “She can do multiple things, yet she can focus on her tasks. All in all, she’s a Soldier, by definition.”

After the ceremony, Freeman smiled at Pitoulu.

“I am proud,” Freeman said; “like a proud parent.”

The road to citizenship was not an easy one for Pitoulu. She had to fill out a lot of paperwork, go through in-depth interviews and take an extensive test.

“You had to know everything,” said Pitoulu. “They gave us 100 questions to study and then asked only 10 questions.”

She sat in one of a multitude of seats at the naturalization ceremony and listened as Lt. Gen Charles Jacoby, deputy commanding general for operations, U.S. Forces – Iraq and commanding general, I Corps, spoke to the crowd.

“These Soldiers made contributions to our country long before their citizenship,” said Jacoby.

When the ceremony ended, Pitoulu, hands filled with an American flag and paperwork verifying her U.S. citizenship, smiled: “I am happy and excited about this. I can submit my “Green-to-Gold” paperwork.”

The ceremony lasted about an hour, a moment in history. For Pitoulu, it was the start of a new life filled with possibilities, as an American citizen.

Humanitarian aid drop brings relief, smiles to Sadiyah families

Story & photo by Spc. Jared Eastman
HHC, 1st BCT-A, 3rd ID, USD-C

BAGHDAD – Iraqi Soldiers from 5th Brigade, 2nd Federal Police Division and U.S. Soldiers with 5th Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment, visited Sadiyah Feb. 10 to hand out food, blankets and heaters to citizens of Iraq.

The joint mission, called “Operation Helping Hands”, afforded the Iraqi Security Forces an opportunity to help their fellow Iraqis.

“We appreciate the help from the American forces today for the operation, especially when they are giving humanitarian aid to the Iraqi citizens,” said Brig. Gen. Faisal Malikmhsen Al Zamili, 5-2 FP commander. “There are a lot of poor families that live here, and they really need the help. It proves that we are all one team, one family, and we are all working towards the same objective.”

The ISF and 5-7 Cav. Regt. asked the local shaykh to organize 100 of the poorest citizens of Sadiyah to receive the goods from the humanitarian aid drop.

“Today, we wanted to further our relationship with the 5-2 FP and do a joint humanitarian aid job right outside of Contingency Operating Station Falcon,” said 1st Lt. Michael Angeli, the 721st Civil Affairs team chief. “The best part of it is that you show the people of Iraq that don’t have much that the coalition forces and ISF care about them still.”

This is the first of many planned humanitarian aid drops for 1st Brigade Combat Team-Augmented.

“We plan on doing these humanitarian aid drops all over Iraq,” said Angeli. “As the ISF takes over from the coalition forces, we’ll be doing more joint aid drops and more joint operations with the ISF.”

The most amazing part of the operation for Brig. Gen. Faisal



Policemen with 5th Brigade, 2nd Federal Police Division and a 5th Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment Soldier pass out blankets Feb. 10 during a humanitarian aid drop conducted in Sadiyah.

was the ability of the Soldiers of the 5/7 Cav. Regt. to perform both assistance and protection for the Iraqi citizens together with his battalion.

“They are giving humanitarian aid with the friendly forces as well as full spectrum joint operations with Iraqi Forces on the battlefield, to present help for the citizens of Iraq, as well as protect

them,” he said.

The benefits were substantial, according to Angeli.

“I believe it strengthens their confidence in their young democracy they have,” Angeli said. “It also gives them faith that the Iraqi Police are there to help them, not only as an acting force, arresting bad people, but a community police as well.” ▲

Marriage Enrichment Study Tuesdays 1900-2000 Spiritual Fitness Center (Bldg 1822)

March - *Five Love Languages*

Upcoming studies

April - *Financial Peace University*

May - *Laugh Your Way to Better Marriage*

June - *Love and Respect*

July - *LINKS*

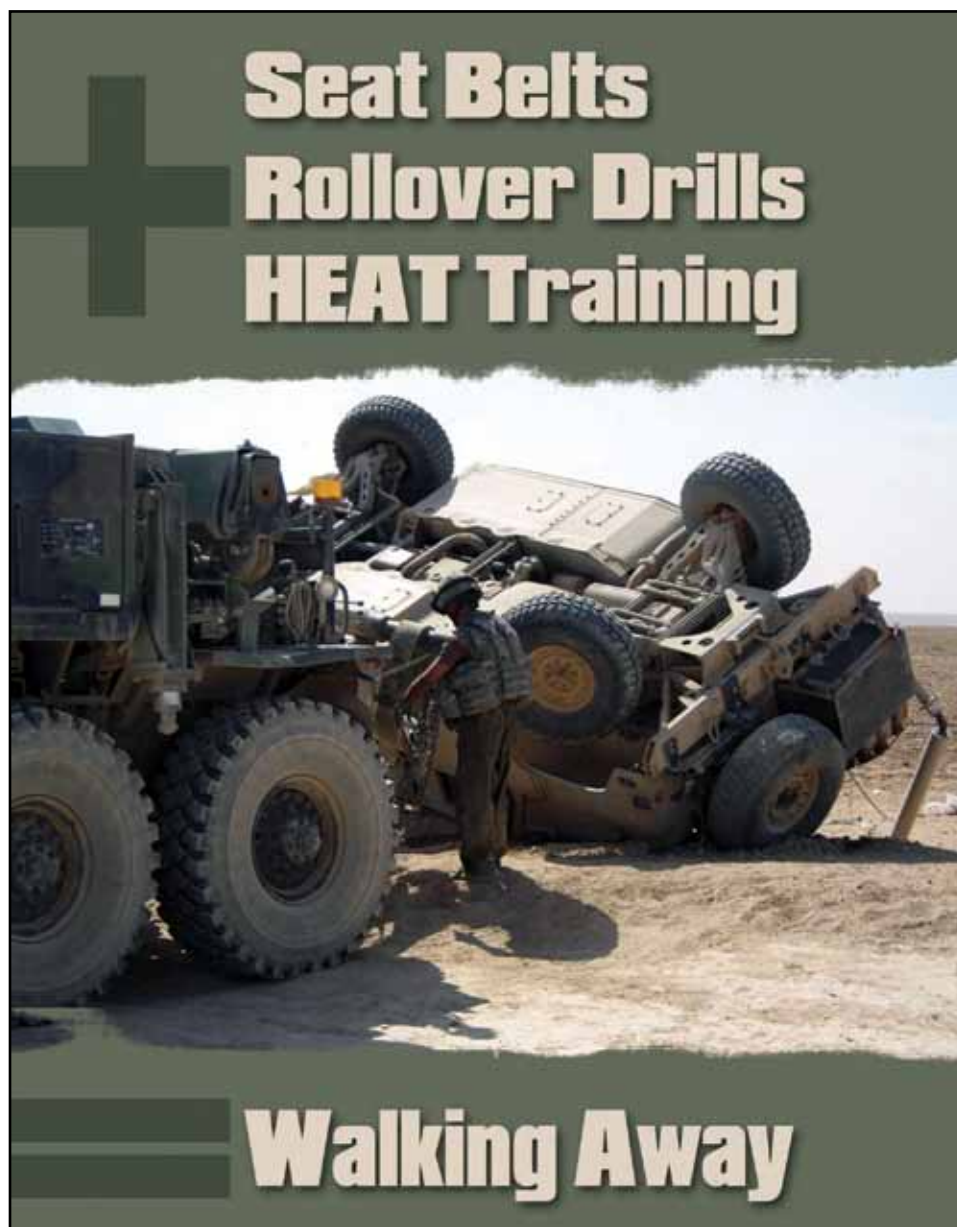
August - *Financial Peace University*

September - *Baby Makes Three*

October - *Five Power Tools for Marriage*

November - *Grab Bag*

For more information please contact the 1st Armored Division Chaplain's Office at DSN 847-2738.



Jump ~ From Pg. 1

"I still like it; that's why I go first," he said.

Conditions were nearly ideal for the training exercise, with mild winds and temperatures, and high visibility, according to Sgt. 1st Class Bryan Caldwell, noncommissioned officer in charge of airborne operations for 3rd Battalion, 319th Airborne Field Artillery Regiment, and drop zone safety officer.

Caldwell, who has conducted partnered airborne operations with other countries, said he has few concerns for the upcoming combined jumps with the Iraqis.

"A paratrooper is a paratrooper," said Caldwell.

"Once they get in the bird and they get parachutes on, it doesn't matter where you are from or where you've been – it's what you are doing at the moment," he said. "The Iraqis are trained paratroopers. I think we'll come together in the bird when it's time and see something amazing."

Command Sgt. Maj. William Johnson, the top noncommissioned officer for U.S. Division – Center, said that the ground was harder than the paratroopers were expecting, but their airborne training instincts kicked in to



Photo by Spc. Michael MacLeod, 1st AAB, 82nd Abn. Div., USD-C

Col. Mark Stammer, commander of 1st Advise and Assist Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division, hands off his universal static line as he moves to parachute from a C-130 aircraft Feb. 12 at Al Asad Airbase, Iraq. Refreshing the airborne proficiency of his paratroopers is the first step toward the goal of combined U.S. – Iraqi airborne training exercises that will follow the Iraqi national elections in early March.

ensure safe landings.

"We're going to train the Iraqis up just like we trained the 82nd paratroopers to get back into currency," said Johnson. "Then, we'll do a combined jump. It's going to make their Army even better."

The training exercise continued smoothly with no major incidents, according to Sgt. 1st Class William Johnson, noncommissioned officer in charge of airborne operations for 1-82

AAB and the person responsible for planning all the events.

After the second jump, the paratroopers were an hour ahead of schedule and by the end of the exercise, 183 jumpers had parachuted onto a drop zone, with only one mild injury, a slight concussion.

"Seeing the first 20 guys load up, it was like seeing the tip of the iceberg to all the hard work we've done to make this happen," said Sgt. 1st Class

Johnson.

The exercises are the first large-scale training jumps in Iraq since the beginning of the war, according to Command Sgt. Maj. Frank Grippe, the top noncommissioned officer of I Corps and the second paratrooper to jump from the first aircraft.

"As a unit, we're able to not only train ourselves but as a goal, do a partnered parachute jump with our Iraqi allies here in the not-too-distant future," said Grippe.

"It's just another metric that we're winning the fight here and that we're continually professionalizing Iraqi Security Forces," he said.

Two years ago, Anbar province was considered too dangerous to conduct training jumps, and combined airborne training with ISF was out of the question, according to 1st Sgt. Scott Thomas of Company C, 1st Bn., 504th PIR. His paratroopers will participate in the second of three training jumps.

"It was at the tail end of the Anbar Awakening, and I remember we had an active al Qaeda [in Iraq] cell nearby," said Thomas, a former scout platoon sergeant for 2-504th PIR operating in the vicinity of Asad in 2007.

The Iraqi army was not ready back then, he said, but they are now. 🇮🇶



Photo by Spc. Michael MacLeod, 1st AAB, 82nd Abn. Div., USD-C

Paratroopers land on a drop zone. The jumper rolling on his back is performing a "parachute landing fall," a maneuver that dissipates the energy of impact.



Col. David Miller re-enlists 210 Soldiers of 2nd Battalion, 15th Field Artillery Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, on Feb. 10, 2010.

210 from 2-10 on 2/10/2010

Commandos conduct historic re-enlistments in Iraq

Story & photos Spc. Rebecca Schwab
2nd BCT PAO, 10th Mtn. Div., USD-C

BAGHDAD – It couldn't have been better timing for 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division; a day with such numerical significance; a day for 210 of the "2-10" on "2/10/2010" to show their commitment.

On that special day, 210 Soldiers from 2-10 Mtn. Div. re-enlisted while deployed in Iraq.

"While it's an individual endeavor, each one of your re-enlistments, combined together, adds up to the 210 great Commandos that are re-enlisting today," 2nd Bde. commander Col. David Miller said to the 39 Soldiers re-enlisting at Joint Security Station Carver, Iraq.

Miller and Command Sgt. Maj. Joe Montour traveled to five different locations within the brigade operational environment to administer the oath of enlistment, and to remind Soldiers of how important their reenlistment is to the unit, and to the U.S. Army.

"Your individual choice to re-enlist, which we deeply and greatly appreciate, has a direct impact on the Commandos, the entire

United States Army mission, [and] the call of freedom all over the world," Miller said.

Without that effort, he said, the mission could not be accomplished.

Staff Sgt. George Jones, a native of Granada, Miss., and a squad leader with Company A, 2nd Brigade Special Troops Battalion, who has been in the Army six years, said having Soldiers reenlist on the same day demonstrated the unity of 2-10.

"It shows camaraderie," Jones said. "It brings us together as a unit. It's one team, one fight, so when we re-enlist together, it shows a team."

Staff Sgt. Harlan Terry, of Partyville, Wis., and the operations noncommissioned officer in charge for 2nd Bn., 14th Infantry Regiment, has been with the unit for 12 years. He said he re-enlisted because he would like nothing better than to stay with the unit. He and 324 others have re-enlisted since the brigade deployed in October 2009.

"It's kind of a pride thing," he said. "It's been a long and wonderful 12 years, so I figure [re-enlisting] is the best I can do for myself and for the battalion." ▲



Col. David Miller, commander of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, shakes hands with the Soldiers who he had just re-enlisted.

Cool ideas to beat the heat

Story & photo by Spc. Daniel Scheider
366th MPAD, USD-C

BAGHDAD – Air conditioners are a valuable piece of equipment for Soldiers as the temperatures start to climb in Iraq, and keeping them running correctly is a necessity.

Personnel from the Kellogg, Brown, and Root heating, ventilation and air conditioning department are offering a few pointers to Soldiers about maintaining air conditioning units in their housing units.

Cleaning out the filter of an A/C unit is the first and most important preventive maintenance a Soldier can perform to keep their A/C units working properly, according to KBR officials. They recommended that Soldiers clean filters once a week, and in dusty conditions, it doesn't hurt to clean the filter more frequently.

In order to clean a filter, Soldiers can lightly tap it against a flat object, or gently shake the dust out of the filter.

Soldiers should not spray air freshener directly into an A/C unit because most air fresheners are oil-based, and tend to attract dust and dirt. When the air freshener dries mixed with the dirt, it hardens into a crust that can get on the coil and motor,

which causes the unit more strain and can lead to disabling the motor.

During the summer months, the air vent should remain closed.

"The air vent is there to allow fresh air from outside to enter the housing unit, and in the summer, there is no fresh air worth letting in the heat for," said a KBR employee.

Keeping the air vent closed will also keep dust from entering a Soldier's housing unit, he added.

As Soldiers use more energy to run their A/C units, the strain on the generators can cause the power going to each unit to rise and fall, so Soldiers should never run the A/C fan on the low setting.

"When the power from the generators fluctuates up and down as everyone is using their A/Cs, the motor of the A/C will rev up and down. As the power ebbs, the motor has to work much harder to cool the same amount of space and can make the motor freeze up," said the HVAC representative. "If your room gets too cold, adjust your thermostat, not your motor. The fan speed should always be set on 'medium cool' or 'high cool'."

The summer heat is right around the corner, and taking a few minutes to maintain your air conditioner can save a lot of sweating and misery when the temperatures rise. ▲



Pull the filter from an air conditioner in order to clean it. KBR officials warn against spraying air freshener into A/C units because they are oil-based and will cause dirt to stick to the filters.

Report questionable activities What is reportable?

Surveillance:

Someone recording or monitoring military activities or facilities or any civilian locations frequented by military or U.S. personnel.

Elicitation:

People or organizations attempting to gain information about military operations, capabilities or personnel.

Tests of security:

Any attempts to measure reaction times to security breaches or to penetrate physical security measures or procedures in order to assess strengths and weaknesses.

Acquiring supplies:

Purchasing or stealing explosives, weapons, ammunition, military uniforms, decals, flight manuals, passes, badges or any other controlled items.

Suspicious persons:

People who do not seem to belong in the workplace or area.

Dry/trial runs:

Putting people into position and moving them around according to their plan without actually committing the terrorist act. This is especially true when planning a kidnapping, but it can also pertain to bombings.

Deploying assets:

People and supplies getting into position to commit the act. This is a person's last chance to alert authorities before the terrorist act occurs.

When in doubt - REPORT!

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Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Kristina Scott, 366th MPAD, USD-C

BAGHDAD – The setting sun lights the sky on fire as its reflection skims the surface of Z Lake Feb. 11 at Camp Liberty, Iraq. Many Soldiers say the colorful sunsets are one of their favorite things about being stationed at Camp Liberty.



Photo by Maj. Timothy Hyde, 2nd BCT PAO, 10th Mtn. Div., USD-C

BAGHDAD – Wilbert Cormier, a New Orleans, native, does a victory dance at Contingency Operating Station Hammer following the Saints’ Super Bowl win against the Indianapolis Colts. Cormier is a Food Service Lead for Kellogg, Brown and Root, Inc.



Photo by Spc. Jared Eastman, 1st BCT-A, 3rd ID, USD-C

BAGHDAD – Master Sgt. Aaron Carter, fires operation sergeant of 1st Brigade Combat Team-Augmented, 3rd Infantry Division watches, Super Bowl XLIV on a television in the dining facility Feb. 8 at Contingency Operating Station Falcon.



Photo by Sgt. Bryce S. Dubee, 4th SBCT PAO, 2nd Inf. Div.

BAGHDAD – Soldiers with 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division stay up late to enjoy some camaraderie and watch the Super Bowl in the brigade conference room.



Photo by Spc. Christopher Wellner, 1st AAB, 82nd Abn. Div., USD-C

CAMP RAMADI, Iraq – U.S. paratroopers of 1st Advise and Assist Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division, watch the Super Bowl Feb. 8 at Camp Ramadi. The New Orleans Saints won against the Indianapolis Colts, 31-17.



Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Kristina Scott, 366th MPAD, USD-C

BAGHDAD – Soldiers of the 1st Armored Division based at Camp Liberty react to a missed catch while watching the Super Bowl in a dining facility. The game aired live at 2:25 a.m. local time.

Women's History Month facts

The public celebration of women's history began in 1978 as "Women's History Week" celebrated in Sonoma County, Calif. March 8 was later chosen as International Women's Day. In 1981 Senator Orrin Hatch of Ohio and Representative of Maryland Barbara Mikulski sponsored a joint congressional resolution proclaiming a national Women's History Week. In 1987, Congress expanded the celebration to a month, and March was declared Women's History Month.



Arabella Mansfield Babb was the first woman admitted to the bar in 1869. Babb was born May 23, 1846 in Burlington, Iowa. She graduated from Iowa Wesleyan College and was admitted into the Iowa bar. Babb died August 1, 1911.

Sandra Day O'Connor was the first woman admitted to the U. S. Supreme Court in 1981. O'Connor was born March 26, 1930. She served as the Associated Justice until her retirement in 2006. In 2009 she was awarded the highest civilian honor, the Presidential Medal of Freedom.



Elizabeth Blackwell was the first woman to receive a medical degree in 1849. Blackwell was born February 3, 1821 in Bristol, England. She graduated from Geneva College in N.Y. in January 23, 1849. Blackwell died May 31, 1910.

Marie Curie was the first woman to be awarded the Nobel Prize. Curie was born November 7, 1867. She received two Nobel Prizes in her lifetime. One for physics in 1903 and one for chemistry in 1911. Curie died July 4, 1934.



Hattie Caraway was the first woman elected to the U.S. Senate in 1932 as the representative of Arkansas. Caraway was born February 1, 1878, in Bakersville, Tenn. She graduated from Dickson Normal College, in Tennessee in 1896. Caraway died December 21, 1955.

Blanche Scott was the first woman to fly an airplane in 1910. Scott was born April 8, 1885 in Rochester, N.Y. She was the second woman to cross the U.S. in an automobile. Following that she began to take flying lessons. She became known as "the tomboy of the air." Scott died January 12, 1970.

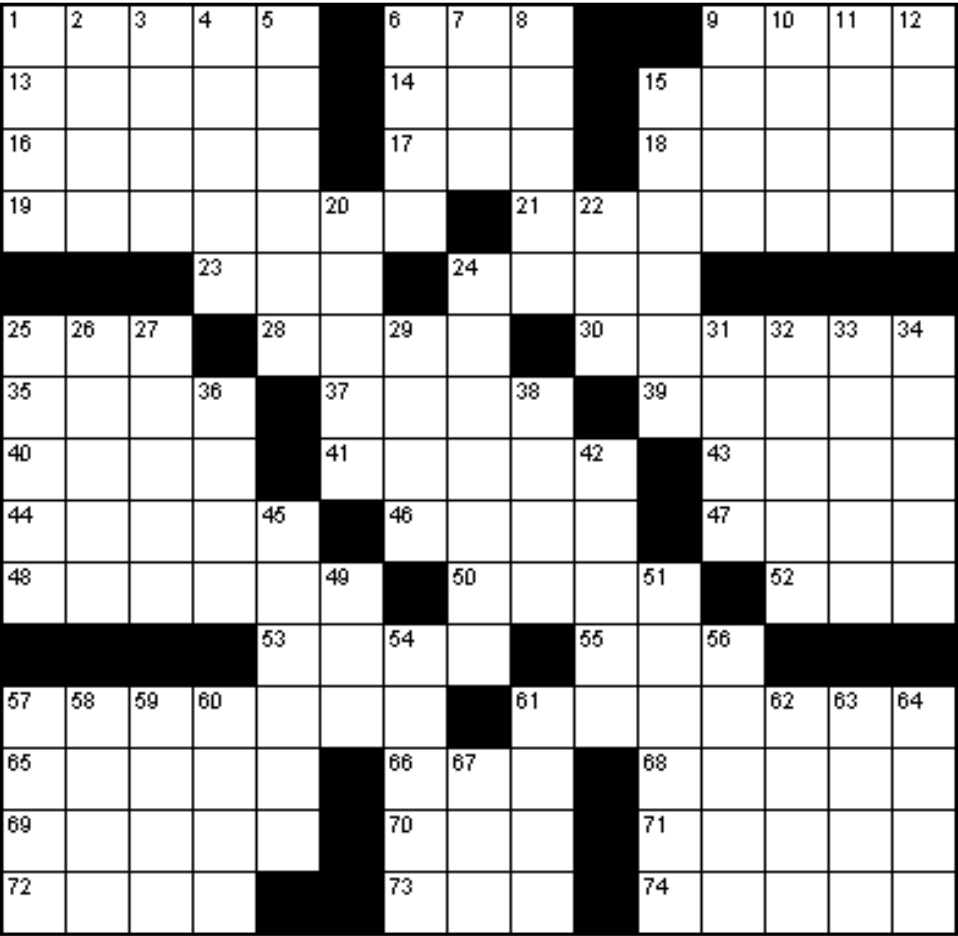


Susanna Salter was the first woman mayor and first woman elected to a political office in the U.S. Salter was born March 20, 1860 in Smith Township, Ohio. In 1887, she became mayor of Oregonia, Kan. Salter died March 17, 1967.

Frances Willard was the first woman to become a college president in 1871 when she was elected as president of Evaston College for Ladies, in Illinois. Willard was born September 28, 1839. In 1887 she became the national president for Alpha Phi. Willard died February 17, 1898.



CROSSWORD



Across

1. Jeer

6. Part of a circle

9. Stop

13. Coconut meat

14. Exclude

15. Court panelist

16. Help

17. Oculus

18. Herb with aromatic seeds

19. Associated

21. Prescribe

23. Appearing bloodshot

24. Traditional music

25. First woman

28. Travel by horse

30. Scaling device

35. Hobble

37. Layer of paint

39. Appeared with Bogart in The Maltese Falcon, Peter ____

40. European river
41. Tally

43. Temporary provision of money

44. Office worker

46. Reign

47. Misplace

48. Plaid design

50. Genuine

52. Church bench

53. Gown

55. Rend

57. Environmental condition

61. Consign

65. Automaton

66. Epoch

68. The Little Bear, Ursa ____

69. Develop

70. Pelt

71. Excessive

72. Outdo

73. Hankering

74. Wading bird

Down

1. Indication of previous damage

2. Inlet

3. Gemstone

4. Mendicant

5. Waver

6. Not up and about

7. Beam

8. System of beliefs

9. Search and pursue

10. Melody for solo voice

11. Disorientated

12. Large plant

15. Canine mammal

20. Decree

22. Unwell

24. Characteristic

25. Choose

26. House

27. Glowing fragment of coal

29. Threshold

31. Child's plaything
32. Wilt

33. Delete

34. Regenerate

36. Saucy

38. Story

42. Acquire knowledge

45. Martial art

49. Negation of a word

51. Paper used to test acid or alkali

54. Burly

56. Produced from a photographic negative

57. Crustacean

58. Traditional knowledge

59. Long-billed bird

60. The greatest number

61. Acquire by effort or action

62. Release a fastening

63. Rancid

64. Journey

67. Regret

Feb. 15 solution

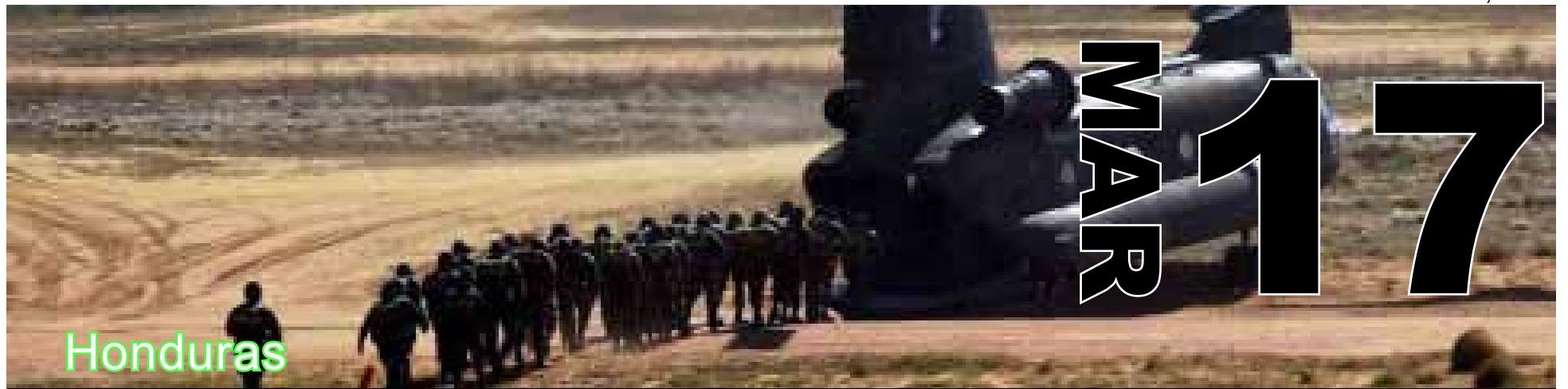


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On this date in American military history

Operation Golden Pheasant

Operation Golden Pheasant was an emergency deployment of U.S. troops to Honduras in 1988, as a result of threatening actions by the forces of the then socialist Nicaraguans.

In early March 1988, the Nicaraguan Sandinista government launched Operation Danto to over-run Contra rebel supply caches in the San Andrés de Bocay region, crossing into Honduran territory in their drive.

The United States, under President Ronald Reagan, dispatched elements of the 7th Infantry Division (Light) Quick Reaction Force on a no-notice deployment. This small force quickly landed at Palmerola Air Base, now known as Soto Cano Air Base, and moved quickly into position at a Honduran military base to facilitate the guarding of a local general. The 7th Inf. Div. QRF were on the ground several days when the 82nd Airborne Div. arrived. The deployment evolved into a live-fire training exercise, but the infantry Soldiers and paratroopers deployed ready to fight, causing the Sandinistas to rapidly withdraw back across their border.

The 1st and 2nd Battalions of the 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment and 3rd Bn. of the 505th PIR. 82nd Abn. Div., were joined by Soldiers from the 7th Inf. Div. On March 17, 1st Bn. landed at Palmerola Airfield, a Honduran Air Force base that was the headquarters for the U.S. military presence in Honduras. The 2nd Bn. jumped onto the airfield a day later.

The units from the 82nd Abn. Div., began rigorous training exercises with orders to avoid the fighting on the border. Had those orders changed, the paratroopers and infantrymen were prepared to fight, but the invading Sandinista troops had already begun to withdraw. Within days, the Sandinista government negotiated a truce with Contra leaders, and by the end of March the paratroopers of the 504th had returned to Fort Bragg. Operation Golden Pheasant prepared the paratroopers for future combat in the increasingly unstable world.

