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Enabling Iraqis to save lives

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

BAGHDAD – U.S. Soldiers gave Iraqi Army students a chance to apply their new combat lifesaver skills during a demonstration March 31 at Contingency Operating Location Constitution.

Iraqi Army Soldiers engaged in the event as part of a wrap-up of their five-day combat lifesaver course administered by Soldiers from Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 41st Field Artillery, 1st Advise and Assist Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division.

“Combat lifesaver is a basic skill that is stressed upon enlisted Soldiers,” said Pfc. Derek Miller, a combat medic with HHC. “I know when we went to basic, it consumed a majority of [basic combat training] because it’s such an important task.”

The team of medics assigned to HHC conducted the combat lifesaver class for the Iraqi Field Artillery Directorate at Constitution in which approximately 15 Iraqi Soldiers participated. The class kicked off with several blocks of instructions to include detailed presentations and practical exercises, a final demonstration led by the Iraqis in a simulated combat environment, and the final exam.

Initially, U.S. forces were a bit concerned about the language barriers that would persist in the classroom environment, said Miller. The Iraqi interpreters sat down with the instructors for briefings on class objectives each day, enabling the class to run smoothly and efficiently.

“We’ve been able to show the



Iraqi students treat a simulated stomach injury during the hands-on portion of the combat lifesaver class March 31. A team of medics, assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 41st Field Artillery, 1st Advise and Assist Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, taught the five-day course to 15 Iraqi Army Soldiers. In order to pass the hands-on portion the Iraqi Soldiers had to react and evaluate, evacuate, and transport the casualty.

Iraqi students exactly what’s required of them in a combat situation to save their friends’ lives and to save their own,” said Sgt. Michelle Shorb, a native of Huntington Beach, Calif., and combat medic also with HHC.

This joint training provided the Iraqis with solid groundwork on which to build on attained skills and become more knowledgeable in the medical field, said Cpt. Paul Jachimek, the physician assistant with HHC and native of Tampa, Fla.

“They took in what the medics instructed them on [and] did a wonderful job,” said Jachimek.

With the drawdown, it’s imperative for the Iraqis to know these life-

saving skills. When the U.S. troops leave Iraq, many of the current medical clinics and operations spread across Iraq will go with them, said Jachimek. U.S. Soldiers are preparing the Iraqis, so they remain standing with countless capabilities and skills.

“This makes me so efficient and a very active Soldier to save my friends on the battlefield,” said Juma’ab Alwan Thahir, a student in the combat lifesaver course.

The training the Iraqis obtained during the combat lifesaver course is something they can continue to practice with each other, train other Iraqi Soldiers, and successfully apply in

real situations, said Jachimek.

“Everything that [U.S. forces] do is to help them build a stronger, better, safer Iraq,” said Jachimek. “One of the most important skills for efficiency is being able to save lives.”

“We’ve never been through these classes, so it’s something very good for us, and it’s going to lead us into the future,” said Juma’ab.

The students successfully completed the life-saving tasks given to them by the U.S. Soldiers, who were very pleased with the outcome.

“If I’m able to teach what I know to someone else, that’s possibly a life I may save in the future by sharing my knowledge with them,” said Miller.

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Force protection measures to avoid being a target

Story by PAO Staff
USF-I

In the last two months, five suspected kidnapping attempts were reported on Victory Base Complex as members of United States Forces - Iraq remain high-value targets for terrorists and criminals.

To some, kidnapping may seem unlikely on an installation like VBC, but the dangers of working in a war zone remain high and to prevent a kidnapping, everyone needs to stay alert and pay constant attention to their surroundings.

"It's good to feel confident as service members, but there is a time to be vigilant," Lt. Col. Kevin Dennehy, director of USF-I's Personnel Recovery Division said. "Remember where you are; you're in Iraq."

Master Sgt. Robert Service, force protection noncommissioned officer-in-charge with the 939th Military Police Company, shares Dennehy's belief that Soldiers need to be aware of the threat and work to avoid complacency.

"We still have an enemy," he pointed out. "We can't just say everything's one hundred percent secure. I think that obviously is not the case."

Dennehy said anybody is at risk of being kidnapped. While Soldiers who take part in missions outside the wire run the greatest risk of being isolated and captured, anybody, even on U.S. bases, is a potential target.

When the MPs encounter lone Soldiers or civilians in an unpopulated part of VBC, they provide the person with a list of anti-kidnapping protective measures and talk to them about the risks.

The MP's guidance puts the bottom line right up front - don't be caught off guard.

The information they provide reminds Soldiers that they need to know their surroundings, remain alert and look for anything unusual. In other words, maintain situational awareness.

For Dennehy, those aren't just ideas that look good on paper.

"I actually live this stuff," he said. "I look behind me, I look around, I check under bridges ... It's easy for three guys to grab you and throw you in a car if you don't see it coming."

Dennehy understands the importance of traveling with a battle buddy or wingman whenever possible as well.

"Anybody can be perceived as low-hanging fruit if they are walking alone," he said, adding that Soldiers need to know where they are, where they're going, and stick to well-lit areas at night.

Service's force protection measures go even farther, with guidance on maintaining a low profile and avoiding predictable patterns, such as traveling the same routes consistently.

He advises everyone to make sure their supervisor or co-workers know where they are going and when they expect to return.

According to Service, everyone needs to pro-

tect themselves at their living quarters as well, citing a recent incident in which suspicious individuals were knocking on doors to Soldiers' rooms at 3 a.m.

Service said people need to keep their rooms secured at all times and be cautious when answering the door.

"Make sure when you open that door, you recognize who the person on the other side is, day or night," he said.

When something suspicious does happen, it needs to be reported to the Provost Marshal's Office immediately. Service said sometimes people won't talk about an incident for a couple days.

"The PMO desk is a 24-hour operation," he explained. "We need to know when something happens as soon as possible. The longer it goes, there is less we can do about it and less information we can get."

Navy Lt. Cmdr. KC Chhipwadia, the senior intelligence officer for the PRD, like Service and Dennehy, said military members, civilians and contractors sometimes need to be reminded where they are, that they understand the threats, and know how to keep themselves and their Soldiers safe.

None of the PRD staff wants another face added to their posters of isolated, missing, detained or captured individuals.

"You're not here on vacation," Chhipwadia said. "Do not end up on an IMDC poster. Your family needs you." 🚩

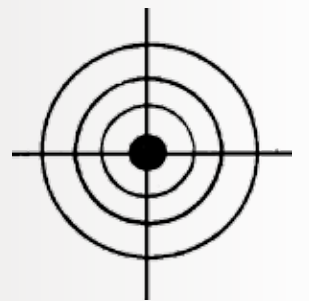


AVOID BEING A TARGET!

Follow these simple rules to avoid being abducted:

- * Avoid unlit areas during evening hours
- * Maintain situational awareness
- * Avoid setting predictable patterns
- * **Always** let a supervisor or co-worker know where you are going
- * **Always** lock your CHU door at night

If you witness any suspicious incidents or activities, authority can be reached by dialing 911 from any DSN phone or calling the PMO on Camp Victory at 485-2758.



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Civil Affairs Soldiers support orphans

Story & photo by Sgt. Bryce Dubee
4th SBCT, 2nd Inf. Div., USD-C

BAGHDAD – The orphans waited patiently, roughly 75 of them, as the U.S. Soldiers set up a security perimeter and brought their truck full of supplies into the Jamia Support Council building.

While most waited in orderly lines, one group of children performed a song welcoming the members of 422nd Civil Affairs Battalion and Company F, 52nd Infantry Regiment, 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, who were there to deliver humanitarian assistance goods March 29.

The delivery was part of an overall shipment of 20 tons of humanitarian assistance goods to 422nd, donated by a stateside non-governmental organization.

“It was a big success,” said 1st Sgt. Joe Winchester, first sergeant for Company B, 422nd CA Bn., explaining that the mission was the result of several months of planning and hard work.

Shaykh Majid, from the Jamia Support Council, was involved in providing material support to local orphans and approached the civil affairs Soldiers about the possibility of getting



Iraqi and U.S. Soldiers unload one of several boxes of humanitarian assistance supplies from a truck during a humanitarian assistance drop at the Jamia Support Council, March 29. Members of the 422nd Civil Affairs Battalion and Company F, 52nd Infantry Regiment, 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, delivered supplies to roughly 75 area orphans.

some supplies for the children.

However, Winchester explained that process was easier said than done.

“It’s not a simple thing to say we’re going to go on in and deliver some [humanitarian assistance],” he said.

During his last deployment, Winchester had worked with a U.S. based NGO, Operation Give, which had provided humanitarian assistance supplies to his unit. Contacting them again, he was able to arrange for 20 tons of sup-

plies to be donated and sent to Iraq for distribution.

Some of those humanitarian supplies were divided into care packages, broken down by age and gender, boxed up and handed out to the orphans at Jamia Support Council, with other supplies handed out at other locations.

The mission was about more than just handing out supplies this one time, Winchester explained.

“Today established some credibility that we are able to deliver,” he said. “What we’re doing here is trying to develop some follow-on support.”

During the humanitarian drop, Winchester was able to meet with members of an Iraqi NGO that, if properly vetted, could be able to work directly with U.S. based NGOs like Operation Give through something known as the Denton Program.

Under the program, he explained, the U.S. government will pay for the transportation of humanitarian supplies between credentialed NGOs. This would enable the orphans and other Iraqis in need to continue receiving aid long after Winchester and other U.S. Soldiers have left Iraq.

“I can step back and know when we’re leaving there’s still a steady stream of supplies coming in to those in need,” he said. 🌈



First Sgt. Joe Winchester, senior enlisted Soldier of Company B, 422nd Civil Affairs Battalion, speaks with an Iraqi Army counterpart after delivering supplies to roughly 75 area orphans at the Jamia Support Council March 29.

US Soliders, ISF bring books to Baghdad

Story & photo by Spc. Jared Eastman
1st AAB, 3rd Inf. Div., USD-C

BAGHDAD – Three schools in Baghdad received books from Iraqi Security Forces and B Troop, 5th Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment, April 11. The U.S. Soldiers assisted the ISF in distributing the books along with assisting in security.

“Today we went on a book drop mission to try and give the Iraqi schools English-Arabic books,” said Sgt. Alexander Hudson, of B Troop, and a native of Pittsburgh, Pa. “The benefit is the Iraqis see the U.S. and ISF working together to help Iraq as a whole.”

With the atmosphere of ‘bring-your-child-to-work-day,’ Soldiers found the situation reversed and sat with Iraqi school kids and rehearsed vocabulary. Their whole-hearted attempts caused laughter amongst the children.

“I feel like this is an important mission,” said Spc. James Shapiro, of B Troop, and a native of Casagrande, Ariz. “As this is my first deployment, I was expecting a lot more firefights, but stuff like this is important. It not only shows the Iraqi kids that we care about them and their future, but it also helps give them an education.”

Soldiers and ISF members alike carried in the Arabic Scholastic books to each headmaster’s office. Members of the school thanked the ISF and U.S. Soldiers profusely for providing the books. For the scouts of the squadron, this was a scenario that required both se-



An Iraqi Federal policeman and Sgt. Alexander Hudson, B Troop, 5th Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment, carry boxes of books for distribution at Ishtar Primary School, during a book drop conducted April 11.

curity and friendly behavior.

“All my guys are professionals, and they are trained,” said Hudson. “That’s my focal point. When we go out – let’s say for a book drop – our discipline level is so high that we can hold our weapons down. You don’t always have to be in [an offensive position],

but we are always watching our sectors. You can greet and smile, but you are always on guard.”

Hudson, who has been on four deployments, three to Iraq, pinpointed the changes he has seen in the nation.

“I was here when the war started and for the first elections,” he said, “So, I’ve seen a lot of differences. We used to have improvised explosive devices popping off all the time ... you really don’t see that stuff as much here in Baghdad.”

Hudson’s viewpoints have passed on to Shapiro, who could be seen pulling security, playing with children and hauling books into the mission.

“I think this transition from combat to assisting operations is important because this country will finally stabilize and there will be less violent actions against one another,” said Shapiro. “If we can help stabilize the nation, younger generations will have a better life.”

For a brief moment in a once war-torn country, a glimpse of the future brought nothing but smiles to Iraqi youth.

“It was heartwarming to see the kids’ smiles,” said Shapiro. “I get a feeling of accomplishment out of these missions. When I can go and see a result like that, I know that this deployment was worth it to me.”

The books won’t last forever; in years, their bindings may be cracked and their pages faded. But, with hope, these books will see the healing of a country, and the addition of more books on school kids’ desks. ▲



Spc. Chad Cardenas, B Troop, 5th Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment, repeats vocabulary while schoolgirls watch at Ishtar Primary School during a book drop conducted jointly with Iraqi Security Forces April 11.

Iraqi, US forces provide needed supplies to Iraqis

*Photos by Pvt. Emily Knitter
1st AAB, 3rd Inf. Div., USD-C*



A local Iraqi reaches for a bag filled with much-needed supplies from a policeman from 5th Bde., 2nd FP, during a humanitarian assistance drop April 4. Soldiers from 5th Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment, provided security for 5th Bde., 2nd FP during the operation.



Two Iraqi children grin as they carry a bag of supplies they received from an Iraqi Federal Police officer and 5th Sqdn., 7th Cav. Regt., Soldiers during a humanitarian assistance drop. After two weeks of planning between 5th Bde., 2nd FP, and 5th Sqdn., 7th Cav. Regt., the drop managed to help more than 250 families.



An Iraqi man reaches for a bag of supplies during a humanitarian aid drop. The drop was a combined effort from 5th Sqdn., 7th Cav. Regt., and 5th Bde., 2nd FP, to provide assistance to some of the impoverished stricken areas in Baghdad.



BAGHDAD – A policeman from 5th Brigade, 2nd Federal Police, hands bags of supplies to Iraqi men during a humanitarian aid drop April 4. The location where the drop took place has an estimated population of more than 2,500 people, many of whom are impoverished.



Policemen from 5th Bde., 2nd FP hand a bag of much needed essentials to a local Iraqi woman during a humanitarian assistance drop. The drop took place in two different locations in Baghdad known for their high levels of poverty: some of the people who received the aid live only in tents.

16th Engineer Soldiers meet with Iraqi partners to address IED, EFP site preservation

Story by Spc. Heather Todd
1192nd Eng. Co., USD-C

BAGHDAD – Iraqi security force leaders in charge of responding to the scene of improvised explosive devices and explosively-formed penetrators met with 16th Engineer Brigade leaders at the Federal Police Explosive Ordnance Detachment Headquarters in downtown Baghdad Mar. 31.

The meeting addressed the importance of preserving evidence at the site of IEDs and EFPs. Their conclusion: Iraqi Army and Federal Police first responders must be keenly aware of how to preserve evidence so that law en-

forcement officials can use it to apprehend and arrest violent extremists behind these acts.

“The U.S. Army EOD frequently arrives at the crime scene to find that the scene is all cleaned up and hosed down – all the evidence is washed away,” said EOD advisor, Maj. Emerson Long. “By keeping the scene from being contaminated, it lets us get the evidence that we need to figure out who the perpetrator or bomb maker is.”

The meeting took place as 16th Engineer Brigade is preparing to redeploy as part of an Iraq-wide responsible drawdown, leaving the job of maintaining safety and security to capable Iraqi counterparts.

Both the Iraqi Army and Federal Police understand the importance of collecting the evidence and are willing to work together, but they have some obstacles standing in their way.

“We are fighting an invisible enemy: the lack of equipment and resources,” said the Federal Police EOD director, Gen. Faris Abid al Hameed Halem.

The Iraqi police officers have trained and continue to train with U.S. explosive ordnance Soldiers, but without the proper equipment or the right resources, it has made it harder to collect the evidence needed to do their jobs correctly and effectively.

The meeting also addressed a plan to split the areas between the

different EOD units. Currently, the Iraqi army, the Iraqi police and the fire department all share the same areas. Whoever arrives on the scene first takes control of the operation.

They expressed they would like to set up designated areas to alleviate any confusion and allow units to run operations as they see fit.

Although progress continues, there are still problems to address.

As a result, Col. Tris Cooper, deputy commander, 16th Engineer Brigade, said 16th will continue building the relationship they have with their Iraqi counterparts: “We will continue working together to ensure there is progress made on these problems.” ▲

Joint training maintains vehicles, friendships

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

BAGHDAD – “I think we should keep these training programs going,” said Sgt. Brian Jones. “It is a gateway to keep our friendship open. We can learn more than just welding; we can learn much of each other’s cultures.”

Jones, a metalworker assigned to

Battery Q, 1st Battalion, 41st Field Artillery, 1st Advise and Assist Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, U.S. Division-Center, was given the task of instructing several Iraqi Army soldiers in vehicle maintenance procedures at Camp Striker March 30.

The Iraqis assigned to the Iraqi FA School at Abu Ghraib attended training sponsored by 1st Bn. The multi-day program instructed the Iraqis on various mechanical main-

tenance procedures so they could then return to their units and teach others.

One IA soldier, Jabar Edan Al Zuhyri, attended the training to reinforce his knowledge about welding.

Zuhyri once owned a metal shop in which part of his

job was to weld. He said he unfortunately had to close his shop and sell most of his equipment. That’s when he joined the IA and has continued to further his knowledge of welding through joint training programs like this one.

“I am very pleased with the treatment I have received and my instructor was very patient,” said Zuhyri. “We cooperated very well together.”

Currently, there are no plans to go back and train others, but Zuhyri said he feels confident that, if the need arose, he could effectively train his fellow comrades.

He also believes, with the knowledge he has gained through this partnership, he will someday reopen his shop and fulfill his dream.

The U.S. Soldiers trained another

group on air conditioning repair and troubleshooting techniques. Unlike in Zuhyri’s case, this group was given the responsibility to return to the Iraqi FA School and train their colleagues.

“We can learn more than just welding; we can learn much of each other’s cultures.”

– Sgt. Brian Jones

P f c .
Keith Freeman, an air condition technician assigned to Btry. G, 1st Bn, was

lead instructor for the air conditioner portion of the training program.

“It has been very interesting. Not only do they learn from us, we learn from them,” said Freeman. “It has been a memorable experience. Not too many people can say they taught Iraqi people how to fix a humvee.”

The training not only helped the Iraqi soldiers learn how to maintain vehicles, it helped maintain friendships created during previous joint-training programs. Stories and jokes were shared in good humor and they discussed the differences between the U.S. and Iraqi armies, including rank, pay and duties.

They also shared a commonality among them, according to Jones.

“Soldiers are soldiers,” said Jones. “We have the same job.” ▲



Iraqi Army soldier, Jabar Edan Al Zuhyri, assigned to the Iraqi Field Artillery School at Abu Ghraib, and Sgt. Brian Jones, a metal worker assigned to Battery G, 1st Battalion, 41st Field Artillery, 1st Advise and Assist Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, U.S. Division-Center, work together March 30 during joint welding training held at Camp Striker.

Police brigade, U.S. trainers reverse roles

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

RAMADI, Iraq – Nearing the end of its mission in Iraq, a team of Missouri National Guardsmen training the Ramadi-area Abu Risha Federal Police Brigade successfully handed over training to the brigade's own officers March 31.

Maj. Rick Radford, operations officer for the Ar Ramadi Federal Police Transition Team, said that, while training will continue for another few weeks, the officers of the Abu Risha Brigade have taken ownership of what has been since September 2009 an American-led training program.

"We've come full circle with our 'training the trainer' concept," said Radford, who is also the chief financial officer for St. Charles Public Schools in St. Charles, Mo.

"When we first started with the brigade back in September, the officers would stand in the back and be very critical of us. But as you can see," he said during the Iraqi-led traffic-control point training, "they are out in front now."

The transition team is attached to the U.S. Army's first "production-model" advise-and-assist brigade, 1st Advise and Assist Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division, whose mission is to professionalize Iraqi security forces.

Colonel Ala, the Abu Risha Brigade training officer and a former tanker who served in the Iraqi army during the Iraq-Iran War and the Gulf War, said the success was due to two years of hard work by his men and well-constructed, consistent training by the guardsmen.

The progress was in spite of significant challenges, not the least of which was the force's mission, according to Radford.

While the Federal Police can operate in cities – something the army cannot do – FP cannot arrest suspects or conduct investigations, two of the cornerstones of law enforcement, said Radford.

"Everything they do has to be funneled through the local Iraqi police," he said.

Originally meant to fill in the gap between army and police, the FP are still trying to find their mis-



A policeman with the Abu Risha Brigade of the Iraqi Federal Police detains a suspect who attempted to drive past a traffic control point in a training exercise at the brigade's Blue Diamond garrison March 31, 2010, in Ramadi, Iraq. The Federal Police were intended to fill in the gap between local police and army.

sion, he said.

Gaining the support and respect of locals is an ongoing challenge. The brigade's name, Abu Risha, represents an effort by officials to strike a familiar cord with local Anbaris.

Sheikh Abdul Sattar Abu Risha is a local hero who led the 2006-07 revolt to throw Al Qaeda out of Al Anbar province.

Though Abu Risha was killed by an Al Qaeda improvised explosive device in 2007, his brother, Sheik Ahmed Abu Risha, took over leadership of the movement.

As part of the Ministry of Interior, the Federal Police are short of funds, said Master Sgt. Troy Hoskins, noncommissioned officer in charge of the training team.

All enlisted "shurta" are paid as new recruits regardless of rank, and there have been no promotions since the brigade was stood up in May 2008. Additionally, there have been involuntary transfers to support the force in Mosul, he said.

"At times, morale is challenged," said Hoskins.

Supply issues experienced by the Abu Risha Brigade have hit close to home for the National

Guard Soldiers, said Sgt. 1st Class Parrish Taggart, a visual information specialist and 24-year veteran of the Guard who was retrained as a communications specialist prior to this deployment.

"Their supply system is not unlike the Guard's. They have no inventory of parts," he said.

Repairs to the police-band radios are made off the local economy and paid for out of pocket, not unlike what Guard units have to do back in the States, he said.

In spite of the challenges, Taggart said working with the Federal Police was a very rewarding experience.

"It really beats doing combat patrols through their cities," he said.

Since September 2009, the transition team has taken a "train the trainer" approach, with special emphasis on skills the shurtas would need for national elections. After the elections, the team was asked to develop a year-round training cycle, said Maj. Mark Turner, the training team's intelligence officer.

Supporting the training's effectiveness is the Abu Risha Brigade's record. None of its members have been arrested or killed,

and all of their missions have been successful, said Sgt. 1st Class Damon Hall, Turner's assistant.

"So far they seem to be regarded as trustworthy," said Turner.

During the final weeks of training, the guardsmen will conduct a review of all the training to date. Selected individuals will also be taught public affairs skills.

"Public affairs is one of the most important departments," said Maj. Falah, who ran the first Iraqi-led training exercise.

"They create an archive of the brigade, which can be used as evidence of our accomplishments to [the] leadership in Baghdad. It also gives us a public voice and introduces us to our neighbors," he said.

"The media is also well-known as the 'Fourth Estate,'" he said. "As the Fourth Estate, it is a tool against corruption, which is very important."

By the end of April, the Iraqi transition team will conclude its mission at Blue Diamond, a former estate of Saddam Hussein and home to the Abu Risha Brigade. The team does not anticipate being relieved in place by a follow-on unit, said Radford. ▲

Snakes a warm weather danger

By Sgt. Teri Hansen
366th MPAD, USD-C

BAGHDAD – Due to the responsible drawdown of U.S. forces in Iraq, there is an increase in base closures in the U.S. Division – Center operational environment.

During these closures, a lot of equipment gets moved around, equipment that may have become home to critters, said Capt. Richard Ramos, the environmental science officer for 1st Armored Division Surgeon's Office. Soldiers could very likely encounter venomous snakes when packing up equipment.

There are precautions that can be taken to reduce the likelihood of getting bitten. In Iraq most snakebites occur from April through October during the daytime. In most cases the hands are the most common bite sites, according to the USD-C Surgeon's Office, so Soldiers should wear leather gloves when working in areas where snakes could be. Other tips for avoiding snakebites are to identify possible snake holes, keep doors and windows closed and keep living and working areas clean.

Symptoms of snakebites vary depending on the snake involved and may include a noticeable bite mark or scratch, pain, redness, or swelling around the bite site. Effects of snakebites can include dizziness, chills, fever, nausea, vomiting, labored breathing and rapid pulse.

In the event of a snakebite remove all jewelry from around the area of the bite. Try to keep the person as inactive as possible and the affected limb should be immobilized and kept slightly below heart level. A constriction band 1 inch wide (not a tourniquet) can be applied at least four inches but no more than six inches above the site.

Seek medical attention as soon as possible. Until medical attention is present, try to treat the symptoms of shock the person may be exhibiting. If possible, provide the medical provider with a detailed description of the snake (type, color or identifying marks), the first symptoms the victim exhibited and time of the bite.

There are certain actions that should not be taken after a person is bitten by a snake. Do not delay getting the victim to medical professionals in order to capture the snake. Under no circumstances should the bite be cut into or sucked on, nor should ice be placed on the wound. A live snake should never be transferred with the patient, but if the snake has been killed it should be taken for identification purposes.

Creatures of the animal kingdom are coming out for the warm weather. Soldiers and animals will be cohabiting; many of these critters could be deadly.

Just as Soldiers should treat every weapon as if it's loaded, they should treat every snake as if it is poisonous. ▲



The Desert Horned Viper is the most commonly seen viper found in Iraq. This snake is commonly found in areas west of the Euphrates. It is a nocturnal, side-winding snake that feeds mostly on rodents. Its bite causes deep local tissue damage, stomach pain, sweating, nausea, fever and possible gangrene according to the Entomological Science Program, U.S. Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventative Medicine.



The Desert Black Snake is a commonly found snake in southwestern Iraq and as far north and east as the Euphrates. It is a nocturnal snake that feeds mostly on lizards. It is less likely to bite during the day but can be dangerously active and aggressive at night. Its venom is characterized as a neurotoxin; it causes very little pain at the bite site but causes the victim to feel weak and then is followed by paralysis, according to the Entomological Science Program, U.S. Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventative Medicine.



The Leventine Viper is mostly commonly seen along the Euphrates and Tigris Rivers and feeds mainly on rodents. It is active at all times of day. It can be especially aggressive at night. Its venom is fast acting and will cause excessive bleeding and burning at the puncture site and will spread quickly, according to the Entomological Science Program, U.S. Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventative Medicine.



The Field's Sand Viper is the most commonly seen cobra in the Middle East. It is a nocturnal snake that spends much of its time underground. It can be very aggressive and strike at distances up to 2/3 of its body length. Its venom is characterized as a neurotoxin; it causes very little pain at the bite site but causes the victim to feel weak and then is followed by paralysis. It also acts as an anticoagulant, according to the Entomological Science Program, U.S. Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventative Medicine.

NCO opens lines of communication

DSTB Soldier recognized for going above and beyond the call of duty

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

BAGHDAD – “You don’t need to be the top dog to make a difference,” said Command Sgt. Maj. Sal Katz, the senior noncommissioned officer for Division Special Troops Battalion, 1st Armored Division, about the DSTB hero of the week.

These heroes he refers to are Soldiers who have been recognized by their commands for significant accomplishments above and beyond their peers.

Chicago native Sgt. Travis Tasharski, the noncommissioned officer in charge of communications at 501st Military Police Company, DSTB, made such an impression that he was recommended for the hero of the week by someone outside of his chain of command. He was recognized March 31 at the start of the weekly battalion meeting.

Sgt. 1st Class Benjamin Guerrero, NCOIC of information technology, Company B, DSTB, and a Los Angeles native, nominated Tasharski even though he was not Tasharski’s direct supervisor.

Guerrero said Tasharski was a major contributor in making communications clear and more reliable for Soldiers operating in the Baghdad area.

“When we first got [to Camp Liberty,] things were a mess,” he said. “Now we can communicate in places we couldn’t before.”

The Soldiers of 501st experienced problems with radio communications when they traveled outside the camp in their vehicles. Without dependable communications, mission success is almost unattainable. Reporting medical evacuations and enemy contact would be virtually impossible.

Tasharski made several checks of the radio systems and found nothing wrong. He was certain the problem lay elsewhere.

“It was frustrating,” said Tasharski. “The last straw was when we replaced every antenna we had.”

He made his way to Signal Hill



Helping an outgoing patrol, Sgt. Travis Tasharski, communications noncommissioned officer in charge assigned to 501st Military Police Company, Division Special Troops Battalion, 1st Armored Division, along with Pfc. Akiel McKnight, a Charleston, S.C., native also assigned to 501st, puts a radio through tests for an upcoming mission. Recently, Tasharski was named DSTB hero of the week; a program which acknowledges Soldiers for outstanding dedication to their duties.

at Camp Liberty.

With the help of Staff Sgt. William Richard, a Bellwood, N.C., native assigned to 146th Signal Co., DSTB, several checks of the area were made and they found a cut wire which did not allow the signals to get through. The wires were repaired and communications between the vehicles outside the wire and the MPs operations center were fully restored.

After resolving the issue at Signal Hill, Tasharski once again found himself dealing with another communications problem.

The 501st vehicles were experiencing difficulties when traveling toward the International Zone. Vehicle radios were put through numerous radio checks, but hours of troubleshooting still did not fix the problem. Guerrero made a call to the radio relay site at Contingency Operating Location Union III in the IZ and had them check the entire radio system on location, including all wires and antennas.

“We had to be absolutely sure

that it was not our equipment before we looked elsewhere,” said Tasharski.

The checks came back green; all systems were in working order.

So sure was Tasharski his equipment was operating properly that he convoyed out to the relay site and checked for himself.

“I had a mission to do and I had to complete it,” he said. “I care about my guys’ safety and if they go out, I want them to communicate.”

Once a thorough check of the area had been made, he found an antenna that was not mounted high enough, which made 360-degree communications impossible. He took the time to raise the antenna and make adjustments. Communications were brought back to full operations.

With all their communications restored, Guerrero remembered the hero of the week program. He submitted the paperwork and received word Tasharski would be honored. Guerrero said he be-

lieves it is important to recognize what outstanding Soldiers daily do.

“Sometimes the littlest things matter. For the NCOs out there, don’t let things go,” he said. “Anything Soldiers do that enhance mission success should be recognized.”

When Tasharski heard he had been nominated, he was humbled.

“We really put in a lot of effort, yet at the same time, I wanted to remain modest,” he said. “I am proud to have won it.”

Recalling the day when he received the award, he said he was surprised when Guerrero summarized the events that led to his nomination.

“When I was hearing it, it was like, ‘Wow, I did all that?’ Yeah, I guess I did,” said Tasharski.

Even Tasharski’s modesty showed as he recognized the Soldiers of 146th Sig. Co.

“I give all the credit to the guys on the hill – they have done a tremendous job,” he said. “I tip my hat to them.”

New Soldiers link up, prepare with MPs

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

BAGHDAD – “This time last year, I was at prom,” the young private revealed with a smile, sitting on a porch amid the sand and desert heat.

Pvt. Andrew Bowles is one of 17 new military policemen who arrived in Iraq mid-February, fresh out of initial entry training, to join 501st Military Police Company, Division Special Troops Battalion, 1st Armored Division.

While in basic, he and the other privates learned the broad range of skills to be Soldiers. At advanced individual training, they learned the broad range of skills to be military policemen. Since arriving here, they have been training and preparing to become a vital part of 501st.

“The purpose of [our] training was to catch them up with the rest of the MPs, so when we go on missions, they have the same training and are just as mission-capable as the rest of us,” said Sgt. Trip Linton, a squad leader with 501st and native of Savannah, Ga.

Linton, along with other unit leaders, was responsible for continuing training that began in Germany.

After arriving in Germany from IET, the privates hit the ground running and were there only long enough to be tested on a few basic tasks, and to gain some knowledge of Iraqi culture and history.

“I had some of the best trainers, [who] told us how to prepare for

[deployment], how to keep our head down, and how to save our buddies,” said Pfc. Nicholas Caskins, a military policeman and driver from Fort Lewis, Wash.

Caskins said the training resumed in Iraq to ensure they retained the tasks learned in basic and Germany and could perform them on the battlefield.

“It’s the real test before we actually get on the road, to make sure we go home safely,” said Caskins.

Their primary mission is to act as escorts, but they have a multi-purpose job and at any time can be tasked to do something else.

“We’ve been doing a lot of classes and learning how the real Army works,” said Bowles, a gunner and native of Ferdinandina Beach, Fla.

The privates agree modern operations and urban terrain exercises were the most realistic and fun training they have experienced. It permitted them to kick down doors, search houses and clear rooms in scenarios with a goal to accomplish the mission without fatalities.

Although that was their favorite training, the most advantageous training pertaining to their current mission in Iraq was convoy security. The Soldiers had a convoy of humvees, each of which contained three privates: a gunner, a truck commander and a driver.

Each position plays a vital role in a convoy, and the privates came together to perform them as they encountered several sticky situations such as simulated improvised explosive devices,



New Soldiers of 501st Military Police Company, Division Special Troops Battalion, 1st Armored Division, took a counter-improvised explosive device course at Camp Slayer to prepare them for missions in Iraq. The course was a priority for the 17 Soldiers who linked up with 501st in mid-February.

route clearance or hasty checkpoints.

“We scanned sectors, practiced driving and tried not to get lost,” said Pvt. Clinton Bryant, a military policeman and gunner from Fallon, Nev.

It was overwhelming as a gunner, said Bowles. There were so many possibilities and things of which to be wary. The gunners learned how to successfully scan their sectors by remaining vigilant and looking diligently at both roads and crosswalks.

“Our team leaders [warned us] there would be trash everywhere, open space, a lot of rooftops, and the [risks involved] when slowing down at checkpoints,” said Bowles.

Other essential skills were taught at the combat lifesaver course. Pvt. Gabriel Fain said he was involved in high school programs that permitted him to shadow and train at crime scenes and accidents, so he was already familiar with some essential lifesaving techniques.

“When I was younger, I mean... a year younger than I am now,” said Fain, a 19-year-old military policeman

and driver with the 501st MP Co., “there was a highway accident. An old lady hit the side of the road and the car flipped over on a piece of rebar and [the rebar] went through her shoulder.”

Fain was expected to ask her questions and ensure the woman remained alert. Thus far, squad leaders say they are impressed with these new privates. It will take time for them to become fully immersed into the MP lifestyle, but one squad leader has high hopes.

“They’re doing well with the limited experience they have, and they catch on pretty quick,” said Linton.

Some of the Soldiers admitted feeling the training was redundant at times and couldn’t wait to get on a mission, but they also acknowledged its importance to returning home safely. “I’m prepared,” said Caskins; “just a little nervous.”

Editor’s Note: This is the first story in an ongoing series about the lives and experiences of new Soldiers serving with 501st Military Police Company in Iraq. ▲



A Soldier reconnects a simulated tripwire after learning how it works and how to spot it. The new arrivals to 501st MP Co., DSTB, 1st Armrd. Div., were required to take the counter-improvised explosive device course in preparation for missions outside the camp.

Bands practice together, plan joint concert

Story & photos by Staff Sgt. Jeff Hansen
366th MPAD, USD-C

BAGHDAD – The 1st Armored Division Band took a trip to the International Zone April 12 to meet with their Iraqi Army counterparts. There, the bands joined together for a practice session and discussed the possibility of a future joint concert.

This was the second meeting of its kind but, with hope, it will not be the last, said Chief Warrant Officer 2 James Bettencourt, commander of the 1st Armored Division Band.

“We’re really looking forward to doing more with these guys,” said Bettencourt, referring to the Iraqi Prime Minister’s Ceremonial Band. “It’s been great so far.”

Learning music has been an ongoing partnership activity; complicated, but so far, successful. Mahmud al-Qa’id, the Iraqi band’s maestro, said he appreciates the Americans’ assistance and is eager to try some new songs.

“Our music was limited at first,” Mahmud said, “but it’s getting better now.”

As an example of this musical partnership, members of the 1st Armored Division band donated replacement parts for Iraqi instruments – such as mouthpieces and reeds – which can be difficult for the local musicians to obtain through their own supply system.

The most important part of the meeting, according to Bettencourt, was a discussion about the possibility of a joint concert, sometime in the future. Whether held at Victory Base Complex or somewhere in the city, a concert involving both bands would be the epitome of their accomplishments, he said.

“It would definitely be great to see. A good concert with both of us would really show their leadership how far they’ve come.” ▲



During a meeting between the 1st Armored Division Band and the Iraqi Prime Minister’s Ceremonial Band, Chief Warrant Officer 2 James Bettencourt got a chance to take over as maestro for the joint musical group. Bettencourt, the commander of the 1st Armored Division Band, said he is impressed with the improvements in the newly formed Iraqi band, and is working on more music for the two groups to play together at some point in the future.



From left to right, Sgt. Maj. Jaffar Sadick Jaffar, an Iraqi Army tour guide; Cpt. Hatim Abd al-Rahim, the Iraqi Prime Minister’s Ceremonial Band commander; and Chief Warrant Officer 2 James Bettencourt discuss the possibility of a future joint concert during a band partnership meeting in the International Zone. During the meeting, Bettencourt also provided his Iraqi counterpart with replacement parts for instruments and discussed the well being of some Iraqi band members who were injured in a recent car bombing.



Maestro Mahmud al-Qa’id leads a joint American and Iraqi band rehearsal session. The group, consisting of members of the 1st Armored Division Band and the Prime Minister’s Ceremonial Band, swapped music and performed for leaders of the Iraq Army.



Staff Sgt. Stefan Muldez, a trumpet player and training supervisor assigned to 1st Armored Division Band, plays a song with his Iraqi counterparts during a joint practice session. The session was part of an ongoing effort to further relations between the 1st Armored Division Band and the Prime Minister’s Ceremonial Band.

Engineers excel in physical fitness

Story & photos Spc. Heather Todd
1192nd Eng. Co., USD-C

BAGHDAD – The Physical Fitness Badge for physical fitness excellence is awarded to Soldiers who aspire to excel at the Army Physical Fitness Test. To receive the badge, Soldiers must score a minimum of 90 points in each of the three events; push-ups, sit-ups and the two-mile run.

Five Soldiers from the Convoy Security Team of 1434th Engineer Company were able to obtain that achievement on their most recent APFT, each of them earning the coveted badge.

This accomplishment is particularly significant because of the improvement that the Soldiers have made since their last APFT.

“When we took our first [APFT] ... at the start of the 1434th’s mobilization, nine of 20 Soldiers in the platoon failed the test,” explained Staff Sgt. Ray Tompkins from Hart-

land, Mich., the CST commander.

Since that day, Tompkins has reinforced the importance of physical training, reminding the Soldiers that the standards for PT were very important to him. “PT and the standards are there for a reason. It is something that I have a lot of respect for and I hold very high,” said Tompkins.

According to the Soldiers, they took it upon themselves to improve their scores by going to the gym in their free time. They wanted to set the standards for the company and the battalion for their physical fitness level.

“The Soldier really needs to place considerable focus on not only muscular endurance strength in the abs and upper body, but the cardio endurance as well,” explained the highest enlisted Soldier of 1434th Eng. Co., 1st Sgt. Tim Lamphere.

The hard work paid off April 3.

Spc. Lee Owens, from Grand Rapids, Mich., improved his score by more than 25 points. While he was consistently scoring in the 270’s

before, since Owens joined the CST, he was been able to score 300 points.

“I eat a lot healthier and work out more since joining the team,” said Owens. “The hardest event for me is the sit-up. With a lot of hard work, I was able to do well on that this time.

Owens also ran the fastest time in the two-mile run event, completing it 11 minutes. For Owens’ age bracket, anything under 13 minutes awards 100 points.

According to Lamphere, for five Soldiers in the same platoon to receive a Physical Fitness Badge is a tremendous accomplishment.

“It is simply amazing,” said Lamphere.

With achieving such results, for Tompkins’ team, there are many individual success stories. For Tompkins, one story stands out the most in his mind.

“For our team, the biggest success story is the team going from nine failures to zero failures, with five Physical Fitness Badges. That alone is a success story by itself,” said Tompkins. ▲

Engineers attend mine detection training

Story & photos Spc. Brian Johnson
1434th Eng. Co., 16th Eng. Bde., USD-C

BAGHDAD – Training to maintain proficiency, with tools designed to accomplish the mission, does not stop when Soldiers enter a theater of war; Soldiers must continue to practice, rehearse and train on all of the equipment that makes them successful by



Working their way across a practice minefield, Soldiers from 101st Engineer Battalion listen for tones that identify practice mines, at Victory Base Complex March 26.

keeping them safe.

Soldiers from 1192nd Engineer Company recently took part in important training to refresh and maintain their skills in mine detection.

The five-day course, offered by the U.S. Army Engineer School located on the Victory Base Complex, is conducted on a regular basis and teaches Soldiers mine identification in both daytime and nighttime environments. Soldiers must be able to identify all the mines presented during the course in order to pass.

“This course is all about one thing: saving lives,” explained retired Army Sgt. 1st Class Mark Blackburn, from Burtran, Mo., a course instructor. “I am trying to teach Soldiers how to stay alive in a mine situation.”

According to Blackburn, the possibility of encountering a minefield still exists, recalling a recent report from the Helmand province in Afghanistan where NATO forces continue to breach minefields during offensives against the Taliban.

The course was taught by civilian contractors, as well as a fellow Soldier, Staff Sgt. Timothy Torrey, a member of Headquarters Support Company, 101st Eng. Bn.

According to Torrey, the mine detector the Soldiers are learning to use during this course is more accurate than previous models.

“You get tones and beeps instead of a constant tone,” said Torrey. “It allows for a more accurate determination of mines.”

The training lanes that the Soldiers must clear have an unspecified number of practice mines. Soldiers are required to find the center of the mine. Making the task more challenging is the fact that the mines they may encounter can be as small as a poker chip or as large as 13 inches,

“It gets people used to looking for different mine types,” explained Torrey.

At the end of the five-day course, Blackburn feels very strongly that if a Soldier does not have a firm grasp on the mine detector, he does not allow Soldiers to graduate, even if they have passed the end-of-course exam.

“When I sign that certificate saying that [the] Soldier is certified in this piece of equipment, I am saying that I will go out in that minefield with them, and I have the confidence in them,” explained Blackburn.

In Blackburn’s opinion, Iraq and Afghanistan are the best places to train a Soldier on how to properly use a mine detector.

“Mine detecting is not a lost art. Mines are still used in wars. If a Soldier screws up, because they are not sure about this equipment, someone is going to get hurt or killed,” said Blackburn. ▲

“When I sign that certificate saying that [the] Soldier is certified in this piece of equipment, I am saying that I will go out in that minefield with them.”

– Sgt. 1st Class Mark Blackburn

Engineers take aim at the range

*Photos by Spc. Brian Johnson,
1434th Eng. Co., 16th Eng. Bde., USD-C*



Spc. Jimmy Altomare from Norwalk, Ohio, a member of 1192nd Engineer Company, 101st Eng. Bn., examines his target at Camp Liberty April 3. The members of company received an opportunity to go to a weapons familiarization range, which allowed them to zero their weapons and qualify with their weapon once zeroed.



With coaches behind them, the Soldiers of 1434th Engineer Company, 101st Engineer Battalion, qualify on their assigned weapons at Camp Liberty Mar. 29.



BAGHDAD – A member of 1192nd Engineer Company, 101st Engineer Battalion, takes aim at a target on the Caughman Range on Camp Liberty April 3. The weapons familiarization and qualification event provided an opportunity for members of the horizontal construction unit to stay familiar with their assigned weapons while they waited for their next construction mission.



After marching seven miles and completing six of the eight events in a company challenge, Pfc. Dennis White, a grenadier from Bim, W. Va., assigned to Co. F, takes an opportunity to air out a large blister before medical personnel tend to it. White soon joined the rest of his team and won the company challenge.



In a timed event, Spc. Sean Kuttner (right), a grenadier from Jacksonville, Fla., and Sgt. Eric Stoodley, a team leader from Wapmallopen, Pa., both assigned to Co. F put their medical knowledge to the test on a simulated casualty.



CAMP TAJI, Iraq – During a team-building challenge, 1st Lt. Alan Roy (right), a platoon leader, and 1st Sgt. David Stoodley (left), both of whom are in Company F, 3rd Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, 1st Air Cavalry Division, completed the course March 23. The two Soldiers' teams endured six other events after completing the course.

Air Cav Soldiers comp

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

Soldiers ran through a gauntlet of challenges March 23 that were designed to test their physical fitness, technical knowledge and ability to work as a team.

Keeping a tight lid on the details, the leadership of Company F, 3rd Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, organized the entire event without letting the inner workings get out to the Soldiers in the company.

"This deployment, the guys didn't get to see a whole lot of action," said Capt. David Puzzo, from East Hampton, Conn., a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter pilot and commander of Co. F. "That is

a good thing, but at the same time they didn't get a chance to validate all of their training.

"I felt that this was a chance for them to close out the deployment strong and build up a little team camaraderie," added Puzzo.

Each team consisted of five Soldiers who started the event at 5 a.m., with a modified physical fitness test – a combined 300 push-ups, 300 sit-ups, 50 pull-ups and a two-mile run.

The rest of the challenge was made up of a 12-mile road march, medical procedures, a 100-meter truck push, pulling a teammate 400 meters on a litter, an obstacle course, a stress shoot and calling in an attack weapons team for support, ending with a barbeque in celebration of surviving the day.

"We definitely designed it to be hard and everybody reacts to stress



leader from Strawberry, Minn., and Sgt. Luis Garcia, a squad leader from Bryant, Texas, 1st Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, U.S. Division – Center, low-crawl through an obstacle course.

pete in company event

in different ways. Obviously, it is going to push you and it is going to beat you down a little bit,” said Puzzo.

“I think there was a lot of team work out there and a lot of camaraderie. Some were able to push on and complete it, others were challenged a bit more and were unable to complete the event.”

Not wanting to let his team down, Pfc. Dennis White, from Bim, W. Va., a grenadier in Co. F, continued on after he developed a large blister on the bottom of his foot.

“I got a pretty awesome blister on my foot, but we finished still,” said White. “It was better after the doc fixed me up, but it still hurt on the four-mile march back.

“The stress shoot was probably my favorite part, I just like to shoot and that is what I am the best at,”

added White.

During the stress shoot, the Soldiers had to identify the components of four different weapons and assemble them and complete a proper functions check on each weapon. Teamwork was necessary, as the components from all four weapons were mixed together into one container.

“There was no yelling or screaming at anybody,” said White. “Everybody just came together as a team and worked real hard and it worked out pretty good.”

White’s team pushed on through the entire day to become the overall winners for the event.

“Whoever crossed that finish line, I definitely think they were happy to have completed it,” said Puzzo; “one, for themselves and, two, for their teammates they were able to support.” ▲



As the sun rises, Soldiers from Co. F, make their way through an obstacle course March 23. The second of eight events, the Soldiers were required to work together in order to complete all of the challenges.



Happy to complete a grueling day-long challenge, Staff Sgt. Jesus Diaz, a squad leader from Los Angeles, assigned to Co. F, touches the finish line.

Soldiers downrange learn about life, career-progressing opportunity

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

CONTINGENCY OPERATING LOCATION NASIR WA SALAM, Iraq – Once a Soldier deploys downrange, his military career is not put on a hiatus until he returns back to the States. Opportunities to advance military careers find their way to Soldiers regardless of the situation.

Airborne liaison officer and recruiter, Sgt. 1st Class Paul Pahl, toured around 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division's operational environment and arrived at 4th Battalion, 9th Infantry Regiment headquarters March 18 to educate Soldiers from every company in the battalion on the benefits and requirements of becoming a U.S. Army Ranger.

"It gives everyone an option to further their career so they don't feel like they're just stuck in Iraq or in Afghanistan," said Sgt. Troy Danahy, a team leader with Company C from Hampton, N.H. "Now that you're over here and you have some time to think about it, it's a good option to have."

A fellow Manchu from Co. A agreed.

"It's not every day that you get that opportunity, especially where we're at now," said Sgt. Nicholas Salazar, a

team leader from San Antonio. "I've always heard that becoming a Ranger and doing something special like that reflects what kind of individual you are and the drive and motivation that you have."

Pahl informed the Soldiers sitting in the conference room that if they wanted to attend Ranger school and possibly transfer to a Ranger battalion, they would need a lot of motivation to attain that goal.

Before even being considered for Ranger school, a Soldier must meet predetermined

requirements including a score of 240 points or higher on an Army Physical Fitness Test, not being flagged or barred from

reenlistment, and a general technical score of 107 or higher on the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery.

Once a Soldier meets the requirements, he attends the Ranger Assessment and Selection Program which is designed to assess and select candidates using various tasks and challenges.

Specialists and below attend RASP 1 and sergeants through sergeants first

class attend RASP 2.

Both groups must complete a 12-mile road march in three hours while carrying a 35-pound rucksack, a five-mile run in 40 minutes, score 80 percent on the Ranger First Responder test and trauma lanes, successfully execute land navigational exercises, and pass a psychological screening and an Army Physical Fitness Test.

Pahl warned noncommissioned officers who wanted to go to a Ranger battalion that they would have to work hard because of the attitudes of

Soldiers who came in the military and went directly to Ranger school.

"You have to have the heart to excel above those

who've been there since day one," said Pahl, a Bucyrus, Ohio, native.

The warning didn't deter Staff Sgt. Emile Anderson, the Mortar Section sergeant and platoon sergeant of Headquarters platoon, Co. B.

"I've always had it in my mind that I'm going to beat that guy that's, like, 10 years younger than me or whatever the case may be, so it doesn't bother me," said Anderson, a Fort Washing-

ton, Md. native.

While most of the Soldiers who attended the brief said that going to Ranger school would benefit their careers, Spc. Brent Brabant, a scout and radio telephone operator with Headquarters and Headquarters Company said going through something that challenging was more personal than that.

"I think the Ranger option, to me, isn't just to further my progression in the military ...it's a progression of me as a human being," said Brabant, a Tampa, Fla. native. "You'd rather learn those lessons at a school than on the battlefield."

Following the brief, Pahl asked the roomful of hopefuls if they had any questions. No hands went into the air.

"At the end, we weren't bashful to ask questions," said Brabant; "Everything we wanted to ask, he answered [in his brief]."

Soldiers left the room with an option that most wanted since they joined the military. Now, it's just a matter of them finding the right path to it.

Once they return home, if the Soldiers choose to follow that path and the advice they received during their deployment and become Rangers, they'll go on to become members of the largest special operations combat elements.

"I think the Ranger option, to me, isn't just to further my progression in the military ...it's a progression of me as a human being"

– Spc. Brent Brabant



28th CSH welcomes Iraqi doctors to military base

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

BAGHDAD — Iraqi medical professionals at Yarmouk Hospital had to cut short a tour for U.S. doctors and Soldiers when an Iraqi Army soldier suffering from a gunshot wound was suddenly brought into their ward.

As doctors from the hospital rushed to save the soldier's life, the Americans witnessed firsthand how the Iraqi medical system operates.

This encounter led to a suggestion by Dr. Khalil, an anesthesiologist with Yarmouk Hospital, that the Iraqi doctors see how their American counterparts handle similar traumatic injuries in their medical facility.

Eight Iraqi physicians were given that opportunity during a tour of the 28th Combat Support Hospital on Sather Air Base April 7.

This was the first time the medical information exchange program, Operation Medical Alliance, had taken place on a U.S. military base. The program was organized by 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division.

The program, which has been conducted on a regular basis for several months, provides Iraqi medical professionals with knowledge and tools necessary to improve Iraqi healthcare through medical lectures and professional discussions on medical practices and treatment.

At the American hospital for the first time, the Iraqi doctors appeared very interested in the up-to-date facility, raising their eyebrows in curiosity and whispering to one another. Khalil said he noticed many differences between his Baghdad hospital and the one he was currently standing in.

"Even though [the Intensive Care Unit rooms in Yarmouk hospital] are 10 times larger than this one over here, this one has ... capabilities to be able to do a lot more with it than the one I have," said Khalil.

The head nurse of the ICU, Maj. Jerry Ross, showed Khalil and the other doctors around the ICU and explained the capabilities of the facility, how they accommodate an



Capt. Ernest Dorema, an officer in charge of the emergency room at the 28th Combat Support Hospital and Palm Beach, Fla. native, shows Sinna Abdul Azeez, an anesthesiologist with Yarmouk Hospital, how to use a Combat Application Tourniquet on the leg of a mock casualty during an exercise as a part of Operation Medical Alliance held at Sather Air Base April 7. Sinna, and several other doctors from Yarmouk Hospital, visited 28th CSH for the first time to observe standard operating procedures of the hospital.

overflow of patients and answered any questions his guests had.

"I think it's important that we [have] dialogue with host nation personnel and keep a good rapport with them, [and] have a good working relationship, because I know we learn a lot from each other," said Ross.

Service members from each section of the CSH had an opportunity to interact with the Iraqi doctors and build on the working relationship mentioned by Ross. It was also an opportunity for everyone involved to broaden their cultural boundaries.

"Some of [the doctors from Yarmouk] graduated a long time ago and they haven't left Iraq since, so

it was a good experience for them to meet with foreign doctors who have the knowledge and expertise to exchange information," said Khalil.

"Personally, it's kind of a fulfilling experience," said Ross. "Any other time, we just have a little bubble [around us] of taking care of our patients — we don't get outside the wire to interact with the locals."

For Capt. Sean Riley, head nurse of the emergency medical treatment section, it wasn't the first time he has had the chance to interact with Iraqis. On a previous deployment, he had helped train Iraqi policemen how to treat casualties at the scene of attacks or

explosions.

Riley said this experience with Iraqis was a little different, because the people who visited were medical professionals and hold degrees in their respective specialties.

He said he was especially touched that one of the directors from Yarmouk Hospital, who attended the walk-through, was interested in what Riley had to say about the CSH organized system of treatment patients receive the moment they set foot in the door, through the trauma room, and all the way up until their departure from the hospital.

"That's an honor to be able to maybe have a little bit of influence on the outcome of the future of their nation and medical healthcare," said Riley.

At the conclusion of the tour, the Iraqi doctors encountered a similar situation that the U.S. Soldiers had witnessed at Yarmouk; an injured Soldier being brought in for treatment by the Americans. Fortunately this time, the injuries were only simulated.

The "casualty", played by Spc. Alan Horsford, a combat medic with the 28th CSH and native of Jackson, Mich., yelled out in pain from the bed in the trauma room as his wounds seeped red-orange synthetic blood.

CSH specialists kept conversation going with Horsford to calm him and learn what happened to him, as they scurried around the table and tended to his wounds. The Iraqi doctors peered over the shoulders of the medics, nurses and doctors surrounding the table, observing the situation as it played out.

At the end of the demonstration, the Iraqi doctors applauded their American counterparts.

Riley, along with many of the other specialists involved in the walk-through and final exercise, said they hoped that they imparted some knowledge to their counterparts so they can better assist their patients.

"We reinforced that the system works and has proven results," said Riley; "I hope that they can take that back to their facility and apply ... our horizontal teamwork strategy and put it into effect so they're successful." ▲

Camp Taji firefighters conduct fire, rescue training

Story & photos by Spc. Roland Hale
CAB Public Affairs, 1st Inf. Div., USD-C

TAJI, Iraq – It is considered routine to see aircraft and Soldiers working on the flight-line at Camp Taji; it is not routine to see the flashing lights of fire trucks and men and women in flame-retardant outfits scrambling toward an aircraft.

To prepare for the unfortunate event of a downed aircraft, Soldiers from 1st Squadron, 6th Cavalry Regiment, Combat Aviation Brigade, joined forces with Camp Taji firefighters to practice for such an emergency April 6.

The firefighters responded to a simulated electrical fire on one of the squadron's OH-58D Kiowa Warriors. Surrounding the aircraft as it sat "burning" on Camp Taji's flight-line, the firefighters practiced dousing the fire and rescuing the pilots.

Camp Taji firefighters routinely practice such fire drills on other types of military helicopters, but they said this was their first experience with the Kiowa, an aircraft that has not been at Camp Taji for quite some time. A compact, dual-seated observation helicopter, the Kiowa presents fire crews with different challenges from the other aircraft.

"It's a lot smaller than a Black Hawk or a Chinook. It can be a lot tougher to get the pilots out and shut down the systems," said firefighter Kevin Wichel after conducting the training. "It's good to get the training now."

The crews will continue to train on the Kiowa and other aircraft during the Combat Aviation Brigade deployment and plan to conduct an aircraft fire drill at least once a month.

Throughout the training, Cavalry pilots will also continue to train firefighters on the Kiowa's unique systems in order to help them develop procedures that could save the pilot's lives.

"We [are teaching] them how to get us out safely and how to shut down the systems in a timely manner," said Chief Warrant Officer 3 Sheldon Gresham, Troop C, 1st Squadron, 6th Cavalry Regiment. "I was able to talk to them and show them the ins and outs of the air-frame."

Over the course of the last year, there have been no reported aircraft-related fires on Camp Taji – a standard Combat Aviation Brigade pilots say they aim to continue. ▲

CAB flies UH-60Ms for first time in Iraq



A crew chief with Combat Aviation Brigade, 1st Infantry Division watches an aircraft shut down at Camp Taji.

Story & photos by Spc. Roland Hale
CAB Public Affairs, 1st Inf. Div., USD-C

BAGHDAD – Something new is buzzing the skies of Iraq.

As Combat Aviation Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, replaces 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, they bring with them a battalion with one of the Army's newest helicopters, the UH-60M Black Hawk. The CAB is the second active duty unit to receive the UH-60M and the first to use it in Iraq.

This new model of Black Hawk was first used by 159th Combat Aviation Brigade, 101 Airborne Division. Receiving the aircraft Nov. 7, 2009, the unit used the aircraft during a deployment to Afghanistan.

The CAB became second to receive a shipment of the aircraft April 21, 2009. On March 30, two crews from the CAB's 3rd Assault Helicopter Battalion, 1st Aviation Regiment, made the M-model's pioneer flight into Iraq, with the rest of the battalion's fleet close behind.

"There are a lot of first times for a lot of things in this war. It's really cool to be a part of one of those times," said Spc. Corey Corr, a crew chief from 3-1 AHB who was aboard one of the two first UH-60Ms to cross into Iraq.

"It was a pretty smooth flight," he said. "As we started getting close the berm crossing into Iraq, the aircraft pulled up side-by-side so that one wasn't going in before the other."

Like Corr, many crew chiefs are enthusiastic about the aircraft's new features. One of the biggest changes impacting the crew chiefs is the moveable crew seats.

"It's changed a lot," said Corr. "I can now move my seat three different ways. On the L-model, it was a fixed-position seat. [This one] provides us the ability to scan and do our job a lot better."

The most notable improvements introduced to the UH-60M are not the crew seats, however.

The new "glass cockpit" features four multi-functional displays, an autopilot system, two electronic flight management systems, dual navigation systems, a digital moving map and an integrated vehicle health management system. Mechanically, the M-model's new blades offer 500 pounds more lift than previous models and it has a strengthened fuselage and infrared suppression. The UH-60M is what many 3-1 pilots call the Cadillac of the sky.

"The M-model made it a smooth flight in (Iraq)," said Chief Warrant Officer 3 Randy Hendrix, a pilot with 3-1. "The moving map display is a huge plus for us. We didn't have to fumble with a paper map up in the cockpit. It really increases situational awareness; right there on the screen you look down and see where you're at as well as other aircraft and units."

The pilots of 3-1 are among the first Army pilots to work with these systems.

Operating them throughout the CAB's year-long deployment, they will pave the way for future pilots of the UH-60M. A tour in Iraq will bring the challenges of extremely hot and sandy conditions, said Chief Warrant Officer 3 Jesse Lee, who also flew one of the first aircraft into Iraq. Communicating with their peers who used the M-model in Afghanistan, CAB pilots will continue to break new ground as they fly the aircraft in an inclement environment.

While CAB pilots can refer to lessons learned by the pilots of 159th CAB, operations in Iraq pose major differences than operations in Afghanistan, such as terrain, heat and elevation.

"It gets hot in Afghanistan, but not quite like this. We'll really be the ones to see how the M-models hold up in this environment," said Lee.

Despite the addition of this new aircraft, 3-1's mission will remain unchanged.

Along with CAB's four battalions, each with their own diverse missions, the battalion's UH-60Ms will conduct full spectrum aviation operations from the skies in support of U.S. and Iraqi ground forces. ▲

Soldiers recognized for stopping insurgent activity



Photo courtesy of U.S. Army

CONTINGENCY OPERATING LOCATION UHR – Maj. Gen. Terry Wolff, the U.S. Division–Center commanding general, gives a small speech following the pinning of the Army Commendation Medal for four aerostat operators from B Company, 3rd Battalion, 69th Armor Regiment, 1st Advise and Assist Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, April 8. Their skills helped stop insurgents from planting improvised explosive devices along a road, possibly saving the lives of several people in the area.

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Wounded veterans visit Mahmudiyah to share tales

Story & Photos by Spc. Jared Eastman
1st AAB, 3rd Inf. Div., USD-C

BAGHDAD — Soldiers from 1st Advise and Assist Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, stationed at Contingency Operating Station Mahmudiyah, gathered to welcome eight Wounded Warriors returning to Iraq April 6 for some closure.

The high of 93 degrees didn't deter Soldiers from thanking the wounded veterans for their service in what has been dubbed Operation Proper Exit.

"It's a great opportunity for our Soldiers and the Wounded Warriors; for them to gain closure, and for our guys to see that when a Soldier is wounded over here, it's not over," said 2nd Battalion, 7th

Infantry Regiment Command Sgt. Maj. Shawn Cook. "There are programs out there that have helped these guys along the medical system, and these guys are a testament to the care of the people back in the States."

The eight Wounded Warriors were welcomed by the 2nd Bn., 7th Inf. Regt. commander, Lt. Col. Gregory Sierra, and were given an overview of current operations in Iraq.

"Everything you guys have put into this has paid off and it's paying off," said Sierra. "Things have changed. It didn't happen by accident, by Iraqis alone. You kicked in the ante and allowed it to be where it's at today."

The event was coordinated with the help of multiple organizations.

"Troops First is really what I do," said Mr. Richard C. Kell, executive director of the Troops First Foundation, "but the program Operation Proper Exit is an initiative that we started under the Troops First umbrella. ... Prior to this trip, we've had 23 Soldiers back and I can tell you that, without question, I have seen 23 men change in front of my eyes in five days. ... They all gained some measure of getting better."

The Wounded Warriors also held a question-and-answer session outside so Soldiers could ask questions in a "no holds barred" session. The Wounded Warriors answered questions ranging from what improvements could be made to the stories surrounding their injuries.

"I would love to meet the medic that helped me out," said Staff Sgt. (Retired) Brian Neuman, who was hit with an explosively formed projectile on Veteran's Day during the 2004 push into Fallujah. "When I got hurt, although it was scary, I knew I was going to be okay. That medic had stuff I'm sure you're medics do but I hadn't seen before."

"My tourniquet was in the pocket [I lost], and he put a ratchet strap on my arm," he continued. "It was a Walmart ratchet strap with a metal buckle that hurt like hell, but it stabilized and stopped the bleeding."

The Wounded Warriors also spoke highly about the treatment they received back in the United States after their injuries.

"The team of doctors, nurses and therapists in hospitals are unbelievable people. They are my heroes," said Maj. Dave Underwood, 31st Aviation Group, 97th Army Reserve Command, injured in Operation Iraqi Freedom V from a house-borne improvised explosive device.

"Those guys go to work every day and look at guys like me. They go in there with a smile and they motivate guys and get them going. They are the ones that push you to get back to a normal life."

"They talk to you from day one. It's not a question of what you can't do; it's a question of what you want to do and how they can get you there."

One of the Wounded Warriors recently discovered he would be allowed to return to the Army, and jumped at the opportunity.

"As far as transitioning over

back to the active duty side, ask yourself this one question, 'What would that do to your self esteem if you got beaten by a one-legged man? He's out there pushing himself even harder and faster than you are,'" said Sgt. Robert Brown, a Wounded Warrior and military mentor, who lost his right leg in combat and is pursuing entrance to the 2012 Olympics for track and field. "I stayed on active duty because I love my job. The camaraderie that you experience within the Army is like none other. ... The bonds of brotherhood and sisterhood that you guys get here is like nothing you will ever experience. Just being away from that is enough to drive a guy insane."

Although some of the Wounded Warriors admitted they had bad experiences during past deployments, they were glad that 2nd Bn., 7th Inf. Regt., took the time to provide a static display for them.

"I have to thank you guys for the static display," said Neuman. "You guys may see this equipment every day but for those of us who have been out of the fight for a little while, it's really cool to come back and just see the advances. The last time I left a [M2] Bradley [Fighting Vehicle], it was me jumping out of the back crew door, [badly injured], and running to the medic. To be able to walk back up that ramp today and sit in there was really inspiring."

Amid all the stories of comedy and grief, the main focus of the question-and-answer session demonstrated the wounded U.S. Soldier's fighting spirit, said Underwood.

"You go through the hospital and you get Soldiers that come out the other end and go to the Olympics," said Underwood. "They go through the whole thing and think, 'Well, I can do anything.'"

On day two of the five-day visit, the Wounded Warriors left a lasting impression upon many of the Soldiers of Mahmudiyah.

As three Blackhawks carrying the Wounded Warriors turned into the Iraqi sunset, several 2nd Bn., 7th Inf. Regt. Soldiers turned and drifted back to where they came, recounting the stories shared by the visitors as they went. Brown joined them, concluding: "Keep fighting your fight, we're here behind you."



Sgt. (Retired) Juan Arredondo, a left arm amputee, speaks with Soldiers of 2nd Battalion, 7th Infantry Regiment, during an Operation Proper Exit visit to Forward Operating Base Mahmudiyah April 6. The "no holds barred" question-and-answer session gave Soldiers an in-depth look at the life of a Wounded Warrior.

Alaskan MPs train IP 'good habits' in Ramadi

Story & Photos by Sgt. Michael J. MacLeod 1st AAB, 82nd Abn. Div., USD-C

CAMP RAMADI, Iraq – Bad habits are like dirty laundry. The longer they stay, the worse they smell.

Bad habits in the policeman who guards the Provincial Government Center in Ramadi, Iraq, can result in the deaths of civil and political leaders who have been key to the ever-increasing stability of Al Anbar province, once home to the most violent insurgency in Iraq.

Misidentify a threat, fail to see the sniper, let the car bomb past the entry control point – any number of missed opportunities to derail the attempts of violent extremists can allow for an incident similar to the double-bombing that occurred Dec. 30, 2009, at the PGC in which the governor of Anbar lost his hand, a provincial council member was killed and two dozen other people lost their lives.

In police work, bad habits are removed by refresher training. Following the double-bombing, staff Maj. Gen. Baha Husayn Abd Hassan, the acting provincial chief of police, requested U.S. forces to provide refresher training to Iraqi police in a number of specialties, including what's known in security jargon as force protection and personnel security detail. In more common terms, these mean protecting VIPs and protecting themselves and their buildings.

To remove bad habits, take a training center run by the provincial Iraqi SWAT commander, add policemen from the PGC. Pour in an Alaskan military police company attached to 82nd Airborne Division, and spin for five days.

Since early March, Soldiers with 472nd MP Company out of Fairbanks, Alaska, have been retraining Iraqi police at the Ramadi Training Center, running parallel five-day courses in force protection and PSD that merge on the final day for a series of practical exercises.

The force protection course covers first aid, vehicle and personnel search, installing and operating entry control points, and evaluating and establishing force protection measures.

"They understand these skills are perishable," said Staff Sgt. William Melton, squad leader in charge of the force protection instruction.

The PSD training, run by fellow MP, Staff Sgt. Eric Armstrong, includes identifying threats such as snipers and improvised explosive devices, working in formations and moving VIPs, unarmed self defense using pressure points and joint manipulation, motorcade operations including what to do in case of an IED or broken vehicle, and command center operations.

According to their platoon leader, 1st Lt. Andrew Wedmeyer, the course emphasizes identifying and searching female threats, a rising problem as terrorists shift their tactics.

On the second day of the first week, Pfc. LeAnn Balderamos, a slightly-built part Sioux Native American from Rapid City, S.D., slipped through the IP's simulated ECP with a water bottle "bomb." Cultur-



Iraqi police participating in a force protection skills refresher course at the Ramadi Training Center in Ramadi, Iraq, search a vehicle April 8, 2010. The course is taught alongside a VIP personnel security detail course, both of which are being taught by Soldiers from 472nd Military Police Company, attached to 1st Advise and Assist Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division.

ally sensitive to females being searched by males, the IP let her slide by the search area.

"Boom!" she hollered. "You're all dead."

"In Anbar, including the army, we have about 34,000 soldiers," counseled Col. Shabban Barzan Ubaidi, commander of the RTC and former Baghdad police chief who himself was wounded by an IED in 2006.

"If we have only 1,000 soldiers who work with the love of his country in his heart, we will have no terrorists in Anbar," he said.

One of Shabban's brothers was killed by terrorists, and another lost a leg to an IED. One of his houses was blown up. He's had a bounty on his head by insurgent elements for years. Yet he wears the IP uniform proudly and asks his men to do the same.

"Learn as much as you can from the U.S. trainers," he said, "and when the training is done, remember to always be clean shaven and smell good and wear the right uniform so that people will see that we look professional and call upon us for help when they need it."

He asked the IP always to show respect for the civilians whom they serve.

By the third rotation of the courses, the female "insurgents" were having much less luck getting past the front gate of the ECP.

Pfc. Krystal Cuellar from Brownville, Texas, played the role of local female to be searched on the final practical exercise.

"I didn't really mind it," she said.

"I feel like it really helps prepare the IP to do their job. And they really did a professional job searching. They use the backs of their hands and other techniques we teach them."

But her role-playing "husband" was very angry.

"Next time, ask the brother or husband before you search," suggested Melton to the IP.

The final exercise included the security detail

moving their VIP through the ECP for a "meeting" with Spc. Michael Weymouth, who was playing "chief."

The PSD was late arriving.

"Where is Shakira? She should be in my office by now," hollered Weymouth.

A motorcade crawled through the ECP; each vehicle was thoroughly searched, each passenger frisked and identified. Once permitted to move forward, they safely delivered the pop singer, Shakira — or her IP surrogate — to Weymouth. Everyone was safe: VIP, guards, civilians and IP.

Following a group critique of the day's training, each policeman was awarded a certificate of completion.

"We retrained on how to protect our commander, how to search vehicles and personnel and how to [medically evacuate] our comrade if he is injured at a checkpoint," said 40-year-old Moad Ahmed Brash, a local Ramadi policeman who said he has seen great improvements in the four years he has been with the force.

"I was in Saddam's army, but I chose to serve my country as a policeman so that I can keep safe the people in the immediate area of where I live," he said.

His three young children are very proud their father protects their neighborhood, he said.

"They are very professional now," said Melton. "It's a huge change since last time we were over here. Now the IP are really interested in grasping the concepts behind the skills."

"They love what they do," he added. "It's too dangerous not to like it. These guys run the risk every day, especially where they work at the PGC. Every day may be the day they never get to see their family again."

Diplomas in hand, the IP loaded up to leave the training center and get back on the line, fresh and clean for a difficult and often dirty job. ▲

Roadside bomb hunters find subtle shift in Iraqi culture

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

CAMP RAMADI, Iraq – There is a tendency here in Iraq to cast any story in its shadow, to find meaning in not what is but from what was.

Recasting the peace among Anbaris during the recent national election in such terms, we might recall how, only two years ago, a U.S. military official declared Al Anbar province lost. What a difference.

In more clinical terms, the 50 attacks during September 2009 are astounding weighed against the 1,350 in March of 2007.

However, the constant breathing of life into the past can give it legs of its own: continuing a well-worn narrative, a journalist declares that “a series of blasts shattered the peace in the months leading up to the election,” as if the past is the rightful heir to the future, as though a marketing campaign by a handful of terrorists is enough to negate the efforts of a hundred-thousand boots on the ground and the hopes and determination of millions of Iraqi citizens grown tired of anguish and turmoil.

Sometimes, as 2nd Lt. Andrew Berreth discovered during a recent visit to an Iraqi police checkpoint, it’s the subtle shifts, the casual comments, what fringe has grown from the new fabric of Iraqi life that let on where they are as a people and a nation. Just as cat-tails growing along a water’s margin best describe a relative tranquility – the germination of a new way can be both subtle and dramatic.

Berreth is a platoon leader of a route-clearance team: 3rd platoon, Company A, 1st Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 1st Brigade, Advise and Assist 82nd Airborne Division. His platoon hunts for roadside bombs. The brigade is of a special type, one developed specifically to partner with Iraqi police and army to harden and sharpen their skills in what time is left of the American occupation.

Two other engineering platoons in his company are partnered with Iraqi Army troops to teach them the latest in route-clearing techniques and tactics – one with 7th Iraqi Army Division in Al Asad, the other with 1st Division in Fallujah. Berreth’s team, however, is not partnered, but rather, provides a foundational service – keeping the main supply routes clear and safe for the brigade’s other activities to con-

tinue. In seven months, 1/82 AAB has taken no casualties to improvised explosive devices.

“We aren’t finding much lately,” says Berreth. “We’ll stop and talk with IP to gather intelligence, find out what they need, and figure out what we can do to assist them. Our advise and assist role is to gauge the workability of the traffic control points and to see if they can be improved upon.”

The platoon’s activity moves in tidal rhythm, regular yet unpredictable. The route, the time and the meetings with IP vary nightly, but nightly they go outside the wire. Many of his Soldiers eat only one meal a day because they work through the night and sleep in the day.

Leaving the hard lights of Camp Ramadi’s entry control points the night of March 23, three combat engineers in the second of several Mine Resistant Ambush Protected Vehicles sing a country song, poetic to the moment:

“That’s the story of my life right there in black and white,” they twang. “You should have seen it in color.”

In color, the driver, Pfc. Zachary McCoy, is an offroad enthusiast from southern Illinois. Truck commander, Sgt. Chris Jorgensen, is a former framing carpenter from Chicago, soon to be heading for engineering school. The gunner, with his thumbs near the butterfly trigger of the .50-caliber machine gun, is Pfc. Chad Turner from Nashville, Tenn. He favored Garth Brooks, Jason Aldean and Tim McGraw.

Tonight, in black and white, they’re IED hunters. As Turner swivels in the gun turret, Jorgensen tests his threat awareness.

“Turner, is it only around bridges that we watch for RKG-3 grenades?”

“Negative, sar’nt,” Turner replies. “Urban areas or any area with cover for people to hide.”

It goes like that throughout the night. Far from being insulted, the junior Soldiers relish the chance to sharpen these skills that keep them alive; still comes the occasional retort:

“Turner, do you see the low wires?”

Turner is eyeball to plastic with the wires. “Doing big things up here, sar’nt. I got the wires,” he replies.

Over the radio, there is chatter between the vehicles. “Husky,” someone says, “be advised there is a vehicle between me and you.” Then a wisecrack, “Do not be afraid. I am here to protect you.”



Second Lt. Andrew Berreth, platoon leader of 3rd platoon, Company A, 1st Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 1st Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division (Advise and Assist), discusses threat activity with Iraqi police officer, 1st Lt. Haithem, at an IP check point near Ramadi, Iraq, March 23. Berreth’s platoon clears routes of bombs along many of the main supply routes in Al Anbar province.

Since November, the platoon has found three IEDs, none causing injury.

“We see plenty of dead donkeys along the road,” says Turner.

“And that monkey,” adds McCoy.

“We swear we’ve seen a monkey twice,” laughs Turner. “The most remarkable thing we’ve seen is in the improved construction of IP check points.”

Outside Ramadi, the IED hunters stop at an IP check point to visit with the police. Berreth dismounts his MRAP as does Jorgensen and a handful of others.

Along this stretch of road, there is little noise beside the banter of policemen and U.S. troops. Semi-feral dogs wander in the periphery of light cast by the station’s floods.

First Lt. Haithem, the officer in charge of the dozen policemen gathered to chat with the Americans, reports that the situation is very stable and safe.

“We can walk outside anytime, daylight or dark, and as you can see, everything is safe,” he says.

Haithem has been stationed here for two-and-a-half years. He says his men have learned much from the Americans, techniques such as searching and how to approach dangerous targets. Skills that keep his men alive.

But as much as his men enjoy visiting with the Americans, it is good that they are leaving, he says.

“If you stay here, I am going to depend on you. I am going to do nothing.”

Berreth asks the silver-haired police officer whether all his men voted

in the recent national elections.

“All of my men, without exception,” he replies.

“Congratulations on a successful vote.”

“We hope,” Haithem says wistfully, “We hope everything is okay after the election results are announced.”

And casually, as if he were talking to a neighbor, the Iraqi says, “We congratulate you on the health care plan in America.”

Mildly shocked, Berreth is taken aback.

“You track our news?” he asks.

“Yes we do,” responds Ali, another policeman.

“We saw President Obama, and he was so excited and happy.”

And, tempted to engage the Iraqis on the health care debate, the American paratroopers realize the subtle and astonishing change that had occurred, said Berreth.

Saddam had kept his subjects blinded to the world by prohibiting Internet and cell phones; insurgent and terrorist violence had kept them too afraid and too busy to care. With peace and stability and the tools of a modern, free society on the table before them, Iraqis are picking them up and becoming world citizens.

They know what’s going on.

“You could stay here five years more, maybe 10,” says Haithem, “but then we will do nothing. You have taught us very well, and as you see, all the police are doing their jobs. It is very peaceful now.”

BSB inducts 17 new Soldiers into NCO Corp

Story by Capt. Lindsey Rowland
2nd BCT PAO, 10TH Mtn. Div., USD-C

BAGHDAD – Seventeen Soldiers from 210th Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, were inducted into the noncommissioned officer corps at the Contingency Operations Station Hammer chapel March 24.

Before this ceremony, the last one the BSB conducted was during the previous deployment and represents a major milestone for the Soldiers, said Master Sgt. Darren Nixon, the BSB operations noncommissioned officer in charge and organizer of the induction ceremony.

“It’s a step the Soldiers take into the noncommissioned ranks,” Nixon said. “It’s the break from where they are a follower to a leader.”

The inductees who participated in the ceremony were Sgt. Jason At-

kins, Sgt. Brandon Babin, Sgt. Farrah Burley, Sgt. Jesse Craig, Sgt. Sylvia Dangervil, Sgt. Robert Deisbeck, Sgt. Jonathan Diaz, Sgt. Damesha Graham-Hood, Sgt. Charity Hyde, Sgt. Steven Kuchta, Sgt. Glenn McClinton, Sgt. Waylon Miller, Sgt. Stephen Pacheco, Sgt. Longuta Phelps, Sgt. Alexis Rosado, Sgt. Lakeith Thomas and Sgt. Bud Todd.

“It’s a rite of passage. This ceremony will make me feel more like a professional NCO and feel a part of the NCO Corps,” said Pacheco, from Company B, who spent two years as a corporal before making his promotion to sergeant. “I think being a corporal first was good training and will help me now.”

When asked if anything was going to change in his daily life after this ceremony Pacheco said, “Nothing will change. I will continue to work hard and accomplish whatever is in my path.”

“The true mark of leadership is not what they do when you are around, but what they do when you are not around.”

– Command Sgt. Maj. Joseph Montour

Guest speaker Command Sgt. Maj. Joseph Montour, the 2nd BCT command sergeant major, encouraged the new members to give Soldiers under their care the very best leadership.

“Our Soldiers are looking to you for leadership and they deserve nothing but the best we have to offer. Being an NCO is a change in mindset; it’s you, the NCO that makes things happen,” said Montour. “It is your job to train and lead Soldiers as well as accomplish

the mission. The true mark of leadership is not what they do when you are around, but what they do when you are not around.”

First sergeants from within the battalion sat in the front row during the ceremony to provide the rite of passage to members as they crossed the threshold from Soldier to NCO.

As each NCO’s name was announced, the NCO crossed a wooden pillar and was met by Montour and BSB Command Sgt. Maj. Pamela Connally on the opposite side to welcome them into the NCO Corps.

Each inductee was also handed a framed copy of the NCO Creed, signed by Lt. Col. Murphy, the BSB commander, and Connally.

“The NCOs affirmed their commitment to the professionalism of our corps today,” said Connally, “and will carry on the tradition of being the backbone of the Army.”

Cav Soldiers let FP take over training at TF Nassir

Story & Photos by Staff Sgt. Ryan Sabin
2nd BCT PAO, 10TH Mtn. Div., USD-C

BAGHDAD – Soldiers with 1st Battalion, 89th Cavalry Regiment, conducted their final session as primary instructors for a training center, known as Task Force Nassir, at Contingency Operating Station Cashe South.

The Soldiers’ final class began March 20 and concluded April 1. Following the session, all primary instructors for the training center will come from the Federal Police.

Task Force Nassir is a training center for the 3rd Battalion, 3rd Brigade, 1st Iraqi Federal Police Division designed to train new recruits in operations ranging from weapons skills to basic police work.

“When we got here, it was pretty much 90-percent American led and 10-percent Federal Police cadre led,” said Sgt. 1st Class Joshua Bakehouse, mortar platoon sergeant for 1-89 and the TF Nassir noncommissioned officer in charge. “In this last class, we have gone to where they teach every class. We are just here to



An Iraqi weapons instructor with 3rd Battalion, 3rd Brigade, 1st Iraqi Federal Police Division, gives a class at the Task Force Nassir Training Academy to Federal Police cadets on the machine gun March 27.

help with any problems they have or just give tips on how to do it better.”

Police recruits must maintain physical fitness by conducting platoon physical training and regular physical fitness tests consisting of pushups and sit-ups for one minute each, and a timed one-mile run.

“We plan the training time to build the skills of our Soldiers so they will be good in the field,” said Lt. Abid Al Majeed Ahmad,

training commander for 3-3-1 Iraqi FP. “This is our goal for our Soldiers – to make them the best of the best.”

The entire training cycle spans 13 days and includes drill and ceremony to maintain discipline and pride, and leadership skills.

“We teach them to teach their Soldiers because we don’t want to teach them and have it stop there,” said Spc. Juan Sandoval Jr., a mortarman for 1-89 Cav.

The recruits also receive class-

room work, hands-on training at marksmanship ranges, room-clearing drills in buildings and foot patrols before culminating with a field exercise. Bakehouse said, while the training is extensive, every step is critical for the Iraqis.

“I believe by the time we leave here,” said Bakehouse, “they will be able to continue on with this course themselves and continue at the same standard that we have set.”

Innovative veteran support program boosts Viking ROTC membership

Story by Spc. Chad Menegay

196th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

CLEVELAND—The Cleveland Army Reserve Officers' Training Corps presented its Cleveland State University cadets a first-ever "Viking Detachment" unit patch Feb. 4 at the College of Urban Affairs building here.

The patching ceremony signifies a significant growth in numbers of CSU cadets. In 2007 the university had only one contracted cadet and had averaged only one per year over the last decade. This year, however, CSU boasts seven contracted cadets and three participating cadets.

The university's ROTC leadership attributes this boost in strength to CSU chemistry professor Dr. John Schupp's Supportive Education for Returning Veterans (SERV) program.

SERV allows veterans to transition among their peers by taking veterans-only classes until they feel comfortable with a college classroom environment, usually a semester or two. The program, founded by Schupp at CSU in 2007, has spread to four more universities: Youngstown State, West Virginia, Ohio State and the University of Arizona.

"It has absolutely been a symbiotic relationship," said Lt. Col. Eric Patterson, professor of military science for the Cleveland Army ROTC.

Safety officials issue precautions after black bear sightings

Story by Rick Wood

Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Public Affairs Office

JOINT BASE LEWIS-MCCHORD, Wash.—Sightings of a mother black bear with her cubs in the Miller Hill area have been reported to the Joint Base Lewis-McChord Safety Office, prompting local safety officials to recommend precautions to residents.

JBLM Safety Director Peter Strohm said it is not uncommon to see bears in the JBLM area.

"Western Washington in general is prime country for black bears," Strohm said.

In fact, the Miller Hill area has seen black bears come through before, he said.

"In any given year, a number of them will be making their home on Joint Base Lewis-McChord," Strohm said.

Awareness, not panic, is the key to preventing a dangerous encounter, he said.

"Make sure to travel in groups and stay on trails, if you can," Strohm said.

The JBLM Environmental Division plans to capture and relocate the bears, he said.

In the mean time, caution is the best advice.

Apache unit arrives at Fort Drum

Story by Staff

Fort Drum, Public Affairs Office

Washington, DC – Secretary of Army, the Honorable John M. McHugh, personally awarded Fort Drum Deputy to the Garrison Commander, Judith L. Gentner, with the Decoration for Exceptional Civilian Service in a Pentagon ceremony today.

The Decoration for Exceptional Civilian Service is the highest award granted by the Secretary of the Army to Army civilian personnel and is comparable to the military Distinguished Service Medal.

Mrs. Gentner was singled out for this top honor based on her relentless efforts to improve the quality of life for Fort Drum Soldiers and Families through great initiative, outstanding personal management skills and strong leadership abilities.

The decoration citation specifically recognizes as a direct result of Mrs. Gentner's leadership a total saving of \$5.6 million dollars for the garrison through projects aimed at cost savings and efficiencies.

PMO supports German animal shelter

Story By Ignacio "Iggy" Rubalcava

U.S. Army Garrison Wiesbaden, Public Affairs Office

BAUMHOLDER, Germany — More than 1,000 pounds of dog and cat food and treats were donated to the Tierheim (animal shelter) in Kusel by the U.S. Army Garrison Baumholder Provost Marshal's Office March 29 in appreciation for taking in and caring for the numerous animals left behind in the Baumholder community.

The 1,000 pounds of food were how much community members donated during the recent dog and cat food drive held by the Provost Marshal's Office. "They do us such a big favor by taking in our strays that we figured we should help them out in some way," said Todd Guyette, director of emergency services.

Staff Sgt. Kevin Collins, Baumholder's DARE officer and one of the organizers of the dog and cat food drive, explained that Baumholder is fortunate that the Tierheim in Kusel is willing to accept animals left behind by Americans who depart Baumholder.

Peter Danner runs the Tierheim in Kusel and was grateful for the food that was donated by the American community.

Gate 1 Construction may cause delays

Story by Staff

Fort Stewart, Public Affairs Office

FORT STEWART, Ga. – Construction at the General Screven entrance Gate 1 will affect traffic flow, and South Main Street entrance Gate 2 will be opened during certain times on weekdays as an alternative to Gate 1.

For vehicles without an installation access decal passes to enter the installation are only issued at Gate 1.

From March 24 through June 24, construction will be conducted on Gate 1 to expand the canopy covering the inbound lanes.

As a result, two of the three inbound traffic lanes will be closed at any given time, which will cause inbound traffic delays. The "Pass Lane" of Gate 1 will not be affected and inbound traffic will be able to use this lane to enter Fort Stewart.

To further alleviate any possible congestion, Gate 2 will be re-opened for inbound and outbound traffic from 5 a.m. to 6 p.m. Gate 2 will be opened Monday through Friday, beginning March 24. This gate can be used as an alternative to Gate 1 to enter Fort Stewart during weekdays.

Healthy Kids Day brings children joy

Story by Tina Ray

Fort Bragg Public Affairs Office

FORT BRAGG, N.C. – Abram and Bradley Sitcer constructed a bug-house and an herb garden holder in the kids workshop section of the Fort Bragg/Pope Air Force Base Armed Services YMCA Healthy Kids Day Saturday. The two brothers, 3 and 4 years old respectively, attended the annual event with their mother, Amanda Sitcer.

She took pictures and said she would send them to her husband who is serving in Haiti.

"It is actually really fun and they're having a lot of fun. It's going to be nice to send their dad pictures of this since he can't be here," Sitcer said.

The Family has lived on Fort Bragg a little more than a year, she added, and often attends post events, which gives the boys something to look forward to and appreciate.

"They're small enough that they're enjoying it. It gives them a day to get their minds off the fact that their dad's not home yet," Sitcer said.

The Family has lived on Fort Bragg a little more than a year, she added, and often attends post events, which gives the boys something to look forward to and appreciate.

K-9 teams enjoy scent of training

Story & Photos by Staff Sgt. Jeff Hansen
366th MPAD, USD-C

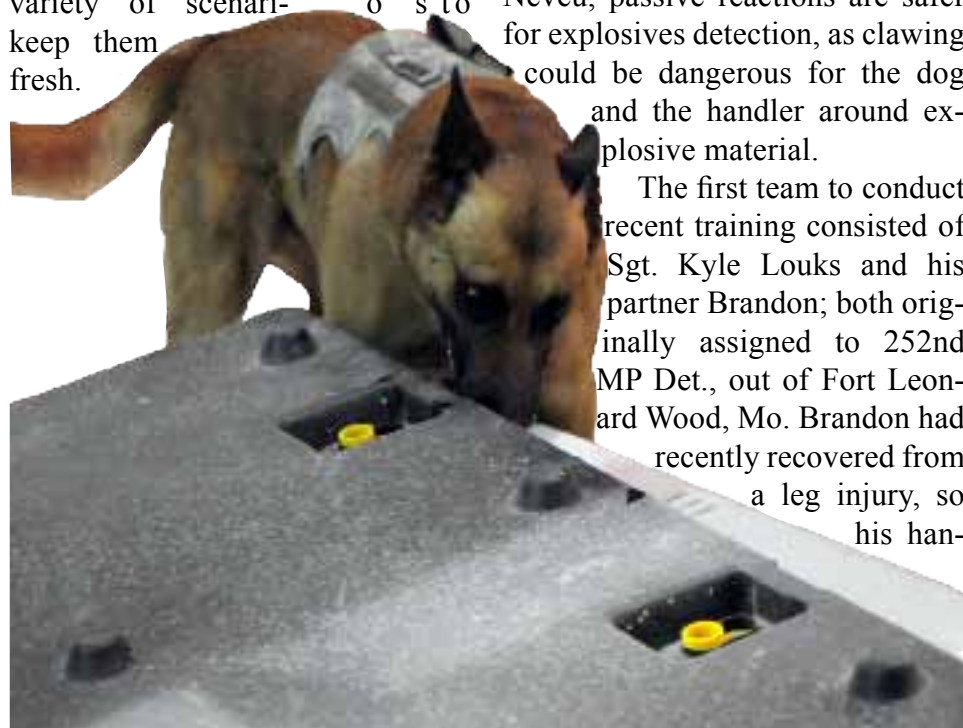
BAGHDAD – Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower was once quoted as saying, “What counts is not necessarily the size of the dog in the fight, it’s the size of the fight in the dog.”

Though he may not have been referring to Military Working Dog teams, the statement holds true for them nonetheless.

The dog teams of U.S. Division–Center support the U.S. mission in Iraq by assisting with cache searches, personnel searches and a wide variety of security duties. The Army calls them individual mobilization augmentees because they deploy separately from their home units to assist units in theater.

The dogs vary in their duties. Some detect explosives while on patrol; others are used for specialized searches. Still others detect narcotics, or assist personnel security teams. The most common duties in USD-C involve explosive detection and personnel security at checkpoints, according to Sgt. 1st Class Shawn John, the USD-C Military Working Dog program manager.

In order to stay vigilant and effective when called upon, the teams must constantly train. This is not always easy because the dogs require plenty of room and a variety of scenarios to keep them fresh.



During a training exercise at Victory Base Complex, patrol explosives detection dog Brandon double checks a CONEX insert lying in an aisle. “He’s very thorough,” said Sgt. Kyle Louks, Brandon’s handler and teammate since May 2009.

“They’re very smart,” said Staff Sgt. Deanna Herrera. “We have to switch it up so they don’t get bored.”

As a patrol explosive detection dog handler and now a kennel master for the USD-C Provost Marshal Office, Herrera understands the importance of keeping the dogs interested in the task at hand. A Phenix City, Ala., native and augmentee from 209th Military Police Detachment out of Fort Benning, Ga., she ensures the teams are on top of their training and all dogs remain fully mission capable.

One training exercise is to practice explosives detection inside a controlled environment. The teams do so regularly, with patrol teams and a specialized search dog team honing their skills in an exercise to locate hidden explosives within the training area.

The exercise supervisors ensure the dogs respond to odors so the handlers can properly respond to the dogs’ change in behavior, said Sgt. Todd Neveu, a dog handler assigned to the 501st MP Company.

“It’s up to the handler to know what his dog does [upon detection] so they can react accordingly,” said Neveu, a North Attleboro, Mass. native.

These examples of behavioral changes are what the military refers to as “passive reactions,” and differ from the active reactions like barking, clawing or biting. According to Neveu, passive reactions are safer for explosives detection, as clawing could be dangerous for the dog and the handler around explosive material.

The first team to conduct recent training consisted of Sgt. Kyle Louks and his partner Brandon; both originally assigned to 252nd MP Det., out of Fort Leonard Wood, Mo. Brandon had recently recovered from a leg injury, so his han-



Sgt. Kyle Louks and Brandon, a patrol explosives detection dog team assigned to U.S. Division – Center, search a shelving unit during a training session at Victory Base Complex April 5. Louks, a native of Hilliard, Ohio, has been working with Brandon on explosives searches and patrols since May 2009.

dlers was looking forward to getting back into action.

Louks, a native of Hilliard, Ohio, worked with Brandon through a series of shelving units in a warehouse in search of explosives hidden by their supervisors. As Louks expected, Brandon located the hidden items and received his positive reinforcement tool, a big rubber toy.

“He’s very thorough,” Louks said. “He’ll search every box if you don’t tell him to come back.”

A former narcotics detection dog handler, Louks explained that the process of detection is virtually the same for explosives and narcotics detection teams. They are both taught to “work the source,” or pinpoint the item’s location based on the general area and strength of the

odor.

In addition to explosives detection, some working dog teams are trained to perform basic Army police patrol functions, such as mobile and foot patrols, and building and vehicle searches.

With such a variety of duties to learn and perfect, a military working dog would seem overworked, but Herrera said she has been impressed with the dogs under her watch – no matter what the handlers say about each other.

Goodhearted rivalries between dog handlers are common, with every type of team claiming to be better than the other; common within the military.

Louks is no different. “Explosives are where you want to be.”

'Manchus' celebrate re-enlistment

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

CONTIGENCY OPERATING LOCATION NASIR WA SALAM, Iraq – It's not every day Soldiers in a deployed environment, or any environment for that matter, get to take a whole day off to enjoy athletic recreation and team building.

The "Manchu's", Soldiers of the 4th Battalion, 9th Infantry Regiment, 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, celebrated "Manchu Day", a day filled with spirited competition, concluding with a mass re-enlistment of 49 Soldiers April 9.

"We wanted to have a special day not only for the Manchu Soldiers who wanted to re-enlist but also for the battalion," said Sgt. Maj. Lee Baleme, the operations sergeant major for 4th Bn., 9th Inf. Reg. "The purpose of Manchu Day is to build esprit de corps among the Soldiers," he said, adding that even with as many of the Soldiers as possible having the day off, the unit still maintained force protection, a quick response force and security on the base.

Organizing an event of this

scale took a lot of planning in order to ensure its smooth success.

"Manchu Day has been in planning for about three months," said Baleme, a San Diego native. "We just started putting ideas together, and before we knew it everyone was on board."

An organizational day for the unit had originally been planned as a chance to play some games and blow off some steam. But, as Sgt. 1st Class Danny Davis, a career counselor for the battalion explained, a discussion with the battalion commander on how to complete the unit's annual retention mission took the event even further.

"We were just trying to come up with an idea of how we could have a big campaign toward closing that out, and through our conversation we came up with [doing] 49 re-enlistments by April 9th," he said, adding that the battalion actually exceeded their goal of 97 re-enlistments for the year, and has had 106 Soldiers re-enlist so far.

And while the re-enlistment ceremony played a large part in the day's festivities, the Manchu's spent the bulk of the day competing in various activities,

including a warrior skills competition, an Iron Man challenge, basketball, football, horseshoes, volleyball and video game tournaments.

"I saw guys with smiles on their faces and that's what matters," said Baleme. "Everyone one was enjoying the sports and there wasn't any fighting, but (instead) a good competitive spirit."

For Spc. Codey Clay, an administrative assistant with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, the event that stood out for him was the warrior skills competition.

The competition involved six-man teams from across the battalion's area, but also being tested on the assembly and disassembly of weapons, radio communication skills, a 25-question written test, foreign weapons and vehicle identification, first aid, vehicle recovery, and a stress shot.

"I was so tired after we finished," said Clay, a Corpus Christi, Texas, native. "I wanted to prove that the guys in the [admin section] are just as tactical and technical as the other guys."

Everyone was really pushing themselves and that motivated

everyone else, he added, saying that while his group placed second in the shooting competition, he was very proud of his team, even though they didn't win first place.

As the sun disappeared below the horizon and the competitions came to a close, the unit gathered around a steel fire-pit, crafted in the form of the Manchu's crest.

Lt. Col. Mark Bieger, the Manchu's commander, called the formation to attention and the pit was lit, sending sparks and billowing smoke into the dark sky.

"This day is for all you Soldiers here," said Bieger. "For the 49 Soldiers that re-enlisted today, it is an honor serving with you."

As the flames climbed higher against the backdrop of an American flag and Stryker vehicles, the brigade commander, Col. John Norris, administered the oath of enlistment to the 49 re-enlisting Soldiers.

"My favorite part of the day was when the fire-pit was lit during the re-enlistment ceremony in front of the flag," said 1st Lt. Robert Hockman, the fires support officer with Company C, from San Antonio. "That image will remain in my mind forever."

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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.

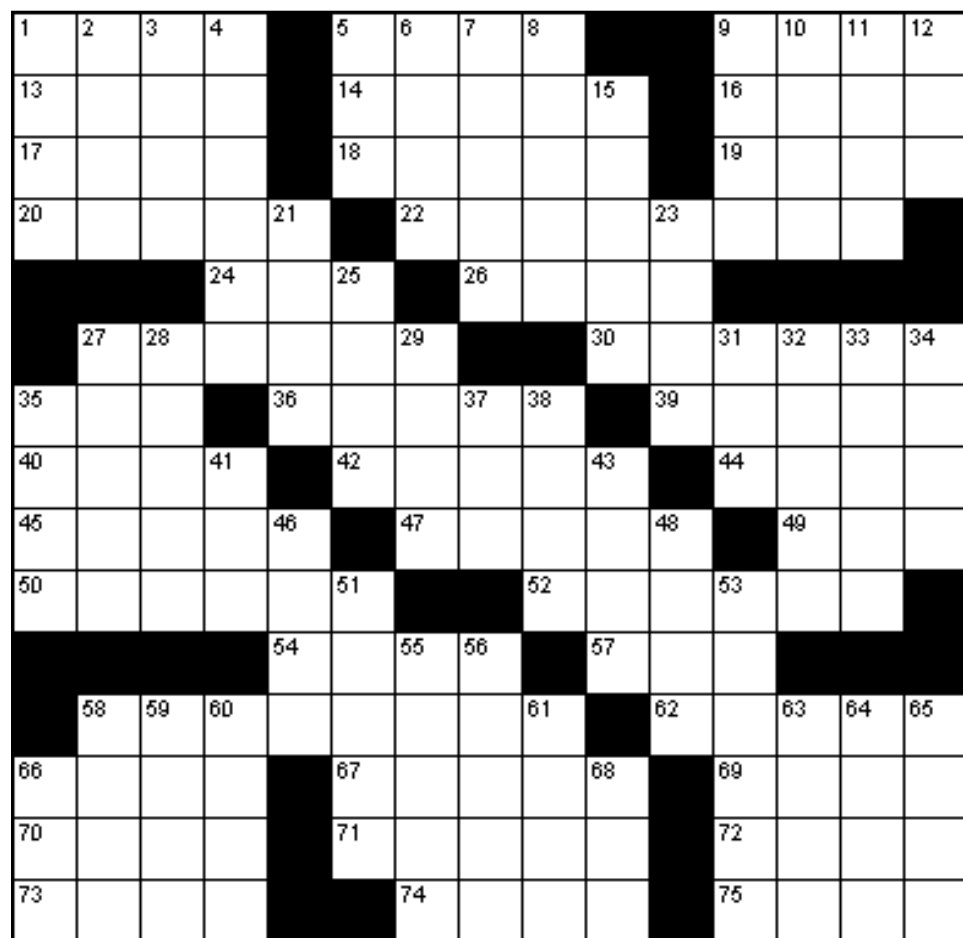
Baghdad Talent Show

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Dress Rehearsal will be at the Division MWR, Camp Liberty, April 30. To register for this event please contact James Hunter via e-mail or DSN:

james.h.hunter1@mnd-b.army.mil
DSN: 318 847 3017

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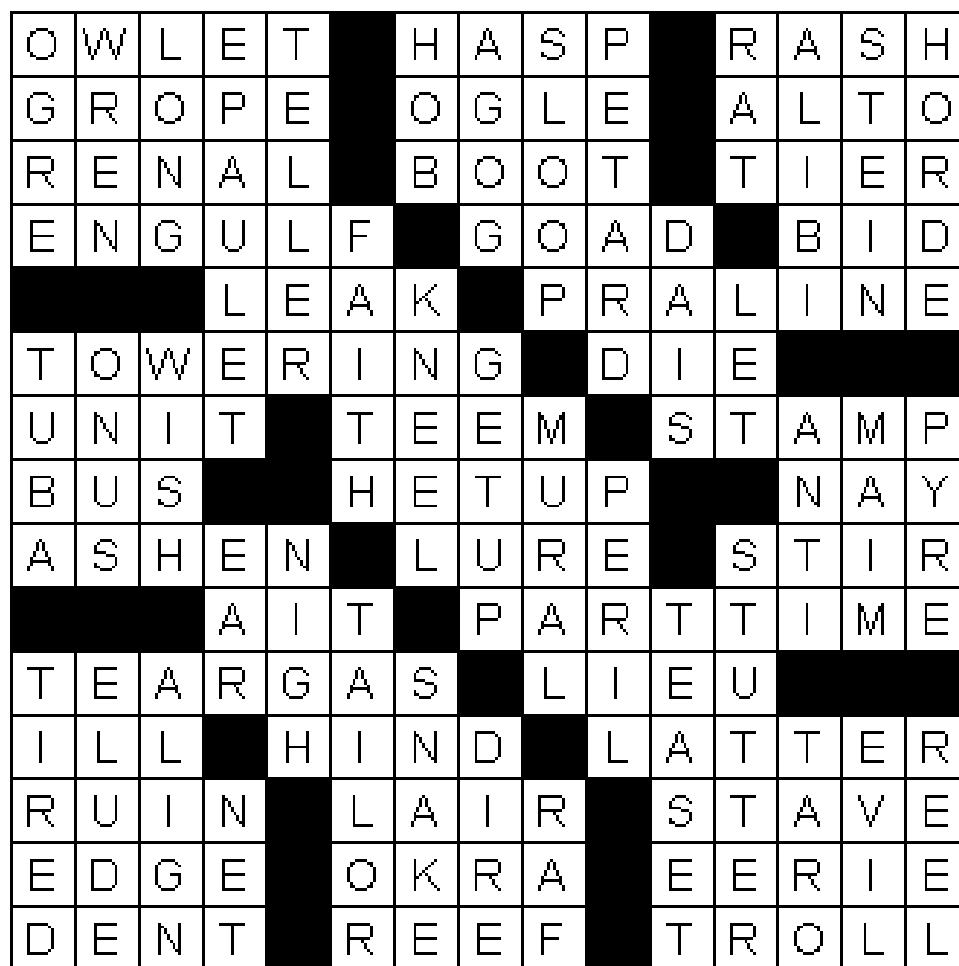
1. Trudge
5. Dreary
9. Retail outlet
13. Wander
14. Warble
16. Remuneration
17. Part of the Roman calendar
18. Play or represent
19. Nimbus
20. Virtue
22. Introduction
24. Type of tree
26. Additional
27. French film festival
30. Temper or season
35. Place
36. Book of maps
39. Currency of Nigeria
40. Woodwind instrument
42. Bird of prey

44. Heat up
45. Ocean vessel
47. Exuviate
49. Fish eggs
50. Nocturnal wildcat
52. One who suffers for the sake of principle
54. Sagolike starch
57. Novel
58. Part of a grandfather clock
62. Meat cooked on a skewer
66. Promise
67. Narrow length of leather
69. Solitary
70. Song for solo voice
71. Path
72. Ballot
73. Religious order
74. Friend
75. Ruler or chieftain

Down

1. Dainty
2. Valuable ore deposit
3. Finished
4. Blueprint
5. Coloring substance
6. Frolic
7. Worship
8. Asian pepper plant
9. Mop
10. Drag
11. Fiend
12. Leguminous plant
15. Tether
21. Large food and game fish
23. Miserly
25. Administer or ___ out
27. Having three dimensions
28. Expiate
29. Close violently
31. Uncooked
32. Personal journal
33. Mistake
34. Epithet
35. Game played on horseback
37. In the past
38. Shantytown
41. Long fish
43. Panache
46. Route
48. Journey
51. Reliance
53. Roman XII
55. Radical
56. Wall painting
58. Small opening in the skin
59. Long narrative poem
60. Orderly
61. Post
63. Economic prosperity
64. Opposing
65. Alcoholic beverage
66. Possesses
68. Travel a route regularly

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American military history

2nd Infantry Division

After training in Northern Ireland and Wales, the 2nd Infantry Division crossed the channel to land at Omaha Beach June 7, 1944 near St. Laurent-sur-Mer, adding themselves to the Allied Forces in Europe during World War II.

The Division crossed the Rhine River March 21, 1944 and advanced, relieving elements of the 9th Armored Div. March 28, 1944. The 2nd Inf. Div. advanced rapidly in the wake of the 9th Armd. Div., and on April 6, 1944 crossed the Weser River at Veckerhagen in northwestern Germany. The division captured Göttingen April 8, 1944 and established a bridgehead across the Saale River on April 14, 1944. They then seized Merseburg on April 15, 1944.

On April 18, 1944 the division took Leipzig, Germany and cleared the area. They then outposted at the Mulde River; elements crossed the river and were withdrawn April 24, 1944. After being relieved at the Mulde, the 2nd Inf. Div. crossed 200 miles, between May 1 and May 3, 1944, to positions along the German-Czech border near Schonsee and Waldmünchen. There 2nd Inf. Div. relieved the 97th and 99th Infantry Divisions. The 2nd Inf. Div. crossed over to Czechoslovakia May 4, 1945, attacking the Axis forces in the city of Pilsen on VE Day.

Pilsen was liberated from Nazi Germany May 6, 1945. Pilsen became a meeting point between invading armies from east and from west. It was in Pilsen that the soldiers of the 2nd Infantry Division first met their Soviet allies who represented the forces of communism that they would face so often in the future, no longer as allies. Since 1990, the city of Plzen has organized annual Liberation Festival taking place in May, which has already become a local tradition, and has been attended by many American and Allied veterans.

2nd Inf. Div. returned to the New York Port Of Embarkation July 20, 1945 and arrived at Camp Swift at Bastrop, Texas July 22, 1945. They started a training schedule to prepare them to participate in the scheduled invasion of Japan, but were still at Camp Swift VJ Day and received orders to move to Fort Lewis at Tacoma, Washington. They arrived at Fort Lewis on 15 April 1946, which became their Home Station.

