



Iraqi Army leads live-fire range

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

BAGHDAD – Iraqi Army Soldiers stood silently in a line, their weapons at the ready. Finally, the voice of the 22nd Brigade, 6th IA Division brigade sergeant major resonated loudly through a bullhorn and the Soldiers unleashed a barrage of live rounds into paper targets mounted on wooden frames 25 meters in front of them.

In the distance, members of the 22nd Bde., 6th IA Div. Military Transition Team, who had previously led marksmanship training with the Iraqi Soldiers, attended the range this time merely as spec-

tators. Instead, the officers and noncommissioned officers of the IA brigade mentored their own Soldiers, going over firing techniques and safety on the range, especially when using live ammunition April 19.

For many of the Soldiers, this was their first time using actual ammunition instead of dummy rounds or not having any at all, so even the 16 rounds they each were allotted was enough to motivate them.

Pvt. Muhammad E'mad Kathim said this was his first time firing and that he had never fired an AK-47 assault rifle in his life.

"It teaches me confidence in myself that I can fight," said Muhammad.

The confidence a Soldier has in his ability to fight is important in case he ever has to engage enemies out on the streets of Iraq, emphasized Capt. Ali, the 22nd Bde., 6th IA Div. Noncommissioned Officer Academy officer in charge.

Ali said there's a good chance that scenario could happen.

"These guys run checkpoints and face the enemy every day," said Ali. "They must be confident in themselves."

The Soldiers of the brigade usually train with their weapons once or twice a year, Ali added. Each time they gain better marksmanship skills.

"The main thing is for them to understand how to prepare [for an

attack] and how they handle their weapons in battle," said Ali.

Due to the fact training is so rare, the brigade sergeant major, Sgt. Maj. Hakeem, noted weak points during the day's training and said he would add them to a list of things to improve at the NCO academy, where the Soldiers who trained at the range would be headed if they chose to continue a career in the military.

Hakeem said a lot of the Soldiers are young and have never experienced any military training. Therefore, he doesn't expect them to know everything he, a 32-year veteran of the IA, knows about marksmanship.

The day spent at the range was the beginning of a much more expansive training mission that the MiTT Soldiers have planned. The range proved to the MiTT, including the team leader, Lt. Col. John Watters, that the training they had given the Iraqis had positive effects since they were capable of running their own operations one step at a time.

"The first step [is that] they're doing it," said Watters, a Jarrettsville, Md., native. "They're out here, it's safe, [and] you can tell the instructors are helping."

Now that they know the IA can take what is taught to them and run with it in true "train the trainer" fashion, the MiTT has scheduled more marksmanship training for the IA Soldiers that can be used to protect themselves and the people of Iraq as the transition teams and other United States troops proceed with the responsible reduction of forces from the country. ▲



Soldiers of 22nd Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division fire rounds at paper targets April 19 at Contingency Operating Location Justice.

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Got combat stress? Doctors have answers

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

BAGHDAD – Despite the shifts of United States operations in Iraq, such as the reduction of troops and taking on a new role to advise and assist, combat stress is still a concern.

Mental health physicians are personally reaching out to Soldiers in combat environments, helping them develop ways to cope with stress, as well as ways to anticipate and mentally prepare for it.

“We know we’re going to ask people to do more than the average person,” said Maj. Elizabeth Brent, the 1st Armored Division psychiatrist and native of Hightstown, N.J.

Combat stress comprises the many responses people have to the stresses of being away from home, in a harsh environment while under pressure, said Brent.

“There’s always going to be stress out there; and to some extent stress, in terms of being vigilant, alert, prepared, and reasonably anticipating danger, is a good thing,” said Brent.

Stress is a normal response to a potentially dangerous situation or the pressure of being a Sol-

dier, but when that stress becomes overwhelming some people freeze, running the risk of becoming a long-term behavioral health casualty, said Brent. “Our goal is to help people control their response to stress,” said Brent.

Traditionally, deployed service members faced stress from imminent danger in which Soldiers were forced to engage in combat, handle dead bodies or witness another suffering from life-threatening injuries.

Now, physicians are seeing more combat stress due to the hardships of being away from their home, fatigue of prolonged operations, multiple deployments and strains on families and relationships.

“We are helping Soldiers cope and manage as effectively as possible, so they can remain in the fight with their A-game,” said Maj. Michael Brand, commander of 1908th Medical Detachment, a combat stress control unit under the 28th Combat Support Hospital.

The different ways to take advantage of mental health services include seeking help from the organic unit therapists or chaplains, area support assets such as combat stress control clinics, troop medical clinics or combat support hospitals.

“People have choices,” said Brent. “There’s a

wide range of services, and there are no restrictions on who to go to first.” She added it’s whoever is most convenient for the patient.

Individual treatment can be given at any of these levels and can range from treatments like helping people with their sleep and stress management in both individual and group sessions, to large-scale treatment in which medication is administered.

There are several combat stress teams scattered across Iraq. Brand and his teams do prevention missions at smaller U.S. bases to provide services to more isolated locations.

“Most prevention missions include education, briefing strategic therapy, a consultation with the command, and a consultation with providers,” said Brand.

Priorities for the combat stress teams are to get out there with the units, see how they’re doing, talk with their leaders and be there to coach them through any challenges Soldiers are facing, said Brand.

“Combat stress teams are getting more creative with their services,” said Brand. “The whole idea is to let them know we’re here.”

To help combat stress professionals, mental health assessments are given during the first 90 days of a deployment and in the last 90 days of deployment, and Brand said they should be taken seriously. Although the units administer them, physicians review them to determine if additional help is needed in a particular area, he added.

As an alternative to meeting with physicians, Soldiers and leaders can combat negative reactions to stress by having competent leaders who know their Soldiers, good unit cohesion and team building, and like any relationship, good communication.

Maintaining mental health is critical to mission success.

“People have to take care of their minds as well as their bodies,” said Brent.

For help with Combat Stress contact the 1908th Medical Detachment at the Restoration Clinic at Camp Liberty.

DSN: 847-3065

SVOIP: 242-4642

There is also help available at the following web sites:

<https://www.militaryonesource.com>


<http://chppm-www.apgea.army.mil> 



Photo by Spc. Leith Edgar, 7th MPAD

Soldiers face many stressful situations when deployed to a combat zone. Stress can cause a variety of different responses for different people. If you or a fellow Soldier feels they need help, contact a combat stress team.



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Commanding General
Maj. Gen. Terry Wolff
Public Affairs Officer
Lt. Col. Eric Bloom
Command Information Supervisor
Master Sgt. Eric Pilgrim
Managing Editor
Sgt. 1st Class Neil Simmons
Layout & Design Editor
Sgt. Teri Hansen

Writers & Photographers

366th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment/ Combat Aviation Brigade, 1st Infantry Division Public Affairs Office/ 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division Public Affairs Office/ 16th Engineer Brigade Public Affairs Office/ 1st Advise and Assist Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division Public Affairs Office/ 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division Public Affairs Office/ 1st Advise and Assist Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division Public Affairs Office.



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Iraqi Fire Academy receives first ambulance

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

BAGHDAD – Soldiers delivered a refurbished ambulance to the Iraq Civil Defense Directorate firefighters in the International Zone April 22.

The ambulance is the first in the IZ and will be used as a training aid for the Iraq Civil Defense Directorate until additional repairs are completed on the vehicle that will make it fully mission capable, said Maj. Arnel David, a Federal Police Transition Team chief in the IZ, assigned to 1st Advise and Assist Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division.

“One of our missions is to have an ambulance at every one of [Iraqi Civil Defense Directorate] fire stations,” said Lt. Col. Gary Esson, the fire and emergency medical advisor for the directorate, assigned to 414th Civil Affairs Battalion, 1st Armored Div.



Iraqi officers with the Iraq Civil Defense Directorate take a closer look at an ambulance, the newest addition to the fire academy in the International Zone. United States forces had the ambulance refurbished and handed it over to Iraqis to use as a training aid and in the future as a rescue vehicle.

Esson said that in the past, if the IZ fire department needed an ambulance, it could take up to 25

minutes for one to arrive from a different area.

Although the IZ will benefit from the ambulance, the ambulance isn't fully equipped yet and will best serve as a training aid for the Iraq Civil Defense Directorate, said David.

Training with the ambulance will include loading and unloading patients, working on patients inside a confined space and performing tasks such as starting intravenous fluids or controlling bleeding while in a moving vehicle.

Esson added that before the arrival of the new vehicle, firefighters were limited to treating patients that were lying on the sidewalk.

“This ambulance is very good for us in enriching the training procedures of this academy,” said Brig. Gen. Jaafer Gatoof, the deputy officer for the directorate.

The ambulance hand off that will enrich training at the Iraqi fire academy was only made possible through strong communication and ties with Iraqi counterparts and good communication within different branches of the United States military.

Airmen from Sather Air Base did a cost-benefit analysis.

They determined it would cost more to ship the ambulance back to the states for repair than to re-

pair the vehicle in Iraq and transfer it to the Iraqis, said David.

David's team was notified and the search began for an organization in need of an ambulance.

Soldiers recalled various news articles and clippings from a demonstration at the Iraq Civil Defense Directorate's Fire academy, and David contacted Esson to see if his Iraqi counterparts might have use for an ambulance, Esson said. The Zurk Group, an Iraqi contracting company, then volunteered to refurbish the ambulance, and it was turned over to the fire academy two weeks later, said David.

“We've been working with the Americans and have received a lot of specialized vehicles, but this is the first ambulance given to this academy,” said Gatoof.

Turning used equipment over to Iraqi organizations is nothing new for David's team, which seeks to improve Iraq's capabilities in any way possible.

“If we continue to increase the essential services in Iraq, [it] allows for a smoother transition as U.S. forces step into an advisory role,” said Esson. “These essential services increase the quality of life.”

Once the repairs are complete, David and Esson hope to see the Iraqis using it on the road, benefiting Iraqis by saving lives. ▲



Lt. Col. Gary Esson, assigned to 414th Civil Affairs Battalion, 1st Armored Division, the fire and emergency medical advisor to the Iraq Civil Defense Directorate, reveals one of many compartments in an ambulance April 22 to an Iraqi firefighter in the International Zone. The ambulance was given to the Iraq Civil Defense Directorate after United States forces had it refurbished.

PRT announces past success, future progress

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

BAGHDAD – From 2003 to present, the Baghdad Provincial Reconstruction Team, in cooperation with United States Division – Center, has made vast improvements to the infrastructure of Baghdad and its surrounding communities.

Reconstruction teams and USD-C have worked to provide basic necessities to Iraqi citizens. Throughout the last seven years, Baghdad residents have gained access to clean water, electricity, sewer systems and waste disposal at a much more reliable rate.

At a conference held April 25 inside the International Zone, PRT members described the work done in cooperation with the Government of Iraq over the past few years.

“Hundreds of thousands of Iraqi people have clean water and electricity now that didn’t have access to it in 2003,” said Thomas Lynch, the program director of the Baghdad PRT.

In the past seven years, potable water production within Baghdad has doubled, according to the PRT. One project included the Sadr City Water Treatment plant, which provides 96,000 cubic meters of clean water, and an expansion of other water treatment plants boosting them to over 225,000 cubic meters

each.

All in all, U.S. and Iraqi cooperation has led to an increase of 1.4 million cubic meters of clean water since July 2007, said Phil Willis, an engineer with the Baghdad PRT. The GoI plans to provide another 665,000 cubic meters of water capacity over the next three years.

Electricity was also discussed during the conference, and it was a topic that sparked quite a bit of interest among the Iraqi media in attendance.

In 2004, the electricity production throughout Iraq was barely meeting 35 percent of the demand, said Joshua Hidra, an electrical engineer with the Baghdad PRT. Currently the power output is 1,200 megawatts, which is an estimated 50 percent of current demand, increasing the average hours of electricity for residents from two hours per day to 12 hours per day.

But, as power generation levels climb, so does the demand for this previously rare commodity, said Richard Shamass, a provincial councilman for the Baghdad PRT.

“After electricity became more available and people’s income climbed, it gave them a chance to buy more electric equipment,” said Shamass.

The Ministry of Electricity plans on continuing this trend, eventually expanding their power generation to 1,800 megawatts by 2015.



The program director of the Baghdad Provincial Reconstruction Team, Thomas Lynch, speaks to the media about past accomplishments of United States forces improving the Baghdad infrastructure during a press briefing April 25 at Contingency Operating Location Prosperity. The PRT and U.S. Division – Center have worked together to help develop Baghdad’s water purification, sewage, waste management and electricity to prepare Iraqi citizens to stand on their own feet as U.S. forces draw down.

Everything the reconstruction team and USD-C accomplished for the Iraqi people has been to assist them in providing for themselves in the future.

The team plans on being phased out with the draw down of U.S. forces in line with the security agreement, but there will be agencies within the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad to provide continued assistance and training to the GoI when necessary, said Shamass.

“Right now, PRTs work under the philosophy of being civilian-operated

with military support,” said Shamass. “With the new direction the Iraqi government is heading, PRTs can step aside and allow normal U.S. agencies to take on their own roles in supporting the Iraqi people.”

“Lately, I’ve noticed the Government of Iraq initiating programs on their own and taking an active stance to provide for their own people,” Shamass continued. “It sometimes takes my breath away when I see the Iraqi people’s accomplishments.” 🚩

JROC works to restore Karkh Waste Water Treatment Plant

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

BAGHDAD – In an effort to restore clean water to the citizens of southern Baghdad, and virtually millions of Iraqi’s further downstream, members of the Joint Reconstruction Operations Center are working together with agencies from United States Division - Center, the Government of Iraq and Japan to refurbish the Karkh Waste Water Treatment Plant.

Originally, the mission of the JROC, established in 2006 by U.S. Army Chief of Staff Gen. George Casey, was to coordinate and synchronize reconstruction efforts throughout Baghdad. That mission has expanded in order to assist people working for the U.S. State Department and U.S. military in finalizing essential service infrastructure projects in and around

the province of Baghdad.

In 2005, the Karkh Waste Water Treatment Plant was attacked by insurgents and subsequently looted. The attack left the plant inoperable, causing untreated sewage water to be dumped into the Tigris River daily, said Maj. Donald Westfall, operations officer for the JROC, and native of Chardon, Ohio, assigned to 16th Engineer Brigade.

“It’s almost like the facility is not there,” said Shukri Rabadi, the sector lead for the JROC sewer section. “The sewage goes directly to the Tigris River without being treated.”

Westfall, Rabadi and the team at the JROC have been meeting with both the Baghdad Sewer Authority and the Japan International Cooperation Agency to try to refurbish and expand the current facility, making it functional again.

“This mission is a priority for the

Iraqi government,” said Westfall. “The need for rehab and expansion is immediate.”

If operational, the Karkh Waste Water Treatment Plant, the largest waste water treatment center in Iraq, would meet the needs of over three million Baghdad residents.

“The international standard for the Bio-Oxygen Demand test in water is a result of less than 40 mg/per liter. The Tigris has levels that are over 12 times that amount,” said Rabadi. “The rural people are drinking the contaminated water. They may get very sick from it.”

In order to get the plant back online, significant time and financial investments will have to be made. The refurbishment of the current facility is estimated to cost \$30 million and will take nearly a year to complete. Construction is expected to start later this spring. Additionally, Rabadi said the expansion will cost over \$400 million

and take two years to complete.

Once completed, the expansion is expected to double the waste water treatment capacity of the current facility. Construction is expected to begin in 2011 and will take two to three years to complete.

The JROC is responsible for ensuring that stakeholders in the reconstruction effort are aware of progress on the projects, and any issues that may arise. The JROC personnel continue to work with the Baghdad Sewer Authority to check on the progress of the refurbishment. They also work with Japan International Cooperation Agency to make sure the expansion continues.

While the projects are many, the goal is always the same: what can be done to help get Iraq running again?

“This is a good start. We have to keep going and continue reconstruction effort for years to come,” said Rabadi. 🚩

7th IA engineers receive variety of training

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



Staff Sgt. Thomas Dwyer, a native of Cumberland, R.I., assigned to Headquarters Support Company, 101st Engineer Battalion, trains an Iraqi Army Soldier how to troubleshoot an electrical panel.



Spc. Danny Rockett, a native of Kingston, Mass., examines an electrical panel with an Iraqi Army Soldier at Camp Yassir April 11. Soldiers from 101st Engineer Battalion worked with IA Soldiers in a classroom setting and around the Iraqi compound, teaching basic electrical safety.



BAGHDAD — A Soldier from the 7th Iraqi Army digs a trench for a new shower drainage pipe at Camp Yassir April 11. Many IA Soldiers have the expertise but lack the confidence to fix basic maintenance issues at the camp.



Staff Sgt. John Melanson, a native of Halifax, Mass., sorts through plumbing connectors. He was part of a team of subject matter experts from the 101st Eng. Bn., 16th Eng. Bde., who spent 10 days at the camp working with the IA Soldiers.

Iraqi Police have new base of operations

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

BAGHDAD – With the stroke of a pen, 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division took another step forward toward the responsible reduction of forces in Iraq, transferring responsibility of Contingency Operating Location Abu Ghraib to their Iraqi police partners during a ceremony April 20.

Leaders from the 1st Battalion, 38th Infantry Regiment, 4th SBCT, 2nd Inf. Div., the Abu Ghraib Police district and the Iraqi Ministry of the Interior participated in the ceremony, which concluded with the signing of documents, officially transferring the COL to the Iraqis.

“Today we transfer over the COL to the Government of Iraq, continuing our journey towards the strategic partnership with the sovereign country of Iraq,” said Lt. Col John Leffers, commander of 1st Bn.



1st Battalion, 38th Infantry Regiment, 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division leadership and Sameer Al-Haddad (left) from the Ministry of the Interior, sign documents transferring authority of Contingency Operating Location Abu Ghraib from United States forces to the Iraqi government April 20.

Working closely with Col. Falah, the Abu Ghraib district police chief, 1st Bn. Soldiers had

maintained a constant presence at the COL since arriving in country last fall. Past units, as a part of the “Surge,” used the COL as a key location to secure the citizens of Abu Ghraib and provide a quick response for Iraqi Security Forces operating in the area.

More recently, a platoon of United States Soldiers, living out of tents at the small base would spend roughly two to three days at a time, said Capt. Joshua Betty, commander of Company C. Soldiers from each of Betty’s three platoons have been fulfilling that requirement for the past several months, he said.

1st Bn. Soldiers performed guard duty at the COL as well as had personnel working in the joint operations center, providing a conduit of communication between U.S. and Iraqi forces, he said.

The sharing of intelligence with their Iraqi police partners helped to improve security in the area, including during the March 7 National Elections. In total, more than 100 combined patrols have been enabled by the close-knit U.S. and Iraqi partnership at the COL during the past six months.

“It’s a sad day for me personally,” said Leffers, who said that he enjoys the close relationship

he shares with Falah and will miss not being able to visit him as frequently now.

The Iraqi commander, calling Leffers his brother, agreed that the day of the handover was a bittersweet one.


“I am sad that my [time with] my friend and partnership in working with Lt. Col. Leffers is going to end,” said Fallah, thanking his American ally for his cooperation in keeping the district safe.

The transfer of authority, while significant in the fact that it gives the Iraqis full responsibility for the installation, does not mean that the close bond between the units will end.

“For all intensive purposes, relationship-wise, the ceremony just means that we no longer live here,” said Betty.

Leffers agreed, saying that the “phenomenal” relationship he has enjoyed with the policemen will continue.

“Even though we are turning over the COL today we are still going to remain partners,” he said.

“The transfer strongly reinforces the confidence of the Government of Iraq and the people of Abu Ghraib in their [police]. They’re ready to lead,” added Betty. 



Capt. Joshua Betty (right) commander of Company C, 1st Battalion 38th Infantry Regiment, 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division shakes hands with Sameer Al-Haddad (left) from the Ministry of the Interior, after signing over COL Abu Ghraib to the Iraqi government.

CAB Soldiers teach air traffic control methods to IqAF

Story & photo by Spc. Roland Hale
CAB, 1st Inf. Div. PAO, USD-C

TAJI, Iraq – In addition to flying joint missions with the Iraqi Air Force, Soldiers of Combat Aviation Brigade, 1st Infantry Division are moving their

mission of partnership with Iraqi forces into the realm of air traffic control at Camp Taji.

Working with Soldiers from Company F, 2nd General Support Aviation Battalion, 1st Aviation Regiment, the Iraqi personnel are learning how to effectively manage the air traffic control

tower on Taji Army Airfield.

“We’re trying to move ourselves, the Iraqi Air Force, forward,” said Lt. Yassen, an Iraqi air traffic controller. “The Iraqi Air Force used old rules for air traffic control; the Americans are teaching us the modern, new ways to do it.”

The job requires intensive training and an intermediate understanding of the English language – the universal language of air traffic control – so, in addition to working with CAB Soldiers, the Iraqis also attend basic aviation management courses and aviation-specific English classes.

“It’s a big team operation up here now between us, the Iraqis and the [United States] Soldiers,” said Patsy Thomas, a trainer from Washington Consulting Group. Thomas, and several other civilians, are responsible for the certification of the Iraqi air traffic controllers.

CAB Soldiers help train the IqAF personnel by observing and assisting them throughout their daily operations, said Thomas. Under supervision, the Iraqis are currently operating a large portion of the systems in the tower.

There is still a need for the presence of the CAB Soldiers, said Staff Sgt. Mark Flater, assigned to Co. F.

“We help them out and are also required to monitor [equipment] systems that they aren’t yet authorized to operate,” said Flater.

As the two forces work side by side in the tower, they face the biggest challenge posed to any Iraqi-American partnership: the language barrier.

“It’s probably the biggest difficulty we’ve had so far, but we practice with them all day and you see that they catch on,” said Flater. “I’ve seen a big improvement in their capabilities just in the time I’ve been here.”

In addition to making progress in the tower, Flater says the Soldiers of Co. F have made personal ties with the Iraqis; during their down-time, they sit and talk about things as Soldiers do – from differences in culture to the similarities of their military careers.

CAB Soldiers will continue working in the control tower over the length of the unit’s deployment, gradually transferring more control to the Iraqi controllers. 🌈



Sgt. Douglas Miller, an air traffic controller assigned to Company F, 2nd General Support Aviation Battalion, 1st Aviation Regiment, Combat Aviation Brigade, 1st Infantry Division and 1st Lt. Murtada, an air traffic controller for the Iraqi Air Force, monitor one of the tracking systems in Taji Army Airfield’s control tower April 21.

US Soldiers, Federal Police build obstacle course

Story & photo by Capt. Marc Allerdt
2nd BCT, 10th Mtn. Div. PAO, USD-C

BAGHDAD – Combat engineers from 2nd Battalion, 14th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division built a 10-station obstacle course April 2 with policemen from 4th Brigade, 1st Iraqi Federal Police at Contingency Operating Location Beladiyat.

The 2nd Bn., Soldiers and Federal Police worked side by side, digging through the compacted Iraqi soil. The project was repeatedly put on hold due to contract delays and availability of materials.

“Originally, the site was going to be used for a DNA research institute,” said Lt. Col. Herbert Charity, the 4th Bde., 1st FP Transition Team chief and project manager. “The first day we went out there with our plans we noticed six other Iraqi engineers measuring for the DNA research institute.”

After two months on hold, the funding for the research institute



Policemen with 4th Brigade, 1st Iraqi Federal Police jump hurdles after the completion of a newly constructed obstacle course, built jointly April 2 with members from 2nd Battalion, 14th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division at Contingency Operating Location Beladiyat.

fell through, and construction on the obstacle course began.

Initially, the project called for an inverted wall with a 20-foot rope climb. However, because of high maintenance and an unforgiving climate, the engineers decided to reduce the number of obstacles

in the course.

“I wanted to build it with low maintenance,” said Staff Sgt. Timothy Plumb, a combat engineer with 2nd Bn. “This way they will be able to use it whenever they want to and not have to worry about rebuilding and purchasing

materials.”

Once the course was complete, four policemen showed up for instructions on how to properly execute each station and test the course. They all completed the course breathing heavily, with smiles on their faces. 🌈

Teaching skills that last a lifetime

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

BAGHDAD – Like much of Iraq, Anbar province experiences scorching summers making air conditioning critical to the Soldiers of the 7th Iraqi Army, based at Camp Yassir. Air conditioning allows Iraqi Soldiers to focus on the mission during working hours and rest more comfortably during downtime.

Soldiers from 101st Engineer Battalion, 16th Eng. Brigade, spent a few days training IA engineers to ensure they have the skills necessary to install and maintain their own air conditioning units.

According to the officer in charge of the training, Warrant Officer Jennifer Summers, assigned to 1434th Eng. Company, a native of Grayling, Mich., there are two parts to this partnership training mission.

“We are doing classroom training to teach the fundamentals of air conditioning work to the Iraqi Soldiers. After the training, we are working with the Soldiers to help them fix many of the issues that they have,” explained Summers.

Pfc. Nicholas Rocca, a native of Watertown, Mass., and Staff Sgt. Thomas Dwyer from Cumberland, R.I., both assigned to Headquarters Support Company, assisted with the training of basic air conditioner maintenance as well as to troubleshoot for their Iraqi counterparts.

Many of the air conditioning units were not functioning properly or at all. For Rocca, a certified heating, ventilation, and air conditioning technician, teaching the basics is key.

“Staff Sgt. Dwyer and I have taught the Iraqis how to troubleshoot the problems on their air conditioners. They have learned not only how to check for leaks in the system, but also how to repair the unit itself,” said Rocca.

According to the trainers, the Iraqi Soldiers are fast learners.

“After we have shown the Iraqi Soldiers how to make the repairs and do general unit maintenance, they don’t have to be shown again,” explained Rocca.

Rocca is particularly impressed by the motivation of one Iraqi Soldier, Pvt. Hamzed. According to Rocca, Hamzed has learned how to troubleshoot with a high level of



Pfc. Nicholas Rocca, a native of Watertown, Mass., assigned to Headquarters Support Company, 101st Engineer Battalion, 16th Eng. Brigade, explains to an Iraqi Army Soldier what is wrong with an air conditioning unit at Camp Yassir April 11. Rocca and other members of the 101st Eng. Bn. conducted training on basic maintenance for air conditioning units.

accuracy.

“Hamzed is highly motivated. He is able to fix everything on his own,” explained Rocca.

Hamzed was initially placed in a different training course that covered the basics of electrical work. An electrician by trade, he left the electrical training after the first day and joined the air conditioning class.

“I explained to the U.S. Soldiers that I already had the basic knowledge for being an electrician,” said Hamzed.

Hamzed shared the story of another Soldier in the HVAC training who did not want to participate. With a little coaching, Hamzed and some of the other Iraqi Soldiers were able to convince the Soldier to stay, by telling him that if he was willing to learn this skill, and work hard at it, one day he could get a big house and drive a nice car. But if he wasn’t, he would be watching his friends with the big house and nice car while he still had the same lifestyle.

“We told him that it would be a good skill for when he gets out of the Army and can help him make money when gets back home,” explained Hamzed.

The next day, the Soldier had a new found excitement and wanted to learn everything that he could because he realized that he could apply these skills to his life outside of the Army.

This training ensures that the Iraqi Army engineers have the basic skills to maintain their facilities and equipment when U.S. forces are no longer readily available.

It is particularly valuable to these Iraqi Soldiers because they understand the skills they learn as engineers can help them get jobs and improve their quality of life when they are no longer serving in the military.

Perhaps the most striking quality of the training is that there is no noticeable separation between the U.S. Soldiers and the Iraqi Soldiers. They treat each other as equals and friends, paving the way for a peaceful future between our two nations as brothers. 🌈



Staff Sgt. Thomas Dwyer from Cumberland, R.I., assigned to Headquarters Support Company, explains the basics of how to troubleshoot a defective air conditioning unit. Dwyer, along with a team of Soldiers from 101st Engineer Battalion, spent 10 days teaching Iraqi Army Soldiers basic and advanced air conditioning unit maintenance.



Water not causing kidney stones



Story & photo by Sgt. Teri Hansen
366th MPAD, USD-C

BAGHDAD – A rumor about the bottled water in Iraq has been circulating making service members uneasy, said Capt. Antonio Chang, the 1st Armored Division, Division Special Troops Battalion Aid Station officer in charge.

The current gossip is that the bottled water currently consumed in Iraq can cause kidney stones. In an effort to quell this rumor, Chang did some research.

While there are numerous factors associated with kidney stones, the bottled water is not one of them, said Chang. With the heat rising in Iraq, hydration is more important than ever.

Kidney stones are made of salts and minerals in urine that stick together and form small pebbles.

The stones can be as small as a grain of sand or as big as a golf ball. The stones become dislodged and travel from the kidneys through the urinary tract. Depending on the size of the stone it can cause quite a bit of pain.

According to Chang's research, the amount of fluid a person drinks is directly related to the formation of kidney stones. The less a person drinks the less they urinate. A low urine output allows an increase of calcium and oxalate to form, which could cause a stone.

Another potential risk factor for kidney stones is excessive physical



exercise without the proper intake of water. The type of fluid can also be a factor, though data on this can vary. Studies have shown that grapefruit juice has been associated with an increased risk of kidney stones. On the other hand studies showed that orange juice lowered the risk of stone formation.

Common drinks such as coffee and tea are perfectly fine to drink though people should refrain from adding a lot of sweetener. Soda contains lots of sugar, which is related to stone formation, especially in women, so it should

be consumed in moderation.

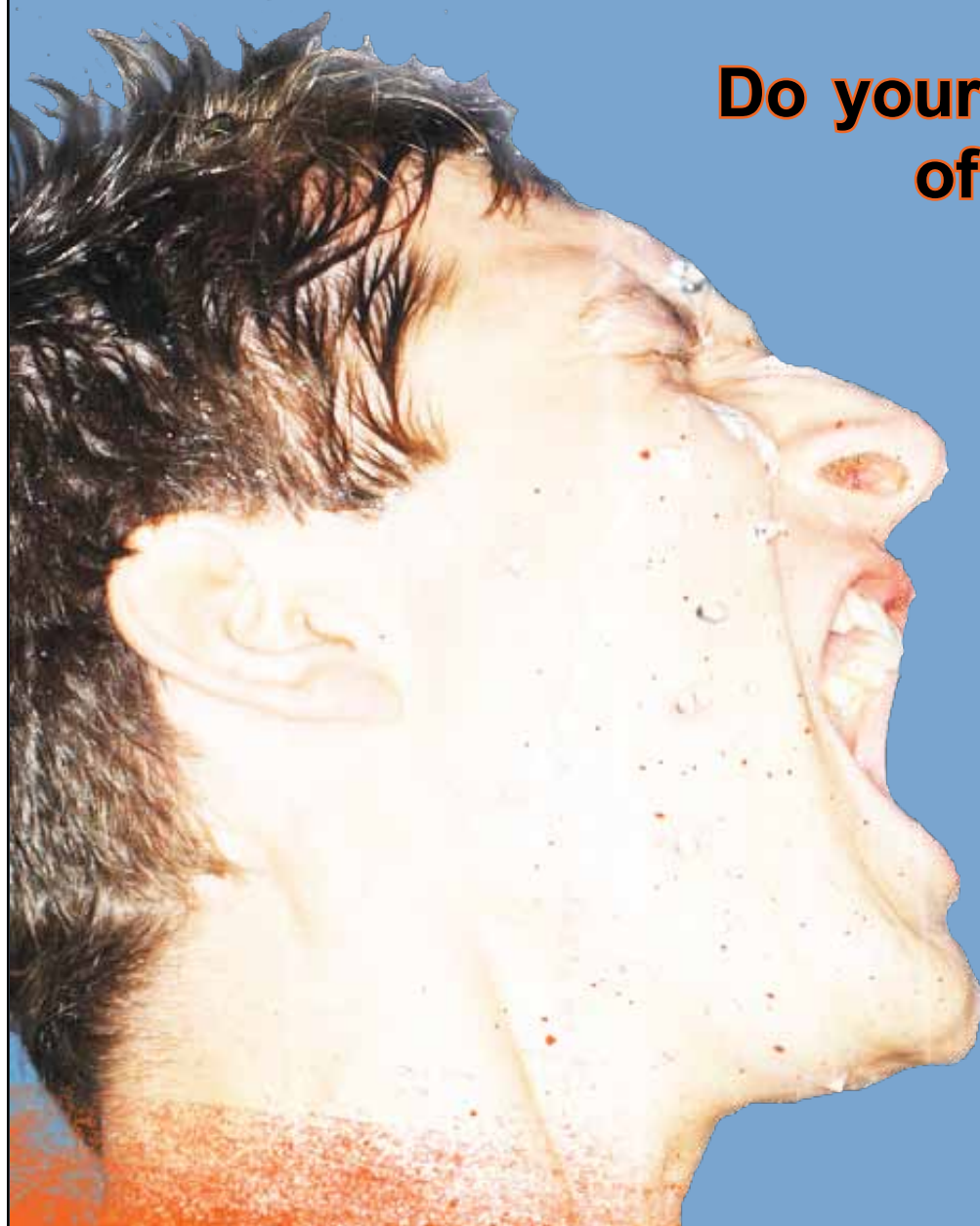
When it comes to what a person is eating, a diet high in red meat, salt or sugar can lead to kidney stones, especially without proper fluid intake.

Other risk factors that can cause kidney stones include, family history, improper kidney function, diabetes, obesity and gout. Medication can also play a significant role in stone formation; medications can crystallize in the urine forming kidney stones. Drinking plenty of water when taking medications can combat the risk of kidney stones forming.

During Chang's research he came across many risk factors for kidney stones, but could not find a study indicating water causes kidney stones. When it comes to the bottled water in Iraq he is certain there is no possibility it is causing kidney stones. ▲

Have fun and look out for each other this summer

Do your part to protect your band of brothers and sisters



Stay Hydrated

Drink water, not alcohol or soda, during summer outdoor activities.

Stay Covered

Wear light colored, loose fitting clothing and wide-brimmed hats. Apply sunscreen that is at least 30 SPF to all areas of exposed skin.

Stay Cool

Seek shelter in the shade or indoors during the hottest parts of the day, usually 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

If you build it, they will climb

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

BAGHDAD — Most Soldiers serving in Iraq had to leave a lot of things behind, at home: loved ones, friends, pets and cherished pastimes. They wait patiently to get back to their favorite fishing hole, restaurant or maybe just a hammock hanging in the cool shade of a large tree in the back yard.

A few Soldiers on Camp Liberty refused to wait. They found a way to make their love of rock climbing a reality, right here in a combat zone.

In a scene typically viewed at the end of the duty day or when Soldiers can find the time to get outside, several Soldiers assigned to 1st Maintenance Company, 373rd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 15th Sustainment Brigade climbed a

bouldering wall April 24.

“What it does is gets my mind off stress and being away from my family,” said Spc. Colton Sanders, a Wrens, Ga., native. “It is something different, instead of the same old stuff every day.”

Bouldering is a style of rock climbing that does not require rope. It is limited to short climbs, so if there is a fall, it usually will not result in serious injury. Sometimes it is conducted on natural rock boulders, but in this case, it is a man-made structure.

The climbing wall did not magically appear at its current location; it took determination and teamwork to make it a reality.

Soldiers assigned to an Oregon National Guard unit originally built the wall and before they left Iraq, the Soldiers of 1st Maintenance Co. offered to buy the plastic handholds



An inverted Spc. Mitchell Fortin, a native of Westminster, Mass., assigned to 1st Maintenance Company, 373rd Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 15th Sustainment Brigade, climbs a bouldering wall April 24 at Camp Liberty.

and take possession of the wall itself.

Once they took ownership of the wall, they decided to move it closer to the Morale, Welfare and Recreation facility.

However, first they had to get permission for the move and prove that the wall would be safe and stable.

The wall was originally designed and built by structural engineers, so blue prints and mathematical equations were left behind with the wall.

“When we went to our sergeant major, we had everything planned,” said Sanders. “We had risk assessments, memorandums and no previous significant injury reports.”

Now that the wall plan was good to go, the move began. It took over two hours to take it down, and over four hours to reassemble it at its new location. At the base of the wall, 12 inches of gravel was laid down, covering an area of almost 30 feet in diameter.

With the wall operational, the Soldiers continue honing their skills and enjoy their time outside.

“I love to climb, and there was nowhere to do it here,” said Sgt. Jeffery Kennedy, a Winchester, Tenn., native. “I love to be fit, but I hate being in the gym—it’s like being inside a box. Climbing builds great core strength and its outside.”

“With our friends, the bugs,” joked Westminster, Mass., native, Spc. Mitchell Fortin. “It’s like having a billion little buddies.”

Fortin also enjoys climbing as a way to add more to his workouts.

“It tires you out quickly, that’s for

sure,” said Fortin.

The Soldiers are always trying to get new folks out to climb the wall, which can be climbed anytime — 24-hours a day, seven days a week. All you have to do is bring a battle buddy, a comfortable pair of shoes and check in at the MWR gym. Also, leave your fears behind.

The climbers believe it is important not to be intimidated. It is like any sport, they said, skills start gradually and you progress as you learn.

“There are plenty of people out here that have experience who could teach and help out,” said Cpl. Kyle Logan, a Fort Wayne, Ind., native. “There are spotters to make it as safe as possible.”

Spotters stay behind the climber and safely guide a falling climber to the ground.

Logan said he visits the climbing wall an average of four to five times a week and enjoys his time out there.

“I like the challenge,” he said. “Being a beginner, I can see the progress I have made over time.”

Although the Soldiers enjoy the wall for themselves, they encourage all would-be climbers or even experienced “rock hounds” to come out and climb. They hope to form a climbing club; not only building healthier bodies but healthier friendships.

Editor’s Note: For more information about the bouldering wall, contact Sgt. Jeffery Kennedy at DSN:(847)-2960 or via e-mail at jeffery.kennedy4@mnd-b.army.mil



Cpl. Kyle Logan, a Fort Wayne, Ind., native, assigned to 1st Maintenance Company, looks up at a potential hand hold on a bouldering wall.

Iron Oasis Dining Facility hosts 'Iron Chef' competition

*Photos by Spc. Daniel Schneider,
366th MPAD, USD-C*



Sgt. Maj. Paul Vallade, the Logistics maintenance sergeant major for 1st Armored Division and a judge for the "Iron Chef" competition, digs into a specially prepared dish. The competition was conducted at the Iron Oasis Dining Facility. Contestants were graded on taste, time, presentation, sanitation and teamwork.



During the fourth "Iron Chef" competition, Pfc. Carlos Forte (right) prepares to hand Sgt. Alice Montgomery a pork loin ready to be baked. Both Soldiers are members of the Raider Inn Dining Facility team representing 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division.



Spc. Jeffrey Wu, a food service specialist assigned to Company B, Division Special Troops Battalion, 1st Armored Division, carefully dumps fried shrimp into a bowl during the "Iron Chef" competition. The Raider Inn Dining Facility team won the competition over the defending Iron Oasis DFAC champions by a narrow margin.



BAGHDAD – Sgt. Jamaal Smith, a food service sergeant assigned to Company B, Division Special Troops Battalion, 1st Armored Division, decorates a plate with chocolate syrup prior to placing a dessert on it during the "Iron Chef" competition April 24 at Camp Liberty's Iron Oasis Dining Facility.

Task Force Iron Claw closes 'Hodge Hall' doors

Engineers to present memorial sign to parents of fallen Soldier

Story & photos by Spc. Heather Todd
1192nd Eng. Co., 16th Eng. Bde., USD-C

BAGHDAD – In October 2005, Company B of the Ohio-based 612th Engineer Battalion lost one of their own. Twenty-year old Sgt. Jeremy Hodge, from Rushsylvania, Ohio, was killed in action when an improvised explosive device detonated near his humvee during a route clearance mission.

Over the past several years, Task Force Iron Claw Academy has been conducting classes inside a schoolhouse at Camp Liberty, named in memory of the Soldier "Hodge Hall."

Appropriately, the academy was responsible for training United States and Iraqi Security Forces how to identify and safely respond to IEDs that are discovered on route clearance missions.

As the responsible drawdown of forces continues, and the ISF become capable of executing independent route clearance missions, the academy has closed its doors and the sign proclaiming it Hodge Hall has been taken down and will eventually be presented to Hodge's family.

"I think it is important to honor him and his sacrifice," said 1st Lt. Craig Smith, former officer in charge of the academy. "It also sent a clear message to the students, that they have a very tough and dangerous mission, and they had better take it seriously."

Smith is honored to be presenting the sign to the Hodge Family.

"The Hodges had to bear what no parent should have to," said Smith.



Soldiers from 1434th Engineer Company, 16th Eng. Brigade build a border to protect the Hodge Hall sign on its trip back to the United States so that it can be presented to the family of Sgt. Jeremy Hodge, a member of the 612th Eng. Battalion, 16th Eng. Bde., who was killed in action in October 2005.

"I would hope that they realize that Jeremy has not been forgotten, nor the sacrifice that he made. Every U.S. Soldier that came through the academy saw that sign and learned about Jeremy," he added.

Col. Robert Phillips, the commander of

the 612th Engineer Battalion at the time of Hodge's death, has deployed to Iraq again as chief of staff for the 16th Engineer Brigade.

"It was nice to see that after five years Hodge Hall was still being used," said Phillips.

The Soldiers who were responsible for the removal and preservation of the Hodge Hall sign were keenly aware of its meaning and where the sign was headed.

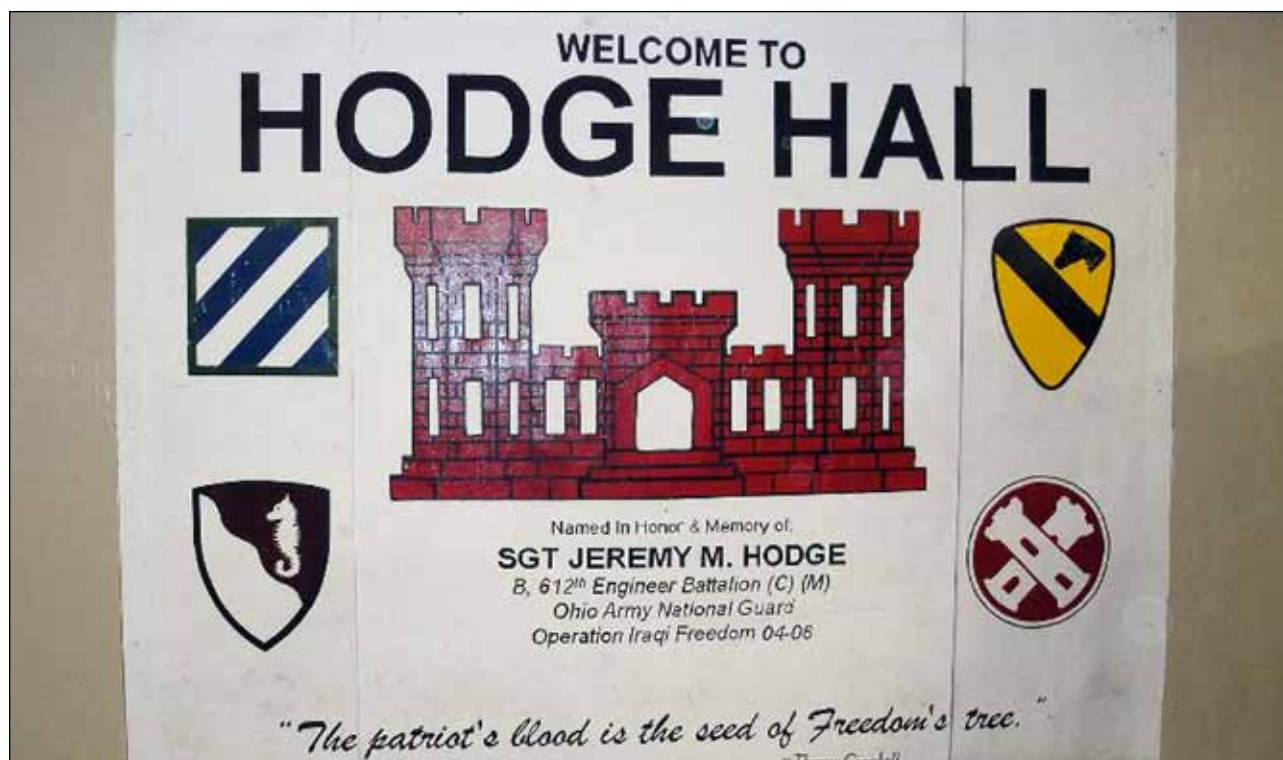
"It was an honor to be able to have a part in getting the sign down," said Spc. Scott Vaughan, of Belding, Mich.

Once the 16th Engineer Brigade, Hodge's former brigade headquarters, completes its deployment, the sign will leave Iraq and be presented to Hodge's mother and stepfather, Michelle and Steve Norris, during a fallen Soldier memorial service.

The idea for the personal exchange was suggested by Brig. Gen. Glenn Hammond III, the current commander of the 16th Engineer Brigade.

"We're giving the family a memorial that they can put up somewhere ... It is an honor to take the sign home with us when we leave here," Hammond said.

Hodge Hall may no longer display Sgt. Jeremy Hodge's name, but his legacy will continue on in the hearts and minds of Soldiers.



The sign above, formerly hung in the Task Force Iron Claw Academy school house, Hodge Hall, was so named in honor of Sgt. Jeremy Hodge from Rushsylvania, Ohio. Hodge, a member of 612th Engineer Battalion, was killed in action in October 2005, when an improvised explosive device detonated near his humvee while on a route clearance mission.

Engineers re-certify combat life-saving skills

Story & photo by Spc. Heather Todd
1192nd Eng. Co., 16th Eng. Bde., USD-C

BAGHDAD – Soldiers who normally concentrate on engineer missions refreshed skills they had previously learned by attending a Combat Life Saver course April 12 taught by medics assigned to 16th Engineer Brigade.

Soldiers from 101st Eng. Battalion opened airways, learned the proper method for treating a penetrating chest wound and different techniques for carrying a casualty. Additionally, Soldiers were trained to respond to the types of injuries that occur from blasts: amputations and severe bleeding. The course even covered the treatment of hot and cold weather injuries. They also practiced the crucial 9-line medical evacuation procedure at the Task Force Iron Claw Academy at Camp Liberty.

A combat lifesaver is a Sol-

dier trained to provide advanced first aid and lifesaving procedures beyond the level of self-aid or buddy aid. The course offers Soldiers an opportunity to improve confidence levels should they find themselves in a situation of attempting to save one of their battle buddies.

“There are many things that can go wrong in just a matter of seconds,” said Staff Sgt. Joseph Kesner, a native of Monroeville, Ohio, assigned to 1192nd Engineer Company, 101st Eng. Bn. “This training has been very good in getting us ready to deal with the stuff that could happen while we’re out there on missions,”

The CLS course was developed in an effort to increase survivability in combat environments when a medic may not be readily available. With technology always advancing, it’s important for Soldiers to be current on treatment options.



During Combat Life Saver re-certification, Soldiers of 101st Engineer Battalion, 16th Eng. Brigade, observe as Spc. Brandi Germain, a native of Fitchburg, Mass., and medic, applies a tourniquet to Spc. Martin Wesley, a native of Providence, R.I. The CLS course was developed in an effort to increase survivability in combat environments when a medic may not be readily available. With technology always advancing, it’s important for Soldiers to be up to date.

“The training was up to date and helpful because it’s not only a practical skill to have, but it can be utilized back at home in our normal day to day occupations,” said Sgt. 1st Class David Zika, a native of Norwalk, Ohio, assigned to 1192nd Eng. Co. ▲

Sharpen Your Edge

What you do right now changes everything.



Anbar Police stand u

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

RAMADI, Iraq – Iraq's newest weapon against the ever-evolving improvised explosive device may be the guest never invited indoors: the dog.

With more than 220 million olfactory receptors, dogs, as compared to humans who have 5 million, have a highly-developed olfactory lobe and perennially wet nose to capture and dissolve scents; nature's intelligently-wired explosives detector.

It is said here among Iraqis that if a dog touches a serving dish, the dish must be scrubbed with sand and set in the sun for 40 days. Pet a dog after washing for prayer, and you must wash again and scrub your whole body too.

But that doesn't make Iraqis "cat people".

"Growing up, I had many pet dogs," said Hussein Saadoun Kareem, a dog handler with the Iraqi Police Anbar province K-9 unit in Ramadi.

"Dogs considered 'inside dogs' are kept in the yard or garden or upstairs on a third floor with no furniture. They don't really see the inside of the house," Hussein explained. "When we

are done playing with the dog, we will take him back outside and chain him."

For Hussein and fellow dog handlers at the Ramadi Training Center, playtime with their canines is reserved for a very special occasion – tossing a dog his toy is the reward for finding explosives.

One of Iraq's newest K-9 units, the five-man Anbar unit was stood up in March 2010 after the handlers completed a 45-day course at the Baghdad Police College.

April 3 they located their first weapons cache; a pod of artillery rounds and grenades buried in the foundation of a house in the Sophia area of east Ramadi.

"Elderly people, women and teenagers were watching us work," said Kareem of their first find. "They were very surprised to see us with dogs working. They had smiles on their faces."

Three days later, in a joint mission with the Iraqi Special Weapons and Tactics unit and an explosive ordnance disposal team, the K-9 unit was called to the Ameryiat Alfallujah area where they were briefed by Fallujah Police Chief, Col. Mahmoud.

Two days prior, a 15-year-old boy

had walked up to an Iraqi Army checkpoint and handed over a suicide belt to the Soldiers. He told them he could lead them to the two women who gave him the belt and instructions on how and what to blow up.

Kennel master Maj. Mohammad Ali Hamadi explained what happened next:

"The dog picked the woman out of a 10-woman line-up many times. Then I had her move to another place in case the smell was in the ground and she was innocent, but the dog kept indicating that the scent was coming from her – not only one dog, but three."

Hussein was one of the handlers on the case. "They brought another older and younger woman in. He sniffed around them but came back to the first woman. She changed clothes, but the same thing happened," he said. "I [feel] like the wealthiest man on earth because of what we have achieved and the innocent lives we saved."

The dogs of the Anbar K-9 unit are typical of those used in the Iraqi K-9 program. Hussein's dog, Arko, is a boisterous, energetic German Shepherd whose personality, his handler says, is "heroic." Even on his days off,

Hussein visits his dog at the kennel.

Marco, the other, much larger shepherd, is handled by Mahmoud Shaker Slayman. Prior to this job, Slayman's only experience with dogs was hunting with hounds for deer and rabbits.

One of the newest handlers, Mahmoud Ismail Husain, is a bona fide dog person.

"I have always loved dogs," said the lanky 23-year-old from Ramadi. His dog, Bally, a Belgian Malinois, mirrors the policeman's build – long-limbed, but not nearly as barrel-chested as the shepherds.

"When I laid eyes on him, I knew he was going to be my dog just from his stance. He was very athletic and hyper," Husain added with an affable smirk, "Bally is a troublemaker. When he gets hold of his toy, he doesn't let go. He makes me very tired."


The canine program is run by the Ministry of the Interior. The goal is to have 1,000 explosive detection dogs and handlers deployed across Iraq within five years. Anbar is scheduled to receive an additional 21 dogs and handlers.

"We need more soon," said kennel master Hamadi. "We are getting so many requests now it is hard to find time for training."

When they do train, it's often with a United States Army Military Police K-9 unit attached to 1st Advise and Assist Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division, at Camp Ramadi.

"Their veterinarian comes and checks the dogs. He provides medication for the dogs and some supplies for our assistant veterinarian," said Hamadi. "Of course we will be able to continue when the Americans leave, though we will miss them. The support and the training they gave us will always stay with us," he said.

Though U.S. officials have long encouraged Iraqis to develop a K-9 corps to combat violent extremist's use of IEDs, response has been slow.

"The situation was not very suitable," surmised Husain. "The police were not ready. They did not have the desire to have working dogs. The people are still very surprised to see working dogs," he said. "But I encourage them not to fear the dog. 'He is a working dog, and he is here to protect our country,' I tell them. 'He doesn't bite – he finds explosives.'" 



RAMADI, Iraq – A dog handler with the Iraqi Police Anbar K-9 unit in Ramadi runs his dog, Sassy, a chocolate Labrador retriever, through an obstacle course during training April 16. The obstacle course is designed to keep the explosives detection dogs healthy and agile.



Marco
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A dog
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o, a bomb-sniffing German Shepherd leads his handler, Mahmoud Shaker Slayman, to a sam-
explosive during training. Anbar is expected to get an additional 21 dogs in the near future.



g handler praises his dog, Sassy, a chocolate Labrador retriever, after she successfully
d an explosive sample during training. While dogs are considered unclean in Iraqi cul-
the K-9 unit is increasingly popular with the Iraqi Police and Army for their dogs' ability
d explosives and people who have handled them.



Mahmoud Ismail Husain, a dog handler with the Iraqi Police Anbar K-9 unit in
Ramadi, gets help from Sgt. Nicholas Arnold, a military police dog handler at-
tached to 1st Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 1st Advise and Assist Brigade,
82nd Airborne Division, while training his explosives-finding Belgian Malinois
April 16. Explosives detection dogs are rewarded with toys they can play with.
In this photo, the dog will not give his toy back.



Hussein Saadoun Kareem, a dog handler with the Iraqi Police Anbar K-9
unit, works with his dog, Arko, to find an explosive sample during training.
With the police since 1991, Hussein attended a 45-day training course at
Baghdad Police College to become an IP dog handler.

'Manchu' Soldiers answer the call

Story & photos by Spc. Luisito Brooks

4th SBCT, 2nd Inf. Div., PAO, USD-C

ZAIDON, Iraq – When Maj. Bassim, commander of 4th Battalion, 24th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division, needed assistance for a mission, help was just a phone call away.

Soldiers with Company C, 4th Battalion, 9th Infantry Regiment, 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, answered the Iraqi commander's request to accompany his unit on a search for a suspected weapons cache April 12.

"We have his number, and he has ours," said Capt. Guy Girouard, commander of Co. C. "We make sure that we are always available if they need us."

Tips from locals had provided Bassim with information about the possible location of the cache, but instead of conducting this mission on his own, he saw this as an opportunity to call his American counterparts and combine their efforts.

"It's key that we work together on these important missions," said Bassim. "Being partners with the [United States] Soldiers helps our mission in every way."

Based on the history between the IA and the "Manchu" Soldiers, working together usually equals success - but not always.

"We have worked with the 4th Battalion on numerous occasions in the past and found many weapon caches, but sometimes we don't," said 1st Sgt Julio Armas, the senior enlisted sergeant of Co. C. "When we did find something, it was usually because the IA had good information on their whereabouts."

Functioning as one team, the U.S. and Iraqi Soldiers used mine detectors to sweep over a large patch of dry dirt where the weapons were suspected of being buried.

Whenever the detectors indicated a potential find, the group would mark the ground and the Soldiers with shovels would start to dig.

"Having the right tool for the job really helped," said Sgt. Dustin Carden, a team leader, explaining that the mine detectors made the search process more efficient.

After several hours of dusty and dirty work, the teamwork between the two units did not turn up any weapons, however, Carden said their efforts were not in vain.

"After looking through the whole area we didn't find anything. But, having this strong partnership between the IA is essential in developing ... confidence, no matter the mission." ▲



During a joint cache search, Sgt. Dustin Carden, a team leader with Company C, 4th Battalion, 9th Infantry Regiment, 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, uses a hand-held mine detector to search for a suspected cache site with Soldiers of 4th Bn., 24th Bde., 6th Iraqi Army Div., April 12.



Soldiers with Company C and Soldiers of 6th IA Div. dig up an area while looking for a suspected weapons cache. The search did not uncover any weapons.



Pvt. Muhamid, with 6th Iraqi Army Division, takes a break from digging while searching for a weapons cache with Soldiers from Company C, 4th Bn., 9th Inf. Regiment., 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Inf.

Wasp III assists with surveillance

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

TAJI, Iraq – In today's warfare, being able to put a set of eyes on the enemy first, without the enemy knowing, greatly increases the success rate of the mission.

Soldiers with the 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division were the first U.S. Army Soldiers in Iraq to receive training on the Wasp III, an unmanned micro-aerial surveillance system, and take it for a test flight April 24 around Camp Taji.

"This system is effective, lightweight and very adaptable," said Staff Sgt. Brian Phillips, a Raven unmanned aerial surveillance master trainer with Company C, 1st Battalion, 38th Inf. Regiment, 4th SBCT, 2nd Inf. Div. "A single Soldier, at the company or platoon level can throw the whole system on their back and carry it into the field."

Phillips also said a unit commander has the ability to launch the Wasp III from just about anywhere.

The whole system, including two planes weighing 16 ounces each, costs \$70,000, but for these Soldiers having that view point on the battlefield is priceless.

"[The Wasp III] exploits blind spots that a unit may have on the ground," said Phillips, a Springdale, Ark., native. "When you are out there, that can mean life or death."

During the training, Soldiers spent many hours in front of a projection screen as the instructor went through slides that explained, in great detail and length, how to operate, maintain and fly the Wasp III aerial system.

This micro-flier has multiple cameras attached that can send live video, day or night, to the controller on the ground several miles away. The amount of time these aerial surveillance systems can stay in the air depends on the pilots and weather condition.

Many of the Soldiers who attended the class said the best part of the training was seeing the Wasp III in the air because of its look and smooth flight.

"I think this is a great tool and the training was good, too," said Spc. Andrew Peters, a scout with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Bn., 38th Inf. Regt., 4th SBCT, 2nd Inf. Div.

"The Wasp is really nice and flies really quiet, which [gives] us large advantage over the enemy and keeps our guys safe," said Peters. ▲

'Raider' Soldiers teach Iraqi Police about crime scene preservation



Iraqi policemen at a police station in Tarmiyah practice searching Soldiers assigned to C Troop, 2nd Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment, 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division during a crime scene preservation class April 21.

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

TARMIYAH, Iraq – Finding evidence at a crime scene is like finding pieces of a puzzle. Ensuring that the pieces remain undisturbed is key to solving crimes.

To help in the collecting of valuable evidence, Soldiers from 2nd Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment, 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division gave Iraqi policemen classes on crime scene preservation and reacting to an improvised explosive devices at the Tarmiyah police station April 21.

"The purpose of this training was to identify how the [Iraqi police] should take control of a crime scene," said Spc. Christopher Nollenberg, a cavalry scout with C Troop. "If they can quickly cordon the area and preserve evidence, the better they can begin investigating these crimes."

The training, beginning with a classroom portion and slide presentation, walked the policemen step-by-step through the process of reacting to an attack and how to properly secure a scene to prevent evidence tampering.

"The class was very good and I am glad the [United States] Soldiers were able to come here," said Muhamid, a newly recruited policeman at the station. "In the class, they answered all of our questions about what needed to be

done."

Moving from the classroom to the outside training area, the students prepared to execute what they just learned.

"I had a trigger man, a spotter, two innocent bystanders and someone who was injured by the blast already staged for the practical exercise," said Nollenberg. "I yelled 'BOOM!' and they had to react accordingly."

While moving through the training area, the policemen began taking control of the chaotic scene. Beyond just reacting to the attack, they had to pay attention to the scene around them to look for clues related to the crime.

"They were communicating very well," said Sgt. Gordon Heintzman, a team leader with C Troop.

"They were able to find and arrest the triggerman, spotter and then perform first aid to the injured local."

He said the officers moved through the scene with a purpose, securing the site of the attack.

In the confusion after the attack, Heintzman, a Yakima, Wash., native, added that a few mistakes were still made but overall the police officers seemed to get a good grasp on the training.

"Now that they know what right looks like, they can begin training other [policemen]," Heintzman said. "The more knowledge we share with them the better, because we want them [to] remain self sufficient as we conduct our responsible drawdown of forces." ▲

Aviators from Fort Riley ready to patrol the Iraqi sky

Story by Sgt. 1st Class Jeff Troth
CAB, 1st Inf. Div., PAO, USD-C

TAJI, Iraq – Under an unusually blue Iraqi sky, Combat Aviation Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, took control of the skies of central and western Iraq during a transfer of authority ceremony between CAB and 1st Air Cav-

alry Bde., 1st Cav. Div. April 15.

The ceremony marked an end to the 1ACB's year-long tour in Iraq. A year marked with many varied missions, but each of them had one thing in common.

"A simple equation we tried to apply to all our operations – including our operations with our Iraqi Air Force brothers – mutual trust plus personal relation-

ships equals quality [air ground integration]," said Col. Douglas Gabram, 1ACB commander, before heading back to Fort Hood, Texas.

The CAB, which recently arrived in Iraq from Fort Riley, Kan., will use this equation during their time here. This is CAB's second tour to Iraq, having completed a 15-month deployment in December 2008. Although deployment is nothing new to the CAB, the operation they will now be supporting is.

"We are humble Soldiers from Kansas, with a mighty task ahead of us," said Col. Frank Muth, the CAB commander. "We are trained and ready to accomplish whatever is required of us in support of operations Iraqi Freedom and New Dawn."

The CAB will be on hand to usher in a new operation in Iraq Sept. 1.

Although Operation New Dawn will change the role of United States ground forces to assistance and support, the CAB mission will remain the same – supporting ground forces.

The CAB, also known as the Demon brigade, is a full spectrum aviation unit whose mission is to support the ongoing efforts of the Government of Iraq to improve internal security, economic growth and infrastructure development. They do this by providing air coverage to safeguard ground troops and also the Iraqi people.

"As a unit we will fulfill our mission by maintaining the highest of standards and discipline," said Muth.

"As a family we will take care of each other with compassion, engaged leadership and Demon resilience," added Muth.

"I truly can't think of a more capable combat leader and team to assume this changing mission than Frank Muth and the Demon brigade," said Gabram. "They will absolutely excel."

Concluding the ceremony, Muth had a bit of advice for his troops.

"The training and speeches are over," said Muth to his Soldiers. "Take charge, lead and execute your assigned mission." ▲



Photo by Spc. Roland Hale, CAB, 1st Inf. Div. PAO, USD-C

Col. Frank Muth, the commander of Combat Aviation Brigade, 1st Infantry Division (right), and Command Sgt. Maj. James Thomson uncash the Demon brigade colors during a transfer of authority ceremony April 15.

CAB network technician excels, re-enlists in Iraq

Story & photo by Sgt. 1st Class Jeffery Gaines
CAB, 1st Inf. Div., PAO, USD-C

TAJI, Iraq – When observing the capabilities of the 2nd General Support Aviation Battalion, 1st Aviation Regiment, Combat Aviation Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, it is easy to focus solely on the different type of aircraft the unit flies. What is not so obvious is the behind the scenes, inner workings of the battalion staff sections. These sections are responsible for providing the battalion pilots with what they need to be successful.

Spc. Kimberly Vanhouten, a native of Tonopah, Nev., is one of the many Soldiers who help keep these staff sections running smoothly. Vanhouten works to provide the battalion with a network of computers, switches, routers and cabling. As a network technician, she is constantly being called upon to solve issues on the network system and is an integral part of planning the information technology infrastructure. Since being deployed to

Iraq in March, Vanhouten has already gained the attention of her unit's senior leaders.

"Spc. Vanhouten is a positive influence in my unit," said Capt. Kirsten Bergman, Vanhouten's company commander. "She has a great can-do spirit and uses that energy to help her peers."

On April 14, Vanhouten re-enlisted; an act she attributes to her family history.

"I come from a family of veterans, so my decision to enlist in the Army was an easy one. The opportunity for training, college education and travel were all factors taken into consideration," said Vanhouten. "I knew I wanted to re-enlist today to continue doing what I have grown to love."

As part of her re-enlistment incentives, Vanhouten will receive a cash bonus and an assignment to Fort Huachuca, Ariz. Further on in her military career, Vanhouten plans to become a warrant officer in the intelligence field. However, while Vanhouten looks forward to the future, her mission with 2nd General Support Aviation Bat-



Spc. Kimberly Vanhouten, a network technician with the 2nd General Support Aviation Battalion, 1st Aviation Regiment, Combat Aviation Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, holds her certificate of re-enlistment with Chief Warrant Officer 2 Jason Horton, April 14.

talion is not yet complete – her unit is projected to be deployed at Camp Taji throughout the next year.

"I'm looking forward to moving on to Fort Huachuca, although I'm thoroughly enjoying my stay with the 'Fighting Eagles' family. This has been a truly rewarding assignment, and I am proud to have been a part of this orga-

nization," said Vanhouten.

Vanhouten and hundreds of other support Soldiers will keep General Support Aviation Battalion, and the rest of the Combat Aviation Brigade battalions, up and running during this deployment, enabling the brigade to conduct operations in support of United States and Iraqi ground forces. ▲

US forces host capabilities exercise



Military policemen from 3rd Brigade Support Battalion, 1st Advise and Assist Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division and Iraqi Security Forces demonstrate riot control techniques during a capabilities exercise conducted April 15 at Contingency Operating Station Falcon.

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

BAGHDAD – Soldiers from 5th Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment, and military policemen from 3rd Brigade Support Battalion, 1st Advise and Assist Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division conducted a capabilities exercise April 15 at

Contingency Operating Station Falcon for the Iraqi Security Forces that incorporated almost every mission enabler the brigade could offer to assist the ISF in its future missions.

“Today we had a capabilities exercise demonstration where we brought together all the partners from 2nd [Federal Police],” said Maj. Michael Sullivan, operations

officer for 5th Sqdn. “We wanted to show [leadership] how our partnership has evolved since we took over the mission of partnering with 2nd FP.”

The Soldiers and policemen from the 2nd FP demonstrated their ability to assault an objective, perform first aid, evacuate casualties by either air or ground and perform riot control tech-

niques.

“We’ve been working on this since we started partnering with 2nd Federal Police,” said Sullivan. “It has really been a great learning experience for both forces.”

The exercise also included dog teams and robots that were employed as part of the brigade’s explosive ordnance disposal team, static displays and a hands-on non-lethal class that covered rubber bullets and lasers.

“The greatest benefits for showcasing these capabilities are so Iraqi Federal Police officers have a better understanding for the skills and technology we can assist them with,” said Capt. Jonathan Heist, 5th Sqdn., assistant operations officer.

The capabilities exercise was aptly named as Iraqi Federal Police, working jointly with United States Soldiers, were able to impressively demonstrate their newly learned skills. Soldiers who have returned to Iraq for another tour say they are impressed with how the two forces are now working together.

“To come here six years after my first trip to Iraq – I’m just amazed at how far we’ve come in partnering and combining operations,” said Sullivan. ▲



Spc. Chad Cardenas, assigned to B Troop, 5th Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Advise and Assist Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, observes as Iraqi Security Forces evacuate a simulated casualty to safety during a demonstration of a partnered assault.

Marching on: medics on the move

Story & photo by Pvt. Emily Knitter
1st AAB, 3rd Inf. Div., PAO, USD-C

BAGHDAD — The walls are lined with boxes of packed supplies. The wooden floor in front of the reception desk is almost bare except for a solitary green stretcher and a few plastic chairs, sitting in a row. The building looks nearly deserted.

A Soldier in medical scrubs walks around the corner, talking to a patient whose arm is cradled in a blue sling. More medics walk into the room, then disappear deeper into the building; some talking to patients, some packing supplies. Yet even as the Soldiers start moving faster, busy with tasks at hand, everyone looks happy, stopping to smile and chat with each other and the patients as they pass by.

The medics of Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 1st Battalion, 41st Field Artillery Regiment at Camp Stryker, have spent the last few months preparing for a move to a different base.

As the move date nears, their plans are slowly transforming from ideas scribbled in notebooks to packed boxes and empty rooms, all while maintaining the top level of medical care possible for their Soldiers.

“We are just trying to maintain and do our jobs, making sure we are taking care of our Soldiers as well as preparing for this move,” said Pvt. Jared Staie, a combat medic.

The medics agree the move a bit of a hassle, but previous experience and constant planning has helped the process.

“From this deployment alone we have moved from Georgia to the building we have currently, and then we [just moved] to a different building. And those types of experiences are helping this move go smoother,” said Spc. Bjorn Carlson, also a combat medic and native of Minneapolis.

“The move is a difficult task, but everything else that would have gone on if we weren’t moving is still continuing,” said Spc. Michael Barbour, a combat medic and native of Road River, Ore. “I’ve gone through so many notebooks, making sure we don’t forget anything.”

Although the team spends much time making sure the plans of the move are laid out, they cannot start packing until right before it is time to leave; they need all the supplies available for day-to-day operations.

The most challenging part of the transition, says Spc. Derek Miller, a combat medic, and native of Rochester, N.Y., is the upgrade they will be going through simultaneously



Capt. Paul Jachimek, a physician assistant for Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 1st Battalion, 41st Field Artillery, and Tampa, Fla., native, examines a patient's finger during a normal work day for the aid team. The team is preparing to move to a different base in the upcoming months. Maintaining daily tasks and ensuring Soldiers receive top medical care while balancing the extra tasks involved with the move has been a challenge for the medics.

from a Level I aid station to a Level I plus.

As they prepare for the upgrade, the team has to make sure they also have enough medics to man the aid station, operate sick call, and be available to go out on missions if a unit requests them. This makes for some very long days for the team.

“We usually work 12- to 15-hour days,” said Miller, “So that gets a little tiring. But we make sure to get out of the office and just go grab coffee or something to relax for a

minute if we need to.”

The medics still have time to find rewards within their job. Barbour says the welfare of the Soldiers they take care of is the greatest accomplishment for the team, and the other Soldiers agree. Miller summed up their greatest reward right now:

“Making sure everyone is healthy and okay to be here. Everyone knows what we’re doing – everyone’s on top of their area – and that’s pretty cool,” he said. ▲

NCO corps welcomes 32 Brigade Support Battalion Soldiers

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

BAGHDAD — There are key moments in every Soldier’s career, but what could be one of the most memorable is when a Soldier is inducted into the Noncommissioned Officer Corps. For 32 Soldiers assigned to 3rd Brigade Support Battalion, 1st Advise and Assist Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, that day was April 26 during a ceremony conducted in the Fallen Heroes room at Contingency Operating Station Falcon.

“Authority is defined as the right to direct Soldiers to do certain things,” said Command Sgt. Maj. Edd Watson, the senior enlisted Soldier assigned to 1st AAB, and the key-note speaker at the induction ceremony.

“You have authority,” he said. “All too often, we look the other way when we see an act of indiscipline. No matter where the Soldiers are from, or what uniform they wear, they are [United States] Army Soldiers, and you have the authority to correct. NCOs detect, correct and make small or minor adjustments daily.”

The ceremony was also an opportunity for NCOs and junior-enlisted alike to focus on the changes the Army has gone through.

“I’ve seen the Army take a turn for a long time—a turn for the better, if I may,” said Watson. “Some people now say, ‘where is the Army going?’ I can tell you where it’s been. The bulk of the Soldiers left Vietnam in 1975, and we know what Vietnam was like—my father was there. Six

years after Vietnam we had an undisciplined NCO corps, and an undisciplined Army. I came into the military in 1981, and when I arrived at my first duty station, it was not a pleasant arrival. As you look back on Desert Storm, Desert Shield, Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom, I want you to think about how we’ve been at war for seven-plus years. We live in a better Army now. We live in an Army where Soldiers have college degrees, where our leaders have college degrees. An Army where NCOs know about the mission and have genuine concern for their Soldiers, and we are getting better every day.”

Watson also reminded the new NCOs what their responsibilities will be:

“A lot of people ask me, ‘How do

you counsel an NCO?’ It’s quite simple,” said Watson, “The NCO Creed. If they are following the NCO Creed, then they are doing their job.”

“As an NCO the two basic responsibilities you have are accomplishing the mission, and the welfare of your Soldiers. Officers command organizations, NCOs run organizations,” continued Watson.

NCO-induction ceremonies are part of a time-honored tradition in the Army, which allow newly inducted NCOs to reflect on their career history and to use those lessons in the future. It also gives senior NCOs an opportunity to impart their wisdom on the new inductees.

Watson ended his speech with a question: “If you were accused of being a Soldier or an NCO, would there be enough evidence to convict you?” ▲

Advise, assist brigade brings together ISF, Arab media

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

RAMADI, Iraq – Journalists and commanding generals of the Iraqi Army and police in Anbar Province attending a media credentialing event at Camp Ramadi April 27 agreed to work together to fight terrorism in the province.

Staff Lt. Gen. Abd Al-Aziz Muhammad Jasim Ahmad Al-Mufriji, commanding general of the Anbar Operations Center and the IA in Anbar Province, thanked more than a dozen journalists for attending and pledged to help the media get their story.

“If you would like to visit our military units or have anything we can help you with, please let us know about it,” said Aziz. “I want us to work together to report the truth.”

Aziz told the media he intended to establish a new media center in the near future to report security-related news all the time.

“We made a deal to open the doors between the [Iraqi Security Forces] and the media of Anbar to start real and serious work for the benefit of our province,” said Basem al Anbari, a broadcast journalist of 15 years who reports for Baghdadia TV.

Col. Mark Stammer, commander of 1st Advise and Assist Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division hosted the event, and told attendees that it was time for a new beginning.



Staff Lt. Gen. Abd Al-Aziz Muhammad Jasim Ahmad Al-Mufriji, commanding general of the Anbar Operations Command in Ramadi, greets a local Iraqi journalist at a media-credentialing event hosted by 1st Advise and Assist Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division April 26. Prior to the event, journalists in Anbar province had little contact with Iraqi Security Force leaders.

“As important as the work my Paratroopers and the Soldiers who work under the Anbar Operations Command and police who work for Gen. Baha is ... a lot of that goes for naught if we don’t tell an accurate and timely story through various media outlets.”

Reporting on the work of the ISF in the communities also bolsters the confidence of the people, said Stammer.

Brig. Gen. Kenneth Tovo, a deputy commanding general-west with United States Division – Center who is stationed at Camp Ramadi, echoed Stammer’s opening remarks by telling the journal-

ists their role was as important as the military’s.

“Keep in mind that the [ISF] have to fight with the truth, with warrants and with rules. The enemy is bound by none of these,” said Tovo.

Basem and his peers were pleased with the credentialing process and with meeting Anbar’s top security force commanders, he said.

“Preferably the meeting would have happened years ago,” he said, though he allowed that only recently could media visit military officials and not fear retribution from terrorists.

“I have met these Iraqi military leaders a few times before,” said Basem. “Because of the improved stability and security, we have been able to come here today. It’s like a miracle for me to come and visit the Americans inside their base and meet their leaders.”

During the often lively banter, a sympathetic chord was struck when Thamer Mohsen of Iraqiya TV asked provincial Director of Police, staff Maj. Gen. Baha Husayn Abd Hassan, why Iraqi law doesn’t punish people for joining al-Qaeda in Iraq.

“Why do they wait until they find evidence against them for a trial while they can try them just for joining AQI?” Thamer asked.

“I don’t know,” replied the

general. “It’s all about the Iraqi parliament. They make the law and we obey it,” he said.

Basem told Baha that the media is a very strong weapon that the ISF can use against terrorists.

“We publish news of the explosions and other bad things, so why you don’t send us the good news for us to report against the terrorists?” Basem asked Baha.

Baha promised to call the media for good news and successful missions in the future.

“You can see that things are changing and the situation is much better than before. We are even using dogs to detect explosives,” said Baha.

Though U.S. forces have encouraged Iraqis to use explosive-detection dogs for years, ISF have drug their feet until recently; dogs are considered unclean in Iraqi culture.

Media credentialing, the event’s main focus, was provided by the Combined Press Information Center, a Baghdad-based U.S. military organization that vetted journalists so they are able to embed with military units.

A CPIC badge does not grant access to U.S. military installations or troops however; it only proves that a person is a bona-fide journalist.

The credentialing process takes about a week.▲



Brig. Gen. Kenneth Tovo, deputy commanding general-west with United States Division – Center, talks to Iraqi journalists at a media-credentialing event. Journalists asked U.S. and Iraqi commanders to share with them as much data as possible so they would be able to accurately report the news.

Paratrooper from Sierra Leone becomes US citizen

Story & photo by 1st Sgt. James Gillem
1st AAB, 82nd Abn. Div., PAO, USD-C

AL ASAD, Iraq – A warm breeze gently blows from the Atlantic Ocean, whispering as it moves through the palm trees in the backyard of the Mammah household. Palm trees strain under the weight of coconuts, and neighbors stop by to purchase those coconuts for the milk.

The place is Freetown, the capital of Sierra Leone in Western Africa, and the former home of Spc. Ojumiri Mammah, now a food service specialist assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 307th Brigade Support Battalion, 1st Advise and Assist Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division.

On Feb. 15 Mammah was sworn in as a citizen of the United States at the Al-Faw Palace at Camp Victory, while deployed as a paratrooper with the 82nd Airborne Division.

“The majority of people born in the United States have no idea how many opportunities are out there to make something of oneself,” Mammah said as a newly-minted citizen.

His father constantly pushed him to find his own way, and his mother always instilled in him to go out and get what he wanted. In spite of Sierra Leone’s sometimes idyllic tropical atmosphere, Mammah knew that creating a fulfilling life would be much easier in the U.S.

Sierra Leone is bordered by Guinea in the north, Liberia in the southeast and the Atlantic Ocean in the southwest. The country’s



Spc. Ojumiri Mammah, a food service specialist assigned to 307th Brigade Support Battalion, 1st Advise and Assist Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division, shakes hands with Lt. Gen. Charles Jacoby, the deputy commander of United States Forces – Iraq. Jacoby administered the oath of citizenship to Mammah, during a ceremony conducted at Al-Faw Palace at Camp Victory Feb. 15. Mammah is originally from Sierra Leone, Africa.

main source of income comes from minerals found all over the country, the primary mineral being diamonds.

Life was not always as calm as

young Ojumiri would have liked it to be. In May 1997, when he was 12, a military coup attempted to overthrow the government. Members of the Armed Forces Revolu-

tionary Council would come to a home, knock on the door, take a person outside, ask him what hand he voted with and cut it off. During the coup, Mammah’s father hid him underground for two days to avoid being taken by the AFRC. Mammah’s grandfather walked over 50 miles to Freetown, pushing his grandmother in a wheelbarrow, to escape the AFRC soldiers. The coup was eventually overthrown by a Nigerian-led force in 1998, and the democratically led government was reinstated.

Mammah immigrated to the U.S. in 2005 to attend college at the University of Virginia, majoring in music. He worked his way through college by teaching music at a high school and playing the organ for a local church.

Mammah became interested in joining the Army through his roommate, who was in the Army Reserve.

Just 45 days after graduating from college, Mammah attended Basic Combat Training at Fort Jackson, S.C. He entered the service to pay off extensive college loans, to have a steady income, and for the challenge, he said.

After basic training, Mammah attended Advanced Individual Training at Ft. Lee, Va., to train as a food service specialist. Upon graduation, Mammah was assigned to 307th at Fort Bragg, N.C. In August 2009, he deployed to Iraq.

Mammah plans to serve 20 years in the military, to attend both Airborne training and Officer Candidate School, and hopes to eventually serve in the elite U.S. Army Band, “Pershing’s Own.”

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Armed Forces Day
May 15, 2010



Flag made by kindergarten class returns after 'deployment' to Iraq

Story by Doug Nicodorus

Public Affairs Office, Joint Force Headquarters-Ohio

DUBLIN, Ohio — As a part of her lessons on American History, Wendy Hamby wanted to invite a military person to speak to the class on Veterans Day. Col. Faber volunteered to visit the school to talk about the military.

Together the morning and afternoon kindergarten classes, with the Colonel's assistance constructed a large American flag on a piece of poster board using pieces of tissue paper.

The flag made its way to the 16th Engineering Brigade of the Ohio National Guard deployed at Camp Liberty, where it was flown and displayed.

On April 14, six months after it was "deployed", the flag returned to Eli Pinney Elementary School. In a presentation made by members of the 16th Eng. Bde., the flag was presented to the teacher, class and school principal.

The flag was returned in a picture frame and accompanied by a framed plaque. The plaque contains photographs of the flag with the children at the school, the flag with Soldiers at the deployed location, a list of the names of the children who made the flag and a letter of appreciation from the deployed commander thanking the students and school for their patriotic support. The Soldiers of the unit also sent a slide show which highlights the work they are doing in Iraq.

Outstanding leadership recognized

Story by Staff

Public Affairs Office, Fort Drum

WASHINGTON — Secretary of the Army, the Honorable John McHugh, personally awarded Fort Drum Deputy to the Garrison Commander, Judith Gentner, with the Decoration for Exceptional Civilian Service in a Pentagon ceremony.

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.

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 Gentner's leadership a total saving of \$5.6 million dollars for the garrison through projects aimed at cost savings and efficiencies.

"Mrs. Gentner's exceptional accomplishments have distinguished her as a paramount public servant leadership who has improved the quality of life for the entire Fort Drum and North Country communities," the citation reads.

Garrison awarded for fire prevention

Story by Jennifer Scales

Fort Stewart, Public Affairs Office

FORT STEWART, Ga. — The Fort Stewart-Hunter Army Airfield Fire and Emergency Services are the recipients of the Installation Management Command-Southeast Army/DoD Fire Prevention Program for calendar year 2009. This is the first time the directorate has won this award, but it will definitely not be the last, notes Chief Donald Hollis, the Stewart-Hunter Fire Chief. Hollis, along with Assistant Chief Paul Crowell and fire protection inspector Mike Minnie, are all confident in the complete services they provide, along with the knowledgeable staff of the Stewart-Hunter fire services.

"Prevention starts first," said Chief Hollis, adding that continuous training is offered through fire services with the aid of their mobile trailers.

Minnie explained that their training aids are kid friendly. "Children can go into either one of the trailers, either here or at Hunter, and learn how fires can be prevented in their homes, such as in the kitchen or bedroom," he said. Simulated smoke can be activated, and they can learn how to safely get out of their home." Crowell. "We have been able to support the communities of Richmond Hill, Glennville, and Port Wentworth, to name a few," said Crowell.

Motorcycles provide escort for returning troops

Story by Staff Sgt. Lynne Lantin

19th Public Affairs Detachment

JOINT BASE LEWIS-MCCHORD, Wash. — A motorcade of flag-adorned motorcycles ridden by veterans, active-duty military and other supporters honored returning Soldiers of the 24th Quartermaster Company April 6 with a special escort to their reunion with families.

Members of the Patriot Guard Riders, a nonprofit, all-volunteer organization, led the troop-filled buses from McChord Field to JBLM Lewis North's Wilson Sports and Fitness Center. Other Patriot Guard Riders members stood in homage, creating a flag-lined path to the gym's entrance for the returning Soldiers.

The Patriot Guard Riders, organized four and a half years ago, lends support and assistance to Soldiers and their families in times of need. It got its start after a group of American Legion riders in Kansas observed a group protesting at the funerals of Soldiers killed in action.

"The protesters would start making noise, doing whatever they could do to disrupt the services," Cullen Ritchie, Washington State Captain said. "The riders formed a line and would fire up their bikes or whatever they needed to do to drown (the protests) out. The whole goal was to shield those families."

Volcanic effect on delivery of mail

Story by Karl Weisel

Public Affairs Office, U.S. Army Garrison Wiesbaden

HEIDELBERG, Germany — The closure of airports throughout Central Europe due to volcanic ash has delayed incoming and outgoing mail that is transported by air for United States Forces patrons in Germany, the Benelux, Italy and Kosovo.

Until flight restrictions are lifted, no mail will be flown into or out of any of these countries, according to Installation Management Command-Europe postal officials. The standard parcel post mail transported by ship is not affected.

Mail that originated in the U.S. or elsewhere outside of Central Europe will not be delivered to Frankfurt or other European airports. As no mail is being received, there will be very little mail delivered. Local mail, sent using the Military Postal Service, will continue to move and be delivered throughout Europe.

Once flights resume, every effort will be made to ensure that mail is delivered as quickly as possible. In the meantime, patrons should watch for further announcements concerning flight restrictions or check with their local postal service center for more information.

Fort Bragg recognized for excellence

Story by staff

AFPS

WASHINGTON — Defense Secretary Robert Gates announced the winners Friday of the 2010 Commander in Chief's Annual Award for Installation Excellence.

The Army's Fort Bragg; Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms, Calif.; Naval Base San Diego; Elmendorf Air Force Base, Alaska; and Defense Distribution Depot Susquehanna, Pa., will receive the award at a May 5 Pentagon ceremony, Defense officials said.

The award, started by President Ronald Reagan, recognizes outstanding and innovative efforts of the people who operate and maintain the installations.

Fort Bragg is receiving the award for keeping the Army's airborne and special operations forces, more than 10 percent of the service, mission ready, while also absorbing the first of nearly 10,000 additional Soldiers who will be assigned to the base by 2013, officials said.

The post's leaders "employed creative solutions to address this growth head-on, focusing on sustainability and long-term viability" in new construction and transportation projects, officials said.

ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

In 1977 Frank Horton and Norman Mineta introduced a congressional resolution that called for the first ten days of May to be proclaimed as Asian Pacific Heritage Week. In 1990 the holiday was expanded when President George H. W. Bush designated May as the Asian Pacific American Heritage Month. May was chosen to commemorate the immigration of the first Japanese immigrants to the U.S. in May 1843 as well as to mark the anniversary of the completion of the transcontinental railroad on May 10, 1869. The majority of the workers who laid the tracks were Chinese immigrants.



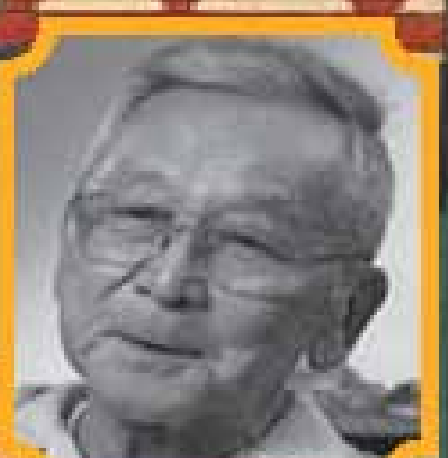
For over a year after Pearl Harbor, Japanese Americans were not allowed to enlist in the military. But Technician 4 Yeichi Kelly Kuwayama had been drafted long before December 7, 1941, so he was in a kind of limbo: part of the armed forces but not allowed to fight. Once President Theodore Roosevelt lifted the ban, the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, composed of Japanese Americans was formed, and Kuwayama became a battlefield medic with them. He witnessed brutal battles in Italy and France, including the famed rescue of the so-called Lost Battalion.

Nicknamed Road Runner for her unflagging energy and enthusiasm, Capt. Evelyn Hirako Tanaka served in Vietnam in spite of a scarring childhood. At the age of six, she saw her family evicted from their California home after Pearl Harbor and relocated to an internment camp in Arizona. When they returned, they found their home burned to the ground. In 1966, as an emergency room nurse, she decided to enlist in the Army, telling skeptical friends, "I have a skill that is needed in Vietnam, and I'm going there to do my duty for my country."



Born in Korea, raised on Long Island by adoptive parents, Sgt. Matthew Braiotta joined the Army in 1999 right out of high school. His intention was to pick a specialty specific to the armed services, not a skill he could use later in life. As part of an armored cavalry unit, he served in Bosnia and then shipped out to Iraq in March 2003. Eight months later, he was badly wounded by a roadside explosive device. Now out of the Army, Braiotta credits his military experience with giving his life purpose and direction.

As a youth, Col. Jimmie Kanaya became fascinated with the military, and at 20 he jumped at the chance to enlist in 1941, months before the attack on Pearl Harbor. After helping his parents relocate from their Oregon home to an Idaho internment camp, Kanaya took his skills as a medic to the 442nd Regimental Central Postal Directory. He looked out for his men, even negotiating a halt to fighting to bring in supplies from the battlefield. Captured by German troops, Kanaya was held in a POW camp. At war's end, he was the only non-Caucasian in his Prisoner of War camp. Kanaya continued to serve his country during the Korean and Vietnam Wars.



Diverse Leadership in a Diverse Workforce

Victory Base Complex hosts fishing tournament

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



Combat medics Pfc. Josiah Portukalian (left), Sgt. 1st Class Arthur James (center) and Pfc. Nicholas Bunch (right), all assigned to Company B, Division Special Troops Battalion, 1st Armored Division, pose for a picture with New Orleans Saints cheerleaders during Operation Catch Fish III.



Pfc. Bryce Maygren, a native of Copperopolis, Calif., assigned to 67th Expeditionary Signal Battalion, casts a line during Operation Catch Fish III.

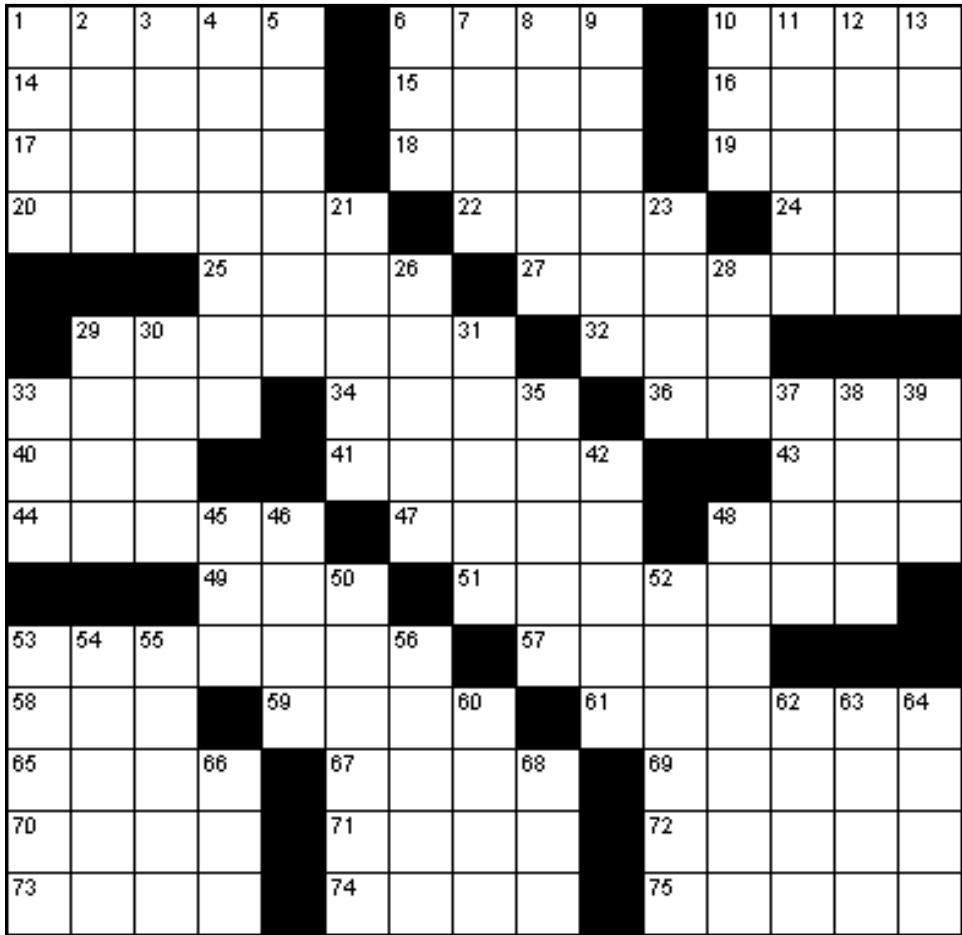


BAGHDAD – Capt. Matthew Vancleave (left), officer in charge of logistics assigned to the 447th Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron, and fishing show host and creator of Operation Catch Fish, Joe Mercurio, hold up a common carp caught by Vancleave. The tournament was held April 28 at Victory Base Complex.



Winner of the fishing tournament conducted during Operation Catch Fish III, Capt. Matthew Vancleave, poses with the celebrity sponsors. The Omaha, Neb., native took the top prize by catching an 8-pound, 11-ounce, common carp.

CROSSWORD



Across

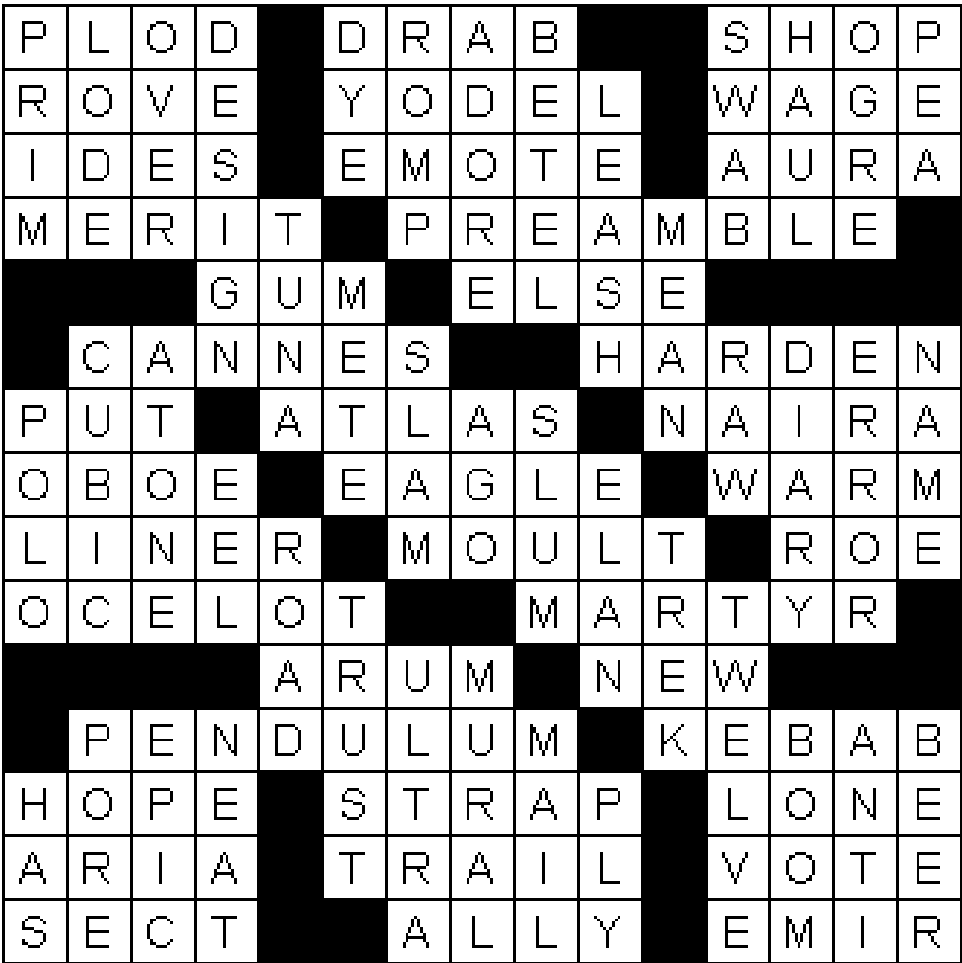
1. Strip of leather
6. Fibbed
10. Golf stroke
14. Not restrained
15. Having the means to do something
16. Succulent plant
17. Broadcasting live
18. Female opera star
19. Stringed instrument
20. Court game
22. Withered
24. Operated
25. Scintilla
27. London cathedral
29. Lead an orchestra
32. Belonging to him
33. Remuneration
34. Average
36. Coarse cotton fabric
40. Make a mistake

41. Ostler
43. Misfire
44. Type of tree
47. Music symbol
48. Sheep pen
49. Paddle
51. Unforseen difficulty
53. Tool
57. Vascular plant
58. Rotating disc
59. Possessed knowledge
61. Rationality
65. Gem
67. Profound
69. Rock
70. Small island
71. Always
72. Approximately in or at
73. Encounter
74. Make anew
75. Composition for eight instruments

Down

1. Coin aperture
2. Tincture
3. Type of horse
4. Vacuous
5. Full stop
6. Man or boy
7. Wading bird
8. Fairies
9. Severe shortage
10. Friend
11. Ayer's Rock
12. Sum
13. Between 12 and 20
21. Bitten by an insect
23. Long poem
26. Fruit of the oak
28. Type of tree
29. Aid
30. Fiend
31. Group of soldiers
33. Entanglement
35. Theme
37. Object of worship
38. Void
39. Peculiar
42. Measuring instrument
45. Swindle
46. Whorl
52. Wall painting
53. Curtain fabric
54. Temporary inactivity
55. Stroll
56. Pass a rope through
60. Remove unwanted plants
62. Variety
63. One time
64. Orderly
66. Up to the present time
68. Athlete who plays for pay

April 26 solution



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Civil War

American military history

Ohio Army National Guard

On May 1, 1864, Governor John Brough asked the services of over 35,000 Ohio Guardsmen. The Soldiers were federalized and organized into regiments for 100 of days service, earning them the nickname "100 day men."

They loaded into open freight cars in a snowstorm May 11, heading for Camp Chase, Ohio. Their reception there was dismal, as there was no preparation to receive them. It was nearly midnight before wood, tents or rations were issued to the men.

On May 14 they marched to Columbus, where they received rifles and headed for Fort Lyon, Va. The Soldiers were exhausted by the time they reached the fort May 21. The Soldiers remained at Fort Lyon busily engaged in strengthening the fortifications until June 5, when orders were received to White House Landing, Va.

They arrived at White House, June 9. Without rest the Soldiers, carrying six day's rations, left all their baggage and marched to guard a supply train 16 miles away. Arriving there they were ordered to report to Bermuda Hundred, Va. They reached this point by water June 13 and were sent to join the National line.

Until August the Soldiers defended their positions against rebel bombardment. At one point the Soldiers built a fort while being impeded by attack after attack. On Aug. 19, they received orders to head to Washington, as their term of service was about to expire. They reached Washington Aug. 21, and from there went by rail to Camp Chase, Ohio, and was released from service Sept. 2, 1864.

