

SCIMITAR

Vol. 2, No. 41

Baghdad, Iraq

Oct. 8, 2004

Big guns

Every Soldier keeps skills sharp

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Unique thanks

Marines show gratitude to folks back home

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Big splash

Divers clean up Tigris at Abu Nuwas Park

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Int'l support gaining in Iraq, says Rice

By Donna Miles
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON — The key to winning the war in Iraq is to support the Iraqis as they take on responsibility for their own future, and the international community is increasingly doing just that, National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice said Sunday.

Rice told George Stephanopoulos on ABC's "This Week" talk show that the international community is stepping up to the plate to be a part of "an opportunity to build a different kind of Iraq as a lynchpin for a much different Middle East."

A wide range of activities — some new and some ongoing — show this

international commitment, she said, particularly "the 30 countries on the ground with us putting their people in harm's way."

Other demonstrations of support include NATO's establishment of a training academy in Iraq for leadership training and Japan's upcoming donor's conference "to hold people accountable for what they have pledged to the Iraqis." Also promising, Rice said, is support for Iraq demonstrated by the Group of Eight industrialized nations, or G8, leaders at their summit last summer.

"This is an international effort, ... and there is a lot of international support," Rice said.

See RICE, Page 10

Deployed dentist drills Soldiers



Cpl. Andrea Russell (right), of Treatment Platoon, Forward Support Medical Company E, 215th Forward Service Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, helps 3rd BCT Dental Surgeon Capt. Joseph Choi with a procedure.

Spc. Jan Critchfield

Combat arms earplugs provide dual protection



Story and photo by
Marine Sgt. Clinton Firstbrook
Scimitar staff

BAGHDAD, Iraq — Living and working in areas exposed to hazardous noise, hearing loss continues to be one of the leading referral complaints of redeploying service members.

To combat this problem, the military has started fielding the Combat Arms Earplug, or CAE, that has the capabilities to provide protection in two types of environments.

"The Combat Arms Earplug has two sides," said audiologist Maj. Eric Fallon of the 31st Combat Support Hospital here. "The yellow side is designed for situations where you're on a dismounted patrol and need to hear what's going on around you. The green side is designed for steady state noises around aircraft or vehicles."

Researchers at the French German Institute have found that inserting a small filter into the earplug with holes at each end restricts hazardous high-frequency noises such as weapons

fire while letting low-frequency sounds pass through.

"The advantage to this earplug is its flexibility," said Fallon. "No one has to come to the end of their military career with hearing loss. Prevention is the key."

With foam earplugs, service members can hear a rifle bolt closing around 60 meters, but with the combat arms earplug inserted, one can hear it around 500 meters.

At \$7 a pair, the CAE is 20 times more expensive than the triple flange ear plug.

"Units who have procured these for their Soldiers have shown a real commitment to their troops," said Fallon. "The CAE is the best one our troops can wear. I challenge everyone to try them out for a week and discover that for themselves."

Last year, 250,000 pairs of the CAE were ordered for troops deployed to Iraq, but Fallon said that simply ordering the CAE and handing them out to the troops isn't enough.

"The problem is a lot of service members aren't using them correctly," said Fallon.

"They're putting in one side of the earplug for all situations, not optimizing their protection. We need to push how they work and get the information down to everyone."

"When I was given a set of the Combat Arms Earplugs, no one told me exactly how to use them," said communications technician Spc. Keith Gatlin. "I had to go out and field test them to find out what side does what."

"Requiring and enforcing hearing-protection use should be viewed as important as wearing another piece of protective gear," said Fallon. "We can't move as freely in body armor as we do in our PT uniform, yet we don't consider going out on patrol without that protective equipment. Everyone should view hearing protection in the same way. I have yet to see someone with hearing or eardrum damage when that person was wearing hearing protection."

To maintain the CAE, keep filter holes free of wax and debris and ensure that plugs are cleaned with soap and water and dry before returning them to their case, Fallon explained.

Iraqi border guards receive new vehicles

Story and photo by Spc. Sean Kimmons
25th Infantry Division (Light) Public Affairs

FORWARD OPERATING BASE KALSU, Iraq — The 292 miles of Iraq-Iran border within 2nd Brigade Combat Team's area of operations should see a boost in security as Iraq's Department of Border Enforcement were supplied an additional 44 new vehicles Sept. 19.

The vehicles were acquired through coordination from Headquarters and Headquarters Service Company, Task Force 2-11 Field Artillery to improve the effectiveness of the Department of Border Enforcement along the border.

"This is part of a bigger mission of building more border control points, sourcing the [DBE] with equipment and preparing them for the future," said Capt.

Scott Greenblatt, the commander of HHS, TF 2-11 FA.

All of the new vehicles, which consist of 2004 Jeep Liberties, Chevy Trailblazers and Nissan pickup trucks, will be dispersed to DBE units in five districts bordering Iran.

2nd Lt. Salar Muhamed, an officer with the Choarta District DBE, said he was pleased with the seven vehicles his unit acquired.

"The seven vehicles are going to be very helpful for our battalion around this district," Muhamed said through an interpreter. "We are controlling a big border and at every corner we don't have a border control point. These vehicles will allow us to have more patrols and cover more area."

The Choarta District DBE is responsible for managing 60 miles of Iraq-Iran border.

Besides supplying new vehicles, HHS, TF 2-11 FA assists DBE units on other equipment needs.

In the Choarta District, winter coats are being issued to DBE guards in preparedness for winter. Also, water and heating projects are being implemented throughout border control points within the district.

"A lot of the BCPs don't have running water or heat, so we're trying to get them the basic [utilities] to make their life more comfortable and help them out with their mission," said Staff Sgt. Daniel McKim, the noncommissioned officer in charge of a HHS, TF 2-11 FA border patrol team sponsoring the Choarta District DBE.

McKim said he hopes the support and equipment given to the DBE units will make them more influential out on the border, which will help deter terrorists and illegal weapons from entering Iraq.

"They will be able to keep more presence along the border," McKim said. "Anything we can do to help them is going to in return help the [multinational forces] throughout Iraq."



A Department of Border Enforcement officer checks out the interior of a 2004 Jeep Liberty Sept. 19. Forty-four new vehicles were dispersed out to DBE units in an effort to improve their effectiveness along the Iraq-Iran border.

Operation Virtual Pencil

Soldiers provide much-needed school supplies



Staff Sgt. Susan German

Schoolchildren at the Al-Kasoor Elementary School held up their new backpacks distributed by Soldiers from Assassin and Bearcat Companies, 15th Forward Support Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division Sept. 27. The children were at the school taking exams prior to the start of school Oct. 2.

Your vote counts

By Spc. Nicole Welch
MNC-I Public Affairs

BAGHDAD, Iraq — Time is running out to make your vote count to help decide who leads our country into the future.

The 2004 November General Election is just around the corner, and U.S. service members are encouraged to exercise their right to vote during overseas deployments through absentee balloting, which is part of the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act.

Absentee ballots must be mailed no later than October 15.

If the absentee ballot is not received in time to meet the October 15 deadline, troops can also use a Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot if they meet the three criteria. First, the individual must be located overseas. Second he must have applied for a regular ballot early enough that the request is received by the local election official at least 30 days before the election and, finally, he must not have received the requested regular absentee ballot.

The deadline for submitting the FPCA may vary from state to state, but registered voters are urged to submit it at least 30 days before the election and 60 days for unregistered voters, explained 1st Lt. Phan Ton of Sacramento, Calif., the voting assistance officer for the 555th Engineer Company from Fort Hood, Texas. Some states accept the online form of the FPCA, but troops should visit their voting assistance officer for additional information about the requirements for their state.

Deployed troops are advised to research the issues and can-

didates they are voting for and can gain more information through newspapers, magazines, various websites and a hotline, Ton explained. Troops can call 1-800-438-VOTE and listen to recorded messages from candidates and information on the various ballot issues.

Many service members at Camp Victory South here understand the significance of each vote, and said they decided to voice their opinions this year even though they hadn't previously.

"While I didn't vote the last election, I plan to vote this year," said Spc. Amanda Webb, of Crawfordsville, Ind., a mail clerk with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, III Corps out of Fort Hood, Texas. "I've had time to focus on what kind of country I was living in and how it was being run. I believe everyone in our country has the right to vote to make a choice to implement changes, and that's the only way this country will get any better."

"With the improvement in pushing for 100 percent contact of Soldiers to get a FPCA and a stronger, more prevalent VAO program and a change in the military postal system, I feel that Soldiers are more confident that their vote will count for this year's election," Ton said.

Ton also explained that of the Soldiers she has encountered, most are interested in being involved in their military future as well as their future as a U.S. citizen, and they are encouraging one another to vote.

For more information about voting in the upcoming election, visit www.fvap.com, or contact your unit's voting assistance officer.

U.S. Embassy Military Pay Office Hours of Operation

Military pay inquires

Saturday - Thursday
9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.
12:30 p.m. to 5 p.m.

Cashier

Everyday but Friday
9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.
12:30 p.m. to 5 p.m.

Located in the basement at the rear of the CPA palace. Also located at the Joint Contracting Finance and Resource Management Office near the 31st Combat Support Hospital

An Najaf engineers complete training hospital cleanup

Story and photos by Marine Sgt. Clinton Firstbrook
Scimitar staff

AN NAJAF, Iraq — Arriving in An Najaf during April, members of the 425th Civil Affairs Battalion, Bravo Company found the teaching hospital in a state of complete of disrepair. Mukkada Al Sadr's militia had taken over the hospital just days earlier and attacked coalition forces at nearby Forward Operating Base Golf.

Once the hospital was retaken by coalition forces, a rapid assessment of the hospital was conducted, iden-

tifying multiple problems. A massive cleanup project began immediately.

"The exterior of the building had extensive battle damage and the grounds surrounding the hospital were littered with debris including burned-out vehicles, which had been destroyed during the fighting," said 1st Sgt. Ryan Bodmer, the 425th Bravo Company first sergeant. "Militia members had destroyed almost everything inside and stolen or allowed the theft of most of the hospital's medical equipment and furniture."

A series of pumps that kept the

hospital from flooding were also nonfunctional, leaving approximately seven feet of standing water in the lower level of the hospital. Assessment teams also found generators and city water pipes leading into the hospital in need of repair due to neglect. The sewage system was backed up and didn't have any maintenance since the hospital's construction in 1983.

"The water that had flooded the hospital was pumped out, and the pumps were repaired," said Sgt. Scott Carter, a 425th Civil Affairs Bravo Company team sergeant. "We removed spoiled food from two large storage warehouses, 14 dead bodies and a large amount of destroyed medical supplies. Damaged electrical panels and interior lighting were also replaced. The city water pipes leading into the hospital were repaired and the hospital's backed-up sewage system was cleaned out, along with returning the generators to working order."

Completing this initial clean-up and repairs took approximately two months, \$80,000 and hundreds of man hours to complete.

"The teaching hospital is the main hospital here, and it's not only important to the city, but to the entire An Najaf province," said An Najaf Governor Adnan Al Zofri. "It is very unfortunate what happened



An Iraqi worker pours broken ceiling panels into a truck outside the teaching hospital in An Najaf to be taken away for disposal.

during the war."

When fighting broke out again in August, the progress on returning the hospital to working order slowed almost to a halt.

"Very few people were coming to work because they were afraid they'd be killed by insurgents," said Carter. "When the peace treaty was signed, large numbers of workers started coming back on a daily basis."

Right now, the project and contracting office along with the Army Corps of Engineers are supervising the project with 100 Iraqi workers to finish reconstruction on the hospital as soon as possible.

"The teaching hospital is one of the biggest hospitals in Iraq," said Bodmer. "It has 420 beds and specialty doctors that a lot of other places don't have. That is why so many people come here from other provinces"

According to Carter, their priority is two have the basement and first floor open as soon as possible because the emergency room and intensive-care-unit offices are on those levels.

"We plan on having those floors up and running within the next month," said Carter. "After that, we'll work their way up until we're finished."



An Iraqi contractor plasters one of the walls inside An Najaf's teaching hospital.

ICDF takes over defense of Iraq's coastal waters

Submitted by Multi-National Division-South East Press Information Center

UMM QASR, Iraq — The Iraqi Coastal Defense Force took over defense of Iraq's coastal regions after a ceremony at this port in southern Iraq Sept. 30.



LA Paul A'Barrow

An Iraqi Coastal Defense Force sailor waves goodbye from the port of Umm Qasr, Iraq, as one of the fast boats sets sail at the start of the ICDF graduation Sept. 30.

The ceremony included a sail past by the fleet and saluting of the dias of before continuing out to sea.

The ICDF was formed in January and trained by a team made up of a combination of British Royal Navy & Marines, Australian Navy, U.S. Navy and Netherlands Navy personnel. The fleet includes five 27-meter Chinese-made Predators, eight rigid-hull inflatable boats and a further twenty five RIB's and fast aluminium boats donated by the United Arab Emirates. The recruits have been trained in numerous skills including seamanship, mariner skills, fire-fighting, gunnery and boarding operations.

The ICDF began operations Oct. 1 and assumes responsibility for the protection of Iraq's maritime sover-



LA Paul A'Barrow

A sail past by the five Iraqi Coastal Defence Force boats in Southern Iraq.

eignty, including patrolling the Khawr Abd Allah and protecting offshore installations and the port of Umm Qasr.

The ceremony was attended by dignitaries from coalition Naval Commands and senior Iraqi military. The ICDF commander spoke at the ceremony and thanked the coalition for

all its help in establishing the foundations of Iraq's Coastal Defence Force over the past months.

The students have proved their ability to absorb and understand their training," he said. "They hope to go on to serve their beloved Iraq and its people."

PERSPECTIVES



Army News Service photo

39-year-old Army vet inspires teammates as South Carolina rookie

Commentary by
Chris Walz

It's not 1975.

It's not Notre Dame, and the crowd is not chanting, "Ru-dy! Ru-dy! Ru-dy!"

There's not a "Touchdown Jesus" anywhere in sight.

But, there's still an underdog story to be told.

It's 2004.

It's Columbia, S.C., and the crowd is chanting, "Fris-bee! Fris-bee! Fris-bee!"

South Carolina Gamecocks wide receiver Tim Frisby played flanker for four snaps.

Why is that noteworthy?

He's a 39-year-old walk-on.

Frisby, whose locker room nickname is "Pops," received the loudest cheers Sept. 25 and he didn't even touch the pigskin. No catches, no touchdowns.

But the crowd recognized his unwavering perseverance.

There's no doubt where Frisby got his "never say die" attitude — he spent 20 years in the Army and was Ranger-qualified with the 82nd Airborne Division.

There is an unquestionable age

difference between Frisby and his teammates. Every now and again, you see some kid try to make it in baseball, but he can't handle a AA curveball. Quarterbacks Chris Weinke and Matt Mauck each led their teams to national championships after dabbling in baseball. Weinke was 28 years old and Mauck was 25.

Frisby, however, graduated from high school before most of his teammates were born. He defended the U.S. against Saddam Hussein in Desert Storm before some of his teammates entered elementary school. He also served in Kosovo before most of his teammates hit puberty. He's older than many of his coaches and 1988 Heisman Trophy winner Tim Brown. No wonder they call him "Pops."

So there's little doubt why "The Legend of Frisby" is growing by the minute. "Pops" has six children — the oldest is 16 years old, the youngest is 6 months — and he carries a 3.8 grade-point average in broadcast journalism.

Depending on which Gamecocks fan you talk to, Frisby can also leap tall buildings

in a single bound. He has x-ray vision and can run faster than a speeding bullet. Of course, Frisby can also fly and dogs love catching him in the air. Well — I made that last one up.

Despite the blurring line between fact and fiction, the Gamecocks have an inspirational leader. He's a great example of mind over matter and can help teach the young guys — even the seniors — what it's really like in the real world. No football game will ever teach them that.

This story should bring a tear to the Army's collective eye. This is not about free publicity; it's about raising a 19-year-old young man into a leader. He may inspire an Army unit or a 105-man football team. Isn't that what the Army is all about?

Not surprisingly, movie producers have already started knocking on his door to discuss a script. "Fris-bee! Fris-bee! Fris-bee!"

Oh yeah, by the way, the Gamecocks beat Troy, 17-7.

Editor's note: Chris Walz is a staff writer for the Pentagon newspaper at Fort Myer, Va.

It's your future.
VOTE
For it!

Make your
vote count!

See your unit Voting Assistance
Officer for more information.



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The Scimitar can also be viewed on the Web at <http://www.mnf-iraq.com/coalition-news/publications.htm>

First women in Iraqi Army honored

By Spc. Marie Whitney
122nd Mobile Public
Affairs Detachment

BAGHDAD, Iraq — Twenty-five women sat on white plastic lawn chairs in a small park area next to the U.S. Embassy building in the Interantional Zone here, not far from a swimming pool. The women quietly chatted in the midday heat while drinking bottled water.

But these were no ordinary women. These were 25 of the first 88 women to join the ranks of the New Iraqi Army.

They awaited the arrival of the congressmen, military officials and other guests set to attend a Sept. 26 conference held in their honor.

Also taking part in the conference was a small group of women from the 1st Cavalry Division's Headquarters Company. Every First Team Soldier volunteered to be a part of the event.

"I am very excited to get to go on this mission. We get to meet the females of the New Iraqi Army. It's great because they are the first ones [to serve in the army]" said Sgt. Dawn Handley, one of the HHC Soldiers who attended the conference.

The conference started with some of the congressmen and military officials giving speeches, telling the Iraqi Soldiers how proud they are of the courage the women have displayed and the historical importance of what they are doing.

After the speeches, the whole group walked over to the Embassy building to watch a docu-



Sgt. Dawn Handley

Some of the first females of the New Iraqi Army listen to a speech at the conference that took place in their honor at the Embassy building in the International Zone Sept. 26. During the conference, there was also a documentary shown about the women, followed by a luncheon with American female Soldiers from the 1st Cavalry Division.

mentary called "Journey of Courage: Women in the New Iraqi Army," displaying the sacrifices and the changes made by these women in their pursuit of serving their country.

This video, which was written, filmed and produced by Kristen Hickman, a film producer from the U.S. Department of State, was the Iraqi Soldiers' answer to a documentary on the

history of women in the U.S. military they were shown during a conference put on by the U.S. Army in June 2004.

This new video documented the time the women spent in Jordan taking part in an eight-week basic training program put on by the Jordanian army with the help of the U.S. Army. The film showed footage of the women going through all of the training along with their thoughts and feelings on serving in the military and what they learned from their time together.

Once the video was over, the group returned to the poolside park for lunch. Under the cover of an umbrella-shaped tree, American and Iraqi female Soldiers ate together from a large buffet of Iraqi food while conversing with each other with the help of translators.

The occasion was wrapped up with Hickman giving a speech to the group of women, thanking them for their dedication to their country and their people.

"Even though what you have begun is valiant, remember that it will not be an easy task," Hickman said. "But I think that if anyone can do it, it would be you, because it takes a special type of person to be able to handle what you had undertaken."

While individual courage of the Iraqi military women has seen them make history in their country, a common bond keeps their focus on the future.

"When we first came together, we had many differences," said one. "But the one thing we have in common is the will and determination to work hand in hand as a team."

Army Ten-Miler coming to LSA Anaconda

By Sgt. Ann Venturato
13th Corps Support Command Public Affairs Office

BALAD, Iraq — Service members all around Iraq and Kuwait will be pounding the pavement to get ready for the second annual Logistics Support Area Anaconda Army Ten-Miler Oct. 24.

The race is open to all service members as well as civilians who want to participate. Registration began Oct. 1, said Maj. Willie Rios, the race coordinator. Interested runners can sign up at registration booths that will be set up in LSA Anaconda's Dining Facility 1 and Dining Facility 4. Runners will even be able to register for the race by e-mail or they can also register the night prior to the race during the pre-race dinner, Rios said. Runners from other installations can register by e-mail by contacting Sgt. 1st Class Rhonda Kenwright at rhonda.h.kenwright@us.army.mil or via the digital nonsecure voice tele-

phone network. The DNV number is 302-529-6351.

The pre-race dinner, which is a tradition of the Army Ten-Miler, will be held at Dining Facility 1 so runners can feast on pasta to energize for the race.

Like the Association of the United States Army race it shadows, the LSA Anaconda Ten-Miler will award trophies to the top three runners in each age group. All runners who finish the race will receive a commemorative race medal. Race T-shirts will be available for purchase, as well.

Those who are interested in the race but don't want to run the full 10 miles can get a team together to run the four-person relay event. Each runner on the team will run two and a half miles.

The race will begin at 7 a.m. Oct. 24 with participants lining up at the starting line in front of the outdoor pool.

"The race will begin and end at the stadium here," Rios said. "The route for the race intertwines throughout a lot of the post."

On race day, the running route will be blocked off and a vehi-

cle will lead the field of runners to keep them safe from traffic, he added.

"Our goal is to get about 2,000 participants," Rios said.

When 3rd Corps Support Command hosted the race last year, about 1,500 runners participated.

"We are continuing the tradition of holding a shadow 10-miler at Anaconda," he added.

This race helps build esprit-de-corps and teamwork, Rios said. It is a chance for service members to do something that people are doing back in the United States, as well.

"Soldiers love a challenge, and this race provides Soldiers with another challenge," Rios said.

Units across Anaconda have contributed to the challenge of making the race a success. Planning for the race began in March and is in full swing as the race date approaches.

All the coordination will pay off when all the runners are racing down the streets of LSA Anaconda.

Worship and Prayer Schedule for CPA - Chapel

Daily Islamic Prayer

Tuesday

1630 — Catholic Mass

(Convention Center)

1930 — Ladies Bible Study

Wednesday

0630 — Morning Bible Study

(Chaplain's office)

1900 — Bible Study

(Ministries Conference Room)

Thursday

1630 — Catholic Mass

Friday

1800 — Jewish (Shabbat) Services

2000 — Contemporary Christian

Gathering

Saturday

1230 — Buddhist Meditation

1630 — Catholic Mass (Convention

Center)

Sunday

0730 — Episcopal /

Lutheran/Anglican

0930 — Choir Rehearsal

1030 — General Christian

1400 — Latter - Day Saints

1630 — Roman Catholic Mass

1800 — Contemporary Protestant

Donated tackle helps troops reel them in

Story and photos by
Spc. Andy Miller
122nd Mobile Public
Affairs Detachment

BAGHDAD, Iraq — The large man-made lake between Camp Al-Tahreer and Camp Al-Nasr here was once stocked with fish as part of Saddam Hussein's private hunting reservation and has become part of one of the largest overseas American military bases built since the Vietnam War.

Though the lake is no longer

stocked, the 1st Cavalry Division Soldiers stationed here have found that fishing season is still open.

The First Team fishing fanatics and amateurs who fish this lake received a boost recently when an Alabama sporting goods company collected hundreds of rod-and-reel combos and thousands of fishing accessories for donation to the Soldiers here.

The gear started arriving last June when the parents of 1st Lt. Kevin Black, the executive officer for 1st Cav. Div. Headquarters

Company, contacted Simmons Sporting Goods Company of their hometown Birmingham, Ala. When the sporting goods company heard Soldiers in Iraq had a place to fish, they immediately donated about 20 rod-and-reel combos along with around 200 lures from their shop, according to Black.

Simmons then went on to contact equipment distributors and other fishing supply companies, which, in turn, donated more than 200 rod-and-reel combos and more than 1,000 lures, along with hooks, line, tackle boxes and other fishing equipment. The store also designed a custom "Fishing Iraq" T-shirt and donated 450 of them for the Soldiers here. All told, more than 500 pounds of fishing equipment and paraphernalia valued at several thousand dollars was shipped to First Team Soldiers from Birmingham.

"It really shows that the folks back home really support what we're doing over here," Black said. "I went and picked up some of [the gear] myself when I was home on R&R, and [the people at Simmons] couldn't thank people over here enough for what we're doing over here."

Sgt. 1st Class Stephen Sanders, a 1st Cav. Div. headquarters platoon sergeant, fished the lake every day when he first arrived to Al-Tahreer. He said the fishing equipment



1st Lt. Kevin Black (left), the executive officer for 1st Cavalry Division's headquarters company, shows off a fish he caught at Camp Al-Tahreer in Baghdad with Capt. Sean Tyson, the headquarters company commander. The fish measured in at 38 inches.

donation is a tremendous morale booster for the troops stationed here.

"I was highly impressed that they sent so much. They didn't send just 10 fishing poles; they sent 200 fishing poles, thousands of hooks and lures. It was awesome," Sanders said. "You know they're not sending all those supplies for publicity. You know they're actually doing it for dedication and support of the troops."

Black and other Soldiers from Headquarters Company devised a system where Soldiers can borrow the fishing gear by signing it out from the company's supply room. The Soldiers plan to expand the equipment sign-out system to the nearby Morale, Welfare and Recreation tent and may sponsor a fishing tournament where participants can receive a "Fishing Iraq" T-shirt.

The donation "gives all the

Soldiers the opportunity to fish on their time off," Sanders said. "You can't go find hooks and lures at the [post exchange]. They don't have the supplies that you need to go fishing. Being right beside nicest lake probably in Iraq, it's hard to know the fish are there and not be able to fish. It makes your mouth water," he added.

Black said he encourages Soldiers to try their hand at the Iraqi lake, even if they've never fished before.

"We had a sergeant in here today who had never gone," Black said. "He went out there and caught a crab. He just had a few minutes after he got off shift last night. There's no telling what you'll catch out of that lake."

Black himself caught a 38-inch long fish of unknown species a few months ago. He stressed that Soldiers should not eat fish from the lake.



Sgt. 1st Class Suree Valenzuela, the supply sergeant for 1st Cavalry Division's headquarters company, throws a line at Camp Al-Tahreer in Baghdad. The man-made lake was once part of Saddam Hussein's private hunting reservation. Sporting goods companies from Alabama have donated more 500 pounds of fishing equipment to Soldiers stationed near its shores.

Highway Patrol sets standard for Iraq

By Spc. Crista M. Birmingham,
Multi-National Corps – Iraq Public Affairs

NASIRIYAH, Iraq —The police force in Dhi Qar Province, which is the first official highway patrol, is the leading example of law enforcement in the new Iraq.

"A national highway patrol system is being developed, with its headquarters in Baghdad, but until that gets set up, these individuals are the standard," said Col. Edward Willis, the group commander for the 115th Engineer Battalion.

A combination of former police officers and new recruits, the force was trained to knock out criminal activity in Southern Iraq by 4th Platoon, 230th Military Police Company, 95th MP Battalion, 16th MP Brigade, out of Manheim, Germany.

"The MPs, who have seen the other [Iraqi Police] stations, think this one is the best organized, prepared and supported in the country and a model for how the coalition should work with and support the IP effort," said Willis.

While training, a second focus was the lack of a decent

headquarters for the highway patrol.

"We took a look at their [former] IP station. At that point, we got together and extended our scope from a force-protection piece to actually build a new place for Major Ali's men and his vehicles," said 1st Lt. Jacob Daylight of the 95th MP Bn.

Multi-National Corps-Iraq donated funds to build a new station and train the force.

"This station is the standard that everyone else is trying to get up to, and the men working in it serve as an example to other police forces," said Willis.

"Hopefully, other IP's will see them and follow their example and work to enforce the law, oppose criminal bands and act as a positive representation of the new Iraqi government."

These IPs are led by Maj. Ali, a Nasiriyah local who has worked as an officer for more than a decade. Prior to leading the IPs, Ali studied at both a four-year university, graduating in 1989, and then a three-year military school, graduating in 1992. Since 1992, he has worked as a police officer in the Dhi Qar Province.

"In the beginning, the MPs trained everyone here at the IP station for shooting, how to use a rifle, how to use physical training," said Ali. Officers were also trained in search tactics, interrogation and map reading, he said. "Our joint patrols, planned coordinated searches have been very successful."

According to Ali, additional issues IPs must deal with are threats from terrorists for doing police work. "They may threaten our families and try to kidnap them, but they will not affect our work," Ali said. "You must know that you will arrest many men. We took in consideration the risk of this job, and we have to do our job correctly. Our happiness here is when we help the poor and arrest the bad, so our life is better now."

"I have great respect for the Iraqi people and especially these brave officers who are willing to accept the risk of standing up to represent the rule of law in their country," said Maj. Dan Munger of the 115th Engineer Bn.

"I believe that the success of our mission here in this country is directly tied to our ability to help the Iraqis take charge of their own infrastructure and their own security."

Corps begins transfer process of electricity stations

Six sites set for return to Ministry of Electricity

By Mitch Frazier
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers,
Gulf Region Division

BAGHDAD, Iraq — Boxes of air filters and oily tools sit in the shadow of a shiny new generator at an electricity station north of Najaf.

The exhaust spewing from the gas turbine generator rattles the tin walls of a nearby tool shed and masks the sound of the clanking wrenches and tools being rifled through inside.

“Are these yours or are they ours,” shouts Maj. Erik Stor to the contractor and two blue jumpsuit-clad Iraqi engineers as he picks up two volt meters inside the shed. “We need to figure out what goes and what stays.”

With Iraqi engineers in tow, Stor, the operations officer for the Army Corps of Engineers Restore Iraqi Electricity Directorate, spearheads the effort to transfer the site back to

the Iraq Ministry of Electricity.

After spending more than \$24 million over the past year bringing the new 23-megawatt generator to life, the time has come to count spare parts, place filters in storage and officially transfer the sprawling site back to Iraqi control.

“We have to make sure we are leaving them the equipment they need to be successful,” Stor said. “We have worked together building this site, and we need to make sure that work wasn’t in vain. The worst thing we could do is to walk away without making sure they have the tools and training necessary to keep this place running for decades to come.”

The station is one of the first to be transferred back to the Interim Iraqi Government, a step that signifies mission completion in the sea of reconstruction efforts now underway.

“This is a great step for the people of Iraq, but we need more training and more time,” said the plant’s manager. “We are very thankful for the work here; we just want more time with the people here to help us.”

In a country where few were allowed to act independently and make decisions on operations and maintenance, training has been an ongoing issue for the electricity reconstruction effort. More than 40 hours of classroom instruction and side-by-side operation in the plant is part of the process to bring Iraqi operators to a better understanding of the controls and equipment brought in to bring more electricity to the country.

Computer controls, scheduled outages for maintenance and safety systems were all new to the employees

See USACE, Page 10

Soldiers build relationship with sheik

By Marine Sgt. Clinton Firstbrook
Scimitar Staff

CONVOY SUPPORT CENTER SCANIA, Iraq — In a scene reminiscent of HBO’s television show “The Sopranos,” service members surround a banquet-size feast with the Abu-Sultan tribe’s top sheik, Hatim Al Jarian, sitting at the head of the table discussing the current situation in Iraq.

Since the 1-185th Armor Battalion arrived here in April, they have visited the sheik many times to improve local and military relations around their base.

“We visit the sheik pretty often to talk about recent issues that pop up in our area of operations” said Sgt. Brian Freeman, a civil military engineer. “He always welcomes us with open arms. It’s like seeing old friends.”

Some of those recent issues include the new projects that the base is working on, such as new bridges, school repairs and irrigation systems.

“They do so much for us,” said Jarian. “All of the people around here are extremely thankful for what they have done.”

To show his appreciation for the efforts by CSC Scania, every few weeks the sheik prepares an exten-

sive meal of Iraqi cuisine and invites the command over for dinner.

“The amount of food they prepare for us is outrageous,” said Maj. John McBrearty, the 185th’s executive officer. “I wish I had a bigger stomach so I could eat more. That’s how good it is.”

But food isn’t the only way the sheik has shown his gratitude to the base.

“He’s informed us about certain security issues,” said McBrearty. “There has also been a drop-off of crime in the area, which is a direct result of our relationship with him.”

The command has also noted how attacks on the base have almost completely diminished. The last assault on the base was in May.

“When the sheik heard we were mortared, he was extremely upset,” said McBrearty. “Because he’s the sheik in charge of this area, nothing is supposed to happen without his approval.”

The Abu-Sultan tribe is spread across Iraq from the border of the Tigris River to the eastern border of the Euphrates River and is made up more than 300,000 members.

“If every community had the same relationship we have with the service members on Scania, Iraq would be a much better place,” said Jarian.

Logistics training center opens in Balad

Submitted by 13th Corps Support Command

BALAD, Iraq — With the opening of a new logistical training facility here Oct. 1, Logistics Support Area Anaconda continues its role of providing logistics excellence for the theater.

The Automated Logistics Assistance Team training facility provides the opportunity for units to receive classroom training, over-the-shoulder tailored training and technical assistance support for all of the Army’s automated logistics systems without having to leave theater.

Having the ALAT in Iraq saves units time and money and provides immediate assistance to deployed Soldiers, 13th COSCOM officials said. Without the team in Iraq, units would have to travel to Kuwait or to Fort Lee, Va. for training or assistance with the Army’s logistics computer systems.

The ALAT has been in operation for several weeks and the opening ceremony was combined with a graduation ceremony for the first group of Soldiers to be trained in Iraq on a new company-level property-accountability system.

Iraq in Brief

Republic of Korea assumes operational authority

MOSUL, Iraq — More than 2,500 Republic of Korea Zaytun Division soldiers assumed safety, stability and civil/military operations in the north-eastern province of Irbil on Oct. 1.

Soldiers of Multi-National Brigade Northwest here transferred authority to the ROK during an official ceremony held on the ROK compound in Irbil.

“The arrival of Soldiers from the Republic of Korea into this great nation demonstrates the strong partnership between Iraq, Korea and the coalition forces,” said Maj. Gen. Andrew Farquhar, the deputy commander of Multi-National Corps-Iraq and the acting commander of Task Force Olympia. “As Soldiers, it is all of our duties to improve our conditions day by day. I know that our partnership will only improve the security situation in northern Iraq, and by supporting the Iraqi people, we can help to develop the true potential of this great country.”

A large number of the Korean soldiers deployed to Irbil are engineers and civil/military soldiers and will be responsible for the construction and repair of infrastructure in the area.

The transfer brings another coalition partner to assist in the development and rebuilding of Iraq. This is the first contingent of South Korean soldiers in the country.

Iraqi Border Patrol gets new equipment

MOSUL, Iraq — The Iraqi Border Patrol battalion received 40 Jeep Liberties and 1,500 body armor vests Sept. 29, equipment that will further their ability to ensure the safety and security of Iraq as its citizens prepare for elections in January.

The body armor vests were purchased by Task Force Olympia with funds from the Commander’s Emergency Response Program at a cost of \$832,500. The vehicles were purchased in Baghdad by Multi-National Security and Transition Command-Iraq.

Multinational forces are working with Iraqi government officials to ensure that the IBP are prepared to provide security during the upcoming elections.

Iraqi government officials have long recognized the border of Iraq as an entry point for terrorists, weapons and money coming into the country. The donation of this equipment is important in preventing terrorists and smugglers from crossing into the country illegally, officials said.

Iraqi National Guard soldiers graduate from training

BALAD, Iraq — During a ceremony at the Iraqi National Guard training area at Logistics Support Area Anaconda here Sept. 23, approximately 100 Iraqi National Guard soldiers from Company A, 210th ING Battalion stood in formation as the second group of ING soldiers graduated from the six-week advanced individual training course in advanced infantry tactics.

The ING soldiers learned how to set up a patrol base, perform searches for weapons, as well as patrol maneuvers, said Staff Sgt. Robert Brite, an ING instructor from Company A, 339th Infantry Battalion.

Prior to the six-week training, the ING soldiers had a 10-day basic-training course where they learned fundamental soldier skills such as marching and rifle marksmanship, Brite added. Although the ING soldiers have finished this schooling, there is more for them to learn in real-life missions.

“The learning never stops. For those of you who are graduating today, you will go on to some new training. More specifically, training for your next mission,” said Lt. Col. Ted Arnold, the Task Force Chinook commander. “You are Iraqi National Guard. You are going to go out and you are going to fight for the freedom of Iraq.”

Soldiers help Iraqi children start the school year in style

BALAD, Iraq — Soldiers from Logistics Support Area Anaconda here are helping local Iraqi children start the new school year with new schools and new school supplies.

Soldiers from the 29th Signal Battalion kicked off the new school year Saturday by distributing school supplies to 130 children in Al bu Hassan. The Soldiers visited on the first day of classes at the battalion-sponsored \$78,000 new school.

Continuing the supply donations through the month of October, the 226th Medical Logistics Battalion delivered school supplies and sports equipment to 120 students at Al Hydria School Monday.

Under Operation Anaconda Neighborhood, Soldiers from LSA Anaconda will distribute school supplies to more than 3,800 students at 10 local schools during October.

Since their arrival in Jan. 13, 13th COSCOM has funded more than \$4.2 million in infrastructure improvements, school construction projects and water-treatment facilities in the areas surrounding LSA Anaconda.

Marines send their thanks to supporters back home

Story and photo by Sgt. Enrique S. Diaz
1st Force Service Support Group Public Affairs

CAMP AL ASAD, Iraq — As Marines operate in the hundred-degree-plus weather here, facing the dangers of living in a combat zone, support from the home front in the form of care packages and “thank you” letters help make their stay a little more hospitable.

Marines assigned to Combat Service Support Battalion 7, 1st Force Service Support Group have come up with their own way of showing their appreciation to their friends and loved ones back home.

Marines are sending American, Marine Corps and even Iraqi flags that have flown at the battalion headquarters for a day to return the favor of those who have shown their support to the deployed service members.

Marines who want to send a little something back only have to spend a few dollars at the base store to buy the flags. They then ask the battalion to fly the colors for a gift of a lifetime.

“It’s to show our appreciation to the people who appreciate us,” said Maj. Carlos L. Olivo, CSSB-7’s executive officer, who sent an American and Iraqi flag to the students at Kholberg Elementary School in El Paso, Texas.

After receiving signed posters from the youngsters back home, he wanted to return the favor, said Olivo.

Marines of CSSB-7 are responsible for providing supplies and services like food, ammunition and medical to Marines throughout the Al Anbar province. The mission is a continuous one that most people don’t get to hear about back home.

However, the families and friends of these Marines know they are hard at work and show their

appreciation by sending things like snacks, hygiene items and magazines.

“To me, these people are patriots. They love their country and they love what we are doing for them,” said the 36-year-old El Paso, Texas, native.

The battalion’s commanding officer, Lt. Col. Drew T. Doolin, created certificates of appreciation to send back with each flag, thanking folks back home for their support.

The phrase “This flag was flown over Combat Service Support Battalion 7” at the top, with the commanding officer’s signature at the bottom, certifies the flags as gifts from a combat zone.

For many back home, the flags were unexpected but very welcomed gifts.

“My brother didn’t think he’d get anything from me for his birthday since I was out here, but he said it was the best birthday present he ever got,” said Cpl. Derek M. Metzger, a 22-year-old native of Mansfield, Ohio, who sent an American flag from Iraq to his brother in Nashville, Tenn.

The first rotation of CSSB-7 Marines began their show of appreciation in February, and their replacements plan to continue sending flags back home during their deployment here.

Second Lt. Ed J. Donahoo, a logistics officer for CSSB 7 who recently arrived here, said he decided to send flags back to Alabama Christian Academy Elementary School where his father is a physical education teacher.

“A lot of times, (the kids) are more honest than adults. They will tell you their feelings and are just trying to be nice,” said the 24-year-old Montgomery, AL, native after receiving an unexpected package from the school.

“It’s the innocence of it that just kind of brings you back to reality and gets your mind off of Iraq for awhile” said Donahoo.



Cpl. Sergio Gonzalez, a 27-year-old Roswell, N.M., native and watch clerk with Combat Service Support Battalion 7, lowers the American flag at sunset at Camp Al Asad, Iraq, Sept 28. The battalion sends American and Iraqi flags that have flown for a day at the battalion headquarters to people and organizations that have supported the deployed Marines.

Marine turns to collecting during deployment

Story and photo by Cpl. Paul Leicht
3rd Marine Aircraft Wing Public Affairs

ALASAD, Iraq — Marines and Sailors deployed here frequently turn to different things to help them pass the time when they are off duty. Some read books or write letters. Others watch movies, play sports or engage in physical training.

One Marine here has also found collecting a peculiar form of currency, only available to deployed service members, to be a fun off-duty activity.

The colorful “coins” look like play money from a children’s board game, but they have real monetary value in addition to their appeal to collectors.

They are called “pogs” and the Army and Air Force Exchange Service has been using them as a form of currency at exchanges in deployed areas for years.

Lightweight and easily recognizable, the AAFES pogs are coated disks about the size of a half-dollar with U. S. military images and come in five-cent, 10-cent and 25-cent denominations.

According to the AAFES Web site, the military finance office normally provides coins to

patrons. However by using the pogs for small change, AAFES reduces the shipment of bulky, heavy metal coins to exchange sites, which helps maximize the availability of goods and services for deployed troops.

“The pogs are kind of cool because there are so many different designs, and I also thought it would be something fun to do while I am here,” said Cpl. Carlos R. Garcia, an adjutant clerk with Marine Wing Headquarters Squadron 3, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing. “The series for this year has more than 36 designs for all three denominations.

“So far I have almost all of them, but there are a few that I still have to collect and put in the special collector’s folder I bought at the exchange to display them in,” continued the 21-year-old.

Whether kept as souvenirs or in a collection, the pogs can be used like real money and are redeemable at any AAFES store worldwide.

Because the AAFES pogs are not real currency, they do not violate the law and were developed at the request of the Department of Defense, according to the AAFES Web site.

Garcia, a native of Alamo, Texas, said in addition to collecting the AAFES pogs, he also has bought some noncirculating Iraqi

dinars, some of which have the face of former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein.

“Even though the bills are not really worth anything, you never know if they will become collector’s items in the near or far future,” said Garcia. “War memorabilia can be worth a lot. Some of the things from the era of Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan that service members found — like bayonets or flags or money — have become quite valuable to the collectors market,” he explained.

Garcia added that, for now, he hopes the pogs and the colorful Iraqi bills with Saddam’s visage are tokens of his deployment and might make good gifts for family members or his children in the future.

But with only a few pogs to go before he completes his collection, Garcia said there are a few he just can’t seem to find.

“There are a couple that I am trying to get,” said Garcia. “Sometimes I trade real U. S. coins or pogs that I already have for ones that I don’t, but there are a few that I just can’t seem to find. Hopefully, I will get them all before I leave Iraq. I have even seen some Marines just throw their pogs away, and I wonder if one of them is one that I need to complete my collection.”



Cpl. Carlos R. Garcia, a casualty clerk with Marine Wing Headquarters Squadron 3, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, sorts through his collection of Army and Air Force Exchange Service “pog” coins Sept. 27.



Lance Cpl. Cory Miller, 20, a native of Wichita, Kan., and a machine-gunner with Weapons Company, 2nd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, looks across the convoy of Marines before they head out into Ar Ramadi, Iraq, Sept. 24.



Lance Cpl. Edmond Parent, 22, a native of Berlington, Vt. and a mortarman with Weapons Company, 2nd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, gets into firing position moments after a rocket-propelled grenade struck the ground a few meters away.



Marines with Weapons Company, 2nd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, position themselves to block traffic during a cordon and search in Ar Ramadi, Iraq, Sept. 24. The Marines were searching the area for insurgents and weapons caches.

Mortarmen set mortars aside for machine guns

Story and photos by
Staff Sgt. Nathaniel Garcia
1st Marine Division
Public Affairs

CAMP HURRICANE POINT, Iraq — Whether riding down the streets of Iraq positioned behind a 50-caliber machine-gun turret or in the back of an armored vehicle, they look like any other rifleman in the Marine Corps.

But these Marines aren't riflemen, they're mortarman with Weapons Company, 2nd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment. Normally, they are an independent group of Marines with the capability of unleashing the destructive power of 81mm mortars on the enemy from a distant position. In Iraq, they ride and fight alongside their fellow Marines on the ground.

"Every person in those vehicles is doing something completely different from what they are used to," said 31-year-old 1st Lt. Paul Callahan, a native of Trout Run, Pa., and a former 81mm mortar platoon commander for 2/5. "Our 81mm mortar platoon was split in half and integrated into combined arms anti-tank platoons. Basically we are operating as mobile assault platoons."

When the mortarman got the order assigning them to heavy machine guns, these Marines cancelled their scheduled training with mortars and started training to operate machine guns and handle various other tasks.

"What we did for six weeks was train the mortarman as vehicle com-

manders, machine-gunners, drivers and radio operators so we could operate as a movable force for escort missions, raids, cordon and searches and whatever might be tasked," said Callahan. "Some of these drivers didn't even have a driver's license, so the first time they've really driven is here in country in combat."

By taking on these new roles, the mortarman would be able to reduce the amount of damage that mortars are known for causing.

"The mortars were set aside to reduce the amount of collateral damage," said Sgt. Aaron Cadorette, 29, a platoon sergeant with Weapons Company. "Mortars have a large kill radius. It is overkill. This type of environment doesn't call for it. This way, we are on the ground and in the streets where we need to be."

Although there currently isn't a need for the mortars, Cadorette and his fellow mortarman haven't put them out of their minds.

"They are on standby, though," said Cadorette, a native of Twining, Mich. "We have them here with us. If they said get them, we can easily break them out."

Although mortars aren't being utilized, Weapons Company has many tasks for their Marines to handle while in Iraq. Currently, Weapons Company is the quick-reaction force for the battalion. Within the company, mortarman can be called on to provide escorts, assist in raids, sweep roadsides for improvised explosive devices, conduct cordon and search-

es and be the quick-reaction force at the company level.

"The strength of the Marine Corps is the Marine's ability to adapt and overcome," said Callahan. "These Marines are no exception. They're just as strong and reliable as any Marine before them."

And like many of the Marines before them, these mortarman hope to make a difference.

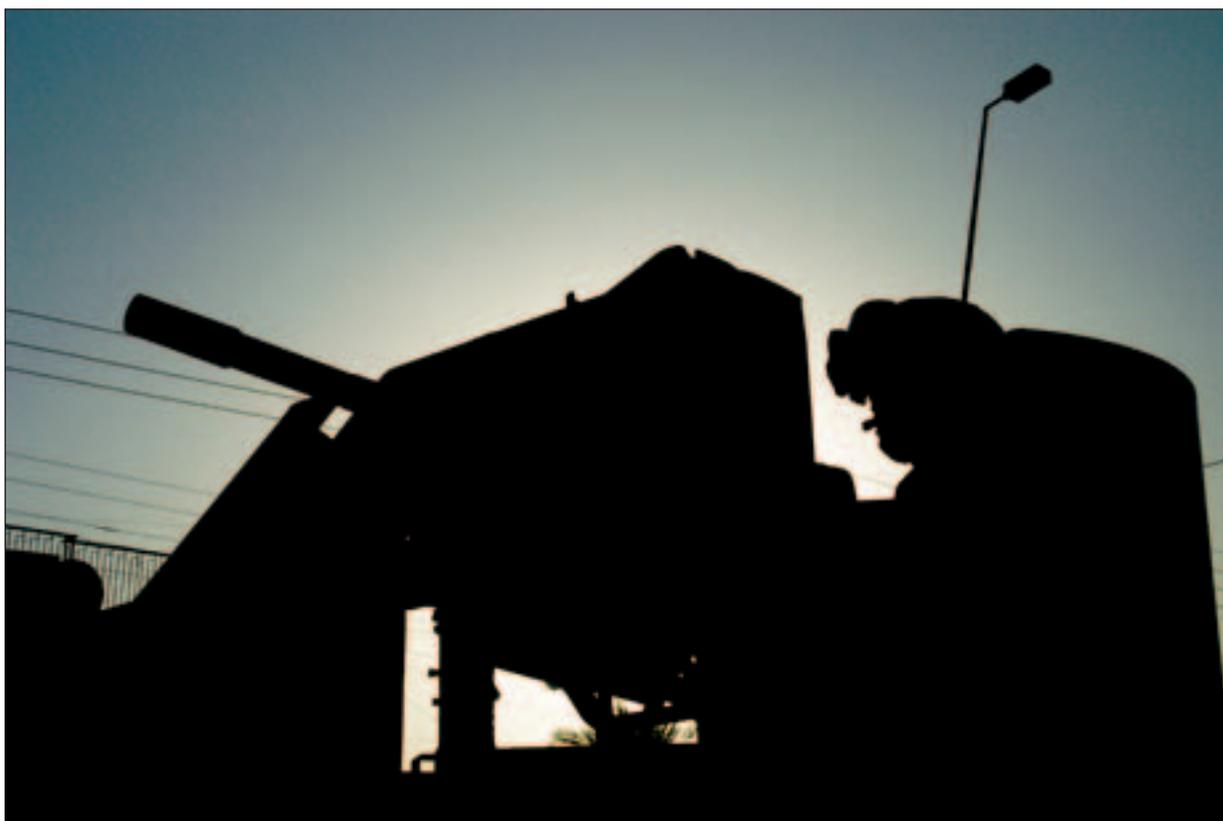
"It would be nice to be able to see that progress was being made, to see some changes or at least know progress has been made when we are finished," said Cadorette.

But before they go home, Cadorette hopes to eliminate as many insurgent fighters as possible in their area and do it without losing any Marines.

"The Marines are doing an outstanding job," said Callahan. "They have been in a few firefights already, and they conducted themselves brilliantly, putting down accurate suppressive fire and killing the enemy when they needed to but also showing restraint when the situation dictated."

With the mortarman's new knowledge they only become more effective and efficient Marines, they said.

"Part of being with Weapons Company means being a jack of all trades," said Lance Cpl. Edmond Parent, 22, a native of Berlington, Vt., and a mortarman with Weapons Company. "I can jump behind anything in our arsenal and effectively deploy it or teach it."



Private 1st Class Cory Miller, 20, a native of Wichita, Kan. and a machine-gunner with Weapons Company, 2nd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, keeps a watchful eye on the roads as the sun goes down in Ar Ramadi, Iraq, Sept. 24.

Summit to drive new DoD policies that will deal with sexual assault

By Donna Miles
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON — Decisions made at a senior leadership summit are expected to have a sweeping impact on the Defense Department's sexual assault prevention and response efforts, according to the task force commander charged with turning the group's recommendations into DoD-wide policies.

The summit Wednesday, made up of senior military and civilian leaders and outside experts on sexual assault, will provide a clear definition of what constitutes sexual assault, Air Force Brig. Gen. K.C. McClain said Oct. 1 during an interview with the Pentagon Channel and American Forces Press Service.

This, she said, will help clear up disagreements and misunderstand-

ings about what behaviors constitute sexual assault — an important starting point in educating the force and preventing sexual assaults.

"Our primary challenge in preventing sexual assault is educating everyone as to what sexual assault is," said McClain, the commander of DoD's new Joint Task Force for Sexual Assault Prevention and Response.

And, if the mantra for real estate is "location, location, location," then, McClain said, in sexual assault prevention, it's "education, education, education."

"It is imperative that everyone from the unit commander to the most junior member of an organization understand that they have a role in preventing sexual assaults, in responding to sexual assaults and in supporting the victim's recovery," she said.

McClain said summit participants also were to address the challenge of protecting victims' privacy while enabling commanders to maintain good order and discipline and hold offenders accountable.

Specifically, the group was to consider how to maintain victim's confidentiality in reporting what McClain called "one of the most underreported crimes" and ways to make the military's response to sexual-assault cases more transparent to victims as well as the general public, within the bounds of the Privacy Act.

It also will look at ways to standardize policies and programs throughout the Defense Department dealing with sexual assault and will examine unique challenges involving deployed troops.

McClain said these challenges include close living environments,

operational and environmental stresses and the lack of some support resources that are available at home stations.

The summit followed a weeklong internal working conference in which more than 150 participants studied issues laid out by the Task Force on Care for Victims of Sexual Assaults. That task force, formed by Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld in mid-February in response to reports of alleged sexual assaults in Kuwait and Iraq, called for a senior summit to develop a plan for DoD-wide policies and programs to address the problem.

Among that task force's recommendations was that DoD establish a single office to develop standardized DoD-wide policies regarding sexual assault and to help the services and combatant commanders put them in place. The new Joint

Task Force for Sexual Assault Prevention and Response is expected to be fully "stood up" by late October.

McClain said the office will take the summit results and work with the services to implement the policies.

McClain acknowledged that the Defense Department faces hurdles in confronting sexual assault, a problem, she noted, not only in the military but also in the civilian community.

But she said DoD leaders have demonstrated their commitment to take on the challenge and reducing the incidence of sexual assault within the military. "Our ultimate goal is to prevent sexual assaults," McClain said, "and, failing that, when there is a sexual assault, it's to ensure that the victim is adequately cared for and supported."

RICE *Continued from Page One*

The national security advisor acknowledged that "not everybody likes the fact that we and others in the coalition believed that it was time to go to war" against former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein.

"But sometimes you have to do with what is right. You cannot wait for unanimous consent," she said. "If you waited for unanimous consent, you would never do anything in the international community."

Rice stood firmly by her conviction that the war against what she called "that thorn in the side of any effort to build a different kind of Middle East" was necessary. "I stand by the

decision to go to war against Saddam Hussein and remove this threat to American security that threatens the Middle East," she said. "I stand by, to this day, the correctness of the decision."

Dismissing questions about questionable intelligence assessments about weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, Rice insisted Saddam Hussein had an interest and proven intent to pursue his nuclear-weapons program. All indications show that Iraq would have had nuclear weapons by the end of the decade, she said.

"A policymaker cannot afford to be wrong on the short side, underestimating the ability

of a tyrant like Saddam Hussein who had expertise and who had weapons of mass destruction and had used them in the past and who kept a very strong intent to keep those programs in place," she said. "And anyone who believes that the world was a better place with a false sense of stability with this dictator in power than we are now ... isn't making a good judgment."

Rice called the war in Iraq an important part of the global war on terrorism. "Iraq is not a diversion, but is in fact a central front on the war on terrorism," she said.

"There is a reason that (terrorist leader Abu

Musab) al-Zarqawi and other terrorists are in Iraq and fighting so desperately," she said. "They are fighting because they know that when there is a free and secure and democratizing Iraq in the center of the Middle East that their ideology of hatred is going to be defeated."

While pointing out solid progress in bringing down the al Qaeda terrorist network, Rice said, "It's not enough to deal with al Qaeda and Osama bin Laden" in winning the war on terror.

"You have to change the circumstances that produce al Qaeda," she said. "And that is what a free Iraq will do."

USACE *Continued from Page Seven*

who had not seen new electricity generators for more than a decade.

"Our job here isn't just to bring Iraq more electricity, it is to help the Iraqi people create a fair and equitable system that will last for years to come," Stor said. "It's about new and rehabilitated generators, spare parts, training. It's about giving them a solid foundation to build from after we leave."

Five other electricity-generation stations across the country are in the process of being transferred back to the Ministry of Electricity, while work continues on finishing the Corp's initial projects list with a price tag of more than \$1 billion.

It's the final step for the projects that began more than a year ago and have served as the daily fuel for Stor and the

team of Iraqi and international contractors working to rebuild the nation.

"We found a dilapidated infrastructure when we arrived," said Lt. Col. Jeffrey Ogden, the Corps' top electricity reconstruction official in Baghdad. "Thanks to the hard work of the Iraqi contractors and laborers and our Corps team, we are leaving behind a system that is much better than what we found."

Since arriving in Iraq last fall, the Corps has built more than 1,200 towers, repaired 8,600 kilometers of transmission line and rehabilitated or built enough generators to bring an additional 1,621 Megawatts to the national grid.

It's an effort that has employed more than 10,000 Iraqis and pumped more than \$500,000 in the local economy.

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- President George W. Bush

Field artillery Soldiers make noise again

Story and photos by
Spc. Aaron Ritter
 139th Mobile Public
 Affairs Detachment

QAYYARAH, Iraq — Booms sounded throughout Forward Operating Base Endurance as field artillery Soldiers took a break from their typical deployment duties and fired their M198 155mm Howitzers during a training exercise Sept. 8 and again Sept. 11.

Soldiers of B Battery, 1st Battalion, 37th Field Artillery Regiment, 3rd Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division (Stryker Brigade Combat Team) focused the training to keep a high level of readiness and ensure their guns are fully mission capable, despite being given a diverse array of new responsibilities throughout their deployment.

“We have performed missions such as convoy-security escorts, infantry missions and civil affairs projects, all of which are not something we are used to,” said B Battery Commander Capt. Dale Barnett. “But this training was a good chance for the guys to be reminded of what their true military occupational specialty is and helped maintain crew proficiency.”

An artillery battery is generally responsible for providing infantry Soldiers with direct-fire support. However, current operations in northern Iraq have not warranted the fire power of the field artillery.

Although they’ve accepted their new roles with pride, the Soldiers said they were eager to return to the tasks they were trained to do — step behind their cannons and pull the lanyard once again.

B Battery Soldiers said they especially welcomed the training and sound of explosions since they have only fired the guns on two occasions since being deployed to Operation Iraqi Freedom. Before the live fire, Soldiers performed several dry-fire



A gun crew with B Battery, 1st Battalion, 37th Field Artillery Regiment, 3rd Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division (Stryker Brigade Combat Team) works together to adjust their aim, ram a round into the chamber and prepare to fire a M-198 155mm Howitzer during a live-fire training exercise at Forward Operating Base Endurance Sept. 8.

rehearsals, practicing proper crew drill procedures on both the gun line and the fire direction center.

As two guns stood poised to take on the “enemy,” the firing crews waited anxiously for their first fire mission from the FDC. The make-shift targets were in a distant field outside the base, void of structures and local residents.

The crews had the goal to hit as close to the targets as possible, if not destroy them.

Barnett said it was great to see his Soldiers excited about finally getting to fire the cannons and see the smiles on the faces of gunners and staff officers alike. Passing Soldiers also stopped and enjoyed the sights and sounds of steel being thrown downrange.

Accuracy is the key aspect of the battery’s mission success.

“We concentrate on accuracy and not so much on speed,” said Spc. Jason Welch, a cannon crew member with B Battery. “We double and triple check for accuracy before a round goes downrange because speed doesn’t matter if the round doesn’t hit its target.”

The training meant more than just a morale boost to the field artillery Soldiers. It also served as a deterrent.

“The exercise showed our fire power to those who might plan attacks against multinational forces,” Akins said. “We’re hoping that if they see this, they might be intimidated and think twice about such attacks.”

Every training opportunity is important to the Soldiers so they can stay at peak performance if they are called upon.

“If the base comes under mortar or rocket attack, we need to jump on the guns quickly

to counter fire,” Welch said. “If we don’t maintain our training, we might get sluggish or sloppy and it’s our job to protect the Soldiers on the base to the best of our ability.”

B Battery Soldiers are not the only ones who benefited from this training opportunity. Soldiers with the 3rd Squadron, 17th Cavalry Regiment and C Company, 52nd Infantry Regiment (Anti-Tank) also participated as observers, much as they would in real-world situations.

Whether it’s cavalry Soldiers flying overhead in Kiowa helicopters or infantry Soldiers looking through binoculars, these units serve as the eyes and ears of the field artillery. As in this exercise, they relayed target locations so gunners could adjust fire and also made sure civilians and structures were not injured or damaged by mistake during the training.

“It was an excellent opportunity that allowed different types of units to work and train together as an integrated Army, and the training mission was all the more successful because of their assistance,” Barnett said.

At the same time, the exercise also allowed the battery to perform its certifications which require crew sections to perform live fire training every six months and perform the annual verifications to ensure the guns are operating properly.

Similar training is expected to continue for the battery’s remaining guns throughout the duration of the unit’s deployment.

All the Soldiers continue to look forward to hearing the sounds of its field artillery as a reminder of where their true passions for their work lies.

“We actually were able to do the job we enjoy and were trained to do,” Welch said. “It’s great to hear the sounds, feel the explosions and know that we’re working together as a team to get those rounds downrange once again.”



Above: A round flies downrange out of an M-198 155mm Howitzer to eliminate its “target” during a training exercise held at Forward Operating Base Endurance Sept. 8.

Left: Sgt. Jesse Akins, a gunner and ammunition team chief with B Battery, 1st Battalion, 37th Field Artillery Regiment, 3rd Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division (Stryker Brigade Combat Team), adjusts the aim of the M-198 155mm Howitzer based on directions from the Fire Direction Center during at live-fire training exercise at Forward Operating Base Endurance Sept. 8.

Marines take on role as guardian angels

Story and photo by
Marine Sgt.
Clinton Firstbrook
Scimitar staff

AN NAJAF, Iraq — In 1968, the Jimi Hendrix Experience released its fourth album, "Electric Ladyland," which included track 15, "All Along the Watchtower."

Today the Marines of 1st Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment's Charlie Company are embodying that song title as they sit atop Forward Operating Base Golf here scanning the horizon with their M-240 machine guns for any suspicious activity between their base's outer walls and the edge of the old cities An Najaf and Kufa.

"We have to make sure nothing slips by us because we're the first line defense," said Lance Cpl. Tawasha Shnein, a mortarman. "Sometimes it goes by pretty fast, and other times it's extremely slow."

To make sure the perimeter is manned 24 hours a day, seven days a week, the company is broken into teams that rotate four hours on, eight hours off. Then the next day they are on standby as part of the quick-reaction force for emergencies



Radio operator Lance Cpl. Timothy Tomisim sits behind his M-240 machine gun at Forward Operating Base Golf, scanning his lane of fire alongside the old city An Najaf, Iraq.

"Since each day is pretty much the same, the weeks blend into one another and you lose track of time," said Shnein. "I can't even remember exactly when we got here. I'd rather be out on patrol, but I recognize the job I do is just as important, if not more."

Before the fighting broke out in

An Najaf, Charlie Company was stationed at FOB Duke conducting daily patrols throughout the area.

"The El Salvadorian army held this position before us," said Cpl. Joey McBroom, a Charlie Company 2nd platoon squad leader. "But when the fighting started again, we were sent in to help out

with security and to conduct combat operations. Every day we were taking repeated mortar and small-arms fire."

Positioned at various locations throughout the FOB, each Marine is responsible for surveillance on a specific sector of fire.

"When I'm up there, the only

"Although nothing is happening right now, all of us still need to remain vigilant because we're the ones who are watching everybody's back."

Cpl. Joey McBroom

thing that runs through my head is making sure I concentrate on my area," said Lance Cpl. Kevin Koester, a Charlie Company machine-gunner. "It can get lonely and boring at times, but it's not a bad way to spend your day."

Even though there is a ceasefire in An Najaf, the Marines of Charlie Company say that is no reason to become complacent in their duties.

"Although nothing is happening right now, all of us still need to remain vigilant because we're the ones who are watching everybody's back," said McBroom. "When on post, we're their guardian angels."



The place to access the latest MNF-I/MNC-I news and information is online. Check out www.mnf-iraq.com to stay informed.

Children flock to youth center

By Sgt. Tina M. Beller
350th Civil Affairs Command

BAGHDAD, Iraq — Amidst the streets of the Karadah District here where tall palm trees burst with sweet, sticky dates, neighborhood children spend their summer days frolicking about, seeking mischief. Rather than playing in the streets and falling prey to harmful insurgent recruiting activity, the children of Karadah now have something more exciting to occupy both their time and their minds.

Located on Wazeer Street in the southeastern district of Baghdad, the Karadah Youth Center has officially opened for business with the commencement of the new school session. U.S. Army civil affairs Soldiers were on the scene to help celebrate the opening.

Master Sgt. Juan Morales, who hails from New York, serves with the 350th Civil Affairs Command from Pensacola, Fla., and coordinated the delivery of a school-supply donation from a Veterans of Foreign Wars post in the U.S.

"I contacted my local VFW and asked them if they would be interested in putting something together as a donation for the Karadah Youth Center project grand opening," said Morales, a father of two who is a corrections officer in his civilian career. "They sent a lot more than what we expected. It was great."

The school supplies and other items were valued at more than \$1500.

Grand-opening day was full of children running everywhere.

Up the stairs, down the stairs, across the first-floor landing they raced, scouting out every crevice as though they had been sugar addicts crashing from a high and someone

had just opened the flood gates to a new candy store.

"Ever since I was a kid here, running around the streets like we did, it has been my dream to give something back to my community and keep the kids off the streets and out of harm's way," said Safa, the neighborhood resident behind the Karadah Youth Center. "We needed more of this when I was a child myself."

Safa said his family generations before him had owned the building and the land the Karadah Youth Center now resides on. Over the course of Iraq's history, the land and properties have changed hands several times.

One of Saddam's brothers-in-law resided in the home until early 2003.

To see the former regime-owned home and grounds remodeled into a safe haven exclusively for the children is quite a delight for about 5,000 of Karadah's kids who could potentially visit here during summer time alone, not to mention the hundreds who will visit weekly during school time, Safa said.

"Ideally, the youth center will be a strong arm in mentoring and educating Karadah's kids," said Safa. "We would like to have the school teachers bring the students here for an hour a week. Our volunteer teachers will provide computer instruction, and, here, our volunteer staff can mentor them and help them prepare for a positive future ... one free of violence."

The youth center provides a host of services and attractions to children of all ages.

"This youth center is a great, safe place for Karadah kids," said Safa, a patient, yet excitable man in his fifties who still enjoys eating those sweet, sticky dates. "When things you do benefit the children, you benefit the future leaders of Iraq. How can you go wrong?"



Above: Staff Sgt. Robert Bussell, the deputy commandant for the 1st Cavalry Division's Horse Cavalry Detachment, examines the nose of Al-Adul, a seven-year-old stallion who once belonged to Saddam Hussein and his family.

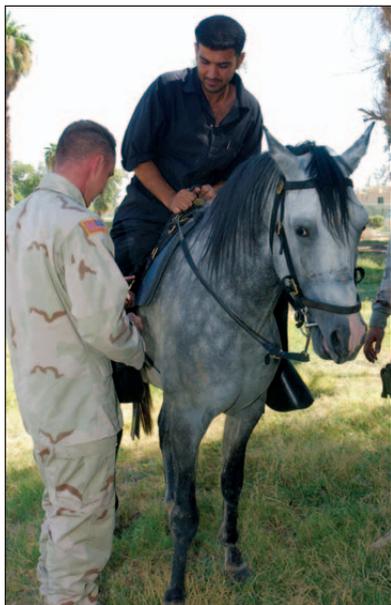
Right: Sgt. Mark Gonsalves (center), the stable team leader, and Pfc. Dominick Anderson (right), a stable trooper, both of the 1st Cavalry Division's Horse Cavalry Detachment, help Iraqi handlers clear rocks from the horse paddock area.



Troopers instruct Iraqi horse handlers

Story and photos by
Staff Sgt. Susan German
122nd Mobile Public
Affairs Detachment

BAGHDAD, Iraq — Trading computers and badges for saddles and spurs has provided a welcome break for troopers of the 1st Cavalry Division's Horse Cavalry Detachment working with Saddam Hussein's former horses at the



Sgt. Scott Woodbury, a farrier for the 1st Cavalry Division's Horse Cavalry Detachment, adjusts the stirrup straps before veterinarian Wasseem Wali rides seven-year-old stallion Al-Adul.

Baghdad Zoo.

After months of desk duty guarding the division main headquarters building, the Soldiers recently had the opportunity to get back in the saddle while also educating the horses' Iraqi handlers about suitable horse care and training techniques.

Before their deployment to Iraq, detachment Soldiers spent their time performing at parades, rodeos and fairs throughout the United States. Daily duties included maintaining their herd of horses and mules and equipment required for their performances. Some of the Soldiers are also trained saddle makers, farriers, boot makers and veterinary technicians.

Staff Sgt. Robert Bussell is the platoon sergeant and saddle maker for the detachment back at Fort Hood, Texas. Experience gained while growing up around horses on his grandparents' farm in eastern Texas coupled with his time at Fort Hood lends credence to the advice he passes on to the Iraqi veterinarians and caretakers. Because the horses belong to the state, it's up to the Iraqis to make the decisions on their care and handling, Bussell said.

"There's a lack of knowledge on some of the modern equine skills, such as medications, training techniques and doctrine that

can be used for the animals," Bussell said. "We're trying to get them as much information as we can to make a better future for the animals and the people here."

At one time, the horses numbered nearly 100, but traumatized by war, their numbers have dwindled. The remaining horses were gathered up after the war was over, according to Bussell, and nineteen horses currently reside at the zoo.

Veterinarian Wasseem Wali has worked at the zoo for a year and with the Americans for the past six or seven months. Although his specialty is caring for the lions at the zoo, he is learning about horses and even pitches in to assist the stable help when necessary.

The horses were originally stabled at Camp Victory, with subsequent moves to Abu Ghraib, the University of Baghdad and their most recent home, the zoo. While a horse is not your typical zoo animal, Saddam's former horses are biding their time surrounded by more common zoo inhabitants like camels and ostriches until the time when more appropriate facilities can be built for them.

Long-term plans include building a 100-stall stable, an exercise area and an equine education center in Baghdad.

"After these [new stables] are built, the situation will change for

"We're trying to get them as much information as we can to make a better future for the animals and the people here."

Staff Sgt. Robert Bussell

the better," Wali said. "I think the future will be good."

The Iraqis pored over several horse-themed magazines that Bussell brought with him, pointing at pictures of horses and equipment that interested them. Pictures are good when a language barrier impedes communication.

Detachment Soldiers make the trip to the zoo several times a week and are getting to know the horses better.

"Because there is a language barrier, it's best sometimes that we just get hands on for ourselves — throw a saddle on them, get on and find out what level they've been put through," Bussell said. On this particular trip, they

brought along a saddle and bridle. Being able to ride the horses was an added bonus, an activity they hadn't enjoyed since being deployed earlier this year.

On a smaller scale, but one that will add to the horses' safety and comfort, detachment Soldiers have built one of several planned pens for two stallions previously tied up to trees in order to keep them separated.

Maad Amer Mohammad, the manager of the original Genetic Arab Horses Generating Center, has worked in the center for more than 10 years and said he wants to increase in the number of horses.

"By doing that, we can help other animal educators have horses with original Arab characteristics, especially the male horses [to pass on the Arabian genes]," Mohammad said.

The Soldiers voiced their praise for a dappled gray stallion named Al-Adul, describing him as beautiful, strong and magnificent — a good horse for breeding purposes. The Iraqis preferred a smaller stallion which carried the traditional Arabian characteristics, including a narrow dishd face, to breed for traditional Arab features.

"The horses are important to the Iraqi people, especially Arabic horses," Wali said. "Their history is with the Arabic people."

Divers make big splash at Abu Nuwas Park

Story and photo by Spc. Al Barrus
122nd Mobile Public
Affairs Detachment

BAGHDAD, Iraq — Soldiers of the 86th Dive Team demolished a boat that was partially sunken in the Tigris River at the Abu Nuwas Park in central Baghdad Sept. 26.

The 35-foot tugboat's superstructure and cabin were an eyesore for the park, which is undergoing renovations by the 1st Cavalry Division, said 1st Lt. Jenny Jo Hartney, an operations officer in the 1st Cav. Div. Engineer Brigade.

"While we were at the park I saw this eyesore and, being a diver myself, I really wanted to tackle this," said Hartney, who coordinated the demolition project.

After the mission was approved by higher command, the 86th Dive Team, based out of Fort Eustis, Va., was called in for the job. It gave the divers the chance to practice their demolition skills using plastic explosives.

"We were going to try and lift up the entire boat, but that would be too difficult because of the size, so we decided to just flatten it," said 1st Lt. Eric Marshall, the 86th Dive Team officer in charge. "No one knows where the boat came from or how it got there. No one cares, either, so we get to blow it up."

The seven-man team conducted reconnaissance of the site as well as a test shot on the submerged boat, using two pounds of plastic



With all spectators and buildings at least 300 meters away, charges detonate and send a sunken boat's wheelhouse approximately 150 feet in the air before it crashes safely into the Tigris River and out of view for Abu Nuwas Park-goers.

explosives, to get a feel for what kind of structure they were dealing with two days before the operation.

The day of the event called for more preparations. Soldiers of the 2nd Battalion, 162nd Infantry Regiment, 39th Brigade Combat Team provided security at the site and helped spread the word to the local security forces so they would expect the explosion.

"Today we are using 14 pounds of the explosives to cut away the wheel house that's jutting out, and a one-pound charge to knock it over, all in one shot," Marshall said.

With everything "a go," six divers loaded up their raft with explosives, sandbags and the wire needed to rig their target. When the rigging was complete, the divers moved back 300 meters from the blast site to detonate. A group of spectators, both Soldiers

and Iraqi children, watched with ears plugged.

First came a great splash, followed by a thunderous boom and subtle shockwave. The blast exceeded everyone's expectations, pushing the bulk of the boat's cabin nearly 150 feet into the air. Boisterous cheers and applause followed as the debris rained from the sky.

"The plume went higher than we expected," Marshall said. "We assumed it would be a nice cutting charge that would just slice through the metal, but it had a lot more explosive reaction than we thought, but no one got hurt. It shot that wheel house up a good 150 feet, but we liked it; that's why we are engineers."

It was the highlight of the day, but not the end. As expected, other portions of the sunken craft still remained above the water line, and another detonation was needed.

"After the first detonation, there was the section in the front and the one in the back that were sticking out, as well as some railings," Hartney said.

The divers pressed on and put another 10 pounds of explosives in the areas needed. It was a smaller explosion on the river as the sun began to set.

"There is some debris still sticking out, but we can just go out ... and pull it apart on a different day," she said. "I think it went excellent. No injuries to personnel or equipment. It accomplished what we needed."

Cavalry Soldiers shoe Iraqi children

By Sgt. Santiago Rubio
68th Chemical Company

BAGHDAD, Iraq — The 68th Chemical Company of the 1st Cavalry Division would have been content to collect a few hundred pairs of shoes for some Baghdad children. Instead, the unit has received more than 5,000 pairs of flip-flops, sandals and sneakers from back home.

And the boxes kept coming.

1st Lt. Brian Cyr, the executive officer with the chemical company, started up the shoe drive nearly three months ago. With so many shoes delivered through his unit, he's bringing the drive to a close.

"We are mission complete," Cyr said.

The 68th Chemical Company is currently serving in the Al Rashid district of southern Baghdad. The unit initially began the shoe drive when they saw that many Iraqi children had nothing on their feet.

Publicity from the event widened when Catholic News Services, a national newsletter, picked up the story. Shoe shipments, as well as a few monetary

donations, came in from all over the United States.

Cyr, a Nebraska native, said that seeing the children put on a new pair of shoes for the first time is something he will never forget.

"The joy on their faces is a lifetime of memories," he said.

The chemical company gave out a thousand pairs of shoes initially in one distribution effort.

"Then more boxes started coming in, so we would take them out on patrol and hand them out to groups of kids and their mothers" he said. "Now the children have something on their feet to play soccer with, and the Soldiers couldn't be happier."

Cyr called the shoe donations a bright spot for his unit during this deployment. Twelve soldiers from the 68th have been wounded in combat since arriving in Baghdad.

Even with the hardships, Cyr said handing out the footwear has shown many people that most Iraqis are appreciative of U.S. efforts to bring peace.

"It has definitely shown Soldiers that the majority of Iraqis are not the ones shooting at us," he said.



Photo courtesy of 68th Chemical Company, 1st Cavalry Division

Iraqi children in the Al Rashid district of Baghdad show their glee, posing with 1st Lt. Brian Cyr, over receiving new footwear. Soldiers of the 1st Cavalry Division's 68th Chemical Company here received more than 5,000 pairs of shoes and delivered them over the past three months.

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Soldiers hone skills, take out frustration

Story and photo by
Sgt. Kimberly Snow
196th Mobile Public
Affairs Detachment

FORWARD OPERATING BASE NORMANDY, MUQ-DADIYAH, Iraq — For a small group of Soldiers tucked away in a corner of Forward Operating Base Normandy here, the gloves are on — along with headgear and mouthpieces.

Capt. Jamey E. Friel, the 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry Regiment maintenance officer, has been training and teaching boxing fundamentals as well as supervising and refereeing sparring sessions for Soldiers stationed here since early May.

“You’re a little tight, loosen up,” he said to one of his trainees. “Okay now, parry my punch. Good, good.”

Friel’s easygoing manner encourages the fledgling boxers, some of whom are just getting started and others who are looking to fine-tune their skills. Others, he said, just want to get in the ring and see what they can do.

“There are a lot of guys who just put the gloves on and... they’ll go at it, kind of like they’re in a bar,” Friel said. “I try to give these guys a little bit of skill, build their confidence.”

The sparring matches actually started during the unit’s deployment to Kosovo last year, he said. He trained Soldiers who already had some experience and refereed matches to make sure the guys didn’t get hurt.

The sparring sessions resumed here in Iraq when Capt. Brian M. Ducote and Friel approached some of the Georgian Soldiers who were



Capt. Jamey E. Friel (right), spars with Sgt. Shane D. Coulon at Forward Operating Base Normandy.

stationed there and asked them if they wanted to do some boxing and wrestling, he said.

“Of course, they were very excited about it,” said Friel. “It was interesting. They were really a jovial group of guys who wouldn’t pass on the opportunity to either get in the ring and fight or get in the ring and wrestle.”

Stories of his initial matches with Soldiers from the Georgian 16th Mountain Infantry Battalion have achieved somewhat mythical proportions among troops stationed at FOB Normandy. One Soldier recalled at least 15 challengers lined up for a shot at Friel. He insists, however, that five was the most he fought consecutively.

“I’d go a couple of rounds with one, then another would come in,”

he said. “It was good training for me because when I used to box competitively, that was one of my techniques. I’d bring a guy in the ring for two minutes and then rotate him out and bring a fresh guy in, just to continue to work me.”

Sgt. Shane D. Coulon, a Bradley Fighting Vehicle mechanic with the battalion’s headquarters company, is one of Friel’s current trainees.

Coulon, who said he enjoys contact sports, began sparring and training with Friel in early September. Although he was with the unit in Kosovo and wanted to do it then, Coulon said he didn’t have the time.

He said he enjoys the sessions and wishes they had more time for

them. As it is, they try to get together twice a week for about two hours. And he said the sparring sessions have improved his physical fitness.

“Going out and (sparring) is better than running two miles. I get winded a lot faster,” he said. “I’ve also started going to the gym a lot more. You need more stamina and more strength.”

Over the Fourth of July holiday, the maintenance section put together an exhibition match. Friel sparred in a couple of matches and refereed several more, encouraging the Soldiers with any sort of grudge or animosity to “put the gloves on and just have at it,” said Coulon.

He said eventually, Friel, who is no stranger to competition, wants

them to compete against some of the other sections to check their progress.

While a cadet at the United States Military Academy at West Point, N.Y., Friel took third place in the national collegiate boxing championships during his sophomore year and improved to second place his junior year.

He also took advantage of an opportunity to spend a semester at the United States Air Force Academy just outside Colorado Springs, Colo., as part of an exchange program. He did that because the boxing program was one of the best in the nation, he said.

The Air Force Academy’s Falcons have won 18 of 25 national team titles and all 25 regional titles. They have also produced 90 individual champions.

While attending the Air Force Academy, Friel met and trained with boxing coach Eddie Weishers, whom he said was the most influential person in his boxing career. “He’s not only a tremendous man, but also a tremendous coach at the national collegiate level,” he said.

Friel, 27, began boxing in his hometown of Galesburg, Ill., only six months before reporting to West Point. He said boxing has been a passion of his for as long as he can remember. And fortunately, he said, boxing classes were required for all male cadets. Female cadets must complete a self-defense course.

“My parents wouldn’t let me fight until I showed them that it was a requirement once I got accepted at West Point,” he said. “I used that as my bargaining chip, and I started fighting and I haven’t stopped since.”

Troops in Iraq to view World Series live on AFN

By Master Sgt. Rich Simonsen
Armed Forces Network Iraq

BAGHDAD, Iraq — When the umpire yells “play ball” to start game one of the World Series, troops deployed in Iraq will be able to see the game live on the American Forces Network.

AFN will carry Major League Baseball’s television feed of the 2004 Fall Classic starting at 2:30 a.m. Oct. 24. The network will show the games live on its AFN Prime channels. Many troops in Iraq, however, only have access to over-the-air broadcasts of AFN’s News and Sports channels. Without the assistance of the Armed Forces Radio and Television Service headquarters, this would have meant that service members would not have been able to watch the games live.

Lawrence Sichter, AFN’s chief of affiliate relations, said the network will switch

“This is a super chance for the people serving in the Multi-National Force-Iraq to enjoy some of the best baseball and ball players in the world.”

Lt. Col. Michael Halbig

decoders feeding transmitters to the Prime channel for the duration of the World Series games.

“In January,” Sichter said, “we tuned decoders so troops in Iraq could see the NFC/AFC playoffs. We’re doing the same

thing for the World Series.”

The plan would only involve those decoders directly connected to over-the-air transmitters. Installations with multiple-channel cable systems already receiving AFN Prime will not be affected.

“This is a super chance for the people serving in the Multi-National Force-Iraq to enjoy some of the best baseball and ball players in the world,” said the AFN Iraq commander, Lt. Col. Michael Halbig. “We’re proud to be able to provide this slice of home to our deployed members. AFN Iraq works continuously to provide the best radio and television service to our deployed troops.”

For viewers more interested in sleep than watching the games live, AFN plans to rebroadcast the game in the early afternoon Iraq time on the AFN Sports channel. You can find more information on AFN television schedules by visiting www.myafn.net.

2004 World Series schedule (Iraq Time)

Game one — Sunday, Oct. 24, 2:30 a.m.

Game two — Monday, Oct. 25, 2:30 a.m.

Game three — Wednesday, Oct. 27, 3 a.m.

Game four — Thursday, Oct. 28, 3 a.m.

Game five (if necessary) — Friday, Oct. 29, 3 a.m.

Game six (if necessary) — Sunday, Oct. 31, 3:30 a.m.

Game seven (if necessary) — Monday, Nov. 1, 3:30 a.m.