

Garryowen, IA troops nab insurgents

By Staff Sgt. Jon Cupp

1BCT, 1st Cavalry Division
Public Affairs

AL QUADRIA, Iraq — Hours before the sun came up, Soldiers from the 1st Squadron, 7th “Garryowen” Cavalry Regiment along with their counterparts from the 2nd Brigade, 9th Iraqi Army Division (Mechanized) were out in force taking down extremists and searching for weapons caches as well as gathering information leading to the capture of terrorists.

Combining their efforts, within just two hours the Garryowen and Iraqi Army troops had captured 15 detainees suspected of terrorist activities in the Taji region and had searched ten houses for weapons caches during an Iraqi-led cordon and search May 28 here.

“Today we’re conducting operations within our entire area of operations to disrupt terrorist cells and this has been a great opportunity to disrupt Al Qaeda in Iraq who are operating within our area,” said San Antonio native Maj. Carl Michaud, operations officer for 1-7th Cavalry. “We’re also helping the Iraqi soldiers to protect citizens in the Baghdad security belt and disrupt the enemy’s lines of communications and to help build up stability in that area.”



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Rachel M. Ahner, 982nd Combat Camera Company (Airborne)

Lt. Col. Kevin MacWatters (center), commander, 1st Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, moves through the streets of Al Quadria, Iraq alongside Soldiers from his Troop A as they work with Iraqi Army troops from the 1st Battalion, 2nd Brigade, 9th Iraqi Army Division (Mechanized) during a combined cordon and search operation May 28.

Throughout the operation, Soldiers from the squadron and Iraqi soldiers weaved a net to capture the suspected terrorists. During one part of the operation, Soldiers from Troop C brought in four detainees, who had been carrying weapons through a field, but fled when U.S. troops moved in on them.

“We confiscated three AK-47 rifles and a pistol which

were dropped in a field as the suspects ran from us, but we had both mounted and dismounted support and a plan in place to prevent them from getting away,” said Melrose, Fla. native 1st Sgt. Donel Washington, top non-commissioned officer for Troop C.

“Any day when we’re out and have successes like this one, it’s a good day,” said Mulberry, Ind. native Spc. Aaron

Allmandinger, a scout with Troop C who assisted in bringing in captured detainees and helping Iraqi Army troops as they placed detainees on Iraqi Army trucks.

Working with the Iraqi Army troops to help them take terrorists off the streets has definitely been a worthwhile experience, according to Michaud.

(See **TAKEDOWN**, page 3)

“War is an ugly thing, but not the ugliest of things. The decayed and degraded state of moral and patriotic feeling which thinks that nothing is worth war is much worse. The person who has nothing for which he is willing to fight, nothing which is more important than his own personal safety, is a miserable creature and has no chance of being free unless made and kept so by the exertions of better men than himself.”

John Stuart Mill, English economist and philosopher



Gen. David H. Petraeus
Commanding General
Multi-National Force - Iraq

For MNF-I Members: Values

Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, and Coast Guardsmen serving in Multi-National Force-Iraq:

Our values and the laws governing warfare teach us to respect human dignity, maintain our integrity and do what is right. Adherence to our values distinguishes us from our enemy.

This fight depends on securing the population, which must understand that we--not our enemies-- occupy the moral high ground. This strategy has shown results in recent months. Al

Qaeda's indiscriminate attacks, for example, have finally started to turn a substantial portion of the Iraqi population against it.

In view of this, I was concerned by results of a recently released survey conducted last fall in Iraq that revealed an apparent unwillingness on the part of some U.S. personnel to report illegal actions taken by fellow members in their units. The study also indicated that a small percentage of those surveyed may have mistreated noncombatants. This survey should spur reflection on our conduct in combat.

I fully appreciate the emotions that one experiences in Iraq. I also know first hand the bonds between members of the "brotherhood of the close fight." Seeing a fellow trooper killed by a barbaric enemy can spark frustration, anger, and a desire for immediate revenge. As hard as it might be, however, we must not let those emotions lead us--or our comrades in arms--to commit hasty, illegal actions. In the event that we witness or hear such actions, we must not let our bonds prevent us from speaking up.

Some may argue the we would be more effective if we sanctioned torture or other expedient methods to obtain information from the enemy. They would be wrong. Beyond the basic fact that such actions are illegal, history shows that they also are frequently neither useful nor necessary. Certainly, extreme physical action can make someone "talk;" however, what the individual says may be of questionable value. In fact, our experience in applying interrogation standards laid out in the Army Field Manual (2-22.3) on Human Intelligence Collector Operations that was published last year shows that the techniques in the manual work effectively and humanely in eliciting information from detainees.

We are, indeed, warriors. We train to kill our enemies. We are en-

gaged in combat, we must pursue the enemy relentlessly, and we must be violent at all times. What sets us apart from our enemies in this fight, however, is how we behave. In everything we do, we must observe the standards and values that dictate that we treat noncombatants and detainees with dignity and respect. While we are warriors, we are also human beings. Stress caused by lengthy deployments and combat is not a sign of weakness; it is a sign that we are human. If you feel such stress, do not hesitate to talk to your chain of command, your chaplain, or a medical expert.

We should use the survey results to renew our commitment to the values and standards that make us who we are and to spur re-examination of these issues. Leaders, in particular, need to discuss these issues with their troopers--and as always, they need to set the right example and strive to ensure proper conduct. We should never underestimate the importance of good leadership and the difference it can make.

Thanks for what you continue to do it is an honor to serve with each of you.

DAVID H. PETRAEUS
 General, USA
 Commanding

A Note from the Editor

The Taji Times would appreciate your feedback.

Please let us know what types of stories you would like to see in the Taji Times. Let us know how we can better serve you, the readership. Also, we are willing to take submissions from units on Taji. Send us your photos from the field. When submitting photos or stories, please ensure that when highlighting particular Soldiers that you include their rank, full name, full unit and spell out their job title. If you have any comments or questions about the publication, feel free to email us at the below address:

jon.cupp@1bct1d.army.mil

TAJI TIMES

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Taji Times is a command information newspaper in accordance with Army Regulation 360-1.

The Public Affairs Office is on Gamecocks Ave. in building 543, VOIP 242-6914. Taji Times, HHT 1st BCT 1st CD, APO AE 09378.

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Stallions, IA search, capture detainees

By Staff Sgt. Jon Cupp

1st BCT, 1st Cavalry Division
Public Affairs

HOR AL BOSH, Iraq — In a big push to clear the streets here of insurgents, Iraqi Army troops of the 3rd Brigade, 9th Iraqi Army Division (Mechanized) teamed with Soldiers from the 2nd “Stallion” Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment to perform a large Iraqi-led joint cordon and search, going door to door to each house in every neighborhood in the village.

In this particular joint operation, the Stallions simply observed as the Iraqi Army troops performed the June 6 searches here.

The Iraqi soldiers walked from house to house checking for weapons caches and meeting the people as well as handing out tips cards for information on any insurgents that may be lurking in the neighborhoods. When they were needed, Soldiers from the 2nd Bn., 8th Cav. Regt. assisted the IA soldiers.

“They’re (the IA troops are) pretty comfortable with everything and taking it slowly and deliberately as they go about their searches,” said Bedford, Va. native 1st Lt. Ben Melton, a platoon leader for Company D,



U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Jon Cupp, 1st BCT, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs

Iraqi Army troops from the 3rd Brigade, 9th Iraqi Army Division (Mechanized) and Soldiers from the 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment patrol the streets of Hor Al Bosh June 6 during a joint cordon and search.

2nd Bn., 8th Cav. Regt. “They’re really doing an excellent job flushing out the bad guys.”

“This is a mainly IA-driven operation and these are the types of things they need to be doing to eventually be able to take over the security of their own country and that’s exactly what they’re doing.”

Over the past few months, Soldiers from the 2nd Bn., 8th Cav. Regt. have been helping to train the 3rd Bde., 9th IA Div. (Mech.) soldiers with advanced infantry tactics and other aspects of military training. Just

recently, the 2-8 Cav. Soldiers have actually begun going on real missions with their Iraqi counterparts.

“When we go on missions with them, we haven’t had to give them any pointers, they’re pretty much already on it,” said Sgt. Marcus Canseco, a squad leader for Co. D, 2nd Bn., 8th Cav. Regt. who hails from Humble, Texas.

Canseco has seen the Iraqi troops work under fire.

“They’re just like any other infantry squad, they’re highly motivated and dedicated to the

task,” said Canseco. “The other day when they took fire, they handled everything very well and ended up capturing three detainees.”

Within the course of this day’s mission, the Iraqi troops arrested 17 detainees and confiscated several illegal weapons.

The day’s success, according to Canseco, is a testament to the Iraqi Army soldiers and U.S. troops working together to gain the trust of the local people in Hor Al Bosh.

“We’ve been securing our (See **HOR AL BOSH**, Page 4)

(From **TAKEDOWN**, page 1)

“They are definitely professional soldiers, understand their missions and perform the routine without a flaw,” said Michaud.

Yet, the day’s operation was not the first time that Garryowen troops have worked with their Iraqi counterparts. Each week the squadron meets with the 2nd Bde., 9th IA Div. (Mech.) during partnership meetings and to coordinate joint missions together.

As recently as the past few weeks, the partnership has yielded many successes, said Michaud, to include two large

squadron missions in support of the Iraqi mechanized troops in which multiple caches were found near Al Quadria.

One of the things that Michaud believes will prove to be a great asset in the fight against terrorists in the Taji area and during future joint operations with Iraqi Security Forces is Garryowen’s newly established Combat Outpost X-ray near Taji.

“It allows us to project our forces easier into the area to better facilitate clearing the insurgents out,” said Michaud.

According to Michaud, the ultimate goal of working with

Iraqi Security Forces is to help them take over their own areas and control of their nation’s security. Michaud added the troops in the 2nd Bde., 9th IA Div. (Mech.) are making progress toward that goal.

“A great part of the unit is capable of independent operations with or without Coalition Forces,” said Michaud. “They are well on the way to transitioning control of the area to themselves.” Other Soldiers who assisted in the day’s operation said they had their own thoughts on what working with the Iraqi troops meant to them.

“We’re helping them so they can stand on their own, without having to rely on anyone else,” said Westchester, Pa. native Pfc. Derrick Densmore, a forward observer with Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 1-7th Cavalry, who said he enjoys going outside the wire and performing missions with Iraqi troops. “Eventually, they are ready for the day when we’re not here.”

“I believe we really are doing some good here,” said Pfc. Dwayne Baldrige of Darkhorse Forward Support Troop, 1-7th Cavalry who hails from Saratoga, Texas.



U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Jon Cupp

A local Iraqi man talks to Iraqi troops from the 3rd Brigade, 9th Iraqi Army Division (Mechanized) during a cordon and search operation in Hor Al Bosh, Iraq June 6. The Iraqi-led joint operation also involved participation from Soldiers of the 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment. Interacting more with the people in the area, is just one of the many ways Iraqi Army troops are taking the lead in security operations within the village.

(From **HOR AL BOSH**, Page 3) patrol base here and making our presence known, and a lot of the time we've spent here has involved meeting the people and most of them want us and the Iraqi security forces here," said Canseco. "We feel really good about what we're doing here today."

Canseco said he hopes his troops gain an appreciation for the Iraqi people and the Iraqi security forces with whom they are working.

"I hope they see how the people live here and earn a better understanding of the culture," said Canseco. "I think it will give them a better appreciation for the

freedoms they have back home."

"They've also had a great opportunity to get to know the Iraqi soldiers and truly become brothers-in-arms," added Canseco.

Willows, Calif. native Spc. James Boggan, an infantryman with Co. D, 2nd Bn., 8th Cav. Regt. explained what the day's mission meant to him.

"It's a small town and it needs to be cleared so the people here can have a future," said Boggan. "I'm just glad that we're able to help the Iraqi Army as they transition so they can give their people a better life by getting rid of any insurgent elements in their town."



U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Jon Cupp

Bath, Maine native Spc. William Bamford (right), Company D, 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment and Iraqi Army troops from the 3rd Brigade, 9th Iraqi Army Division (Mechanized) prepare to enter a courtyard of a house during a cordon and search in Hor Al Bosh, Iraq June 6. In the operation, 17 suspects were detained.

Support from the sky



**U.S. Army photo by
Spc. Nathan Hoskins,
1st Air Cavalry Brigade,
Public Affairs Office**

Winnboro, Texas native Spc. Caleb Barrett, a UH-60 Black Hawk crew chief for Company C, 3rd "Spearhead" Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, scans the ground for danger while flying through the skies of Baghdad. Spearhead, a Black Hawk battalion, supports the effort in Iraq with multiple missions including air assaults and Soldier transportation. Recently, 3-227th has worked around the clock to provide support to the search for three missing Soldiers south of the Iraqi capital.

Safe neighborhood construction complete

By Sgt. Mike Pryor

*2nd Brigade Combat Team,
82nd Airborne Division
Public Affairs Office*

BAGHDAD –The thick chains attaching the "T-Wall" barrier to the crane shuddered as the slab of heavy concrete was lifted into the air. The crane operator worked his control stick, first swinging the barrier through the air, and then slowly lowering it into place.

As the 14,000 pounds of concrete settled onto the ground with a grinding crunch, the project to secure a neighborhood in Baghdad's Adhamiyah District behind miles of protective barriers came to an end in darkness of the early morning May 28.

The project, overseen by the 82nd Airborne Division's 2nd Brigade Combat Team, involved emplacing temporary barriers and checkpoints around a three-mile area of Adhamiyah in order to protect the local populace from attacks by terrorists.

"This was our biggest project to date,"

said Lt. Eric Brumfield, of Visalia, Calif., a platoon leader with the 2nd BCT's 407th Support Battalion, which oversaw the project's construction. "It was a massive undertaking."

Almost every night for two months straight, paratroopers from the 407th BSB left their base and convoyed to Adhamiyah, emplacing as many as 70 of the huge barriers each night alongside the main road ringing the neighborhood.

"It was probably more labor intensive than anything we've done," said Capt. Priscilla Smoot, of Miami, the commander of Company A, which did the majority of the work for the project.

Brumfield said he was shocked to read early media reports criticizing the project as a Berlin Wall-like partition dividing neighbor from neighbor. In reality, the wall was a simple security measure, he said.

"It's just like driving at home where you have barriers beside the highway. It's no different than that," he said.

In some sections, the project simply

improved on roadblocks that residents had already emplaced themselves, said 1st Lt. Jacob Allen, of New Kent, Va., a platoon leader with Co. A. Allen also pointed out that the wall hasn't restricted foot movement at all in the area.

"There are plenty of places to walk. What this has blocked off is movement of (vehicle-borne) explosives," he said.

Brumfield said that despite the criticism of the project, his paratroopers are proud of what they accomplished.

"We're exhausted. We're tired of seeing the wall every night. But in the end, we did it. We were able to fight through the IEDs and the publicity and everything else and get it done," Brumfield said.

"Now it's time to step back and start looking at the statistics. We have to let time tell if it's going to work," he said.

So far, the results have been positive. Murders are down 61 percent in Adhamiyah between the beginning of April, when construction began, and May 28, when it ended, according to reports compiled by the 2nd BCT.

Beaver fans watch games on Taji

Fellow Oregonians cheer on team in College World Series via streaming video

By Staff Sgt. Jon Cupp

*1st Brigade Combat Team,
1st Cavalry Division
Public Affairs Office*

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – When they say they're Beaver fans they're not talking about Jerry Mathers or the Cleaver clan.

Sgt. Jessy Lakin, a targeting non-commissioned officer with Headquarters Company, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division and Capt. Amanda Doyle, brigade provost marshal, are talking baseball-- college baseball to be precise.

The Beavers they have on their minds are the ones from Oregon State University who shut down the North Carolina State Tarheels two nights straight to win the College World Series which was played in Omaha, Neb. June 23 – 24.

Lakin and Doyle caught the series through streaming video on a computer and both stayed up into the early morning hours of June 24-25 here to catch the games.

"It was excellent having the ability to watch the games, unfortunately at odd hours, but we made it work," said Doyle, who explained that the games started at 3 a.m. here.

"It was worth it just to watch them win," said Lakin, who said game one in the series lasted until about 7 a.m. in the morning. "I still came into work the next day at 8 a.m., but getting to actually see the games was great, last year I could only listen to the games on the radio. I really wish I could be there to actually see the games in person."

The two die-hard Oregon State University baseball fans—Doyle from

Sio, Ore. and Lakin from Philomath, Ore. have hometowns that are just a few miles from the college which is located in Corvallis, Ore. and are practically next door neighbors. Many of the members of Doyle's family to include her grandmother and cousins are from Philomath which happens to be Lakin's hometown.

"It's been really fun. I sent a photo of myself with Lakin to my grandmother and she got a kick out of seeing him," said Doyle, explaining that not only was it good to be working in the same place as a fellow Oregon State fan but also someone who practically came from the same town. "He knows all of my cousins so it was good to push that back to the families."

"It's good to know that I'm working with another person from where I come from," said Lakin. "It makes you feel more at home."

Being fellow Beavers fans gives them the opportunity to share in the camaraderie of the sport.

"It's good to have another Beaver for support who can help me cheer on the teams," said Doyle.

"When bragging about the Beavers, it's always good to have back up," said Lakin with a laugh.

Doyle and Lakin's love of Oregon State University's sports teams is deeply rooted and the two follow the school's football and basketball teams as well.

"The first Oregon State game that I went to was in sixth grade," said Lakin. "Ever since then, I've gone to the games and by my junior and senior years I had season tickets."

"We've always been strong supporters of anything Oregon State," said Doyle. "Both of my parents went to Oregon State and are local to that region. If I was there right now, I'd be there with them for every game."

"I'm borderline fanatical but I'd have to say that my family is completely



Philomath, Ore. native Sgt. Jessy Lakin (left), a targeting noncommissioned officer for Headquarters Company, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, and Sio, Ore. native Capt. Amanda Doyle, brigade provost marshal, watch the College World Series in the early morning hours of June 25.

fanatical," added Doyle explaining that she's the average fan as opposed to the ones who run around painting themselves or wearing cheese heads like folks in Green Bay, Wis. have been known to do.

Doyle also mentioned that her husband is also an Oregon State fan but missed the recent College World Series due to his busy schedule.

This year's College World Series marked the second year in a row that Oregon State's baseball team won the series.

"They've been absolutely amazing, but I was a little worried about them," said Lakin. "It was kind of a shock that they made it this year because they only had two returning field players on the squad."

Both Lakin and Doyle have their own different thoughts on what it meant being able to see their favorite team play in the College World Series while deployed to the combat zone.

"It's good to have that kind of distraction," Doyle said of the games, explaining that with the long hours and stress in Iraq, it was good to be able to take a break. "Getting behind your home team gives you a feeling of normalcy."

"It's nice to know that you can fight for freedom here and still have people back home who are free to play baseball," said Lakin.

Messages from the Homefront

CPT Matthew Weeks (115th BSB S-4 OIC) Happy Belated Father's Day Daddy! Mommy and I miss you very much. So do Sox and Killian. We can't wait to see you! Thank you for being our hero. Please be safe and know that we are thinking of you every minute of every day. We love you so much! Love, Conor and Mommy

To: 115th BSB Staff Happy Belated Mother's day and Happy Belated Father's day to all of you! Conor and I wish you the best, and are praying for your safe return. We are thinking of you always! Love, Maryellen & Conor Weeks

Sgt Josh Burke 15th Sus. Bde: Happy Anniversary to my husband, Here's to four years of marriage and many more to come. Even though we are apart this year we are still in each others hearts. I love you with all that I am and looking forward to your homecoming. Forever your Bride. Come Home Safe and Soon! Sissy Burke

To SPC Jeff O'Haver,
"I know what I am planning for you," says the Lord. "I have good plans for you, not plans to hurt you. I will give you hope and a good future." Jeremiah 29:11 Stay strong my Jeffrey and I'll be strong for you! We miss you so much! Love you!
Love Always,
Your Jill and Nathan "The Boss" O'Haver

My Beebes :)
It was SO incredibly great to see you during your R&R! I had so much fun just hanging out with you and being our silly/dorky selves! I have missed that so much! It hasnt even been that long and i miss you so much already! We dont have much longer though till you're home - and you can bet i'm counting the days! :) I'll talk to you soon I'm sure, but just remember that
I love you and I miss you and to stay safe!
All my love,
forever and ever,
Alexis :)

Ministry Center/Tigris River Chapel Weekly Events Schedule

WEEKLY EVENTS			Ministerial Staff
<u>EVERY Sunday:</u> Ministry Center	0830 Hrs 0830 Hrs 1000 Hrs	Sunday School New Believers Worship Service	Chaplain Leader (CPT) DAVID SCHLICHTER david.schlichter@us.army.mil
<u>1st & 3rd Monday:</u> Tigris River Chapel	1900 Hrs	Leadership Training	Pastoral Lay Minister (WO1) CURTIS JOHNSON curtis.lee.johnson@us.army.mil
<u>2nd & 4th Monday:</u> Tigris River Chapel	1900 Hrs	POWER Prayer	Minister of Music (CPT) MATTHEW MILLER matthew.s.miller@us.army.mil
<u>1st Tuesday:</u> Tigris River Chapel	1900 Hrs	Marital Enrichment	
<u>2nd Tuesday:</u> Tigris River Chapel	1900 Hrs	Women's Fellowship	
<u>3rd Tuesday:</u> Tigris River Chapel	1900 Hrs	Singles' Fellowship	
<u>4th Tuesday:</u> Tigris River Chapel	1900 Hrs	Men's Fellowship	
<u>EVERY Wednesday:</u> Ministry Center	1900 Hrs	Bible Study	
<u>EVERY Thursday</u> <u>*** & Saturday:</u> Ministry Center	1900 Hrs	Choir Rehearsal	
<u>EVERY Friday:</u> Ministry Center	1900 Hrs	JOY NITE!	



Extension: the 8th dirtiest word

By Cmdr. Edward Simmer
 Combat / Operational Stress Psychiatrist
 113th Medical Company
 Combat Stress Control

Several years ago the U.S. Supreme Court came up with a list of the “seven dirtiest words” in a case about obscenity. On Camp Taji (and everywhere else in Iraq right now), many people would add an 8th: “Extension!” As everyone knows by now, virtually all active duty Army tours have been extended to 15 months, meaning those here now have been extended for an additional 3 months.

For most of us, redeployment is a day we look forward to. Some of us “count the days” – or our families do it for us! Often we have events planned after homecoming, which may have been delayed until after we come home. In addition, just thinking about having to spend another 3 months here can be very depressing and can cause significant stress for both those of us here, and our families.

So if you have been extended, what are some ways to deal with it? You could get angry, frustrated, or depressed, or perhaps

all 3. Indeed most of those extended will probably feel some of those emotions at some point. The goal, however, is not to let these emotions get the best of you. Extension, like many things in the Army, and especially in Iraq, is something we have no control over. So getting overly angry and frustrated about it really does not help us very much.

That said, while we may have no control over the extension itself, we can control how we respond to it, and we can help our families adjust to it as well. So how can we do this? Here are a few simple suggestions:

1. Focus your energy and time on the parts you can control – your reaction to the extension, helping your family, rather than on the extension itself.

2. Talk to your family about it. Let them know you would rather be home sooner, but also assure them that you are still coming home, and that you are still looking forward to seeing them.

3. Many people will be getting \$1000 extra per month after they have been here 12 months. Make a plan for the extra money. Saving it is a great idea, as is pay-

ing off bills. But you may also want to use some of it for a special treat for you and your family – perhaps a trip when you get home, or a new piece of gear for your home.

4. Find a way to make the extra 3 months productive. If you have time, consider on-line education, or doing something you enjoy. Perhaps you can work toward a goal in terms of getting in shape. There are lots of possibilities. The important thing is to have something to show for the extra 3 months when you leave here.

5. Consider making a video for your child/family. You can come by Combat Stress Control – we have all the equipment, blank DVDs, mailers, children’s books, etc. that you will need. All you need to bring is yourself. Even if your homecoming is delayed, the video can help keep you and your family connected. You can just stop by, or call us for an appointment at DSN 834-1050 or VOIP 242-6950.

While you cannot control the extension itself, with these steps, you can help control the stress the extension can cause, which will make the extra 3 months go by a little bit quicker!



113th Medical Company Combat Stress Control

“Never Leave A Fallen Comrade”

We are currently offering classes and groups everyday!!!
 No appointments are necessary!!! All classes take place at 10 a.m.
 and 3 p.m. on days listed below.

Mornings: 10 to 11 a.m. Afternoons: 3 p.m. to 4 p.m.



Classes

Monday (Morning Only): Anger Management
Tuesday (Morning Only): Stress Management
Wednesday (Morning Only): Coping Skills
Thursday: Conflict Resolution
Fridays (Morning Only): Relaxation Techniques

Monday (Afternoon Only): Relationships
Tuesday (Afternoon Only): Money Management
Wednesday (Afternoon Only): PTSD Group
Thursday (Afternoon Only): Drug/Alcohol Group
Friday (Afternoon Only): Smoking Cessation

Directions: 113th CSC is located at the corner of Sooner Ave. and 37th. Directly east of the light tower.

113th MEDICAL COMPANY Combat Stress Control, Building 632 Sooner Avenue DSN: 318-834-1050
VOIP: 302-242-6950 (OIC) LTC: daniel.e.lonnquist@us.army.mil (NCOIC) SFC: ibrahim.s.kabbah@us.army.mil

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

Staying fresh for the long haul

By Chaplain (Capt.) Tom Strong
1st Battalion, 37th Field Artillery Chaplain

Greetings from Camp Taji! As you know, the longer you are deployed, the quicker fatigue sets in & frustration pops to the surface. One of the best things we can do is to “rest.” And it is important for staying fresh for the journey.

Years ago, out of necessity, I came up with a personal acronym to help me focus on REST. R=Relate to trusted others, E=Eat healthy & exercise, S=Study something interesting, preferably your faith, T=Take it easy. This could apply if we have two weeks vacation or only pockets of time here & there. The key is to nurture our whole self: our mind, body, heart & soul.

R=Relate to trusted friends. Trusted friends are those who are easy to be around. They are ones for us that carry on a mutual dialog, give & take. We all need several people in our lives where we can express what we are thinking & how we are feeling. Safe people are those who will listen well & accept us for who we are, telling us afterward that they still love us. Whether these friends are near or far, interacting with them will help bring us back to relational balance.

E=Eat healthy & exercise. When we are on the go all the time, it is easy to default to the food that is quickest to eat, but it may not be the best, health-wise. We will feel better if we focus on meats,

vegetables, & fruits. Eating healthy will help us recover from the low-octane blues. Also, demands squeeze out exercise. Add that on top of already feeling tired out, & pretty soon, it’s been weeks or months since we have broken a sweat in our PTs. Exercise is another surefire way to rekindle freshness in our body. We will feel better & sleep better!

S=Study something interesting, preferably our faith. When we are tired, we usually don’t want to think. That’s why it is easy to watch TV, it thinks for us. Our minds do grow tired but our minds are renewed by exercising them in a fresh way. If your faith has been on the shelf for awhile, maybe it is time to dust it off. And/or read up on the interest you just haven’t taken the time for. You will be pleasantly absorbed in something new & something you don’t regularly do.

T=Take it easy. Our doing flows from our being, yet we are so accustomed to doing that we forget how to be! We can get spinning so fast that we begin to think that we are God & limitless, but we are neither. We get addicted to adrenalin & activity. We need to break the routine & chill out. Find a way to be still. God even says, “Be still & know that I am God” (Psalm 46:10a). The key is to relax.

Whether you are going on R & R or trying to stay fresh for the long haul, may God grant you REST along the way & strengthen your warrior soul! May God bless you & your family!

CAMP TAJI RELIGIOUS SERVICES SCHEDULE

Rawhide Chapel (Bldg. 639)
 POC: SPC Leatherman 834-1049

Sunday
 10 a.m. Protestant

Wagonmaster Chapel (Bldg. 97)
 POC: SGT Kimp 834-1124/1161

Sunday
 10 a.m. Church of Christ
 10 a.m. Contemporary Protestant (Theater)

Tuesday/Thursday
 7 p.m. Choir Practice

Friday
 6 p.m. Communion Service

Saturday
 7 p.m. Catholic Mass

Special Forces Chapel
 POC: CH (CPT) Black 246-1032

Sunday
 2 p.m. Protestant

Saturday
 4 p.m. Catholic Mass

Warrior Chapel (Bldg. 510)
 POC: SSG Drain 242-6501

Sunday
 10 a.m. Traditional Protestant
 2 p.m. LDS Service
 6:30 p.m. Contemporary Protestant

Saturday
 10 a.m. Catholic Mass

Tigris River Chapel
 POC: SSG Drain 242-6501

Sunday
 9:30 a.m. Traditional Protestant
 11:00 a.m. Contemporary Protestant
 2:00 p.m. Spanish Protestant

Friday
 12:00 p.m. Islamic Prayer (Jummah)
 1:00 p.m. Islamic Q & A Service
 7:00 p.m. Jewish Service

Saturday
 10:30 a.m. SDA Service
 8:00 p.m. Catholic Mass

For Gospel Services/Weekly Activities at Tigris River Chapel, please see Page 4 of the Taji Times.

A Special Message to the Troops

Dear Soldiers and Comrades of Shawn,
 In a small church outside of Boston, MA., in a small city named Fitchburg, we held a memorial day service. We prayed, thanked the LORD, for those who have gone before you, for you who are serving now and for the young men who will be joining you.
 Our tears were shed for the priceless sacrifices that have been given, so that we might sit in that old new england church, free to worship, free to pray, and free to live in America.
 As a returning CSM Dad and his soon to be deployed LCpl son stood before us, we sung the "Star Spangled Banner". We all know the words to the first verse, but verse four, so appropriately written in 1814, becoming our national anthem in 1931, may it still hold true to this day in 2007:
 "Oh thus be it ever when free men shall stand between their loved homes and wars desolation.
 Blest with victory and peace, may the heaven rescued land praise the Power that hath made and preserved us a nation!
 Then conquer we must, when our cause it is just; And this be our motto: "In God is our trust!" And the star spangled banner in triumph shall wave over the land of the free and the home of the brave."

Continuing in prayerful support of you all,
 the Niemiera Family,
 Greg, Joy, Greg, Lee, Ben, and mommom- Gladys (Kristen & Heather too)
 ps: Shawn, the usual July 4th picnic is on hold till you return!
 1st LT Shawn Jokinen
 D Company, 2-8 Cav
 1BCT



TAJI BUS LINES WITH STOPS

South A

- PX/Mayor's Cell/Freedom Phone
- Pool
- Finance/Post Office/Wrangler Clinic
- Theaters/DFAC2
- Combat Stress
- Blacknight Laundry
- Wolfpack Motorpool

South B

- PX/Mayor's Cell/Freedom Phone
- DFAC 1
- PAX Terminal
- DFAC2/Theater
- ECP 9
- Optometry
- Finance/Post Office/Wrangler Clinic
- Black Night Laundry

Tomahawk Express

- PX/Mayor's Cell/Freedom Phone
- DFAC 1
- PAD 1
- CSC AYRD
- Tomahawk Village
- Gym 129
- PAX Terminal

North A

- PX/Mayor's Cell/Freedom Phone
- DFAC 1
- 61st Blue Devil
- Bldg. 680 MWR
- Bldg. 582 MWR/Gym

North B

- PX/Mayor's Cell/Freedom Phone
- DFAC 1
- POD 1
- MWR 544
- Blue Devil Laundry
- 61st Blue Devil
- PAD 16



**U.S. Army photo by
Spc. Nathan Hoskins,
1st Air Cavalry Brigade
Public Affairs Office**

Wichita, Kan., native Spc. Benjamin Full (left), a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter crew chief, and pilots 1st Lt. Kenny Doleac (center), from Portland, Ore., and Priest River, Idaho, native Chief Warrant Officer 2 Jaime Gordon (right), all Soldiers from Company A, 3rd Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, stand before their peers during a June 8 ceremony in which they'll receive Combat Action Badges for their actions April 5, when their helicopter had a forced landing.

Cavalry aviators receive Combat Action Badges

*1st ACB troops receive
Combat Action Badges after
Blackhawk goes down.*

By Spc. Nathan Hoskins
*1st Air Cavalry Brigade,
1st Cavalry Division
Public Affairs Office*

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – Aviators from the 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, received combat action badges in a June 8 ceremony for their actions when their helicopter went down April 5.

Chief Warrant Officer 2 Jaime Gordon, a UH-60 Black Hawk pilot for Company A “Werewolves,” 3rd Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, 1st ACB, 1st Cav. Div., was the pilot in command that day.

It all started when the helicopter’s number one engine went out and caught on fire, said Gordon a Priest River, Idaho, native.

When the fire began to rage, Wichita, Kan., native, Spc. Benjamin Full, a Black Hawk crew chief for the Werewolves,

helped the pilot fight the fire, he said.

“I can’t see the engine from where I’m seated. (Full) was my eyes to see the engine. Together we fought that fire,” said Gordon.

While Full and Gordon were fighting the engine fire, another fire started inside the cabin where the passengers were seated, said Gordon.

That’s when the other crew chief, Nolanville, Texas, native Sgt. Bruce Adams, from Company B, 3-227th, threw the fire extinguishers to the passengers to help fight the flames bearing down on them, said Gordon.

While most of the crew and passengers were fighting the fires, the co-pilot, Portland, Ore., native 1st Lt. Kenny Doleac of Co. A., was trying to land without the usual communication with Gordon or his crew chiefs, Gordon said.

“(Doleac and Gordon) ensured the safety of their occupants and they minimized the destruction of Army property. Those are two things we are trying to do every time we go out there and fly and do

our mission,” said Carlisle, Pa., native Lt. Col. Michael Shenk, commander of 3-227th in remarks at the ceremony. “I’m glad (Gordon and Doleac) are setting the example for the rest of us pilots and as members of the crews.”

Once Doleac safely landed the helicopter, the crew chiefs, without any concern for their own safety, quickly began evacuating the passengers and pilots, he said.

After the crew and passengers were safely away from the downed aircraft, Full provided first aid to the wounded passengers, said Gordon.

“You hope and expect that the (crew chiefs) will act and react to the situation with the best of their abilities ... there wasn’t one thing they did wrong that day,” he said.

“We thank Pfc. Full for understanding the bigger picture and being a much bigger part of the crew that day,” said Shenk.

Once the badges were pinned on the Aviators in attendance – Adams was not able to attend – the crew did what most heroes do; they went back to work.

15th BTB Soldier to get citizenship in theater

Supply sergeant soon to be naturalized citizen

By Spc. Karly Cooper

15th Sustainment Brigade

1st Cavalry Division Public Affairs

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – Soldiers can get their citizenship in theater after applying and waiting six months. For a citizen there is normally a five-year residency requirement to be eligible to obtain citizenship.

Sgt. Jose Mendoza, a supply sergeant with the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 15th Brigade Troops Battalion, 15th Sustainment Brigade, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) has been approved for citizenship and is about to go thru a naturalization ceremony.

“I am excited to be able to do this, becoming a citizen in Iraq makes me very happy and it does seem a little strange considering the circumstances,” said Mendoza.

The Fullerton, Calif., native has been in the Army for eight years now. “There were better opportunities in the Army,” he said.

Since he has been serving in the Army and living in America all his life, “There’s not much of a difference, I’ve been treated like a United States citizen all along,” he said.

Though serving in the Army, not being a United States citizen did have its downfalls.

“I went to Airborne school, graduated, and then I decided I wanted to go to Ranger School but couldn’t go because I wasn’t a U.S. Citizen,” he said.

To start the process off, he submitted a photo and fingerprints for a background check. He went to his brigade legal office to complete the paperwork and an application. His company commander signed a memo stating that he was not flagged or in trouble.

Once the documents were submitted to the Immigration Naturalization Services (INS) the six month wait began.

“I got my letter about six months later and then I got an e-mail from the legal office in Balad,” said Mendoza.

The process includes an interview where the applicant must demonstrate the ability to write and speak a sentence in English and pass a 100-question exam.



U.S. Army photo by Spc. Karly Cooper, 15th Sustainment Brigade, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs

Sgt. Jose Mendoza from Fullerton, Calif., a supply sergeant with the HHC, 15th BTB, 15th SB, 13th SC (E) has completed the process to becoming a United States Citizen. Mendoza will soon be going through the Naturalization ceremony located at a Logistical Support Area in Balad, Iraq to officially become a citizen.

Now well into his second deployment, he is happy he took the steps that he needed to get naturalized. “My father wanted me to do this a long time ago, but I procrastinated and really should have done it on my first deployment,” he said.

Now that his time of being an immi-

grant is at an end, the beginning of a new life as a citizen it is opening up many possibilities. Mendoza plans to one day to join the Special Forces as a weapons sergeant.

“I really don’t reel any different and I considered myself a citizen before but I am very proud,” said Mendoza.



U.S. Army photo by
Sgt. Mike Pryor, 2nd
Brigade Combat Team,
82nd Airborne Division
Public Affairs Office

Walnut Ridge, Ark., native 1st Lt. Jeremy Tillman, a new platoon leader with Battery B, 2nd Battalion, 319th Airborne Field Artillery Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, gathers information from a local shopkeeper during a recent night patrol through a neighborhood in Baghdad's Adhamiyah District.

Closing the loop: Falcons working to earn, maintain trust of Iraqis

By Sgt. Mike Pryor

2nd Brigade Combat Team,
82nd Airborne Division
Public Affairs Office

BAGHDAD – It's the usual happy chaos when 1st Lt. Josh Rowan arrives at neighborhood advisory council member Abu Muhanned's house for their weekly meeting – children running amuck in the yard, women crowded into the kitchen, and Muhanned standing in the doorway in pajamas and bare feet, a cigarette in one hand, jabbering into his cell phone.

He greets Rowan warmly and ushers him and his Soldiers inside his home nestled in eastern Baghdad's Adhamiyah District. While a security team sets up on the roof, Rowan and Muhanned move to the living room to talk. By now, it's a familiar routine.

It should be.

Muhanned's house was the destination of Rowan's very first patrol in Iraq, almost four months ago, and they have met regularly ever since to plan development projects for the area.

Today, however, will be Rowan's last visit. Rowan, a platoon leader with 2nd Battalion, 319th Airborne Field Artillery Regiment, from College Station, Texas, is moving to a different job. The purpose of this final meeting was to introduce Muhanned to his replacement, 1st Lt. Jeremy Tillman, of Walnut Ridge, Ark.

"All I'm here to do is introduce Tillman and close the loop," Rowan said.

In the Army, the only constant is change. Soldiers are always moving from one position to another and taking over different duties. But in Iraq, the challenge for new leaders like Tillman is, how do you take over a relationship? Rowan and Muhanned worked successfully together because they had a strong personal bond. Tillman will have to build that trust all over again.

"That's the challenge of counter-insurgency warfare," Rowan said.

"It's difficult," agreed Tillman. "It's really just about the individual person's personality."

Over tea and cigarettes at Muhanned's house, Rowan made a big show of introducing Tillman.

"Sir, I look forward to working with you," Tillman told Muhanned, when Rowan was done.

"I will put my hand in your hand. You will protect me, and I will protect you," Muhanned replied.

The meeting continued for almost two hours, with conversation bouncing from topic to topic. One minute they were talking about putting trash cans on the street corners, the next minute about a trip Muhanned's son was planning and the next about security threats in the area. In between, Muhanned's wife served a huge lunch.

When the meeting was over, Tillman said it had been an eye-opening experience. At his previous unit, the focus had been almost entirely on raids and kinetic operations. Tillman could only remember a few times when he had actually sat in an Iraqi's house and talked.

"Here, they're interacting. They're constantly getting out there and talking to local leaders," Tillman said. "The mindset is just totally different."

Since the 2-319th took over its section
(See EARNING TRUST, page 16)

Maintainers keep ACB in the fight

By Sgt. 1st Class Rick Emert

1st ACB, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – If the Soldiers from Company D, 4th “Guns” Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, have anything to say about it, a battle damaged aircraft may be down temporarily, but it won’t be out of the fight forever.

The Co. D, 4-227th, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, Soldiers are about 93 percent complete with a battle damaged Apache that required extensive repairs.

The Apache that they set out to repair had holes in the frame which also caused damage to the windows, wiring and rotors, said Capt. Randy James, commander of Co. D.

“It ... required all three levels of maintenance up to the depot level,” said James, a native of Slidell, La. “We decided to do it here because my guys are that good. We got approval to do the repairs here.”

The other levels of maintenance are unit-level maintenance, which the company-level maintainers can perform; and interim-level maintenance, which would normally be performed by Soldiers and contractors from the 615th Aviation Support Battalion, 1st ACB. Company D had Soldiers on hand with the training and experience to conduct repairs at those higher levels, James said.

The first task was to strip the aircraft completely down to assess the damage underneath the frame and clear the way for the armament specialists to make needed repairs, said Staff Sgt. Sean Higgs, an Apache mechanic.

“I’ve never seen an Apache more stripped down – other than at the Boeing plant,” said Higgs, who hails from Shavertown, Pa.

The crews had to remove all of the weapons system components and in-



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. 1st Class Rick Emert, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, Public Affairs Office

Spc. Victor Carbajo, who calls Copperas Cove, Texas, home, makes repairs to a battle damaged AH-64D Apache June 11 at Taji, Iraq. Carbajo, along with other Apache maintenance Soldiers from Company D, 4th Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, keep battle-damaged Apaches in the fight.

spect hundreds of wires, said Spc. Josh Rosenbaum, an armament specialist.

“This is the same kind of thing we would do for a 500-hour phase (maintenance),” said Rosenbaum, from Keller, Texas. “We would normally have to inspect everything and then put it back together like brand new.”

Finally, the aircraft had to be put back together and is now in the inspection phase.

In all, the Co. D maintainers have put about 1,800 man hours into the Apache repairs, all the while continuing with their normal maintenance mission.

“The other maintenance that these guys do has not slowed down at all,” James said. “In fact, it has sped up because of the surge.”

More flying means more maintenance. They have been able to accomplish this by being even more focused – they have not had to increase the hours they work.”

Along with focus, the Soldiers had to dig deep for the confidence to conduct such a mission.

“A lot of guys might have shied away

from doing this, because this level of maintenance is not taught at the schoolhouse,” said Portland, Ore., native Spc. Andrew Koplun, an aircraft structure repairman. “For some Soldiers, this was outside their normal (military occupational specialty) skills. A lot of us did on-the-job training to get this done.”

Although they didn’t realize it at the onset, the mission would become a great training event for the crews.

“My main focus in this was to train the guys on stuff they had never done before,” said Sgt. Kevin Koch, a squad leader and Apache mechanic, who calls St. Cloud, Fla., home.

“You learn a small percentage of what you will do here from the schoolhouse,” Higgs added.

“The rest you learn from OJT. It falls on the people who have done it before to make sure that newer Soldiers learn how to do this.”

Throughout the mission the Soldiers gained new skills and gelled as a team, and most importantly, worked to keep one of their aircraft in the fight.

Iraqi Army brings medical care to Sab Al Bor with 1st BCT's help

By Staff Sgt. Jon Cupp

1st Brigade Combat Team,
1st Cavalry Division Public Affairs

SAB AL BOR, Iraq – Iraqi Army medics from the 2nd Brigade, 9th Iraqi Army (IA) Division (Mechanized) are moving toward transition by taking the lead in providing medical care for their own healthcare projects.

That's just what these IA soldiers did as they teamed with troops from the 1st "Ironhorse" Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division to bring free healthcare to the villagers here during a June 18 community healthcare outreach project at the Sab Al Bor health clinic.

The effort was coordinated by medical staffs from the 2nd Bde., 9th IA Div. (Mechanized). The 1st Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment's squadron surgeon aided the effort by arranging to bring in medics from the 115th Brigade Support Battalion and a few healthcare professionals from the Regional Support Unit, Coalition Military Assistance Training Team on Camp Taji.

"The IA medics are really very professional and they learn very quickly," said Sgt. Jim Nnoko, a medic for Charlie Medical Company, 115th BSB, who said he enjoys working with the IA medics. "They do a good job working with the patients."

Nnoko over the past few months has been helping these Iraqi medics get to the point where they are now--working in real operations with little help from coalition forces—by training them in basic medical skills and combat lifesaver courses.

"They've come very far," Nnoko, who hails from Fort Dodge, Iowa said. "They continue to impress us. Sometimes it can be hard working with them due to the language barrier, but they have been doing just fine, you just have to be very patient with them."

After the Sab Al Bor health clinic opened its doors, patients were seen by Iraqi medics or a U.S. medic



U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Jon Cupp, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division Public Affairs

Washington, D.C. native, Sgt. Marcus Robinson (left), a scout with Troop B, 1st Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment, keeps a look out and pulls security as Iraqi Army troops from the 2nd Brigade, 9th Iraqi Army Division assist with directing a large crowd on their way to the Sab Al Bor health clinic during a community healthcare outreach project in Sab Al Bor, Iraq June 18.

and the 1st Sqdrn., 7th Cav. Regt. surgeon was on hand to assist with diagnosis and treatments of patients as well as giving advice to the patients and the medics.

Over the course of the healthcare event, more than 400 patients were treated for ailments ranging from colds, minor burns, allergies, ear infections and other easily treated maladies much like during a military sick call. Patients with more severe injuries or diseases were referred to seek treatment at a hospital in Baghdad.

"We're helping to give the Iraqi people badly needed medical attention that they don't normally get," said 1st Lt. Juan Briones, a physician's assistant for Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 1st Sqdrn., 7th Cav. Regt. who worked with an Iraqi Along with medical treatment, Iraqi Army troops and U.S. Soldiers gave out free toys, candy, hygiene items and many other things to the villagers.

Ramone, Calif. native Spc. Jack

Rosfeld, a medic with Troop B, 1st Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment, who has spent much of his time working in line units and now works in the 1st Sqdrn., 7th Cav. Regt.'s aid station, said he lives for days when he can participate in medical missions like this one.

"It's awesome, I really love doing this," said Rosfeld of the day's healthcare mission. "Something that I can take away from this experience is knowing that I actually got to help the Iraqi people."

"What I hope they (the Iraqi people) take away from the experience is knowing we really do care about them," Rosfeld added.

Reflecting on the day's healthcare effort, Soldiers said they see the role they are playing in helping the IA medics as in some small way benefiting the efforts of Iraq to become its own independent nation.

"Overall, the more we help these guys help themselves, that's what it's all about," said 1st Sgt. James Brown, top noncommissioned officer for C Med. Co., 115th BSB.

EARNING TRUST

(Continued from page 13)

of Baghdad in February, the paratroopers have adhered to classic counter-insurgency theory, balancing military operations with efforts to engage local leaders, build the economy, and improve essential services. Rowan said the strategy, though slow and difficult to measure, is showing results.

“People are moving here from other parts of Baghdad because they say this is a safe place,” he told his platoon members just before his last patrol with them. “It’s the little things that we are doing that are making a difference.”

In the end, it all boils down to personal relationships, said Capt. Jonathan Harvey, Rowan and Tillman’s battery commander.

The challenge when a key leader gets switched out is to maintain the existing relationships.

“You have to be very delicate in the hand over,” said Harvey, of Nebraska City, Neb. “Iraqi culture is big on trust.” Harvey said he made sure Tillman had plenty of time to shadow Rowan and meet one on one with all his Iraqi counterparts.

“Back in the states, a change of command is nothing more than an inventory. Here, it’s a much more deliberate process,” Harvey said.

“(For Tillman and Rowan) we took 11 days, and each day had a different leader engagement.”

Despite the introductions and the crash course he received on Adhamiyah’s kaleidoscopic array of political and religious groups and their rivalries, Tillman said he still has a lot to learn.

It will take time to build up the kind of personal relationships that Rowan had, where he knew not just someone’s name, but their wife and son’s name and what brand of cigarette they smoked, too.

“I know the area. As far as terrain, how to operate, tactics - I know all that,” Tillman said. “What I need to learn is who I can trust.”



U.S. Army photo

Chief Warrant Officer 4 Johnny Judd (center) and Capt. Randy James (left), receive the Air Medal with Valor from Lt. Col. Timothy DeVito, commander of 4th Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division.

Aviators honored for valor

By Sgt. 1st Class Rick Emert

IACB ICD Public Affairs

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – Three AH-64D Apache pilots from the 1st Air Cavalry Brigade don’t like to talk about the Air Medal with Valor awards they earned for their actions on Jan. 28.

The pilots, from 4th “Guns” Battalion, 227th Aviation, 1st ACB, 1st Cavalry Division, don’t care so much about their heroics and even deny that they behaved heroically.

For now, the awards are a painful reminder of the loss of their comrades, Capt. Mark Resh and Chief Warrant Officer 3 Cornell Chao – fallen heroes who made the ultimate sacrifice that day during fighting in An Najaf, Iraq.

There is no question however, that the actions of Chief Warrant Officer 4 Johnny Judd, Chief Warrant Officer 2 Jake Gaston and Capt. Randy James were heroic.

Judd and Gaston were the lead team with Resh and Chao as their wingman when the Apache crews were called in to support ground forces in An Najaf. There were more than 600 insurgents with small arms and rocket propelled grenades that were engaging the ground forces.

“They came in to the target area; they were talking to the (U.S. Air Force Joint Terminal Attack Controller),” said Maj. William Denny, executive officer for 4-

227th. “Jake Gaston was obtaining just superb situational awareness of what was going on, but one thing we never got the picture of from any systems or any sources was actually what was on the ground.

“The radio came up; someone came on the net and said: ‘Hey, you’re taking fire; break left.’ “So, (Judd) was breaking left and, on the video feed we saw, you could see the bongo truck that was shooting at him – the earth just erupted around it, and that was the engagement by Captain Resh and (Chief Warrant Officer 3) Chao that saved those guys both. They didn’t know if they had battle damage or not. They broke left; they came back around and saw their wingman impact the ground.”

Judd immediately got on the radio and alerted the JTAC and the 1st ACB tactical operations center that one of the aircraft was down.

“That gave us the upper hand. We called all of the aircraft in the sky. We got a hundred percent accountability of all of our aircraft except in Najaf, so we launched another Apache team to conduct battle handover,” Denny said.

That team consisted of Chief Warrant Officer 2 Zach Johnson and Capt. Randy James. Meanwhile, Judd and Gaston remained on station.

“Heroically, they stayed on station as (See AVIATORS, page 18)



U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Jon Cupp, 1st Brigade Combat Team Public Affairs Office

Soldiers from Company A, 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment and Iraqi Army troops from the 3rd Brigade, 9th Iraqi Army Division (Mechanized) rehearse moving from a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter into fighting positions as they trained on Camp Taji, Iraq June 1 for an air assault which took place in the early morning hours of June 2.

Iraqi Army performs air assaults with 2-8

Iraqi Army troops work with 2-8 CAV to take down bad guys during air assaults

By Staff Sgt. Jon Cupp
1st Brigade Combat Team,
1st Cavalry Division
Public Affairs Office

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – Soldiers from the 2nd “Stallions” Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment recently began a partnership to capture terrorists near here by performing Iraqi-led air assault missions with their counterparts in the 3rd Brigade, 9th Iraqi Army Division (Mechanized).

Although they have been training for months to do the air assaults, just prior to each air assault mission, the U.S. and Iraqi soldiers continue rehearsing each step of each operation with precision movements to keep their skills sharp for the actual missions in which they rapidly dismount aircraft to take down insurgent forces.

This was the scene as they rehearsed together here June 1 on how to assault an objective before an actual air assault mission which took place in the early morning hours of June 2.

“Our doing air assault missions and working side by side with the Iraqi Army has been a really great opportunity to get to the

goal of having them trained up to where they can eventually do these missions on their own,” said Louisville, Ky. native 1st Lt. Cecil Wolberton, a platoon leader with Company A, 2nd Bn., 8th Cav. Regt. “The mission we’re going on tonight is going to be good for their confidence, and they’re learning from these air assaults and we’re making them a part of our team and treating them the same as we treat the rest of our guys.”

“We’re working on leadership and team building and we’re finding that we are improving every time we go out,” he added. “Through the rehearsals and training, we can see any weaknesses we may have and work on those so we’re constantly improving how we do things.”

During the evening rehearsal, Soldiers from the 1st Air Cavalry Brigade assisted the 3rd Bde., 9th IA soldiers and Stallion troops by giving them instruction on the proper ways to conduct air assaults to include everything from how to rapidly board a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter to how to take a fighting position once dismounted, and how best to move without being detected by the enemy.

Mixed lines made up of the Iraqi troops and U.S. Soldiers ran to each UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter quickly climbing aboard and then just as quickly as they had loaded the aircraft, they rapidly exited taking up fighting positions as they practiced for mission.

With the help of aviation assets and aircraft from the 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, the Stallions and the 3rd Bde., 9th IA Div. (Mech.) soldiers rapidly hit each objective during air assault operations making these missions much better in many ways than the regular conventional method of going after terrorists in a vehicle convoy, according to Wolberton.

Over the past month, 2-8 Cav. has had many successes finding weapons caches and taking down insurgents during the air assaults with the help of their Iraqi “brothers-in-arms.”

“We’ve gone on several air assault missions with them and disrupted enemy forces who were working against us (Iraqi security forces and coalition forces) and the Iraqi civilians. Going after these insurgents like this prevents them from having the ability to attack us,” said Wolberton.

Much like traditions in which Soldiers carry good luck charms, during the air assaults, the Stallions and their Iraqi brothers have their own tradition as well.

“We like to switch our patches with them because they’re our brothers,” said Sullivan City, Texas native Pfc. Joaquin Mendoza, an infantryman with Co. A, 2nd Bn., 8th Cav. Regt.

“We take care of each other and it boosts our morale when we do something (See **AIR ASSAULT**, Page 20)



U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Jon Cupp

Top in Retention

Maj. Gen. Joseph F. Fil, Jr. (left), commanding general for Multi-National Division-Baghdad and the 1st Cavalry Division, speaks to Sgt. Roree Anderson, assistant retention noncommissioned officer for the 1st Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery Regiment, on Camp Taji, Iraq June 13 after presenting him with a framed print recognizing the 1st Bn., 82nd FA Regt's retention efforts. Out of all the 1st Cavalry Division's battalions, 1-82 was the top battalion for retention for the second quarter of fiscal year 2007 reaching 133 percent of its goal to keep Soldiers in boots. Anderson, a native of Dallas, Texas said it was an honor to receive recognition for the battalion's retention efforts. So far, in fiscal year 2007, the battalion has re-enlisted 83 of its Soldiers.

AVIATORS

Continued from Page 16

as their weapons systems malfunctioned, but they rolled back in to reengage anyway, because they knew their teammate was in trouble," Denny said. "When you listen to it on the tape, their commitment – their absolute commitment to their brothers – that's heroism.

"(Chief Warrant Officer 2) Gaston's only thought at that time was protecting his teammates. (Chief Warrant Officer 4) Judd's thoughts were a little bit more comprehensive. He knew that was a bad area," Denny explained. "So, he protected his airframe and his crewmate using his knowledge and experience as a pilot in command and got back in there. He reengaged the target area with suppressive fires. Even though they were having weapons systems malfunctions, they still did not pull off the area. They adjusted what they were doing to cover their wingman as long as they could."

Judd calmly conducted battle handover to the team coming in, which included James and Johnson.

"He was doing a battle handover when (the team) was five minutes out, and Johnny Judd is just as calm as he can be explaining to them without emotion exactly what is happening, what they're doing, what they can expect, where they should go," Denny said. "It was just the interplay of professionals and how they react when they are in that situation. You know you have people who are absolute scientists, but they're there for their brothers. I don't know any other way to say that."

Gaston continued to talk to the JTAC about what was developing on the ground.

"He was increasing situational awareness with every transmission," Denny said. "Every time he talked, everybody else knew a little bit more about what was going on, about what to expect – developing the situation so that we could carry the day."

The crew's mission focus had changed from supporting the ground forces to protecting their wingman. Priorities always change when there is a downed aircraft. That switch in priorities was instantaneous, and it was seamless, Denny said.

James and Johnson, along with their wingman crew Chief Warrant Officer Two Eddie Roche and Capt. James Cahill, continued to fight the enemy forces, leaving the site once to rearm and then returning to engage the enemy forces.

James worked with Special Forces troops and the JTAC to determine Coalition Force and enemy positions. He led his team's attack that dismantled the enemy's defensive positions and set the conditions for follow-on teams to exploit, according to his award recommendation.

After expending all of his ammunition on enemy positions, he led his team back to the rearming point and then rejoined the fight.

James downplays his heroics, calling attention to Resh and Chao and to James' own wingman crew of Roche and Cahill.

"I'm no hero," James said. "I did what we were supposed to do. You look at those guys, Captain Resh and (Chief Warrant Officer Three) Chao – those guys are heroes. Those guys (Roche and Cahill) who were going in with a broken aircraft – those guys are heroes."

Estonian Minister of Defense visits Stone platoon, 1st BCT on Taji

By Staff Sgt. Jon Cupp

1st Brigade Combat Team,
1st Cavalry Division Public Affairs

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – For more than six months, an Estonian platoon (EST-PLA) referred to as the “Stone” platoon, has been working with troops from the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division conducting combat operations together in the village of Sab Al Bor, Iraq.

Recently, these partners shared a rare opportunity to meet the Estonian Minister of Defense Jaak Aaviksoo June 8 here.

During the visit, Aaviksoo talked with Estonian troops and Soldiers from Troop B, 1st Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment—who work alongside the Estonian soldiers every day. Aaviksoo also exchanged gifts with senior leadership in the 1st BCT.

In a presentation at the Camp Taji theater, Aaviksoo took part as Estonian troops and Soldiers of Garryowen presented each other with awards—with the 1st Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment presenting traditional Cavalry spurs to their Estonian partners while several Garryowen troops received the Estonian Distinguished Service Medal.

“The traditional earning of the spurs comes with service in the Cav. as the organization goes to war,” said Lt. Col. Kevin MacWatters, upon presenting the spurs to the Estonians. “Wear these spurs with honor.”

“You can definitely see a good interaction between our two countries, and this is very important to our nation” said Estonian Army Col. Neeme Vali, the Chief of the General Staff for the Estonian Army, who presented Estonian Distinguished Service Medals to Soldiers in Garryowen. “Now it’s time for the Estonians to say thank you to the U.S.”

Following the ceremony and a briefing on the Estonian and Garryowen mission in Sab Al Bor, the minister took the opportunity to speak to those in attendance.

“We’re not very numerous and our country is not very big, but we suffered



U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Jon Cupp, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division Public Affairs

Killeen, Texas native Sgt. Nicholas Anderson (left), a scout with Troop B, 1st Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment explains a little about U.S. Army military gear to Estonian Minister of Defense Jaak Aaviksoo on Camp Taji, Iraq June 8 during a visit by the minister to the base camp.

under totalitarianism for 50 years and we don’t want that to ever be repeated,” said Aaviksoo during his opening comments. “The modern world is getting smaller all the time and the ideals of democracy are just as important to us as they are to the local Iraqi people here.”

“This is not an easy mission here, and you know that better than I do,” added Aaviksoo addressing his troops and the Soldiers from the 1st Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment. “But the goal of the joint multinational forces is to help bring peace and democracy to Iraq. I have seen your focus and commitment to that goal.”

In cordon and searches, mounted and dismounted patrols and other joint operations with U.S. troops and Iraqi security forces, the ESTPLA has assisted in the detaining of more than 37 insurgents. They also assisted in the conducting of convoy operations and traffic control checkpoints along with the finding of many weapons caches and improvised explosive device-making materials. In all, they have been on 148 patrols, some of which were up to 48 hours long. Aaviksoo concluded his speech with praise for the achievements

of the partnership.

From the Taji theater, Aaviksoo traveled to the Estonian platoon area on the base camp where he viewed a static display of both Estonian and American weapons. Afterwards, he ate lunch with the Stone platoon.

Estonian Sgt. Juri Lapko said the experience was worthwhile and meant a lot to him and his fellow troops.

“It’s good that our leaders remember what Estonian soldiers are doing here, and that they recognize we are in Iraq doing a very important job for Estonia,” said Lapko, a gunner on a humvee from the ESTPLA. “And that what we are doing here will be good for the future of the Iraqis.”

MacWatters and his troops said they have been quite impressed with the soldiers in Aaviksoo’s Stone platoon.

“They are full partners with no restrictions on how their soldiers participate in operations and they’re just like a part of our platoon,” said MacWatters. “They bring their own counterinsurgency skills and always add to the capabilities of the unit. We have a great partnership here.”

AIR ASSAULT

(Continued from page 17)

By Staff Sgt. Jon Cupp

1BCT 1CD Public Affairs

symbolic like that," added Mendoza.

Mendoza explained what working and training with the Iraqi Army troops means to him.

"Air assaults are great missions and we're doing the best we can to work with the Iraqis to make them safe and to help train the Iraqi troops," said Mendoza. "They're great people doing a

great job."

"I like what I'm doing right now, it's a job worth doing," added Mendoza. "There's a lot of camaraderie and joking that goes on and we have a good time with the Iraqi troops. It helps us build bonds with them and you know they have your back and you've got theirs."

The evening rehearsals, according to Wolberton, paid off with success.

During the actual June 2 mission, six houses were searched

and 17 detainees, to include one known insurgent cell leader were arrested near Mushada, Iraq and held for further questioning.

"This was a pretty important mission as the guys we were looking for here were involved in attacks against coalition forces and have hurt everybody to include members of the Iraqi civilian population and have had a total disregard for the types of collateral damage they've been causing," said Wolberton.

Taji neighborhood watch turns over cache to coalition

1st BCT, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs

CAMP TAJI, Iraq - For a second time in a week, a large cache consisting of improvised explosive device-making material and mortar rounds was turned over to Coalition Forces by the "Neighborhood Watch" June 25 in Taji, Iraq.

The Taji neighborhood watch contacted Coalition Forces after the driver of a truck fled the scene when the volunteers stopped a suspicious vehicle moving through the rural village of Abd Allah al Jasim. The vehicle contained 24 mortar rounds, two rockets, spare machine gun barrels, small arms ammunition and other IED-making material.

"This grassroots movement of reconciliation by the volunteers is taking off all around us. The tribes that had once actively or passively supported al-Qaeda in Iraq now want them out," said Lt. Col. Peter Andrysiak, the deputy commander of the 1st "Iron-horse" Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division.

The neighborhood watch is made up of a group of 500 volunteers, from a number of tribes in the area, who want reconciliation with the Coalition Forces and the Iraqi government. The volunteers are currently being vetted for possible future selection for training as Iraqi Police or some other organization within the Iraqi Security Forces.



Boston native Staff Sgt. Robin Johnson (left), with Company C, 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry Regiment, and an Iraqi Army soldier from 1st Battalion, 1st Brigade, 11th Iraqi Army Division, work together during Operation Tiger Hammer, a combined cordon and search mission in Baghdad's Adhamiyah District June 7. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Mike Pryor, 2nd BCT, 82nd Airborne Div. Public Affairs)

Iraqi Army conducts Tiger Hammer

By Sgt. Mike Pryor

2nd Brigade Combat Team,
82nd Airborne Division,
Public Affairs Office

BAGHDAD — Iraqi Army soldiers conducted a battalion-sized cordon and search operation in the Adhamiyah District of the Iraqi capital June 7.

The combined mission, dubbed Operation Tiger Hammer was conducted by elements of the 1st and 3rd battalions of the 1st Brigade, 11th Iraqi Army Division with support provided by Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers from Company C, 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry Regiment, operating in Baghdad with the 2nd Brigade Combat

Team, 82nd Airborne Division.

The four-hour operation netted nine detainees and 38 illegal weapons.

Just after sunrise, the U.S. troops established blocking positions around the neighborhood while the Iraqi units fanned out through the narrow streets, searching houses and apartment complexes room-by-room for weapons and contraband.

"This just shows the commitment of the Iraqi Army to protecting the people of Adhamiyah by going after criminals and terrorists who want to create instability and hinder progress," said Capt. Leon McGill, of Waynesville, Missouri, a U.S. military transition team advisor.



U.S. Army photo

Soldiers from a MEDEVAC crew that came under fire but still evacuated wounded Soldiers stand near their UH-60 Black Hawk MEDEVAC helicopter May 31 in Kalsu, Iraq. Pictured are, from left to right, Chief Warrant Officer 2 Christopher Walls, Sgt. Dale Hlavacek, Chief Warrant Officer 2 Corey Mallard and Pvt. Bryan Makepeace.

If you need them, they will come

Medical evacuation crew brings care to Soldiers while facing enemy fire.

By Sgt. 1st Class Rick Emert
1st Air Cavalry Brigade,
1st Cavalry Division
Public Affairs Office

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – The saying goes that only two things in life are guaranteed: death and taxes.

In battle, there's only one: MEDEVAC.

A medical evacuation crew from Company C, 2nd "Lobo" Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, proved that to be true on Memorial Day as they picked up two wounded Soldiers who needed urgent care.

Despite flying in adverse weather and coming under enemy fire, the MEDEVAC crew managed to evacuate the wounded Soldiers to a combat support hospital within about 30 minutes of being called.

"The weather was below marginal conditions," said Lt. Col. Timothy DeVito, acting commander of 1st ACB, who hails from Orlando, Fla. "No Multinational Division-Baghdad or Multinational Division-Center aircraft were

flying, but in true MEDEVAC fashion, the condition of the injured Soldiers on the ground is what drove them to conduct that mission."

"The visibility was less than two miles," said Chief Warrant Officer 2 Christopher Walls, the pilot in command on the MEDEVAC mission, who hails from Tampa, Fla.

Additionally, the crew had to fly without an AH-64D Apache escort.

"There was no Apache available (to provide security), but the mission was approved," said Sgt. Dale Hlavacek, a medic from Co. C, who calls Des Moines, Iowa home. "We had a (UH-60 Black Hawk) chase helicopter and the ground guys to provide security."

The nine-line MEDEVAC request had warned that there were enemy forces to the north, but the landing zone itself was secure.

"We were told (the landing zone) was secure, but you really don't know what can go on once you get down there," Walls said.

The weather turned out to be the least of their problems. Moments after the two Black Hawks landed, they came under mortar and small arms fire.

"We landed to the south," Hlavacek said. "I saw the ground element at our three o'clock. I got off and started assessing the patients. One of them was a litter patient, so I called for the crew

chief (Pvt. Bryan Makepeace, from Avon Park, Fla.) to bring a litter. I heard an explosion and small arms fire. I signaled the crew chief for the aircraft to take off."

Chief Warrant Officer 2 Corey Mallard, another pilot on the MEDEVAC crew, immediately knew something was wrong.

"I heard two explosions at our six o'clock," said Mallard, from College Station, Texas. "There was small arms fire hitting the ground to our left. I told Makepeace to get on the aircraft. Once he got in and I saw that we were all clear, we took off. There were tracer rounds to our left, and they followed us all the way out."

Walls said it appeared the enemy initially was firing at the chase helicopter from 3rd "Spearhead" Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment. The chase helicopter was between the enemy forces and the MEDEVAC helicopter, he said.

"I could see tracer rounds in front of the helicopter. It looked like they were shooting at the chase helicopter while we were on the ground, because they were closer (to the enemy)," Walls said. "As we took off, they were shooting at both of us."

Hlavacek remained with the two injured Soldiers. One of the injured Soldiers had sustained a gunshot wound to (See **MEDEVAC**, Page 24)

June reenlistments abound on Camp Taji



U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Jon Cupp

Reno, Nev. native, Spc. Olon Forrest (right), a mechanic for Company G, 115th Brigade Support Battalion, now attached to the 1st Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery Regiment reenlists June 23 on Camp Taji, Iraq as San Diego native Lt. Col. Martin Clausen, commander, 1st Bn., 82nd FA Regt., reads him the oath of enlistment. The reenlistment marks the 650th time during Operation Iraqi Freedom rotation 06-08 that a 1st "Ironhorse" Brigade Combat Team Soldier has reenlisted.



U.S. Army photo by Spc. Nathan Hoskins

Above: Alamo, Texas, native Spc. Jose "OJ" OjedaGovea (in tan), a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter crew chief for Company B, 3rd Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, takes the oath of reenlistment from his company commander, Capt. Lee Evans a San Antonio native. Right: Sgt. Roshanne Peters (right) of the 1st Brigade Support Battalion reenlisted June 7 on Camp Taji, Iraq. Joining Peters was her twin sister, Spc. Roshelle Peters (left), who is stationed at Camp Prosperity and took a visit to Taji just to be at the reenlistment.



U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Jon Cupp

1st BCT outlines joint common plan

By Staff Sgt. Jon Cupp

1st BCT, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – Helping Iraqis to help themselves has been a common theme running through many of the reconstruction efforts currently being pursued by coalition forces as they work with the Iraqi government.

A new way ahead for reconstruction being outlined by the 1st “Ironhorse” Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division follows this line of thinking with helping the Iraqi government to become self reliant as it works to transition to becoming a fully independent democracy—free of influence from U.S. or coalition forces.

Recently, the brigade completed the joint common plan (JCP) that it has been working on in coordination with local Iraqi governments within the Nahias and Qadas in its area of operations and personnel from its Embedded Provincial Reconstruction Team (ePRT) to facilitate lasting solutions to reconstruction issues.

“The JCP essentially synchronizes in time and space the non-lethal deliverables that shape the counterinsurgency fight. Identifying goals and objectives and aligning specific programs available from the U.S. State Department and the U.S. Agency for International Development to help meet those goals,” said Lt. Col. Peter Andrysiak, deputy commanding officer, 1st BCT. “The whole plan is based on getting the Iraqi government involved in transition from relying on coalition forces to self reliance on the part of the Iraqi people by focusing on building indigenous capabilities and capacities.”

“The plan is designed to outlive our deployment,” added Andrysiak, noting that whoever relieves the Ironhorse Brigade will simply be able to pick up where they left off. “There shouldn’t be a major 180 degree deviation and the plan marks the transition from where the State Department and civilian agencies will be able to pick up the fight, since this is something (negotiating and assisting developing nations) they do on a day to day basis all over the world.”

Thus the main focus areas of the



U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Jon Cupp, 1st BCT, 1st Cavalry Division, Public Affairs Office

Lt. Gen. Raymond Odierno (second from left), commanding general, Multi-National Corps-Iraq, confers with Bambi Arellano (left), the Iraq Mission Director for the U.S. Agency for International Development with Maj. Gen. Joseph F. Fil, Jr., commanding general Multi-National Division-Baghdad, and Brig. Gen. Vincent Brooks, deputy commanding general (support), Multi-National Division-Baghdad, just prior to a briefing of the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division’s newly drafted joint common plan for reconstruction efforts on Camp Taji, Iraq June 13.

plan will be the responsibility of the ePRT, with supporting roles from 1BCT’s military side of the house, and include the areas of general government, local services and economics.

Government Transition Teams working through the brigade’s ePRT, will advise local Iraqi governments in governance much the same way as Military Transition Teams have assisted the Iraqi Army with mentorship and training programs, according to Andrysiak. The GTT will coach government leaders in train the trainer type senior leader mentorship programs sponsored by USAID. The goals of the programs are not to tell Iraqis how to run their government, but rather assist them with advice in the basic concepts of governance, said Andrysiak.

“It’s about getting the local Iraqi government to operate within it’s defined structure, a mayor for administrative functions, a council to perform policy-making and legislative functions and a technical department for essential services delivery,” said Andrysiak. “As they begin operating

within this political structure, then we introduce the USAID programs to help facilitate the process.”

The local governments have already been making progress.

“They’re getting a better understanding of the political structure, how they’re supposed to operate, and they understand they have to start delivering on their own,” added Andrysiak. “They see that we’re here to help them. They also understand that they can do this with very little help from us.”

For local services, the goal is to eventually have a transition from partial coalition forces reliance to the local governments being able to deliver services such as public safety, public works, health, fuel and education to the local Iraqi populace.

To facilitate their ability to provide these services, the government leaders will also learn, through senior leader mentorship programs, the processes of staffing and equipping for facilities such as hospitals, schools and emergency services departments to

(See **PLAN**, Page25)



Pfc. Gilberto Rojas of Los Angeles, Calif., an infantryman with C Co., 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry Regiment, searches for suspicious material inside the home of a suspected bomb-maker following a raid in Adhamiyah, Baghdad on June 5. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Mike Pryor, 2nd BCT, 82nd Airborne Division)

MEDEVAC

Continued from Page 21

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – leg and the other had a gunshot wound to the head. The Soldier with the head wound was able to walk. Hlavacek and a few of the Soldiers from the ground unit got the injured Soldiers to cover.

The enemy forces “were in a ditch. I could see the rounds skipping off the dirt and hear them going by,” Hlavacek said. “I think they were targeting both of the aircraft. Once we got the patients to cover, I began to return fire with the ground unit. I always take my M-4 with me when I depart the aircraft, but this is the first time I have had to return fire. Usually when we land, the enemy forces will bug out and leave. These guys stayed and fired at us. They were close.”

The firefight lasted for about a minute, Hlavacek said, and then the aircraft were cleared to land again. Hlavacek got smoke from the ground

unit and moved the landing zone closer to where the injured Soldiers were located.

They loaded the Soldiers on the MEDEVAC helicopter and took them to the Combat Support Hospital without further incident, Hlavacek said.

“Everything is briefed (before the missions), and we have been doing this for a few months,” Walls said. “I didn’t have any concerns about (Hlavacek); I knew that he would be safe with the ground guys. He knew that we would be back to get him. We talk about this every day, about what we will do in this situation, and we did it just how we had planned. We brief this and talk it beforehand, and everyone just reverted to their training.”

Hlavacek said that his reaction was second nature, because of previous training and the crews’ many briefs on this scenario.

“Once I heard the explosion, my mind went right back to the training I have had,” Hlavacek said. “If a situa-

tion comes up, the aircraft has to leave (the medic behind). You don’t want the aircraft to be damaged.

“It was surreal,” he added. “Everything that went through my head is what I have encountered in training. The ground guys did a great job in controlling the situation. It went really smooth.”

Although he goes on MEDEVAC missions just about every day, Hlavacek said that he doesn’t get into a routine on the missions.

“It may seem like the same thing every day – we do this whenever guys out there need us. You never know what’s going to happen when you go out to pick up patients,” Hlavacek said. “You have to be ready. I would tell my peers to stay open to things; it’s never going to be the same thing out there. Anticipate the worst.”

But one thing remains the same for ground forces in Baghdad, as this crew from Co. C, 2-227th, has proven: If you call for MEDEVAC, they will come.

The Warrior's Word

Heavenly father,

Bless these men, these Soldiers of God and of country.

For they defend the right to live in peace.

Bless these men with your love and your words of wisdom.

Father you touch us everyday as you feel our joy and our sorrow.

You see us happy and in pain, for we are all your children Father.

Bless these men, for when other men may judge them as warriors of death,

these Soldiers, these warriors as they are called stand for peace,

they are a mark for freedom and for justice.

These warriors are living values coated with the armor of hope and dreams

of free will for all mankind. Bless these men my Lord for they are lost yet they

know the way for you are our Shepherd. Father we need your guidance for

the journey is long and filled with shadows and the echoes of the fallen.

“For God and country” fills our souls and brings truth to our hearts.

Bless these men Father, these few men, these brave souls for I love them all.

They are my brothers. My brothers in arms.

SGT Michael Bell
Battery A, 1st Bn., 82nd FA Regt.

PLAN

(Continued from page 23)

include fire stations among others.

In several areas the local Iraqi governments have been stepping up to the plate when it comes to sustaining services for their constituents, according to Andrysiak.

“In the past, most if not all problems were solved by coalition forces, now they are beginning to repair some of the infrastructure on their own,” said Andrysiak, citing the examples of the local governments taking the initiative to repair downed power lines from IED strikes and fixing broken water lines. Most recently, they even started funding and contracting renovations of key infrastructure, according to Andrysiak.

Within the economic focus area, the goal is to create an

environment that fosters small business opportunities and growth as well as employment opportunities with a focus on long-term employment. Some of the things currently in the works for the Ironhorse area of operations are micro-business mentorship programs, agricultural business programs and partnerships for farmers. There will also be efforts to revitalize pre-existing state-owned enterprises to include steel factories, a furniture factory and other initiatives that will stimulate the local economies.

Bringing to bear the capabilities the ePRT has to offer to include the State Department and USAID programs, the JCP will mark a change in the way reconstruction efforts have gone forward in the past, and Andrysiak said he feels positive about the plan.

“Changing our business

processes on reconstruction will never be fast enough, and it won't happen overnight,” said Andrysiak. “It is a direction in which we need to go, and we feel optimistic about it.”

“We need to not feel the urge to do everything for the Iraqi government, success now is seeing them do it on their own,” he added.

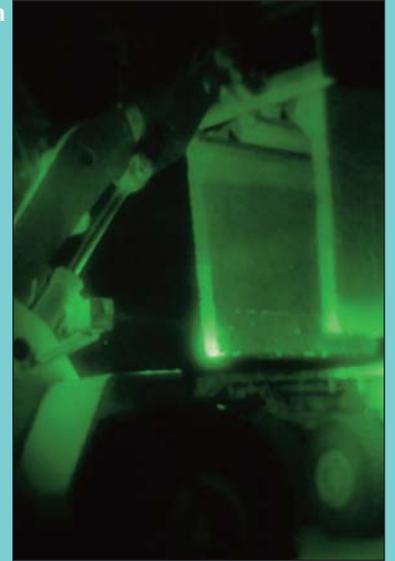
The Ironhorse Brigade unveiled their newly completed JCP to Lt. Gen. Raymond Odierno, commanding general, Multi-National Corps-Iraq and III Corps, during a meeting on Camp, Taji, Iraq June 13.

Within the coming weeks, the brigade will continue its work with local government officials in the two regional Qadas—Abu Ghraib and Taji—as well as the six Nahias within its area of operations to begin implementing the plan.



Soldiers from Battery B, 1st Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery Regiment fire a projectile which flies from the barrel of an M109A6 Paladin howitzer on Camp Taji, Iraq June 2. The troops performed the calibration fire to pinpoint and test the accuracy of rounds fired from the howitzer.

Right: Kellogg Brown and Root personnel use a forklift to off load scud bunkers at an Iraqi Army traffic control point near Taji June 8.



Through The Lens of Combat Camera

As seen through the cameras of Sgt. Rachel M. Ahner, 982nd Combat Camera Company (Airborne).



Left: An Iraqi Army Soldier with 3rd Brigade 9th Division checks the identification card of a local passing through a traffic control point, June 18. Below: Soldiers from Annihilator Company 2nd Battalion 8th Cavalry Regiment work along side Iraqi Army Soldiers from 3rd Brigade 9th Division at a traffic control point.



Above: Kellogg Brown and Root personnel hook a crane to an Alaska barrier so it can lift the heavy cement and maneuver it into place at a traffic control point (TCP) June 8.

