

Serving Task Force Marne and MND-Center



Paratroopers earn Bronze Star Page 3



Soldiers earn Purple Heart Page 3



Back to school Page 5



EOD on duty Page 10



By Staff Sgt. Carlos Lazo / MND-C Public Affairs

Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Adm. Mike Mullen administers the Oath of Enlistment to 31 Task Force Marne Soldiers during a re-enlistment ceremony outside the task force's headquarters at Camp Victory Oct. 5.

Chairman of Joint Chiefs re-enlists 31

Mullen praises troops for combat experience, capability, strength

TIM KILBRIDE
MND-C Public Affairs

CAMP VICTORY — Just four days after pledging his own commitment to the highest military position, the new chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff visited Task Force Marne Oct. 5 to administer the Oath of Enlistment to 31 Soldiers and to prepare them for the challenges that lie ahead.

"I believe (you are) the best military in the history of the world," Adm. Mike Mullen told troops here. "You are in possession of combat experience, combat capability, combat strength to a degree that has never been seen in our armed services.

In five minutes of remarks, Mullen rare-



By Staff Sgt. Tony M. Lindback / MND-C Public Affairs

All re-enlistees took a photo with the Chairman and received a coin from him. Pictured here is Pfc. Christopher West, 2nd BCT, 10th Mtn. Div.

ly turned his head from the 31 men and women standing at his side.

Placing their decision to re-enlist in the context of U.S. national security, Mullen

challenged the Soldiers to remember the lessons they've learned in the villages of Iraq and apply them to future conflicts.

"We're living in a very challenging world, and in that regard, we're going to need your experience," he told the troops. "We need to take that experience and invest it in a way that benefits the future."

The comments echoed those he made Oct. 1, when he assumed his new role from the outgoing chairman Marine Gen. Peter Pace.

Then he told the crowd at Fort Myer, Va., to remember the valor and sacrifice of the men and women of the Armed Forces who volunteer to protect their country.

"You are true heroes who, understanding that your missions are demanding, dangerous and often deadly, still raise your right hand with a promise and an oath to continue building on the legacy of service

See RE-ENLIST, Page 4

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THE MARNE FORWARD

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Marne 6 sends

Progress due to your hard work

Visiting America's wounded heroes; Attacks down

While I was on EML, I visited our wounded warriors at Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio, Texas, and at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C.

Being with our Soldiers was the most humbling experience I've had while wearing this uniform. Their injuries ranged from wounded hands and legs to double amputees.

In every encounter, our Soldiers were not complaining about their struggles but thinking of you – they were asking about their units, their buddies, and when they could get back in the fight. These Soldiers are truly America's heroes.

When I returned to Iraq, I was absolutely thrilled with the progress that had been made in the three weeks I was gone. Attacks have dropped drastically across the entire area and casualties are down. All of that progress is due to your hard work and determination to succeed.

The Concerned Citizens Program has surpassed the 20,000 mark, and that is because of your efforts in making our battlefield secure.

Now Iraqis do not live in fear. Before they were too scared to help us, and now they are developing checkpoints on their own and utilizing the community centers you are building to plan operations.

When I visited 4th Brigade Combat Team (Airborne), 25th Infantry Division, I heard about the progress 3rd Battalion, 509th Parachute Infantry Regiment made in Muellah.

There, Sunni and Shia leaders are planning combined checkpoints along their main route. They are also working together to help resettle both the Shiite and Sunni families that left the area as a result of previous violence. Because you made them feel safe, they are returning to the area.

I am also so very proud of the work done on patrol bases



Maj. Gen. Rick Lynch
Task Force Marne Commander

while I was gone. As soon as I returned I went to Patrol Base Hawks. When I left on leave it was an empty field – now it is filled with T-walls, HESCO barriers, air-conditioned containers for our Soldiers to live in, a gym, and a four-ship landing zone so that Company B, 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment can conduct air assault operations.

We're excited to have 1st

Battalion, 10th Field Artillery Regiment return from its mission at Camp Bucca. The battalion will build a patrol base in Nahrawan, and additional patrol bases are going to be built in Owesat, Kidr and Hawr Rajab. All of these positions will only further our success in securing the Iraqi people and will give them the confidence to be proud of their nation.

There is no doubt in my mind we have been so successful because you have the courage to live among the Iraqi people.

Your presence helps them feel safe and secure, and in turn, they trust you. They are giving you intelligence and becoming concerned citizens. These concerned citizens are helping you target al-Qaeda, and together, you are going after the same enemies.

ROCK OF THE MARNE!



Making history

Maj. Gen. Rick Lynch, Task Force Marne Commander, presents Staff Sgt. Andrew Pearce, the assistant operations noncommissioned officer of Headquarters Company, 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, with a coin during a ceremony at Forward Operating Base Hammer Oct. 1. "Some people choose to read history," Lynch said at the ceremony. "Some people choose to make history. All of you have decided to make history."

Photo by Spc. Ben Hutto / 3rd HBCT, 3rd Inf. Div. Public Affairs



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 3rd Combat Aviation Brigade
 214th Fires Brigade
 82nd Sustainment Brigade
 720th Military Police Battalion
 Mobile Unit 3 Explosive Ordnance Disposal Battalion
 875th Engineering Battalion

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Paratroopers get Bronze Stars with Valor

Leadership, taking initiative in absence of leadership both credited for valorous acts

By **Sgt. KEVIN STABINSKY**
2nd BCT, 3rd Inf. Div. Public Affairs

FOB KALSU – Every day Paratroopers of 1st Squadron, 40th Cavalry Regiment perform acts of valor in the effort to make Iraq more secure.

Eleven such Paratroopers from Troop B and C received Bronze Stars with Valor Device in a ceremony at Forward Operating Base Kalsu Sept. 28.

“There are a number of acts every day that deserve these awards,” said Col. Michael Garret, 4th Brigade Combat Team (Airborne), 25th Infantry Division commander. “You are earning every bit of your paycheck here.”

Although they may have performed different types of acts to earn the fourth-highest combat award of the U.S. Armed Forces, all actions speak of the high professionalism and dedication of the Soldiers.

“They’re all brothers to me,” said medal recipient Spc. Kaylon Ross, a gunner with 1st platoon, Troop C. “Everyone else would do the same thing.”

Ross, who administered life-saving aid to two of his platoon mates after encountering an improvised explosive device outside Patrol Base Red, said the only reason he was getting the award was because he happened to be “in the wrong place” at the right time. The training he received that enabled him to save his two friends was something any of his fellow Paratroopers could do.

“Our Soldiers know what to do,” he said of his first aid ability. “Our leaders make sure we know the basics.”

Although leadership was credited by Ross, Garret credited the Paratroopers



Photos by Sgt. Kevin Stabinsky

Sgt. Eric Herrington, Troop B, 1-40 Cav. Regt. receives a Bronze Star with V Device from Col. Michael Garret, 4th BCT (Abn.) commander. Ten other Paratroopers also received Bronze Stars with V Device.

themselves, noting that even in the absence of leadership, they performed exceptionally.

Despite having their commander, Lt. Col. Mark Odoms, evacuated back to the States after he was injured by an IED, Garret said they have continued to perform remarkably.

“The mark of a great unit is functioning without their leader, with no degradation of performance,” Garret said.

Two of the recipients from Troop B exemplified this quality.

Pfc. Jose Rodriguez and Spc. Manuel Miranda were manning a guard position at Patrol Base Dog April 12 when a vehicle borne improvised explosive device detonated outside their patrol base. The attack, which killed four and injured nine, was followed by an assault by a group of insurgents. Despite being the only func-

tioning guard positions after the VBIED, Rodriguez and Miranda began a counter attack in the absence of leadership.

The actions of the two helped repel the initial assault, allowing others to regroup and eventually break back the insurgent attack. The two also helped with the recovery and aid mission that followed the attack.

“When I think about the people who died, I don’t think what I did was so heroic,” Rodriguez said, noting that one

of the killed was a platoon mate.

The medals will remain a reminder of the bravery, sweat, blood and hard work of all the Paratroopers on that April day, said Capt. Donald Braman, Troop B commander, who was also awarded a Bronze Star with V Device. “It will always be a sign of remembrance,” he said.

Just as it is important that the 11 will always remember the events surrounding their contributions, Garret said it is equally important to remember the bravery demonstrated that day and continue to display such professionalism even as redeployment draws near.

“Pay attention, stay aggressive and stay focused,” he said. “Be as aggressive as you’ve always been. I am proud of you all.”

The following Soldiers all received a Bronze Star with V Device from Troop B: Capt. Donald Braman, Staff Sgt. Elias Cowell, Sgt. Eric Harrington, Spc. Manuel Miranda, Pfc. Jose Rodriguez, Pfc. Mike Scanzuso and Spc. John Schumacher. From C Troop: Spc. Mark Lelend, Spc. Matthew Loshaw, Spc. Kaylon Ross and 1st Lt. Eric Rudberg.



The 11 Bronze Star recipients stand and get applause from their fellow Paratroopers after receiving the award.

1-15 Inf. Regt. Soldiers receive Purple Hearts

In separate IED attacks, recipients live to tell their stories

Spc. **BEN HUTTO**
3rd HBCT, 3rd Inf. Div. Public Affairs

FOB HAMMER — Two Soldiers from Company A, 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment were awarded Purple Hearts in a ceremony held at FOB Hammer Oct. 1.

Sgt. Jason Silva from Ridgecrest, Calif., and Spc. Jayt Massiet from Palm Dale, Calif., tankers with Company A, 1-15 Inf. Regt., 3rd Infantry Division both received the awards for injuries sustained from improvised explosive device attacks while

on separate combat patrols.

Silva was a gunner in an M1A1 Abrams tank when it ran over an IED on a combat patrol near the Al Bawi pump station Aug. 1. He received a concussion from the blast.

He does not remember much about the incident, but said his parents and fiancé were happy that it wasn’t worse.

“They were relieved that I was fine and I still have all my limbs,” Silva said. “It could have been worse.”

Massiet was injured when the Abrams tank he was driving was struck by a buried IED on a combat patrol near the Tigris River June 7. He received a shrapnel wound in his



Command Sgt. Maj. Mark Moore pins a Purple Heart on Spc. Jayt Massiet, a tanker with Co. A. Massiet was injured June 7, when the tank he was driving ran over a buried improvised explosive device during a combat patrol near the Tigris River.

Photo by Spc. Ben Hutto

RE-ENLIST: Mullen acknowledges sacrifices of Soldiers and families

From page 1



By Staff Sgt. Carlos Lazo / MND-C Public Affairs

The Chairman stands in front of the formation of re-enlisting Soldiers and speaks with them personally, thanking them for their commitment.

“endearing you to the people of this nation,” Mullen said.

Despite current strains, the chairman highlighted the role of ground forces in preparing to confront future threats, and stressed the need to maintain their strength.

“Fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan will one day end,” he said. “We must be ready for who and what comes after. That’s the promise we’ve made.”

Fulfilling that promise has not been easy or without sacrifice, the chairman reminded the crowd. There have been 110 casualties from Task Force Marne so far, he said, “brave, courageous Soldiers – your comrades – who’ve given their lives in this cause.”

Considered in that light, the decision to re-enlist is more courageous and honorable than ever, Mullen said.

“It has been that sacrifice which has made us great as a nation, and it’s been a burden that this nation has asked our young to bear” for more than 230 years, he said.

Mullen acknowledged the stresses deployed Soldiers face are matched by the strain and sacrifice bourn by military families.



By Sgt. Timothy Kingston / 55th COMCAM
The Chairman is greeted by Lt. Col. John Kolasheski, commander of 3rd Sqdm., 1st Cav. Regt., 3rd HBCT, during a visit to PB Assassin after the re-enlistment ceremony.

But it is the combined strength and sacrifice at home, and in the towns and villages of Iraq, that is enabling U.S. forces to make headway in their mission, Mullen said.

“I look forward to continued success, continued progress, continued great service – the courage, the bravery, the valor that Task Force Marne has shown,” Mullen said.



Members of the Navy’s Explosive Ordnance Disposal Mobile Unit 3, out of San Diego receive recognition for their work from the Chairman during his visit to PB Murray after the re-enlistment ceremony.

Photo by Sgt. Luis Delgado / 2nd BCT, 3rd Inf. Div. Public Affairs

400 Iraqis show up for police recruiting

By Spc. BEN HUTTO
3rd HBCT, 3rd Inf. Div. Public Affairs

FOB HAMMER – Approximately 400 civilians showed up for a police recruiting drive at the Iraqi police station in Wehda Sept. 30.

Lt. Col. Kareem, the station commander, processed 180 of the applicants into the bio-metric automated tool set.

“With this many candidates showing up, I don’t think he (Kareem) will have a problem filling his open positions with qualified people,” said 1st Lt. Andrew Hanson, of Fresno, Calif., platoon leader for 3rd platoon, 59th Military Police Company, Fort Carson, Colo., currently assigned to the 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team.

The Wehda police station is trying to hire 162 people. The drive went so well that Kareem plans to hold another drive and expects to have a similar turnout.

“It’s a real credit to the people of Wehda that so many people showed up from the town and the surrounding communi-



An Iraqi policeman and waiting applicants take time to read and discuss stories from the Baghdad Now newspaper during the police recruiting drive

ties,” Hanson said. “They all want to get a job and help secure their community. The station did a great job putting this event together, and I expect that they will do it again for the next one.”

The 59th MP Company is from Fort Carson, Colo., and is currently attached to the 3rd HBCT, 3rd Infantry Division, Fort Benning, Ga. The 3rd HBCT has been deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom since March 2007.



Courtesy photos / 1-15 Inf. Regt.

Sgt. Jeffrey Hancock, of Hulbert, Okla., and Sgt. 1st Class John Hardy, of Griffin, Ga., both assigned to the 59th Military Police Company from Fort Carson, Colo., supervise a recent police recruiting drive in Al Wehda.

1-15 Inf. Regt. helps turn school around

Children run from classroom to classroom in amazement of once run-down facilities

By MAJ. JOE SOWERS
3rd HBCT Public Affairs Officer

FOB HAMMER — Leaders from the 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment joined leaders of the Mada'in Qada to open the refurbished Al-Eslah School in Al-Wehda, east of Baghdad Oct. 1.

The ribbon-cutting ceremony marked the completion of the two-month project. The Al-Wehda Nahia Council forwarded the issue of school refurbishment to 1-15th Inf. Regt. representatives during a council meeting in July.

Following a tour and assessment of the school, Soldiers began the work of getting funds approved for the project. Iraqi construction workers began work on the project following the approval of emergency relief funds.

Prior to the refurbishment, the school was virtually falling apart according to Capt. Matthew K. Givens, Columbus, Ga., civil-military operations officer for 1-15th Inf. Regt.

The project employed 87 citizens during the two-month period. Workers provided electrical and plumbing upgrades as well as installing new doors and win-

dows. Structural and cosmetic improvements to the school were also made.

"This project will affect the local populace in many ways," Givens said. "The largest impact will be that the children of Al-Wehda have an appropriate facility which is conducive to learning."

Security measures were taken into account during the construction process for three full-time security guards. A rest house for the guards was added to the school grounds as part of the refurbishment. Workers heightened and expanded a security wall as well.

"The council was thoroughly pleased with the contractor's work, as were we," Givens said. "This facility has been completely refurbished from its original condition. The contractor's attention to detail and genuine care for the project is evident and the people responded to his hard work."

After the ribbon was cut to open the school, students were thrilled with their new facility and ran room-to-room looking at the entire school. Teachers expressed their appreciation to council members and Soldiers.

"The school refurbishment far sur-



Courtesy photo / 1-15 Inf. Regt.

Students accept backpacks from Soldiers at the opening of the Al-Eslah School in Al-Wehda. The school opening was the culmination of a two-month effort by local leaders and 1-15 Inf. Regt. to refurbish the school.

passed all of our expectations," Givens said. "The Al-Wehda Nahia Council has been working hand-in-hand with us to get projects accomplished and to improve the security and quality of life for the people of Al-Wehda."

The 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment is assigned to the 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, Fort Benning, Ga., and has been deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom since March 2007.

Op. Chickamagua IV eliminates explosives

Soldiers from 3rd platoon, Co. B, 1-15 Inf. Regt. pull security outside a house in Al Jarra. An RPG warhead was discovered, which was later destroyed.



Courtesy photo / 1-15 Inf. Regt.

By Spc. BEN HUTTO
3rd HBCT, 3rd Inf. Div. Public Affairs

FOB HAMMER – Soldiers from 3rd platoon, Company B, 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment conducted a mission in Al Jarra to deny enemy sanctuary and to find possible weapons caches in the area Sept. 30.

Operation Chickamagua IV led to the discovery and destruction of a rocket propelled grenade warhead.

Company B cleared six structures while searching for possible cache sites, and called for an indirect fire attack that destroyed a building insurgents used as cover. After finding the warhead, Soldiers from the 789th

Ordnance Company destroyed the munitions.

"Third platoon conducted operations in an efficient, professional manner," said 1st Lt. Matthew Barwick, a Lanham, Md., native and fire support officer for Company B. "We are pleased with how well the operation went."

"Third platoon will continue to operate in Al Jarra in order to secure the area from insurgents."

The 1-15 Inf. Regt. is part of the 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, Fort Benning, Ga., and has been deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom since March 2007.

Ground forces, helicopters team to kill 3 insurgents

Deep-buried IEDs don't stop Soldiers from completing mission

By MAJ. JOE SOWERS
3rd HBCT Public Affairs Officer

FOB HAMMER – Attack helicopter pilots, supporting Soldiers from Company A, 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, killed three insurgents and wounded two others during an air assault into a suspected enemy sanctuary the night of Oct. 3 near Al-Bawi.

Soldiers from Company A conducted the raid to disrupt insurgent activity along the Tigris River north of Salman Pak. An attack aviation element from the 1st Battalion, 3rd Combat Aviation Brigade provided aerial support with two AH-64 Apaches, while the 4th Battalion, 3rd CAB provided helicopters to move the Company A Soldiers to their target.

"The Al-Bawi area is very well protected by the enemy with deep-buried improvised explosive devices along the main routes," said Maj. John Cushing, from Rochester, Mich., the 1-15th Inf. Regt. operations officer. "An air assault operation is a great way to reach

areas like Al-Bawi to confirm or deny enemy sanctuaries."

While Company A Soldiers were clearing three groups of houses, pilots from 1-3rd CAB identified five armed individuals moving toward the Company A Soldiers. The 1-3rd CAB pilots were able to kill three during their initial engagement and the Company A Soldiers later detained two individuals.

"Last night, we were able to kill armed insurgents attempting to flee the area," said Cushing. "We showed the enemy, once again, that we can reach out and touch them at the time and place of our choosing."



Photos by Sgt. Timothy Kingston / 55th COMCAM

A Soldier from the 3rd Sqdrn., 1st Cav. Regt. checks behind a courtyard gate during a night raid east of Baghdad. It was a joint mission with Iraqi National Police.

Cav Soldiers, ISF detain HVI

By MAJ. JOE SOWERS
3rd HBCT, 3rd Inf. Div. Public Affairs

FOB HAMMER – Elements of the 3rd Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment and Iraqi National policemen conducted a raid east of Baghdad resulting in the detention of a high-value individual and three other suspected extremists Sept. 30.

Soldiers from Troop A and the Time-Sensitive Target platoon of the 3-1 Cav. Regt. conducted the raid with their police partners to kill or capture the HVI and to deny extremists sanctuary in the regiment's area of operation.

The HVI is suspected of maintaining a leadership position in a local extremist net-

work. Information obtained by 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team officials links the HVI to indirect fire attacks against Coalition Forces and weapons smuggling.

"Detaining this individual should assist us in reducing indirect fire attacks and takes us one step closer to making the Al-Kut Highway a safe route," said Maj. Desmond Bailey, a native of Alabama, the 3-1 Cav. Regt. operations officer.

Bailey further explained continued efforts to engage local leaders has resulted in greater information on suspected extremists and insurgents in the squadron's AO.

An Iraqi Security Force uniform, an AK-47 assault rifle and a large amount of small arms ammunition were seized.



A Soldier searches a suspected insurgent during the night raid. The raid, conducted with Iraqi National Police, resulted in the detention of a high-value individual and a cache. Additionally, An Iraqi Security Force uniform, AK-47 and ammunition were seized.

HEART: Soldier credits fellow crew members for quick reaction, medical aid

From page 3

right elbow and several lacerations on his right side.

"Basically, the blast knocked out both Massiet and my gunner," said 1st Lt. Justin Patton, the executive officer for Company A, 1-15 Inf. Regt., Waynesville, Mo., and the tank commander at the time of the attack. "We rolled about 70 meters and they both came to. I was yelling down to him because the coms (radios) were out. I asked, 'Are you ok?' and he yelled back 'Yeah, I'm bleeding.' At that point, the fact that he said anything was a relief. The tank was destroyed. He was very lucky. Really, the whole crew was."

Massiet was happy to receive the

award.

"It's not something I ever wanted, but I'll take it," he said.

Massiet was thankful that Patton and Sgt. Robert Lady, the gunner during the mission, were there to help him.

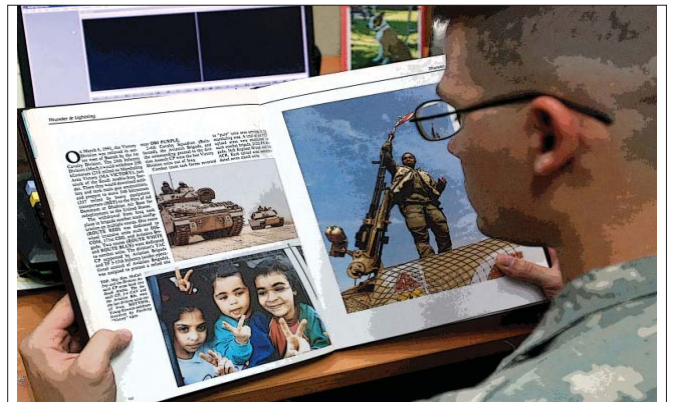
"They both got me out of the hatch and got me to the medic really quick," Massiet said. "Those guys were great."

The 1-15 Inf. Reg. is part of the 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, Fort Benning, Ga., and has been deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom since March.



By Spc. Ben Hutto

Command Sgt. Maj. Mark Moore pins a Purple Heart on Sgt. Jason Silva, a tanker with Co. A. Silva was injured Aug. 1, when the tank he was riding in was hit by an improvised explosive device during a combat patrol near the Al Bawi pump station.



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E-mail images to 3idyearbook@iraq.centcom.mil

Not all of our enemies are outside the FOB...

OPERATIONAL SECURITY

...some have disguised themselves as one of us. Report suspicious activities immediately.

...IT'S EVERYONE'S JOB.

Motor pool hub for coalition mechanics

By SGT. BEN BRODY
MND-C Public Affairs

AL KUT – Forward Operating Base Delta hosts a broad cross-section of the Coalition of the Willing, and the maintenance shop is no different.

At the motor pool tucked in a corner of the sprawling base, soldiers in different uniforms and speaking different languages work together, turning wrenches, soldering joints and generally making broken equipment whole again.

The mechanics come from so many units that they simply refer to themselves as the “Delta Dogs.”

Since many of the Coalition troops use borrowed U.S. military vehicles and equipment, they must learn how to main-

tain them from U.S. Soldiers.

“The El Salvadorian troops are pretty proficient at maintaining Humvees because the vehicles they use at home are similar,” said Staff Sgt. Melissa Copeland, a shop supervisor with Company B, 168th Maintenance Battalion, which is part of 214th Fires Brigade from Fort Sill, Okla.

“The Georgians are still getting familiarized with the Humvee – it’s pretty different than the Russian trucks they’re used to,” said Copeland, who is from Granbury, Texas. “To speed up the learning curve, we embedded one Georgian mechanic and an interpreter with each repair crew.”

Every new gadget or protective plate that comes in from U.S. suppliers must be fitted to the Humvees by whatever means necessary, and that often means a trip to the welding shop.

Staff Sgt. James Buckner, NCO in charge of the welding shop, has a small team of Americans and Georgians who do all of the welding for FOB Delta.

When Georgian chaplain Father Gabriel came by the shop Oct. 3, looking for a new bell to place atop his chapel, Buckner and his Georgian counterpart, Cpl. Merab Gzirishvili, were happy to oblige.

“Merab knows just



Photos by Sgt. Ben Brody

Spc. Jeremiah Watson (left) and Sgt. Alicia Scott, both of 168th Maintenance Battalion, 214th Fires Brigade, repair a set of night-vision goggles at FOB Delta.



Georgian Army Cpl. Merab Gzirishvili and Staff Sgt. James Buckner, welding NCOIC for 168th Maintenance Battalion, 214th Fires Brigade, work on a bell for the Georgian’s Eastern Orthodox chapel.

about everything about welding – he’s a great asset to our team,” said Buckner, who is from Tchula, Miss.

Buckner and Gzirishvili’s team recently fitted 200 Humvees with special shields that protect the vehicles’ two main electronic interference systems from canceling each other out. Lately they have been busy installing security glass around the Georgians’ Humvee turrets.

Away from the flying sparks and rumbling engines, Soldiers run electronics repair shops in quiet, impeccably clean trailers nearby.

“We spent the first few weeks training the Georgians how to fix their radios – now they take the lead diagnosing and fixing problems,” said Sgt. 1st Class Kenric Brooks, NCO in charge of the electronics repair section. “They are really interested in learning about our equipment and learning English.”

“There is much work to do here, and it is good practice for us to learn the Humvees and learn English,” said Junior Sgt. Oleg Gochashvili, a mechanic with the Georgian Army. “The Americans help us every day.”

Soldiers bring needed supplies to Iraqi schools

By SPC. BEN HUTTO
3rd HBCT, 3rd Inf. Div.
Public Affairs

FOB HAMMER – Soldiers from Troop B, 3rd Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, helped schools in Sabah Nissan, Narhwan and Hollendia by providing supplies for the children Oct. 4.

Soldiers unloaded backpacks, notebooks, pens and pencils over the weekend, and children from each neighborhood showed up to help unload supplies and see Soldiers.

“It’s going great,” said 1st Sgt. Miguel Rivera, New York, the first sergeant of Troop B. “Hopefully these schools can help teach these kids right from wrong and give them a better future. It won’t happen over night, but in a few years this will be an

entirely new and better nation.”

The Soldiers delivered supplies to help 26,000 students.

“It’s tough,” said Capt. Jared Albright, from Lancaster, Pa., the commander of Troop B. “In Narhwan alone, there are 20,000 to 30,000 students we are trying to take care of. We’ll be back to meet with the local council to make sure that the students are getting what they need.”

The first stop on the mission was Sabah Nissan, a small village south of Narhwan.

“Right now the kids here in Sabah Nissan have next to no supplies,” Albright said. “The Ministry of Education is doing what it can, but there is such a need that any help we can give is appreciated.”

The boys and girls schools in Sabah Nissan opened on Oct. 1. Troop B had previously delivered 300 backpacks, but brought

800 more this mission to accommodate the 1,100 students that attend both schools.

“We are glad we got to complete this project in preparation for the school opening,” said 1st Lt. Chris Sweitzer of Morgansville, Tenn., a civil affairs officer in the 489th Civil Affairs Battalion from Knoxville, Tenn., currently attached to 3-1 Cav. Regt.

The Soldiers continued their mission unloading supplies for the 5,000 students that attend the school in Hollendia, another village to the south of Nahrwan.

“This area has been relatively quiet, but we are trying to help each school as much as possible so no one in the area feels neglected,” Albright said.

As the Soldiers unloaded supplies to lines of students who came out to help at the last stop in Narhwan, Albright talked



By SPC. BEN HUTTO

Sgt. Charlie Jones from Troop B, 3-1 Cav., 3rd HBCT talks to Iraqi children during a school drop in Sabah Nissan

with school officials.

“We’ve arrested a lot of insurgents in operations out here,” Albright said. “Now we are trying to come back in and help the community. I think they feel much better about us when we

come out here like this.”

The 3-1 Cav. Regt. is part of the 3rd HBCT, 3rd Inf. Div. out of Fort Benning, Ga., and has been deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom since March 2007.

1-30 troops give medical aid to locals



Photos by Sgt. Luis Delgadillo

Capt. Keri L. Mullen, brigade surgeon for 2nd BCT, speaks with a woman through an interpreter.

By **SGT. LUIS DELGADILLO**
2nd BCT, 3rd Inf. Div.
Public Affairs

FOB KALSU — If you didn't know better, you would mistake the crowded house filled with rambunctious children as the site of a busy community day-care center.

However, upon closer inspection one would discover Army doctors and nurses busily interacting with their young patients in improvised treatment rooms during the 2nd Brigade Combat Team's pediatric medical operation Oct. 3.

People in Arab Jabour must travel long distances to reach the nearest medical clinics, so when concerned citizens groups requested a medical operation, Lt. Col. Ken Adgie and his Soldiers came through.

"In this area there is no Iraqi army or Iraqi police or government services. We started working and got the water and electricity turned on, and now we're starting to focus on medical services," said Adgie, commander of 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, 2nd BCT, 3rd Infantry Division.

Capt. Keri L. Mullen, brigade surgeon for 2nd BCT, said she enjoyed having the chance to get out and care for patients because

as a brigade surgeon her job often ties her to more administrative duties.

"My goal was to see as many local civilians as possible and to try and treat them as best we could," said Mullen in regard to her approach.

During the medical operation, Soldiers evaluated more than eighty patients, most of whom were children and gave away medicines to those who needed them.

The medicines provided relief to some of the illnesses the patients had, but Mullen said one of the best parts of the visit was being able to educate those who visited.

"A lot of the women were saying that they can't get clean water here, so because they can't get clean water they're not drinking enough fluids, they're not eating enough food, and they are more likely to get these symptoms."

Symptoms, which she said include parasitic infections, stomach infections, back pain, and joint pain.

Mullen said that with a balanced diet and clean water many of the residents could avoid the parasitic infections, which some of the children had.

"It always feels good to be able to help someone," she said.



Lt. Col. Hee-Choon Lee (above), battalion surgeon for 1-30 Inf. Regt., checks a man's eyes during the medical operation in Arab Jabour. Hee-Choon Lee (Left) takes a man's blood pressure. The operation included medical evaluations, distribution of medicine, preventive medicine tips and "goodie" bags for children.

"That's why most of us go in to this field, why we become medical providers — medics, doctors, PAs (physician's assistants) — because we like to help people, so any time that I'm able to help someone to feel a little better, it makes my day."

As hosts of the pediatric medical operation, Soldiers of the 2nd BCT evaluated their young patients, while outside, concerned citizens groups teamed up with Coalition Forces to provide security.

"They are in charge of, primarily all of the security in this building," said Capt. James An-

thony, commander of Company C, 1-30th Inf. Reg.

"They are locking down this entire area so insurgents don't come in and attack this humanitarian event," he said.

So with the growth of the concerned citizens groups in Arab Jabour, Adgie said that his focus has grown to include medical services.

Still he acknowledges that the operations are just a short-term fix.

"We're working real closely with the director general of health to try to build a long-term medical clinic here staffed

by Iraqis. That is truly the way ahead," he said. "We're going to leave some day, and it needs to be self-sustaining."

With the success of the medical operation, Anthony sees that the event did not just benefit the patients seen.

"For my company and the guys in my company it is something tangible for being over here in Iraq. It's something we can actually put our hands on, look at and say, 'Hey we helped 30 people today, or we helped 40 people with medical care — women, children and older adults,'" he said.

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local shows: Victory Stage Oct. 13, 20, 27 7 p.m.

Photos by Staff Sgt. Tony M. Lindback



Sgt. Lisa Young, human resource sgt., Queens, N.Y.



Sgt. Christian Friedman, TF Vigilant nightshift battle NCO.



Sgt. Paul Lammers, network controller, Luling, Texas



Master Sgt. Kevin Crawford, G-6 planning team, Tulsa, Okla.



Spc. Sparkle Irby, Chem. Bio. Radiological Operating specialist, Peoria, Ill.



Dion Johnson, petroleum laboratory specialist, Crescent City, Fla.



Pfc. Mary Armstrong-Johnson, combat ground station operator, Hinesville, Ga.



Staff Sgt. Artisha Gilliam, Aviation Operations NCO, Portsmouth, Va.



Air Force Capt. Manaal Ibrahim, from the Boston area.



Edwin Reyes, Equal Opportunity NCO, San Juan, Puerto Rico.



Spc. Olinda Pugh, food service specialist, Miami.



Aiashia Spivey, food service provider, originally from Toledo, Ohio.

The Freedom Report

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A weekly radio program about troops serving in
Operation Iraqi Freedom

Father comes to FOB Kalsu in desperation

Civil affairs Soldiers step up, get support from U.S. organization to help baby

By Sgt. 1st Class Craig Zentkovich
MND-C Public Affairs

On an ordinary day in June, a story began to unfold in which an Iraqi man, Younis, and his daughter would experience something extraordinary.

Younis was desperately trying to get help for his daughter, Mariam, who was born with a hole in her pallet.

The condition made it difficult for her to eat. When she did eat, she had trouble keeping food down, often getting sick after meals. Her condition caused her health to deteriorate. She was malnourished and not getting any better.

Younis was going to do what any father would do in order to see his little girl healthy again. He also knew there'd be a price to pay, not only in Dinar but in putting his and his family's lives at risk. He ventured to the gates of Forward Operating Base Kalsu to find the help his daughter needed.

It was at FOB Kalsu where he met up with a group that would change his daughter's life forever. That group was Company C, 412th Civil Affairs Battalion.

Younis told the Soldiers of Co. C that his daughter needed two surgeries; more specifically, he needed the money for these surgeries, which would cost more than \$2,000 – money Younis didn't have.

1st Sgt. Paul Wilcock, Co. C, 412th CA Bn., first sergeant, and his Soldiers made a few phone calls and sent e-mails to charitable organizations back in the states trying to raise funds for Mariam's surgeries. Within hours, they received a response from Alan Krotchkoff, president and co-founder of www.adoptasoldierplatoon.org.

Krotchkoff and his organization, which was established in April 2003, raised \$1,800 in less than two hours.

"(adoptasoldierplatoon.org) sends us anything we ask for," Wilcock said.



Courtesy photo / Co. C, 412th CA Bn.

Baby Mariam plays on her father's lap, one month after having two surgeries to correct a hole in her pallet.

"They consistently send us care packages, but recently sent us soccer uniforms, complete for three different (Iraqi recreational) teams."

"He (Younis) thanks us profusely for everything we have done, and told us he wants a cell phone to be able to call us when (militants) are in his area."

— 1st Sgt. Paul Wilcock
Co. C, 412th CA Bn.

the bargain.

"He stops in about every two weeks," Wilcock said. "He thanks us profusely for everything we have done, and told us he wants a cell phone to be able to call us when (militants) are in his area."

He added that, four months later, Mariam is eating solid food and looking very good.

With the help of generous Americans, selfless Soldiers and a father willing to do anything for his daughter, Mariam can look forward to a long, healthy life.

Blowin' stuff up



Photos by Sgt. Ben Brody / MND-C Public Affairs

Navy explosive ordnance disposal technicians from Mobile Unit 6, Detachment 14, pile up captured munitions for destruction at FOB Delta, Oct. 4. The cache included 40 122mm artillery shells, several large mortars, a 50-pound sack of TNT, and various anti-tank mines of Iranian and Italian manufacture.



Petty Officers 2nd Class Jim Hilbert and Greg Pruet lay C-4 charges over the cache.



Captured munitions and an old 1,000-pound aviation bomb are destroyed by MU6 technicians. MU6 is from Naval Weapons Station at Charleston, S.C.



Petty Officer 2nd Class Steve Serio, an MU6 EOD technician, inspects the crater left by the destruction of captured munitions.

FREEDOM REPORT
TELLING THE TASK FORCE MARNE STORY
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From the editor

Get your beer on R&R

By SGT. MICHAEL CONNORS
MND-C Public Affairs

Traveling outside of theater isn't the only way to get some R&R. I somehow finagled a four-day pass to Qatar recently (Camp As Sayliyah). I can only hope that all Soldiers, most of whom are certainly more deserving than me, will get the same opportunity.

I know of several Soldiers who have opted to go to Freedom Rest or LSA Anacanda for their four-day pass because they didn't want to go through the hassle of traveling to Qatar, but let me tell you, it's worth it – and I should know.

I slept on the cement in a waiting tent at BIAP overnight trying to get a flight out because my original flight was diverted (Not to worry though, the four-day pass starts a day after you arrive to Camp As Sayliyah.) And on my way back from Qatar into BIAP, between my congestion and the combat landing, I writhed in pain, feeling as if my head were in a vice from the pressure.

But I'd do it all over again, and one word sums up why: BEER! And I'm not talking a can of beer, I'm talking 20-ounce draught beers, three a night. Budweiser, Fosters, Guinness, Kilkenny, Carlsberg. Bottled beers including Corona are also available, not to mention wine and limited mixed drinks.

If the idea of getting your favorite drink in a tall glass or on ice isn't enough to interest you, that's just a fraction of what

R&R has to offer.

There are several off-post trips including the ever-popular shopping malls. It's like being back home, right down to the Starbucks.

But you'll want to keep your shopping fix to a minimum, so you'll have time for once-in-a-lifetime day trips such as the Qatar cultural tour or the inland sea trip.

Because I was there during Ramadan, the cultural tour was not offered, but I got to go on the inland sea trip. We took SUVs over the rolling desert to a sea resort on the Persian Gulf where we swam in the water, played volleyball, and ate a catered meal.

Also enjoy these on-post amenities: swimming pool and hot tub, two gyms, day spa, Chili's, Orange Julius, Dairy Queen, Green Beans, Pizza Inn, Subway, gift shops, jewelry shops, PX, Internet café, X-box room, two movie/TV rooms, DSN phone rooms, mini golf, chaplain's office, finance office, post office, etc.

So be a good Soldier and "take the initiative," i.e., don't pass up the opportunity to visit Qatar – Cheers!



Sgt. Zettion Branham, G-1 casualty operations team chief, enjoys the inland sea trip during R&R in Qatar.

Photo Contest Winner: Sgt. Carla Monday



Purple haze: Sgt. Carla Monday with Company C, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Aviation Regiment, 3rd Combat Aviation Brigade took this photo of a Black Hawk helicopter at sunset.

Photo Contest Get Published!



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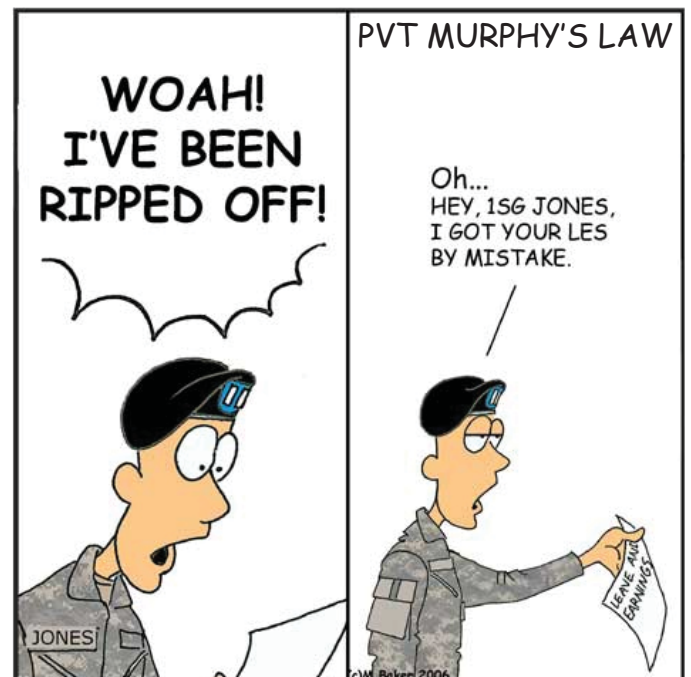
Email your best photo to the editor: michael.connors@iraq.centcom.mil. A photo will be chosen for the next edition of the *Marne Focus*. Include your rank, full name, job title, unit, photo date and a brief caption with rank, full name, job title and unit of each Soldier in the photo.

Christmas in October



Maj. William Coker dances with Christmas decorations Oct. 3 while packing a shipping container for redeployment from Camp Striker, Iraq, to Fort Drum, N.Y. The container's contents must be examined by customs before shipping to the United States. Coker discovered his decorations in a box. He serves as the personnel officer for 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry) out of Fort Drum, N.Y.

Photo by Sgt. Chris McCann / 2nd BCT, 10th Mtn. Div. (LI) Public Affairs



Eye in the sky . . .

High-tech military blimp catches IED emplacers in the act, films their demise a few days later

By SGT. MARCUS BUTLER
4th BCT (Abn.),
25th Inf. Div. Public Affairs

FOB KALSU – Military tactics are like a game of chess. One must think several moves ahead in order to be successful.

Paratroopers from 4th Brigade Combat Team (Airborne), 25th Infantry Division laid out a strategy the night of Sept. 24 which resulted in the death of a four-man improvised explosive device team responsible for detonating a roadside bomb that struck a Coalition convoy.

Beginning two days prior with the use of an AEROSTAT, Paratroopers saw four suspicious individuals near a road not far from Forward Operating Base Kalsu. An AEROSTAT is a helium-filled blimp with a camera that has day and infrared capabilities allowing the user to see 360 degrees to distances of several kilometers.

Following the individuals from the road to a house, the AEROSTAT team sent up coordinates of the house and the location on the road and continued to scan the area for other suspicious activity.

Two days later Spc. Phillip Alderson of Attalla, Al., and Spc. Tell-James Nieuwenhuis of Stapleton, Neb., conducted surveillance of a possible rocket launch site when Nieuwenhuis decided to focus

on the coordinates from two nights before.

“We were looking at another area before we switched to the area where the suspected triggermen were located,” Nieuwenhuis said. “After scanning for a few minutes, we heard the blast.”

The blast came from a roadside bomb that struck the lead vehicle of a Coalition convoy less than 30 minutes after Nieuwenhuis had switched his focus to the area. Once hearing the blast, the camera of the AEROSTAT controlled by Nieuwenhuis, went into action.

“Once we heard the blast the first thing we did was start to scan the area for any triggermen,” Alderson said. “After a brief scan we found them hiding in a canal. I sent their location to our higher command and they took appropriate action.”

The Brigade Operations Center called attack helicopters to engage and neutralize the enemy threat. The helicopters engaged, killing the four insurgents.

“We saw everything happen,” Alderson said. “It was a very exciting moment to see and know we had a hand in helping find and neutralize a threat to Coalition Forces.”

After the initial threat was gone, ground forces moved in to conduct a battle damage assessment while the AEROSTAT



Courtesy photos

An AEROSTAT above FOB Falcon during a training exercise.

continued to watch the area.

Ground elements located four AK-47s, four ammunition racks and a cache of 7.62 mm ammunition at the site.

After ground forces left, Alderson and Nieuwenhuis went back to work searching the areas near and far for threats to the security of FOB Kalsu and the Para-

troopers patrolling the streets.

“Having helped in the process of eliminating a threat to the security of my fellow Paratroopers is a really good feeling to me,” Alderson said. “It really validates our job here and lets everyone know how vital and important our job with the AEROSTAT is.”



Soldiers (far left) receive AEROSTAT training at Fob Falcon. Soldiers (left) pose during training at FOB Falcon. An AEROSTAT is a helium-filled blimp with a camera that has day and infrared capabilities allowing the user to see 360 degrees to distances of several kilometers.

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