



IA celebrates 86th birthday with skills, equipment showcase

Story, photo by Spc. Abel Trevino
28th Public Affairs Detachment

FOB CONSTITUTION – One week after the execution of Saddam Hussein, Soldiers from 3rd Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division, held a ceremony marking the 86th birthday of the Iraqi Army here.

American Soldiers from the 412th Civil Affairs Battalion, the unit in charge of the Military Transition Teams there, attended the event as well.

“We are here to show support and respect, just as they show it for our celebrations,” said Maj. Darwin Rice, Company A, 412th Civil Affairs Bn. “I think it was a very good event. It shows the progress the Iraqi Army has made. Even though it’s the new Iraqi Army, they still have pride in their country and military.”

The brigade leadership gave speeches that stressed the sacrifices the Soldiers were making for their country.

“You are the best of this nation and have given sacrifices for this nation,” Gen. Nassir, brigade commander, 3rd Bde., 6th IA Div., said to the Soldiers in attendance. “No one will forget these sacrifices -- not in these difficult times. You are putting the interests of the country first. Our country asks a lot, but you have risen to its challenges.”

A convoy showcasing the equipment and troop strength of the unit immediately followed the motivational speeches. The ceremony culminated with a simulated house raid, complete with flash grenades and a mock casualty that required treatment.

“Every time (Soldiers) go on a mission, they take a doctor in case someone gets injured,” said 1st Lt. “Doc” Abdali, medical commander, 3rd Bde., 6th IA Div. “[In this exercise] one of the ‘terrorists’ was injured, so they gave



As part of their Iraqi Army Celebration Day ceremony at Forward Operating Base Constitution, a commando team from 3rd Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division demonstrated the tactics used to raid a building. The raid was complete with flash and smoke grenades and mock casualties that required treatment.

him treatment after capturing him.”

The overseeing MiTT, which regularly conducts joint missions with the Iraqi Army, was impressed by the changes they’ve witnessed over the last nine months.

“It shows the bond, the cohesiveness, of the Iraqis,” said Col. Kenneth Stone, 3rd Bde., 6th IA Div., MiTT chief, 412th Civil Affairs Bn. “We’ve seen tremendous strides in improvements in the Soldiers and the camp since we’ve been here. We’ve just been real impressed with them. We’ve been in combat with them and they are real brave Soldiers. They don’t run from a fight.”

The ceremony concluded with

awards presented to Iraqis who uphold strong Army values. Several awards were presented to Soldiers who not only rejected a bribe from a trucker attempting to enter their compound, but also reported and detained the individual.

Pvt. Sadique, 3rd Bde., 6th IA Div., one of the Soldiers recognized for bravery and courage, spoke briefly of the incident.

“We had a mission (in the area) and they released information about a kidnapper,” he said. “We observed the movement of the kidnapper’s vehicle and engaged. (This recognition) makes us feel very happy. We feel that somebody really cares about us.”

Commentary

Uniform rules still important in war zones

I have many bad habits, but one of them started sticking out in the three weeks since I got to Iraq: walking and smoking.

In the back of my head, I think of it as a time-saving measure. Instead of stopping for a cigarette before I head out or after I get to my destination, I'll just puff away as I make my way.

This works any time I'm in civilian clothes, but as any military smoker knows, this usually doesn't fly in



From the Editor's Desk
Sgt. Jacob Boyer

uniform. As a matter of fact, the Multinational Forces-Iraq uniform policy specifically restricts the activity. I filed it away and quickly started doing my own thing – never the right answer.

Recently I was walking along, a cigarette blazing away, when an observant

NCO – the first one to this point – corrected me. Sure, I enjoy a smoke and a walk, but she had a point: Whether we like them or not, rules and regulations are there for a reason, and we all need to follow these lawful orders.

Even here in Iraq, every servicemember needs to adhere to the rules. It takes discipline, but that concept is one of the most important to a warfighter. It informs who we are both on and off the battlefield.

Whether it's stopping yourself from smoking and walking, making sure you have all the right armor and protective devices before leaving the wire, or making sure you have on the right headgear at the right time of year, we all need to stop now and then and make sure we're doing the right thing.

How we act in here reflects how we'll act out there. We would all do well to remember that.

Chaplain's Corner

Sanctity of Life

by **Chaplain Oscar Arauco**
MNC-I Operations Chaplain

On Jan. 22, 1973, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in support of abortion. Before the Court's ruling, a majority of states prohibited abortion, although most allowed an exception when pregnancy threatened the woman's life. The Court overturned these state prohibitions in *Roe v. Wade*.

Since those days there has been a great struggle in our land across the moral and political spectrum. Many who seek to preserve life no matter the age or condition or status remember this court decision and honor life particularly on the third Sunday in January, often calling it Sanctity of Life Sunday.

Sanctity of life implies the sacredness of life, preciousness, and specialness of life. God is the giver of life and sanctity of life honors and celebrates life. The Bible records how the, "LORD

God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being." God later sent His Son, Jesus Christ to pay the penalty for the sins of men and women, so that whoever accepts this might have a renewed relationship of peace with God. The Bible again recounts, "Anyone who believes in the Son of God has this testimony in his heart.

Anyone who does not believe God has made him out to be a liar, because he has not believed the testimony God has given about his Son. And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life."

God is about giving life, once at birth and again, spiritually, through His own Son Jesus Christ. Abortion is about taking life. Now sometimes personal situations get muddled, confused, and the difference between life and choice, life and privacy, becomes foggy and grey. Yet in Iraq it is much

easier to see the difference between life and death. Recently on a muddy day, I visited a Combat Support Hospital. On this day, doctors, nurses and technicians struggled valiantly to preserve a young Soldier's life. And in the bed near this mortally wounded warrior, enemy detainees were also receiving the same life giving care. I saw a young man and an old man detained, but receiving life preserving care, life choosing care. The medical staff was about saving life, preserving life. They wanted to let life breathe, have life go on and grow up gracefully no matter the age or condition or status of their patient.

Life is such a wonderful thing and what we seek, fight for, sacrifice for, and yes will even die for especially if it preserves the life of our brothers and sisters in arms. The sanctity of life is much clearer to see in Iraq, away from the political debates and grey fog of personal relative morality. Let us honor the sanctity of life during our days in Iraq and in the days of our dreams back home.

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Rollover!

89th MPs learn humvee survival skills

Story, photo by

Spc. Kimberly Millett

89th MP Brigade Public Affairs

Soldiers from 2nd Brigade, 10th Mountain Division, trained dozens of Soldiers on humvee rollover techniques Jan. 5 and 6 in the parking lot beside the 89th Military Police Brigade Headquarters.

Sgt. 1st Class Jesus Rada, platoon sergeant, Company A, Special Troops Battalion, 2nd Bde., 10th Mountain Div., said the two-day class was part of a larger goal geared toward certifying 23 trainers who will take the equipment and experience back to Camp Beuhring, Kuwait, and instruct their own units.

The Humvee Egress Assistance Trainer, commonly known as HEAT, is designed to give Soldiers an idea of what it's like to be in a rollover.

Rada said its purpose is to prepare troops for the real thing.

Before climbing into the simulator, Soldiers first received safety training measures and rollover response techniques. From there, individuals were fully-gearred for training before climbing into the simulator and combat-locking the doors.

The operator first rolled the truck to the left and then to the right at a 25-degree angle to illustrate to the passengers when the humvee is in danger of rolling over. Next, the truck was spun in a complete circle, forcing the gunner to take refuge in the cab. The other team members held onto the gunner and braced themselves.



Sgt. Michael Steele, military policeman, HHC, 89th Military Police Brigade, struggles out of an overturned Humvee Egress Assistance Trainer during rollover training Jan. 6.

During the last exercise, the simulator was flipped upside down, leaving Soldiers with the challenge of finding a way out. Up until this point, the teams weren't challenged much, finding the trainer more like an amusement park ride than a test.

That changed within seconds. Getting the seatbelt off after the rollover required lifting their body weight and the weight of their gear up while they were hanging upside down. Some Soldiers came rolling, falling or crawling out of doors tiresome and gasping for air.

Spc. Charles Robertson, military policeman, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 89th MP Bde., was surprised at how challenging the training was.

"It was as realistic as they could make it and still be

safe," he said. "It was more disorienting than I thought it would be. We're heavier than I thought we were with all the gear on."

Sgt. Joshua Smith, another Soldier from HHC, 89th MP Bde., said it was harder than initially anticipated.

"It was chaotic," he echoed. "Our gear got stuck in the straps. The seatbelts would get stuck."

Robertson said getting out of the seatbelts while upside down was the hardest part of the training.

"The hardest part is trying to get out of the seatbelt," he said. "You can always kick a door down. There was a little bit of panic when the seatbelts started choking."

Smith said Robertson had a really hard time staying out of the turret while they were spinning, especially since he is a relatively little

guy. Overall though, he said that the training made him more aware of his role in a humvee rollover and helped prepare his team for the possible event that an accident occurs outside the wire during a mission.

In addition to teaching Soldiers how to unlock combat-locked doors while upside down, Rada hoped the training reinforced the necessity of wearing seatbelts.

"Not many people take seatbelts as a serious matter," he said. "Through this training, they can see how much the gunner gets flapped around. I've seen videos of people who didn't wear seatbelts at all and they got tossed all around."

Rada said that from the beginning of Operation Iraqi Freedom until October 2006, there were 364 fatalities from rollovers.

Odierno reflects on Iraq challenges

Story, photo by By Sgt. Curt Cashour
MNC-I Public Affairs

The general responsible for day-to-day operations in Iraq said Sunday that the conflict hinges on closing the gap between the people of Iraq and their fledgling government.

Nearly a month into his command of Multinational Corps–Iraq, Lt. Gen. Ray Odierno spoke at length with reporters about the complex issues surrounding Operation Iraqi Freedom and some of the strategies he plans to use to help stabilize the country.

Violence from a number of different groups has created a rift between many Iraqis and their government. In order to stabilize the country, the coalition must work with Iraqis to establish legitimate, competent Iraqi security forces and work toward provincial elections, which will produce locally elected government officials, Odierno said.

These objectives cannot be achieved through military efforts alone, however, and must be paired with economic and political initiatives. In order to achieve success, Americans must be patient while Iraq's government continues on the path toward self sufficiency, a process that could take two to three years, Odierno said.

Enemies coalition forces face in Iraq break down into three main categories: Sunni extremists who seek to regain the power they had under Saddam Hussein, al Qaeda operatives who aim to establish a safe haven from which they can conduct future terrorist operations and Shiite extremists who want to implement a strict Islamic government grounded in Sharia law, Odierno said.

The simultaneous activity of the three groups has led to the onset of sectarian violence — in which Sunni and Shiite groups are battling for superiority. Complicating matters further are Iraq's militias, which have sprung up to provide security in the wake of all the sectarian strife, Odierno said.

Eighty percent of the country's militias operate within the law and can eventually be integrated into Iraqi security forces, while the rest will have to



Lt. Gen. Ray Odierno, commander of Multinational Corps-Iraq, speaks during a luncheon with reporters Sunday. Odierno spoke at length on the challenges in Iraq and the strategies he plans to use to help bring stability to the country.

be dealt with militarily, Odierno said.

Though the job of tamping down the violence will be challenging, there are signs of hope, Odierno said.

On Jan. 15 the 2nd Iraqi Army Division will take charge of security in Mosul and the 3rd Iraqi Army Division will do the same in Tal Afar.

In the last 90 days coalition forces have made great strides in Anbar province, an area west of Baghdad that is the main stronghold for al Qaeda in Iraq. Coalition forces have partnered with local tribes in an effort against al Qaeda, and recruiting for police in the area has increased significantly. Furthermore, recent polls of Iraqis indicate that 75 to 80 percent of the population rejects al Qaeda and extremist militias, Odierno said.

The coalition must take advantage of these successes and fill the security

void by working with Iraqis to defeat insurgents and extremists. Once areas are secure, Iraqi forces, augmented by American military transition teams, will take over security operations. The goal is to have Iraqis leading the security effort within Baghdad by late summer or early fall, Odierno said.

But as Iraqi forces grow, care must be taken to ensure those within the ranks are loyal to Iraq, Odierno said.

"We've got to make sure that the leaders in place — the battalion commanders, the brigade commanders, the division commanders — are not sectarian in nature," he said.

Even with success on the battlefield, challenges will remain, Odierno said.

"There's always going to be violence, but there's a certain level of protection that allows you to operate on a daily basis," he said.

Iraqi Soldiers pressure insurgents in Baghdad

by Master Sgt. Rick Brown

MNSTC-I Public Affairs

BAGHDAD — As the new year dawns bright, Soldiers from 3rd Battalion, 5th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division, pressuring insurgent leaders in the Karkh section of Baghdad.

The Soldiers of the 3rd Battalion take responsibility for protecting both Shia and Sunni citizens seriously. The leadership, working with intelligence gained from the residents of the neighborhoods, has developed a top-three list of insurgents operating in the area they intend to capture.

Adil Tamra, a man who reportedly kills people for sport, is at the top of that list. Stories abound about Tamra and rival leaders playing a deadly game of one-upsmanship where each man taunts the others to kill more men today than he did yesterday.

"He's just like Saddam Hussein," said an Iraqi intelligence officer who works with the battalion. "He sits there and shoots people in the head, because they don't share the same beliefs as him."

Much to the frustration of the battalion, Tamra has proven to stay just one step ahead of the Iraqi Army.

"We raided Adil Tamra's house yesterday," said team leader Iraqi Army Maj. Ahmed during a combat patrol Jan. 4. "We found his (explosive) vest, some mortars and an RPG. The information we had told us he was in the house minutes before we arrived."

Clearing insurgents from Baghdad's neighborhoods comes with a price. Some members of the 3rd Battalion have received death threats against them and their families from Tamra and the others on the list. "They know we're getting very close to them," said one Iraqi officer, who asked not be identified for security reasons. "They are worried. We are becoming very effective against them."

While the battalion conducts many missions on its own, they are sometimes joined by a Military Transition Team (MiTT) from 2nd Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division. The Jan. 4 combat pa-

trol through the area was such a case.

The MiTT and its two Bradley fighting vehicles were a welcome asset to the patrol because contact was expected. Even though contact was expected,

With Ahmed leading the combat patrol, the large convoy headed through an intersection known as Talil Square. This intersection is such a popular spot for enemy snipers to engage Iraqi and Coalition troops that shell casings litter the intersection.

Just off Talil Square, Ahmed stopped the patrol and signaled for his troops to begin cutting open the sandbags that block the alleys. He requested assistance from one of the Coalition fighting vehicles to help out with a larger, more complex position.

"You could see, as we tore down the sandbags, there were hundreds of empty (shell casings) from AK-47s," Ahmed later explained through an interpreter. "The insurgents use the sandbags to stand up and shoot at the Iraqi Army and Coalition, then duck down and hide so we can't shoot them."

While tearing down one of the fighting positions, an explosion occurred about 20 meters from where Soldiers were completing their task. It was a small explosive device and only one minor Coalition injury was sustained. The Soldier was treated and released immediately following the mission.

The Jan. 4 mission was a success for two reasons. First, three insurgent fighting positions were destroyed by Iraqi and Coalition forces. The second is far more important but less tangible. Ahmed said local citizens began walking up to the patrol to talk to them.

"These people from the Sheik Marouf area, they glorified the Iraqi Army today," Ahmed said, "and they were grateful for what we do in setting (traffic control points) and for patrolling the area. They told me they pray to God to bless us and they asked the Iraqi army

to protect them from Adil Tamra and the others because they are terrorists."

Ahmed said one of the local citizens told him that while he and his men were tearing down the sand bags, insurgents a few blocks away were trying to kidnap a group of civilians. The local citizen also told Ahmed the insurgents caught wind of the combat patrol moving through the area and released the victims and ran for cover.

"Today's mission was very successful and the evidence I can give you is that the people were very grateful for us being there," Ahmed stated.

He also understands his troops face an enemy that is better armed than his fledgling team.

"We've had a lot of progress in the past year," he said. "A year ago,

the Iraqi Army didn't have the Humvees, we didn't have a lot of equipment.

"Today, we are still short on weapons. The enemy has RPGs, mortars and grenades, so we still need proper weapons," he continued, "weapons that are at least equivalent to our enemy's. Soldiers are telling me 'if we have a grenade or an RPG, I will kill all the insurgents.'"

The battalion's noncommissioned officer in-charge, Iraqi Army Sgt. Maj. Sarmed, said he recognizes the strides his team has made, but also acknowledges that there's a long way to go.

"With the 6th Division, we never took the lead until recently. Now we're doing missions on our own. Back in the day we were led by the Coalition," he recalled through an interpreter. "It's a lot better now, but we would love to have the Coalition (come out with us) more. It's not because we're weak — everybody knows about the fights we get into every day. To be very honest, I still want the (Coalition here) so we can keep going forward and not slip backward."

"You could see, as we tore down the sandbags, there were hundreds of empty (shell casings) from Ak-47s."

-Maj. Ahmed
3rd Bn., 5th Bde., 6th IA Div.

Open wide!



Photo by Sgt. Rachel Ahner

Capt. Beezer Moolji, medic, HHC, 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade, 1st Cavalry Regiment, mimics the "ah" posture while using an LED light to check the back of a boy's throat during a medical operation inside Anwal School in Khan Dari Market, Iraq.

Transition teams face various challenges

by Sgt. 1st Class Jennifer Schwind
and Sgt. Shannon Crane
U.S. CENTCOM PAO

Transition teams' success in their mission to train Iraqi units to take responsibility for their nation's security relies heavily on their ability to understand and appreciate the Iraqi culture, which can be a difficult task.

Sgt. Maj. Rock Shiffer, senior enlisted advisor for the Iraqi National Police Headquarters, said when a team deals with its Iraqi counterparts, it is important to take the time to get acquainted before discussing business.

"You've got to do that piece," Shiffer said. "You've got to be able to get to know them, because their culture is, 'Come on in. Have a seat. Let's sit and talk. Let's have some tea.' If you try

"If you try to rush through (getting to know them), you're going to offend them, so we don't want to do that."

-Sgt. Maj. Rock Shiffer
senior advisor,
Iraq National Police Headquarters

and rush through that, you're going to offend them, so we don't want to do that."

Varied expectations of the Iraqis' abilities tend to create challenges for the teams, as well.

"One of the things that we have to keep reminding ourselves is that these

are not Americans and their standards are different," said Capt. John Govan, advisor for 4th Battalion, 2nd Brigade, 9th Iraqi Army Division.

"We have to constantly step back and apply a new metric to how we measure them, and it's much different than anything that we've done before," he added.

Some of the non-cultural issues experienced by the transition teams are strictly logistical in nature.

"They don't have a national industrial base," said U.S. Marine Col. Juan Ayala, senior transition team advisor for the 1st Iraqi Army Division, "so they don't have anything to draw from — so their logistics are outsourced. That has been a difficulty."

Editor's Note: This is the fourth part of a five-story series.

Announcements

Financial services

The 389th Finance Detachment offers financial services Tuesday from 9 a.m. to noon at the Al Faw palace. Services will include check cashing, casual pays and the Savings Deposit Program.

Tae kwon do lessons

The American Tae Kwon Do Association offers tae kwon do lessons Tuesdays and Saturdays from 5 to 6 p.m. at the South Victory Gym.

Contact Sgt. Maj. Frank Zepp at 822-3296 for more information.

Customs class

A customs class for all separate brigades on the Victory Base Complex will be held Feb. 1 from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the Al Faw Palace. The class will allow brigades to have certified customs inspectors to inspect subordinate units redeploying within

Lost & Found

Cell phone

A Cell phone was found at REd Leg LSA Jan. 2. Contact Sgt. 1st Class Barry Ellis at 822-4703 to confirm the type of phone.

Cell phone

A cell phone was found at the Liberty Helipad Dec. 18. Contact Staff Sgt. Jeffery Stacy at 822-3299 to confirm the type of phone.

Memory Stick

A purple and gray memory stick with a neck strap was lost Dec. 29. Contact SKC Felicia Cosby if found.

Bible

A Bible with a black cover and the name "Uzere, Vicarisy" inside was found in Dodge City North Nov. 24. Contact Marine

each brigade. The class is limited to 50 participants and spots are reseserved on a first-come, first-served basis.

Contact Sgt. 1st Class Frank Koptya for more information.

Post-Deployment Health Assessment schedule change

Post-Deployment Health Assessments for all U.S. servicemembers and DoD civilian employees will be held Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 1 p.m. at the Golby Troop Medical Clinic, Trailer 120T5, beginning Monday. Individuals may walk in, but units of five personnel or more must schedule an appointment.

Contact Capt. Daniel Gray at 822-5402 for more information.

Karaoke Tuesdays

DJ Tek offers karaoke and mixed music Tuesdays at 8:30 p.m. at MWR Bldg. 124.

Maj. R.S. Rayfield Jr. at 822-2184 for more information.

Digital camera

A digital camera was found on the HHC, STB, MNC-I transportation bus Jan. 6. Contact Sgt. 1st Class Walter Ebbert at 822-3536 to confirm the type of camera.

Large duffel bag

An ACU-pattern large duffel bag is missing from a Dec. 2 flight. It was dropped off in front of the KBR Billeting Office. It has shoulder straps like a standard Army duffel and a large zipper flap for access. "Gutierrez, R 9911/HHC, III Corps/FSC-10" is stenciled on the outside.

Contact Maj. Robert Gutierrez at 822-2083 if found.

Operating Hours

Coalition Cafe
Breakfast 5:30 - 8:30 a.m.
Lunch 11:30 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Dinner 5:30 - 8 p.m.
Midnight Dining 11 p.m. - 1 a.m.

Sports Oasis
Breakfast 5:30 - 8:30 a.m.
Lunch 11:30 a.m. - 2 p.m.
Dinner 5 - 9 p.m.

Shopette
Open 24 Hours

Camp Liberty Post Exchange
8 a.m. - 10 p.m.

Fitness Center
Open 24 Hours

MNC-I STB Mailroom
9 a.m. - noon
5 - 7 p.m.

Golby Troop Medical Clinic
Sick Call:
Monday - Friday 7:30 a.m. - noon
Saturday & Sunday 9 a.m. - noon

Dental Sick Call:
Monday - Friday 7:30 - 10:30 a.m.
Saturday 9 - 10:30 a.m.

Mental Health Clinic:
Monday - Friday 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Saturday 9 a.m. - noon

Post-Deployment Health Briefings:
Monday, Wednesday and Friday 1 p.m.

Pharmacy:
Monday - Friday 7:30 a.m. - noon;
1 - 4:30 p.m.
Saturday & Sunday 7:30 a.m. - noon

Legal Assistance/Claims
Saturday - Thursday 9 a.m. - 6 p.m.
Friday 9 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Personnel Service Support Centers
Monday - Saturday 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Sunday 9 a.m. - 1 p.m.

ID Cards
Monday - Friday 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

Worship Hours

Victory Chapel (Bldg. 31)
Sunday
7 a.m.....Collective Protestant
8:45 a.m.....Collective Protestant
10 a.m.....Catholic Confession
10:30 a.m.....Catholic Mass
noon.....Gospel Protestant
2 p.m.....Latter Day Saints
4 p.m.....Episcopal/Lutheran
6 p.m.....Contemporary Protestant
8 p.m.....Kinghts of Columbus
(1st & 3rd Sundays)

Saturday
11 a.m.....Seventh Day Adventist
8 p.m.....Catholic Mass

Mini Chapel (Bldg. 2)
Sunday
9:30 a.m.....Breaking of Bread
3 p.m.....Church of Christ
7:30 p.m.....Latter Day Saints

Monday-Friday
4 p.m.....Daily Mass

Friday
6:30 p.m.....Jewish Service

AFN Freedom Radio

Al Asad 107.3	Kirkush..... 107.3
Ali Base 107.3	Mosul 105.1
Ar Ramadi.. 107.3	Q-West 93.3
Baghdad ... 107.3	Taji 107.3
Balad 107.3	Tal Afar..... 107.3
Fallujah..... 105.1	Taqadam.. 107.3
Kirkuk..... 107.3	Tikrit..... 100.1

All stations are FM

Do you have an announcement about an event of interest to the Camp Victory community? Contact Sgt. Jacob Boyer at jacob.boyer@iraq.centcom.mil with the information. Information for community announcements needs to be submitted at least two weeks prior to the event to allow for timely publication.

West beats East in Army's All-American Bowl

by 1st Lt. Chris Coleman
Army News Service

SAN ANTONIO — America's best high school football players and more than 80 Soldier heroes shared a nationally-televised stage at the 2007 U.S. Army All-American Bowl at the Alamodome.

The West All-Stars defeated the East All-Stars 24-7 in front of a record All-American Bowl crowd of 35,151.

The Alamodome crowd was filled with Army Combat Uniform-clad Soldiers. At least four stadium sections were filled by Advanced Individual Training students from Fort Sam Houston.

During breaks in the game, the stadium's big screens would play commercials from the new "Army Strong" advertising campaign.

The commercials would spark a spontaneous and loud "hooah" from the stands, and inspire a large number AIT Soldiers to stand at attention and shout the Soldier's Creed in unison.

During the Army Strong Pregame, more than 80 Soldiers who have been awarded a Bronze Star, Silver Star or Purple Heart were honored as Soldier heroes. As the all-star athletes emerged on the field they greeted a Soldier hero at midfield before heading to their sideline.

Capt. Scotty Smiley, an Accessions Command Soldier who was blinded during a suicide car bombing in Iraq but has fought to stay in



Photo by Daren Reehl

East running back Caleb King finds a hole during the All-American Bowl all-star football game that split the best players in the nation into East and West squads.

the Army, flipped the coin during the opening coin toss.

Smiley, a Pasco, Wash. native, joked that he was selected because "they just knew my thumb just worked that well."

"I love every opportunity to be an example for the Army," Smiley said.

At halftime, 100 Delayed Entry Program Soldiers from the San Antonio area marched onto the field to take the oath of enlistment from Gen. Richard A. Cody, Vice Chief of Staff, United States Army.

Bryan Elkins, and 18-year-old Lehman High School student from San Marcos, Texas said he was proud to take the oath.

"I love the military, and I've always wanted to serve my country," Elkins said.

Additionally, Gen. William S. Wallace, commander, Training and Doctrine Command, administered the oath of office to two officers.

Second Lt. Jennifer Oviedo, formerly a St. Mary's

College Reserve Officers' Training Corps cadet, and 2nd Lt. Daniel Barnhart, formerly a University of Texas-San Antonio cadet, were the Army's newest lieutenants, according to Cody.

"It was awesome. How many people can say that they had a general officer administer their oath," Oviedo said.

West All-Star Ian Harris, the nation's 24th best tight end prospect according to Scout.com, said he appreciates the sacrifices the more than 80 Soldier Heroes have made.

"What the Soldiers do is intense. You cannot compare that to football," he said.

The game provided Soldiers an opportunity to meet former NFL players, notable contemporary music acts and NASCAR icon Mark Martin.

Martin, who will co-drive the No. 01 U.S. Army Chevrolet during the 2007 Nextel Cup season, signed autographs for every Soldier who asked.

Former Washington Redskins kick returner Brian Mitchell, the NFL's second all-time leader in total yardage, was born at Fort Polk, La., and his father had a 20-year Army career.

He watched the game from the sidelines, signing autographs and talking with Soldiers.

"My dad passed in '91, and it is nice to see firsthand the discipline that he talked about. I have a lot of respect for Soldiers. Because anyone who puts their life on the line - you must respect that," he said.

During the NBC-televised game, a few heralded football recruits announced where they would play their college football.

Additionally, Sergeant Major of the Army Kenneth O. Preston presented Notre Dame recruit Jimmy Clausen the U.S. Army Player of the Year Award.

Over 30 advanced individual training students moved stage pieces to and from the field during the event's myriad ceremonies and musical interludes.

Pvt. Kacie Kremer, an AIT Soldier from Lancaster, Calif., volunteered to push the stage out for country band Lonestar, who performed a 45-minute concert in honor of Soldiers and their families after the game.

"We are pumped up," she said.

Many Soldier Heroes honored at the game and during the Lonestar performance said the game was the perfect finale to a week of All-American Bowl celebrations.