

Old Ironsides keeps MSR Tampa security "iron clad"

Story and photos by Sgt. M. Trent Lowry, USMC, 1AD PAO

MAIN SUPPLY ROUTE TAMPA, Iraq -- If the road system in Iraq could be compared to the human circulatory system, Main Supply Route (MSR) Tampa is the artery that keeps the life blood of the country flowing.

Continuing with the medical analogy, Task Force 1st Armored Division Soldiers are the white blood cells that protect Iraq from any elements that would attack the body.

Just ask members of C Company, 1st Battalion, 35th Armor Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division.

"I'd say MSR Tampa is one of the most important routes in theater," said Capt. Richard A. Graves, company commander of C Co., and Shreveport, La., native. "When you see the amount of logistics that pass through here, you quickly see the importance of the mission. If supplies can't get through, then people don't eat and vehicles don't get fixed."

Though it doesn't stop at Baghdad, the 450-mile-long MSR Tampa is the main line of communication between Baghdad and Kuwait. It carries civilian 18-wheelers and military convoys alike.

The length of the highway makes keeping it safe from enemy elements a daunting task, but one that 1AD and its Soldiers are up to.

"Anywhere through there the enemy can place IEDs (improvised explosive devices). Anywhere through there they can attack us with small arms fire and RPGs (rocket propelled grenades)," said 1st Lt. John R. Pulley, C Co. executive officer, from Chattanooga, Tenn. "In our sector alone that is the main mission: protect the route."



Traffic along the much-traveled Main Supply Route Tampa highway in central Iraq flows freely under the watchful eyes of Soldiers from C Company, 1st Battalion, 35th Armor Regiment, 1st Armored Division.

In the months since Task Force 1AD troops have taken over the mission of safeguarding the passageway, C Co. has been on the receiving end of mortars, IEDs and various types of rocket attacks.

While that may be a lot to contend with – and fortunately, the attacks have resulted in neither injuries for C Co., nor any damage to the route infrastructure – attacks against the troops are a sign that the security efforts are working.

"The enemy is targeting us because we've denied them any access to the big targets, like bridges," Graves said. "We're not giving them enough time or the places to set up their IEDs."

Knowing the enemy is out there is further reason for the troops to perform at their highest levels.

"It helps when you have an enemy trying to kill you to help motivate you to make your mission a success," Graves said.

Part of keeping the route secure

entails shoring up the bridges. Soldiers have set up various combinations of concertina wire, sand barricades and speed bumps protecting the structures.

"Just like whenever you are defending a piece of ground in warfare, you are always trying to improve your position," Pulley said. "That's what we're doing here -- making improvements and adjusting from there. We find out what security measures work and go with that."

Because of the route's length, keeping the MSR stocked with troops and vehicles can be a tricky task for the units.

"Like most missions, it's always a challenge to get the right amount of men and materials to the right place at the right time, but I don't think we'll have any problem accomplishing that," Pulley said. "It's very time-consuming, but I'd say the (companies) have responded remarkably well. We're getting it done and staying focused."



Quote of the Day...

"Man's capacity for justice makes democracy possible; but man's inclination to injustice makes democracy necessary."

-- Reinhold Niebuhr (1892-1971), American theologian



Soldiers from C Company, 1st Battalion, 35th Armor Regiment, 1st Armored Division fuel up their M1 Abrams tank along Main Supply Route Tampa in central Iraq. They are assisted by bulk fuel specialists from 40th Engineer Battalion. (Photo by Marine Corps Sgt. M. Trent Lowry)

Oddly Enough...

U.S. Biker Sets 'Iron-Butt' Record Across Continent

MIAMI (Reuters) - A U.S. motorcyclist made the 5,632-mile trek from the northernmost road in Alaska to the southernmost tip of Florida in 100 hours and set a transcontinental record certified by the "Iron Butt Association" of bike enthusiasts. "I'm a little tired ... a little bit bruised," biker Gary Eagan said by phone from Key West, Florida, on Tuesday, a day after finishing the journey on his Ducati Multistrada. He bested the old transcontinental "Iron Butt" record of 114 hours and 49 minutes, set last year by a BMW rider from Maryland. A few hours after starting his solo journey on a gravel road in Prudhoe Bay, Alaska, a truck forced Eagan off the road and his motorcycle flipped over into the tundra, breaking his windshield, one rearview mirror, auxiliary fuel tank and shearing off the saddlebag containing his spare clothes. "I think I broke my big toe and dislocated my finger and elbow a little bit," said Eagan, 56, of Salt Lake City, Utah. He patched the bike together with zip ties and drove on through Alaska, Canada and the continental United States, making a pit stop in Kansas City to change tires, and stopping occasionally to nap or refuel. Eagan said he endured suspicious border patrol agents, traffic snarls and torrential thunderstorms but completed the trek without any speeding tickets. "You don't have to really ride that fast to do a record like that. You just have to stay on the bike and be efficient," he said.

Today in History...

(Historynet.com)

1314 Scottish forces, led by Robert the Bruce, win an overwhelming victory against English King Edward II at the Battle of Bannockburn.

1340 The English fleet defeats the French fleet at Sluys, off the Flemish coast.

1497 Explorer John Cabot lands in North America in present-day Canada.

1812 Napoleon crosses the Nieman River and invades Russia.

1861 Federal gunboats attack Confederate batteries at Mathias Point, Virginia.

1862 U.S. intervention saves the British and French at the Dagu forts in China.

1896 Booker T. Washington becomes the first African American to receive an honorary MA degree from Howard University.

1910 The Japanese army invades Korea.

1931 The Soviet Union and Afghanistan sign a treaty of neutrality.

1941 President Franklin Roosevelt pledges all possible support to the Soviet Union.

1943 Royal Air Force Bombers hammer Muelheim, Germany, in a drive to cripple the Ruhr industrial base.

1948 The Soviet Union begins the Berlin Blockade, America responds with the Berlin Airlift.

1955 Soviet MIG's down a U.S. Navy patrol plane over the Bering Strait.

1970 The U.S. Senate votes overwhelmingly to repeal the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution



For your Information...

The following AAFES facilities located on BIAP will close and remain closed for business as of the dates listed below.

BIAP(W) PX (Dogwood)
1 JULY 2004.

BIAP(E) AAFES Concessions:
Barber Shop Alterations Shop Gift Shop Bazaar
1 JULY 2004.

BIAP(E) AAFES PX and Burger King
5 JULY 2004.

The ADACG PX will remain open throughout the 1st Armored Division Redeployment.

Reenlistment Bonus Incentives continue.

The Army continues to pay soldiers for remaining part of the team. Recently, some bonuses have been retroactive as far back as March 18, 2003.

If a Soldier reenlisted between March 18 and Sept. 18, 2003 for either option E1 (Regular Army) or E2 (Current station stabilization) and did not receive a bonus, he or she should contact their Career Counselor and see if they qualify for the bonus.

The most current update to the Selective Reenlistment Bonus program is MILPER Message 04-163 dated 05/14/2004.

myafn.net TV SCHEDULES: THURSDAY, JUNE 24, 2004				As of: Wednesday, June 23, 2004 6:58:06 PM		
Start Time	SPORTS	ATLANTIC	SPECTRUM	PACIFIC	NEWS	Start Time
00:00	SPORTSCENTER				HEADLINE NEWS (NN)	00:00
00:30		ACCESS HOLLYWOOD (NN)			NBC NIGHTLY NEWS (NN)	00:30
01:00	COLLEGE BASEBALL - COLLEGE WORLD SERIES - GM 11	MLB - CHICAGO CUBS @ ST. LOUIS CARDINALS	THE WILD THORNBERRIES (TVY): - SPIRITED AWAY	SESAME STREET	ABC WORLD NEWS TONIGHT (NN)	01:00
01:30			SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS (TVY7): - PROCRASTINATION / I'M WITH STUPID		CBS EVENING NEWS (NN)	01:30
02:00			THE SIMPSONS (TVPG): - ANOTHER SIMPSON CLIP SHOW	PLAY WITH ME SESAME	COUNTDOWN WITH KEITH OLBERRMAN (NN)	02:00
02:30			HAPPY DAYS (TVG): - WISH UPON A STAR	WHEEL OF FORTUNE (TVG):		02:30
03:00			ONE TREE HILL (TVPG): - CRASH INTO YOU	THE DR. PHIL SHOW (TVPG):	HANNITY & COLMES (NN)	03:00
04:00	MLB - OAKLAND ATHLETICS @ ANAHEIM ANGELS	SPORTS SPECIAL - NBA DRAFT SPECIAL	THE WEST WING (TVPG): - ARCTIC RADAR	THE OPRAH WINFREY SHOW (TVPG):	THE NEWSHOUR (NN)	04:00
05:00		HEADLINE NEWS (NN)	DOMINICK DUNNE'S POWER, PRIVILEGE, AND JUSTICE (TVPG): - MYSTERY IN THE HAMPTONS	NBC NIGHTLY NEWS (NN)	BET NIGHTLY NEWS (NN)	05:00
05:30		ESPNEWS		JUDGE JUDY (TVPG):	NIGHTLY BUSINESS REPORT (NN)	05:30
06:00		HEADLINE NEWS (NN)	JOURNEYS TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH - THE LAST TRAIL OF BUTCH AND SUNDANCE	ACCESS HOLLYWOOD (NN)	LARRY KING LIVE (NN)	06:00
06:25				GUIDING LIGHT (TV14):		06:25
06:30		HEADLINE NEWS (NN)				06:30
07:00	ESPNEWS	SESAME STREET	MASTERPIECE THEATER (TVPG): - OUR TOWN		NEWSNIGHT WITH AARON BROWN (NN)	07:00
07:13				GENERAL HOSPITAL (TV14):		07:13
07:30	TOTALLY NASCAR					07:30
08:00	SPORTSCENTER	PLAY WITH ME SESAME		DISNEY'S HERCULES (TVY): - THE GIRLDE OF HYPOLITE	PAULA ZAHN NOW (NN)	08:00
08:30		WHEEL OF FORTUNE (TVG):		HEY ARNOLD! (TVY): - FULL MOON / STUDENT TEACHER		08:30
09:00	COLLEGE BASEBALL - COLLEGE WORLD SERIES - GM 12	THE DR. PHIL SHOW (TVPG):	THE WILD THORNBERRIES (TVY): - SPIRITED AWAY	YU-GI-OH! (TVY): - DOUBLE TROUBLE DUEL (PT. 2)	NIGHTLINE (NN)	09:00
09:30			SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS (TVY7): - PROCRASTINATION / I'M WITH STUPID	JACKIE CHAN ADVENTURES (TVY7): - DANGER IN THE DEEP FREEZE	ARMY NEWSWATCH (NN)	09:30
09:46		THE OPRAH WINFREY SHOW (TVPG):				09:46
10:00			THE SIMPSONS (TVPG): - ANOTHER SIMPSON CLIP SHOW	JEOPARDY! (TVG):	HARDBALL WITH CHRIS MATTHEWS (NN)	10:00
10:30			HAPPY DAYS (TVG): - WISH UPON A STAR	HEADLINE NEWS (NN)		10:30
10:36		GUIDING LIGHT (TV14):				10:36
11:00			ONE TREE HILL (TVPG): - CRASH INTO YOU	ESPNEWS	60 MINUTES (NN)	11:00
11:17		GENERAL HOSPITAL (TV14):				11:17
11:30				PACIFIC REPORT (NN)		11:30
12:00	SPORTSCENTER	HEADLINE NEWS (NN)	THE WEST WING (TVPG): - ARCTIC RADAR	EVERYBODY LOVES RAYMOND (TVPG): - PETER ON THE COUCH	THE O'REILLY FACTOR (NN)	12:00
12:25				SCRUBS (TV14): - MY CLEAN BREAK		12:25
12:30		JUDGE JUDY (TVPG):				12:30
12:50				REEL TIME		12:50
13:00	MLB - CHICAGO CUBS @ ST. LOUIS CARDINALS	TODAY (NN)	DOMINICK DUNNE'S POWER, PRIVILEGE, AND JUSTICE (TVPG): - MYSTERY IN THE HAMPTONS	EXTREME MAKEOVER (TVPG): - JEFF AND AUTUMN	GOOD MORNING AMERICA (NN)	13:00
14:00			JOURNEYS TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH - THE LAST TRAIL OF BUTCH AND SUNDANCE	E.R. (TVPG): - BLOOD RELATIONS		14:00
15:00	SPORTSCENTER	DISNEY'S HERCULES (TVY): - THE GIRLDE OF HYPOLITE	MASTERPIECE THEATER (TVPG): - OUR TOWN	PACIFIC REPORT (NN)	HEADLINE NEWS (NN)	15:00
15:30		HEY ARNOLD! (TVY): - FULL MOON / STUDENT TEACHER		TONIGHT SHOW WITH JAY LENO (TVPG):	ABC WORLD NEWS THIS MORNING (NN)	15:30
16:00	BEYOND THE GLORY	YU-GI-OH! (TVY): - DOUBLE TROUBLE DUEL (PT. 2)			THE EARLY SHOW (NN)	16:00
16:30		JACKIE CHAN ADVENTURES (TVY7): - DANGER IN THE DEEP FREEZE		THE LATE SHOW WITH DAVID LETTERMAN (TVPG):		16:30
17:00	SPORTSCENTER	JEOPARDY! (TVG):	THE WILD THORNBERRIES (TVY): - SPIRITED AWAY			17:00
17:30		HEADLINE NEWS (NN)	SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS (TVY7): - PROCRASTINATION / I'M WITH STUPID	ACCESS HOLLYWOOD (NN)		17:30
18:00	WIMBLEDON TENNIS TOURNAMENT - EARLY ROUND COVERAGE DAY 4	ESPNEWS	THE SIMPSONS (TVPG): - ANOTHER SIMPSON CLIP SHOW	ALIENS	FOX NEWS LIVE (NN)	18:00
18:30		HEADLINE NEWS (NN)	HAPPY DAYS (TVG): - WISH UPON A STAR			18:30
19:00		EVERYBODY LOVES RAYMOND (TVPG): - PETER ON THE COUCH	ONE TREE HILL (TVPG): - CRASH INTO YOU		60 MINUTES (NN)	19:00
19:25		SCRUBS (TV14): - MY CLEAN BREAK				19:25
19:50		REEL TIME				19:50
20:00		EXTREME MAKEOVER (TVPG): - JEFF AND AUTUMN	THE WEST WING (TVPG): - ARCTIC RADAR		FOX NEWS LIVE (NN)	20:00
20:30				REVENGE OF THE NERDS		20:30
21:00		E.R. (TVPG): - BLOOD RELATIONS	DOMINICK DUNNE'S POWER, PRIVILEGE, AND JUSTICE (TVPG): - MYSTERY IN THE HAMPTONS		HEADLINE NEWS (NN)	21:00
21:30					INSIDE POLITICS (NN)	21:30
22:00		HEADLINE NEWS (NN)	JOURNEYS TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH - THE LAST TRAIL OF BUTCH AND SUNDANCE	ESPNEWS: THE HOT LIST		22:00
22:30		TONIGHT SHOW WITH JAY LENO (TVPG):		HEADLINE NEWS (NN)	ARMY NEWSWATCH (NN)	22:30
23:00	AROUND THE HORN		MASTERPIECE THEATER (TVPG): - OUR TOWN	TODAY (NN)	LESTER HOLT LIVE (NN)	23:00
23:30	PARDON THE INTERRUPTION	THE LATE SHOW WITH DAVID LETTERMAN (TVPG):				23:30