



The Old Ironsides Report



Tuesday, December 09, 2003

490th Civil Affairs Battalion renovates two Abu Ghraib primary schools

Story by Staff Sgt. Conrad College, 372nd MPAD

BAGHDAD, Iraq – Smiling and laughing, happy school children, in grades 1 through 6, returned to two newly renovated primary schools in the Abu Ghraib area of western Baghdad in November.

A team from the 490th Civil Affairs Battalion, an Army Reserve unit from Abilene, Texas, managed renovations and repairs at the two schools, Ruqia Primary School and Al-Fayha Primary School.

The 490th is part of the 354th Civil Affairs Brigade, an Army Reserve unit based in Riverdale, Md., and is attached to Task Force 1st Armored Division for Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Capt. Thane Thompson, a team chief for the 490th, was the officer in charge of the project. Thompson, who is from Monterey, Calif., said, “The coalition is doing a lot of positive restoration work and the vast majority of Iraqis that we deal with are appreciative.”

More than \$80,000 was spent on the repairs and renovations at the two schools, he explained. The Ruqia school project cost \$34,000 and the Al-Fayha school project cost \$46,000. The funding was provided by the 354th Civil Affairs Brigade, and came from Commanders Emergency Relief Funds.

Immediately following the main combat phase of the war, both schools – just as with most government buildings – were completely looted. All of the furniture and equipment was stolen from the schools. Even doors and windows were removed and taken elsewhere. All the light fixtures, wiring and switches were taken out of the walls

All that was left were the walls and the roof. The same thing had happened at most other public buildings in Baghdad.

So the schools were unusable until the U.S. Army came and started the process of getting everything repaired, replaced or renovated.

Thompson and his noncommissioned officer in charge, Spc. George Black, of Abilene, Texas, led the team of civil affairs soldiers in getting this mission accomplished, from the initial assessments to completion of construction and painting.

“My team,” Thompson said, “coordinated the project from start to finish. We conducted the initial assessments defining the scope of the work, found contractors to help with cost estimates, prepared the funding proposal, got the funding approved, and contracted with local construction companies to do the hands-on work.



Schoolgirls, waving ribbons and chanting a welcome, lined the walkway into the Ruqia Primary School, welcoming visitors on Nov. 15 the day of the grand reopening of the school. Photo by Air Force Tech. Sgt. John Houghton, Combat Camera.

In both cases, he said, the work included masonry, grounds work, windows and glass, interior finish, plumbing, electrical, plaster and paint.

“In the case of the Ruqia school, about \$1,800 of project funds went toward school supplies, such as office furniture, etc.,” Thompson said.

“In the Al-Fayha school case, we raised the exterior wall (a wall around the property, similar to a fence, but it is a wall of stone) an extra meter as it had a very low wall that the headmaster thought was a security risk. Raising the wall cost approximately \$7,800 of the total,” Thompson said.

The commander of the 490th Civil Affairs Battalion, Lt. Col. Donna Hinton, cut the ribbon at the grand reopening of the Ruqia school and said, “This is a happy day for everyone. The children are happy to have a good school to go to, the school staff are appreciative and the soldiers are satisfied that they have accomplished a great work here. It’s also good for the community and the whole area.”

Both schools are in the area of Baghdad protected by the 3rd Brigade Combat Team of the 1st Armored Division.

“It was decided that it would be good to paint the school in colors that are different from the usual desert tan color, which is the natural color of the stone used in the construction. So we told the school officials to pick any color as long as it is a pastel color. The Ruqia school was painted blue inside and out, while the Al-Fayha school is now pink on both the interior and the exterior,” Thompson said.

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News...

Bush Signs \$400B Medicare Overhaul Bill

WASHINGTON (AP) - President Bush on Monday signed into law the most far-reaching changes in Medicare in nearly four decades, an overhaul that includes for the first time a prescription-drug benefit for seniors. Bush said the measure, estimated to cost \$400 billion over the next 10 years, would give older Americans "better choices and more control over their health care, so they can receive the modern medical care they deserve."

Northeast Digs Out After Major Snowstorm

BOSTON (AP) - Some schools stayed closed Monday morning and airlines struggled to catch up as the Northeast plowed out after the powerful weekend snowstorm that piled snow nearly 4 feet deep in places. "It's not unique but it is unusual that we would have a December snowstorm that would yield this amount of snow," said National Weather Service meteorologist Charlie Foley.

Putin Loyalists Win; Monitors Decry Vote

MOSCOW (AP) - Allies of President Vladimir Putin won a sweeping victory in parliamentary elections, but human rights officials condemned the vote Monday as short of international legal requirements and a retreat from Russia's democratic reforms. With more than 98 percent of the vote counted, United Russia - a pro-Putin party led by Cabinet ministers - won 37.1 percent, leaving its rivals far behind, Central Election Commission Chairman Alexander Veshnyakov said at a news conference.

Canada Theater Wall Falls; Several Hurt

TORONTO (AP) - A wall of a Toronto theater that was being demolished collapsed Monday into a school next door, trapping people inside and injuring others. Authorities said it was too soon to tell if anyone was killed in the accident at the Uptown Theater and the Yorkville English Academy, which teaches English mostly to adults and teenagers.

Chaplain's thought for the day...

"Our Challenge"

John Wesley, founder of the Methodist movement, wrote a challenging poem that we all would do well to listen to closely and put into action:

Do all the good you can,
By all the means you can,
In all the ways you can,
In all the places you can,
At all the times you can,
To all the people you can,
As long as ever you can....

In court....

High Court Allows Parks Suit Over Song

WASHINGTON (AP) -- The Supreme Court refused Monday to intervene in a lawsuit over the hit song "Rosa Parks" by the Grammy-winning rap group OutKast.

The action, taken without comment from the justices, means the 90-year-old civil rights figure can go ahead with her lawsuit against the band.

The 1998 song is about the entertainment industry and its lyrics do not refer to Parks by name. The chorus of the song goes, "Ah-ha, hush that fuss. Everybody move to the back of the bus."

Parks claimed that OutKast violated her publicity and trademark rights and defamed her. She lost her first round in federal court, but a three-judge panel of the 6th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Cincinnati reinstated part of the lawsuit earlier this year.

The case will now return to a lower federal court judge.

Parks wants all references to her removed from future versions of the record.

OutKast has argued that the song is neither false advertising nor a violation of Parks' publicity rights and is protected by the First Amendment.

Parks made history in December 1955 when she was arrested for refusing to give up her seat to a white man on a Montgomery, Ala., city bus. Her arrest triggered a 381-day boycott of the bus system by blacks and led to court rulings desegregating public transportation nationwide.

The case is LaFace Records v. Parks, 03-504.

& in other news...

NY Man Plans to Move 80 Turtles From Loft

TEWKSBURY, N.J. (AP) - Richard Ogust found his calling in Chinatown. There, he met Empress, a black-and-orange diamondback terrapin trapped in a tank at an all-you-can-eat buffet.

A decade after Ogust paid \$20 to liberate Empress, his Manhattan loft is filled with 80 species of turtles - more than the Bronx Zoo.

Today's safety message...

Living and Work Area Safety

When improving your work and living spaces the following rules apply:

Remember:

- Privacy barriers should not be constructed in such a manner as to obstruct means of escape in an emergency. A 3 foot wide aisle must be maintained.
- Doors must swing out in the direction of your exit.
- All appliances must be turned off prior to your leaving the space for any reason.

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Tuesday, 09 December, 2003

myafn.net TV SCHEDULES: TUESDAY, DECEMBER 09, 2003				As of: Monday, December 08, 2003 9:57:27 PM		
Start Time	SPORTS	ATLANTIC	SPECTRUM	PACIFIC	NEWS	Start Time
00:00	NFL PRIMETIME	HEADLINE NEWS	AMERICAN CHOPPER	TODAY		00:00
00:30		TONIGHT SHOW WITH JAY LENO			HEADLINE NEWS	00:30
01:00	AROUND THE HORN		PICTURE PERFECT		LESTER HOLT LIVE	01:00
01:30	PARDON THE INTERRUPTION	THE LATE SHOW WITH DAVID LETTERMAN				01:30
02:00	SPORTSCENTER			SESAME STREET	HEADLINE NEWS	02:00
02:30		ACCESS HOLLYWOOD			NBC NIGHTLY NEWS	02:30
03:00		ESPNEWS	RUGRATS : - FALL STINKS	DRAGON TALES : - ONE BIG WISH/ BREAKING UP IS HARD TO DO	ABC WORLD NEWS TONIGHT	03:00
03:30	PBA - PBA CAMBRIDGE CREDIT CLASSIC	MONDAY NIGHT COUNTDOWN	SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS : - GRANDMA'S KISSES / SQUIDVILLE	WHEEL OF FORTUNE	CBS EVENING NEWS	03:30
04:00			THE SIMPSONS : - SKINNER'S SENSE OF SNOW	THE DR. PHIL SHOW	THE NEWSHOUR	04:00
04:30			HOME IMPROVEMENT : - TIM'S FIRST CAR			04:30
05:00	PGA TOUR - 2003 PGA GRAND SLAM OF GOLF: DAY 2	MONDAY NIGHT FOOTBALL - ST. LOUIS RAMS @ CLEVELAND BROWNS	J.A.G. : - WHEN THE BOUGH BREAKS	THE OPRAH WINFREY SHOW	HANNITY & COLMES	05:00
06:00			THE PRACTICE : - KILLING TIME	NBC NIGHTLY NEWS	THE NEWS WITH BRIAN WILLIAMS	06:00
06:30				JUDGE JUDY		06:30
07:00			BIOGRAPHY : - STEPHEN KING	ACCESS HOLLYWOOD	BET NIGHTLY NEWS	07:00
07:25				GUIDING LIGHT		07:25
07:30					NIGHTLY BUSINESS REPORT	07:30
08:00	SPORTSCENTER		BRIDGES OF MADISON COUNTY		LARRY KING LIVE	08:00
08:13				GENERAL HOSPITAL		08:13
08:30		HEADLINE NEWS				08:30
09:00	NFL TOTAL ACCESS	SESAME STREET		DISNEY'S PB&J OTTER : - BAGPIPE BLUES/ YOU CAN'T COME IN	NEWSNIGHT WITH AARON BROWN	09:00
09:30				WHAT'S NEW SCOOBY DOO? : - SPACE APE AT THE CAPE		09:30
10:00	PARDON THE INTERRUPTION	DRAGON TALES : - ONE BIG WISH/ BREAKING UP IS HARD TO DO		LIZZIE MCGUIRE : - SCARLETT LARRY	PAULA ZAHN NOW	10:00
10:30	SPORTSCENTER	WHEEL OF FORTUNE	EBERT & ROEPER AT THE MOVIES	ALL THAT		10:30
11:00	SPORTSCENTER	THE DR. PHIL SHOW	RUGRATS : - FALL STINKS	JEOPARDY!	NIGHTLINE	11:00
11:30	COLLEGE BASKETBALL - 2003 BB&T CLASSIC - CONSOLATION GAME: TEAMS TBD		SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS : - GRANDMA'S KISSES / SQUIDVILLE	HEADLINE NEWS	ARMY NEWSWATCH	11:30
11:46		THE OPRAH WINFREY SHOW				11:46
11:52				PACIFIC REPORT		11:52
12:00			THE SIMPSONS : - SKINNER'S SENSE OF SNOW	ESPNEWS	HARDBALL WITH CHRIS MATTHEWS	12:00
12:30			HOME IMPROVEMENT : - TIM'S FIRST CAR	HEADLINE NEWS		12:30
12:35		GUIDING LIGHT				12:35
12:52				PACIFIC REPORT		12:52
13:00			J.A.G. : - WHEN THE BOUGH BREAKS	MONDAY NIGHT FOOTBALL - ST. LOUIS RAMS @ CLEVELAND BROWNS	THE O'REILLY FACTOR	13:00
13:17		GENERAL HOSPITAL				13:17
13:30	SPORTSCENTER					13:30
14:00		HEADLINE NEWS	THE PRACTICE : - KILLING TIME		PRIMETIME SPECIAL EDITION:	14:00
14:30	COLLEGE BASKETBALL - 2003 BB&T CLASSIC: CHAMPIONSHIP GAME	JUDGE JUDY				14:30
15:00		TODAY	BIOGRAPHY : - STEPHEN KING		GOOD MORNING AMERICA	15:00
16:00			BRIDGES OF MADISON COUNTY	ESPNEWS		16:00
16:30	SPORTSCENTER			HEADLINE NEWS		16:30
16:52				PACIFIC REPORT		16:52
17:00		DISNEY'S PB&J OTTER : - BAGPIPE BLUES/ YOU CAN'T COME IN		TONIGHT SHOW WITH JAY LENO	HEADLINE NEWS	17:00
17:30	SPORTS SPECIAL - 2003 NASCAR AWARDS SPECIAL	WHAT'S NEW SCOOBY DOO? : - SPACE APE AT THE CAPE			CHANNEL ONE	17:30
17:45					WORLD NEWS THIS MORNING	17:45
18:00		LIZZIE MCGUIRE : - SCARLETT LARRY		THE LATE SHOW WITH DAVID LETTERMAN	THE EARLY SHOW	18:00
18:30	NFL'S GREATEST MOMENTS - THE LEGENDARY VOICE OF NFL FILMS	ALL THAT	EBERT & ROEPER AT THE MOVIES			18:30
19:00	SPORTSCENTER	JEOPARDY!	RUGRATS : - FALL STINKS	HONEY, I SHRUNK THE KIDS		19:00
19:30		HEADLINE NEWS	SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS : - GRANDMA'S KISSES / SQUIDVILLE			19:30
20:00	AROUND THE HORN	ESPNEWS	THE SIMPSONS : - SKINNER'S SENSE OF SNOW		FOX NEWS LIVE	20:00
20:30	PARDON THE INTERRUPTION	HEADLINE NEWS	HOME IMPROVEMENT : - TIM'S FIRST CAR			20:30
20:45				HONEY, I BLEW UP THE KID		20:45
21:00	MONDAY NIGHT FOOTBALL - ST. LOUIS RAMS @ CLEVELAND BROWNS	SMALLVILLE : - RYAN	J.A.G. : - WHEN THE BOUGH BREAKS		PRIMETIME SPECIAL EDITION:	21:00
22:00		MEET THE PARENTS	THE PRACTICE : - KILLING TIME		FOX NEWS LIVE	22:00
22:30				CINEMA SECRETS : - OSCAR WINNING FX		22:30
23:00			BIOGRAPHY : - STEPHEN KING	HEADLINE NEWS	HEADLINE NEWS	23:00
23:30				ESPNEWS	INSIDE POLITICS	23:30