



The Old Ironsides Report



Saturday, October 25, 2003

1-1 Cav works with Civil Affairs to restore school

Story and Photo by Sgt. Brent M. Williams
49th PAD (ABN)

BAGHDAD, Iraq –Classrooms stand empty; the desks inside, brown benches of wood and steel, add color to the newly painted white cement walls. Ceiling fans and fluorescent light fixtures adorn the rooms, providing the structures with a sense of newness. The windows repaired, and the glass within replaced, refracts the day's sunlight against the chalky blackboard at the front of the class. The picture at the center of the board shows a smiley face offset by an Iraqi flag and an American flag.

"God, peace be on you," says the school administrator to the students gathered in the courtyard before him. "And God, peace be on you as well," sing the children of the Al Nakawa School, a primary education school in the Al Furat Province of Baghdad.

The students and teachers of the Al Nakawa School formed in groups separated by their classrooms and lead by their teachers to celebrate the dedication of their new school building Monday.

Iron soldiers from 1st Squadron, 1st U.S. Cavalry Regiment escorted their Squadron Commander Lt. Col. Charles E. Williams to a complex that once housed Republican Guard, former Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein's elite Special Forces.

At the ceremony, children gathered before Al Furat council members cutting the ribbon to celebrate the opening of the school for the first time since the war began.

The school's administrative staff, teachers and students applauded coalition forces and their designated guest of honor, Williams, for helping the city council in the renovating of the buildings inside a military complex that once quartered Republican Guard.

During combat operations in March and April, the Republican Guard took quarters in the original Al Nakawa Schoolhouse in Al Rashid District in south Baghdad, to avoid the initial bombing of key targets in Iraq.

As coalition forces entered the city in early April, the school house was completely destroyed.

When civil affairs teams began working with local Iraqi leaders in the Al Furat community, they quickly identified the need to relocate the children to a new school.

Using commander's discretionary funds, money allotted by the Coalition Provisional Authority for special projects designed to help in the rebuilding of Iraq, Williams approved the rebuilding of the military complex, transforming the site into a community center in Al Furat.

The squadron working with CA assets and local community leaders are planning to renovate the complex, building a community center complete with basketball courts, a youth activities center and a town hall meeting place for local community leaders.

"This is not an issue about what countries, what nations are here or will be here. This is about the world. This is about the people," Elam said. "It's bringing us as a people together as one."



School officials assist a young disabled Iraqi student in the ribbon-cutting ceremony for the Al Nakawa school which was recently restored by elements of 1-1 Cav and CA assets.

"In this great complex we're going to try and build here, it's only fitting we start with the school first," Williams said at the ceremony. "The buildings that were once used as instruments for destruction will now be the buildings used as instruments for instruction."

After the formality of the ceremony, soldiers of Troop Apache handed out paper, pens, and notebooks to the children in Grades 4-8. An especial treat, new soccer balls were also donated to the Al Nakawa School.

"We're delivering school supplies in appreciation for the kids," said 1st Lt. Louis Pauli, battle captain, Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 1st Sqdrn., 1st U.S. Cav. Reg. "They will appreciate it. The kids we see here, they had no say so in the (war). When they grow up, they will remember us."

The school opening is a good opportunity for the soldiers of Task Force Falcon to treat the people with dignity and respect, affording them the opportunity to give the children supplies to support their education or school systems, said Spc. Gabriel J. Elam, chemical equipment specialist, Troop A, 1st Sqdrn., 1st U.S. Cav. Reg.

The biggest challenge is going to be maintaining what they have learned in the school systems, so they won't have to go back to the old ways, said Elam.

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NEWS

Donors Promise Iraq \$33 Billion, Smashing Expectations

MADRID (Reuters) - International donors pledged at least \$33 billion in aid and loans over the next four years to help rebuild war-ravaged Iraq on Friday as the response to a U.S.-led drive for funds far outstripped expectations. Spanish Economy Minister Rodrigo Rato said the combined offer -- made at a gathering of more than 70 nations in Madrid -- was equivalent to twice Iraq's annual national income and was a global vote of confidence in the country's future.

Britain Warns of Imminent Terror Attack in Saudi

LONDON (Reuters) - Britain sharply raised its warning to travelers Friday not to go to Saudi Arabia, saying terror attacks were imminent. "We advise British nationals against all but essential travel to Saudi Arabia. We believe that terrorists may be in the final phases of planning attacks," the new Foreign Office warning said. The previous warning had simply said that attacks against Westerners were "likely." The warning followed an admission from Saudi Arabia that it had arrested nearly 600 people in a crackdown on militants since suspected al Qaeda suicide bombers struck Riyadh in May.

Quattrone's Case Ends in Mistrial

NEW YORK (Reuters) - A mistrial was declared in the criminal case of Frank Quattrone on Friday after jurors failed to decide whether the one-time star banker tried to obstruct federal investigations into how some of biggest stock offerings in history were allocated to investors. Quattrone, a mustachioed 48-year-old who is the most powerful financial figure in years to face criminal trial, showed little emotion when the mistrial was announced. While he declined to comment, his attorney said the defense was unhappy with the outcome.

A Smart Tip From 1AD Safety

Track Vehicle Safety

Track vehicles are extremely durable, but can be extremely dangerous.

- ✓ Maintain speeds that will allow you to recognize terrain hazards.
- ✓ Recon routes, note hazards and brief before future ops.
- ✓ Maintain nametag defilade, secure hatch locks.
- ✓ *CREW DRILLS! CREW DRILLS! CREW DRILLS!*

Oddly Enough

'Iceman' Grabs Shark to Save Men

STOCKHOLM (Reuters) - An Icelandic fishing captain, known as "the Iceman" for his tough character, grabbed a 660-pound shark with his bare hands as it swam in shallow water toward his crew, a witness said Thursday.

The skipper of the trawler "Erik the Red" was on a beach in Kuummiit, east Greenland, watching his crew processing a catch when he saw the shark swimming toward the fish blood and guts -- and his men.

Captain Sigurdur Petursson, known to locals as "the Iceman," ran into the shallow water and grabbed the shark by its tail. He dragged it off to dry land and killed it with his knife.

"He caught it just with his hands. There was a lot of blood in the sea and the shark came in and he thought it was dangerous," Frede Kilime, a hunter and fisherman who watched from the beach, told Reuters by phone from Greenland. Icelandic author and journalist Reynir Traustason, who knows the trawler captain, said the act was typical of the man.

"He's called 'the Iceman' because he isn't scared of anything," he said. "I know the people in that part of the world. They are really tough."

SPORTS

Pat Riley Steps Down as Heat Coach

MIAMI (Reuters) - Pat Riley, one of the most successful coaches in National Basketball Association history, resigned Friday as head coach of the Miami Heat, turning the club over to assistant Stan Van Gundy.

Riley, who won four NBA titles with Magic Johnson and the Los Angeles Lakers but never scaled such heights with the Heat, said the rebuilding of the Miami team was far enough along for him to step down.

"I believe we've turned the corner. With the nucleus of guys we have now, I believe this is the right time for this change," the Heat's web site quoted Riley as saying.

This Day in History **25 October, 1415**

During the Hundred Years' War between England and France, Henry V, the young king of England, leads his forces to victory at the Battle of Agincourt in northern France.

The battlefield lay on 1,000 yards of open ground between two woods, which prevented large-scale maneuvers and thus worked to Henry's advantage. At 11 a.m. on October 25, the battle commenced. The English stood their ground as French knights, weighed down by their heavy armor, began a slow advance across the muddy battlefield. The French were met by a furious bombardment of artillery from the English archers, who wielded innovative longbows with a range of 250 yards. French cavalymen tried and failed to overwhelm the English positions, but the archers were protected by a line of pointed stakes. As more and more French knights made their way onto the crowded battlefield, their mobility decreased further, and some lacked even the room to raise their arms and strike a blow. At this point, Henry ordered his lightly equipped archers to rush forward with swords and axes, and the unencumbered Englishmen massacred the French.

Almost 6,000 Frenchmen lost their lives during the Battle of Agincourt, while English deaths amounted to just over 400. With odds greater than three to one, Henry had won one of the great victories of military history.