

By Pfc. J. H. French
82nd Airborne Division PAO

IEDs Get the Boot

AR RAMADI, Iraq - Soldiers from the 1st Brigade Combat Team (BCT) participated in Operation Boothill, November 10, outside Ar Ramadi to clear roadways and other areas of improvised explosive devices and other weapons. The 1st BCT is part of 1st Infantry Division from Fort Riley, Kan.

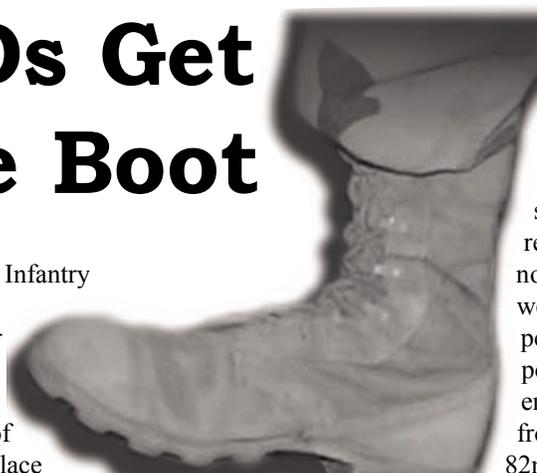
According to Maj. Steven D. Hart, Operations Officer for 1st Engineer Battalion, 1st ID, the mission was two-fold.

The first part of the mission was to clear the shoulders of a road near Junction City, to make it more difficult to place IEDs. Engineers brought in heavy equipment to clear the sides of the roadway of rubble, trash and anything else that could be used to conceal IEDs.

The second part of the mission was to search a cemetery in the area to find weapons caches used by enemy troops against the Coalition forces.

In the past, cemeteries have been used regularly as hiding places for mortars, shells, rocket propelled grenades and other types of weapons, said Hart.

During the search, the soldiers found three mortars, one RPG and 200 rounds of ammunition.



The operation wasn't without surprises. While the search was taking place, a funeral procession arrived.

The team conducting the search had prepared and rehearsed for the situation, noted Hart. Translators were present to talk to the people and explain the purpose for soldiers being present. The Muslim chaplain from the 307th Eng. Bn., 82nd Airborne Division, and

a tactical psychological operation team were also present to explain the reason for the mission and in doing so, restored the sanctity of the cemetery.

Overall the mission was a success, commented Hart. The weapons were confiscated and disposed of properly. "As long as we continue to find weapons hidden in cemeteries, we will continue to search there."

The finding of weapons caches results in fewer attacks against Coalition forces. With increased peaceful interactions between the Coalition and the Iraqi people, infrastructure will improve and Iraqis will control their country sooner.

Single Soldiers Not Forgotten

By Sgt. Joe Healy
82nd Airborne Division PAO

AL ASAD, Iraq - As the holiday season approaches, soldiers in the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment will have been deployed in Iraq for nearly nine months. Many soldiers have family members -husbands, wives and children- that will send them holiday gifts reminding them they are missed back home. However, the Regiment has a plan to remember its single soldiers, too.

"Operation Magi" is a program that links single soldiers in the Regiment with churches and individual citizens during the holiday season," said Chaplain Christopher Faria, Regimental Chaplain, 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment. "One small, simple gift given to a single soldier will remind the soldier that

people back home support him."

According to Faria, Operation Magi is unique to the 3rd ACR. No other unit in Iraq has attempted to provide every soldier who is single with a holiday gift. He has spearheaded other holiday campaigns in the past back in the states like Operation Christmas Child and Operation Christmas Care, but Operation Magi is different because it targets deployed soldiers. Even the name- Operation Magi-ties into 3rd ACR's deployment.

"The Magi were men from the east, where the regiment is currently located, from ancient Persia," said Faria. "They made the journey west to find Him...Now hundreds upon hundreds of soldiers will be in the land of the Magi, and without their families."

According to Faria, individuals from all over the world have donated gifts.

"Most of our gifts come from Fort Carson, Colo., but we've had people donate from England and Kuwait, too."

When asked how the gifts are to be distributed, Faria said the command staff has been a tremendous support.

"I've already received over 500 boxes," said Command Sgt. Maj. John Caldwell, Regimental Command Sergeant Major, 3rd ACR. "The boxes are pouring into my office everyday."

Caldwell is in charge of collecting and distributing the gifts to the single soldiers. He said he has a list of all the single soldiers in his unit and it is the Regiment's goal to make sure each one receives a gift.

"We want to make sure everybody is included," said Caldwell.

Caldwell noted the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment's Family Readiness Group is involved too.

"Sue Teeples and my wife, Teresa Caldwell, have been instrumental in making this a success," said Caldwell.

Caldwell also said that the size of the gift should be small.

"We're not looking for big gifts. Books, games; anything that costs around \$10 is perfect," added Caldwell.



ON THE COVER - Members of the 1st Infantry Division pull a tank that was left behind by the Iraqi Army. The crew works with members of C Company, 307th Engineer Battalion, 82nd Airborne Division to destroy Iraqi tanks so they may not be used against Coalition Forces. Look for the full story next week. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Justin A. Carmack)

Florida Guardsmen Transform Base

By Spc. Jamie Bender
1st BCT, 1st Infantry PAO

AR RAMADI, Iraq-For the last six months, Company C, 1st Battalion, 124th Infantry Regiment, a National Guard unit from Florida, has manned a combat outpost in Ar Ramadi in support of the 1st Brigade Combat Team. The 1st BCT is part of 1st Infantry Division and Task Force All American.

The soldiers of 1st Bn., clear main supply routes on a daily basis.

"We run MSR clearance 24 hours a day, and they are still able to sneak an [improvised explosive device] in here or there," said Sgt. 1st Class Manuel Pallango, 1st Bn. "For about the last two weeks, we have been finding one a day on the MSR and that's good. That's one [IED] a day that we caught that isn't going to injure American troops and we are very proud of that."

Facing danger daily is only one of the

challenges soldiers deal with.

"As a National Guardsman you give up a lot," said Pallango. "We have soldiers who have their own businesses; we have soldiers who are engineers and aviators. Of course they are human and they miss family and friends, but they know they have an obligation here. They have a duty and they are very proud to serve,"

Before the 124th could settle in for their deployment, the outpost needed many repairs and much maintenance. The outpost was once an Iraqi motor pool and required a lot of clean up before improvements could be made.

"There were old Iraqi vehicle parts everywhere and burned out vehicles all over the place," said Pallango. "It was just a mess. None of the buildings had power or running water. The building where I stay had no floors, no windows, no doors and no air conditioning. It was like that for a while until we got situated, and then we started

making the improvements."

The buildings now have floors and doors, and living conditions are continuing to improve.

"Now we are building two showers, real showers with hot water and sinks," said Pallango. "And we are also building a race track so the soldiers can do [physical training]. We are also going to be connecting to the main city's electrical power instead of using generators, and we will also be using the city's water and sewage system."

In addition to the living quarters, the soldiers are also getting morale, welfare and recreation activities. A basketball court and a weight room have been added to the compound and an MWR room is under way.

As each month passes, the base improves. Some of the amenities from home are finding their way to the soldiers.

"Now we have satellite television," said
(Continued to Page 5)

The Canopy is published by the 82nd Airborne Division Public Affairs Office and the 350th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment under the guidance of the Division Commander, Division Public Affairs Officer and editorial staff. *The Canopy* does not represent the opinion of V Corps, US Central Command or the Department of the Army. To contact *The Canopy*, send questions or comments to:

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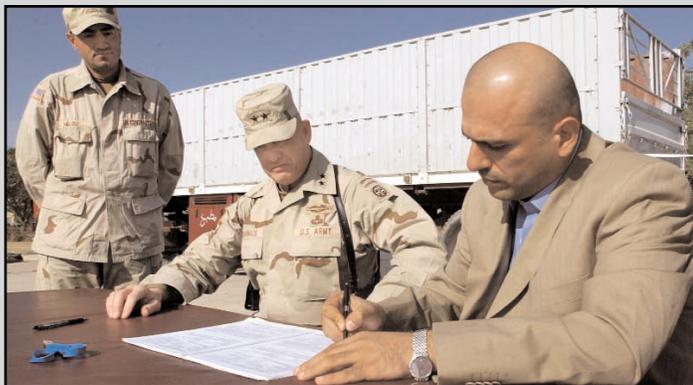
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CG Speaks Out ... Signs Trucking Initiative



(U.S. Army photo by Spc. Rachel Ahner, Combat Camera)

Major Gen. Charles H. Swannack Jr. responds to a reporter's question during a press conference held at the Baghdad Forum on Nov. 18. The Commanding General fielded questions ranging from security issues, to the presence of foreign fighters and terrorists in the Al Anbar region. Also addressed was the use of former Iraqi military officers in the new Iraqi Army. Swannack plans to continue engaging the media during press conferences in the future to highlight the successful efforts of the soldiers serving in the Task Force.



(U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Craig Pickett)

One such success was the signing of the Al Anbar Trucking Initiative between Swannack and the owner of Al Bariz Trucking. The initiative will employ local truck drivers from Al Anbar to carry supplies to Coalition forces while reducing the exposure of U.S. soldiers to attacks.

Brick Factory to Generate Jobs

By Spc. Justin Carmack
350th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

FALLUJAH, Iraq—After major combat operations in May, Coalition forces shifted much of their focus toward humanitarian aid and the rebuilding of Iraq's infrastructure. The 3rd Brigade of the 82nd Airborne Division and the 423rd Civil Affairs Battalion are working in the Fallujah area to reestablish commerce. Economic vitality is a major segment of the infrastructure.

One of the larger projects in the economic rebuilding has been the repair of electrical connections to local factories and businesses. Last week one of Fallujah's largest employers, a brick factory just outside the city, received two generators to power two brick presses.

Civil Affairs teams are currently working to organize the connection of the generators to the factory's power grid. Once both presses are wired into the generators, approximately 500 jobs will be created and available for the citizens of Fallujah. The factory currently employs about 200 people. Present employees operate the one brick press and perform grounds maintenance as well as handle all the paperwork for the factory.

Army officials believe the increase in production of bricks will improve the speed which Coalition forces can rebuild local busi-

nesses. They are also hoping the factory's director is correct in assuming 500 new jobs will play a major part in reducing the amount of violence directed toward soldiers.

According to Jabar Yunies, the manager of the factory, the decline in the number of jobs in the area has been the cause of frustration for many now unemployed citizens.

"I think that the citizens of Fallujah will be very happy by the reopening of the section of the factory," said Yunies. "I also believe creating new jobs in the area may decrease the amount of violence aimed toward Coalition forces."

Coalition forces are planning to host a ribbon cutting ceremony once the generators and brick presses are fully functional. The ceremony will not only serve as a christening of the two generators, but as a celebration in honor of the creation of 500 new jobs for local citizens.



The Great 60 Day Build-up

By Pfc. J. H. French
82nd Airborne Division PAO

AR RAMADI, Iraq - The task was to build a city in 60 days, and that is exactly what engineers from the 1st Engineer Battalion, 1st Brigade, 1st Infantry Division did.

From a dining facility to offices, from living quarters to roads, from electricity to a post exchange, the engineers did it all. They took an abandoned Iraqi military installation and turned it into home for more than two thousand soldiers from the 1st BCT from Fort Riley, Kan. and 1st Cavalry Regiment from Fort Hood, Texas. Also, paratroopers from the 82nd Airborne Division from Fort Bragg, N.C., and several National Guard and Reserve units occupy the rebuilt area.

The camp needed to be completed in 60 days because it is difficult to live out of a rucksack for that long, said Maj. Steven D. Hart, Battalion Operations Officer for 1st Engineer Battalion. "After 60 days, it becomes hard to continue to live in a tent and do personnel hygiene and laundry."

The first task was to get rid of all the trash left behind, continued Hart. "The place stank to high heaven."

"We moved 70 to 80 thousand cubic yards of trash and put it into the inner berm," said Staff Sgt. John C. Kelley, a Platoon Sergeant with 568th Engineer Company.

"The berm is seven and a half kilometers long," continued Kelley. "The soldiers worked on it for 25 days before it was complete."

According to Capt. Guy D. Joseph, commander of the 248th Engineer Company, a National Guard unit from Connecticut, his unit arrived in July and immediately started the rubble clean up and worked on that nearly non-stop for five weeks.

The place was trashed when we got here, said Joseph. The entire compound was infested with sand fleas.

In some places there were coils and knots of wire 40 feet tall, continued Joseph. There was also more than 30 small buildings that had to be torn down.

Another job was to consolidate the pits for burning the trash, Hart said. When 1st BCT got here, there were 32 burn pits and it caused a "big stink."

In addition to the burn pit, water evapora-

tion pits had to be built also. "We dug 50 by 50 meter drainage pits for the showers," noted Pfc. Ian L. Dixon, a crane operator for 568th.

The second major task was to organize a plan for the city. Where soldiers are going to live, work, dispose of their trash and how electricity would be provided to all the buildings were all integral parts of the plan to organize and operate this city, noted Hart. "Synchronizing the dozens of bits and pieces of a plan we inherited was a big problem. We had 12 people doing 12 different things, so we had to get everyone moving in the same direction."

One of the first tasks people were directed into was force protection. Roads and barricades for force protection was a big issue early on, said Dixon, who arrived in the middle of September.

The soldiers brought in tons of gravel to place on the roads, commented Kelley.

"It seems like everything that comes up is top priority," he continued, "and lack of personnel is a problem."

We facilitated building the PX and we also unloaded over 30 million dollars worth of stuff, like computers and generators, from conexes," said Kelley.

Soldiers from the engineer units completed many tasks to build the city, but some difficulties surfaced when integrating locals into the work plan.

A problem was the work done by some of the local contractors, noted Joseph, whose company is in charge of quality control.

"We are going to have to go back and redo a lot of the wiring the contractors did. It just isn't up to standards."

The biggest problem dealing with locals so far is the language barrier, he continued.

"Getting to all the local contractors, meeting people and getting what we need is difficult."

"Even with all the difficulties," said Hart. "We will have a very livable camp inside 60 days." Everyone will be indoors, have water, power, sewage, and a place to sleep, Hart said.

"It is better than I expected," laughed Kelley. "We have air conditioning and heat. We could be living caveman style."

"There is always something else to work on," he continued. "Our work will never be finished."

POWERED UP..

TOP- A worker removes a chain on the new 1500-kilowatt generator that arrived by flatbed truck at the brick factory

MIDDLE - Sgt. Belongea, a team leader with the 432nd Civil Affairs Battalion discusses the the area where the new generators will be located with a local contractor. The generators are part of an effort to by Coalition Forces to lower the unemployment rate and stimulate the economy in Fallujah.

LEFT - Local contractors operate a crane to set one of two, 1500-kilowatt generators in place at the brick factory. (Photos by Spc. Justin A. Carmack, 350th MPAD)



Chaplains Soothe Souls Everyday

By Staff Sgt. Rodrick Stallings
350th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

AL FALLUJAH, Iraq-The United States Army is not just rebuilding a country - they're also winning souls.

Major Scott Carson, 3rd Brigade chaplain says he has a calling from God to minister to soldiers.

Chaplains perform a unique function for soldiers in Iraq. Ministering to soldiers in combat also includes combat stress classes, suicide prevention and reunion briefings.

Interacting with soldiers and providing reassurance is part of the everyday life for the chaplains of 3BCT. Chaplain Carson stated his calling is first to be doing God's will here and to minister to soldiers.

I believe in what the Coalition is doing with the mission [freeing Iraq] and establishing Democracy for the Iraqi people, said Carson.

The chaplains have orchestrated three separate services to meet the needs of the majority of the soldiers of St. Mere Eglise, the forward operating base here.

Chaplains offer Protestant, Catholic and Latter Day Saints services. These worship services provide a sanctuary for soldiers. With bullets flying, IEDs detonated and rockets launched on a daily basis, soldiers need to know there is comfort and stress relief in the chapel.

Carson received his Doctor of Ministry degree from Bethel Seminary in St. Paul, Minn. The seminary's doctrine is, "nurture

the living, care for the casualties and honor the dead," said Carson.

Carson's fellow chaplains deliver religious services and inspired messages to the troopers at St. Mere chapel in Al Fallujah. In the midst of potential attacks, chaplains at the FOB have turned this hot spot into a haven for ministering to American soldiers.

Many opt for the traditional Sunday service. The Protestant service is held at 10a.m. and has all the flair of any state-side church.

It boasts its praise singers, whose leader, Capt. Todd Hollins, just happens to be one of St. Mere's chaplains.

Hollins, under the guidance of Carson, has put together a praise and worship group which leads the congregation during the service.

The group is accompanied by an acoustic-guitarist, Spc. Elliott Diaz. His amazing hand-speed is enjoyed by the congregation. Strumming the strings of his guitar at an almost frantic pace, he aides in the worship process. Diaz dedicates himself to the ministry and openly shares his gift of music. Diaz is a self-taught guitarist and he freely shares his musical gift by playing in church.

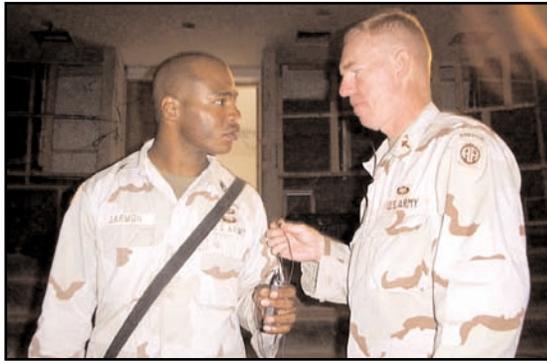
As he plays, soldiers react to his performance, and many voice their approval of his ability to spiritually uplift them. Troopers and worshippers around the chapel lifted their hands during the service to show their appreciation.

Another goal of the St. Mere chaplains is to remove the thought of war from soldiers' minds.

The worship service is designed to fill soldiers' hearts with joy and for a brief moment, cause them to forget the war.

Carson said it's his calling and his duty to bring soldiers to God and God to the soldiers. "The job is challenging because we endure the same hardships soldiers endure, including being shot at," Carson explained.

Though their job is challenging, and at times, dangerous, chaplains continue to serve soldiers in their time of need. Whether it is taking their minds off the harsh Iraqi conditions during a Sunday morning service or comforting them after a fire, Army chaplains are available to help.



(U. S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Rodrick Stallings)

Staff Sgt. Derrick Jarmon of 3rd Brigaid, 82nd Airborne Division hands a microphone to Capt. Harold Cline, a Chaplain for 3rd Brigade 82nd Airborne Division. Cline conducted a Sunday sermon for approximately 125 people.

Guardsmen... (Continued from Page 2)

Pallango. "It's the local satellite television so we get the European version of CNN and some music channels but nothing like ESPN or anything like that. It's better than nothing. We also have Internet [capability]. We have a little Internet café that has three hubs. We have a sign in roster and soldiers get 30 minutes at a time.... We also have Internet for soldiers without a laptop. We have a company computer that soldiers can use and write home and say hello to their families."

The soldiers' morale is a focus for the leadership at the outpost, said Pallango.

"It starts with the leadership and the way you react to adversity," he said. "As a leader, if you react to adversity with courage and discipline your soldiers will follow.

As a result of leader actions, morale remains high. Pallango said he is very happy with the support of the 1st BCT.

"I think 1st Brigade has done an excellent job of going out there and casing the enemy," he said. "We are getting very good support. They treat us not as a National Guard unit but as a regular combat infantry unit, which we are."

Question of the Week ?

Why did Thomas Edison invent the light bulb?

Last Week's Answer:

On average, a McDonald's hamburger bun contains 180 sesame seeds.

The Back Page...

U.S. Studies Mystery Projectile

WASHINGTON - Army munitions experts at the Detroit Arsenal in Warren, Mich., are investigating a mysterious new weapon that fires a projectile the size of a pencil eraser that was used by Iraqi insurgents to knock out an M1 Abrams main battle tank in Baghdad.

The yellow metal round penetrated the tank's armored skirting and hull, tore through a gunner's seat back and flak jacket and then took out vital equipment, disabling the tank before burying itself in the opposite wall in a hole nearly two inches deep.

The four-member crew of the 69-ton, \$4.3 million Abrams survived the hit, although the gunner and the tank commander were hit by flying bits of metal.

According to Don Jarosz, spokesman for the Army's Program Evaluation Office for

Ground Combat Systems, the incident happened Aug. 28, while the tank was on patrol in Baghdad.

The investigation into what weapon was used in the attack is not yet complete, he said.

Only one other Abrams tank has been disabled by enemy fire since the U.S.-led war in Iraq began last March, and that incident involved an ordinary rocket-propelled grenade.

There have been no reports of any other mystery projectile being fired at U.S. equipment before or since the Aug. 28 incident, but there are fears that Iraqi insurgents may possess some kind of secret weapon.

The Army Tank-automotive and Armaments Command, which is conducting the investigation, is withholding all information concerning it, including what progress has been made, Jarosz said.

However, in unclassified excerpts of a

preliminary report published in the Army Times newspaper, Rock Island (Ill.) Arsenal technical representative Terry Hughes described the munition as made of yellow metal.

"It seems clear that a penetrator of a yellow molten metal is what caused the damage," he wrote after examining the tank in Baghdad, "but what weapon fires such a round and precisely what sort of round is it?"

A hollow-charge penetrator round works by melting the metal it strikes and pushing a stream of molten metal ahead of it as it passes through armor plating.

According to the Army Times excerpts, the round struck a vulnerable spot in the Abrams body structure between the top of the tread and the base of the turret.

Current-day Abrams tanks carry armor made of steel casing filled with depleted uranium, which has more than twice the strength of steel.

Reserve And Guard Ordered To Alert More Troops For Iraq

WASHINGTON- Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld ordered an additional 15,000 Reserve and National Guard troops on Wednesday to prepare for the possibility of yearlong duty in Iraq or Kuwait, rounding out a plan to rotate American forces in the region by next spring.

Combined with alert warnings and deployment orders approved two weeks ago, Mr. Rumsfeld's decision brings to 58,000 the total number of Reserve and National Guard troops who have been alerted for possible service in the Persian Gulf region early next year.

The latest orders, which had been expected, are part of the Pentagon's overall plan to reduce the American force levels in Iraq to 105,000 by next May from about 130,000 now.

"We're notifying the next wave of reservists who were included in the original rotation announcement," said Lawrence Di Rita,

the Pentagon's chief spokesman. He said that the notification began Wednesday and that the list of units would not be made public until troops received official word.

Reserve and National Guard troops will play an increasingly important role in the next rotation. By spring, reservists will represent about 37 percent of the total force in Iraq, or 39,000 troops, compared with about 22 percent now, or 28,000 troops. The big difference is that the reservists in Iraq now are support personnel. In the next rotation, there will be 15,000 troops from three National Guard combat brigades.

The large-scale mobilization of reservists, and the strains it places on their families and employers, has been a difficult issue for the Pentagon, and military officials had sought to limit this next round of call-ups.

But because so many of the military's logistical units are in the Reserve or National Guard, the Pentagon has had little choice but to tap more reservists, focusing on units and individuals that had not yet been mobilized since Sept. 11, 2001.

Sensing Shiites Will Rule Iraq, U.S. Starts To See Friends, Not Foes

WASHINGTON - The Bush administration, which was wary earlier this year of installing a government dominated by Shiites in Iraq, has concluded that such a development is virtually inevitable and not necessarily harmful to American interests, administration officials said Wednesday.

The officials said that fears of an Iranian-style - and Iranian-influenced - theocracy

in Baghdad have faded because it has become clear that Iraq's Shiite population is not a monolithic bloc and not necessarily dominated by Tehran.

"Our basic position is that as we get to know more of Iraqi society, we're more comfortable with a democratic process, and if that emerges with a predominant Shiite role, so be it," said an administration official. "There's been a steady education process here."

Still, American officials are taking steps

to ensure that when a Shiite-dominated government is installed next year, as most expect, religious freedom and minority rights are respected and Iraq's neighbors are reassured that the first Shiite-governed Arab country does not pose a threat to them.

The shift in the administration's thinking laid the groundwork for the decision announced last week to accelerate the timetable for self-government in Iraq, administration officials say.