



The Old Ironsides Report



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Snipers bring school to Iraqi desert

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BAGHDAD, Iraq - - For most people, the U.S. Army Sniper School at Fort Benning, Ga., conjures up images of soldiers in camouflage sneaking around the densely wooded training grounds of western Georgia, learning to kill the enemy stealthily with high-powered rifles.

However, the rural woodlands of the southeastern United States have little in common with the sun-scorched desert of Iraq, and cannot compare to the bustling urban setting of cities such as Baghdad.

So, rather than sending troops to Fort Benning for sniper training, the 1st Armored Division has requested the school to come to Iraq.

Three sniper instructors from the school, a mobile training team (MTT), have brought their weapons, equipment and other teaching materials to Baghdad, where they are training a group of 20 1st Armored Division sniper candidates.

Though MTTs are designed to travel to teach sniper students at locations away from Fort Benning, this is the first time an MTT has trained soldiers in a combat zone since the Vietnam War, according to Sgt. 1st Class Clark Swedberg, senior instructor for special projects, U.S. Army Sniper School.

The advantages of bringing the school into the environment where units are conducting combat operations are clear. Soldiers have experienced the conditions of the environment, and can use the sniper training to better react to situations they may encounter.

"The wind is a lot different here than at Fort Benning," Swedberg said. "It makes a big difference for soldiers to learn to deal with it here where they will experience it later. We can identify any other problems and fix them now."

Swedberg said he's noticed another advantage to training snipers in this environment: "They're already in a combat frame of mind."

Though the sniper school is a five-week course at Fort Benning, the mobile course is about a week shorter, Swedberg said. However, the students will be taught everything they would if they were taking the course stateside.

The sniper school is not just about shooting, either. The sniper candidates spend time in the classroom and in the field learning about reporting intelligence information, calling in close air support, mortars and artillery, and being an over watch for whatever element they are assigned to, Swedberg said.



1st Armored Division sniper trainees take aim at targets downrange to zero their rifles at a range near Baghdad Oct. 22.

"One of their biggest assets is in their ability to provide information from reconnaissance and observation," said Master Sgt. Alec Lazore, master gunner, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division.

Bringing the sniper school to Baghdad also serves to replenish critical war-fighting skills, Lazore said. "We've been here six months, and 1st Armored Division requested the school because we've lost trained soldiers due to natural attrition like PCS and ETS (permanent change of station and expiration of time in service)."

By replenishing snipers who are trained to operate in this environment, 1st Armored Division will be able to support its forces for the remainder of their deployment here.

Furthermore, the sniper candidates' training has gone beyond simply learning to handle environmental conditions in Iraq. As they went into a range in the desert outside Baghdad to zero their weapons Oct. 22, the snipers found themselves looking through their scopes at the remaining most wanted members of Saddam Hussein's regime, including Saddam himself.

The sniper instructors placed wanted posters of the 55 most wanted on the targets the sniper students were to use for zeroing their weapons.

"It's a good thing," Lazore said. "It serves two purposes. The picture squares are perfect for the trainees to use to get a tight shot group. And it gives the soldiers a chance to see the most wanted through a scope."

Lazore added, "Maybe one day these guys will get out there in the real world and see someone from that list through their scope."

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NEWS

Soot, smoke from wildfires spark health concerns

The fires burning across Southern California have left millions with a scratching in their throats and a burning in their eyes – telltale signs of the significant health risks the smoke and soot clouding the entire region can pose, officials said Monday.

The same Santa Ana winds that have whipped up the frenzy of firestorms pushed smoke toward the populous coast, casting a gritty pall over the Los Angeles and San Diego metropolitan regions.

Dems Still Unable to Take Down Dean in Debate

Howard Dean got off lightly from opponents seeking to bring down the frontrunner in the race to challenge President Bush in 2004, analysts said of Sunday night's Democratic candidate debate. Howard Dean, the big winner. Every debate that goes by in which no one lays a glove on Howard Dean is a huge victory for Howard Dean. He's the frontrunner," said Fox News contributor and Weekly Standard publisher Bill Kristol. "It mystifies me why the other candidates don't see the urgency in taking down Howard Dean."

Israel ignores road-map over illegal outposts

The Middle East peace process faced another setback yesterday when the Israeli government admitted it is to provide new services to illegal settlement outposts which it pledged to dismantle under the "road-map" peace plan. At the Aqaba summit in June, Ariel Sharon, the Israeli Prime Minister, promised to take down the outposts built since he came to power. Yesterday's move, in direct contravention of the peace plan, has strengthened the impression that Israel is now openly ignoring the road-map, which was personally backed by President Bush.

FleetBoston sale seen changing regional economic balance

Bank of America Corp.'s planned \$47.8 billion acquisition of FleetBoston Financial Corp. leaves New England without a major bank headquarters, a loss that some experts fear is a sign that the region is being sidelined. The acquisition will give Charlotte, N.C.-based Bank of America a leading market position in Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut and New Jersey as well as a powerful retail platform in New York City, upstate New York, New Hampshire and Maine, both companies said Monday.

Iraqi Violence Unnerves Nations and Aid Groups

World leaders strongly condemned today the stark and apparently coordinated outbreak of violence that brought Baghdad its bloodiest day since the fall of Saddam Hussein's government. But while officials in some countries, including Britain, said they remained confident that the American-led forces would control the violence in Iraq, others, notably France and Germany, both harsh critics of the Iraqi war, said the latest troubles underscored a need to restore Iraqi sovereignty quickly. Meanwhile, some aid groups said they were reassessing their operations in Iraq, news agencies reported.

Oddly Enough

Canadian Beats World at Rock, Paper, Scissors

The competitors, in glitzy, off-the-wall costumes, call themselves professional athletes. Some even bring along team doctors to supervise their nutrition and take them through intense warmups. This is serious stuff for at least some of the 320 competitors who shook their fists at the World Rock, Paper, Scissors Championships at a nightclub in downtown Toronto. The winner, who netted \$3,825, was Toronto's Rob Krueger, a member of the "Legion of the Red Fist" team. He took the lofty title of World RPS Champion with a combination of rock-paper-paper, defeating his opponent's three rocks. Treading a thin line between silly spectacle and serious sport, the event drew a crowd of about 900, including a slew of local and international media. Andy Cumming, 28, flew in from London with five other members of the British team, plus their team doctor who counsels them on warmups, diet and practice. "It's an internationally played game, you know," he said, wearing a pair of worker's coveralls with the red, white and blue of the Union Jack patterned on it. To the uninitiated, taking the playground game seriously is difficult. Many competitors wore crude, homemade costumes, and played with a can of beer in their non-throwing hand.

SPORTS

Red Sox Say Manager's Contract Won't Be Renewed

The Boston Red Sox said today that they would not extend the contract of Manager Grady Little, who was let go despite having guided the team to 95 regular-season victories and a berth in the American League Championship Series. The team's president, Larry Lucchino, and General Manager Theo Epstein said the decision was not based on Little's ill-fated decision to leave Pedro Martínez on the mound during the eighth inning of Game 7 of the championship series against the Yankees. Little's decision backfired; Martínez allowed the Yankees to erase a 5-2 lead and tie the game, which they later won in the 11th inning.

This Day in History **28 October**

- 1492** Christopher Columbus discovers Cuba
- 1636** Harvard University (Boston) established
- 1776** Battle of White Plains; Washington retreats to NJ
- 1790** New York gives up claims to Vermont for \$30,000
- 1793** Eli Whitney applies for a patent on the cotton gin
- 1886** Statue of Liberty dedicated by Pres Grover Cleveland, it is celebrated by the 1st confetti (ticker tape) parade in NYC
- 1904** St Louis police try a new investigation method-fingerprints
- 1918** Czechoslovakia gains independence as Austria-Hungary breaks up
- 1919** Volstead Act passed by Congress, start prohibition over Wilson's veto
- 1922** 1st coast-to-coast radio broadcast of a football game
- 1922** Benito Mussolini takes control of Italy's government
- 1961** Ground broken for Municipal (Shea) Stadium for NY Mets
- 1962** Khrushchev orders withdrawal of missiles from Cuba, ending crisis
- 1965** Gateway Arch (630' high) completed in St Louis, Missouri

Start Time	SPORTS	ATLANTIC	SPECTRUM	PACIFIC	NEWS	KOREA	Start Time
0000	AROUND THE HORN		THE SILENCE OF THE LAMBS		THE BIG STORY		0000
0030	PARDON THE INTERRUPTION	THE LATE SHOW WITH DAVID LETTERMAN					0030
0100	SPORTSCENTER			SESAME STREET	HEADLINE NEWS	SESAME STREET	0100
0130		ACCESS HOLLYWOOD			NBC NIGHTLY NEWS		0130
0200		ESPNEWS	RUGRATS	DRAGON TALES	ABC WORLD NEWS TONIGHT	DRAGON TALES	0200
0230	HORSE RACING	MONDAY NIGHT COUNTDOWN	SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS	WHEEL OF FORTUNE	CBS EVENING NEWS	RUGRATS	0230
0300			THE SIMPSON	THE DR. PHIL SHOW	THE NEWSHOUR	THE DR. PHIL SHOW	0300
0330			HOME IMPROVEMENT				0330
0400		MONDAY NIGHT FOOTBALL	J.A.G.	THE OPRAH WINFREY SHOW	HANNITY & COLMES	THE OPRAH WINFREY SHOW	0400
0500			COMEDY CENTRAL PRESENTS	NBC NIGHTLY NEWS	THE NEWS WITH BRIAN WILLIAMS	NBC NIGHTLY NEWS	0500
0530				JUDGE JUDY		JUDGE JUDY	0530
0600			BIOGRAPHY	ACCESS HOLLYWOOD	BET NIGHTLY NEWS	ACCESS HOLLYWOOD	0600
0630				GUIDING LIGHT	NIGHTLY BUSINESS REPORT	GUIDING LIGHT	0630
0700			ROSEMARY'S BABY	GENERAL HOSPITAL	LARRY KING LIVE	GENERAL HOSPITAL	0700
0730	RACING	HEADLINE NEWS					0730
0800		SESAME STREET		HAPPILY EVER AFTER	NEWSNIGHT WITH AARON BROWN	ABC NEWS SPECIAL	0800
0830				WHAT'S NEW SCOOPY DOO?			0830
0900	ESPNEWS	DRAGON TALES		LIZZIE MCGUIRE	PAULA ZAHN NOW	TAINA	0900
0930	ESPNEWS	WHEEL OF FORTUNE	EBERT & ROEPER AT THE MOVIES	ALL THAT (TV-7)		ALL THAT (TV-7)	0930
1000	ISU FIGURE SKATING	THE OPRAH WINFREY SHOW	RUGRATS	JEOPARDY!	NIGHTLINE	JEOPARDY!	1000
1030			SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS	HEADLINE NEWS	ARMY NEWSWATCH	WHEEL OF FORTUNE	1030
1100		ACCESS HOLLYWOOD	THE SIMPSON	ESPNEWS	HARDBALL WITH CHRIS MATTHEWS	ESPNEWS	1100
1130		GUIDING LIGHT	HOME IMPROVEMENT	HEADLINE NEWS		ADVISORY BLOCK	

1200	BEST DAMN SPORTS SHOW PERIOD	GENERAL HOSPITAL	J.A.G.	NFL	THE O'REILLY FACTOR	NFL	1200
1300	SPORTSCENTER	HEADLINE NEWS	JOE MILLIONAIRE		ABC NEWS SPECIAL		1300
1330		JUDGE JUDY					1330
1400	NASCAR WINSTON CUP SERIES	TODAY	BIOGRAPHY		GOOD MORNING AMERICA		1400
1500			ROSEMARY'S BABY	HEADLINE NEWS		HEADLINE NEWS	1500
1530				TONIGHT SHOW WITH JAY LENO		TONIGHT SHOW WITH JAY LENO	1530
1600		HAPPILY EVER AFTER			HEADLINE NEWS		1600
1630		WHAT'S NEW SCOOBY DOO?		THE LATE SHOW WITH DAVID LETTERMAN	CHANNEL ONE		1630
1700		LIZZIE MCGUIRE			THE EARLY SHOW		1700
1730		ALL THAT (TV-7)	EBERT & ROEPER AT THE MOVIES	ACCESS HOLLYWOOD		ACCESS HOLLYWOOD	1730
1800	SPORTSCENTER	JEOPARDY!	RUGRATS	THE EXORCIST		GHOST DAD	1800
1830		HEADLINE NEWS	SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS				1830
1900	54321	ESPNEWS	THE SIMPSON		MSNBC LIVE		1900
1930	PARDON THE INTERRUPTION	HEADLINE NEWS	HOME IMPROVEMENT			SOME LIKE IT HOT	1930
2000	NFL	SMALLVILLE	J.A.G.	TO GILLIAN ON HER 37TH BIRTHDAY	MSNBC LIVE	TO GILLIAN ON HER 37TH BIRTHDAY	2000
2100		WHAT LIES BENEATH	JOE MILLIONAIRE		ABC NEWS SPECIAL		2100
2200			BIOGRAPHY	HEADLINE NEWS	STUDIO B WITH SHEPARD SMITH	HEADLINE NEWS	2200
2230				ESPNEWS		ESPNEWS	2230
2300	ESPNEWS	HEADLINE NEWS	ROSEMARY'S BABY	TODAY	INSIDE POLITICS	TODAY	2300
2330	ESPNEWS	TONIGHT SHOW WITH JAY LENO			ARMY NEWSWATCH		2330