

IV Marne Focus

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Serving Task Force Marne and MND-Center

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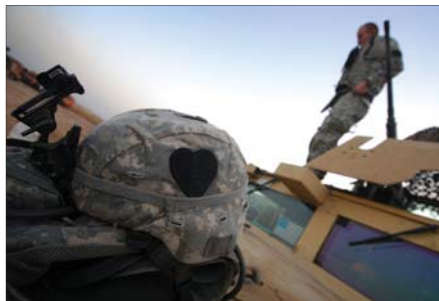


Rooting out al-Qaeda



Photos by Sgt. Ben Brody

Pfc. Leal Potter, a mortarman with HHC, 2nd Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, attached to 4th Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, prepares to launch a 120mm round at a target in the desert west of Iskandariyah during Operation Dragoon Dec. 15. A few days later, Soldiers established Patrol Base Kelsey further west in Khidr to help eliminate al-Qaeda presence in the area. **For more on PB KELSEY in honor of SGT. SAMUEL KELSEY, see page 9.**



Members of the Blackhearts Brigade, Soldiers from 2-502 Inf. Regt., prepare for Operation Dragoon at Forward Operating Base Kalsu Dec. 15.

Hope grows in Salman Pak



Spc. Ben Hutto

Staff Sgt. John Zamarripa with Co. A, 1-15th Inf. Regt. jokes with citizens in Salman Pak.

Significant improvements noticed in once bitterly contested area

By SPC. BEN HUTTO
3rd HBCT, 3rd Inf. Div. PAO

FOB HAMMER – Staff Sgt. Robert Butler expresses a range of emotions when someone asks him what he thinks about Salman Pak.

The platoon sergeant, from Excelsior Springs, Mo., for Headquarters Platoon, Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division has handed out candy to children there, fought insurgents, lost friends and helped the National Police provide security.

In his mind, the former resort town has a lot of potential, but he readily admits that there is still a lot of work that needs to be done before it can reach that potential.

The recent opening of the courthouse in Salman Pak and a recent push by the 489th Civil Affairs Battalion, Knoxville, Tenn., currently attached to 3rd HBCT, 3rd Inf. Div., to help stimulate local business are important steps in building the city, but security is still the main issue according to Butler.

“Right now, I don’t think that they are at a level where we can fully concentrate on economic stabilization,” said Butler. “It has come a long way from where it was, but we still have hot spots that we need to clean up.”

Butler has seen firsthand how far Salman Pak has come and how the citizens’ view of him and his 3rd HBCT brethren has changed.

“When we first started patrolling Salman Pak, the people there were very stand-offish,” he explained. “We would go down the street and people would go inside. A few weeks later, they started coming out.”

Gradually troops in the area earned the local resi-

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Marne 6 sends

End-of-year review: Your hard work paying off – Attacks way down

One year ago, the 3rd Infantry Division Headquarters was preparing for a summer 2007 deployment to Northern Iraq. When President Bush announced the Surge, the Division's training time decreased from six months to six weeks and its area of responsibility shifted south. The 3rd Infantry Division quickly moved to stand up Multi-National Division – Center, covering Baghdad's southern belts – the Mahmudiyah and Mada'in qadas, as well as the southern provinces – Babil, Karbala, Najaf and Wasit. In the months since, we've seen the course of the war change, and it's because of you.

As we look back on 2007, we will never forget the Soldiers who made the ultimate sacrifice. Every morning I begin my day in prayer; I lay out the pictures of the 119 Soldiers we have lost and remember the price they paid for our freedom. The progress you made this year shows us their sacrifices have not been in vain.

In 2007, you reduced the number of attacks from record highs down to 2004 levels of violence. You gave us the combat power to take the fight to a brutal enemy who only responds to force. The Surge allowed us to conduct detailed, aggressive and precise combat operations to deny the enemy his sanctuaries and to take down network leaders and their subordinates. Over the course of the last nine

months you have killed or captured about 4,000 insurgents and removed approximately 60 high-value individuals from the battlefield. I couldn't be more proud or more humbled to serve with you.

When the Division deployed last March, attack levels were at 25 attacks a day, and now you face fewer than six attacks

60 percent of you live at patrol bases among the Iraqis. Your commitment is unparalleled.

per day, with less than two attacks resulting in a casualty or equipment damage. Civilian casualties are also down 75 percent, which illustrates the impact of your ability to secure the population.

With the Surge, securing the population became our focus. In Multi-National Division – Center, we don't commute to work. In the past you lived on large forward operating bases and came back after missions. Now 60 percent of you live at patrol bases among the Iraqis. Your commitment is unparalleled. When you move in, the Iraqis ask you if you are going to stay, and when they understand you are not leaving, they bring you intelligence and you go after the safehouses, caches and improvised explosive devices.

This dedication to the Iraqi people sparked the Concerned Local Citizens program. Because you made the Iraqis feel empowered, they came forward and said, "I've had enough of the violence. I want to secure this area and help to rebuild my neighborhood." Today in Multi-National Division – Cen-



Maj. Gen. Rick Lynch
Task Force Marne Commander

ter, we have more than 26,000 Concerned Local Citizens, and that is a direct reflection of you – your ability to recruit them, provide over-watch, and to train them to protect themselves.

The Division has approximately 150 Concerned Local Citizens groups, about 20 percent of which are mixed groups because the conversation is no longer about sectarian issues. And that's largely attributed to your ability to bring them together. I walk the streets every day and people don't tell me "I'm Sunni" or "I'm Shia." Instead they say, "I'm Iraqi." There are a lot of Iraqi flags flying, and a lot of citizens identifying with Iraqi nationalism.

I find that Iraqis want the same things that we want. They want freedom from fear – they want to be able to send their kids to school, be able to go to work, and to have a place to live in peace. And every day you are helping them to achieve these goals.

As General Petraeus said, no one is dancing in the end zones yet, but we are taking advantage of the security gains

to tackle stability. In 2008, the Division is going to shift its focus to capacity building. We spent most of 2007 working to improve security, and in 2008 we are going to focus on governance, economics, transition, and communication. Safety and security will always be the number-one priority, but we have to build capacity in order to transition our way home.

As a result of the Concerned Local Citizens groups, you are working hard to develop local coordinating councils, and we are working to link these local councils with their respective qada, nahia and provincial councils. In 2008, governance will be achieved at the local level – Iraq will work itself out from the ground up.

As the councils come together, you are seeing Iraqis identify what they need. When I walk the streets the conversation is no longer about security, but about jobs. In 2008, we are going to work hard to create substantive, long-term economic improvement. Of the more than 26,000 Concerned Local Citizens, only a third of them will transition into the Iraqi Security Forces as policemen or soldiers; the other two thirds need jobs. You are already working to develop public works battalions and Iraqi civilian conservation forces that meet the needs of the Iraqis. Some of these men are skilled plumbers, engineers, painters, or agriculture experts, and we are going to work with the government of Iraq to find them sustainable jobs.

For the one third that will

See MARNE 6, Page 10



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Managing Editor – Master Sgt. Marcia Triggs
 Editor – Sgt. Michael Connors
 Layout – Sgt. Michael Connors
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 Staff Sgt. Carlos Lazo, Sgt. Benjamin Brody, Spc. Emily J. Wilsoncroft
 Graphics – Staff Sgt. Tony M. Lindback, Spc. William Hatton

Contributing Units

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 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division
 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault)
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 3rd Combat Aviation Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division
 214th Fires Brigade
 7th Sustainment Brigade
 720th Military Police Battalion
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Division Soldier of Year named

Pfc. cites perseverance as main factor in turning around his life, earning top honor

By Pfc. MONICA K. SMITH
3rd CAB, 3rd Inf. Div. PAO

CAMP STRIKER – Sometimes it's difficult to remedy a mistake made, a first impression is often irrevocable, and restoring your reputation can be almost impossible.

For Pfc. James Truitt, Company B, 603rd Aviation Support Battalion, 3rd Combat Aviation Brigade, 3rd Inf. Div., the mistakes and errors early in his military career are only a memory after being named the 3rd Infantry Division Soldier of the Year Dec. 20 at Forward Operating Base Kalsu.

"The (3rd Infantry Division Command Sgt. Maj. Jesse L. Andrews) said I might be asked at any time to talk, so I want Soldiers to know they can come back after making mistakes," said Truitt, from Spokane, Wash. "I think some Soldiers need to hear that."

Truitt began his ascent to Division Soldier of the Year by winning the Battalion Soldier of the Month in August, then the Battalion Soldier of the Quarter in September, followed by 3rd Combat Aviation Brigade Soldier of the Year in mid-September.

Though Truitt knew he would be expected to stand before a board for the Division Soldier of the Year, he did not know when, or what material he would be expected to know.

"I got the information at the end of my leave," said Truitt. "My squad leader e-

mailed me when the board was going to be and what the subject matters would be, which had changed from the brigade board."

Truitt had two days while on R&R to study the topics and spent the majority of the time looking online to study, focusing on promotions, policies and regulations.

"I basically only had three days to prepare for the division board," said Truitt. "But, I feel, once you reach the division level board, you've asserted yourself as someone who can accomplish at the board."

The board began at 9 a.m. and Truitt was the third junior-enlisted Soldier to stand before the board at FOB Kalsu, which Truitt explained was named after a 1st Lieutenant who played football for the Buffalo Bills.

"A lot of things I wanted them to ask they didn't ask," said Truitt. "It took six hours waiting in the board room, and my nervousness started to build and build. The nervousness turned into excitement and my brain started working in motion to do this one thing."

Truitt was asked to perform drill and ceremony, the longest, Truitt says, he's done before a board. Truitt was also asked, among other things, to give information on current events, and clear, disassemble, reassemble, and perform a function's check on his weapon. To overcome the more difficult portions of the board Truitt looked to himself for guidance.

"I think I'm my biggest critic," said



Pfc. Monica K. Smith

Pfc. James Truitt with Co. B, 603rd ASB inspects a magnetic chip detector for metal flakes, shavings or other metal debris in a Black Hawk engine at the Combat Aviation Brigade flight line at Camp Striker Dec. 28.

Truitt. "I picture myself from the other side of the table and then I try to exceed people's views of what a Soldier of the year or Soldier of the quarter should be."

Spc. Brandon Weiler, Co. B, 603rd ASB, has known Truitt during his time of hardship and has witnessed his improvement.

"I'm amazed with someone who has gone through as much adversity as he has to be where he is now," said Weiler. "He never seemed mad, took full responsibility of his actions. He was upbeat but a bit discouraged. He felt he let us down. But (Truitt is) a little more upbeat knowing that his career hasn't halted. He says that

a lot because he thought his career was over."

Now that he has become the Division Soldier of the Year, Truitt says he believes he has exceeded what people may have judged him to be and tells other Soldiers who are in a difficult situation to persevere.

"No matter how much trouble or how big of a hole you find yourself in, if you don't stop believing in yourself, people around you won't stop believing either," said Truitt. "February of last year I thought was going to be chaptered, and now I'm the Division Soldier of the Year. You can make good things come of bad."

No one reason explains why Soldiers re-enlist

267 Marne troops recommit in mass ceremony at palace

By Spc. EMILY WILSONCROFT
MND-C PAO

BAGHDAD – Every day, Soldiers make the decision to stay in the Army, but the mass re-enlistment ceremony held at Camp Victory's Al Faw Palace Dec. 19 was not an everyday sort of event.

Army Chief of Staff Gen. George W. Casey, Jr. stood in front of 267 Soldiers, who had come from all over Multi-National Division – Center's area of operation, Ramadi and Q-west to raise their right hands and repeat the Oath of Enlistment.

"Thank you all for what you're doing here, and for the differ-

ence you're making in Iraq," Casey said to the ACU-patterned sea of faces before him. "I think it's important, every once in a while, to take a step back from what we're doing day-to-day and think about the big picture and remind ourselves what's at stake out here in the War on Terror."

"We are at war with a global extremist terrorist network that is out to destroy our way of life," he continued, "but what's happening here in Iraq, because of your efforts and the efforts of others like you is that Iraqis are turning against extremists."

Pfc. Heather Lee Haynes with 632nd Maintenance Company, 3rd Sustainment Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, said she was pleased that Casey had come to conduct the ceremony.

"It was very kind of him to

come here," she said.

Although the Soldiers that gathered together for the ceremony shared one common bond – their desire to continue their military service – their reasons for doing so were diverse.

Haynes said she has only been in the Army for a year and a half, but had already decided to re-commit for six years.

"I'm working on my bachelor's degree in criminal justice," the Fort Myers, Fla., native said. "This way I can use my tuition assistance for that, and my husband can use my (Montgomery) G.I. Bill money for his school."

Staff Sgt. Dominic Clegg with Company F, 203rd Brigade Support Battalion, 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Inf. Div., said he was re-enlisting because he wanted to continue to train Soldiers.

"I'm not ready to get out," Clegg, from San Diego, Calif., said. "I re-enlisted for Fort Jackson (S.C.) for eight years. I want to teach new Soldiers."

Maj. Gen. Rick Lynch, MND-C commander, addressed his Soldiers.

"You don't have to look any further than the 267 men and women about to raise their right hand to understand that this is the best Army in the world," he said. "We're blessed and humbled just to be in your presence."

"When you add it all up ... you're committing to another 1,264 years of service to our nation," Lynch continued. "People ask me all the time, 'Lynch, how can you have so much confidence?' It's easy, because I'm around you all the time."

"You're doing it to protect our freedom and our way of life."



Pfc. Monica K. Smith

Soldiers raise their right hands and repeat the Oath of Enlistment during a ceremony officiated by CoS Gen. George W. Casey Jr. at the Al Faw palace at Camp Victory.

Gen. Petraeus' end-of-year letter: Big improvements, tough fight continues

HEADQUARTERS
MULTI-NATIONAL FORCE - IRAQ
BAGHDAD, IRAQ
APO AE 09342-1400

28 December 2007

Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, Coast Guardsmen,
and Civilians of Multi-National Force - Iraq:

As 2007 draws to a close, you should look back with pride on what you, your fellow troopers, our Iraqi partners, and Iraqi and Coalition civilians have achieved in 2007. A year ago, Iraq was racked by horrific violence and on the brink of civil war. Now, levels of violence and civilian and military casualties are significantly reduced and hope has been rekindled in many Iraqi communities. To be sure, the progress is reversible and there is much more to be done. Nonetheless, the hard-fought accomplishments of 2007 have been substantial, and I want to thank each of you for the contributions you made to them.

In response to the challenges that faced Iraq a year ago, we and our Iraqi partners adopted a new approach. We increased our focus on securing the Iraqi people and, in some cases, delayed transition of tasks to Iraqi forces. Additional U.S. and Georgian forces were deployed to theater, the tours of U.S. units were extended, and Iraqi forces conducted a surge of their own, generating well over 100,000 more Iraqi police and soldiers during the year so that they, too, had additional forces to execute the new approach. In places like Ramadi, Baqubah, Arab Jabour, and Baghdad, you and our Iraqi brothers fought – often house by house, block by block, and neighborhood by neighborhood – to wrest sanctuaries away from Al Qaeda-Iraq, to disrupt extremist militia elements, and to rid the streets of mafia-like criminals. Having cleared areas, you worked with Iraqis to retain them – establishing outposts in the areas we were securing, developing Iraqi Security Forces, and empowering locals to help our efforts. This approach has not been easy. It has required steadfastness in the conduct of tough offensive operations, creative solutions to the myriad problems on the ground, and persistence over the course of many months and during countless trying situations. Through it all, you have proven equal to every task, continually demonstrating an impressive ability to conduct combat and stability operations in an exceedingly complex environment.

Your accomplishments have given the Iraqi people new confidence and prompted many citizens to reject terror and confront those who practice it. As the months passed in 2007, in fact, the tribal awakening that began in Al Anbar Province spread to other parts of the country. Emboldened by improving security and tired of indiscriminate violence, extremist ideology, oppressive practices, and criminal activity, Iraqis increasingly rejected Al Qaeda-Iraq and rogue militia elements. Over time, the desire of Iraqis to contribute to their own security has manifested itself in citizens volunteering for the police, the Army, and concerned local citizen programs. It has been reflected in citizens providing information that has helped us find far more than double the number of arms and weapons caches we found last year. And it has been apparent in Iraqi communities now supporting their local security forces.

As a result of your hard work and that of our Iraqi



comrades-in-arms – and with the support of the local populace in many areas – we have seen significant improvements in the security situation. The number of attacks per week is down some 60 percent from a peak in June of this year to a level last seen consistently in the early summer of 2005. With fewer attacks, we are also seeing significantly reduced loss of life. The number of civilian deaths is down by some 75 percent since its height a year ago, dropping to a level not seen since the beginning of 2006. And the number of Coalition losses is down substantially as well.

We remain mindful that the past year's progress has been purchased through the sacrifice and selfless service of all those involved and that the new Iraq must still contend with innumerable enemies and obstacles. Al Qaeda-Iraq has been significantly degraded, but it remains capable of horrific bombings. Militia extremists have been disrupted, but they retain influence in many areas. Criminals have been apprehended, but far too many still roam Iraqi streets and intimidate local citizens and Iraqi officials. We and our Iraqi partners will have to deal with each of these challenges in the New Year to keep the situation headed in the right direction.

While the progress in a number of areas is fragile, the security improvements have significantly changed the situation in many parts of Iraq. It is now imperative that we take advantage of these improvements by looking beyond the security arena and helping Iraqi military and political leaders as they develop solutions in other areas as well, solutions they can sustain over time. At the tactical level, this means an increasing focus on helping not just Iraqi Security Forces – with whom we must partner in all that we do – but also helping Iraqi governmental organizations as they endeavor to restore basic services, to create employment opportunities, to revitalize local markets, to refurbish schools, to spur local economic activity, and to keep locals involved in contributing to local security. We will have to do all of this, of course, while continuing to draw down our forces, thinning our presence, and gradually handing over responsibilities to our Iraqi partners. Meanwhile, at the national level, we will focus on helping the Iraqi Government integrate local volunteers into the Iraqi Security Forces and other employment, develop greater ministerial capacity and capability, aid displaced persons as they return, and, most importantly, take the all-important political and economic actions needed to exploit the opportunity provided by the gains in the security arena.

The pace of progress on important political actions to this point has been slower than Iraqi leaders had hoped. Still, there have been some important steps taken in recent months. Iraq's leaders reached agreement on the Declaration of Principles for Friendship and Cooperation with the United States, which lays the groundwork for an enduring relationship between our nations. The United Nations Security Council approved Iraq's re-

quest for a final renewal of the resolution that authorizes the Coalition to operate in Iraq. Iraq's leaders passed an important Pension Law that not only extends retirement benefits to Iraqis previously left out but also represents the first of what all hope will be additional measures fostering national reconciliation. And Iraq's leaders have debated at length a second reconciliation-related measure, the Accountability and Justice Bill (the de-Ba'athification Reform Law), as well as the 2008 National Budget, both of which likely will be brought up for a vote in early 2008. Even so, all Iraqi participants recognize that much more must be done politically to put their country on an irreversible trajectory to national reconciliation and sustainable economic development. We will, needless to say, work closely with our Embassy teammates to support the Iraqi Government as it strives to take advantage of the improved security environment by pursuing political and economic progress.

The New Year will bring many changes. Substantial force rotations and adjustments already underway will continue. One Army brigade combat team and a Marine Expeditionary Unit have already redeployed without replacement. In the coming months, four additional brigades and two Marine battalions will follow suit. Throughout that time, we will continue to adapt to the security situation as it evolves. And in the midst of all the changes, we and our Iraqi partners will strive to maintain the momentum, to press the fight, and to pursue Iraq's enemies relentlessly. Solutions to many of the tough problems will continue to be found at your level, together with local Iraqi leaders and with your Iraqi Security Force partners, in company and battalion areas of operation and in individual neighborhoods and towns. As you and your Iraqi partners turn concepts into reality, additional progress will emerge slowly and fitfully. Over time, we will gradually see fewer bad days and accumulate more good days, good weeks, and good months.

The way ahead will not be easy. Inevitably, there will be more tough days and tough weeks. Unforeseen challenges will emerge. And success will require continued hard work, commitment, and initiative from all involved. As we look to the future, however, we should remember how far we have come in the past year. Thanks to the tireless efforts and courageous actions of the Iraqi people, Iraq's political and military leaders, the Iraqi Security Forces, and each of you, a great deal has been achieved in 2007. Thus, as we enter a new year, we and our Iraqi partners will have important accomplishments and a newfound sense of hope on which we can build.

As always, all of your leaders, our fellow citizens back home, and I deeply appreciate the dedication, professionalism, commitment, and courage you display on a daily basis. It remains the greatest of honors to serve with each of you in this critical endeavor.

Sincerely,

David H. Petraeus
General, United States Army
Commanding

Arab Jabour Governance Center opens

By SGT. JASON STADEL
2nd BCT, 3rd Inf. Div. PAO

FOB KALSU – It was a great day for leaders and citizens in Arab Jabour.

The Arab Jabour Governance Center officially opened Dec. 27 with a large ceremony on the grounds of the center. More than 250 people were in attendance. The center will function similar to a city hall for Arab Jabour. It will be the headquarters for the Arab Jabour Governance Council, and the Concerned Local Citizens. Local Iraqis will be able to bring infrastructure and political issues to Arab Jabour leaders at the center.

Lt. Col. Kenneth Adgie, 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division commander, said the opening of the governance center is a symbol of the progress in security that has been made in Arab Jabour during the last six months.

“This is where people can get problems solved.”

He said this is a step forward in the political progress being made in Arab Jabour.

Six months ago, Arab Jabour had almost no Coalition Force presence and al-Qaeda in Iraq used the community as a safehaven and imposed a strict Islamic law on the residents.

With the arrival of 2nd BCT, 3rd Inf. Div., the fifth and final surge brigade, 1-30th Inf. Regt. was able to move into the area and push al-Qaeda out of Arab Jabour.

The battalion also started the CLC movement in Arab Jabour that has grown to more than 800 local Iraqis from the area. The CLCs will provide security for the Arab Jabour Governance Center.

Adgie and his battalion began conducting offensive combat operations against al-Qaeda in June. CLCs began guarding the community’s infrastructure about four months ago.

“The real happiness is outside with the farmers working and the children going to school. This didn’t happen before.”

—Majid Hamad Yasien al’ Jabouri



Photos by Sgt. Luis Delgadillo

More than 250 people attended the opening of the Arab Jabour Governance Center Dec. 27.

“This is Iraqis working with Iraqis to improve the basic needs of their people,” Adgie said.

Local Iraqis in attendance praised the opening of the center and the overall improved security in Arab Jabour.

“Today is a great day for our region and for all of Baghdad,” said Majid Hamad Yasien al’ Jabouri. “This is a great day for all of the Iraqi people.”

Majid added he was happy to be a part of the celebration at the governance center but the best part of the day was seeing the people of Arab Jabour being free to live their lives without the over watch of a dictator or al-



Lt. Col. Ken Adgie (left) and Yacoob Yuosif, Rashid District Council Chairman, walk through the new Arab Jabour Governance Center.



An Iraqi plays trumpet during the celebration of the governance center. (Right) the celebration meal.



Qaeda.

“The real happiness is outside with the farmers working and the children going to school. This didn’t happen before,” Majid said.

The governance center has been refurbished with new furniture, computers, Internet and offices for Arab Jabour and CLC council members; there is also a meeting room, kitchen, reception room, and offices for area officials. It is but one more step on the path to a safe and secure new Iraq that can govern and care for itself.



Sgt. Luis Delgadillo

A CLC stands watch near a checkpoint with the recent addition of streetlights.

By SGT. LUIS DELGADILLO
2nd BCT, 3rd Inf. Div. PAO

FOB KALSU – With small additions like streetlights, a sense of safety is returning to the streets of Arab Jabour and Al Buaytha.

Having been installed more than a month ago, it took some time before residents of the area

Streetlights bring sense of safety

saw the effect of having the lights. The same is true for the Soldiers of 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division.

Now, Soldiers and Concerned Local Citizens are enjoying the peace of mind the lights bring.

The streetlights are just the first step in securing the night for CLCs, says CLC member Yassin Majid.

He hopes that in time he and his fellow CLCs will be able to take on a larger role in securing their neighborhoods at night, but that for now 1st Battalion, 30th Inf. Regt. Soldiers take care of it.

Spc. Dwight Arceneaux, a combat medic with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1-30th Inf. Regt. said since adding the lights, night patrols are a little safer because when he or his fellow Soldiers see anyone

out after dark, they are easily identifiable.

A fact that Yassin said his fellow CLCs take comfort in.

Arceneaux added that it also gives him and his fellow Soldiers the ability to recognize which vehicles should or shouldn’t be out on roads after curfew.

Yassin agreed with Arceneaux adding that nighttime visibility has also meant that roads can stay open in the daytime due to the decreased improvised explosive device threat.

“If you were to ask all the people around here they would tell you the same thing, the lights have made things safer,” he said.

As Coalition Forces push further south to take on al-Qaeda, CLCs like Yassin will take on a larger role in defending their communities.

Celebrating Kazakhstani Independence Day



Photos by Sgt. 1st Class Stacy Niles / 214th Fires Brigade PAO



Soldiers from the Kazakhstan Army celebrate their nation’s independence day at FOB Delta Dec. 16. The Kazakhstan Army provides unexploded ordnance disposal support to Coalition Forces and trains the Iraqi Army on basic engineer skills.

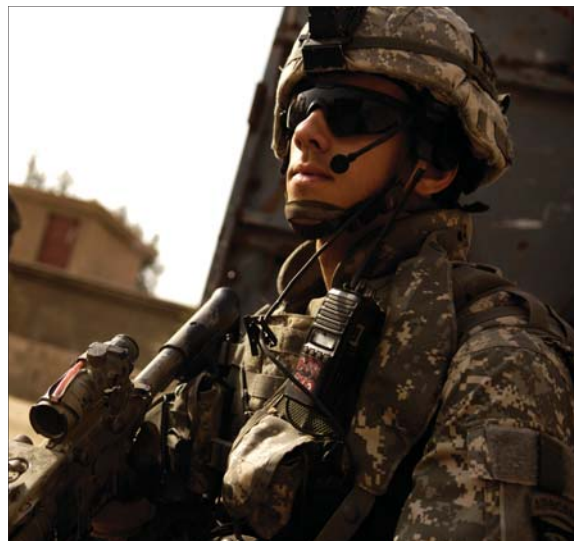
Warrior Ethos

*I will always place the mission first.
I will never accept defeat.
I will never quit.
I will never leave a fallen comrade.*



Tech. Sgt. Adrian Cadiz

Soldiers from 3-187th Inf. Regt., 3rd BCT, 101st Abn. Div. (AASLT) take cover in a potato field in Fair Al-Jair after hearing a loud explosion in the area during a search for al-Qaeda insurgents during Operation Marne Roundup Dec. 16.



Tech. Sgt. Adrian Cadiz

Staff Sgt. Eric Gitschlag (above), 3-187th Inf. Regt., 3rd BCT, 101st Abn. Div. (AASLT), provides security at the entrance of an Iraqi home in Fair Al-Jair, as U.S. Soldiers search for al-Qaeda insurgents during Operation Marne Roundup Dec. 16. Spc. Stephen Raab (below), Co. A, 1-30th Inf. Regt., 2nd BCT, 3rd Inf. Div., uses a scope attached to his M-4 rifle to watch a suspected al-Qaeda house in Busayefi Dec. 21.



Sgt. Jason Stadel



Sgt. Jason Stadel

Spc. Travis Royals with Co. A, 1-30th Inf. Regt., 2nd BCT, 3rd Inf. Div. provides security in Busayefi Dec. 21. The Soldiers are on a mission to find al-Qaeda in Iraq in support of Operation Athens.



Sgt. Natalie Rostek

Sgt. 1st Class James Mattwig, Trp. A, 3-1 Cav. Regt., 3rd HBCT, 3rd Inf. Div., conducts a search of a house during a night raid Dec. 19 near a shopping area known as Four Corners.



Sgt. Michael Connors

A Soldier from Co. D, 1-187th Inf. Regt., 3rd BCT, 101st Inf. Div. (AASLT) provides security in Sadr al Yusifiyah Dec. 26 near Patrol Base Warrior's Keep.

Soldiers continue mission after IED strike

By **STAFF SGT. TONY M. LINDBACK**
3rd BCT, 101st Abn. Div. (AASLT) PAO

CAMP STRIKER, Iraq – While supporting Multi-National Division Center’s current main effort, Marne Roundup, teamwork saved a Soldier’s life and potentially the lives of local residents near the village of Mahalah Dec 16.

Soldiers with the 3rd Battalion, 187th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) had a two-part mission.

The first objective was to conduct a strike on a target known to have housed insurgent activity. The second was to perform an air assault to put Soldiers in a blocking position in case any insurgents tried to flee to a known refuge.

Precombat checks and mission briefings were conducted just prior to the start of the mission to ensure everyone knew their role and just how things would go.

After the initial assault into a rural, farming community, Lt. Col. Andrew Rohling, commander of 3-187th Inf. Regt., led his personal security detail on a reconnaissance and presence patrol.

While walking through the area Sol-



Staff Sgt. Tony M. Lindback

Soldiers with 3-187th Inf. Regt., 3rd BCT, 101st Abn. Div. (AASLT) set up a fighting position while providing a cordon after finding an item thought to be an IED alongside a road outside the village of Mahalah Dec. 16.

diers found improvised explosive device-making materials on and alongside roads. There was also a hole found dug into the side of the road which was built up higher than the land around it. An area large enough to sleep two men was how

Rohling described what he saw when he inspected the hole.

The evidence of IEDs and insurgent activity caused the Soldiers to stay off the road. While walking on paths and through farm fields next to the road, how-

ever, a Soldier was wounded by an IED.

Staff Sgt. Edmond Sharp, an intelligence analyst with 3-187th Inf. Regt., was the first responder on the scene. He and a medic were providing initial care within a matter of minutes.

After the Soldier was rapidly MEDEVAC’d, Rohling went to homes in the area where the IED went off to find out who owned the field. The residents informed him the field’s owner was no longer in the area because of a recent influx of insurgents.

Residents in the area cooperated with questioning and offered refreshments to the Soldiers. A woman had recently died in that same field, the residents told Rohling. The impact of the woman’s death on the community motivated residents to help the Rakkasans.

Rohling carried on with the mission of talking to the people, listening to their concerns and taking note of their needs in an effort to improve the security of the area and to build confidence in Coalition Forces in the residents’ eyes. It is hoped that building a good relationship with the people in the area will result in another community free from insurgents.

CG visits Soldiers at PB Warrior’s Keep, tours village

By **SGT. MICHAEL CONNORS**
MND-C PAO

CAMP VICTORY – The commanding general of Multi-National Division Center greeted troops and met with a local sheik at Patrol Base Warrior’s Keep and toured the local village Dec. 26.

Meeting in a small, makeshift courtyard between the front of the main building of the patrol base and T-walls protecting the building, Maj. Gen. Rick Lynch presented Sheik Kehri with a photo book entitled “Building a New Iraq Together.” The book highlights positive relationships between Coalition Forces and Iraqis. Lynch and Sheik Kehri discussed local concerns and future projects including the establishment of an Iraqi Police station in the area.

The CG’s visit gave troops the opportunity to speak about life at this patrol base located 12 miles southwest of Baghdad in the rural village of Sadr al Yusufiyah. Since October the tenant has been Company D, 1st Battalion, 187th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault). The base was previously under the control of 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry).

Spc. Rodney Warchuck, a radio operator with Company D said there hasn’t been any attacks on the base since they arrived, adding that their Iraqi neighbors have been friendly.

Warchuck and his buddies indicated that life is a steady drumbeat of work, chores, working out and sleep. But even in this spartan environment, Soldiers have established some of the pleasures of home including satellite TV, the Internet, and phones to call home. And ever the innovators, Soldiers here play a hybrid sport to pass the time they call dragon football (Company D is known as Dragon Company), which is a cross between rugby and football.

“This is just one big ol’ family,” said Warchuck. “If one person has a bad day – the rest of us – we try and cheer ‘em up.”

Cpl. Josh Cornell, a mortar gun squad leader with Company D, expressed that his consolation for living in this remote area was doing the job he was trained for.

“I get to shoot mortars this year,” he said. “Last deployment we didn’t do that, so we get to do our job finally; it’s nice.”

Cornell mainly shoots illumination rounds at night from the patrol base over specific outlying locations where operations are taking place. He said the

rounds light up the night sky like it’s sunlight over a diameter of 1,000 meters for approximately one minute.

After speaking with troops and meeting with the sheik, Lynch moved out on foot to tour the village market. He was accompanied by Company D Soldiers including the commander, Capt. Thomas Goettke, and the battalion commander, Lt. Col. R.J. Lillibridge.

The Army wasn’t kidding when it said it would locate patrol bases within communities. PB Warrior’s Keep is located at the foot of the village market. In just a matter of steps outside the front gate, Lynch went into shops, shook hands with residents, and was curious about such details as the cost of fuel.

Lynch spent about 45 minutes in the market which consisted of about 30 shops along two sides of a narrow, barely paved road. The procession then moved along an unpaved side street into a residential area before returning to base.

If life within the walls of the patrol base has become somewhat routine, the infantrymen and personal security detail took nothing for granted on the streets. They moved tactically, focusing on their job to provide security for the CG and leader-



A Soldier from Co. D, 1-187th Inf. Regt. provides security for MND-C CG Maj. Gen. Rick Lynch while local Iraqis and a Concerned Local Citizen look on in the village of Sadr al Yusufiyah.



Two Iraqis greet each other while Staff Sgt. Ryan Joseph, a PSD Soldier, stands by at the market in the village of Sadr al Yusufiyah during the CG’s visit.

Photos by
Sgt. Michael Connors

ship. The Soldiers providing security were friendly and professional: Sometimes they stopped to greet onlookers; at other times they maintained a buffer of a few meters as a precaution.

The tour turned out to be a calm afternoon stroll, with the only disturbances being the occasional yelping dog or squawk-

ing of nervous chickens awaiting their fate in vendors’ cages.

Warchuck summed up the potential for Sadr al Yusufiyah and the surrounding area.

“In my opinion we are completing the mission, so they (Iraqis) can take over when we leave, so no one else has to come out here.”

SALMAN PAK: Iraqis now helping themselves says Soldier

From front page

dents' trust, said Butler.

"Their children come out and greet us. Merchants try and give us drinks," he said. "The establishment of the Concerned Local Citizens there has improved their view of us even more."

Staff Sgt. Raymond Cotrell, from Zanesville, Ohio, Co. A, 1-15 Inf. Regt., was one of the Soldiers beside Butler on many of those patrols and agrees with his assessment of the town's improvement.

"Everyone knew when we first got here that there had been little to no Coalition presence here," he said. "Since we've been here, I've seen Salman Pak improve tenfold. Contact rates have gone down. IED attacks have gone down. They are seeing their town improve and know that we are here to help them."

The help that Cotrell and his fellow Soldiers have provided the people, while important, is not as important as what the townspeople are doing to help themselves.

"They are helping themselves now," said Cotrell. "Part of the reason IED attacks are down are because of the CLC checkpoints that have been set up. The people here see the CLCs and are becoming more confident in their security. In short, the program is working. As security has improved, the people have started coming out to the markets. They have started opening up their businesses again. It's just getting better. This isn't all talk. Compare what the market looks like now to when we first started patrolling here. It's like two different places."

When he is asked for details about how much different it is, Cotrell clarifies his point.

"When we first came here, the people saw us rolling through in our Bradleys and tanks and they just closed up shop," he said. "I think people were scared. They were scared of us. They were scared of the insurgents. We roll by now and they stay open. They wave. You can see they are not afraid. It is easier for us to do business with them. They really just want to get back to living a normal life and taking care of their families."

Maj. John Wolfe, from Scottsboro, Ala., team leader for Civil Affairs Team 915, is using his team to help the people of Salman Pak get back to living a normal life through Operation Market Garden.

"The primary purpose of the operation is to improve business economics in the Salman Pak area," he said. "We are trying to give small business owners information to run their businesses profitably and giving them financial assistance to help them get a leg up."

The program will provide business owners with classes to help them make better business decisions and financial assistance to help them build their businesses.



Spc. Ben Hutto

Pfc. Jeremiah Johnson, Co. A, 1-15th Inf. Regt., pulls security during a market assessment in Salman Pak.

"We are doing this in small steps," said Wolfe. "They have got to be able to do this on their own. We like to give them the tools and confidence to be successful."

Wolfe pointed out that the resurgence of the bank in Salman Pak, the courthouse opening and the improved security environment are all key indicators that the economic state in Salman Pak will continue to improve over time.

"Security is really the no. 1 priority," he explained. "Once security is established, our mission goes beyond humanitarian aid. We can really dig deeper. The bank is a good example of that."

Talking with Wolfe, he named off several projects that are helping Salman Pak. He mentioned the opening of a firehouse, curb restoration projects and road sanitation projects. All of these, he pointed out, are signs that Salman Pak is improving.

"There was a stigma of how bad it was here, but all of these projects could have never happened if the security wasn't there," he said.

Butler believes that the security, economic improvement and the favorable disposition of the citizens of Salman Pak are all products of the sacrifice he and his fellow Soldiers made to help secure and improve the town.

"We never stopped," he said. "Even when we lost brothers close to us, we put on our boots and went out there and continued to do our jobs. No matter what happened, we kept coming out to help them and do our jobs. If me and my whole platoon had died, I know that Hardrock (Company A) and 1-15 would have been out there the next day to continue our work. That's how important it is to us."

Despite the mission being hard, Butler believes in it. In spite of the losses, he still believes in the people of

Salman Pak.

"Despite losing my brothers there, I don't have hate for the people there," he said. "I believe in everything we've done here. We have to give these people a taste of freedom, no matter what flavor it is. Once the people have tasted it, they will never let it go."

Butler insists that to give them that taste, courage will be needed on both sides.

"I knew my Joes (Soldiers) were scared a lot of the time, but they call you brave because you overcome it and drive on," he explained. "The first thing we heard from the citizens here was that they were scared. We asked 'Why did you let insurgents use your house?' or 'Why didn't you call us?' and they would tell us they were scared. I just had to admit to them that I was too, but we were still going to be there for them. I didn't do it to show weakness. I wanted them to understand that we were human too, and we were going to get down on their level and help. In many cases, I think that helped them overcome their fears and reach out to us. In time, they stepped up."

Butler believes that the Concerned Local Citizens program in Salman Pak is an example of that bravery.

"They (CLC) don't get paid a lot to do what they are doing," he explained. I think that shows they want a stable neighborhood for themselves and their family. I respect them for that. Standing up for your neighborhood and family is a brave thing."

Butler understands that his role as a statesman is just as important as his role as a Soldier and tries to instill that belief in the Soldiers around him.

"We're rebuilding Iraq with a strong foundation, and I think kids are the biggest part of that," he said. "Every time they are out, Joes need to check their actions. These kids are like sponges, and they soak up every little thing we do. You never know what small thing will have a huge impact when they remember us. We have to show them that we are human beings like them. We have to show them that we are here to help; and even when we are having a bad day, we have to remain professional. The 12-year-old we interact with today will be 17 in five short years and he'll have a choice. Will he be the one digging up an IED or will he be the one to emplace one? I want him to make the decision to dig it up."

As 1-15 Inf. Regt.'s deployment in Iraq enters its final months, Butler, Cotrell and Wolfe hope that the progress they've made continues long after they've gone.

"Salman Pak is a really beautiful place," said Butler. "You look at the Arch (the Arch of Ctesiphon, one of the largest and oldest freestanding arches in the world), the mosque, and some of the houses there and you see so much potential. I hope that the progress we are making now will help that potential become a reality after we have left. In 10 years, I want to be able to say that I was there when Salman Pak turned the corner. I'll be proud to say I was a part of that."



Check with your retention counselor for information on the Enhanced Program Bonus and the Deployed Program Bonus



Pfc. Amanda McBride

A Shadow 200 RQ-7B UAV lands after completing a flight to support troops outside Forward Operating Base Kalsu.

UAVs give troops 'eyes where theirs cannot see'

By Pfc. AMANDA McBRIDE
4th BCT, 3rd Inf. Div. PAO

FOB KALSU – When people think of aircraft in Iraq, many imagine fighter jets, Chinooks and Black Hawks. Many don't know about a smaller, but equally important aircraft in use today.

Shadow 200 RQ-7B unmanned aerial vehicles are flown over the skies of the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division area of operations to provide safety for Soldiers on the ground.

Flown by the UAV Soldiers of the 4th Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 3rd Infantry Division, the Shadow is a small and light-weight aircraft, coming in at a little over 11 feet, with a gasoline engine that can run for about four hours.

"Our mission while in Iraq is to provide the best detailed real-time footage to the troops on the ground, so as to help them in their mission, whether it's a cordon, raid or patrol on the streets of Baghdad," said Sgt. Christopher Herrmann, standardization officer with Company A, 4-3 BSTB.

Since the brigade has been in Iraq, the UAV Soldiers have accumulated over 700 hours in flight time, he added.

The UAVs on Kalsu, commonly used for route reconnaissance, raid over-watch and searches, launch continuously to support the ground units outside of the base.

Herrmann, from Hinesville,

"Our mission while in Iraq is to provide the best detailed real-time footage to the troops on the ground."

– Sgt. Christopher Herrmann, standardization officer, Co. A, 4-3 BSTB

Ga., said the UAV personnel are the eyes for the troops when they cannot see something.

"We use the UAVs for anything the battle captain wishes to look at on the ground," he said.

Although some may think it is easy to fly UAVs, the biggest mistake made is not knowing their limitations.

"Anyone can fly these, but it takes someone who understands the system and is knowledgeable to fly these to their fullest capabilities," Herrmann said.

After every Shadow flight, Soldiers inspect the aircraft to ensure it will be ready for its next flight.

"After it comes in, we conduct a PMD, a preventive maintenance daily," said Spc. Christine Ahhing, with the 4-3 BSTB. "We make sure nothing is torn, broken or not functional."

Increasing situational awareness is the greatest advantage of the UAVs, Herrmann concluded.

"We give them eyes where theirs cannot see."

New patrol base named for hero

PB Kelsey dedicated to Soldier who died in quest to secure Kidhr area

By 2ND LT. WILLIAM PERDUE
4th BCT, 3rd Inf. Div. PAO

FOB ISKANDARIYAH – Heroes deserve to be memorialized, especially those who give their lives to save the lives of others.

Newly established Patrol Base Kelsey is named in honor of Sgt. Samuel Kelsey, who was killed Dec. 13 by an IED near Khidr while attempting to render aid to a wounded Soldier.

Kelsey, who was with Company E, 3rd Battalion, 7th Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, was part of the main effort of Marne Roundup, an operation to clear suspected al-Qaeda in Iraq from the Khidr area of North Babil and to establish a patrol base for Iraqi Security Forces and Co-

alition Forces.

Within a few days of Kelsey's death, Company B seized the town of Khidr, just a few kilometers north of where Kelsey died.

Once the main part of the assault was complete and Khidr secured, the Company B commander, Capt. James Hart, made the recommendation to name the new patrol base after Kelsey, in honor of the courageous Soldier and noncommissioned officer who made the ultimate sacrifice.

"The sacrifice that Sgt. Samuel Kelsey made was monumental in the establishment of the patrol base, and it is fitting that we name the patrol base in his honor as an acknowledgement of his selfless actions on December 13 when he moved to the aid of a fellow comrade in spite of

the recognized risk to his own life," said Lt. Col. Timothy Newsome, commander of 3-7th Inf. Regt.

From Patrol Base Kelsey, Iraqi Security Forces and Coalition Forces will conduct patrols to provide security and bring stability to the local population.

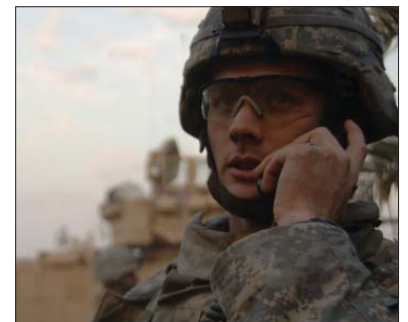
"Naming the patrol base after Sgt. Samuel Kelsey has meant a lot to the leadership and the Soldiers of this company," said Capt. Chris Neels, commander of Company E. "Kelsey was a phenomenal NCO who gave his life trying to save a wounded comrade. Enough can't be said of him or his actions that day. Each time we clear routes in the area or hear 'Patrol Base Kelsey' over the radio, we'll be reminded of his heroic actions and our friend."

Facing down the enemy



Sgt. Adam Hedrick (left), of Corona, Calif., 1-15th Inf. Regt., 3rd HBCT, 3rd Inf. Div., patrols near Al Bawi during a combined operation with Concerned Local Citizens and National Police to help secure checkpoints along the Tigris River. A 1-15th Inf. Regt. Soldier (lower left) pulls security during the operation. First Lt. Ross Pixler, of Phenix City, Ala., a platoon leader in Co. A, 1-15th Inf. Regt., gets a situation report.

Photos by Sgt. Timothy Kingston / 55th Combat Camera



Canines – more than best friends – family

Military working dogs are force multiplier, deterrent, says handler

By Pfc. AMANDA McBRIDE
4th BCT, 3rd Inf. Div. PAO

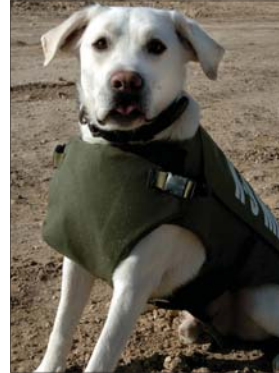
FOB KALSU – With their strong sense of smell and their immeasurable loyalty, the highly trained military working dogs in the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division are proving to be essential in the fight against terrorism.

Military working dogs first entered the U.S. armed services in March 1942. Today, the dogs are still providing support to the troops on the battlefield.

A single dog can search more area in less time than an entire company could do, said Staff Sgt. Charles Graves, a dog handler with 241st Military Police



Sgt. Steven Ramil (left), attached to 4th BCT, 3rd Inf. Div., talks to Marco, a military working dog, during Operation Copenhagen Dec. 21. Udi, a working dog from FOB Kalsu, poses for the camera after he completes his daily training Dec. 25.



training.” Graves said that even though the dogs are trained to search and find items that could hurt fellow Soldiers, they are also a big morale booster.

“When we go out on some missions where the guys have been out in the field for three weeks with no hot water or hot chow, they will just brighten up when they see the dogs.”

While deployed, the MWDs depend solely on their handler to take care of them.

“The handler is responsible for everything dealing with the dog,” Graves said. “The dog is like your child; you feed him, clean up after him and take care of him.”

The handler and dog team go out on missions knowing that they have each other’s back.

“There is a never-ending loyalty with these dogs,” Graves said. “They would save my life and I would save theirs.”

Detachment, Fort Meade, Md.

“By using the dogs, you are leaving your shooters to other aspects of the mission, rather than having them go out to start a search capacity,” Graves said.

Knowing the commands taught by the handler, the MWDs search for improvised explosive devices, weapon caches and other devices meant to harm Coal-

ition Forces and local citizens.

“They’re a good deterrent for any terrorist activity,” Graves said. “They see the dogs out and know that (the dogs) will spot items humans won’t necessarily find on the first search or even with an in-depth search.”

While deployed in support of the war against terrorism, the dogs serve a yearlong tour.

“Right now, we are the only service doing 12 months with the dogs,” said Sgt. Steven Ramil, a dog handler attached to 4th BCT, 3rd Inf. Div.

When not on missions, the dogs train daily to sustain skills.

“The dogs go through obedience, detection and protection training,” Graves said. “Patrol dogs also go through aggression

Marne 6: *Never a better time than now to make further progress*

From page 2

join the Iraqi Security Forces, there has never been a better time than now. We’re partnered with the 6th Iraqi Army Division and the 8th Iraqi Army Division, and both divisions are led by capable, competent military professionals who push their organizations to get better every day. You work side by side with the Iraqi Army companies and National Police companies; and in 2008, we are going to work toward transitioning the responsibility for security from the Coalition Forces to the Iraqi Security Forces.

Communication is the critical element for continued success. During his visit two weeks ago, General Casey told you that you “took Iraq off the front page.” While it is off the front page in America, it needs to be on the front page in Iraq. We need to put Iraqis in front of Iraqis to discuss their progress, and continue

to let the American people know about the amazing accomplishments you are making every day. In 2008, non-lethal achievements such as opening clinics, markets and schools will be just as important as reducing extremist networks. Every Iraqi off the streets is an Iraqi no longer shooting at you and is an Iraqi taking responsibility for his town, his government and his own economy.

None of us has ever claimed the ability to win this war – only the Iraqis can win this counterinsurgency fight, but in 2008 we are going to coach, teach, and mentor the Iraqis to secure themselves, develop their capacity, and stop the violence.

Happy New Year!

ROCK OF THE MARNE!

A birthday blessing for Georgians

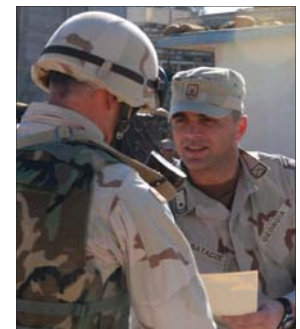


Photos by Sgt. 1st Class Stacy Niles

Soldiers from the 3rd Georgian Infantry Brigade celebrate their third anniversary Dec. 29 at FOB Delta. The brigade was formed in 2004.



Father Gabriel (left), an Eastern Orthodox priest, conducts an invocation ceremony at the celebration.



Maj. Shavlego Tabatadze, the brigade commander, presents a Soldier with a certificate.

Not all of our enemies are outside the FOB...
OPERATIONAL SECURITY
...some have disguised themselves as one of us. Report suspicious activities immediately.



Courtesy photo

Master Sgt. Barry Norris (left), senior career counselor for 3rd CAB, stands with his son, Spc. Shamario Jackson, signal support systems specialist with 1st BCT, 3rd Inf. Div., after Jackson participated in a mass re-enlistment ceremony with Army Chief of Staff Gen. George W. Casey, Jr. at Camp Victory's Al Faw Palace.

Father re-enlists son in Iraq

BY PFC. MONICA K. SMITH
3rd CAB, 3rd Inf. Div. PAO

CAMP STRIKER – When Spc. Shamario Jackson was ready to re-enlist, he didn't talk to his career counselor like most Soldiers; he called his dad.

Jackson, with 1st Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, enlisted through his father, Master Sgt. Barry Norris, senior career counselor for the 3rd Combat Aviation Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division.

"I'd been thinking about (re-enlisting) for a while," said Jackson. "Anything about re-enlistment I ask him about."

Norris helped his son learn when he would be eligible to re-enlist, what he could qualify for and what his various options were. Because Norris recruits only Soldiers within the CAB, he was unable to credit his son as a Soldier he has re-enlisted; however, as a courtesy his name was put on the contract because Jackson is his son.

"It's a great honor and a privilege to

re-enlist my son," said Norris. "We'd been talking about this since before he left (in January) and it makes me proud to see him doing well in his career. It's also an opportunity for me to see him while I'm deployed."

Jackson flew in from Camp Korean Village to re-enlist as part of a mass re-enlistment ceremony with Chief of Staff of the Army Gen. George W. Casey, Jr. The ceremony took place Dec. 19 at Camp Victory's Al Faw Palace, with 267 Soldiers from across Multi-National Division – Center and other 3rd Infantry Division brigades outside the area.

Jackson, a signal support systems specialist, re-enlisted for six more years with an \$11,000 bonus and current station stabilization for 12 months.

"I know when I joined the Army I wanted to, more than likely, make the military a career," said Jackson. "(Norris) made it easier to re-enlist. There are a lot of military things I don't know about that he knows."

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Meeting Gen. Petraeus



Sgt. Natalie Rostek

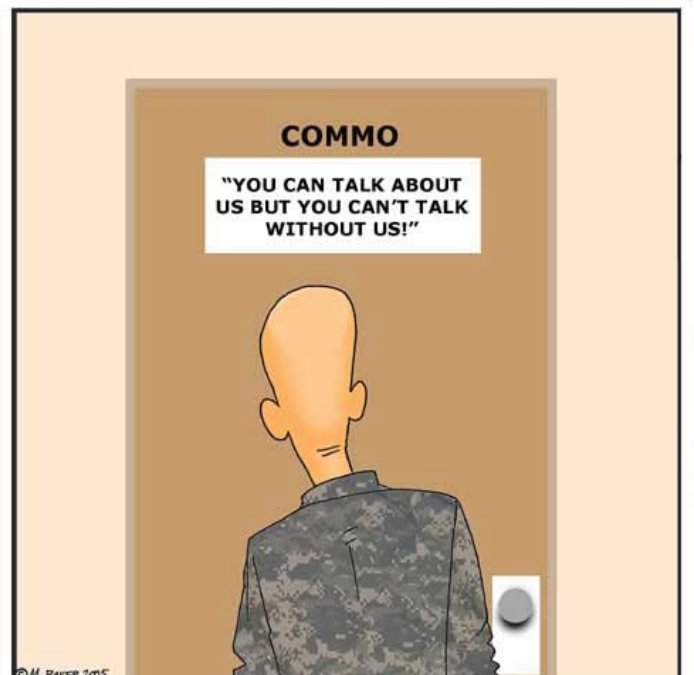
Multi-National Force - Iraq commander Gen. David H. Petraeus (center), joins 10 Soldiers of the 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division for a photograph during his visit to Forward Operating Base Hammer Dec. 22. Petraeus awarded the 10 selected Soldiers with MNF-I coins for excellence.



Sgt. Ana Hernandez, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, shakes hands with Gen. Petraeus after receiving a coin from him during his visit to FOB Kalsu Dec. 26.

Photo by Sgt. Jason Stadel

PVT MURPHY'S LAW



© M. PAKER 2005

Double amputee walks out of hospital

Young woman injured in rocket attack plans to play soccer, dance

By **Sgt. NATALIE ROSTEK**
3rd HBCT, 3rd Inf. Div. PAO

FOB HAMMER – Standing upright and walking on her own is something 20-year-old Soham Hassan Ka-Naan, a young woman from Khargulia, never thought she would be able to do again.

After receiving her second prosthetic leg Dec. 20 at the 28th Combat Support Hospital in Baghdad, Soham was able to walk upright with the assistance of crutches.

Soldiers of Troop A, 3rd Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division found Soham in July, after an insurgent rocket attack hit her house, amputating both of her legs. Since then, she has undergone multiple trips to the 28th CSH for surgery, prosthetic fittings and physical therapy.

The journey was a painful one according to Soham; however, her final fitting leaves her pain free with two prosthetic legs. One of the legs fills in the missing calf and foot on her left leg, and the other extends from the beginning of her right hip.

"I am very happy, I have no pain," she said through a translator. "I feel normal again."

Soham has high expectations for herself and said she expects to walk on her own, without crutches, in about five months. She said she hopes to be able to play soccer, run and dance too.

"I'm not going to give up," she said through a translator. "I gave up before and didn't think about walking for three years. I never imagined I would have two legs again."

According to Chris Cummings, from Fort Lauderdale, Fla., prosthetic clinic adviser at the 28th CSH, Soham still has a long way to go to get used to her new legs.

"Training and learning to use her legs is a huge energy expenditure for her that we take for granted," he said. "But she'll get it. She is strong and has good balance. I'll bet she does quite well."

Cummings, a civilian working overseas who primarily assists local patients, said he gets fulfillment from helping his patients accomplish feats they believed to have been lost after their accident.

"My hope is that every patient leaves here with something they can get a lot of use out of," he said.

"So this is where the magic happens," asked one Soldier about the room in which Cummings was shaping Soham's prosthetic leg.

"No, out there, when they start walking, that's where the magic happens," Cummings replied.

During her most recent visit to Cummings' clinic, Soham was escorted by Capt. Sayed Ali, from Long Island, N.Y., a physician in the 3-1 Cav. Regt.; Capt. Troy Thomas, from Litchfield, Minn., commander of Troop A, 3-1 Cav. Regt.; Staff Sgt. Michael Cook, noncommissioned officer in charge of the medic platoon in Troop



Photos by Sgt. Natalie Rostek

Soham Hassan Ka-Naan, from Khargulia, is lifted from a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter and put in her wheelchair by her brother, Khalid Hassan Ka-Naan, during a visit to the prosthetics clinic at the 28th Combat Support Hospital in Baghdad. Soham walks for the first time in three years with the help of prosthetic legs at her home while her mother looks on.

A; and Soham's brother, Khalid Hassan Ka-Naan, who have all seen Soham through the entire process.

Soham is thankful for all of Troop A, 3-1 Cav. Regt. Soldiers who took part in making her recovery possible.

As she sat on the end of a physical therapy table at the prosthetics clinic swinging one of her new legs, she told Thomas, "You are my brother, my father, and my uncle all in one."



Army Acronym Crossword

By Sgt. Michael Connors

Down

2. MP
5. CSM
7. IP
8. EO
9. CSH
10. IG
11. HBCT
12. OBE
13. AASLT
14. USO
15. PB

Across

1. CG
3. PRT
4. MRAP
6. AFN
16. SMA
17. SJA
19. HHC
20. OPSEC

Answers for 20 DEC puzzle
ACROSS: 15. high mobility multi-purpose wheeled vehicle; 20. high-value individual. **Down:** 2. relief in place; 3. area of operation; 4. vehicle-borne improvised explosive device; 5. rocket propelled grenade; 6. expiration of time of service; 7. counter insurgency; 8. armored personnel carrier; 9. unexploded ordnance; 10. armored security vehicle; 11. joint direct attack munitions; 12. Multi-National Corps - Iraq; 13. field artillery regiment; 14. transfer of authority; 16. heavy brigade combat team; 17. improvised explosive device; 18. Multi-National Division - Center; 19. light anti-tank weapon.