

ISF safely usher nine million pilgrims

Coalition Forces lend support from sidelines for Arba'een celebration

MND-C PAO

BAGHDAD – Approximately nine million religious pilgrims converged on Karbala this week to celebrate Arba'een. U.S. commanders attribute careful planning and massive security operations by the Iraqi Police and Army to the overall success of the event

"Millions of Iraqis enjoyed the freedom to worship because of the courage and professionalism of Iraq's Soldiers and Policemen," said Brig. General Jim Huggins, deputy commanding general for maneuver, Multi-National Division-Center.

The Shia Muslim holiday, which culminated Feb. 27, was preceded by more than a week of travel for many pilgrims who came to Karbala from all over Iraq and around the world. Within Iraq, millions traveled through Baghdad, Najaf, Hillah and Iskandariyah to reach the Muslim holy city.

Throughout the whole journey and celebration, the Iraqi Security Forces led an unprecedented operation to secure the festivities, deploying a total of 39,000 Soldiers and Police to man checkpoints, secure routes and collect and analyze intelligence. Within the city of Karbala and the surrounding area, 80 ISF checkpoints were established to screen pilgrims for bombs and weapons.

More females than in previous years participated in the celebration. This was the first Arba'een since 2003 without a significant fatal act in the Karbala province. There was one attack in Iskandariyah, which killed 41 people.

Multi-National Division – Center Soldiers from the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division assisted the ISF, providing intelligence and logistics support throughout the ongoing security operation.

"When it comes to providing security for the citizens of Iraq, the Iraqi Security Forces – both Police and Army – are taking charge more and more," said Col. Thomas James, commander of the 4th BCT, 3rd Inf. Div. "The high level of success achieved

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– Col. Thomas James
4th BCT, 3rd Inf. Div. commander

during Arba'een is a testament to the Iraqi Security Forces and to the fact that they can be relied upon to provide effective security for their own people and why they will continue to provide this security for a long time."

Pilgrims began the trip home Feb. 28, and millions are expected to remain on the roads through the weekend.

Arba'een represents the finale of the Ashura commemoration, marking the 40th day after Imam Hussein was killed in Karbala in the seventh century.

Large-scale public celebrations of Arba'een were banned in Iraq under Saddam Hussein, but resumed in 2003 following the U.S. invasion.





Courtesy photo

Aircraft from 4th Battalion, 3rd Aviation Regiment, participate in Operation Iron Boston Jan. 27.

Air assaults always fast, never easy

PFC. MONICA K. SMITH
3RD CAB, 3RD INF. DIV.

CAMP STRIKER — Rather than moving Soldiers on the ground through difficult terrain sometimes littered with improvised explosive devices, many infantry units in the rural areas south of Baghdad opt to use helicopters to reach their targets.

“Air assaults extend the abilities of the ground units,” said Capt. Joshua Karkalik, commander of Company B, 4th Battalion, 3rd Aviation Regiment. “A lot of times the purpose of an air assault is the element of surprise, or the target is not reachable by ground either because of the terrain or because of IEDs,” Karkalik said.

When the call comes for these air assaults, the Black Hawks of 4-3 Avn. Regt. take the lead role in transporting the troops to their destinations, but getting Soldiers from Point A to Point B is a complicated process.

The ground troop commander prepares the mission, decides what targets to hit and then works with his aviation representative to create an initial concept of the operation where they lay out what they want, how many people they are trying to move and where they are trying to go.

The first meeting with the aviators is called the “aviation mission coordination meeting.”

During this meeting, aviators look at the ground commander’s intent and try to create an arrangement that would facilitate his plan.

With a plan in place, the aviators present it to the ground commander during an air mission brief.

“This is the ‘good idea’ cutoff point,” said Chief Warrant Officer Joshua Gunter, Co. B, 4-3 Avn. Regt., from River Fall, Ala. “This is where we tell the ground units, ‘This is what the aviation unit can give you,’ and we finalize the plans,” he said.

Finally there is an air crew brief, a detailed brief describing all events and actions down to the second, including show times, landing times and even who calls for refueling when the aircraft return.

“We get detailed because air assaults are the most difficult,” said Karkalik, a Jasper, Ind., native.

“There are so many variables included. Everything can change. There are a lot of elements, a lot of moving pieces. What seems to be a simple mission can become complex,” Karkalik said.

“With multiple aircraft trying to land and take off in one area, it can be very difficult,” he added. “That is, unless you’re Bravo Company.”

Since deploying to Iraq, 4-3 Avn. Regt. has conducted more than 160 air assaults with Company B. The sheer numbers mean they’ve gained experiences they can apply to other missions.

See ASSAULT, next page

THE Dog Face Daily

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ASSAULT

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"With the experience we learned out there with other units, we are able to apply them to new missions," Karkalik said. "The ground units have come to expect (aviators) to provide input on the aviation side such as with landing heading and which way they should exit the aircraft."

The aviators' expertise helps the infantry Soldiers take their enemies unaware.

"It gives the ground troops the element of surprise. It doesn't give the enemy a chance to run because we're there and they have nowhere to go," said Spc. Rolando Rodriguez, Company A, 4-3 Avn. Regt., from Barstow, Calif.

"They're being blocked off to the north and south and we have Lighthorse (Kiowa Warriors from 3rd Squadron, 17th Cavalry Regiment), and Vipers (Apaches from 1st Battalion, 3rd Aviation Regiment) keeping watch overhead. We're there and we're quick; there's nothing really to it," Rodriguez said.

Despite the hard work involved, many aviators say air assaults are the most enjoyable of their missions.

"(Air assaults) might get tough but you never get bored," said Chief Warrant Officer Joel Fonseca, Co. B, 4-3 Avn. Regt., from Salem, Mo.

"Everything happens quickly and the missions are so different you are always doing something new... and it's not as mundane as VIP missions," Fonseca said.

Gunter says he enjoys air assaults because of the direct impact they make on the enemy.

"They know that at any given night we can land in their backyard and snatch them," he said. "It's got to be a humbling experience to be 'Mr. Big and Bad' and then it changes really fast."

FORSCOM CG presents safety award to Stewart

FORT STEWART PAO

FORT STEWART, Ga. — A senior Army leader presented the installation with a significant Army safety award during a ceremony at the Main Post Chapel Feb. 28.

Gen. Charles C. Campbell, commander of U.S. Army Forces Command headquartered at Fort McPherson in Atlanta, came to Fort Stewart to present the 3rd Infantry Division and Fort Stewart-Hunter Army Airfield with the Department of the Army Composite Risk Management Safety Award. Winning the award reflects the commitment of the Soldiers, Army Civilians, and Family Members to do the right things when it comes to safety and to look out for each other's well-being, he said.

"It's not done any where better than right here at Fort Stewart," Campbell said. "You raised Soldier and Family Member involvement and awareness."

Winning the safety award shows Fort Stewart-Hunter Army Airfield's commitment to Soldier readiness, installation safety director James McCullough said.

"We at Fort Stewart and the 3ID are fully cognizant of what it takes to protect a Soldier," McCullough said.

The installation demonstrated exemplary leadership, employing the tenants of composite risk management, and implementing proactive measures that focus on motorcycle safety, clearing tree-lined roads, installing safety signs, and renovating an off-duty facility on the installation into Rocky's for Soldiers to combat drinking and driving.



Jimmy McSalters

Gen. Charles C. Campbell presents Fort Stewart garrison commander Col. Todd A. Buchs and Command Sergeant Major Charles E. Durr with the Director of Army Safety Composite Risk Management Award.

The Army's composite risk management teaches Soldiers how to think-not what to think-about safety situations they could encounter and how to manage risk.

It is the Army's primary decision-making process for identifying hazards and controlling risks across the full spectrum of Army missions and activities, both on and off duty.

Campbell briefly touched on the mission of the 3rd Infantry Division and the Army in the Global War on Terrorism. He and Maj. Gen. Rick Lynch, 3rd Inf. Div. commander, spoke recently about the division's contributions.

"(Lynch) commented on the difference being made by Soldiers wearing the Marne patch in Iraq," Campbell said. "There is reason to be optimistic. The American Soldier with boots on the ground is the centerpiece of American commitment."

Safety Thought of the Day

Overhead Protection Tips

- Sandbags should be filled to 75 percent capacity.
- When emplacing sandbags on roofs, allow for proper drainage of rain water.
- Remember, water-saturated sandbags can more than double in weight.
- The roof of an Iraq single floor building is not designed to support much more weight than itself

- without additional reinforcement of the substructure.
- When in doubt of a structure's soundness, request a structural assessment from the engineers.
- GTA 07-06-001, Fighting Position Construction; GTA 05-08-001, Survivability Positions; and FM 5-34, Engineers Field Data, offer additional information for proper construction of these projects.

Headline Highlights

Biker-thwarted robbery; unconventional birth**Wrong night for a robbery**

SYDNEY (Reuters) — Two armed thieves picked the wrong night to rob a Sydney club, disturbing a meeting of 50 motorcycle bikers, who tackled and hog-tied one of the thieves until police arrived.

The Southern Cross Cruiser Club was staging its monthly meeting on Wednesday night in the club in Sydney's west when two men armed with machetes entered the club and ordered patrons to lie on the ground and surrender their money. But the balaclava-wearing bandits did not realize there were 50 bikers in the next room.

"I was in the middle of giving my meeting and someone ran in and said, 'the place is being robbed'," biker club president Jester told local radio on Thursday.

"So we ran around the roller door out the front and as this guy opened the roller door, we crash tackled him in the doorway," Jester said.

The thief managed to escape the biker's tackle, but was caught again by the bikers.

"We caught him at the fence and crash-tackled him and hog-tied him to the ground and waited for the police to get there," said Jester. "Yeah, he picked the wrong night I think."

The other thief jumped over a balcony and ran into a nearby park, but was later caught by police.

"If they'd only looked, right when they walked in the main door, they would have seen 40 or 50 of us sitting there. Obviously they couldn't see out of the balaclavas, because they didn't even look," said Jester.

Man faces murder trial for 1966 shooting

PHILADELPHIA (Reuters) — A Pennsylvania man who shot and wounded a police officer more than 41 years ago will stand trial for his murder following the officer's death last year, a judge ruled on Wednesday.

Prosecutors say the victim, Walter Barclay, died of injuries directly linked to the 1966 shooting.

William Barnes, 71, who already served around 20 years in prison for the shooting and other offenses, was rearrested last year and charged with murder following Barclay's death.

Prosecutors say a urinary tract infection that afflicted Barclay was a direct result of his paralysis. That in turn was caused when Barnes shot him in the spine during an attempted break-in on November 27, 1966.

Judge Bradley Moss of the Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas sided with prosecutors, although he noted that he had not found any other case in the United States in which a suspect had been charged with murder so long after causing an injury.

"It seems to me the Commonwealth has met its burden in this matter," Moss said after a two-hour hearing. He set a trial date of March 19.

Defense attorney Bobby Hoof said prosecutors failed to prove the police officer had not died from intervening causes between the shooting and his death in August 2007 at age 64.

He argued that Barclay had been involved in two car accidents after the shooting and also fell out of his wheelchair, all of which could have contrib-

uted to his death. Medical examiners did not perform an autopsy and had not ruled out possibilities he might have died from other causes, Hoof said.

Medical Examiner Ian Hood told the court that an autopsy had not been carried out because medical records clearly indicated Barclay died from the urinary tract infection that stemmed from his paralysis. He reported the cause of death to be homicide.

Pregnant woman uses train toilet, baby slips out

AHMEDABAD, India (Reuters) — A newborn baby girl survived an ignoble birth after slipping down the toilet bowl of a moving Indian train onto the tracks when a pregnant woman unexpectedly gave birth while relieving herself on Tuesday.

"My delivery was so sudden," said the Bhuri Kalbi, the mother of the infant, born two months prematurely. "I did not even realize that my child had slipped from the hole in the toilet."

Kalbi, a 33-year-old from a village in Rajasthan, fainted on the toilet seat after the birth for a few minutes before waking up and alerting her family.

"They stopped the train and ran on the tracks to find the baby," she said, speaking from her hospital bed in the western city of Ahmedabad.

Railway staff at a nearby station were alerted and soon found the newborn girl lying uninjured on pebbles by the track. She is now in intensive care because of her premature birth, doctors said. Most toilets on Indian trains are filthy chutes emptying directly onto the tracks.

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from Sudoku: The Original Brain Workout From Japan

Solution to
yesterday's
puzzle:

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ARABIC WORD OF THE DAY

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