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Serving Task Force Marne



Sgt. Natalie Rostek

A soldier from the 13th Georgian Army Light Infantry Battalion, provides security from behind a wall March 7 during a patrol through al Lej, Iraq.

Coalition forces, IA conduct operation in al Lej

SGT. NATALIE ROSTEK
3RD HBCT, 3RD INF. DIV.

FOB HAMMER – Iraqi Army and Coalition forces conducted a two-day cordon and search operation March 7-8 in al Lej, Iraq.

The operation resulted in the death of two extremists, discovery of four improvised explosive devices and one weapons cache, and destruction of two buildings storing ammunition and explosives.

Soldiers from the 13th Georgian Army Light Infantry Battalion provid-

ed area security as 2nd Battalion, 3rd Brigade, 8th Iraqi Army Division Soldiers searched houses in two villages in al Lej looking for weapons caches and evidence of extremist activity.

Soldiers from the 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team's Military Transition Team and Task Force Petro, the brigade's Georgian army liaison team, provided support while Soldiers from Company E, 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, an engineer company, cleared the roads of IEDs.

According to Capt. Jimmy Hathaway, from Columbus, Ga., commander

of Task Force Petro, Coalition Soldiers have not had any presence in al Lej for approximately five years.

When U.S., Georgian and Iraqi soldiers entered the villages, they found the majority of houses abandoned.

"The importance of the mission was to push out any al-Qaeda extremists who were entrenched in al Lej," said Sgt. 1st Class Jay Carey, from Nanticoke, Pa., noncommissioned officer in charge of the MiTT. "The mission was also to clear all weapons caches. This

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File photo

MoE repairs tower on Baghdad's power belt

SGT. LUIS DELGADILLO
2ND BCT, 3RD INF. DIV.

FOB KALSU – Reconstruction of three 132-kilovolt high-tension power line towers in the region of Arab Jabour is nearing completion.

Iraqi Ministry of Electricity employees began work on the towers March 1; once complete, another link of the southern Baghdad power belt will be fixed.

With the exception of occasional route clearance teams proofing the route to and from the site of the towers, Coalition forces had no involvement in securing the area.

Sgt. Rod Elrifai, a power generation specialist with 2-3 Brigade Troop Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, said the belt is a series of 400-132 kv power lines and electrical stations which provide power to and encircle the capital city.

The towers, once fixed, will not directly impact power supply for Arab Jabour; however, rebuilding the towers symbolizes a noticeable improvement to Baghdad's power grid.

Elrifai, from Dallas, said the 2nd BCT has made substantial contributions toward electricity repair. Since arriving to the region, Elrifai said, the 2nd BCT has purchased more than \$500,000 worth of electrical equipment, used by contractors to repair the area's dilapidated power grid.

AL LEJ: Cordon, search conducted by Iraqi Army, Coalition forces

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will allow the local populace to move back to the area and have a normal, stable life."

Hathaway said the mission set the stage for the arrival of the 1st Brigade, 9th Iraqi Army, and will enable them to move into the southern bowl of the Mada'in Qada, the 3rd HBCT's area of operation.

Soldiers also secured the al Batan pump station, a large station with the ability to provide water to multiple areas.

After the mission, 13th GAB soldiers and Sons of Iraq set up 12 checkpoints throughout the area.

Hathaway works closely with Maj. David Sulkhanishvili, commander of the 13th GAB, and the battalion soldiers.

"It was great to see the Georgian soldiers securing the objective and immediately being able to transition to helping the locals," Hathaway said.

The 3rd HBCT, 3rd Infantry Division, from Fort Benning, Ga., has been deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom since March 2007.



Sgt. Natalie Rostek

Soldiers from 2nd Battalion, 3rd Brigade, 8th Iraqi Army Division, conduct a foot patrol March 7 in al Lej, Iraq

THE Dog Face Daily

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Managing Editor — Master Sgt. Marcia Triggs
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Village of Hope aims to boost Hawr Rajab economy

SGT. JASON STADEL
2ND BCT, 3RD INF. DIV.

FOB KALSU, Iraq –After months of oppression from al-Qaeda in Iraq, the southern Baghdad community of Hawr Rajab is coming back to life.

Coalition and Iraqi efforts are now focused on rebuilding the economy. One initiative garnered 50 students for classes at the “Village of Hope,” a vocational school designed to train Hawr Rajab residents the basics of construction.

Soldiers from 6th Squadron, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division provide security at construction sites and classes are taught by U.S. Air Force Airmen with occupation specialties in construction.

The Airmen-turned-teachers are with the 557th Expeditionary Red Horse Squadron, headquartered at Balad Air Base. The Village of Hope team has about 30 members who conduct classes from Patrol Base Stone, a Coalition outpost in the heart of the community.

Tech. Sgt. Jacob Wilcock, a structural class instructor, said he had to adjust his mindset from pounding nails to teaching.

“As builders, we are more attuned to seeing a completed structure or physical progress at the end of a work day,” said Wilcock, from Phoenix. “Teaching is very rewarding, but the reward is seeing the students understand the lesson and do well on a practical exercise.”

In addition to learning the basics of building over the three-month course, students will rebuild homes damaged or destroyed by extremists. Rebuilding homes is part of the lesson plan and as

an added incentive, students are paid for attending class.

“The students are very receptive, ecstatic and happy about the school,” said Capt. Josh Aldred, Village of Hope project manager. “They are very grateful and fully understand we’re here to help.”

Local businesses will also benefit from the Village of Hope project. When classroom instruction ends and hands-on training begins, building materials available locally will be purchased from Hawr Rajab vendors.

“Many come up to say that this is the best thing that has ever happened here,” Aldred said.

To ensure a steady supply of building materials, a brick and concrete block maker from Hawr Rajab was awarded a Baghdad-7 embedded Provincial Reconstruction Team microgrant to help improve his business.

Airmen also gave the business owner and his employees some tips on how to make products more efficiently.

“He’s been making blocks for a long time and does good work,” said Air Force Master Sgt. Richard Kapp, the liaison between the Army and Air Force on the project. “We just showed him how to improve the products he puts out.”

Bruce Bailey, Baghdad-7 ePRT international development adviser, said Hawr Rajab is heading in the right direction to get back on its feet. “They’re



Courtesy photo

U.S. Air Force Master Sgt. Fernando Ginette, teaches Hawr Rajab block makers how to install batter boards March 4 at the Village of Hope training site at Patrol Base Stone.

“Many come up to say that this is the best thing that has ever happened here.”

– Capt. Josh Aldred
Village of Hope project manager

near Baghdad, they have a main road going through the community and their one of the last stops before you get to the farms. Hawr Rajab has great economic potential.”

Airmen also see the rewards coming from their new line of work.

“I’ve deployed five times but I’ve never had the chance to help someone change their life,” said Tech. Sgt. Christopher Collins, plumbing class instructor, from Fort Walton Beach, Fla. “This training will help them for the rest of their lives.”

Safety Thought of the Day

Medical Waste Disposal Procedures

- Never dispose of medical waste in regular trash.
- Use red bags (or any puncture resistant, leak resistant and uniquely colored or marked bag) to hold medical waste.
- Use sharps containers for syringes, needles, scalpel blades.
- Do not snip or cut needles: they must be discarded intact into the sharps container.
- Contact your BCT surgeons officer or BCT medical supply section for proper waste disposal procedures on your FOB or Camp.
- FM 5-116 and FM 5-104 are references for medical waste disposal procedures.

Headline Highlights

'Laser' attacks; lookalike attacked; century-old runner

Flying safety compromised by 'laser' attacks in Canada

OTTAWA (Reuters) – At least 33 pilots in Canada, including some flying large commercial airliners, have complained about being flashed in the eyes by bright lights that could be lasers, officials said on Thursday.

Canada's transport ministry said it is probing the complaints, which started in 2005, and had handed most of them over to the police.

"All we know is that a bright light was shone into the cockpit. We don't know if it is in fact a laser and that's why when these reports happen, an investigation is started," said ministry spokeswoman Kirsten Goodnough.

"It is a serious concern because anything that distracts the pilot and affects the safe operation of the aircraft is a problem for us," she said.

None of the pilots involved had suffered any eye damage, she added.

Soccer referee sent into hiding after lookalike attacked

MILAN (Reuters) – Italian referee Mauro Bergonzi was sent into hiding by police after thugs tried to attack someone he looked like, the head of the country's referees' association has said.

Bergonzi awarded two contentious penalties in Napoli's 3-1 win over Juventus in October.

"A dangerous incident happened. A group of people encircled someone they

thought was a referee, they tried to abduct him and continually punch him. The only thing was he just looked like the referee," Cesare Gussoni told Friday's La Repubblica newspaper.

"He was a bank manager, poor thing, and he managed to reveal this at the end to save himself from more blows. On the advice of the police, the referee was forced to live under protection and went to another province for two weeks."

Former leading referee Pierluigi Collina, who now appoints officials for Italian games, has been sent bullets in the post and has been given a police escort as supporters' anger grows following a number of controversial decisions this season.

Italy still remembers the 2006 match-fixing scandal, where Juve were demoted and other clubs had points deducted after being found guilty of procuring favorable referees for some matches.

Meanwhile, Bulgarian referee Valeri Petrovski is recovering in hospital after being beaten up near his home in Sofia, police said Friday.

"I was in the car, waiting for my wife, when two men attacked me with baseball bats and knuckledusters," Petrovski told reporters.

The 43-year-old Petrovski, considered one of the country's leading referees, began officiating matches in the Bulgarian top division in 1996.

Police said the incident was under investigation but did not confirm the attack was soccer related.

101-year-old marathon runner trains hard in hopes of record

LONDON (Reuters) – Already Britain's oldest employee, 101-year-old Buster Martin now aims to become the world's oldest marathon runner by completing the London Marathon and celebrating with a pint of beer and a cigarette.

Sprightly and bearded, he completed a half marathon at the weekend in five hours 13 minutes. The former Army physical training instructor works three days a week for a London plumbing firm and says he has trained for the April 13th race in his spare time.

"I've said I'll attempt it," he told Reuters by telephone. "I haven't said I'll complete it. If I do make it, all the better. I hadn't thought of doing it before but someone asked me and the money goes to charity so why not?"

His sponsorship money will go to the Rhys Daniels Trust, which provides temporary accommodation for families of patients in specialist children's hospitals.

Martin, who had 17 children and returned to work at the age of 99 saying he was bored after two years of retirement, would beat the previous record for world's oldest marathon runner by eight years.

"If I finish, I'll do what I always do and have a pint and a fag," he said. "People ask what is my secret but I haven't got one. They say fags and booze are bad for you—but I'm still here, aren't I?"

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						9	6	
	3				1		4	
	7	5	6		2		1	5
6			8					3
7								
				8				
4			7		5	2	3	

from Sudoku: The Original Brain Workout From Japan

Solution to Saturday's puzzle:

5	9	7	8	2	6	4	1	3
3	4	2	1	9	5	7	8	6
8	6	1	7	3	4	5	2	9
9	3	4	2	6	7	8	5	1
2	7	5	9	8	1	3	6	4
6	1	8	4	5	3	2	9	7
7	2	6	5	4	9	1	3	8
1	5	9	3	7	8	6	4	2
4	8	3	6	1	2	9	7	5

ARABIC WORD OF THE DAY

South

jih-noob