

THE
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Serving Task Force Marne

Air strike destroys torture house



Air Force Master Sgt. Andy Dunaway

Airman 1st Class Daniel String puts his radio and gear on after a B-1B Lancer successfully dropped six 500-pound GBU-38 bombs onto an al-Qaeda in Iraq torture house and prison in northern Zambraniyah, Iraq, March 10. String is a Joint Terminal Attack Controller, from Fort Drum N.Y., and is deployed with the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division. Sons of Iraq led Soldiers from Troop C, 6th Squadron, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division to the torture house and prison March 5.

Spartans' latest patrol base under construction

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

FOB KALSU— Construction of Patrol Base Vanderhorn began in early March near Sayifiyah, a region formerly controlled by insurgents.

The patrol base will be home to a company from 1st Battalion, 187th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), taking over the area of operations for 5th Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment, 1st BCT, 3rd Infantry Division. Both battalions are operationally attached to 2nd BCT, 3rd Inf. Div.

PB Vanderhorn is named after Staff Sgt. Christopher Vanderhorn, a 1-187th Inf. Regt. Soldier killed in an improvised explosive device attack Jan. 1, 2006, during the battalion's previous deployment to Iraq.

Building supplies were transported by the 26th Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd BCT, 3rd Inf. Div. The 535th Engineer Company, from Grafenwoehr, Germany, was tasked with building the base.

Food, water, base defense systems and living quarters were transported to the base by Companies A and B, 26th BSB. The battalion has helped build numerous patrol bases in the 2nd BCT's area of operations since their deployment began last May. Building patrol bases is a much different mission than what the company tackled on their last deployment.

"Last time we were here we supported three FOBs," said Staff Sgt. Carl Beasley, Co. A, 26th BSB operations sergeant,

from Pensacola, Fla. "This time we've helped to build 11 patrol bases."

Building patrol bases that allow Soldiers to live among local residents is a main counterinsurgency strategy set forth by Gen. David Petraeus, commander of Multi-National Forces – Iraq.

Once supplies were delivered, the engineers went to work.

"We're horizontal engineers," said 1st Lt. Derek Benz, 3rd platoon leader, 535th Engineer Co. "We build from the ground up."

PB Meade, another 1-187th Inf. Regt. patrol base, was also built by the 535th Engineer Co. They are normally a quick-reaction engineer unit that does rapid road repair. For example, if an IED were to explode and create a large crater in the road, they would be called to fix the hole to prevent another IED emplacement there, Benz said. However, with recent work, he said his Soldiers are becoming proficient at building patrol bases.

"We've learned from success," Benz said, referring to PB Meade, which was fully operational in less than 30 days from the day construction started.

Most of the work is done by Coalition forces, but there is some Iraqi involvement.

A local crane operator, known simply as "Sammy," was hired to move T-walls and large metal containers into place



Sgt. Jason Stadel

First Lt. James Robinson, Company A, 26th BSB, 2nd BCT, 3rd Inf. Div. platoon leader, hooks a chain from a crane to a military container at Patrol Base Vanderhorn March 6.

around the patrol base. Sammy worked at PB Meade and is now working at PB Vanderhorn. Benz said he is an asset to Coalition forces.

"He works and works and works," Benz said. "He never complains; he goes until the job is done. I think he understands that we're here to help so he works as hard as he can for us."

In most cases, U.S. troops train Iraqis at various skills and trades, however, with Sammy the tables have turned. "This guy has even trained a couple of my Soldiers on how to run the crane," Benz said. "He is helping our Soldiers get on-the-job experience."

Since liberating Sayifiyah from extremists, Coalition forces have started a Sons of Iraq program and held two coordinated medical engagements. The construction of PB Vanderhorn will put Coalition forces amongst Sayifiyah residents to help rebuild their community.

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Motivated maintenance Soldiers primed for crew chief positions

Pfc. Monica K. Smith

3RD CAB, 3RD INF. DIV.

CAMP STRIKER – When crew chiefs are promoted, they traditionally move from flight companies to maintenance companies. In order to fill positions left vacant, junior enlisted Soldiers from maintenance companies are brought up to line companies and trained to become crew chiefs.

“Crew chiefs are needed because we help reduce the risk of accidents for pilots,” said Spc. Rick Anderson, a crew chief trainer in Company C, 4th Battalion, 3rd Aviation Regiment, 3rd Combat Aviation Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division. “The pilots spend their time looking forward. We’re an extra set of eyes in the back of the aircraft. We can cover more.”

Soldiers chosen from Co. D, 4-3 Avn. Regt., a maintenance company, possess the skills necessary to complete tasks crew chiefs perform daily.

“We pick ... the hard workers, the motivated,” said Anderson from Miami, Fla. “We say, ‘okay, this guy we want,’ because being a crew chief is not all about flying. It’s about taking care of your aircraft. Each crew chief is assigned an aircraft. If it breaks, it’s your responsibility to get it fixed.”

Candidates’ training begins with academics. Soldiers learn the aircraft’s limitations, physical effects of flying and daily crew chief tasks.

“We go in-depth on each task so there is no confusion on how it’s supposed to be done,” Anderson said. “We train the new crew chiefs pretty intensively, which is why Co. C is the best in

the brigade.”

Candidates begin at readiness level three. At this stage, they are brand new. During RL3, candidates learn basic tasks such as surveillance, preparing the aircraft for missions and they participate in crew briefs.

Once proficient at basic tasks, they move to RL2, where they begin learning mission tasks. At this stage, candidates begin flying on missions to learn in-flight tasks.

Once Soldiers achieve RL1, they are expected to perform all tasks to standard and are susceptible to no-notice evaluations similar to a pop-quiz. During RL1, Soldiers are prepared to take on any mission task with another RL1 crew chief.

Spc. John Marsh, a crew chief candidate in Co. C., 4-3 Avn. Regt., said, when it came to learning the material, maintenance information came easy for him. Having spent more than a year in the maintenance company, Marsh says he has other areas to focus on.

“Like with the radio, it’s hard remembering what to say and learning the terminology,” said Marsh, from Bonifay, Fla. “The radio is loud when everyone is talking and it takes time to learn how to respond. All the flying is new to me,



Pfc. Monica K. Smith

Spc. Rick Anderson, (left) a crew chief trainer with Company C, 4th Bn., 3rd Avn. Reg., 3rd CAB, 3rd Inf. Div., shows Spc. John Marsh, also with Company C, how to perform a post-flight inspection on a Black Hawk March 7 at the 3rd CAB flight line in Baghdad.

but not the actual maintenance.”

During the current deployment, five Co. C., 4-3 Avn. Regt., Soldiers have advanced from the maintenance company to the flight company. However, being chosen to progress does not automatically ensure a spot as a crew chief. Soldiers who do not meet the standard are weeded out.

“You can’t be lazy in this job,” Anderson said. “There is always something to do and if you’re sitting around that means something’s not getting done. You have to be a self-starter because our job doesn’t allow us to be around our leaders all the time. You have to get yourself and get your buddy motivated. Get your gear, get out there and get the job done.”

Safety Thought of the Day

Hearing Loss Prevention

WEAR:

- Own voice will sound low toned. Sounds will be muffled.
- Twist rather than pull earplugs out of ear.
- Re-insert periodically if worn for long periods.

CARE:

- Wash earplugs with warm soapy water.
- Allow earplugs to completely dry before placing into the ear or earplug case.
- Store earplugs in an earplug case to minimize loss and damage of the earplugs.

ORDERING:

- Triple Flange
NSN Small 6515-00-442-4821
NSN Medium 6515-00-442-4818
NSN Large 6515-00-467-0092
 - Quad Flange
NSN 6515-01-0443
 - Combat Arms Earplugs (CAE)
NSN Double 6515-01-466-2710
NSN Single 6165-01-512-6072
- Reference: U.S. Army Center for Health Promotion and Prevention Medicine (USACHPPM).

Headline Highlights

Foldable car; anthem mix-up; rodent halts operation

Foldable car tackles gridlock

CAMBRIDGE, Massachusetts (Reuters) – Wouldn't it be nice to drive a car into town without worrying about finding a parking space?

Scientists at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology have devised just such a vehicle, a futuristic "City Car" that could even drive itself.

Once at your destination, the vehicle's computers would, at the press of a button, look for a parking spot behind others like itself, then fold roughly in half so you could stack it there as you would a shopping cart.

"We have reinvented urban mobility," said Bill Mitchell, a professor in architecture and director of the project at an MIT think tank in Cambridge, just outside Boston.

The vehicle hasn't yet been built. But a miniature mock-up version has gone on display at a campus museum, and there are plans to build a full-scale model this spring.

The dozen or so engineers and architects on Mitchell's team are confident their computer-generated work is on target.

They feel their golf cart-sized vehicle could provide a novel solution to the chronic traffic congestion afflicting cities across the United States, Europe and Asia – not to mention pollution and energy use, since it would run on a rechargeable battery, the researchers say.

On the drawing board, their two-seater is roughly half the size of a typical

compact automobile and a little smaller than the Smart car made by Daimler's Mercedes-Benz.

"It's a virtual computer on wheels," said Franco Vairani, designer of the vehicle's foldable frame, which he predicts will shrink the car to as little as an eighth the space needed to park the average car. While parked, it would hook up to an electricity grid for recharging, he added.

But a key consultant for the project, Christopher Borroni-Bird, director of the Advanced Technology Vehicle Concepts at U.S. automaker General Motors Corp, said he doesn't think City Car is quite ready yet for the road.

"What we have is a very intriguing concept," Borroni-Bird told Reuters. "It is certainly a very promising idea, but I don't want to say it is ready for production ... there's still a lot of work yet to take it from concept to production."

Chinese gold-medalist keeps cool during anthem mix-up

VALENCIA, Spain (Reuters) – China's Liu Xiang received the gold medal for the 60 meter hurdles on two occasions Sunday after a mix-up over the national anthem.

A bemused Liu was the model of stoicism in the initial ceremony as organizers inadvertently played Chile's national anthem instead of the Chinese.

But he then shook his head as he explained to fellow medalists Allen Johnson and Evgeniy Borisov and organizers

what had happened.

An altogether happier Liu took to the podium for a second time 10 minutes later to pick up his gold once again, on this occasion accompanied by the correct anthem.

Dead rodent stops operation

LONDON (Reuters) – A patient was told there was no reason why he couldn't have surgery in a hospital, despite the smell caused by a dead rodent trapped in the building's ceiling.

Andrew Cowper was due to have an operation at the Queen Elizabeth II hospital in Hertfordshire when staff "were made aware of a dead rodent in the single storey unit's roof space," the hospital said in a statement.

The hospital said its experts concluded that the dead animal was outside the operating theater and posed no risk.

But "despite being told that the trust's infection control experts had stated that Mr Cowper was not being exposed to an infection risk, he decided not to proceed with the operation," it said.

Cowper, 19, told the Sun newspaper he had waited 11 months for the operation, and the doctor told him he could go ahead despite the stench.

"He said the smell didn't represent a health risk, but I was appalled," Cowper said. "I asked him: 'If you were me, would you have the operation?' He looked at me and said 'no', so I decided there and then I wasn't going to go ahead."

Sudoku

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

from Sudoku: The Original Brain Workout From Japan

Solution to yesterday's puzzle:

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

ARABIC WORD OF THE DAY

East

shark