

THE

Grey Wolf

HOWL



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INSIDE:

'Grey Wolf' HQ Runs TOC Smoothly	Pg. 3
'Chargers' Provide Support to al-Hakeem	Pg. 4
'Gladiators' Recognize Newest Leaders	Pg. 8
3-8 CAB SCelebrates Regiment's Birthday	Pg. 9
FA Battery Rises to the Top	Pg. 10
Soldiers Stronger than Superman	Pg. 11

CDR/CSM Corner	Pg. 2
Soldier on the FOB	Pg. 5
Chaplain's Corner	Pg. 5
Grey Wolf in Action	Pg. 6-7
FOB Photos	Pg. 12

Commander's Column

By Col. David W. Sutherland
3BCT, 1CD Commander



Grey Wolf!

We have officially surpassed the one year-mark since our deployment began, and it makes me proud to see how much this province has changed since our arrival. Every Soldier leaving the wire can attest to the changes taking place throughout Diyala, but especially in Baqubah. That said, it could not have happened without your hard work, dedication and devotion to your mission here in Diyala. Earlier this year, CNN called Baqouba, "The most dangerous city in Iraq." Today, five months later, this city is a very different place. The people of Baqubah are swarming the markets, people are going to work, kids are attending school, and the people are now becoming a part of the solution.

Because of the vast improvements in the security situation, the people of Diyala are now focusing on reconstructing their cities and rebuilding the infrastructure and essential services that suffered years of neglect under Sadaam's harsh dictatorship. They are no longer plagued by a constant fear of death or kidnapping, and

have grown increasingly tired of the hatred, death and destruction of al-Qaida and other extremist organizations.

Also because of improved security, the Public Distribution System, which is the Iraqi subsidized food program, is functional in all five Qadas in the province. Local businesses are beginning to open and jobs are now becoming available. A total of five flour mills in Baqouba are now operational and are currently producing flour that is available throughout the province. Rice is also being produced locally and is now available to the citizens. A work program to clean the city of Baqubah is underway and producing great results as they clean the streets and the rubble produced during the past several years. They are becoming the definers of their own definition of democracy.

As I said, these are the fruits of your labor. The peaceful people of Iraq, and especially Diyala, are grateful for what you have given them -- the hope of a better future for them and their children. You have continuously demonstrated to the people of Iraq and the world what a great Army can achieve. I thank you for what you have done, and for what you will continue to do until it is our time to leave Diyala.

There truly are not enough words to describe the pride I have for each and every one of you on the Greywolf Team. Every chance I am given, I

brag about your accomplishments and how the progress we are seeing would not be possible if it weren't for you. Whether you work behind the scenes in support of combat operations, or are a Soldier conducting patrols and combat operations, your contribution to this fight is vital and necessary. You have gone where no man or woman should ever have to go, and have seen and experienced things no man or woman should ever have to. For your service and your sacrifices, I thank you. It is truly an honor to not only lead you, but to serve along side you.

I know our families back home are amazed at what we have achieved, but I believe I speak for every Soldier when I say that we are more amazed at how our families have supported our mission by showing such strength during this deployment. We would've not achieved such success had it not been for the constant support we've received from our loved ones back home. We can only dream of the day we can embrace them once again.

While our mission is coming to an end, keep in mind we still have many kilometers to go before we can drop our rucksacks. God continue blessing our families, our Soldiers, our Armed Forces, and our nation.

Greywolf 6

'Hooah' Corner

By Command Sgt. Maj. Donald Felt
3BCT, 1CD CSM



HOOAH!

Don't count the days...make the days count!!!

It's true - our days are numbered. And that number is getting smaller everyday. However, don't let that fool you. You can't let your guard down or get complacent. Keep training, keep rehearsing, keep inspecting. Keep on top of your game. The enemy will be counting on you to do otherwise.

And, although we have seen significant improvement in the Diyala province in our year here, we still have a lot of work to do. We are still fighting in some areas, constantly patrolling and working hard on civil-military projects at the same time. The amount of improvement in the Iraqi people's standard of living is remarkable. It couldn't have been done without the hard work that you have endured throughout the year. We are at the tip-



ping point in this conflict. Your efforts are really starting to payoff.

In B. F. Skinner's Hierarchy of Needs, security comes first. Then other needs gain importance. We can see a living example of this theory as we drive around Diyala. Just the other day, I saw a mural that has been painted on the wall outside the Ministry of Education. It is a perfect example of what you have accomplished. The people would not be painting such things if their needs at the basic level have not been met. A few months ago, anyone would have been killed trying to paint this mural.

That being said, we can't rest on our laurels. Give that Greywolf effort until the last day. Everything we do from here on out makes it that much better for the people of Diyala, and the Soldiers following behind us. And that makes our mission that much more successful. Thanks for all you do. Be safe, be focused and be professional until the end.



**Live the Legend,
Greywolf 9**

Non-headless 'Chickens' Run TOC in Baqouba

By Spc. Ryan Stroud
3rd BCT Public Affairs

When you watch a modern-age military movie with high explosives and crazy doomsday-like machinery running around the battle field, there are always scenes of commanders and their staff running around like chickens with their heads cut off in a dark, secret-looking room with maps on all the walls and glowing computer screens on every table.

Also, there always seems to be one young Soldier who turns to the acting commander and spouts a line like, "Sir, we have a real big problem here."

That's exactly the scene inside the tactical operations center for the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, only, instead of everyone freaking out and running around like headless chickens, the Soldiers inside of "Grey Wolf's" intelligence-driven TOC runs smoothly and professionally, just as a big-budget Hollywood movie wouldn't want it to.

"The TOC is the brigade's tactical operations center, which enables the commander to gather information from his subordinate units, correlate that information and present it to him in a manner he easily understands and make rational decisions when it comes to combat operations," said Greywolf's operations sergeant major, Sgt. Major Darryl Gill, a native of Springfield, Ohio.

"The TOC is the fusion cell where all the battle information comes in for the brigade commander," adds Capt. Mike Laramore, Brigade Chief of Operations – Battle Major for Grey Wolf.

"We process all reports and information on everything that's happening in the battle space, consolidate it and get it to the commander, giving him a clear and concise picture of what's going on in his battle space throughout the day so he can make the right decisions to help keep the Diyala province moving," Laramore said.

"It also allows us to make tactical decisions and send indirect fire [and other support elements] to the battalion level so they

can exploit the enemy with those systems," Gill said.

"If we didn't have an operation center like this, we might as well pack up and go home," he added. "There's no way that we could take the fight to the enemy."

And taking the fight to the enemy is a strenuous, arduous job which takes the right Soldiers to properly handle every aspect of battle.

"My job is to ensure those Soldiers whose boots are on the ground outside the wire have the assets available to destroy the enemy," said Gill. "That's what we do; we help them destroy the enemy."

"[The Soldiers inside the TOC] help plan missions; we help coordinate the assets

into the TOC, many of these Soldiers didn't fully understand its importance.

"Before I started working in the TOC, I never really understood why we had one in the first place," said Spc. Jason Maher, Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 3rd BCT, and a native of Penn State, Pa.

"Now that I see both sides of the mission, it's a lot more important than I thought back in my last deployment," he continued. "There are a lot of steps that you have to go through to make sure the missions which are ongoing move smoothly."

"As an 11B [infantryman], I've gotten to see both sides of deployment," said Staff Sgt. Larry Green, daytime battle NCO, and a native Gainesville, Fl.

"The side I didn't get to see in the beginning [of the first deployment] was the moving pieces of the battlefield that was handled by the brigade in the TOC to help out our missions," said the member of HHT, 3rd BCT.

"The coordination of air assets and other essential assets to make the battlefield what it is and properly work, without the TOC, none of our engagements would move fluently or be successful," Green added.

"Seeing both sides, being on an [infantry] line and being in the TOC, you

see everything that has to happen to make sure thing go off without a hitch," added Sgt. Michael Hudson, HHT, 3rd BCT. "You see why certain decisions are made that you might not fully understand while on the ground."

"Being in a brigade TOC is like being a head coach or general manager of a football team," Hudson explained. "We call all the shots, make all the plays and pass all the information to the surrounding units and battalions, otherwise known as the players on the team, so that the game, also known as the overall mission, is won."

Overall, Gill says he's proud of his guys working with him and for the brigade.

"This is a great bunch of guys who are incredibly dedicated to what they're doing who work hard to make sure all the missions are a success."



Photo by Spc. Ryan Stroud, 3BCT Public Affairs

Members of the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division tactical operations center pose for a group photo. The TOC is the center of operations for the "Grey Wolf" Brigade during their deployment to Diyala province in support of OIF 06-08.

needed for those missions," he continued. "We are in everything. This is a 24 hour-a-day operation that needs top-notch Soldiers behind the scenes running the show."

And with every Soldier in the TOC standing behind every mission, giving their all, when a Soldier loses their life, it is felt by all.

"There isn't one Soldier inside this TOC that hasn't been affected by the loss of another Soldier," said Gill. "As hard as those losses are, my guys have to share those losses with the units. All those losses affect us directly."

Many of these Soldiers inside the TOC are in the midst of their second deployment to the Middle East. A vast array of them were in combat-related jobs, going out on many dangerous missions, making their understanding of mission successfulness inside the TOC a must. But before their trek

Al-Hakeem Residents Build Ties With CF

Story By 1st Lt. Richard Ybarra
115th MPAD

Coalition Forces distributed humanitarian aid in the village of Al-Hakeem Sept. 17, just north of Baqouba. The very next day, with the support of the village leadership, they assisted in the establishment of a Concerned Local National neighborhood watch group.

"We recently started presence patrols and established an

outpost in Al-Hakeem. The people have been open and the leaders were willing to discuss starting a relationship with Coalition Forces" said 1st Sgt. Ron Ramsdell of "Crazy Horse" Troop, 1-12 Combined Arms Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division.

More than 30 prospective members of the Al-Hakeem CLN were screened in addition to receiving retinal and fingerprint scans to cross reference in a database for known and suspected terrorists before being allowed to join.

Coalition Forces have been able to focus outside of Baqouba as stability takes hold in the provincial capital. A key to Baqouba's success has been the establishment of CLNs, armed neighborhood watches that provide both Iraqi and U.S. forces with early warnings and intelligence.



Photo by 1st Lt. Richard Ybarra, 115th MPAD

A young man of Al-Hakeem carries a bag of rice to distribute to fellow residents Sept. 17.

CLN groups have been successful in Baqouba neighbor-

hoods such as Kahtoon, Burhiz, Kana'an and Baqouba proper. "People are now able to go to markets and farms because CLNs have helped keep the areas secured," such as schools, hospitals and other vital resources to the communities in which they live, said Capt. Josh Southworth of 1-12 CAB.

The motivation for the new CLN group in Al-Hakeem is no different than their fellow Iraqis in the larger city to the south, simply the prospect of improved security through a collective effort.

"We have agreed to help for our own families' security, so they may sleep well at night. All that we want is peace," said Fasil Shihn Nassif, the muhktar of Al-Hakeem. "If we all do our part, maybe all of Iraq can know peace."

A humanitarian aid visit was also made to the nearby village of Al-Karya on Sept. 18, which has an established CLN group. The combined shipment of supplies to the two villages, consisting of flour, rice and bottled water, totaled 10 tons of aid.

The humanitarian aid

shipments to both villages were done in the spirit of Ramadan and goodwill, said Ramsdell.

"Our goal is to drive a wedge between al-Qaeda in Iraq and the population, while the citizens take ownership of their villages," to help them see the situation for what it is, said Capt. Clayton L. Combs, commander of C Co., 1-12 CAB. "I have asked several of the village leaders if al-Qaeda has ever helped them, the answer is always 'no.' Then I show them that we care, that we can help them, help them to help themselves."

The approach is working, as new CLN groups across Diyala province continue to be founded and the more established groups cement their ties with their local communities, Iraqi Security Forces and the Coalition Forces. The result has been an improved security situation in the province in comparison to six months ago.

"The turnout today in Al-Hakeem was good. Whenever you see villages like these take ownership, take responsibility for themselves, their families and their neighbors, it is a step in the right direction," said Combs.

Useful Iraqi Phrases

Stay where you are.

ibqa ib-maka-nak

On the cover ...



Spc. Damon Cobbs, a Soldier from C Company, 1-12 Combined Arms Battalion, pulls guard during a humanitarian assistance drop in al-Hakeem, Iraq, Sept. 17.

USAF Photo by Staff Sgt. Shawn Weismiller, COMCAM

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Chaplain's Corner

Grey Wolf Team,

It is wonderful to be able to serve you and your families as your Brigade Chaplain. It is an exciting time to transition during this period of the deployment cycle. Soldiers are actively engaged in combat operations. At the same time, Soldiers and families are preparing for redeployment and all the requirements that are necessary to bring all our people home. Families are involved in school, work, and home activities; while children are back in school and actively involved in sports, band, and other extra curricular activities. Certainly, our families are moving in a number of directions, but our goal is to again unite the Soldiers and families of the Greywolf Team. In preparation for redeployment a number of things are being planned.

First, Soldiers are receiving training on issues to include: reunion, communication skills, and transition from combat to home. All of our Soldiers, DA civilians, and contractors have been changed by the events they have experienced during deployment. The majority of our Soldiers have been in a hostile environment for fifteen months. They have experienced the loss of other Soldiers, civilians, and the many of the difficulties of war. Many of the things that they have experienced can only be experienced in the midst of combat. As a result, they may have a difficult time expressing their experiences with those who have never experienced war, even those closest to them. Redeployment training provides support for Soldiers and families, and provides a level of insight that will facilitate a smooth transition from Iraq to home station.

Second, families are receiving support from the Rear-detachment and the Family Readiness Groups, but for these to be effective, spouses of our Soldiers must actively participate. Classes are provided to support families in preparing for a smooth transition from a time separation to a time reunion. Spouses and families have had to reorganize and adjust to life apart from one another. Many families have grown and experienced a level of independence that they never thought was possible. Many of those experiences have made the family ever stronger. Nevertheless, dramatic changes have taken place within our Grey Wolf families. Adjustments for reunion of the family will require the help and support of every family member. Many of our families also continue to provide ongoing support to other families within the Grey Wolf Team; for this, we are extremely grateful. Upon the return of the Soldiers, classes will be provided to reinforce and support our families. I highly encourage as many of our families as are able to attend these family building opportunities. In addition, many Soldiers will participate in block leave, allowing families and single Soldiers to unwind and take some time outside the military environment.

Third, upon the conclusion of block leave, our Unit Ministry Teams will lead "Strong Bonds" training for single Soldiers and families. These will be off-site events where our families and singles will be able to unwind and experience valuable training, supporting the bonds of friends, family, and spouses. The current plan for these events is on the training calendar, scheduled to take place in the February and early March time frame. Please contact your unit chaplain for these scheduled times.

In conclusion, it is exciting to be a part of the mighty Grey Wolf Team. May God continue to bless you and your families at this time of reunion and transition. During this time of transition, let each of us do our part to assure that our upcoming reunions are a tremendous success.

Chaplain (Maj.) Robert Wichman
3BCT, 1CD Chaplain

Soldier on the FOB

"What are you going to do on your 30-day block leave?"



Sgt. Robert Zufall
B Co., 1-12 CAB

"Go on vacation with my wife and daughter. Probably take my daughter to Disney World."

Sgt. Kelvin Gray
HHC, 1-12 CAB

"Go home and do some family maintenance. We've been separated a long time and now it's time to do some making up for lost time."



Spc. Meghan Hesselgrave
HHC, 3rd BSTB

"I'm going to take my daughter to SeaWorld. Oh, and I'm going to eat some Taco Bell."



Sgt. Charlotte Howard
HHT, 3rd BCT

"Spend Christmas with the family and then go to Vegas for the New Years."



Spc. Angelito Abejuela
HHT, 3rd BCT

"First, take my wife to a bed-n-breakfast, and then go on a Disney Cruise."



By Spc. Ryan Stroud, 3BCT Public Affairs

GREY WOLF



Photo by 1st Lt. Richard Ybarra, 115th MPAD

Above, Pfc. Michael Strausbaugh and Spc. Carlos Livingston, 1-12 CAB, hurry through an intersection during a joint mission with the 5th Iraqi Army Division, Sept. 22. Iraqi forces focused on clearing structures while Coalition Forces provided security for the mission in the industrial section of southern Baqouba.



Photo by 1st Lt. Richard Ybarra, 115th MPAD

At right, Spc. David Cordick, 2-23 Inf. Div., attached to 3rd BCT, sets up a 60mm mortar tube during an ongoing operation to remove al-Qaida in Muqdadiya, Iraq, Sept. 18.



Photo by 1st Lt. Richard Ybarra, 115th MPAD

Above, Spc. Garrett Vogland, 1-12 CAB, provides security for Iraqi soldiers during an Operation Rock Wrench in the industrial section of Baqouba.

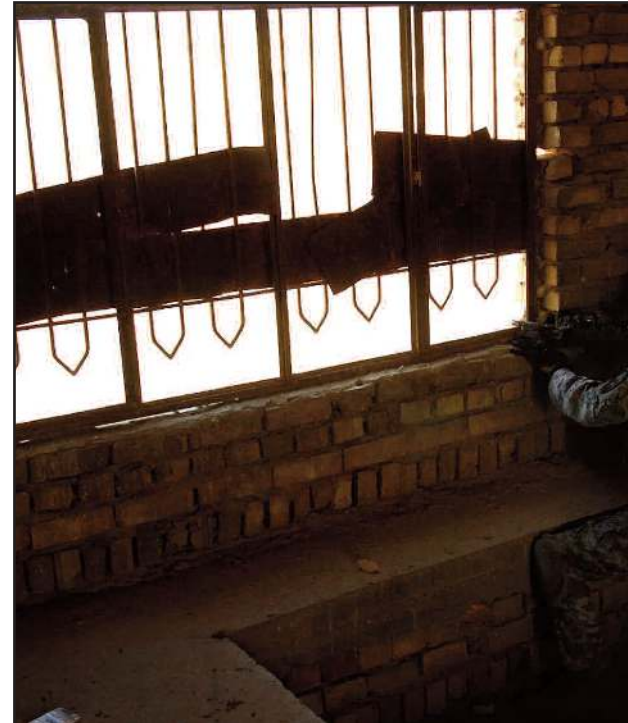


Photo by 1st Lt. Richard Ybarra, 115th MPAD

At right, Staff Sgt. Yair Cardona, A Co., 1-38 Inf. Regt., attached to 3rd BCT, peers through the window of an abandoned building in an attempt to locate a sniper firing on fellow Soldiers in Baqouba, Iraq, Sept. 20.

F IN ACTION



Photo by Pfc. Kirby Rider, 115th MPAD



Photo by Sgt. Patrick Lair, 115th MPAD



Photo by Pfc. Kirby Rider, 115th MPAD

Soldiers of 1-12 CAB, partnered with members of the 5th Iraqi Army Division, run as they begin conducting a presence patrol through the market region of Buhriz, Iraq, Sept. 2.

'Gladiators' Celebrate Unit's Newest Leaders

By Spc. Ryan Stroud
3rd BCT Public Affairs

Taking the step from junior enlisted to becoming a non-commissioned officer in the U.S. Army is one which scares many Soldiers. Thoughts of, "Am I good enough?" or, "What if I do things wrong?" often enter those Soldier's minds.

But a group of ten Soldiers from the 3rd Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, stationed in Baqouba, Iraq, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom 06-08, have answered the call and have earned the right to be called leaders.

These Soldiers were welcomed into the brotherhood of

other NCOs with the "Gladiator" Battalion's very own NCO Induction Ceremony Sept. 15, at Faulkenberg Theater, on Forward Operating Base Warhorse.

"Today, we conducted our 4th quarter NCO Induction Ceremony," said 1st Sgt. Harold Hall, first sergeant for Company B. "We had ten Soldiers who were officially inducted, seven sergeants and three corporals."

"It's an important ceremony because it officially recognizes the transition from the lead to a leader," Hall passionately continued. "Officially, as a corporal and a sergeant, you are a leader. It is now your duty to take care of Soldiers."

Each Soldier inducted into the NCO Corps was announced

to the audience in attendance while the Soldier's sergeant announced the approval of the recommendation. The Soldiers then marched onto the stage and proudly recited the NCO Creed.

After a speech was given by Hall, each Soldier was greeted by the audience as 3rd Brigade's newest NCO inductees.

"It was better than I expected," laughed Dillon McCallister, Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, and a native of Colorado Springs, Colo. "It is different being recognized for something like this, but it is interesting at the same time."

"It's a time-honored thing," added Sgt. Noel Reeson, Co. B, and a native of Blanchardville, Wis.

"When you get inducted into the corps, it shows your transition from Soldier to NCO, showing people you have what it takes to lead Soldiers," she added. "When I put on the rank, I felt really good. This is a big accomplishment and a huge responsibility."

Hall said he was proud of every inductee and hoped each Soldier took at least one message from his speech.

"I think the key thing I would like these Soldiers to take from my speech was leading by example," Hall said. "All you have to do is live your life by the Army Core Values, the Prin-

cipals of Leadership, the Traits of Leadership and the NCO Creed; and passively, you are taking care of Soldiers because you are teaching them the right way to conduct yourself as a non-commissioned officer and a leader."

For Reeson and McCallister, they both admit to being up to the challenge of being an NCO and understand the responsibilities which follow.

"You learn a whole lot once you become an NCO," said Reeson. "As a [junior enlisted], you often think, 'Why are we doing this?' But as an [NCO] you finally understand why certain things need to be done. Once you're in the role of a leader, it's like everything finally becomes clear."

"Being an NCO, you have a different view of the Army and how you have to conduct yourself and what is important," added McCallister. "It's about putting yourself second, if not last, to make sure everything gets done and things are taken care of."

"I'm a new father, so this kind of goes [hand-in-hand] with [becoming an NCO]," he continued. "I'm learning about taking care of my kid, and Soldiers are also like my kids, they need help and guidance to make sure they are properly taken care of. That's what I'm here for."



Photo by Spc. Ryan Stroud, 3BCT Public Affairs

First Sgt. Harold Hall, first sergeant for Co. B, 3rd BSTB, and Command Sgt. Maj. Arthur Swingler, battalion command sergeant major, congratulate a new inductee into the NCO Corps during a ceremony, Sept. 15.



'Grey Wolf' Retention Team

3 BCT Senior Counselor
3rd BSTB
1st-12th CAV

215th BSB

3rd-8th CAV
6th-9th CAV

2nd-82nd FA

Master Sgt. Jeffrey Helmes
Staff Sgt. Luis Carter
Staff Sgt. Jason Folmar
Staff Sgt. Alegray Hamer
Staff Sgt. Annamarie Conklin
Staff Sgt. Margaret Smothers
Staff Sgt. Don Jewell
Staff Sgt. Richard Erickson
Staff Sgt. Keston Dyer
Staff Sgt. Daniel Beltran

Soldiers Celebrate Regiment's Birthday in Iraq

By Sgt. Joshua R. Ford
3-82 BCT Public Affairs

History has and always will be an important part of our lives. Whether it is world history, the history of the state you're from, or your family's history, history impacts most people in one way or another.

For the Soldiers of the 3rd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, the history of their regiment is held deep in their hearts. And although the Soldiers of the "Warhorse" battalion were deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom 06-08, they did not allow that to stop them from celebrating the 141st birthday of their regiment at Forward Operating Base Palwoda in Balad, Iraq, Sept. 21.

In honor of their regiment's birthday, the Soldiers took a break from their rigorous deployment routine for a rest and re-fit period to enjoy challenging activities and good food.

Soldiers were treated to a barbeque and music during the occasion. They also participated in a strong-man competition to prove their mettle and enjoy the brotherhood they share with the buddies they serve alongside on a daily basis.

With the temperature still soaring around 100 degrees, the Soldiers were

physically taxed after competing in the events, which included a Light Medium Tactical Vehicle tire flip, track pull and truck pull.

First Lt. Benjamin Harrow of Wilmington, N.C., placed first in the event; Pfc. Kyle Bushey of Mooers Forks, N.Y., placed second, and Sgt. Darius Heard of Detroit, placed third overall.

The battalion is in its twelfth month of combat and stability operations in Salah Ah Din province, charged to work with local Iraqi Security Forces to protect the people of Balad, Dujayl and the surrounding community.

Lt. Col. Kevin Dunlop, battalion commander, said, "It has been a tough ride, but one where our troopers have served honorably and done very well. We have fought hard here to bring stability to this area. We are using this day to remember where we came from and celebrate who we are."

The day's activities concluded with an awards presentation and cake-cutting ceremony. Pvt. Jonathan Aguirre from Las Vegas, the youngest trooper in the battalion, assisted Dunlop in cutting the ceremonial cake.

"This is an opportunity to allow Sol-



A Soldier from 3rd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division participates in the truck pull event of the strong man competition as the unit celebrates the 141st birthday of the 8th Cavalry Regiment in Balad, Iraq, Sept. 21.

by enjoying some well-deserved break away from their daily mission set," Dunlop continued. "After 12 months in country, we saw it necessary to celebrate our achievements and mentally prepare ourselves to complete our mission."

"[The Soldiers] continue to show me their 'no quit' attitude every day. There is still a long way to go on this deployment and we will continue to stay focused," he said.

View All Issues of the Grey Wolf Howl at:
<http://pao.hood.army.mil/1stcavdiv/units/3bct/index.htm>

In Memory Of...

CPL Jonathan Rivandeneira B Trp., 6-9 ARS 3BCT, 1CD	SGT Terry Wagoner B Trp. 6-9 ARS 3BCT, 1CD	CPL Todd Motley B Trp., 6-9 ARS 3BCT, 1CD	SSG Kevin Brown A Trp., 6-9 ARS 3BCT, 1CD
PFC Christopher McCloud B Trp., 6-9 ARS 3BCT, 1CD	SPC Nicholas Olsen 2-23 IN 4BCT, 2ID	SPC Joseph Landry 2-23 IN 4BCT, 2ID	SPC David Watson 2-23 IN 4BCT, 2ID
SPC Jonathan Valentine 2-23 IN 4BCT, 2ID	PFC Luigi Marciante Jr. 2-23 IN 4BCT, 2ID	SSG Donnie Dixon Headquarters Troop 3BCT, 1CD	

Best of the Best...**'Grey Wolf' FA Battery Rises to the Top**

By Spc. Ryan Stroud
3rd BCT Public Affairs

It is not every day a unit in the U.S. Army achieves one of the highest standards set in relation to their specific mission, and even raises the bar on those standards while deployed to Iraq. But when a unit does, whether formally recognized or not, there is a sense of accomplishment among the team.

Battery A, 2nd Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery, 3rd "Grey Wolf" Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, is Multi-National Division-North's best and most respected field artillery batteries operating in northern Iraq today, said Lt. Col. Tony Bryant, MND-N's fires and effects officer in charge.

"We have fired almost 4,300 rounds of artillery throughout this deployment," Capt. Sean O'Keefe, the battery's executive officer humbly admitted when discussing an accomplishment normally achieved by a battalion-sized field artillery unit.

Proudly discussing the capabilities of his battery, O'Keefe said, "We've conducted more missions and fired more rounds than [any other battery] in [Multi-National Division-North]," he added after confirmation of this information by Bryant.

Firing the most rounds as a battery-sized element is not the only accomplishment for these Soldiers said Bryant. They are also the first battery in MND-N to fire an Excalibur round, a GPS guided ammunition, in theatre combat responding to troops in contact, while running 24 hour-a-day operations in Diyala province.

"We provide 24-hour artillery fire coverage in the Diyala province," said O'Keefe, a native of Yonkers, N.Y.

"We've got men on the gun line, men in the Fire Direction Center, so we have fires available whenever anyone needs a mission – we are never closed,"

he added.

"Anyone who calls for fires through Grey Wolf, as long as they have the clearance... we send [ammunition] downrange," Staff Sgt. Donald Whann, a member of A Battery, and a native of Modesto, Calif.

"Every challenge we've been faced with, we've always done what we could to help out those around us and never turn anyone away. We've risen to the occasion each time," O'Keefe said.

"The Excalibur round is a way to bring back artillery and accuracy into the fight. We, as a battery, have been given a thumbs up to firing into a city without the Excalibur round because of how accurate we are," O'Keefe said.

"The Excalibur round is a great piece of ammunition used to help keep us in the fight, but it's been our exceptional firing that has kept us in," he continued. "We were the first to fire the round in Iraq during an operation and we've fired the most Excalibur rounds out of the MND-North."

A Battery's success hasn't come from luck-of-the-draw Soldiers coming to the unit; it's come from countless hours of training and preparing for the unthinkable.

"Some people get off days; we never really do," said Whann. "As soon as the day begins, we're training. We are constantly on our toes."

"Everyday we have to make sure that our weapons have been [maintained]," he continued. "Maintenance is so very important. That weapon cannot fire if you don't take care of it."

"Training is important because it keeps our Soldiers on such high level of standards," Whann added. "They have to know how to conduct each person's job just in case something ever happens. If

something ever happened to me, I know [my guys] could pick up where I was and continue to send rounds downrange."

Whann's unique training methods molds his Soldiers into being battle-ready fighters.

"There will be times when we're training and I'll just fall [to the ground]," joked Whann. "My guys will be like, 'What are you doing, Chief?' I'll just lie there, playing dead, and then they know they need to rotate positions and keep running the mission. That forces the guys to react, adapt and finish the mission at hand.

"With us staying [up-to-date] with the standards, we're ready for any call to come down to us," he said. "We're ready for anything that could be thrown at us."

These artillerymen are not only ready for anything; they thoroughly enjoy their jobs. A Battery pride themselves on exceptional performance they strived to attain while in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom 06-08.

"This job really is motivating at times," said Spc. Jesus Perez, a native of Bovina, Texas. "When a fire mission comes down, you run to the guns ready to shoot. You've been waiting for your chance and now you're all pumped up."

"It is motivating," Spc. Emmanuelle Reyes, a native of Bronx, N.Y., agreed. "You get your energy going and you

know that you're helping troops in contact, trying to make a difference. Knowing that we might be

blowing up a building that the enemy is hiding in to help our guys get the job done is really a great feeling."

Reyes' noted one of the most important accomplishments his unit has achieved is the great numbers his unit holds.

"We pride ourselves on speed and safety," he said. "You have to be fast at your job because peoples' lives could be on the line, but safe at all times."

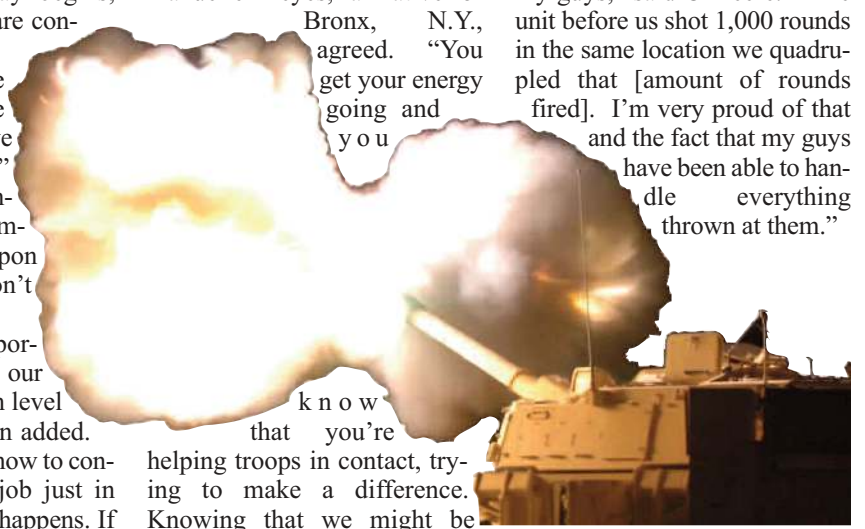
Though the battery's deployment is coming to an end, these artillerymen said they will stay focused until they are on the plane home. They said it's been a hard deployment at times but a successful one.

"This is an unbelievable experience that I've gotten to work with the Soldiers in this platoon and in our battery," said O'Keefe. "We've had all different kinds of missions thrown at us and been given the opportunity to prove what we can do and how good we are at our jobs."

"We have proven that artillery still has a significant position in modern military battlefield," he continued. "My Soldiers have risen to the occasion every time and it's completely humbling to be in charge of guys like this."

O'Keefe smiled and spoke confidently about his Soldiers and how proud he is of them.

"I am absolutely proud of my guys," said O'Keefe. "The unit before us shot 1,000 rounds in the same location we quadrupled that [amount of rounds fired]. I'm very proud of that and the fact that my guys have been able to handle everything thrown at them."



Soldiers Show Greater Strengths than Superman

By Spc. Ryan Stroud
3rd BCT Public Affairs

Superman was known for his daring feats of greatness, his ability to fly as fast as a locomotive and his ability to exhort unbelievable amounts of strength when the citizens of Metropolis needed to be saved.

While the Soldiers of the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, are not aliens from the planet Krypton, nor can they fly as fast as a speeding train – or fly at all, they do possess the same amounts of physical strength Superman does – a feat they proved at the Forward Operating Base Warhorse Strongman Competition, Sept. 9.

With events like the tire flip and the humvee pull, where the Soldiers flip a tire just under their height and drag a humvee down a road across a finish line, these Soldiers stationed in Baqouba, Iraq, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom 06-08, proved they are just as strong, if not even stronger, than the great “Man of Steel.”

“We are here participating in the FOB Warhorse Strongman Competition to help build morale and let loose and have some fun,” said Capt. Michael

Anderson, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 215th Brigade Support Battalion, and a native of Griffith, Ind.

“It’s a mixture of Soldiers, NCOs and officers joining in a day of camaraderie, showing off our physical strength and endurance, and just hanging out together and having a good time,” he continued.

“This is all about teams and competition,” added Spc. Joseph Armstrong, HHC 3rd Brigade Special Troops Battalion. “It’s also about individuals trying to prove who the best of the best is. It’s just everyone trying to be all that they can be.

“I’m competing in the individual competition. I’m competing in the tire flip, the chain pull... and the humvee pull,” said the Freeport, Texas native.

All the competitors were in top physical shape, ready for both the physical and mental challenges that lie ahead of them.

“This is the first time I’ve ever done an event like this,” Armstrong said. “I think they’re all going to be tough and mentally challenging. You really have to go out there and push yourself to give it your all.”

In pushing himself to his

max capabilities, Armstrong spoke about the burning pain one can feel in their muscles and how to overcome those circumstances.

“I don’t think of the pain,” he said after completing the chain drag event. “When I get out there, it’s an adrenaline rush. With your adrenaline pumping, all the pain goes away.

“When I’m getting ready for an event, I don’t think about nothing but me and accomplishing my objective,” he continued. “I don’t focus on anything else out there, just me.”

With Soldiers from all over Warhorse attending the event as spectators, proudly cheering on their fellow battle buddies as they performed feats of strength, Soldier morale was highly on display, helping the competing Soldiers to push themselves further to achieve a higher goal.

Events like these that raise morale are just what Armstrong and Anderson said they enjoy about competing.

“Events like these do help morale because it gets the athletes and the [spectators] pumped up,” said Armstrong. “You got your brothers and sisters competing so you root for them just as much as you root for yourself.

“You want to see people succeed in events like these,” he continued. “Everyone’s giving their all and you have to respect that; and that’s why you support and root for everybody.”

“These events are very important because all day we are trapped inside these gates of the FOB and we get to go out on the road and hangout outside the wire for a little bit, but this is

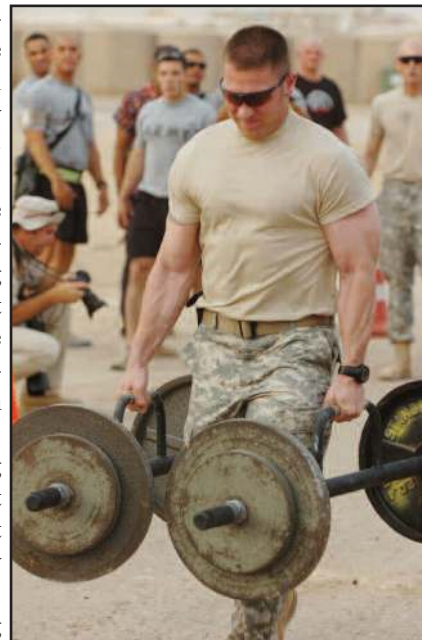


Photo by Spc. Ryan Stroud, 3BCT Public Affairs

Capt. Michael Anderson, HHC, 215th BSB, carries an extreme amount of weight across the finish line during the Forward Operating Base Warhorse Strongman Competition, Sept. 9.

still nothing like being back at home,” said Anderson.

“This is important because this brings Soldiers together, gives them an event that they may watch or participate in back at home, and gives them a chance to let loose a little and have fun,” he said.

And it’s these kinds of events which both Soldiers said would like to see more of.

“I think it would be very good to have more events like these out here because you’re not just challenging others, you are challenging yourself and what you can accomplish,” said Armstrong. “It helps improve your mind, body and spirit.”

“All these events are great for the Soldiers and I’m very happy that we are able to let go of some steam today,” Anderson agreed.

“Sometimes, this is what’s needed to help us get by,” he said.



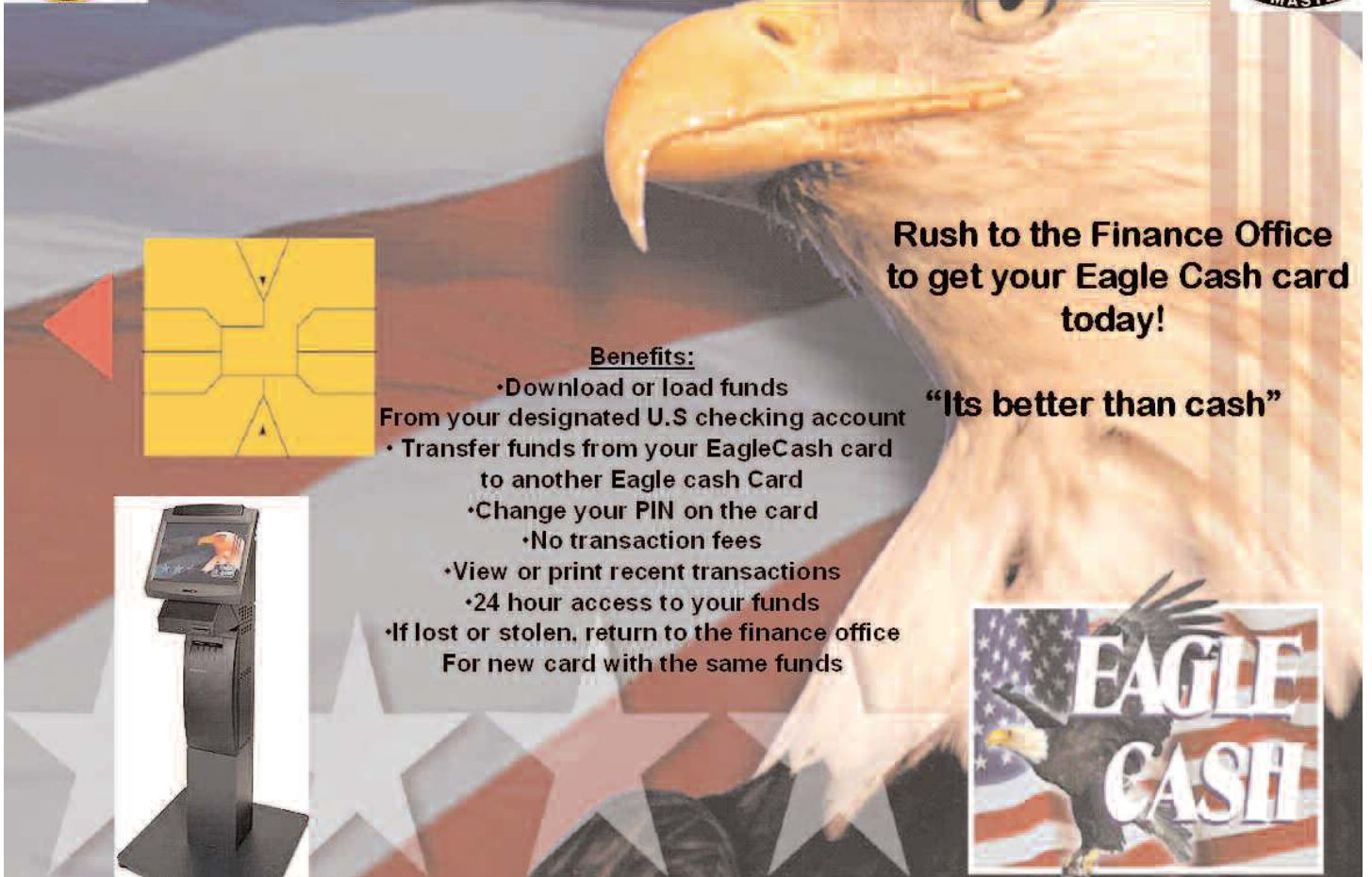
Photo by Spc. Ryan Stroud, 3BCT Public Affairs

Spc. Joseph Armstrong, HHC, 3rd BSTB, uses all his energy to lift a large tire down a road. The fastest time to the finish line was declared the winner of the event at the FOB Warhorse Strongman Competition, Sept. 9.

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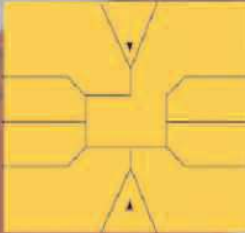




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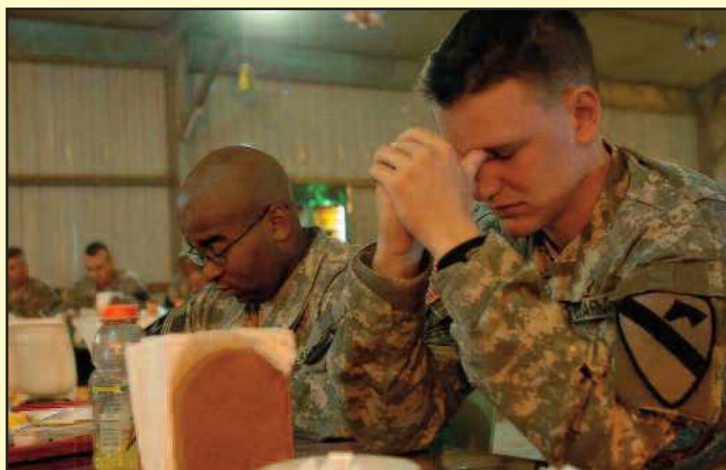
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Photos From the FOB...



Cpl. Daniel Speers, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, prays with fellow Soldiers during a prayer breakfast at Forward Operating Base Warhorse, Baqouba, Iraq, Sept. 11 in remembrance of the 9/11 attacks.

Got Photos?

If you'd like to see your photo in *The Grey Wolf Howl*, e-mail Sgt. Serena Hayden at serena.hayden@us.army.mil.

Photo by Pfc. Ben Fox, 3BCT Public Affairs