



The Mountain View

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December 15, 2008

Cavalry regiment sets stage for move to Hillah

SGT. DAVID TURNER
4ND BCT 3RD INF. DIV.



FOB KALSU – The commander of the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division visited Hillah Dec. 4 to see the construction of a new patrol base in the capital of Babil Province.

Col. Thomas James met with Lt. Col. William Benson, commander of the 1st Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment, whose troops will be moving to the new base in the coming weeks. Patrol Base Hillah is co-located with the headquarters of the 31st Brigade, 8th Iraqi Army Division, as well as a military transition team, which works closely with the IA brigade.

“Living at the patrol base, embedded with the Iraqi Army, is exactly the right way to foster relationships and promote security,” said Benson. “We are always safer when we are embedded, and it makes the service in Iraq much more rewarding.”

The 1-10th Cav. Regt., currently deployed in both Babil and Wasit provinces, will concentrate its forces in Babil to partner with the 31st IA Bde. Benson said his Soldiers will work closely with the Babil Provincial Reconstruction Team, based in Hillah, as well as local Iraqi Security Forces and Coalition mili-



Photo by Sgt. David Turner

Construction proceeds on a new patrol base in Hillah Dec. 4. The 1-10th Cav. Regt. will move its forces to Hillah in the coming weeks where they will partner with 31st Bde., 8th IA Div.

tary trainers.

Benson, whose troops currently work with the 32nd IA Bde., said he is looking forward to working with his new partners.

“The 31st IA Brigade is already recognized as one of the best brigades in the

Iraqi Army. The officers and Soldiers of the 31st (IA) Brigade prove this every day,” said Benson. “It makes it enjoyable to come to work when you are working with a professional organization and we look forward to continuing to support the people of Hillah and Babil Province.”

Water treatment facility rehydrates MND-C mission

STAFF SGT. AMBER EMERY
MND-C



CAMP VICTORY – Fresh, clean drinking water is a necessity of life; one which can easily be taken for granted when not in a desert. Soldiers and civilians of Victory Base Complex and surrounding areas depend on the availability of clean water to complete their missions.

The Soldiers and civilians working at the Al Morrell Oasis International Water Development facility do not take this responsibility lightly, which is reflected through its daily distribution averaging nearly 40,000 cases of bottled water.

“The importance of the water treatment facility is to supply water to the troops out on the line and here at the VBC,” said Sgt. Brandon Krueger, 62nd

Quarter Master Company day shift non-commissioned officer- in- charge at Al Morrell Oasis International Water Development. “We have different areas that we supply to (other than VBC), like the International Zone and internal and external Forward Operating Bases.”

Prior to the construction of this water

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An Army life – one deployment at a time

SPC. JOSH LeCAPPELAIN
MND-C



CAMP VICTORY – Does a Haitian rainfall smell different than one in Iraq? What color does the setting sun give the horizon in Somalia or the sand of Saudi Arabia? If given but a single word to describe, how would you tell someone else about Afghanistan, Korea or Thailand?

All of these questions can be answered by talking to one single man: Sgt. 1st Class Thomas Matthews, Multi-National Division – Center Analysis and Control Element noncommissioned officer-in-charge.

A resident of the town that calls itself the birthplace of American fly fishing – Neversink, N.Y. – Matthews graduated from Tri-Valley High School and quickly joined the Army, enlisting in 1990 as an engineer.

“I did really well at (Advanced Individual Training),” Matthews said. “I got more comfortable and felt like I had picked the right job.”

Following graduation, Matthews was assigned to the 52nd Engineers, out of Fort Carson, Colo., which was deployed to Saudi Arabia. After a brisk month’s work of preparation, the young private found himself heading toward the Middle East.

“Being 19, it is hard being so far away from home in a combat zone,” he reflected on his three-month first deployment. “You try to set a rhythm – but it’s hard, as a private.”

He returned to Fort Carson, con-

tinuing to learn his job and the way the Army works. It was during this time that he married his high school sweetheart, Katrina. Together, they started a family, having three children – Britney, 16 years old; Jenna, 12; and Trey, 6.

In 1993, the call came again to deploy; this time, he would travel to the African country of Somalia.

“I was a little more comfortable,” he said, of the difference between his first

United States. Quickly, he learned that he would be deploying again the following year.

“We started training to go to Haiti,” he recalled.

Unlike Somalia, Matthews enjoyed his time in Haiti, calling it his most enjoyable deployment.

“We went to the beach and actually built a beach house,” he smiled, his brown eyes fondly recalling memories such as playing football in six inches of water and mud. But it wasn’t all fun and games; a tropical storm hit Haiti, causing destruction and chaos.

“We were sleeping on top of our cots, on top of all of our (equipment),” said Matthews.

The Soldiers worked long and hard amidst the destruction of the storm; their mission changed to humanitarian assistance. For their efforts, they were awarded Humanitarian Service Medals.

Following redeployment, Matthews applied for a position in the White House. After countless screening processes, he received his top secret clearance, only to learn the position was filled. As one door closes, another opens. As a result of his new clearance, he found a path to a new Army career field – military intelligence.

Upon completing his second AIT at Fort Huachuca, Az.,

the Matthews family headed for Fort Belvoir, Va. The Matthews family spent two years there before going to Schofield Barracks in Hawaii, with a year-long

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Photo by Spc. Josh LeCappelain

Sgt. 1st Class Thomas Matthews, MND-C ACE NCOIC, stretches prior to a morning run Dec. 4 on Camp Victory.

two deployments. “But Somalia was my worst deployment. Following the incidents of ‘Black Hawk Down,’ my family was really frightened...convincing them I was safe was very difficult.”

After four months, he returned to the

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Task Force 449

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DEPLOYED: *Experiencing the world in boots*

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training stop in Fort Hood, Texas. During this time period, Matthews deployed twice to Asia, for month-long training exercises in Korea and Thailand.

Late in 2001, Matthews received orders to Fort Drum, N.Y. It was during his leave in conjunction with changing stations the world changed.

"I was enroute when 9/11 happened. I knew my life would never be the same," he said.

Needing time to adjust and settle his family into Watertown, N.Y., Matthews declined an offer to deploy immediately. He was assigned to 2nd Battalion, 87th Infantry Regiment. After a year and a half, he asked to move up to division, where he has served ever since.

During his 10th Mnt. Div. G2 tenure, he has twice deployed to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, and now, to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

"The comfort of life has greatly in-

creased," Matthews said of current deployments.

"First-time deployers don't really realize how good we have it (here). Before, you'd be in your tent, playing cards with your buddies or writing letters home. Now, we have email and instant messenger...it's much easier to stay in touch with home."

Matthews has already served 18 years and knows that his time in the Army is winding down. But, he still has dreams and aspirations before he retires.

"I'd like to get my first sergeant (rank) sometime. I think that's an achievable goal," he said.

For any Soldier, there's someone who makes all the travel, all the struggle, all the sacrifice possible.

"My wife has been great. Being deployed as much as I've been, you need a strong Family relationship," he said. "I miss her every single day."

In his spare time here, Matthews stays busy running.

"The Army 10-Miler was pretty im-

portant to me. I ran it while deployed to Afghanistan and again here. I use physical training a lot – especially running – as a stress release."

Professionally, Matthews considers his work in helping manage the day-to-day lives of more than 100 Soldiers in the ACE of the utmost importance.

"When a Soldier is upset, you try to relate. I have a ton of Army experience and deployments under my belt. It's rewarding to pass my knowledge on to other people," he said with a sense of accomplishment.

"I love my job. The feeling you get, the sense of accomplishment when returning from a deployment, is unbelievable."

Every time he gets on the plane to come home, one thought fills his mind: Katrina.

"There is a song, 'Faithfully,' by Journey. That's kind of my song with my wife. There are lyrics in it that go, 'I get the joy of rediscovering you,' he said, a wide smile filling his face. "That what it's all about, for me."

WATER: *Replenishing Iraq's Oasis by the bottle*

From page 1

treatment facility on VBC and five others in locations throughout Iraq, water was transported from Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and parts of Europe, which proved to be an inefficient process.

"We actually pump the water from Z Lake into our storage bags where the treatment is then initiated," said Gustavo Perea, Al Morrell Oasis International Water Development quality assurance manager. "By having the water treatment facilities and water sources inside each of the bases around the country, there is better control of the quality; and if there are any issues, we can immediately take care of it."

The water from the storage bags is cycled through seven stages of filtration and three stages of chemical treatment. It is then bottled, packaged and put on the lot outside of the facility where it must remain for 48 hours. During that time, test results are acquired to ensure it is safe before releasing to the military.

"This water is actually a little better than what we have in the states because of where we are," said Perea. "In the states, there are normally about four to five steps of filtration and no chemical treatment."



Photo by Staff Sgt. Amber Emery

Topi Katwal, Al Morrell Oasis International Water Development machine operator, inspects the packaged cases of water for discrepancies Dec. 4.

Though the Soldiers of the 62nd QM Co. play a key role in providing potable water to VBC personnel, they have no part in the actual purification and bottling of it.

"The civilians working at the water treatment facility actually produce the water. They manufacture it and put it in

the cases and get it out in the yard," said Krueger. "The Soldier's job is to provide customer support. We actually issue out and keep track of all of the water here."

Civilian or Soldier, the staff of the Oasis water treatment plant get the job done daily, consistently providing one of life's basic essentials to thousands of people.

Toys to brighten the eyes of children

By SPC. SOPHIA R. LOPEZ

For service members and civilians with children, Christmas shopping can be a headache. What are the best toys out there? Are they safe? Are they educational? Here is a selection of children's toys deemed safe, enjoyable and sure to brighten any child's eyes.

The **VTech Kidi Art Studio** is an educational toy to help inspire a child's artistic side. With this art center, children can experience what graphic design is all about. The Kidi Art Studio consists of an art desk with a stool, which can be connected to the TV in order to view one's work.

This is no ordinary desk, but rather an electronic drawing board which works with a touch sensitive pen. An attached camera allows children to take pictures and modify them. The Kidi Art Studio is recommended for ages four and up.

IToys' **Me2** is a handheld game with a twist. This game works on the basis of how physically active a child is - it actually counts the number of steps taken. It can be played offline or online - connect the game to the computer and play in a 3-D world. The number of points gathered increases proportionally to the number of steps taken. Me2 can be used as a clock, an alarm and a reminder service as well. The Me2 is recommended for ages eight and up.

WowWee's newest addition to their line of robots is

the **Tribot**, the robot with three wheels who dances. The Tribot is a cheery fellow who jokes and makes sounds. There's also a remote control for this little guy. The recommended age for the Tribot is eight and up.

Corolle's 17-inch **Marie** doll is almost like the real thing. Marie is a unique interactive doll with international roots as she says phrases such as "I love you" and "Tell me a secret" in English, Spanish, French, German, Greek and Italian. Marie can also record personal messages. Marie is recommended for ages three and up.

U-Dance is a product from Tiger Electronics that takes dancing to another level. With no irritating wires to trip over or dance mats to bother with, it works via motion sensors which are slipped over the shoes.

Children can jump around, cross their feet - go crazy - while following the virtual feet which are displayed on the screen. For a little extra, children can try the other games that also come with U-Dance. This toy is recommended for ages five to 12.

Playmobil building sets now include the circus. A colorful circus tent, a ring master, a little band playing music, various animals, trapeze artists and much more will bring the circus to life for children.

One of the most authentic features of the circus tent is the twinkling LED lights. This toy is recommended for those ages five and up.

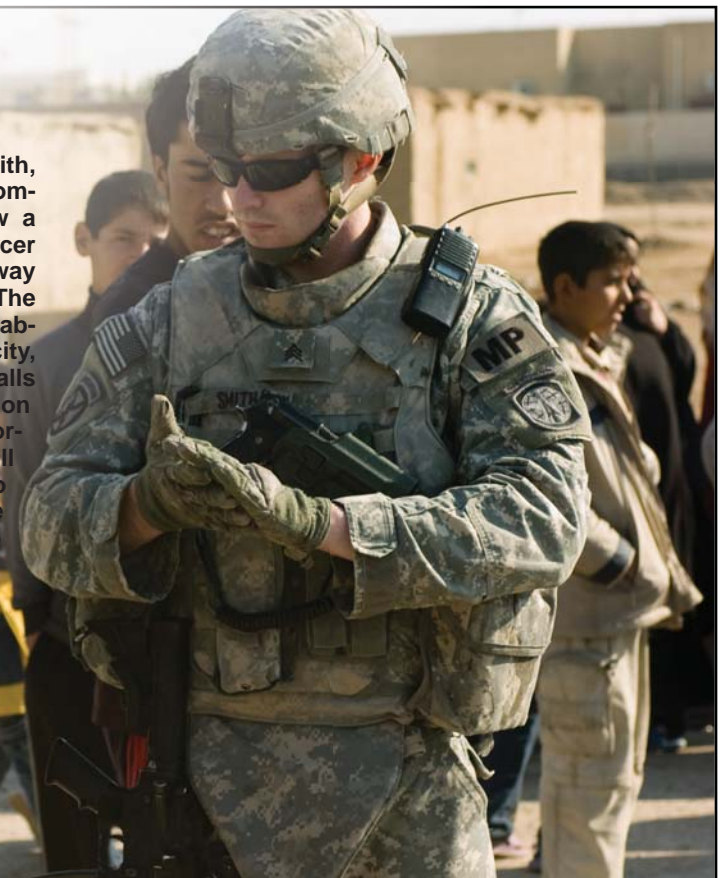
Community connects through soccer balls



Photos by Sgt. Daniel West

(Above) Children hold their soccer balls as they watch the remainder of a soccer ball distribution by IPs and members of the 511th MP Co. in Shay'k Sa'ad Dec. 11.

(Back) Sgt. Nicholas Smith, 511th Military Police Company, uses signs to show a child the last of the soccer balls have been given away in Shay'k Sa'ad Dec. 11. The 511th MP recently re-established a presence in the city, and distributed soccer balls donated through Operation Soccer Ball, a non-profit organization, to build goodwill with the populace and to introduce Iraqi Police in the city to the practice of community policing.



Headline Round-up

World News:

British Prime Minister Gordon Brown arrived in Pakistan on Sunday for a lunch meeting with Pakistan President Asif Ali Zardari, just hours after holding talks in New Delhi with Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. Brown's shuttle diplomacy -- aimed at easing tensions between India and Pakistan in the wake of last month's Mumbai terror attacks -- comes as Pakistan's military said Indian fighter jets encroached on its airspace. Relations between India and Pakistan -- both neighbors with nuclear arms -- deteriorated amid evidence that the militants who targeted 10 sites in Mumbai last month were trained in Pakistan.

U.S. News:

Since September, pastors nationwide say they have seen such a burst of new interest that they find themselves contending with powerful conflicting emotions -- deep empathy and quiet excitement -- as they re-encounter an old piece of religious lore: Bad times are good for evangelical churches. "It's a wonderful time, a great evangelistic opportunity for us," said the Rev. A. R. Bernard, founder and senior pastor of the Christian Cultural Center in Brooklyn, New York's largest evangelical congregation, where regulars are arriving earlier to get a seat. "When people are shaken to the core, it can open doors."

Health News:

For years, the federal government has recommended that pregnant women and young children limit their consumption of fish to avoid exposure to potentially harmful amounts of mercury. Now, two top consumer protection agencies are at odds over whether that advice should be reconsidered to encourage all people to eat more fish, in order to promote healthy hearts. The Food and Drug Administration has been circulating a draft report within the government which argues that the health benefits of eating fish outweigh the potential ill effects of mercury.

Sports:

Oklahoma quarterback Sam Bradford won the Heisman Trophy, which is given annually to the country's most outstanding college football player. Bradford edged Texas quarterback Colt McCoy in the voting, 1,726 to 1,604, in the closest finish since 2001.

Quote of the Day

"I believe in equality for everyone, except reporters and photographers." - Mahatma Gandhi

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For the answer to today's puzzle, go to:



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WHAT IS YOUR HOLIDAY TRADITION?



Photo by Staff Sgt. Amber Emery
 "On New Years, I stay with my grandparents until midnight, then I go hang out with my friends," said Lance Cpl. Michael Otero, National Port of Entry Advisory Team gunner and Chubbuck, Idaho, native.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Amber Emery
 "Just being with family and picking on each other. We are Irish so we also drink a lot!" said Spc. Jason Kelly, 525th Military Intelligence Battlefield Surveillance Brigade integrated electronics worker and Alton, Ill., native.