

IRAQI DESTINY

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Claimants paid for damages *First sign of reimbursement for Mosul people*

By Spc. Joshua M. Risner
40th PAD

In a show of good faith, Iraqi citizens who had filed damage claims were compensated in cash payments for the first time June 25 at the Civil Military Operations Center.

Approximately 60 people were paid for damages ranging from \$36 to \$700 maximum. A total of \$10,302 was given out, according to Pfc. Evelyn R. Soto, 101st Corps Support Group.

"Most of the people we dealt with today were stating damages from the ammunition supply point explosion that occurred a few weeks ago," said Sgt. 1st Class Raul Rios, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault).

"We've had almost 1,000 claims from that incident alone."

The citizens were happy to see some kind of reimbursement for their trouble, according to Rios. "We had some happy people when that money touched their hands," he said.

Not all people who made claims were able to be paid, however. "A big problem we've had is from traffic accidents," said Spc. Spencer Beatty, HHC, 101st Abn. Div. (AAslt.).

"It's hard to investigate when a military vehicle is involved in an accident; they usually keep on driving and the claimants are unable to get names or units. Without that information, we can't process a claim."

When the claims can't be proven, the people don't get paid, Beatty added. "It makes for some very mad Iraqis," he said.

When this happens, the people are

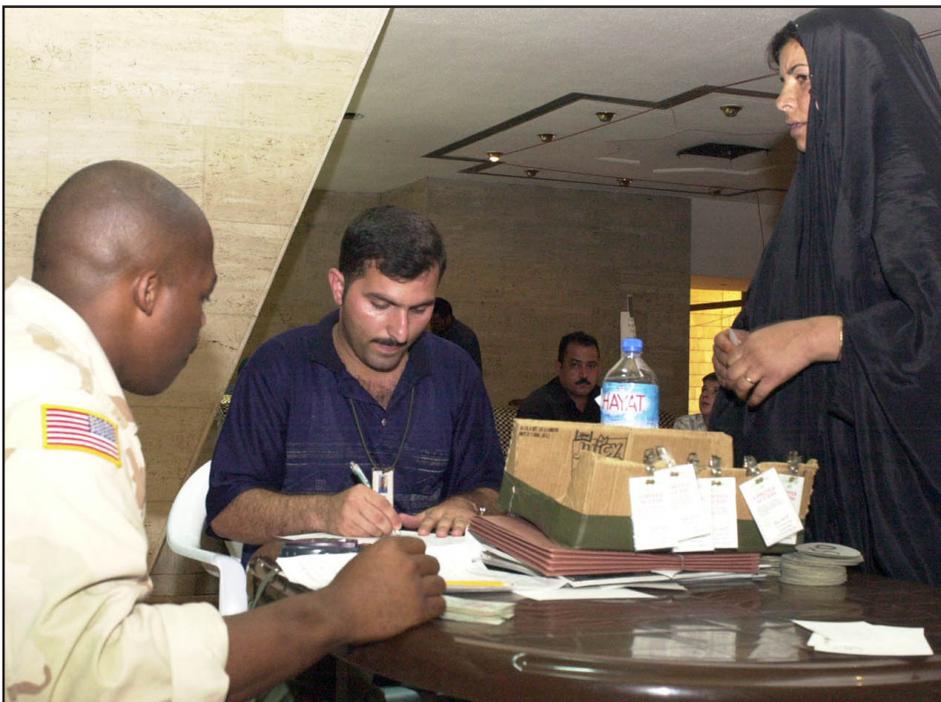
understandably frustrated, according to Beatty.

"Some people give us a hard time," he said. "But they're orderly in a sense that when we can't help them, they get very emotional and don't want to hear 'no', but they don't make threats or swear at us. Americans would probably do worse in the same situation," Beatty added.

The claims department handles 130 to 160 claimants every day, according to Rios.

Each soldier in the unit deals with individual people by themselves. "We average about 60 interviews per person," Rios said.

"This month, I did more claims than I would do in a year back in garrison," Rios said. "I've never heard of a foreign claims office having anywhere near as many claims as we do."



Spc. Joshua M. Risner

Spc. Steven Woodley, 431st Civil Affairs Battalion and Hassan Jalal Hassan Aloka check in a woman who has come to receive her claim.

Announcement

Salaries authorized for the below mentioned offices (Military Industrial Corporation) should report to the Rafidain Bank/ Ninevah 112, which is located at Rafidain Bank/Um Al Rabe'ain Branch, to collect the employee's salaries on Saturday, June 28.

Names of the offices are:

1. Jaber Ibn Hayan Co.
2. Al-Kindi Co.
3. Al-Hader Co.
4. Al-Zahf Al-Kabeer Co.
5. The National Auditing Office/N. sector

Soldiers preparing to ETS given food for thought

By Sgt. Jason L. Austin
40th PAD

Many division soldiers are excited about their pending end of time in service, now that unit stop loss has been lifted. Are you one of those soldiers? Do you know you may still be obligated to two to six more years of service?

Every soldier has a commitment to the Army for eight years, so depending on your length of enlistment, you may still have up to six years left to serve. Why not get paid for the remaining obligation and serve in the United States Army Reserves or your state National Guard. Of the division soldiers ETSing before Dec. 20, 771 are eligible for the Reserves.

This may sound misleading, but soldiers should all remember a brief conversation at the military entrance processing station, or our recruiter's office about the individual ready reserve and our eight-year commitment.

When a soldier swears in, he commits to an eight-year service obligation with a specified enlistment.

The time not covered in the enlistment is considered IRR. If there is a national emergency, and your military occupational specialty is deemed to be critical, you can be recalled to service within that obligation.

Time in the delayed entry program counts toward your RSO. Someone with a four-year enlistment with six-months in DEP would have three and a half years of IRR.

Here's the catch. If you are called back into active duty from IRR after your ETS, you will have a break in service, which

counts against you when it comes to promotions and other administrative actions.

There are ways around this though, and former active duty soldiers can benefit from these options.

If you decided to join the Reserve, you have no break in service and under peace time you only serve one weekend a month and two weeks a year. Many people exiting the Army don't want to look back, according to Sgt. Maj. Timothy C. Williams of Mount Carmel, Penn., reserve component retention sergeant major, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault).

But Williams says if the soldiers look at the opportunities the reserves can offer them, many would reconsider.

A lot of soldiers, Williams talks to, plan to go to school after the Army to use their GI Bill. In the National Guard, 23 states offer 100 percent tuition assistance to guardsmen, which would make the GI Bill go much farther. If soldiers were to enter the Reserve the tuition assistance is limited, but still available. In addition to TA, soldiers with certain MOSs, or in certain units, can also earn the GI Bill Kicker, a program which adds \$200 per month to the soldier's GI Bill payment for a six-year contract.

Soldiers wishing to retrain in a different MOS may do so through the reserve component, as long as

they meet the mental and physical qualifications.

Other benefits offered to reserve soldiers include full soldier's guaranteed life insurance, family or single dental coverage, post exchange and commissary privileges, space available travel within the United States and most territories, and direct exchange policy for unservicable uniforms. Before soldiers are allowed to out-process the division they must speak to a reserve component counselor, like Williams, to ensure they understand the options available to them.

Williams is available most days at the Division Rear element at the Mosul Airport, located across from the staff judge advocate desk. He will also be traveling to the 1st Brigade Combat Team and 101st Aviation Brigade areas July 7, and is planning a trip in mid-July for soldiers in 3rd BCT. He can be reached at DNVT 581-0911.



Courtesy photo

Sgt. Maj. Timothy Williams, division retention sergeant major, 101st Airborne Division, discusses the benefits of Reserve Component affiliation with Spc. Monika Comeaux, Co. A, 52nd ECB (H).

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Anderson showcases brigade

Commander leads Australian media on tour of Mosul

By Pfc. Thomas Day
40th PAD

Reporters from the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) visited the soldiers of the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) Friday, covering the challenges and accomplishments surrounding the city of Mosul, Iraq's second largest city.

Col. Joseph Anderson of White Plains, N.Y., commander, 2nd Brigade, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), escorted ABC reporter Jane Hutcheon and a cameraman around the city, putting his brigade's work on exhibit for the Aussie news crew.

"You can't help but be impressed by what the soldiers are doing," Anderson said. "The world has to understand what's going on here."

The ABC broadcast of the work includes interviews with soldiers with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion of the 502nd Infantry Regiment, who were working on trash cleanup in some of the dirtiest neighborhoods in Mosul, as well as soldiers from Co. B, 3-502nd, who were manning a World Food Program warehouse.

Anderson also escorted the Aussie television crew to a World Food Program distribution site, as well as the Al Thakafa police station in downtown Mosul.

Anderson even bought the journalists, from down under, a much needed ice cream cone.

"This is purely about people," Anderson said. The 2nd Brigade commander spoke to an audience in Australia that can only be described as skeptical of American led operations in Iraq. About 2,000 Australian troops supported Operation Iraqi Freedom under the directive of Prime Minister John Howard, who now may be facing hearings in Parliament regarding the as-of-yet unfound banned weapons in Iraq.

"Ninety-five percent of the (Australian) people did not agree with the decision," Hutcheon said. "It was very unpopular."

While Mosul may be a shining example of what is going right for American forces in Iraq, (it was the first city in the country to hold democratic elections to elect an



Pfc. Thomas Day

Col. Joseph Anderson of White Plains, N.Y., commander, 2nd Brigade, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) talks to Jane Hutcheon from the Australian Broadcasting Corporation in Mosul Friday. Anderson gave the ABC correspondents a guided tour of what his brigade was doing to rebuild Iraq's second largest city.

interim government), it is still not without "many issues," according to Anderson. Anderson's brigade has been working with the local police force in "cleaning out the bad guys," and has fired two police chiefs for ineffectiveness. Hutcheon and her cameraman met with 2nd Brigade soldiers who are working directly with local police.

The ABC crew also met some of their

fellow Aussies with the World Food Program, directly supported by the Australian government. The Australian government had been providing food for Iraq even before Operation Iraqi Freedom under the Oil for Food Program.

"It's easy for people in this city to get frustrated," Anderson said. "People are working hard everyday."

Hungry? *Soldiers taste free Iraqi cuisine*

You want hamburgers? You got it. You want French fries? They've got that too. Pizza, grilled or barbequed chicken, steak, they're all available along with more exotic Iraqi fare like beef escalopes, lamb kabobs, and chicken and rice pastries.

Welcome to the Eagles Inn, the new restaurant for soldiers of the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) who live and work at Post Freedom, located at the Palace of Swords in Mosul (Division Main).

Scheduled to open Wednesday, the Eagles Inn will feature a menu with "local cuisine as well as American," said Sgt. 1st Class Henry DeGrace, Post Freedom mayor, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 101st Abn. Div. (AAslt.).

While the prices for food are still being decided, nothing on the menu will be over six or seven dollars, DeGrace said.

The Eagles Inn will be open 24 hours a day, with three set meal times. 7 a.m. – 9

a.m. for breakfast, 11 a.m. – 1 p.m. for lunch and 5 p.m. – 7 p.m. for dinner, DeGrace said. Snacks are available after hours.

The restaurant is "an alternative to the dining facility for the soldiers, and offers an appreciation of local cuisine," DeGrace said.

Local chefs and cooks from Mosul restaurants will prepare and serve the food, said Abdul Kareem, chief engineer for 14 years at the former palace.

On Sunday, the post celebrated the creation of the Eagles Inn with a grand opening and pool party.

The chefs brought out dozens upon dozens of trays of free food prepared at a nearby food processing plant.

"I'm really excited because of the free food on the first day," said 1st Lt. Richard Miller, executive officer, 63rd Chemical Co. "It's a good morale booster."

The restaurant doesn't just boost the morale of the soldiers tired of eating MREs and T-Rations, it also gives the military

cooks a break. "We don't have to prepare as much now, it's easier," said Cpl. Harley Herron, food service specialist, HHC Div.

"It gives the soldiers a bigger variety," Herron said. Pvt. Michael Baglio, a cook with the 311th Military Intelligence Battalion, agrees with Herron.

The restaurant is also a good way to get soldiers to sample the local fare and culture, when they might not otherwise have a chance, Baglio said.

Some soldiers are familiar with Iraqi cuisine and enjoy an opportunity to eat as much of it as they can.

"The way they use the different types of vegetables in their dishes tastes good and is healthy," said CWO3 Kevin Palmer, unit maintenance technician, 63rd Chem. Co. "The food's ten times better than T-Rats," Baglio said.

Contributed by
Spc. Joshua Hutcheson
101st Abn. Div. (AAslt.) PAO



Spc. Joshua Hutcheson

Soldiers from the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), take advantage of the free food offered at the opening of the "Eagle's Inn" Restaurant, which gives soldiers options besides military fodder.

“Don’t even know if I’m ever coming home”

7/101st endures back to back deployments in Afghanistan, Iraq

By Pfc. Thomas Day
40th PAD

After more than a year in Afghanistan and Iraq, with only a few weeks to see their families in between theaters, the soldiers of Company B, 7th Battalion, 101st Aviation Regiment, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), seem to be at their boiling point.

“In Aviation, we try to do things as safe as possible,” said CW3 David Justice, safety officer for the Co. B, 7-101st Aviation. “Being in a combat zone for this long, some of the things that are normal are starting to be overlooked... there’s a great potential for mistakes.”

Company B landed in Fort Campbell the first week of February, only to get back on a plane three weeks later destined for Kuwait. The unit fought in operations in An Najaf and southern Baghdad before landing in Mosul.

“In a few days we’ll be 14 months in a combat zone,” Justice added. “There’s got to be something upper management can do.”

According to a soldier in the unit who asked not to be identified, a number of 7-101st soldiers could not even finalize divorces filed

during missions in Afghanistan because they did not have the time before being shipped to Kuwait in February.

Other frustrated families around Fort Campbell have begged congressmen and senators in Washington to assist in redeploying the unit.

The battalion is responsible for flying CH-47 Chinook helicopters, many of which have not been active since the end of major combat operations in Operation Iraqi Freedom. “There isn’t a guy who wouldn’t want to be here, but when the mission is done, then ok,” Justice remarked.

“We’re not needed here,” according to Staff Sgt. Chad Cox of Millersburg, Ohio, a flight engineering instructor for Company

B, 7-101st. “We’ve got two companies of Chinooks out here, they’re all sitting on the ground.”

Morale has so deteriorated, according to Justice, that four crewmembers in the unit have requested to be taken off flight status and reassigned to other areas within the company.

“They’re tired, I understand that, they miss their families,” said 1st Sgt. Scott Sowers, Company B first sergeant and native of Fort Bragg, Calif. “The hardest part is not so much staying for so long, it’s just not knowing when.”

Sowers’ company includes more than 220 soldiers. “I’m extremely proud of these guys,” he said.



Pfc. Thomas Day

A sign just outside the 7-101st Aviation Regiment's sleeping tents counts the days Company B has been deployed supporting Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Man on the Street

What do you want your first meal to be when you get back home?



“Outback Steakhouse... a ten-ounce ribeye steak!”

- Sgt. James Miles of Denver, Co., 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) commanding general’s office



“My wife’s home cooking.”

- Capt. Cordis Jordan of Madison, Miss., Joint Visitor’s Bureau, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault)

“Whatever my wife cooks me.”

- Staff Sgt. Peter Walker of Sarasota Springs, N.Y., 37th Engineering Battalion, Fort Bragg, N.C.



“Wendy’s!!!”

- CW3 Clyde Spady of Coos Bay, Or., 311th Military Intelligence Battalion, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault)



“A T-Bone Steak.”

- Capt. Jim Dobrinska of Tigerton, Wisc., Headquarters and Headquarters Support Company, Divison Support Command, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault)



“I’ll probably go to Rafferty’s and have a grilled chicken salad.”

- Spc. Claudia Taeia of Houston, Texas, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault)