

IRAQI DESTINY

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101st celebrates Memorial Day in Iraq

By Pfc. Thomas Day
40th PAD

With most of the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) operating in Mosul, Iraq, half the world away from their families, soldiers took time Monday to celebrate Memorial Day and remember the service members lost during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Brig. Gen. Edward Sinclair, assistant division commander (support), 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), addressed the soldiers in a ceremony at a 101st airfield in Mosul.

“There’s nobody in the world more proud of you than me,” Sinclair said. “There’s a lot of things screwed up about America and there always will be, but America is still the best place in the world and you make it the best place.”

Sinclair barely managed to contain his emotions during his speech, “I love every one of you...America is proud of you.”

The day began with a 5K race around the airfield and continued with sporting events all day.

Screaming Eagle soldiers and units were invited to take part in a 3-on-3 basketball tournament, volleyball and softball tournaments, along with spades, dominos and chess tournaments inside.

Lunch was a traditional Memorial Day bar-b-que in a not so traditional setting: a mobile kitchen trailer.

Soldiers enjoyed hamburgers and baked beans, much like their families likely celebrated the holiday with in the United States.

“Everybody from the camp pitched in and made it happen,” said Chap. (Capt.) Darin Nielsen of Weeping Water, Neb., of the celebrations.

Nielsen led the organization of the events.

“Most people were touched, it’s so different doing a Memorial Day service on the battlefield where soldiers have lost their lives,” he added. “It gives you a whole new perspective on Memorial Day.”

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Pfc. Thomas Day

Staff Sgt. Ron Henry of Baxley, Ga., Division Support Command, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), sings some gospel tunes with a little help from Sgt. 1st Class Kevin Toon of Havelock, N.C., HHC DISCOM, Spc. Laura Brazeil, 101st Airborne Soldier Support Battalion, and a soldier observing the festivities. The 101st soldiers performed as a part of Memorial Day celebrations at a 101st airfield.

Working together: Arabs in business with Kurds

By Spc. Joshua M. Risner
40th PAD

Some Arabs in the village of Domez are selling their houses to Kurdish families. "Many of the Arabs here wanted to sell their homes, because they have gotten jobs elsewhere," said Lt. Col. Chris Holden, 3rd Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment. "We've been supervising the legal selling and buying of homes and so far we've had no problems."

Holden added that the houses were selling for between one and \$3,000.

This peaceful coexistence was not always this way. When the legal residents moved back into the village after being displaced, several Kurdish families had been squatting on the property.

They had to be removed by the military before the owners were allowed back in.

After Domez was once again populated by the Arabs who held ownership, they were approached by a few Kurdish families who explained they were homeless and had nowhere else to go.

In a gesture of kindness and generosity, the families were given places to stay in the village.

"Domez is an interesting, dynamic place," Holden said. "There has been a long history of tension between the Kurds and Arabs, but so far they have been able to cooperate here."

The village has a mayor appointed by the government in Mosul and a town council made up of three Kurds and three Arabs, according to Holden.

Anyone wanting to move into the town has to first be screened by the town council. If they are found to have weapons after moving in, they are kicked out basically, Holden said.

"This community is a role model for the rest of the country. This is an example of U.S. forces making a real impact," Holden said.

"Celebration" continued from page 1

Also included in the day's events was the opening of the new Base Exchange at the 101st airfield in Mosul. The BX gives soldiers the opportunity to shop for personal hygiene products, food and recreational goods for the first time on base since the 101st crossed the Kuwait-Iraq border in March.

Soldiers flocked at the opportunity when the shop officially opened at 10 a.m. Monday.

Lines stretched for several hundred feet as soldiers patiently waited to buy products they miss, a definite morale booster.

"I've been waiting in line since 6 a.m. this morning," said 1st Lt. Kimberly Colter of Orangeburg, S.C., still waiting in line at about the stroke of 11 a.m. "I'm looking to buy some snacks, CDs and cold drinks."



Pfc. Joshua Hutcheson

Tools of the trade

A soldier from the 37th Engineer Battalion, Fort Bragg, N.C., looks over the tools soldiers and Iraqis used Tuesday to clean the city during Task Force Neighborhood.

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Photos by Pfc. Thomas Day

Soldiers wait in what most called a five-hour-plus line to shop at the Base Exchange at a 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) airfield. The BX-PX opened Monday as part of the base-wide Memorial Day celebration.

Memorial Day Festivities

Chief Warrant Officer 2 Eric Hoffman of Harrisburg, Penn., 3rd Battalion, 101st Aviation Regiment, shopped, Memorial Day, at the newly opened Base Exchange at an airfield in Mosul.



Brig. Gen. Edward Sinclair, assistant division commander (support), 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), speaks to a crowd of soldiers during Memorial Day celebrations at a 101st airfield in Mosul.



Spc. Steven Blevins of Columbus, Miss., 501st Signal Battalion, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), drives to the basket against Spc. Andre Greene of Chicago, Ill., 320th Field Artillery, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault). Units from the 101st fielded 3-on-3 basketball teams to play in an all day tournament this Memorial Day in Mosul.

One dead, others injured after fire in Mosul

By Spc. Joshua M. Risner
40th PAD

One civilian is reported to have died and five civilians and four military personnel are said to be injured after a fire at an ammo supply point near an airport in southern Mosul, May 22.

"The fire caused some rounds to go off and damage nearby civilian buildings," said Capt. John Boyer, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 101st Airborne Division, (Air Assault). "It took nearly five

hours to put the fire out."

"The civilian injuries are unconfirmed right now," Boyer said. "We expect to get more claims of injury in the days to come."

After the fire was extinguished, a team was assembled to assess the damage to the nearby infrastructure.

"We circled around a few times," Boyer said. "I saw some broken windows but not much more than that. There really wasn't as much damage as I thought there would be."

Civilians are being encouraged to file damage claims at the Civil Military

Operations Building starting May 29 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Boyer added. "We've asked that they bring in photographs of the damage and eye-witnesses and anything else that would help us expedite the investigations into each claim." All claims filed will be investigated to ensure validity, according to Boyer.

"We will reimburse all claims that are payable, but submitting a claim will not guarantee payment," he said.

The cause of the fire is still unknown. The investigation is still ongoing at this time, Boyer added.

Aviation battalion improves villagers' lives

By Sgt. Jason L. Austin
40th PAD

Two Iraqi villages south of Mosul have been receiving a helping hand from Uncle Sam via 5th Battalion, 101st Aviation Regiment.

Sunday a crew from the battalion delivered \$2,500 worth of supplies to the town of Sheikh Hamad. The supplies included things like soccerballs, pencils, pens, water pumps, water tanks, swamp coolers, tables, chairs and desks to name a few.

The initiative began when the battalion, which had been wanting to go into the villages in its sector, received a visit



Sgt. Jason L. Austin

Villagers from Sheikh Hamad, Iraq, unload an air conditioning unit from a light, medium tactical vehicle Monday as Pfc. Adam Cruz, driver, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 5th Battalion, 101st Aviation Regiment, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), waits for the next unit to come down.

from Brig. Gen. Benjamin Freakley, assistant division commander (operations), 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), who told it about Task Force Neighborhood.

Task Force Neighborhood is a program in which units go into areas near them, and using \$25,000 per brigade, help rebuild the area through contracting labor and providing supplies.

Different units are using the funds in different ways. Fifth Bn., 101st Avn. Rgt., assigned Maj. James Bird, battalion S3, from Darlington, S.C., to decide how best to use the funding.

"We had a visit the other day from Freakley,"

Bird said. "He came in and we expressed a desire to go to the village of a sheikh we had met at a social event several weeks ago."

The selection process for which village will be helped continues to be based on people who have worked with the battalion.

The next village the 5th Battalion helped was Bird's translator's.

"We went to the first village and he asked if this was the only village we were helping," Bird said. "I said no, and he asked me how we chose. I then asked him if he would like for us to visit his village next."

"Village" see page 5

"Village" continued from page 4

Although Bird has only visited two locations, he is noticing similar problems in each town.

The schools have limited supplies, and are in need of repair. "The teachers seem very motivated and want to help the children," Bird said.

Each village has a shortage of water, and problems with their electricity.

"The basic necessities any town in the United States would take for granted, these people don't have."

Bird is working to remedy the problems, by buying water pumps, generators, filters and other necessary supplies, he is hopeful they can bring a reliable water supply from the Tigris River to village homes.

Bird said he hopes they will be able to predict what each new village will need and have it on hand when they do the initial assessment of each village, which they're planning to do every two days.

Along with the supplies and the contracted labor, the battalion also sends Army doctors out to the villages to treat patients using funds from Task Force Neighborhood.

The doctors buy medication in Mosul using Task Force Neighborhood funds and distribute them to villagers while other supplies are being delivered and contractors repair equipment. Many of the villagers are suffering from birth and genetic defects, according to Maj. Gregor Fryer, battalion flight surgeon.

The soldiers are gaining a sense of accomplishment from the program too.

"Without question, everyone of my soldiers involved in this activity, I guarantee, will tell you the best days they've had in the Army have been found doing this," Bird said.

The villagers show their thanks by offering cigarettes, chai (tea), and an occasional meal.



Sgt. Jason L. Austin

Pfc. Adam Cruz, driver, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 5th Battalion, 101st Aviation Regiment, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), from Guam, helps villagers in Sheikh Hamad, Iraq, unload an air conditioning unit from a light, medium tactical vehicle, Monday. The air conditioner will be used in the village school.

Man on the Street

Do you feel Mosul is safe?



"Very good, I'm very happy here in Mosul."
- Dhiyaa Sulaiman Maly, Janitor



"Mosul is better than any province in Iraq for security."
- Ali Hashem Sheyal, Linguist



"I feel there is room for improvement." - Spc. Nathaniel Haggard, Little Rock, Ark., 431st Civil Affairs Battalion

White's resignation means changes for Army

By Pfc. Thomas Day
40th PAD

Ahurricane is approaching the Army shores. Now is the time to start boarding up your windows.

With the recent (forced) resignation of Secretary of the Army Thomas White and the expected retirements of Army Chief of Staff Gen. Eric Shinseki and U.S. Central Command Commander Gen. Tommy Franks, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld has a clear path to make his vision for the military a reality.

Secretary Rumsfeld, who is on his second tour as Defense Secretary having briefly served under the same post under President Ford, has had a clear vision for the military and the Army specifically since he took the position in 2001. Rumsfeld has repeatedly stressed the importance of Special Forces and light, mobile forces capable of dancing across an area of operation as the 101st has since the beginning of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

In the two and a half years he has been in office, he has worked to remodel the Army into a more agile force. He is also at work developing a military equivalent of the CIA special operation forces, with the sole purpose of answering to him and not CIA director George Tenet.

The defense secretary also has often shown no interest in "nation building," for better or worse, and rejected proposals for a large joint task force aimed at stabilizing Afghanistan after the fall of the Taliban. It appears now that the defense secretary is in a no-holds barred battle with Secretary of State Colin Powell and ORHA chief L. Paul Bremer for a similar force in Iraq.

In one of his more questionable calls, Rumsfeld also pushed for a nuclear defense system and has continued this cause after September 11. Rumsfeld threatened a presidential veto of any defense budget for 2002 that did not divert funds from combating terrorism towards this system just days before the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.

His ideas are in many ways revolutionary and often run counter to what many senior officers in the Pentagon want, particularly in the Army. For example, Gen. Shinseki, whose retirement Rumsfeld is undoubtedly eager to accept, testified this winter in front the Senate Defense Commit-

tee that "several hundred thousand troops" would be required to stabilize Iraq after the end of the war. Rumsfeld's deputy Paul Wolfowitz promptly denounced Shinseki's remarks in harsh terms.

Many senior officers at the Pentagon were reportedly quite upset at Rumsfeld after it appeared in the first week of the war that America did not deploy enough forces to defeat Saddam swiftly and without enormous casualties. Television airwaves were flooded with criticism of Rumsfeld, much of which came from retired generals working as military pundits for television news stations, after the 3rd Infantry Division (Mechanized) moved 250 miles inside Iraq before any second wave of support crossed the Kuwait-Iraq border.

Those same officers must have cringed at the thought that Gen. Franks' original war proposal last year, one that looked very similar to the five division/five carrier group proposal that won the war, was initially rejected by Rumsfeld. The defense secretary wanted an even lighter force with, reportedly, only two or three divisions.

A controversial character in the Bush administration, with extremely little charm and even less grace, Donald Rumsfeld is now unquestionably the most powerful Secretary of Defense since Robert McNamara in an administration where the hawks are flying higher than ever. The Powell doctrine is out, the Rumsfeld way is in, and that's how it's going to be.

The Rumsfeld Way

Thomas White, a retired Brigadier General in the Army, was forced out by Rumsfeld in favor of the Army's new secretary, James Roche. Roche now the Secretary of the Air Force served 21 years in the Navy, reaching the rank of captain.

The new Army secretary has a background in two rival services but not one day in Army greens. The reason he was selected for the post: Roche is lock step with the defense secretary's military philosophies.

The Army's proposal to develop a Crusader artillery system, which Rumsfeld found far too heavy and not nearly mobile enough, had a lobbyist in White. In fact, White was lobbying for the Crusader system on Capitol Hill as a way to leapfrog his boss. Now that he is out of the way, the Army can just forget about the Crusader as long as Rumsfeld is in the Pentagon. Roche won't be the only new face at the Pentagon. With Gen. Shinseki out in June, the Army can expect a chief of staff that too is in sync with the defense secretary's desire for a "21st century fighting force." Former generals have accused Rumsfeld of politicizing promotions, and clearly the next Army chief-of-staff will not be anyone who isn't in tune with Rumsfeld's thinking.

Many men and women in uniform decried the base closings under President Clinton but seem to overlook that President Bush is well on his way to surpassing the Clinton defense department after the 2005 proposed closings that could shut down 100 installations. Rumsfeld's defense budget proposal, just passed by the

house and the senate, called for those installations to be axed by 2003 but was delayed by legislatures eager to avoid the political fallout in their districts.

He also proposed cutting two divisions out of the Army's arsenal at the beginning of his term, but tabled the proposal after resistance from Shinseki and White, among others.

The recent and upcoming changes in the Army's leadership may clear the way for him to renew that quest.

His ideas are in many ways revolutionary and often run counter to what many senior officers in the Pentagon want, particularly in the Army.

-- Pfc. Thomas Day



Pfc. Mary Rose Xenikakis

A skull found in a mass grave in northern Iraq is being measured by a Criminal Investigation Division soldier for investigation about its history.

Mass grave found by sheikh

Skeletons claimed to be bodies of Iranian prisoners of war from 1999

Soldiers of the 101st Airborne Division unearthed the remains of seven people from a sinkhole in a rural area about 120 kilometers southwest of Mosul. Shattered bone fragments indicated foul play.

According to a division radio log entry, a Mosul sheikh brought the site to the attention of civil affairs personnel May 14. The sheikh reportedly claimed the bodies of Iranian prisoners of war were taken there after execution in 1999.

"You can see blunt or ballistic trauma on their skulls," said Lt. Col. Richard

Thomas, division surgeon, who headed a mass grave assessment team. "This skull here has fractures that can't be confused with natural sutures between skull bones, and this other one has a hole where a bullet entered on the back-left side, and more cracking around the exit hole."

Skeletons were found in natural sinkholes where they were buried in groups, separated by layers of lye and dirt, with clothes buried separately on top of them, according to Thomas.

"I don't believe this happened all at one time," Thomas said. "The skeletons are in varying states of decay. There's more flesh, for example, on some of the more superficial skeletons than there is on some of the deeper ones."

Amid the civilian clothing, several small ropes with knots tied in them were also found that may have been used to bind the alleged victims.

The team excavated seven sets of femurs, five jaw bones and three skulls, but stopped when they reached harder sediment.

"I wouldn't go digging back in there without help," Thomas said. "I don't want to damage any evidence that might be found."

Case officers from the Criminal Investigation Division documented each bone set and launched a formal investigation.

*Contributed by
Spc. Robert Woodward
101st Abn. Div. (Air Assault) PAO*

Bullets, bunkers, beans

Supplying U.S. troops develops relationships with host nation

U.S. servicemembers in Iraq expect to be taken care of. Commanders respond to that call by ensuring that vital supplies such as food, water and battle equipment are sent to the front as quickly and often as possible.

However, supplies that are easily taken for granted by members of the military, are moved forward by a complex process involving deep rooted relationships between the U.S. and its host nation of Kuwait.

“Our host nation gives us the ability to get supplies from the United States to the troops in Iraq,” said Maj. John Means, deputy director of civil military operations. “These supplies directly affect soldiers by making sure they get everything from Army and Air Force Exchange Services, to tank parts and mine plow pins.”

The Kuwaiti government allows military supplies to be sent to its country free of charge over land, air and sea.

Kuwaiti airlines provide aircraft that ship supplies to and from the United States through a defense corporation agreement that speeds military equipment through customs.

Means said part of his job is to make sure military equipment doesn't sit too long in the airport cargo hold, helping to open space for our hosts and getting important supplies to U.S. troops.

“Normally people ship military supplies commercially due to accessibility,” Means said. “The volume of cargo coming in each day is tremendous and can interfere with the operations of the airport. We develop a relationship with the Kuwaitis, who are helping us, so that units can get their gear moved out and the airport can function properly. The beauty of our job is that if we're right, we're invisible.”

Thomas Brown, military transport specialist, oversees all Army cargo going into and coming out of Camp Doha. A former Army 1st Sgt., Brown said that when military gear starts getting backed up, he understands how important it is to work with host nation officials to develop a smooth running process.

“Red tape can really slow things down,” Brown said. “You

have to develop a relationship with the nationals who work here to get cargo cleared so we all understand each other. A lot of this equipment is mission essential and we have to get it out quickly. These units have to stay moving and combat ready at all times.”

Sammi Binhajji, superintendent of delivery at Kuwait Airways, said he is happy to be a part of making sure that U.S. troops receive vital supplies.

“The U.S. Army has VIP status with its supplies,” Binhajji said. “I'm glad that me and my country can help their Armed Forces accomplish their mission. We're working hard to help the soldiers who are helping the Iraqi people.”

Binhajji said that as Baghdad's capability to receive cargo and supplies increases, Kuwait's role will diminish. He said the airport crew currently receives seven to eight cargo loads daily, forcing many to work 24-hour shifts.

Al Hoti, airport section customs chief, said although his staff works hard supporting the military, the relationships that have been built are well worth the effort.

“Our customs section and Kuwait Arabs feel we are helping the U.S. to liberate the Iraqi people,” Al Hoti said. “By helping to liberate our neighbors, we are helping ourselves. If the U.S. military needs anything, we move with them. When we understand each other, we give full help.”

Al Hoti said that part of how his government helps the U.S. military is making it as easy as possible for battle equipment to be shipped through the country.

“Ammunition and weapons have minimal paperwork,” Al Hoti said. “Any shipments are sent through expediently under a special procedure agreed upon before the war. The guys here are really helping the U.S. military do its job because in the past they fought for our case.”

*Contributed by
Spc. Randy Randolph
22nd MPAD*

Chaplains Corner

Admission to heaven

A man dies and goes to heaven. Of course, St. Peter meets him at the Pearly Gates. St. Peter says, “Here's how it works. You need 100 points to make it into Heaven. You tell me all the good things you've done and I give you a certain number of points for each item, depending on how good it was. When you reach 100 points, you get in.” “Okay,” said the man. “I was married to the same woman for 50 years and never

cheated on her, even in my heart.” “That's wonderful,” say St. Peter, “That's worth 3 points!” “I have 3 points?” he says. “Well, I attended church all my life and supported its ministry with my money and service.” “Terrific!” says St. Peter, “that's certainly worth a point.” “One point? How about this. I started a soup kitchen in my city and worked in a shelter for homeless veterans.” “Fantastic, that's good for two more points,” he says.

“TWO POINTS!” the man cries. “At this rate, the only way I get into Heaven is by the grace of God!” “Come on in!”

Author unknown

“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith-and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God-not by works, so that no one can boast.”

Ephesians 2:8-9