

## A Month in Najaf Remembered

By Pfc. Al Barrus  
122nd MPAD

BAGHDAD, Iraq - August was a month that the Soldiers of Company A, 2nd Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment, won't soon forget.

The company, attached to 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, stationed at Camp Justice, normally conduct day-to-day patrols in the northern Baghdad neighborhood of Kadhamiyah. However, in August, they faced a new task: assist the Marines in neutralizing the Muqtada militia presence in An Najaf.

The Soldiers faced a conventional battle complete with a battlefield and enemy defensive positions. It was an experience the troops will always remember.

"It's hard to describe what it was like there," said Pfc. Jesus Ramirez, a tank driver in 2-12 Cav. "All I can say is that it was a hard month. It was just crazy."

"While we were in Najaf, we saw a very focused combat operation," Capt. Kevin Badger, 2-12 Cav., Company A, commander said. "There were fortified enemy positions and daily attacks.

A major change for many of the troops was going back to their original military specialties. Instead of their usual jobs patrolling, and participating in cordon and searches, they



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Pfc. Jesus Ramirez, a Tank driver in Company A, 2nd Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment, mounts his battle-damaged Abrams tank. The tank, nicknamed "Bad Luck" suffered roughly half a dozen rocket propelled grenade impacts. The multiple hits were taken during a series of battles while the unit was temporarily supporting Marines in Najaf in August.

got to do what they joined the Army to do.

"Everyone ... actually got to do [their] job while we were out there," Pfc. Joseph Pidgeon, a tank driver with Company A, said. "If you're in mortars, you're shooting mortar rounds; if you're a tank driver, you're shooting the big rounds: none of that cordon and searching. Rolling around in tanks is what we came in the Army for."

The brunt of the battles the troops ran into were located in the Najaf cemetery: a field of graves and tombs spanning a square mile with catacombs beneath.

"Whenever we rolled into the cemetery, we received enemy contact," Sgt. Dale Frantz, a tank driver said. "We'd take small-arms fire, then mortars would start to hit along with sniper fire and [rocket propelled grenades]."

This graveyard-turned-battlefield was almost a daily stop for the troops. They spent 12-hour shifts of adrenaline-fueled battle broken up by 20-hours away from the cemetery. This routine was the norm for the group but the rush never died down.

"The adrenaline stays the same every day," Pidgeon said. "The energy

stays up, but you gain more focus. I think you get a bit calmer with it."

It was that energy that kept most of them alive during the month of summer heat and enemy fire. The Soldiers learned lessons from each other's experiences.

"The company performed outstanding," Badger said. "They are a very aggressive and lethal team. I don't think any of us wished to go there, but I think that when presented with that task, we just got focused. It enabled us to validate our training. It got to a point where you're not excited, but you're ready to do the job."

# 91st Eng. Bat. Recruits Iraqi Police

By Sgt. Dan Purcell  
122nd MPAD

BAGHDAD, Iraq-Push-ups, sit-ups, and a run are all the makings of a military physical training test, but for some Iraqis trying to become policemen they are a rite of passage.

Soldiers of the 91st Engineer Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division and the 425th Civil Affairs Battalion sponsored an Iraqi Police (IP) recruitment drive on Sunday, Sept. 12.

According to Staff Sgt. Orlando Torres, Headquarters Company, 91st ENG, Neighborhood Council (NC) members from five neighborhoods were asked to provide 30 recruits from their areas, who were interested in joining the police force.

"The 91st is actually sponsoring this IP recruitment through the [Neighborhood Councils] in our area of operation," Torres said. "We are providing ... the site security and screening process.

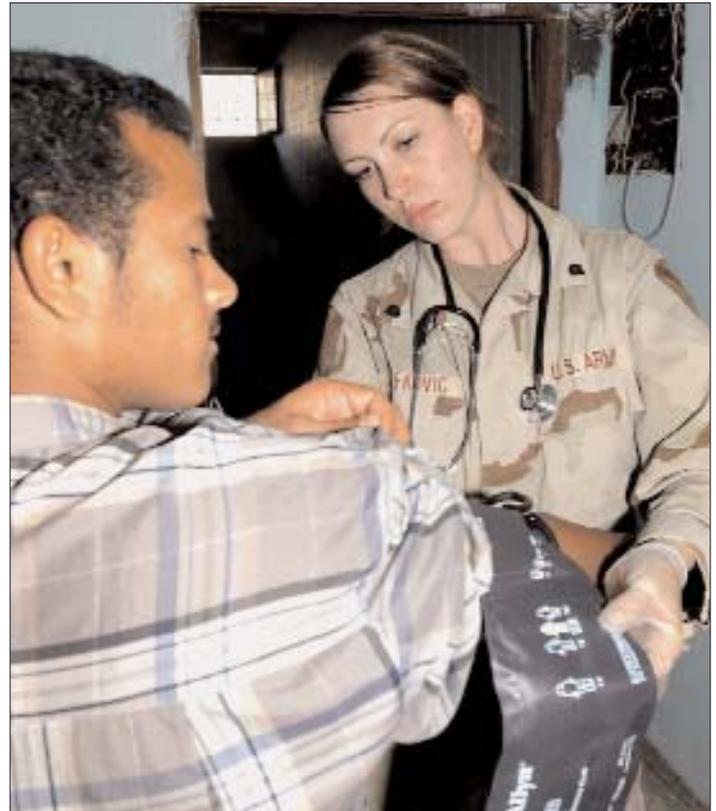
The screening process included a physical training test, a medical check-up, and a background check before the potential recruits

were allowed to apply. Of the 150 expected candidates, only 30 would be hired immediately and the remainder would be placed in a pool of future recruits.

"Last time we had a 50 percent washout rate because a lot of the Iraqis couldn't pass the written test, or had failed at some step of the process," Sgt. Timothy Roby, 425th CA, said. "However, we are hoping to get at least 100 good candidates this time because they are being recommended by their [council] members."

The prospective recruits are required to run a 13.5 to 17 second 100 meter dash, do 10 sit-ups, 10 push-ups and five pull-ups. They are then given a medical check-up that includes a urinalysis to insure that they are drug free and healthy. Lastly, their backgrounds are checked out and can then fill out an application.

"Ultimately, we want all of them to pass, but if an applicant fails any part of the screening process, then they will not be considered for this hiring phase," Capt. Marc Chung, 425th CA, said. "If we didn't set some basic standards, then every-



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Spc. Hanna Jurekovic, medic, Headquarters Company 91st Engineer Battalion checks the blood pressure of an Iraqi Police applicant during a recruitment drive sponsored by the 91st Engineers.

body would want to be an IP."

"The best part of this is putting these men to work. The Iraqis have the same needs as anyone else...They just want to provide for

their families," Torres said.

"And the bottom-line is that we want to get as many out on the streets as we can because it allows them to become part of the process."

## Useful Iraqi Words/Phrases

When will we return?  
matta sa-narjAH

### Thursday

High: 96  
Low: 70



### Friday

High: 98  
Low: 72



### Saturday

High: 100  
Low: 74



Weather information provided by 1CD Staff Weather Office (SWO)

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## News Notes

### eArmyU will be Fielded Armywide

WASHINGTON (Army News Service) -- Beginning Oct. 1, access to the Army Continuing Education System's eArmyU program will be available to most active-duty enlisted Soldiers. The Army launched eArmyU in 2001, to offer eligible enlisted Soldiers the opportunity to work toward a college degree or certificate online. With the program's expansion to the entire Army, the eArmyU "Technology Pack" or "laptop" option will be offered solely as a retention and readiness tool in support of Army Transformation and the Army Campaign Plan, officials said, by encouraging re-enlistment into combat forces/operational units.

### Navy Ship Donated to Ocean Scientists

SEATTLE (AP) -- A Navy surveillance ship that once listened for enemy submarines and hunted for drug traffickers was turned over to scientists Monday to begin a new mission of exploring the world's deepest oceans. Navy officials gave the USNS Capable to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration in a ceremony on Lake Union, making it the first vessel devoted solely to the agency's ocean-exploration branch. The ship's new task will be to study the deep-ocean environment, from marine life and ocean dynamics to oil and natural gas reserves.

## South Texas Prepares for Ivan

HOUSTON (AP) - Southeast Texas communities were preparing for an influx of evacuees from Louisiana who are expected to flee the path of Hurricane Ivan, which was swirling in the Gulf of Mexico Tuesday.

Texas emergency managers said the Category 4 storm posed little threat to the state's coastline if it continued on its predicted path.

"We are watching it very close because if it wouldn't make the turn and would continue to head our way, we would have to get people out," said Darlene Koch, assistant emergency management coordinator for Jefferson County.

But on Tuesday, Koch said all that was predicted for Texas' coast was higher tides and "no wind or no rain to really speak of."

Ivan, blamed for at least 68 deaths in the Caribbean,



News Journal

Employees at Crabs Restaurant on Pensacola Beach, Fla., prepare for evacuation by removing a 12-foot crab from the outside of the building Tuesday morning in advance of Hurricane Ivan.

was a Category 4 hurricane Tuesday afternoon with top sustained winds at 140 mph, down from 160 mph - Category 5 strength.

A hurricane watch was posted for a 420-mile stretch of coastline from St. Marks in the Florida Panhandle, just south of Tallahassee, to

New Orleans and Morgan City, La.

Texas officials have promised to take care of Louisiana residents affected by the storm, Koch said. She said the state hadn't opened any shelters on Tuesday but is prepared to when and if they are needed.

## DOD Details Medicare, TriCare Link

KILLEEN, Texas (Killeen Daily Herald) - Don't throw away that Department of Defense letter about health insurance.

It tells of a special enrollment period for Medicare Part B that is required of all dual eligible TRICARE beneficiaries, according to Jeri Chappelle, spokesperson for Darnall Army Community Hospital.

Some will discover they are eligible for reduced premiums and refunds for 2004 overpayments, Chappelle said. Others will learn they must enroll in Medicare Part B or lose their TRICARE insurance coverage.

Even though Medicare Part B costs more than TRICARE, beneficiaries must only pay for Part B to be covered by both insurance

policies. "This is still a great health benefit," said Kay Connelly, spokesperson for TRICARE in Washington, D.C.

A special open enrollment period is now on for Medicare Part B for dual-eligible beneficiaries, Connelly said. This gives another chance for those who did not enroll immediately.

For certain Medicare-TRICARE dual-eligible beneficiaries, the Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement and Modernization Act of 2003 (MMA) eliminates the

Medicare Part B surcharge for those who paid more than \$66.60 a month for enrolling in Part B during the years 2001-2004. These individuals will have their premium rates reduced and be reimbursed for any surcharges paid in 2004, according to a news release from TRICARE.

Later this month the Social Security Administration (SSA) will send a statement explaining these changes, and refunds will be provided in Social Security retirement checks.

The legislation also provides the opportunity for uniformed services beneficiaries who are entitled to Medicare Part A but are not enrolled in Medicare Part B to enroll in Part B without a premium surcharge.



## Soriano Helps Texas in Race

OAKLAND, Calif. (AP) -- The Texas Rangers bounced back from one of their most embarrassing moments by just plain winning.

Alfonso Soriano had three hits and two RBIs as the Rangers responded with their bats to beat the Oakland Athletics 12-9 Tuesday, a night after Texas reliever Frank Francisco threw a plastic chair into the stands and broke a woman's nose.

Soriano, the Rangers' All-Star second baseman, had another big offensive night after hitting two home runs in Monday's bizarre 7-6, 10-inning loss.

Doug Brocail (4-1) pitched two perfect innings for the win. The right-hander was one of



AP  
Texas Rangers' Alfonso Soriano drives in a run against Oakland Athletics' Justin Lehr in the fourth in Oakland, Calif.

the most visibly agitated players during the altercation Monday, screaming at fans. He was booed loudly when he came in to pitch the seventh.

"I'm not going to make any statement about last night's game," Brocail said. "We're here to play baseball and we're going to go forward. I blocked everything out. I went out and got loose knowing I would be counted on to help win a baseball game. That was my approach."

Eric Young singled twice, scored two runs and hit a fifth-inning sacrifice fly, and Laynce Nix had two doubles and an RBI. The Rangers won for the fourth time in five games, and have scored 10 or more runs in four of those.

The AL West-leading A's got help from Seattle to maintain their two-game division lead over the Anaheim Angels, who lost 3-2 to the Mariners at Safeco Field.

## LSU, Auburn May Become Ivan Casualty

ARCHER, Fla. (NBC) -- The threat of Hurricane Ivan is wreaking havoc on the college football schedule.

No. 5 LSU and No. 14 Auburn will decide Thursday if the SEC rivals will play their game at Auburn on Saturday, ESPN reported.

"We'll monitor the situation to see if the game can be played in a safe environment," LSU senior associate athletic director Dan Radakovich told ESPN Monday.

The game is currently scheduled for 2:30 p.m. kickoff local time Saturday.

Tulane officials have already postponed Saturday's football game against Louisville and Thursday night's game between No. 10 California and Southern Mississippi was postponed earlier in the



AP  
Customers enter Casey's Cafe, which is boarded up with plywood bearing messages to recent hurricanes, on Monday in Archer, Fla.

week.

Tulane officials said in a statement Tuesday that the game is tentatively rescheduled for the weekend of Dec. 4 at the Superdome.

The Cardinals and Green Wave are both off until Sept. 25, when Louisville plays North Carolina at Chapel

Hill and Tulane hosts Southern Mississippi.

"Our utmost concern at this point is the safety of our student-athletes, coaches, staff, fans and community," Southern Miss athletic director Richard Giannini said in a statement Monday night in Hattiesburg, Miss.

## Sports Shorts

### Suspicious Mail sent to Grisham

CHARLOTTESVILLE, Va. (AP) -- Authorities are investigating a suspicious mailing - initially thought to be a bomb - that was sent to best-selling author John Grisham at his farm in Albemarle County. "It appeared to be a potentially explosive device," said Lee Catlin, a spokeswoman for the county. "But a state police evaluation determined it was not a functional explosive device." County fire marshal Bob Lowry said Tuesday the large envelope was placed in Grisham's mailbox Saturday but was not delivered by the U.S. Postal Service.

### Nets in Talks to Trade Kidd

(NBC) -- Jason Kidd may join the New Jersey Nets exodus. The Nets are reportedly talking to the Portland Trail Blazers about trading the All-Star guard for forward Shareef Abdur-Rahim, Sportsline.com reported. The Nets, who traded guard Kerry Kittles and lost forward Kenyon Martin to free agency, haven't confirmed talks

with the Blazers, but Portland president reportedly reported Steve Patterson did. He did not say if a deal had been completed. "It's early," Patterson said. "I don't know if anything will happen."

