

Steel Dragons Log Milestone

By Sgt. John Queen
3rd BCT Public Affairs

BAGHDAD, Iraq - Soldiers of 2nd Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division reached a milestone in August by logging half a million miles traveled during convoy operations around central Iraq since arriving in Baghdad last April.

"The task force just completed its half millionth operational mile," said Lt. Col. Greg Shultz the battalion's commander. "That's 500,000 operational miles and about 2,600 missions that we have already completed."

More commonly known as Task Force Steel Dragon, the battalion provides security escorts for nearly every convoy that originates inside Baghdad's International Zone.

These convoys go to various ministries and locations throughout the capital city including daily runs to Baghdad International Airport. The task force also conducts a number of long-range missions to different points in central Iraq.

Shultz said that a major part of what his Soldiers do while on these escort missions is provide security for specific passengers.

"We have platoons that do missions for the Ministry of Oil," he said. "They (the ministry) send advisers down to investigate where pipelines have been blown. So we provide security on the site as well as in route."



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Before departing for the day's mission, 1st Lt. Jamie Vasquez, a platoon leader from Company C 160th Infantry Regiment, California Army National Guard gives a patrol brief his platoon and their principles. Keeping them informed of what the convoy's route, destination, mission and enemy activity might be is key to the survival of his Soldiers and passengers.

Shultz's task force is made up of active duty Soldiers from Fort Hood, Texas and a company from the California Army National Guards 1st Battalion, 160th Infantry Regiment located in Riverside, Calif.

"They're full members of the team," Shultz said about his guardsmen. "You cannot tell the difference between C company and the rest of my other batteries. They've done a great job."

Shultz explained that these half million miles have involved enemy contact.

"It's not unusual for us to have at least one platoon a

day to have enemy contact," Shultz said. "We've had some days when two or three platoons have enemy contact."

"One platoon on one mission at two different times dealt with improvised explosive devices and on a third incident had small-arms fire," he said.

Before each convoy the Steel Dragon troopers go through a series of briefings and checks to make sure nothing has been overlooked.

"We do pre-combat inspection's prior to leaving," said Staff Sgt. Paul

Teso, a convoy noncommissioned officer in charge from Company C 1-160 Infantry. "We do function checks on the weapons. We make sure we have ammo and a re-supply of food, water - plenty of water."

With the task force less than half way through its deployment Shultz is confident his Soldiers will surpass the next milestone - one million miles.

"We have a number of months to go so we're expecting we'll break the one-millionth mile mark before we go home," Shultz said.

Macedonian Troops Celebrate at Cooke

By Sgt. Merrion LaSonde
122nd MPAD

TAJI, Iraq - The Republic of Macedonia celebrated its 13th year of Independence on Sept. 8. To commemorate the occasion, Italian Maj. Gen Armando Novelli, deputy commanding general, Multi-National Corps-Iraq, visited the Macedonian Soldiers stationed at Camp Cooke in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Primarily supporting the 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment and the 1st Battalion 206th Infantry Regiment, the Macedonian troops are in Iraq serving beside their American allies to prove a point.

"Our mission is to conduct ... reconnaissance and raids according to the needs of the battalion commander," said Capt. Goran Ilioski, commander of the task force. "We are here to help in the fight against terrorism and our government wants to show that we have the capability to work side by side with the coalition forces and to prove that we are ready to become members of the [North Atlantic Treaty Organization]."

According to the

Republic of Macedonia Ministry of Defense Website, "[Macedonia] has demonstrated its firm determination in the last few years to become a NATO member country. This organization, which is the cornerstone of the Trans-Atlantic security system...would contribute to the peace, stability and prosperity in the world."

A country in its growing independent infancy, NATO membership would afford Macedonia the protection of many strong allies to help fight against its enemies, both foreign and domestic.

Embedded with the Macedonians is a small group of Iraqi National Guardsmen who accompany them on all their missions.

"We use them to bridge the cultural gap between us and the local nation," Ilioski said. "We believe having them with us helps the locals be less resistant to us and our presence."

This is the third group of Macedonian troops to support operations in Iraq, and they work for six-month rotations with the coalition.

"Each rotation of troops is decided upon and



By Sgt. Merrion LaSonde, 122nd MPAD

Italian Maj. Gen. Armando Novelli, deputy commanding general, Multi-National Corps-Iraq, addresses the Macedonian troops stationed at Camp Cooke.

approved by our government," Capt. Dragan Stevoski, Macedonian operations liaison officer, Multi-National Forces-Iraq.

Ilioski said, "We will be here conducting missions for as long as the Coalition is here."

During his visit, Novelli received a mission

and training brief of the Macedonian's operations, viewed a weapons static display and toured the ING facilities at Camp Cooke.

"I have got a very good impression," Novelli said. "They are tough Soldiers and very well trained. The results of their operations here in Iraq are outstanding."

Useful Iraqi Words/Phrases

What's your e-mail address?

maa huwa AHunwaanak feel eemayl?

Friday

High: 98
Low: 74



Saturday

High: 100
Low: 76



Sunday

High: 102
Low: 76



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

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News Notes

Va. to Preserve Civil War Battlefield

CHANCELLORSVILLE, Va. (AP) -- A portion of the battlefield where Gen. Robert E. Lee's outnumbered Confederate forces defeated Union Soldiers in 1863 will be spared from development under a proposed deal that preservationists call a model for other Civil War sites. The agreement to set aside 140 acres of the "core" Chancellorsville battlefield marks a breakthrough in a long campaign to save part of the land. The deal is subject to approval by the Spotsylvania Board of Supervisors.

Requests for Ballots Pour In

CHICAGO (Sun-Times) -- Record numbers of absentee ballots are being requested for military personnel and other registered voters living overseas. "It's off the charts," said Cook County Clerk David Orr. "We're up considerably," Chicago Board of Elections spokesman Tom Leach said. "This far exceeds anything we've ever seen before," said Lake County Clerk Willard Helander. Across the Chicago area, thousands of requests are coming in from military officers and others overseas entitled to receive ballots early to allow plenty of time for their return before Nov. 2. Concerns about delays resulting in uncounted votes are helping drive some of the rush, many said, especially after the 2000 presidential election.

Army's New Recruiting Drive

RICHMOND, Va. (Army News) - The T-shirt vendors had to move over at Richmond International Raceway this year to make room for the latest addition to NASCAR - the U.S. Army Mobile Interactive Unit.

This mobile exhibit is designed and operated by Keystone Marketing, Winston-Salem, N.C., because the Army needed a recruiting tool that fit the NASCAR target, said Guy Moran, Keystone tour director.

On entering the exhibit, visitors are greeted and asked to complete a postcard to send to troops overseas.

"We get an average of 5,000 to 7,000 postcards per weekend," said Jimmy Mendenhall, Keystone field marketing director.

Guests then proceed to a viewing area that features a five-minute video about NASCAR and the Army. It

includes info on the No. 01 U.S. Army Chevy driven by Joe Nemecheck, who finished 22nd in the Chevy Rock and Roll 400, Sept. 11. It also mentions the National Guard's Greg Biffle's No. 16 Ford driven by Greg Biffle.

The next stop is the Army video game - America's Army. Here visitors can play the demo version at eight kiosks or visit the Army recruiting Web site to find about the different jobs in the Army.

It is here most people meet Sgt. 1st Class Rock, from Natick Labs in Massachusetts.

"I am a fully interactive robotic piece of equipment whocan see, hear and speak," he says.

Other events included an Army marksmanship practice unit and an unmanned aerial vehicle flight simulator.

The last stop is the Army Simulator. Here visitors can



Army News

Jeff Jenkins (front) and Mark Moncure, both from Richmond, Va., step up to the pit crew challenge at the Army Mobile Interactive Unit.

feel and see what it's like to drive the Army racecar, Army dragster and the Army Stryker vehicle.

"It's our most popular exhibit," Mendenhall said. "The audience loves it.

Calm Before Storm in Big Easy

NEW ORLEANS (Austin American-Statesman) - As the winds here begin to swirl and the rain drizzles with the first signs of Hurricane Ivan, the party, for now, is rained out in the Crescent City. The bars and strip joints along Bourbon Street are boarded up.

The city declared a 2 p.m. curfew today. Those who haven't joined the Interstate 10 exodus made some final preparations. Outside hotels and restaurants, personnel busily positioned one more sandbag or another layer of plywood.

"It's just a Band-Aid, really," said Arceal Butler, an employee of the Chateau Sonesta hotel on Canal Street, as he screwed in ply-



Austin American-Statesman

wood to prevent loose debris from smashing the hotel's windows. "If it's a Category 4 or 5, we can expect five feet of water."

The hotels are booked with residents seeking firm shelter. Several poodles, with

the aid of their masters, have checked themselves into rooms.

Few people, other than dogwalkers, some seemingly disappointed tourists and, curiously, a couple of joggers, made their way through the French Quarter this morning. It's mostly quiet, except for the creaking of hanging gas lamps pushed about in the breeze.

As the afternoon approaches, residents here have little to do other than wait. Ronnie Cassano, a resident of Dauphine Street, decided he was too exhausted to leave.

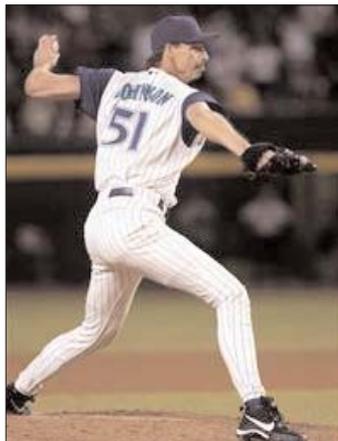
"I was up till 1:30 a.m. last night," he sighed. "I had 150 plants in their containers to batten down."

Big Unit Breaks Lefty Record

PHOENIX (AP) -- Randy Johnson broke Steve Carlton's major league record for strikeouts by a left-hander, fanning 11 to lead the Arizona Diamondbacks past the Colorado Rockies 3-2 Wednesday night.

Johnson pitched eight strong innings and finished the night with 4,139 strikeouts, passing Carlton (4,136) for third overall on the career list behind only Nolan Ryan (5,714) and Roger Clemens (4,287).

The Big Unit struck out Vinny Castilla in the seventh for No. 4,137. Play was interrupted momentarily while the scoreboard flashed the statistics and the crowd cheered the workhorse of their struggling team.



Reuters

Arizona Diamondbacks pitcher Randy Johnson, a five-time Cy Young Award winner, struck out every player in the Rockies' starting lineup Wednesday except their pitcher.

Despite Johnson's big night, the paid attendance was announced as 22,598 - the second-lowest ever

at Bank One Ballpark.

Johnson had his 12th double-digit strikeout game this year and 203rd overall - moving within 12 of Ryan's big league record. Johnson has a major league-high 268 strikeouts this season. He is 244-127 in his career.

Luis Terrero hit a leadoff homer and Shea Hillenbrand drove in a run for the Diamondbacks, who won their second straight after losing 10 of 11.

It was the first time in eight starts that the Diamondbacks scored more than two runs for Johnson (14-13), and he needed them after giving up a leadoff triple and a two-run homer to Aaron Miles in the eighth inning.

No New Deal, McKenzie Returns to Packers

GREEN BAY, Wis. (AP) -- Cornerback Mike McKenzie returned to the Green Bay Packers on Wednesday after holding out throughout training camp and missing the season opener.

"Mike McKenzie is back here to play for the Packers, and that is where we are right now. We will take it one day at a time," coach and general manager Mike Sherman said Wednesday.

McKenzie, with his familiar dreadlocks flowing to his shoulders, practiced with the team Wednesday as the Packers prepared for Sunday's game against the Chicago Bears in Green Bay.

Sherman said McKenzie's contract has not been reworked, and the team has two weeks to activate him to play.



Reuters

Cornerback Mike McKenzie practiced with the team as the Packers prepared for Sunday's game with Chicago.

Sherman met with McKenzie and his agent Wednesday morning at their request - just two days after the Packers opened the season by overpowering defending NFC champion

Carolina 24-14.

"It looked like he had been training and was in shape and that's a positive thing. We are going to try to get him ready as soon as possible," Sherman said.

Just because he's back doesn't mean McKenzie has resolved his differences with the Packers. There's always the possibility they could still part ways by the Oct. 19 trading deadline.

Quarterback Brett Favre said the team welcomed McKenzie back with open arms.

"We need him," Favre said. "I said that all along. He is an important part of our defense and an important part of our team."

Even though he had been critical of McKenzie's holdout earlier, Favre said Wednesday there were no hard feelings.

In Brief

Roy Horn Recalls Tiger Attack

LOS ANGELES (AP) -- Nearly a year after a tiger attack left him partly paralyzed, Roy Horn, one-half of the illusionist duo Siegfried & Roy, for the first time described his memories of the mauling during a television interview that aired Wednesday. In an interview with Maria Shriver on NBC, Horn said he fainted on stage during the fateful performance and that the 380-pound tiger was only trying to help him by dragging him off stage.

"It's just my body. I have high blood pressure," Horn said, referring to why he fainted Oct. 3, 2003, at a hotel in Las Vegas.

Malone Won't be Ready to Play

(NBC) -- Even if Karl Malone decides to return for a 20th NBA season, he won't be



back in action right away, the Los Angeles Times reported Wednesday. Malone, who underwent arthroscopic surgery on his right knee after the NBA Finals, hasn't completely recovered and will miss at least part of the exhibition season, the newspaper reported. "He is working out and all signs are pointing to a 100 percent recovery, but that is still many months away," Malone's agent, Dwight Manley, told the Los Angeles Times.