

The Daily Charge

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Operation Iraqi Freedom II

"Telling the First Team's Story"

August 14, 2004



By Pfc. Al Barrus, 122nd MPAD

Iraqi children swing around in one of the new toys at the Al Buwaib Qu'rter playground in Al Sadiya. The grand opening included a ribbon cutting and soccer ball giveaway in the 5 BCT, area of operations.

Soldiers Help with Playground

By Pfc. Al Barrus
122nd MPAD

AL SADIYA, Baghdad, Iraq – There were plenty of smiles around Al Sadiya on July 26, when a new playground was opened for the neighborhood. The Al Sadiya Neighborhood Council sponsored the project. Cake was served, and soccer balls were handed out to the children.

The project, within the area of operations of Battery B, 1st Battalion, 21st Field Artillery Regiment, 5th Brigade Combat Team, began construction May 17 and cost \$33,000, said Capt. Michael Levy, the battalion civil military operations officer.

While most civil affairs

"We wanted to utilize some open space to give the kids a place to play."

**-Capt. Roberto Mercado
Battery B Commander 1-21 FA**

project ideas come from the neighborhood councils, bringing this place of recreation was a concept developed by the troops.

"We noticed that there are two schools in this area and there was an open space in the middle of them that wasn't being used," said Capt. Roberto Mercado, Battery B commander. "They didn't ask for it, but it was something that came up from the battery. We wanted to utilize some open space to give the kids a place to play."

They are also working to improve other, more complicated and expensive portions in their neighborhood. They are in the process of implicating sewage and electrical improvements in the area as well, Mercado said.

For now, though, projects already underway are mainly focused toward the children. Refurbishment projects for two primary/secondary schools are ongoing. Additionally, a

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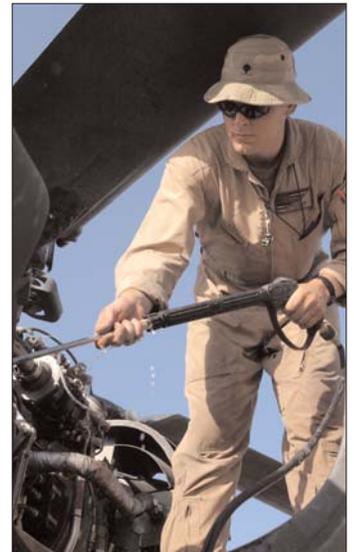
45th Medevac Beats the Clock

By Sgt. Merrion LaSonde
122nd MPAD

CAMP COOKE, Taji, Iraq—The instant a person sustains a life-threatening injury from a roadside improvised explosive device (IED) or small-arms fire in the Baghdad area, the clock starts ticking for the 45th Medical Company (Air Ambulance).

"After we get a medevac [medical evacuation] request, our response time is about four-and-a-half minutes to be in the air," said 45th Med. 1st Sgt. Robert Boler. "On average, we are at the site in 10 minutes. We pride ourselves on

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By Sgt. Merrion LaSonde, 122nd MPAD Spc. Darrick McClain of Stockport, Iowa, is a Blackhawk crew chief with the 45th Medical Company. He pressure washes built up dirt and debris off the hydraulic deck of his aircraft.



By Pfc. Al Barrus, 122nd MPAD

Lt. Col. Christopher Bauman, 1st Battalion, 21st Field Artillery Regiment, commander, joins community leaders in the ribbon cutting of the Al Buwaib Qu'rter children's playground.

First Team Opens New Playground in Al Sadiya

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 new footbridge passing over a main road assists pedestrians, especially kids going to school, Mercado said.

"These projects are great because the kids we help now will be the ones who delegate and run this country in the future," Sgt. Morris Harris, a team leader in 1st platoon, Battery B, said.

The playground opening marks the first of sever-

al projects to open in the neighborhood under the battery, and strengthens the local's outlook toward American Forces.

"When we first got to this neighborhood I would rate it as neutral toward us," Mercado said. "But in the last two months when they have seen action on our part in that area they have been leaning more toward being pro-coalition. I wouldn't say they're quite there yet, but it's going that way."

'Smallest and the Busiest' Aviation Unit Saves Lives Daily

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 getting there quick."

One of four medevac companies in theater, the 45th handles all calls from Baghdad on through the southern reaches of the Central Command's area of operations in Iraq.

"Our focus and direct support is to the 1st Cavalry Division within Baghdad and south. It is our primary mission," Boler said.

The 45th is a self-sustaining company with the same elements of an aviation battalion, only smaller.

"We have over 100 per-

sonnel in our company," Boler, a Detroit, Mich. native, said. "Of those personnel, we have our own medics, pilots, mechanics and headquarters elements; just platoon-size rather than company-size."

The 45th has been in Iraq for the past eight months and in that time has transported more than 2,000 patients, been on more than 1,300 missions and logged more than 2,700 hours of flight time.

"We are the smallest and the busiest," said Company Commander Maj. Chris Knapp, a native of

Milwaukee, Wis., and pilot for the company. "We are the busiest just because our [area of operation] is Baghdad. We cover some of the hottest areas in theater."

They also handle their own maintenance needs.

"We make sure the helicopters are flyable at all times," said Sgt. 1st Class Luis Arzadon, the maintenance platoon sergeant. "I think the maintenance crew is the meat and potatoes of how we can get the medics where they need to be."

Sgt. 1st Class Vito Dichristina, flight platoon sergeant and native of

Buffalo, N.Y., supervises approximately two-thirds of the company.

"We can do everything in-house and are on-call 24 hours a day, seven days a week for medevac coverage," Dichristina said.

Speed is critical.

"There is what we call the golden hour," he said. "That is the hour between the time a person sustains an injury to the time we get them to a hospital. Focusing our efforts on staying within that hour time frame means the patient's chances of survival are excellent."

Useful Iraqi Words/Phrases

**Where?
 AYNa?**

Saturday
 High: 106
 Low: 80



Sunday
 High: 110
 Low: 80



Monday
 High: 110
 Low: 82



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

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News Notes

Robbers Strike Jelly Bean Plant

SAN FRANCISCO, Calif. (CNN)-- Two armed men robbed the Jelly Belly factory in San Francisco, making off with an undisclosed amount of cash but none of the jelly beans that were a favorite of President Reagan. The robbery happened after hours and no one was hurt during the robbery.

Texas Training Complete by Guard

FORT HOOD, Texas -- Hood Stadium filled with Cajun cooks Thursday as volunteers prepared a feast for thousands of outgoing Army National Guard Soldiers. The 256th Louisiana National Guard Brigade is scheduled to deploy to Iraq in a couple of months, said Maj. Jeff Volpe, the brigade's public affairs officer. After finishing their training at Fort Hood, the brigade heads to the National Training Center at Fort Irwin, Calif. From there, they take two weeks leave and deploy to an undisclosed location, the *Killeen Daily Herald* reported Friday. Volpe said the brigade will join the 1st Cavalry Division upon arrival in Iraq.

Oregon Schools Low-Performing

PORTLAND, Ore. -- More than 200 Oregon schools, including more than half of the state's high schools, are branded as low-performers in federally mandated school ratings made public, the *Oregonian* newspaper reported Thursday.



Kids Model Schoolwear at Fashion Show

► From *Fort Hood Herald* KILLEEN, Texas--School clothes was a focus of a monthly meeting for a family readiness group in the 1st Cavalry Division.

Gathered Thursday, members of the support group for the 4th Battalion, 5th Air Defense Artillery Regiment watched as children, ages 4 to 12, paraded schoolwear during unit's second annual back-to-school fashion show.

"We do a monthly event to keep everyone in touch," said Christine Fischer, the family readiness group's event planner.

Fischer said the event was paid for entirely by the

group's sale of yellow ribbon magnets.

"We sold about 1,500 in under a month, and that has been keeping us going all this time," Fischer said.

Capt. Shane Robb, the unit's rear detachment commander said the event was a welcome respite for the unit's families.

"These are fun events," said Robb, adding that he is glad to be able to do things to show support for the spouses while the most of the unit is in Iraq for a year.

The Fort Hood Main Exchange allowed the children to borrow outfits from the store for the fashion

Children of 4-5 Air Defense Artillery Regiment Soldiers, show off their new school outfits at the unit's second annual back-to-school fashion show. The family readiness group from 4-5 ADA does monthly events to keep everyone in touch while their family members are serving in Baghdad with the First Cavalry Division.

Fort Hood Herald

show.

Bonnie Plaster, the sales area manager for the soft-lines department, said that store was glad to provide the support to the families.

"We helped approximately 25 children of 4/5 ADA select one outfit apiece for a back-to-school fashion show," Plaster said.

"The children were excited to be able to choose any outfit to model," she said. Plaster said the Fort Hood store has a wide selection of back-to-school clothing, supplies and school uniforms.

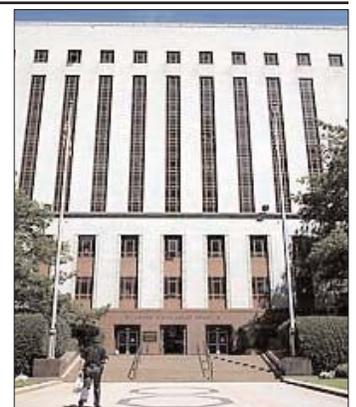
"It was my pleasure to be able to assist in this event," she said.

Depression-Era Courthouse Closes Doors After 64 Years

► *Seattle Times* SEATTLE, Wash.-- Seattle's William Kenzo Nakamura Federal Courthouse captures the Depression-era utility of its Work Projects Administration origins. It closes its doors today, Friday Aug. 13, after 64 years as the hub of federal justice in Seattle.

If there were a way to capture the appearance of federal justice, opines longtime Seattle public

defender Tom Hillier, it would look like the U.S. District Courthouse at Madison Street and Fifth Avenue in Seattle: solid and magisterial, unadorned and accessible. These are a few of the attributes given the stodgy old courthouse, which closes its doors today after 64 years as the hub of federal justice in Seattle. It will reopen in several years as the Seattle office of the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals.



Seattle Times

Seattle's Federal courthouse will close after 64 years, but will reopen in several years as the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals.



AP

The National League's first 15-game winner this season, Jason Schmidt of the San Francisco Giants pitched a 4-hit shutout against Pittsburgh Thursday.

Giants' Schmidt Joins Mulder as 15-Game Winner

PITTSBURGH (AP) - Jason Schmidt dominated his former team, just as he's done against almost everybody this season.

Schmidt pitched a four-hitter with 11 strikeouts for his NL-leading 15th win, and the San Francisco Giants defeated the Pittsburgh Pirates 7-0 Thursday night.

"It's nice to come back here and win, but it's not like I was thriving on it," Schmidt said. "It was like I was facing any other team, to be honest with you."

Edgardo Alfonzo, Marquis Grissom and Michael Tucker each drove in two runs to help the Giants avoid a season sweep by Pittsburgh. Barry Bonds had an RBI double.

Schmidt (15-4) walked one and allowed only four singles - two by Rob Mackowiak. It was Schmidt's eighth career shutout and third this season. All three of his com-

plete games this year have been shutouts.

"That's your goal when you go out there is to go the whole way," Schmidt said.

The right-hander struck out at least 10 for the third straight start and ninth time this season. He joined Oakland's Mark Mulder as the only 15-game winners in the majors.

"When (Schmidt is) pitching, we have a feeling we're going to win," Giants manager Felipe Alou said. "There aren't very many good pitchers, not like that. I remember when I played for this team, when (Juan) Marichal was pitching, we knew we would win the game."

"We always played better, we always hit better behind a guy like that."

Schmidt is 4-1 lifetime against the Pirates, who dealt him to San Francisco

on July 30, 2001, for outfielder Jon Vander Wal, outfielder Armando Rios and pitcher Ryan Vogelsong.

This was the first time Schmidt faced Vogelsong since the deal.

It was a mismatch.

Vogelsong (3-9) lasted only five innings and has not won a home game since he beat the Phillies on opening day. He allowed six hits and three runs, walking four and striking out three.

Still, it was better than his previous start, when he lasted only 1 1-3 innings against San Diego.

"I'm nowhere near where I want to be," Vogelsong said. "I want to get on Jason Schmidt's level, and I'm far from that right now."

San Francisco salvaged the finale of a three-game series. Pittsburgh won five of six meetings between the teams this year.

Sports Shorts

Olympic Dream: Iraqi Team Wins

PATRAS, Greece (AP) -- In its first Olympic competition since its country was shattered by war, Iraq upset a star-studded Portugal soccer team 4-2 on Thursday in a gritty, come-from-behind victory that set off cheers and celebrations among 200 fans. "This victory will be received with happiness by my people, who have suffered through much," said Iraqi coach Adnan Hamad.



Ravens Win -- Lewis to Court

ATLANTA (AP) -- Jamal Lewis' drug conspiracy trial is scheduled to begin Nov. 1, the middle of the NFL season.



The date was set Thursday by a federal court, falling between the eighth and ninth weeks of the pro football season. Lewis became only the fifth player in NFL history to rush for more than 2,000 yards (2,066) in a season. Meanwhile, the Ravens' suffocating defense demolished the Atlanta Falcons 24-0 in Baltimore Thursday night in an exhibition game. Reserve tight end Daniel Wilcox caught two TDs for the Ravens.