

First Team Soldiers Keep Route Secure

By Cpl. Bill Putnam
122nd MPAD

AL RASHID, Baghdad, Iraq – From rocket propelled grenades to small arms fire, the 1st Squadron,

7th Cavalry Regiment, sees all of it on their regular patrols through the Al Rashid District of Baghdad. Cavalry troopers from 1-7 Cav. have been

running constant patrols on the highway from Baghdad International Airport (BIAP) through Al Rashid for well over a month now.

Keeping the strategic highway open is a critical mission, yet the days are long and hot for the troopers. The highway runs from BIAP and splits at one point. One section heads downtown, the other through the squadron's and the 5th Brigade Combat Team's area of Al Rashid.

"Something always goes 'boom' when we're going back to the camp," Spc. Joshua Breeding, a cavalry scout in Troop C, 1st Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment, said before the patrol begins.

Patrols frequently last most of the day. They encounter everything from

improvised explosive devices (IED) to cars broken down on the roadside. Often times insurgents will shoot at them.

The patrol Comanche Troop ran the afternoon and evening of July 25 starts typically: quiet.

Several times they spot cars sitting on the highway's narrow shoulder. Soldiers hop out of the vehicles and tell the drivers they have to move.

They patrol left the camp and drove to its assigned sector. And they drove around and around and around, for hours.

"Yeah, this is how we live," said Sgt. Faheed Alajmi, a cavalry scout in Comanche Troop, while driving his Humvee. In front of him was a M-2A3



By Cpl. Bill Putnam, 122nd MPAD

Sgt. Kofie Antwi (left), a medic in Troop C, 1st Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment, pull security on Highway 8 after a suspected improvised explosive device (IED) was found during a patrol July 25. The suspected IED, a dog wrapped in a t-shirt was later found to be nothing more than a dead canine.

Young Mother Reenlists for Her Son

By 1st Lt. Kristy Schaffer
20th Engineer Battalion

BAGHDAD, Iraq.— There are many reasons why Soldiers reenlist in the Army, a monetary bonus, change of job, even a change in duty station; but Spc. Tronda Powers, Headquarters Company, 20th Engineer Battalion, reenlisted for an entirely different reason. She reenlisted for her son.

Powers gave birth to her son, Dontrell Treyvon, on Dec. 14, 2003, just three days after her 21st birthday. She was only able to spend four short months

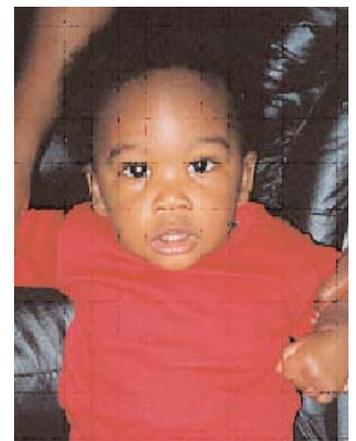
with Dontrell before joining the rest of her unit in Iraq. Powers, a supply clerk for 20th Engineers, though devastated at the prospect of having to leave her newborn son, was ready to join her military family in Iraq. She knew that her year in Iraq would be a tremendous help for a single mom raising a son by herself. She hopes to use the money she saves from being deployed to buy a new car to replace the old and unreliable one she had been driving.

Powers is also getting plenty of support on the home front. Powers and her parents, Ronald and

Gwen Cozart, are originally from Temple, Texas. Her stepfather served in the Army for 22 years. Her mother is taking care of Dontrell for the duration of the deployment. She said that without the support of her family she doesn't know where she would be at this time.

So when it came time for Powers to decide whether to stay and reenlist in the Army or get out, she had only one deciding factor to think about, her son Dontrell.

"I want my son to have better opportunities than I had," she said. "I want him to go to college."



Courtesy photo

Dontrell Treyvon, son of Spc. Tronda Powers, now seven months old, stay in Temple, Texas with Powers' parents. Powers currently serves with the 20th Engineer Battalion at Ironhorse Base.

Continued on Page 3

Back to School: Najid Renovation Completed

By Sgt. Dan Purcell
122nd MPAD

KERNABAT DISTRICT, Baghdad, Iraq – Najid primary school was once a wrecked and dilapidated shell of its former self. But now with the new school year only months away, the school celebrated its recent restoration with local students, teachers and the people who helped make it happen.

Marking the completion of the school's renovation, the students' in attendance received gifts provided by the 425th Civil Affairs Battalion. Soldiers

of Company A, 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, and Iraqi National Guardsmen intermingled with the children and provided a secure environment July 28.

The school was in bad shape before the project started.

"When I did the initial assessment of the school it was completely trashed. There were big holes in the walls, broken windows, major electrical problems and a big pool of standing

water," said Spc. Sharla Tracy, project coordinator, 425th CA. "It looked like a dump yard with piles of trash and old desks,"

"We then hired a local Iraqi contractor, Dr. Karim Alwari. Our purpose was to restore the school to its original look, to include things like new faucets for drinking water, a fence and fresh paint," she said.

"This school is the first one we initiated, so what we wanted to do was set a standard on how schools should look," Sgt. Malcolm Flanders, 425th CA, said.

"Dr. Karim did an exceptional job. His bids are always low to moderate, and he always puts in way more effort into what he does."

Local contractors did all the work on the renovation, which is one of the project's several good points because it helps to stimulate the local economy, Tracy said. It was a 45-day project that was started in mid-June and was completed at a cost \$65,000.

"Before we started work on the school it was horrible, it wasn't fit for human beings," Alwari said. "There was water everywhere and the toilets were so bad you couldn't even look at them. To see it, you would say just leave it and build something new."

To get the job done, Alwari hired 30 employees including some who were handicapped.

"It's good for our economy to hire locally because it is better to give our people something to do and pay them than just handing them money," Alwari said. "We repaired the roof, walls and windows."



By Sgt. Dan Purcell, 122nd MPAD

Sgt. Jung Park, 425th Civil Affairs Battalion, gives out candy to some students who attended a celebration

marking the completion of renovations to Najid Primary School in the Kernabat district of Baghdad.

Useful Iraqi Words/Phrases

What is this?

Ma HAZa

Tuesday

High: 112

Low: 82



Wednesday

High: 112

Low: 80



Thursday

High: 110

Low: 78



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

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State Helps Libraries Hook Youths

Arkansas Democrat Gazette

LITTLE ROCK, Ark., - Public libraries are often the summer go-to spots for bored children looking for air conditioning and entertainment, but in Arkansas, libraries have another hook.

An 11-year-old program that lets anyone with a library card borrow rods and reels along with books and videos is catching on across the state, giving hundreds of children and a few adults a taste of one of the state's popular hobbies.

The racks for lender rods and reels were bare at the William F. Laman Public Library in North Little Rock on Thursday.

"Right now we don't have one in," said Mary Furlough, the library's children's service director.

Of the 44 lending sites in the state, Laman Library often reports the highest

circulation of fishing gear. Children and their parents start mining the library's stock in spring when the weather warms up, and the racks won't be full again until winter, Furlough said.

"Most people usually keep them for the whole two weeks, and some re-check them out."

Every once in a while, a sheepish junior fisherman returns a damaged rod and reel, but there's no penalty.

The lender program is sponsored by the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission, and commission employees stop in at the libraries when needed to do repairs.

Started in 1993 as part of a national campaign to get young people interested in the outdoors, the Tackle Loaner Program has spread beyond libraries to a few nature centers, churches

and schools. And in most cases, the program has proven popular.

In 2003, the 425 fishing rods and reels in the program were loaned out 2,330 times. The Central Arkansas Library System has participated for seven years, and racks of rods and reels stand near the children's sections at all of the library system's branches.

Carolyn Polite and her 11-year-old son Amad make sure the rods at the Aerospace Library in Little Rock get plenty of use.

Amad has his own fishing supplies at home, but the ones at the library are better, Carolyn Polite said.

Rommel and MacArthur parks are favorite fishing spots, but so far this year the fish haven't cooperated.

"He caught a couple of small ones," Carolyn Polite said.

The Game and Fish Commission will have rods and reels to lend inside the library and a stocked pond.



Arkansas Democrat Gazette

Fishing poles are on display at the Main Library in downtown Little Rock. An 11-year-old program, sponsored by the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission, allows library patrons to borrow rods and reels.

1-7 Cavalry Takes on IEDs, Keeping Main Routes Safe

Continued from Page 1
Bradley Cavalry Fighting Vehicle.

The most exciting part of the day happened a short time later. The Bradley's commander, Staff Sgt. Darrin Boner, calls on the radio.

"There's a dead dog on the side of the road," he said. A gray t-shirt covers its abdomen. It could be an IED.

The patrol stops in the middle of the highway to investigate. Traffic,

though, doesn't stop and continues to drive around the vehicles. Some of the locals slow down enough to look at the dog before speeding off in clouds of dust.

Boner picks up a pair of binoculars.

"It's wrapped in a t-shirt," Boner said. The Bradley driver moves the vehicle so Boner can get a better look. He doesn't see any wires coming out of it, so the patrol drives down some, hops the median and comes back around to block traffic. An Explosive Ordnance Disposal team from Camp Ferrin-Huggins is called.

Traffic on the major highway still doesn't stop, though. Even with the troopers' extraordinary efforts to stop it, the traffic is like a river that can't be dammed. The drivers see the Humvee and Bradley sitting in the road and simply drive around it. Pedestrians walk dangerously close to the dog.

Some of the troopers just shake their head at the sight.

After a while, Task Force Iron Claws shows up. The large, ungainly-looking Buffalo vehicle that sweeps major roads around the city for IEDs lumbers down the road to the dog. The crew inside picked it up with the vehicles attached long claw, not once, not twice, but four times. The dog doesn't blow up.

With that, the patrol mounts back up and continues their circuit around the highway. The Humvee, with the exception of the radio traffic, is quiet. No one really talks; they just concentrate on the road and looking out for insurgents.

The patrols aren't always this quiet, said Breeding and Alajmi. During one break, in the shade of a building, they talk bluntly about insurgents firing rocket-propelled grenades at them. Occasionally, insurgents will shoot small arms. It's all par for the course for the patrols.

Finally, long after the sun sets and the reddish after glow fades, the patrol receives a call they've waited for. Their relief, another patrol from 1-7 Cav. arrives.

"We are officially relieved and headed home," said Alajmi.

The drive home is quiet and hot. Nothing goes "boom" on the way back.

Johnson Takes Pennsylvania 500

From the *Associated Press*

Johnson wins, Junior out: Jimmie Johnson became the fifth driver ever and the first since 1999 to sweep a season series at Pocono Raceway. His win Sunday in the Pennsylvania 500 also gave him 11 top fives in his last 13 races. Johnson finished well ahead of Mark Martin, who had to settle for his sixth career runner-up finish at Pocono.

Meanwhile, for the second straight week, Dale Earnhardt Jr. had to give way to a replacement driver. Earnhardt said his left leg was going numb and felt he was hurting the team because he couldn't feel the brake pedal. John

Andretti took the wheel of the No. 8 Chevy 54 laps into the race with the team a lap down in 32nd place. Andretti was in 36th place when the car was black-flagged on lap 79 for not meeting a minimum speed. By the time he got back on the track, Andretti was seven laps down and ended up finishing 25th.

Kevin Harvick (No. 9 in the standings heading into the race) had to head behind the wall. That ended his streak of 58 consecutive races in which he was running at the end — a modern-era record — and dropped him down to 10th in the standings.

FINAL RESULTS:
1. Johnson; 2.

Martin; 3. Kasey Kahne; Gordon; 8. Matt
4. Greg Biffle; 5. Jeff Kenseth; 9. Jeremy
Gordon; 6. Terry Mayfield; 10. Elliott
LaBonte; 7. Robby Sadler.



AP Photo

SEND IN A RELIEVER -- John Andretti get into the number 8 car, relieving Dale Earnhardt, Jr., 54 laps into the Pennsylvania 500 at the Pocono Raceway. Earnhardt's leg went numb during the race, forcing the driver change.

Ready or Not, Olympic Games Coming to Athens

ATHENS, Greece (AP) - Giorgos Voulgarakis knows his nation faces a daunting task: protecting thousands of athletes and millions of spectators at the Summer Games from an unprecedented range of domestic and international threats.

Olympic venues must be secured. Tourist sites such as the Acropolis must be safeguarded. Trains and buses are possible targets, as are Athens' countless

sidewalk cafes. And there's the port, where visiting royalty and U.S. basketball stars will bunk on luxury liners.

"Everything we have done here is beyond any human imagination," says Voulgarakis, the public order minister and the man ultimately responsible for security at the games. "It is well known we really spent more than we could afford."

A record \$1.2 billion is

what Greece is paying for security. And it has enlisted the help of NATO and a seven-nation advisory group including the United States, Britain and Israel, and trained 70,000 police officers and soldiers.

But just in case Voulgarakis, like many Greeks, keeps a religious icon on the wall behind his desk for good luck.

Voulgarakis needs all the help he can get. Athens is hosting the first Summer Olympics since the 2001 terrorist attacks in America. It's a dangerous world - there are daily bombings in Iraq, the Middle East remains explosive and terrorism is a global problem.

In addition to its own domestic mix of anarchists and other radical groups, Greece sits uncomfortably close to many of the world's hot spots - including Iraq, Chechnya,

Afghanistan and the Balkans. Libya and Sudan are also nearby.

"Concern about Greece's vulnerability to penetration by international terrorist groups is partly due to the existence of countless points of entry into the country," the Congressional Research Service wrote in a report in late April.



AP Photo

There are only ten days to go until the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens, Greece.



AP Photo

Security is a major concern about the upcoming Olympic Games in Athens.