

Soldier Firefighters Protect Camp Taji

By Cpl. Benjamin Cossel
122nd MPAD

CAMP TAJI, Iraq -- Housed in an unassuming concrete structure, the remnant of a prior regime, a small group of men humbly awaits their next mission. Their job requires strength, humility, teamwork and courage. They are the firefighters of Camp Taji.

Assembled from the Puerto Rico National Guard's 215th Engineering Detachment and Massachusetts-based Army Reserve units, the 287th and 356th Engineering Detachments, the 1st Cavalry Division firefighters on Camp Taji play a pivotal role as first responders to a variety of situations ranging from hazardous material clean-up to crash and rescue services.

"As a firefighter you have to know so much more than how to put out a fire. With all the extra skills the guys here have, we are able to bring so much more to the table than just fighting fires," Staff Sgt. Alfredo Torres, of the 215th Eng. Det., said. "Many of our guys are certified Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs), so we are able to provide assistance to the medical companies here when needed. We have the ability to collect hazardous material and package it for disposal. We are trained in crash and rescue so we can support the aviation brigade (The 1st Cavalry Division's 4th Brigade Combat Team)"

In addition to the tangible skills related to their job, the Soldiers of the detachment offer classes and inspect all of the many newly constructed buildings prior to their occupancy.

"About once a month we give fire prevention classes and instruction on how to properly use a fire extinguisher," said Boston resident Spc. Mohan Pilwah, a pump operator with the 287th Eng Det. "Units are also able to come to us and request classes relevant to our field, and we do our best to meet their requirements and provide the training."



Photos by Cpl. Benjamin Cossel, 122nd MPAD

Spc. William Miranda (left) of Salinas, Puerto Rico, assists Spc. Pinael Roamel of San Juan, Puerto Rico, don the over 85 pounds of gear each firefighter must wear when responding to an emergency. Both Soldiers are with 215th Engineering Detachment attached to the 1st Cavalry Division.

Ask any firefighter what drives them, what compels them to go into a burning building where any mistake could mean their life.

"You do this because you love helping people," Pilwah said. "And over here, the stakes are so much higher. You know, you do this back home and most folks have insurance so at least they are financially compensated for anything they may lose. But here... a Soldier's trailer goes up in flames due to a mortar strike, and that's all they've got in the world right now."

When the alarm calling the firefighters to duty sounds, the countdown begins. Within two minutes, the engine company of four personnel donned the 85 pounds worth of protective gear the job requires. They jumped into the truck carrying 6,000 gallons of water and sped down the road to the scene of the accident. Steeling themselves for the mission ahead, they repeat an often-



Coming together from the Puerto Rico National Guard's 215th Eng. Det. and the Mass. based 287th and 356th Eng. Det, attached to the 1st Cav. Div.; the firefighters of Camp Taji are able to respond to emergency situations with two engine companies.

used mantra expressed by Salinas, Puerto Rico resident Spc. William Miranda, of the 215th Eng. Det.

"I have to win this. I have to beat this fire. I have to save whoever is in danger. I must, above all else, win this."

Because You Can't Take It With You

By Staff Sgt. Susan German
122nd MPAD

CAMP AL-TAHREER, Baghdad -- With several months to go until their redeployment, deployed Soldiers will soon start sorting through their belongings; making decisions on what to send home, as well as how to dispose of what is no longer needed.

Many have accumulated items, such as televisions, bicycles and refrigerators. With limited space to ship items home through military channels, along with high mailing costs incurred using the postal system, Soldiers have an option, other than using unit or post-exchange bulletin boards or word of mouth, to rid themselves of unwanted baggage before packing time comes.

Buyers and sellers can now link up on an electronic bulletin board called "Trigger's Marketplace," located on the 1st Cavalry Division's home page (CAVNET) on the Secure Internet Protocol Network (SIPRNET).

Maj. Edward Prem, the Division Automation Management Officer with the Communications (G-6)



By Staff Sgt. Susan German, 122nd MPAD

Sp. Josh Sesters, an assistant fire support non-commissioned officer with the 2nd Brigade Combat Team's Fire Support Element, 1st Cavalry Division, looks at the list of items available on "Trigger's Marketplace", an online bulletin board where people can buy and sell personal belongings.

Section of the 1st Cavalry Division, came up with the idea for the site after finishing a DVD series. Not wanting to spend money on shipping the DVDs home, he hoped to recoup some of their cost by selling them.

Although only available via SIPRNET, the G-6 Section is working to make access to the marketplace a little easier. Currently there's a project called 'SIPR to the Company', where the section is trying

to bring SIPR access to every single company in the division.

Because the actual sale of items is the responsibility of the seller, Prem does not track final sales. Items stay on the site for 14 days or until sold, whichever is shorter. If an article has not sold during that time, sellers are allowed to request a resubmission through the webmaster.

Webmaster Kit Hester, a civilian information tech-

nology employee of Northrup Grumman, is responsible for the coding for the web site. Prem is alerted by e-mail when new items are submitted and approves items before they can be posted on the web page. A warning appears when the site is first accessed "Joke or nuisance posts are automatically rejected and will not appear". Prem has the final say on the appropriateness of items placed on the site.

Instructions are easy enough. Site users complete a form on the site's information page in which they describe the item they want to sell, set a price and provide e-mail or telephone contact information. Those looking to buy items describe the item and the amount they would like to spend. The categories available to select from include the following: cameras, DVDs and Movies, Electronics, Music, Sporting Goods, Video Games, and Miscellaneous.

If you're looking for a way to put a little extra cash in your pocket, consolidate your living area, or help out a fellow Soldier, you might want to take a look at Trigger's Marketplace.

Useful Iraqi Words/Phrases

How much is that?
bikam haaza?

Wednesday

High: 94
Low: 64



Thursday

High: 96
Low: 66



Friday

High: 92
Low: 64



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

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News Notes

A Bag of Pennies for Some Silence

LOS ANGELES (AP) -- A Hollywood producer agreed to pay a couple \$1,000 to stop noisy tree trimming during a TV shoot then delivered the payment in big bags of pennies. While on location, producer Ronald L. Schwary's location team asked Stefanie and Myron Roth to halt the trimming because the noise was interfering with production. The Roths agreed on the condition that they be paid \$1,000. Schwary waited several weeks before having 100,000 pennies delivered to the Roths. The Roths were outraged and threatened to sue. Paramount responded with a letter apologizing for "any inconvenience" and agreed to pay the Roths \$1,000 and donate \$1,000 to a favorite charity.

S. D. Deer Just Wants to Shop

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) -- A store owner said it would take at least a day to clean up after a deer crashed through a window and knocked over displays and merchandise inside. The doe darted through traffic and through a side window at Balloons, Bears and Bouquets in southwest Sioux Falls on Sunday. "So if there's any gratification, it's that it was a smaller window versus a larger (front) window," said owner Ken Brunick. Bystanders watched as the deer knocked over plants and displays in its search for a way out. Officers with the city's animal control department killed the deer and removed it.

A Phone Call Could Save a Life

RICHMOND, Texas (*Houston Chronicle*) -- If only someone had made a single phone call, high school senior Marsai Murry might be alive today.

That is the thought that continues to gnaw at Nettie Murry, whose daughter was slain outside Sugar Land's Mercer Stadium nearly a year ago.

Marsai's killer received a 33-year prison term in July. But Murry is hoping that a new, privately run hot line in her daughter's name will help prevent the kind of crime that cut Marsai's life short.

"I'm trying to stop someone from having to go through what I have been through for the last year," Murry said.

The Marsai Alert hot line, designed to let people anonymously tip police to pending trouble, works differently from Crime Stoppers, which offers reward money for information about crimes that have occurred. The Marsai Alert is a mechanism to get information to police before the crime happens and offers no reward.

Marsai, 17, a student at Hightower High School, was killed Nov. 8 by a single shot fired by a man who did not know her and who was not aiming at her.

After suspect Marcus Hudgins was arrested the police learned at least one person knew Hudgins was packing a pistol at the football game with the intent to kill. But nobody alerted police. Murry said if someone had called police beforehand, there is a chance Hudgins might not have brought the gun to the stadium or might have been apprehended before the shooting



By Carlos Antonio Rios, *Houston Chronicle*

Nettie Murry, the mother of murder victim Marsai Murry, is leading an effort to establish a hot line that would take tips regarding potential crimes.

occurred.

Missouri City Police Chief Ron Echols said the hot line sounds like a good idea.

"The more avenues people have to funnel that information to law enforcement, (the better)," he said.

Echols said police often find out after a crime has been committed that someone knew about it beforehand.

"It happens frequently. It is very unfortunate. People come into information about a crime, and you have to ask, 'Why didn't you come forward when you knew about it,'" he said.

Festival Highlights Turkey's Diversity, Tolerance

SEATTLE (*Seattle Times*) - Gokce Sezgin was easy to spot yesterday amid the crowd at Seattle Center's Center House, adorned as she was in a festive, scarlet-and-gold robe and a silver-trimmed scarf reflecting one clothing tradition of her native Turkey.

But it was another tradition - one of cultural diversity - that Sezgin, president of the Turkish American Cultural Association in Washington, emphasized as she spoke about the two-day Turkfest staged at the Center over the weekend.

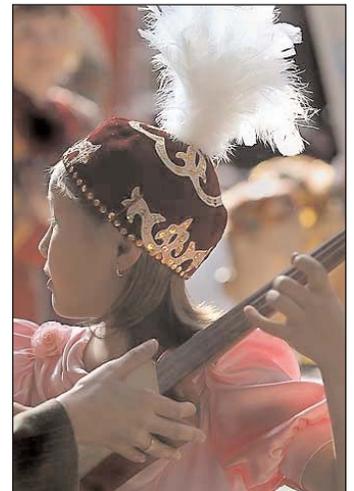
Dancers - among them Sezgin - whirling in colorful costumes, musicians strumming on lutelike instruments, displays of intricate embroidery and vendors selling hand-woven carpets, jewelry and elaborately decorated hats from Turkey and nearby lands were all part of the festival.

About 6,000 Turkish Americans live in the Seattle area, according to John Gokcen, honorary consul general of Turkey for Washington state and Turkfest's executive director.

The festival's theme was the diversity that has characterized Turkey for centuries, as a crossroads between the Near East and regions to the west, as well as the cultural, ethnic and religious harmony that Sezgin and others maintain prevails there.

To highlight those diverse influences, the festival featured dancers, musicians and hand-crafts not only from Turkey but also from Greece, Bosnia, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and other countries and from Jewish groups.

"We've been living with these people for a long time," said Sezgin. "They were a part of our land long ago, and we still share a lot of things.



John Lok, *Seattle Times*

With the help of her mother, Kanykey Maratkyzy, 10, practices playing her komuz before performing yesterday at Turkfest at the Seattle Center.

Bengals Get Surprise Win at Home

CINCINNATI (AP) -- With two reputations on the line - his team's and his own - Chad Johnson got the best of Champ and turned the Bengals into a prime-time success.

Chad Johnson left cornerback Champ Bailey face-down in his tracks on a 50-yard touchdown catch that got the Bengals revved for a 23-10 victory over the Denver Broncos in their long-awaited return to "Monday Night Football."

The Bengals (2-4) hadn't played on the Monday night stage for 12 years, the longest such exile in the league. A crowd of 65,806 - the biggest ever to see a Bengals game in Cincinnati - was hoping just to avoid embarrassment.

A chatty receiver gave them so much more.

A week after one of the most embarrassing moments of his career, Johnson excelled in a matchup of Pro

Bowl receiver vs. Pro Bowl cornerback.

"This is something I expect," said Johnson, who had only three catches and three drops in a 34-17 loss at Cleveland. "I let everybody down last week, so I worked double hard this week."

With Bailey locked on him man-to-man, Johnson made one easy catch and a bunch of acrobatic ones that positioned Cincinnati for the upset.

Denver (5-2) had won its last four games with the NFL's best running game and a defense that ranks among the leaders in every category. The Broncos couldn't get nearly enough out of either.

The Bengals had been exiled from the Monday night lineup since 1992 because of their history of losing. Cincinnati hasn't had a winning record since 1990, the league's longest current streak of futility.



AP

Denver Broncos' Willie Middlebrooks (right) gets called for pass interference after knocking the ball away from Bengals receiver T.J. Houshmandzadeh in the first quarter in Cincinnati Monday night.

This time, the Broncos did the bumbling.

Gators' Head Coach Fired But Will Finish Season

GAINESVILLE, Fla. (AP) -- Florida coach Ron Zook was fired Monday after two-plus years and a stack of embarrassments on and off the field, satisfying a growing groundswell for his ouster that began the day he replaced Steve Spurrier.

Zook will finish out the season while athletic director Jeremy Foley and school president Bernie Machen search for another coach.

"In the final analysis, it was apparent to me that something's not working here," Foley said. "I know that's kind of nebulous, but it's the truth. It's hard to put a finger on it exactly,



AP

Florida Gators' head football coach Ron Zook addresses the media following his firing by the University of Florida Monday in Gainesville, Fla.

but it certainly just didn't appear to be working as we all envisioned."

The Gators are 20-13 under Zook with four games left - that's just 14 losses fewer than Spurrier had in 12 seasons.

Machen and Foley decided Sunday morning that Zook's tenure was over. They informed the coach Monday morning at Machen's home.

Zook agreed to coach the remainder of the season - something Foley was counting on.

"I can't begin to tell you how much I appreciate and respect these players," Zook read from a statement, making little eye contact and pausing several times to collect his emotions. "They work hard and they do what we ask. I take a lot of pride in the fact that we leave this program in very good shape, with a lot of good young talent and good people. The future of Gator football is very, very bright."

Foley said he kept Zook for the rest of the season because it was "something he deserves."

"The guy has been here for three years; this is his football team," Foley said. "He's worked extraordinarily hard. It would be inappropriate for him not to finish the season. It would be inappropriate for the kids, too. We didn't think that would have been right in our opinion."

In Brief

World's Oldest Man, a Sox Fan

SYRACUSE, N.Y. (AP) -- 113 years-old, Fred Hale, Sr., documented as the world's oldest man, is also a lifelong Boston Red Sox fan. And his team is up 2-0 over the St. Louis Cardinals in the World Series. Can the Sox win their first World Series since 1918? "That's the question," said Hale. "We'll wait and see. Luck goes one way and goes out the other." Hale who turns 114 Dec. 1, is recognized as the world's oldest man by the Gerontology Research Group at the UCLA School of Medicine. His hearing and sight are failing, and he needs a wheelchair to move about, but Hale said he otherwise feels "pretty fair."

Stewart: Prison Food is 'Terrible'

Alderson, W. Va. (AP) -- Martha Stewart has been exercising, reading and making friends in prison, but the food at the minimum-security prison camp in West Virginia is "terrible," the domestic diva's daughter said Friday. "I'm sure she could give them quite a few pointers, but I think that the budget is so limited that ... I'm not sure how much change they'd be willing to make," Alexis Stewart said on CNN's Larry King Live. Alexis said her mother has one roommate in a dormitory-type building that houses 80 women. The celebrity homemaker has not yet been assigned a job, but in the meantime she has been taking walks, going to the gym, watching television news and reading.