

All Quiet on the Western Front (of Baghdad)



By Cpl. Bill Putnam, 122nd MPAD

Spc. Juan Jimenez, a fire direction specialist in Bravo, 1st of the 21st Field Artillery, listens to a radio call while on a counter-mortar mission June 27.

By Cpl. Bill Putnam
122nd MPAD

AL RASHID, Baghdad, Iraq- Just before sunset June 27, on what would be the last night before the coalition turned over control to a sover-

eign Iraq, a platoon of Soldiers from Battery B, 1st Battalion, 21st Field Artillery Regiment, headed out on a counter-mortar mission.

Insurgents had been firing rockets and mortars at various targets from the battalion's

area. Lately, such attacks have increased, making counter-mortar missions like this one more important.

Still, It's not a new mission to these Soldiers. In the gathering twilight June 27, Sgt. 1st Class Jose Barajas, a platoon sergeant in Bravo Battery, said they've been on them since arriving in country back in April.

Their job, when they see a rocket or mortar engage coalition forces, is to estimate its launch point, head to it and kill the insurgents responsible.

But they don't always take the insurgents by surprise when they find them. A couple of rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs) have been fired at them, and there have been a couple of small-arms engagements with anti-Iraqi insurgents.

"We've been in contact out here but we've never been in a situation where we've been out gunned," Barajas said.

The number of contacts has been small because the battery treats the area's residents with "dignity and respect," Barajas said.

"Treat the locals with it, and they'll help you out," he noted.

That approach has worked

well for the battery. Locals have led Soldiers to cached rockets and mortar firing points. They've been invited to weddings and offered tea "out of the blue" by the locals, Barajas said while he and his

"Treat the locals with it [dignity and respect], and they'll help you out."

-SFC Jose Barajas, Bravo Battery platoon sergeant, 1-21 FA

Soldiers waited for something to happen in their Humvee.

This mission ran much like every other counter-mortar operation. The platoon of Multiple Launch Rocket System crewman and fire direction specialists reached their first observation point as the oppressive heat of the day slipped into something more

bearable. Iraqis milled about, silhouetted against an orange and red sunset.

The Soldiers waited for something to happen. They heard the noises of parties off in the distance. They commented on dogfights. It was a typical night for these Soldiers. They waited for something to happen, hoping nothing would.

"Now I understand how a cop feels," Barajas said at one point.

"They have donuts, though," Spc. Juan Jimenez, his driver, said.

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In Spite of Stop Loss, Move**First Team Meets Reenlistment Goal**

By Master Sgt. Dave Larsen
1st Cavalry Division PAO

BAGHDAD, Iraq- Even faced with long deployments, involuntary extensions and the inability to move more freely from assignment to assignment, the 1st Cavalry Division has met its retention goals for the third quarter of this fiscal year.

The division reenlisted more than 700 Soldiers over the past three months, with more than a third re-upping to stay with the First Team.

"That's a tremendous amount of Soldiers reenlisting for stabilization," said Sgt. Maj. Merle Henry, the division's command career counselor. "It says a lot about Cav traditions."

For the year, Henry said, the division's overall retention percentage stands at a whopping 124 percent. But that figure is a little misleading, since retention received credit for Soldiers voluntarily extended to support Operation Iraqi Freedom II.

"In the first two quarters [of this year], we had no problem [achieving retention goals]," Henry said. "Meeting our first quarter retention mission sets the tone for the rest of the year. We don't have to play catch up."

Cash bonuses have played an important role in helping the First Team meet its reenlist-

ment goals, Henry said.

"Because we're in a war zone, many Soldiers in specialties who might never see a bonus can get one here," he said. The size of the bonus is based on a Soldier's pay grade, and the length of the reenlistment.

Sgt. Rose Cerda, personnel services sergeant and driver for the division's command sergeant major, raised her hand to swear in for another six years, effectively maximizing her reenlistment bonus. She received \$10,000; all of it tax-free while serving in Iraq.

The San Antonio native said that her decision to reenlist had been a topic of discussion with her husband, Matt, even before she deployed. Actually, the choice was already made. The only question was the timing.

"Ever since I joined, I knew I'd be a 'lifer,'" said the five-year Army veteran. "I think you'll see a lot of us [Soldiers in specialties normally not receiving bonuses] take advantage of it over here."

Besides the bonus money, Cerda reenlisted for a European assignment. She expects to depart Texas for Germany in July 2005. That leaves her just a few months after returning from Iraq to pack up the house and get her

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By Spc. Joseph Hickey, 1st. Cav. Div. HQ

Sgt. Rose Cerda (right), a personnel sergeant with the 1st Cavalry Division's Headquarters Company, reenlists for a six-year term at the division's headquarters building July 3. Cerda is one of many First Team Soldiers taking advantage of special reenlistment bonuses available to troops serving in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom II. Lt. Col. Frank Caponio, the division's chief of personnel, conducted the reenlistment ceremony.

Today in History

July 7

► From historychannel.com

1852 According to Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's stories, Dr. John H. Watson is born on this day. Coincidentally, the author died on this day in England at the age of 71.

1969 A battalion of the U.S. 9th Infantry Division leaves Saigon in the initial withdrawal of U.S. troops.

1976 For the first time in history, women are enrolled into the United States Military Academy at West Point, N.Y. On May 28, 1980, 62 of these female cadets graduated and were commissioned as second lieutenants.

1981 President Ronald Reagan nominates Sandra Day O'Connor, an Arizona court of appeals judge, to be the first woman Supreme Court Justice in U.S. history.

1983 Samantha Smith, an 11-year-old American girl, begins a two-week visit to the Soviet Union at the invitation of Soviet leader Yuri Andropov.

1984 "When Doves Cry," the first single to be released from Prince's 1984 album *Purple Rain*, hits the top of the charts. The song stayed on top for five weeks and became the best-selling single of 1984.

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Familiar Sights, Sounds Greet 1-21 FA Soldiers

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The platoon hears a party off in the distance. They heard two loud booms and someone thought they were explosions.

"Did you hear that?" Jimenez asked?

"No, it came from over there," said Sgt. Elias Ayala,

the vehicle's gunner.

The sound they heard turns out to be the booming of a loud drum. "They've got a good beat," observed Spc. Ivan Tana, the platoon's medic.

The area the platoon patrols must've been the sight of a huge battle; the ground is littered with shell casings and

expended shells. Bullet pockmarks cover the face of one building like bad graffiti. Squatters moved into the area after the war ended. It's these people the platoon deals with on a daily basis.

A popping noise would start and stop. Someone was firing a weapon in celebration of something.

"Dude's weapon is jamming," Jimenez said. They would hear the popping all night long.

A little later, they heard a rooster, whose crowing echoed across the fields around them.

"That rooster's clock is screwed up," Jimenez said.

"Must be on U.S. time," Sgt. Elias Ayala, the Humvee gunner said from his perch.

Then they saw a car quickly driving away from the party. Jimenez joked why it was leaving so early: free food.

"Yeah, man, he probably hung out near the back door..." Jimenez said.

"And waited until dark to leave so no one would notice him leaving," Tana said picking up Jimenez's train of thought.

It was dark now and they brought out night vision goggles. They saw things they always see out there: half-built homes, people socializing and dogs on patrol.

As they night went on, the Soldiers tried to readjust their gear. As they readjusted their gear for what seemed the millionth time because of the heat, Barajas and Jimenez recounted how they were "told to keep their eyes open" more than usual out on patrol. They did.

Large packs of dogs would show up every so often. The barking of 100 dogs would announce their presence. After almost four months on the ground the Soldiers have divided the dogs into gangs.

"The 'crips' and 'bloods,'" Jimenez said.

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By Cpl. Bill Putnam, 122nd MPAD

Sgt. Elias Ayala, a multiple launch rocket system crewman, raises binoculars to scan his sector during a counter-mortar operation the evening of June 27.

When It Comes Down to It, Reenlistment's a Family Decision

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husband and 14-month-old son, Amadeo, ready for the trip. She's looking forward to it.

"I wanted to get a chance to go to Germany," she said. "I want my son to see the world."

Henry said the Army issued out \$5.1 million in reenlistment bonuses in the third quarter alone for First Team Soldiers. While he admits the money is important to reten-

tion, he said it's not the only factor keeping Soldiers in the Army, and in the First Team.

"I believe every Soldier who serves here is a great American," Henry said. "There's really not one thing that will trigger everybody to stay, but patriotism does play a role."

Looking into his retention crystal ball, Henry said it will become more difficult for the

division to meet reenlistment goals down the road, since more than 1,000 Soldiers have been involuntarily extended under the Army Stop Loss policy to stay with the division during this deployment.

"When we return to Fort Hood, those Soldiers are going to want to get on with their lives," Henry said.

Henry said the most important issue for Soldiers today impacting on their deci-

sion to either stay in or leave the force is future deployments, especially the uncertainty of the length of those deployments.

"Many Soldiers tell me that if they knew future rotations were six months in length, instead of a year, it would make a difference," he said. "A year away from family is a long time, and the decision to reenlist, or not, is a family decision."

Iraqi Word of the Day

forest

gha-beh

Wednesday

High: 114
Low: 86



Thursday

High: 116
Low: 87



Friday

High: 115
Low: 88



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

Summer Camp Appeals to the Next Generation of Computer Whizzes



Seattle Post-Intelligencer

Cybercamps counselor intern Helena Menendez, 17, helps 8-year-old Angie Mayr of Sumner with her robotics project. What started in one classroom in 1997 has grown to 50 camps across the country.

► From *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*

SEATTLE- Even as a college student plotting out hypothetical business models for imaginary companies, Pete Findley's vision was complex and ambitious.

He envisioned a multi-

limbed technology company with branches for children and adults, schools, businesses, even the military; a firm that could grow and evolve like the human brain itself, spreading the gospel of high-tech with missionary zeal.

But first, he had to start a summer camp.

It began in the summer of 1997, when the newly minted college graduate got the University of Washington to lend him a classroom where a few youngsters would learn to build Web pages.

Eight years later, Cybercamps has exploded to include 6,000 children at 50 camps across the country, creating video-game codes, digital animation, and elaborate multimedia Web sites with soundtracks from Led Zeppelin and Pink Floyd.

To Findley, 30, his success among youngsters is only logical. The surprise came later, when parents came to pick up their young charges and, agog at what their progeny could create, began to demand similar courses for themselves.

"Kids are acting like the

chief technology officers in their families and parents don't want to be left behind. They're just blown away by their kids' love of technology and what they can do with it," said Findley, while 58 young computer wizards zipped between four university classrooms, devising digital films and computer-controlled robots.

To answer their pleas, the entrepreneur now offers 20 high-end adult technology courses at sites around Western Washington, including the Fort Lewis military base, through his umbrella company Giant Campus.

At that moment, camp director Anna Farr was trying to ascertain whether one of her students had sufficiently planned for next week's water fight. Cybercamp kids are not pesty geeks who refuse to set foot outside. Indeed, Farr, a free-lance video-game designer in the adult world, discovered just how exuberant the new generation of tech-heads can be.

The water guns come from home, but all the other equipment — computers, monitors, digital cameras, editing software and robotics materials — are

donated or sold at deep discounts by technology companies only too glad to reach youngsters early in their buying careers.

Cybercamp is pricey. Though Findley said he is aiming for the day when 10 percent of all campers will be financed by scholarships, most students now pay about \$500 for one five-day program. Many sign up for a single session.

To make sure Thomas and other Cybercampers stay involved and increase their skills during the school year, Findley and his staff have spent the last six years building thousands of hours of online curriculum so students can log on and return to their projects for 12 more months.

Cybercamps, which is designed for youngsters 7 to 16, is about 75 percent boys, but Findley, the ever-optimistic entrepreneur, has a plan for that as well.

"Next year, we're going to offer many more visual and creative courses to try and attract more girls," he said. "We're a learning company. Cybercamps is the foundation from which we're going to build a much big-

FIRST TEAM

1-21 FA Continues Patrols, Relishing the Quiet

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While looking for insurgents setting up mortars or rockets, they commented on the dogs and their constant fights. Huge packs would rush up and start barking at each other several times during the night, kicking up huge clouds of dirt as they circled each other.

To the Soldiers it was funny. They'd yell "Get some!" or "That's all you got?!" at the dogs.

Eventually, though, as fun as they are, the patrols end and they head back to camp. The drive back was quiet. The battery would run many more missions like this one.



Temple Daily Telegram

Down the drain - Devon Underwood, 9, slides down a waterslide Monday at Lions Park in Temple. Officials at the park said crowds were so large that the park was forced to turn away potential swimmers.

Duke's Krzyzewski Credits E-Mail in Decision



AP

Duke University's rising junior and biology major Andrew Humphries, of Waynesboro, Va., seen outside of Cameron Indoor Stadium in Durham, N.C. on Tuesday, July 6, was a single fan of head basketball coach Mike Krzyzewski that influenced the coach to stay at Duke after the L.A. Lakers offer this past week.

► From AP

DURHAM, N.C.- Andrew Humphries was distraught when he heard Mike Krzyzewski might leave Duke to coach the Los Angeles Lakers.

The Duke student, a Blue Devils fan since he was a kid, felt helpless. But he knew he had to try something to help persuade the Hall of Fame coach to stay. So he did what any die-hard bas-

ketball fan with a connection to the Internet would do: he sent Krzyzewski an e-mail, asking him, "Please still be my coach."

It was impressive enough that Krzyzewski singled out Humphries when the coach held a news conference Monday to announce he was staying with the Blue Devils. For Humphries, 19, an act of desperation turned into the thrill of his life.

In the e-mail sent last

Thursday night, Humphries, a junior biology major who grew up in Waynesboro, Va., recounted playing basketball in his driveway as a kid, pretending he was hitting shots to win the national championship for Krzyzewski and the Blue Devils.

Eventually, he realized that he would not play for the Blue Devils. But once he came to Duke, Humphries began camping out at "Krzyzewskiville" to attend games at Cameron Indoor Stadium as one of the "Cameron Crazy's."

Even though he doesn't score points or grab rebounds, Humphries wrote, he feels he is part of the Blue Devils basketball family. Humphries closed the e-mail with his plea, "Please still be my coach."

Krzyzewski said the e-mail - one of many he received while considering the Lakers' offer - brought him to tears and reinforced the bond he feels with the school he had led to three national championships in his 24-year tenure.

"If Andrew's listening, thanks a lot. You never know what's read."

 **MLB** 
scores as of July 6
8:15 p.m. PDT

AMERICAN LEAGUE

Tampa Bay 3
Baltimore 1

Boston 11
Oakland 0

Cleveland 4
Texas 1

Detroit 9
New York 1

Minnesota 4
Kansas City 0

Toronto 7
Seattle 6

Anaheim
@ Chicago

NATIONAL LEAGUE

Milwaukee 4
Chicago 2

St. Louis 5
Cincinnati 3

Atlanta 1
Montreal 0

New York 4
Philadelphia 1

Florida 6
Pittsburgh 3

Arizona
@ Los Angeles

Houston
@ San Diego

Colorado
@ San Francisco

TV GUIDE	 ATLANTIC	 PACIFIC	 Sports	 Spectrum
6 p.m.	Popular Mechanics for Kids/ Liberty's Kids	Tonight Show with Jay Leno/ The Late Show with David Letterman	Track & Field	Congo 5 p.m.
7 p.m.	Jeopardy!/ Headline News	Access Hollywood 7:30 p.m.	SportsCenter	The Wild Thornberrys/ Spongebob Squarepants
8 p.m.	ESPNNews/ SportsCenter	The Young Lions	ESPNNews/ Baseball Tonight 8:20 p.m.	The Simpsons/ Happy Days
9 p.m.	8 Simple Rules.../ The Bernie Mac Show		MLB - Detroit Tigers @ NY Yankees	Ripley's Believe It or Not
10 p.m.	Fear Factor			Andromeda