



By Pfc. Al Barrus, 122nd MPAD

Col. Michael Formica, commander of the 1st Cavalry Division's 2nd Brigade Combat Team, pins Staff Sgt. Keith Gates, a tank commander from Company B, 2nd Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment, with the Bronze Star with V Device. Gates and his platoon leader, 1st Lt. Murugan Palani, were awarded the decoration Sept. 22 at Camp Black Jack in Baghdad. The two Soldiers were recognized for valorous actions while under enemy fire during combat operations in Abu Graib in April. Additionally, 13 Soldiers were awarded Purple Hearts during the ceremony.

Reserve Reenlistments Exceed Expectations in Iraq NCO Says

By Sgt. Dan Purcell
122nd MPAD

CAMP BLACK JACK, Baghdad - How much is a good Soldier worth and how far would you go to keep one in the Army? For one dedicated noncommissioned officer (NCO) keeping a good Soldier in is everything.

Recently, three Soldiers belonging to the 425th Civil Affairs Battalion reenlisted in An Najaf. Making it happen took the patient efforts of Master Sgt. Rebecca Sewell, who is the senior Army Reserve retention noncommissioned officer in Iraq assigned to the

Third Army.

Sewell, a native of Cape Coral, Fla., is one of three Army Reserve retention NCOs in Iraq. Her workstation is located on Camp Victory but her job takes her all over Baghdad and beyond, which is how three sergeants stationed in An Najaf - Hugo Rivera, Kenton Jones and David Reid were able to reenlist.

"This is the first time the Army has deployed retention NCOs to the field," Sewell explained. "I am responsible for the reserve Soldiers here in theater, even those attached to the [1st Cavalry Division] and I am here to help facilitate

the reenlistments of those Soldiers."

From Taji to Camp Rustamiyah (formerly Camp Cuervo) to An Najaf, Sewell has been all over the Baghdad area with one stated goal: reach as many eligible Soldiers as possible.

"I will go wherever there are Soldiers who need to be reenlisted and I will tell them that as long as it is dignified, they can do the reenlistment ceremony anywhere they want," Sewell smiled. "Of course, the first thing they always say is that they want to do it at home."

Continued on Page 2



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Sgt. Hugo Rivera, 425th Civil Affairs Battalion, takes his reenlistment oath, administered by his battalion commander, Lt. Col Sean Kelly. Rivera was one of three 425th Soldiers who reenlisted while serving in An Najaf.

Reservists Ready to Reenlist in Iraq

Continued from Page 1

Sewell has seen Soldiers reenlist in bombed out palaces, Blackhawk helicopters a hundred feet off the ground, even in their humvees standing up in the gunners hatch with their officer because that vehicle holds a special significance.

"I've had generals reenlist soldiers because it is such an honor for them to do it," Sewell said. "It's a Soldier's choice; they can ask any officer they want."

Sewell said most Soldiers will ask an officer they work with, but some others set their sights a little higher.

"I have never had a general turn me down because it's good for the Soldiers," Sewell said. "They want to do it. It's an honor to be asked to reenlist a Soldier."

For most Soldiers in a combat zone getting the job done can be difficult in the best of circumstances and getting reenlisted is no exception. However, everything begins with the Soldier.

"I get them the necessary information they need

so that they can make informed choices about reenlisting," Sewell said. "Ultimately, the Army wants them all to reenlist, but I'm a career counselor: I give them all their options and tell them everything there is out there for them."

Sewell said the biggest hurdle here has been contacting Soldiers interested in reenlisting. To communicate with the Soldiers who are unable to stop by her office, Sewell relies on e-mail to ask and answer questions.

"If a reserve Soldier wants to reenlist while [they are] in theater, there is a process for making it happen," Sewell explained.

"They need to talk to their unit or they can drop by my office or contact me by e-mail. Their commander must give them a memo that states that they are not flagged, barred or pending UCMJ [Uniformed Code of Military Justice] action because I have no way of checking all that stuff out like I would in the states. I have to see a data sheet that shows all their military information so I can see what they qualify for. Then, I like to talk to the



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Master Sgt. Rebecca Sewell, a reserve component retention NCO serving in Baghdad, counsels a prospective reenlistee at her office, located on Camp Victory.

Soldier to see what they want and how it is I can help them."

Sewell attributes much of her success to the units she supports, the commanders and dedicated NCOs. One of her most recent success stories includes the reenlistment of 11 out of 15 eligible Soldiers from the 425th CA Battalion.

"The 425th was really great about getting their guys reenlisted," Sewell said. "Command Sgt. Maj. Jonathan Church [battalion

sergeant major] and Lt. Col. Sean Kelly [battalion commander] really look out after their Soldiers."

Kelly expressed his gratitude for the support he got from the 1st Cav. Div.

"When I told them we needed to get to An-Najaf to reenlist three Soldiers, they didn't hesitate to put two Blackhawk helicopters from the Illinois Army National Guard at our disposal," Kelly explained. "They really took care of us. If you're part of the Cav, you're family."

Useful Iraqi Words/Phrases

Would you like to join us?

tuHibb tushaarik-naa

Tuesday

High: 106

Low: 73



Wednesday

High: 105

Low: 73



Thursday

High: 105

Low: 72



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

Commanding General: Maj. Gen. Peter Chiarelli

Public Affairs Officer: Lt. Col. James Hutton

122nd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment Cmdr.: Maj. John Fuhrman

Public Affairs Supervisor: Master Sgt. Dave Larsen

1st Sgt. 122nd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment: 1st Sgt. William Kuhns

Editor: Spc. Andy Miller

Staff Writers: Sgt. 1st Class Tony Sailer, Staff Sgt. Susan German, Sgt. Merrion LaSonde, Sgt. Dan Purcell, Sgt. Christina Rockhill, Cpl. Benjamin

Cossel, Cpl. Bill Putnam, Spc. Jan Critchfield, Spc. Marie Whitney, Spc. Erik LeDrew, Pfc. Al Barrus, Pfc. Brian Schroeder, Pfc. Matthew McLaughlin.

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News Notes

Insurance Claims Down in Texas

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) - Insurers paid Texas homeowners 38 cents in claims for every \$1 they charged in premiums during the first half of this year, their best showing in several years, according to the Texas Department of Insurance. Officials are hopeful that improving results for insurers will eventually translate into good news for homeowners. "If this trend continues, we expect rates to go down," said Jim Hurley, spokesman for the insurance department. Consumer advocates, however, said insurers were enjoying a windfall partly by raising deductibles on homeowners.

Army Considers Shorter Tours

NEW YORK (Reuters) - Officials say the Army's ability to recruit and retain Soldiers will erode unless tours are shortened from 12 months to between six and nine months -- the rough equivalent of the tours found in the U.S. Marine Corps, said the New York Times, citing top Army personnel officers and Army Reserve and National Guard officials. The newspaper quoted Lt. Gen. Steven Blum, chief of the National Guard Bureau, who said that the Army leadership "agrees that 12 months is too long," adding that the service "needs to move to a shorter rotational base."



Dallas Morning News

Rich LeFevre and his wife, Carlene, of Nevada dominated the World Corny Dog Eating Championship on Sunday at the State Fair of Texas. The contest drew hundreds of Fletcher's-loving fairgoers, who cheered raucously as 15 contestants downed as many dogs as they could in 10 minutes. As the race ended, exuberant contestants launched their leftovers into the crowd.

American Legion Head Says Job is "for Veterans"

WATERTOWN, New York (Watertown Daily Times) - If you ask Paul Cortright his goal as state commander of the American Legion, he'll give it to you rather simply: to support Soldiers of the U.S. military.

Whether it's hosting a Friday night fish fry at a local Legion post to raise money for care packages for Soldiers deployed overseas or lobbying elected representatives for better funding for Veterans Affairs hospitals, it's all part of the job - a job he loves.

As the first Jefferson County resident elected state commander, Cortright, Redwood, is serving a one-year term advocating for the goals and policies of the Legion. He was elected to the state post in July.

"I love it, because it's all for the veterans. Everything we do is for the veterans," Cortright said after a news conference Saturday morning at the Days Inn on Watertown's Arsenal Street.

During a brief speech,

Cortright outlined several of his goals, one of which will help children of deceased veterans obtain college educations.

Cortright said that, in traveling to each county in the state, he'll be advocating for the American Legion Memorial Scholarship Legacy Fund, the former American Legion 9-11 Scholarship Fund.

When wives of deceased veterans are left to raise their children alone, too often they can't afford to put those children through college, Cortright said. The scholarship program is intended to change that.

Cortright said the Legion recently gave a scholarship to the daughter of a deceased veteran from New York City.

He said the Legion is also working to expand "concurrent receipt" - a program that prevents a disabled veteran's retirement payment from being reduced by his or her Veterans Affairs disability benefit.

Under the legislation, veterans with 20 or more years of service, including those who retired under the Early Retirement Authority, and who have a 50 percent or higher disability rate, are eligible for the "concurrent receipt" program, he said.

Cortright said the Legion is working with Congress to expand the program to those with disability ratings between 10 percent and 40 percent.

With 2.8 million members nationwide, Cortright said, the American Legion is lobbying the U.S. Senate to approve a proposed constitutional amendment that would ban the physical desecration of the U.S. flag.

"We served under that flag, died under that flag. It's draped over our coffins," he said.

He said the issue might sway some votes in the Nov. 2 presidential election.

The amendment approved by the committee reads: "The Congress shall have power to prohibit the physical desecration of the flag of the United States."

Chiefs Beaten by Texans

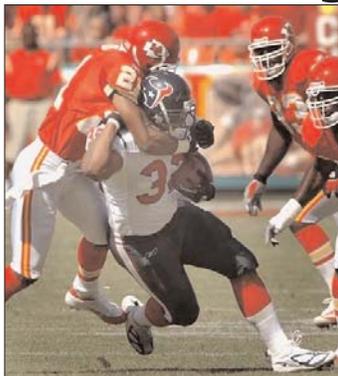
KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP) - Marcus Coleman made the interception and the long return. Andre Johnson and Derick Armstrong made the catches.

And, finally, Kris Brown made the kick that kept the Kansas City Chiefs winless.

The Houston Texans came up with one clutch second-half play after another Sunday, and Brown capped the rally by nailing a 49-yard field goal with 2 seconds left for a 24-21 victory. The Chiefs, the defending AFC West champions, became the fourth team since 1990 to start 0-3 after making the playoffs the previous season.

"My life peaks when I get a chance to win a game," Brown said.

Priest Holmes became



AP

Houston Texans running back Jonathan Wells (32) is tackled by Kansas City Chiefs safety Jerome Woods (21).

the Chiefs' career leading rusher with 4,941 yards but couldn't get into the end zone. Trent Green threw three touchdown passes but also gave up the interception that Coleman returned 102 yards for a third-quarter

touchdown to tie the game at 14.

And the defense kept Houston in check for three quarters - before giving up three plays of 20 or more yards in the fourth. On the winning drive, Houston marched 42 yards in 2:16 to set up the field goal.

"Right now, we're sort of snakebit," Chiefs coach Dick Vermeil said. "We can't make things go our way. We had an opportunity to win a football game here, and we couldn't take advantage of it."

Kansas City, 13-3 a year ago, hasn't started this badly since opening the 1980 season 0-4.

Houston (1-2) won despite just 76 yards rushing against a team that gave up career days to opposing running backs in the first two games.

Schilling Wins 21st vs. Yanks

BOSTON (AP) - The Red Sox ended their home season in typical fashion with another brilliant performance by Curt Schilling and another bench-clearing confrontation with the Yankees.

Schilling (21-6) allowed one hit in seven innings Sunday when Boston beat New York 11-4 and knocked Kevin Brown out in the first inning of his return from a broken hand.

The Red Sox (93-62) won 11 of 19 from the Yankees (97-59) to take the season series for the first time in five years and cut New York's AL East lead to 3½ games with one week to play.

"We probably play them too much," Boston's Johnny Damon said with a smile. "There's too much anxiety

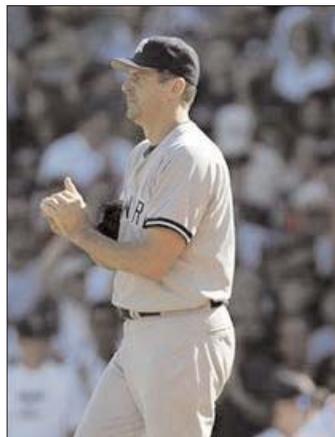
brewing."

In the top of the eighth, Boston's Pedro Astacio was ejected for throwing behind Kenny Lofton and both teams were warned by plate umpire Jim Wolf.

In the bottom half, New York pitcher Brad Halsey and manager Joe Torre were ejected after Halsey threw a pitch high and tight to Dave Roberts, causing the benches and bullpens to clear. Players were kept apart.

"Tensions run high when we play the Red Sox, but I don't think it affects the way we play," said Halsey, who denied throwing at Roberts.

On July 24, also in Fenway Park, the teams fought after Alex Rodriguez was hit by a pitch by Bronson Arroyo and was shoved in the face by catcher



AP

New York Yankees starter Kevin Brown, left, stands on the mound as the Boston Red Sox celebrate.

er Jason Varitek.

Schilling, who leads the major leagues in wins, is 12-1 at Fenway this season, his first since Boston acquired him from Arizona.

In Brief

Iraq War Film Wins Prize

MADRID (Reuters) - An Iranian-Iraqi film set in the run-up to the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq and starring an amateur cast of war-scarred children won the top "Golden Shell" award at Spain's prestigious San Sebastian film festival Saturday. "Turtles can fly," directed by Iranian-born Bahman Ghobadi, explores the story of four children, one armless, and another a blind toddler -- who has since had an operation and can now see -- as the invasion progresses.

Singh Breaks Money Record

FARMINGTON, Pa. (AP) - Vijay Singh is running out of firsts to take away from Tiger Woods. Singh broke the PGA Tour single-year money record Woods set while winning three majors in 2000, holding off a fast-finishing Stewart Cink to win the 84 Lumber Classic by one shot Sunday for his third consecutive victory. Singh's eighth championship this year pushed his earnings to \$9,455,566 in 26 events, surpassing the \$9,188,321 Woods made while winning nine times in 20 events in 2000. With Singh expecting to play four more times, he could become the first to win \$10 million in one year.

