

Ensuring Safety at a Moments Notice

By Cpl. Benjamin Cossel
122nd MPAD

BAGHDAD, Iraq - It's 4:45 a.m. and Staff Sgt. Oracio Pena, 2nd squad leader, 1st Platoon, Company A, 2nd Battalion 5th Cavalry Regiment, walks among his squad performing pre-combat checks and inspections as he informs his Soldiers of the objective to the pending mission. He drills the knowledge into each team member, asking them to repeat back to him what was said, ensuring the mission is understood and giving time for any questions that might exist.

"One of my jobs as a squad leader is to make sure that each and everyone of these guys knows exactly what is expected of them," said the Hillsborough, Texas native. "[And] that if something should happen to the leadership above them, they could carry on the mission."

"There's been a couple times out here that the whole mission has changed on us in like five minutes," Pena said. "We start out with a dismounted patrol to talk to people and all of sudden we're taking fire and engaging the [Muqtada] Militia. So you always have to be alert and flexible; ready for anything to happen."

It's the seventh day of Operation Iron Fury II. The Soldiers of Company A, 2-5 Cav. are tired. They've run anywhere



By Cpl. Benjamin Cossel, 122nd MPAD

Staff Sgt. Oracio Pena, 2nd squad leader, 1st Platoon, Company A, 2nd Battalion 5th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division indicates to his squad which building they would occupy in the event they came under fire in the streets of Sadr City during Operation Iron Fury II, Aug. 31.

between two to three missions a day often performing the same tasks in the same areas they've patrolled since their arrival in early March. They haven't showered since the operation began.

"You got to make sure these guys are changing their socks to avoid blisters and fungus growth, that they're getting enough to eat, that they're shaving every day and just doing the basic hygiene things that become so critical once you've been in the field for an extended amount of time," said Staff Sgt. Matthew Mercado, 3rd squad leader, 1st Platoon,

Company A, 2-5 Cav.

Along with physical well being, a Soldier's mental fitness is among the many things for which a squad leader must be aware.

"You've really got to know your guys, so you can tell when something isn't quite right," Mercado said. "It could be anything, issues on the home front, not getting enough rest, or having been on too many missions. If you know you're guys, you know what to look for. You see the difference in how they act or carry themselves. It takes time and it's not something that

comes overnight, but as a squad leader it's something you work for all the time."

Mercado and Pena both agreed that developing rotation schedules to enable proper down time was key in keeping Soldiers mentally sharp and focused on the mission.

"By virtue of the fact that I out-rank the guys in my squad, they have to listen to the orders that I give them," Mercado said. "But to me the real challenge and mark of a good leader, is to have these guys respect me as a person that happens to be their squad leader."

Avoiding Stress and Battling the Blues

By Capt. William Porter
1st Cav. Div.
Preventive Medicine Surgeon

BAGHDAD, Iraq - Though many Soldiers don't want to admit it, being deployed to Iraq is stressful. Working long hours in a harsh desert environment is tough. The constant threat from improvised explosive devices, mortars, or full-scale combat operations increases the tension we all feel.

Worry over unresolved issues at home, feeling out of touch with our families, and arguments with supervisors or peers can make the experience for some Soldiers unbearable. As Operation Iraqi Freedom II continues, leaders need to be on the lookout for Soldiers who are having difficulty coping with their situation. When a Soldier is no longer able to cope with the impact of being deployed, and this ineffectiveness is due to psychological causes, the Soldier is said to be suffering from combat stress.

Combat stress may show up in many different forms. Soldiers may appear withdrawn from their normal group, they may appear frightened, anxious or con-

fused. They may complain of sleep disturbances, headaches, or decreased appetite. Soldiers who were previously excellent performers may become insubordinate. They may argue with the chain of command or make other comments that reflect a loss of confidence in their superiors, the unit, or the mission.

Any of these symptoms should serve as a warning sign to small unit leaders. Also, it is important to understand that a unit does not have to be directly engaged in high intensity combat operations for combat stress casualties to occur.

Soldiers in support roles face a different set of challenges than those faced by combat arms Soldiers, convoy operations, late night maintenance missions, and the challenges of caring for wounded Soldiers can also be very stressful. The bottom line is that combat stress can affect anyone, regardless of age, rank, race, sex, nationality or job.

Casualties produced from combat stress are real. Each of us is different, and we each have a limit to the amount of stress we are capable of coping with.



By Sgt. John Queen, 3rd BCT Public Affairs

Once that threshold has been crossed, and the symptoms of combat stress develop, these Soldiers are just as sick as someone with a purely physical illness.

Luckily, there are ways to help someone who suffers from combat stress. The help begins with small unit leaders being on the lookout for combat stress among their Soldiers.

Although it is common for Soldiers to complain about chow, the weather or other small things, leaders must be able to detect subtle changes in their Soldiers that may suggest the onset of combat stress symptoms.

Left untreated, combat

stress can have drastic outcomes. Soldiers who suffer from combat stress may feel compelled to harm themselves while they are still deployed. These suicide attempts often revolve around a transient crisis that pushes them over their psychological limit.

Sometimes, the event that leads to thoughts of suicide may seem trivial to an outsider. But, to the person suffering from combat stress, even little things can have a tremendous impact. If a Soldier who suffers from combat stress redeployes without treatment, it can lead to a tough battle with mental illness.

Useful Iraqi Words/Phrases

Go Away!
imshee

Thursday

High: 108
Low: 80



Friday

High: 106
Low: 78



Saturday

High: 104
Low: 78



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

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News Notes

Entire Ala. Family Enlists in the Navy

LOCUST FORK, Ala. (AP) -- Navy recruiter Wendy Chunn visited the McIntyre home hoping to persuade their 18-year-old daughter Brandi to enlist. The sales pitch worked better than she had imagined: The entire family signed up. "No. No. Never. Never," Chunn said when asked if she had ever heard of an entire family enlisting. Along with Brandi, her 19-year-old brother enlisted for active duty and both of her parents enlisted in the Naval Reserves.

America's Traffic Problem Gets Worse

WASHINGTON (AP) -- The nation's traffic problems are getting worse faster than they can be fixed even in small cities like Brownsville, Texas, and Pensacola, Fla. And in the 85 biggest U.S. cities, snarled traffic is costing travelers 3.5 billion hours a year, up from 700 million two decades ago, according to the Texas Transportation Institute's annual Urban Mobility Report released Tuesday. Also, a solution to ever-growing traffic jams isn't likely to come soon, transit and highway advocates say. The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials estimates it would take federal spending as great as \$400 billion over the next six years to solve traffic problems, according to a 2002 study.

Killeen Students Take Peek at World of Blind

KILLEEN, Texas (Killeen Daily Herald) - Some Killeen first-graders opened their eyes to the world of the blind Tuesday, learning that disabilities don't really make people different.

Tina Snider's first-grade Talented and Gifted cluster class at Clifton Park Elementary School was visited Tuesday by three vision-impaired people and their guide dogs. The visit brought reality to the class's lesson on disabilities.

The class began its exploration of disabilities and differences last week with lessons on the blind and deaf. They learned about Braille, even translating their spelling words into Braille. They read a book about Helen Keller and gained some empathy for the disabled through trips down the hall in a blindfold or earmuffs.

"It felt kind of scary because it kind of feels like you're left out," said 6-year-old Madison Ullrich, about walking in the shoes of the blind and deaf.

Ullrich said she and her classmates also learned that people who are blind or deaf are still like everyone else.

"They can still play and run and play on the computer and go to school and sleep and drink and eat, just like us," she said.

The class will finish out the week with a focus on deafness and will take a look at other disabilities, such as spinal cord injuries, next week. Snider said her students will again put themselves in someone



Killeen Daily Herald

Esmy Fryer gives her first impression to a group of four-legged visitors in her first-grade classroom at Clifton Park Elementary School on Tuesday. Three vision-impaired guests brought the canine partners to give the students insight into the world of the blind. The visit was part of a unit designed to teach the children about Braille and how it feels to be without sight.

else's shoes as they try to maneuver a wheelchair through a doorway.

Teaching her students to appreciate differences in people is important to Snider, but so is getting them to see the similarities.

"In the society we live in today, children need to learn from when they're little bitty that being different

doesn't make you the odd man out," Snider said. "They've realized, after all we've been talking about and doing, that children are just children."

The visitors from Vision Impaired Persons who are Very Important People brought their guide dogs and taught the students about Braille Tuesday.

Team USA Beats Russia 5-3

ST. PAUL, Minn. (AP) -- The United States again went with a younger lineup, but it was the veteran line of Keith Tkachuk, Mike Modano and Bill Guerin that played ageless hockey.

Tkachuk had four goals - all assisted by Modano - and added an assist as the Americans' top line accounted for 11 points and led the United States into the World Cup of Hockey semifinals with a 5-3 victory Tuesday night over Russia.

The St. Louis Blues forward - normally the target of boos at the Minnesota Wild's Xcel Energy Center - was the difference for the Americans, who avenged last week's loss to the Russians by eliminating

them from the tournament.

"We went through a lull last week," Tkachuk said. "We were tired, and when you're tired you cut corners. But these are elimination games and we're hitting our stride now."

Just in time, too. The United States will play either Finland or the Czech Republic, who advanced from the European Division, on Friday night in St. Paul. Canada hosts Slovakia in Toronto on Wednesday with the final semifinal berth on the line.

After being outworked against Canada and Russia last week, the Americans beat struggling Slovakia 3-1, but still looked like the underdog against the



AP

Keith Tkachuk celebrates with teammate Bill Guerin after scoring his fourth goal Tuesday. Team USA beat Russia 5-3.

Russians. But the roles reversed in the rematch, with Russia making costly turnovers that the suddenly opportunistic Americans jumped on.

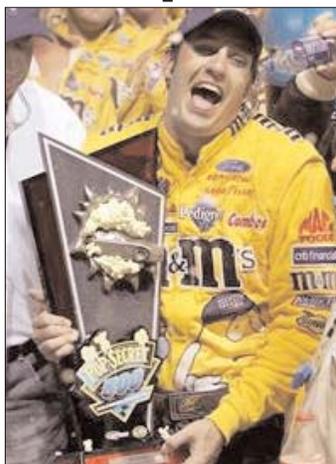
Salder Wins Pop Secret Victory

FONTANA, Calif. (AP) -- Elliott Sadler has an appointment to be fitted for a tuxedo.

After winning the Pop Secret 500 Sunday night at California Speedway and all but nailing down a spot in NASCAR's new Chase for the Nextel Cup playoff, Sadler could hardly contain his excitement about a possible trip to New York City in December for the annual postseason awards banquet.

Only the top 10 in the points get to go on stage at the gala, and Sadler is ready right now.

"I've been in racing a couple of years now and I never got to go to New York," Sadler said. "I'm going to go get my tuxedo next weekend and I'm going to get all fitted up so I can look all snazzy when I go up



AP

Elliott Sadler celebrates in victory lane after winning the NASCAR Nextel Cup Pop Secret 500 Sunday on stage in New York."

First, though, he has a little business to take care of.

If Sadler simply starts

Saturday night's race at Richmond International Raceway, he will lock up his spot in the top 10. Once that is done, the 29-year-old driver from Emporia, Va., has a considerably higher goal.

"I think we can win the championship," said Sadler, who has never finished better than 20th in the points in his first five years in NASCAR's top stock car series.

Since beginning the season with a seventh-place finish in the Daytona 500, Sadler's No. 38 Ford has never been out of the top 10. He is the only full-time driver in the series who has been running at the end of every race and, going into Richmond, Sadler has two wins, seven top fives and 11 top 10s in 25 races.

Sports Shorts

Bad Call in Serena Loss to Capriati

NEW YORK (AP) -- Unfairly, unbelievably, Serena Williams was robbed of a point by an umpire's mistake at the U.S. Open, just like her sister was at Wimbledon. It happened in the opening game of the third set between Williams and Jennifer Capriati, who went on to win their Open quarterfinal 2-6, 6-4, 6-4 Tuesday night. "I'm very angry and bitter right now. I felt cheated. Shall I go on? I just feel robbed," a composed Williams said, laughing a bit. "At first, I thought it was another Wimbledon conspiracy."

Jeopardy Champ Continues to Roll

NEW YORK (AP) -- "Jeopardy!" master Ken Jennings has advanced his winning streak to 40, picking up another \$21,800 and bringing his total money won to \$1,353,461. The Salt Lake City software engineer became an unlikely TV star this summer when he began mowing down opponents on the quiz show. He won 38 straight games before the show went on hiatus in late July. The new season began Monday. If Jennings keeps winning, he'll keep coming back. Game spokesman Jeff Ritter said there's been no discussion of a cut-off point, or another change in the rules.

