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Operation Iraqi Freedom II "Telling the First Team's Story" Dec. 28, 2004

3BCT Commander Spotlights Prosthetics Lab

By Staff Sgt. Susan German
122nd MPAD

CAMP UNION I, Baghdad -- Deep in the basement of the palace which houses the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, in the former kitchen, is a working prosthetics lab. The location was chosen primarily for its large oven that was left behind by family members of Saddam Hussein. The oven is able to reach temperatures high enough to heat the plastic sheets needed for the prosthetic molds.

Located next to the MWR's Internet café and television viewing area, most are unaware that the lab exists. It first received exposure when an Iraqi interpreter who had worked for Company C, 1st Battalion, 325th Airborne Infantry Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division during Operation Iraqi Freedom I was having trouble receiving a prosthetic leg from his civilian employer after he had lost his leg from injuries sustained during a U.S. military operation.

A story written a Los Angeles Times journalist was brought to the attention of the lab's founders, Sgt. Chris Cummings and Capt. Steve Lindsley, by Capt. Rob Edwards, an intelligence officer with the 112th Military Police Battalion, 89th Military Police Brigade 3rd BCT, who read the article in Stars and Stripes.

As the journalists gathered around him in the lab, Cummings explained some of the technical aspects of the lab, as well as how they find their patients, many times by chance.

The Fort Lauderdale, Fla. native is a civil affairs specialist who first came to Iraq on a nine-month tour with the Florida-based 478th Civil Affairs Battalion and is now serving a second nine-month tour with the 443rd Civil Affairs Battalion, from Warwick, R.I. He voluntarily extended his tour specifically to continue his work with the prosthetics mission.

"This is my civil affairs project now," Cummings said. "I'm fortunate enough that people like the project and realize the importance of it enough that they've given me full-time work over here."

Cummings left behind an orthotics and prosthetics manufacturing business he had built over the last 12 years when he was mobilized for duty to Iraq.

Cummings, along with Lindsley, and Edwards, who volunteered his help to the two, after he heard of the shipping dilemma they were having, trying to receive supplies from the states. A friend at Federal Express, in Memphis, Tenn., was able to arrange for more expeditious shipments of supplies from the U.S.

Lindsley is a logistics officer for the 112th MP Bn. At home, he manages the Methodist Orthotics and Prosthetics Department in Monroe, La., affiliated with the Methodist Rehabilitation Center in Jackson, Miss. The hospital has been instrumental in providing supplies to the mission in Baghdad, according to Lindsley. In a good year back in the states, with a full team of trained technicians and staff, Lindsley handles the type of caseload that he's already seen in Baghdad in just several months.

The team has helped fit and make prostheses for 61 patients, of various ages and backgrounds. On his way to a meeting at a hospital in Karadah, Cummings spotted his first two prosthetics patients standing less than a block apart on a Karadah street. Both were young and fit the criteria of a good candidate and subsequently fitted for prosthetic legs.

"For now it may not be safe for these Iraqis to say that Americans helped them, but someday it will be," Edwards said. "In their hearts they will know American Soldiers took the time to get them back on their feet, in more ways than one."

By Staff Sgt. Susan German, 122nd MPAD

Sgt. Chris Cummings, a civil affairs specialist serving with the Rhode Island-based 478th Civil Affairs Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, helps a young Iraqi boy, one of their first prosthetics patients, walk with his new leg at the prosthetics lab at Camp Union I in Baghdad, Iraq. The boy was immediately able to quit using the crutch he had been dependent upon.

82nd Airborne Soldiers Reenlist in Iraq

By Pfc. Mike Pryor
82nd Airborne Public Affairs

BAGHDAD -- Soldiers on long marches have been known to sing a cadence that goes, "Re-up? You're crazy! Re-up? You're outta your mind!" If that's true, Spc. Garrick Whitley is crazier than most.

Whitley, a nuclear, biological, and chemical operations specialist with Headquarters Company, 3rd Battalion, 325th Airborne Infantry Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division, was deployed to Iraq about two weeks ago. Now, he's missing his family, he's always freezing, and he's in constant danger from mortar attack and vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices. So what did Whitley do? He re-enlisted for four more years in the Army.

Call him crazy if you want, but Whitley is happy with his decision.

"When you enjoy doing what you're doing, (being a Soldier) is the easiest job in the world," he said.

Whitley was one of eight paratroopers who swore their re-enlistment oaths at a ceremony at Baghdad's Crossed Sabers Parade Field Dec. 17. Three other paratroopers re-enlisted later that night at a separate ceremony.

The paratroopers' battalion commander, Lt. Col. Thomas Hiebert, swore them in. He was happy to be able to retain experienced, qualified Soldiers, Hiebert said.

By Pfc. Mike Pryor, 82nd Airborne Div. Public Affairs

Paratroopers from 3rd Battalion, 325th Airborne Infantry Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division swear their re-enlistment oaths during a ceremony at the Crossed Sabers Parade Grounds. (Left to right) Staff Sgt. Terry Ross, Sgt. 1st Class Blain Erickson, Spc. Matthew Scheiner, Spc. Garrick Whitley, Spc. James Miller, Spc. Vincent Ingram, Spc. Carter Wright, Sgt. Darrell Patterson.

"These guys are great Americans," he said.

A person who played an instrumental role in the re-enlistments was Staff Sgt. Rodney Stewart, career counselor for 3rd Bn. Stewart said getting Soldiers to re-enlist - even in combat - isn't that difficult.

"My thing is, I just tell the guys what the Army has to offer them," he said.

The majority of Soldiers he sees have already made up their minds to either stay in the Army or get out, Stewart said. When they're not sure is where he comes in.

"I have a mission," he said. "My mission is to keep guys in. But I'm also a career counselor. Whether they stay in or get out, I just want them to have a plan."

Often, Stewart can convince undecided paratroopers to stay in by showing them a comparison of the benefits they'll receive by staying in the Army and the benefits they'll receive in similar jobs in the civilian world, he said. The comparison often favors the Army, he said.

That is especially true during deployments, Stewart said. Paratroopers who re-enlist while deployed may receive a tax-free combat bonus of $10,000 or more.

A big incentive for the group that re-enlisted on Dec. 17 was getting their bonus before the holidays, Stewart said. That way, they can take care of their families even if they're not with them, he said.

That wasn't the only reason to re-enlist expressed by the paratroopers at the ceremony. Whitley said re-upping in Iraq was his way of showing his support for his unit and its mission.

"(The re-enlistment ceremony) really made me feel like I was doing something for my country. I was glad to be one of the first people from the 82nd to re-enlist here," he said.

Others like Sgt. David Mikula of Company C downplayed the significance of their decision to continue soldiering in the Army.

"I didn't have anything better to do," Mikula joked.

Staff Sgt. Bill Flippo of Company D didn't even want to attend a ceremony. He just wanted to get back to work, he said.

"To me, re-enlisting is just another day," Flippo said, "It doesn't change anything around here. We've still got jobs to do."

Useful Iraqi Words/Phrases

I'm in pain.

ana AHndee alam.

Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
High: 59	High: 64	High: 64
Low: 41	Low: 37	Low: 37

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

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Tsunami Waves Kill Over 21,000 in Asia

AP

Residents stand on a flooded street after tidal waves hit in Lhokseumawe, Aceh province, Indonesia, Sunday, Dec. 26, 2004. Tidal waves swamped Indonesian towns near the epicenter of Sunday's massive undersea earthquake, killing at least 408 people and leaving bodies wedged in trees as the waters receded, officials and witnesses said.

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka (*AP*) -- Rescuers scoured Asia's coastlines for survivors of devastating tidal waves that obliterated seaside towns in nine countries, killing more than 21,000 people. Aid poured into the region, but morgues and hospitals struggled to cope with the tragedy.

Hundreds of children were buried in mass graves in India as their grieving parents looked on.

The death toll began climbing sharply after Sunday morning's 9.0-magnitude quake that struck deep beneath the Indian Ocean off the coast of Indonesia, the most powerful temblor in four decades.

The waves sped away from the epicenter at over 500 mph before crashing into the region's shorelines without warning, sweeping people and fishing villages out to sea. Millions were displaced from their homes and thousands were missing.

Officials said the death toll would continue to rise and warned that disease outbreaks were possible.

Sri Lanka said just over 10,000 people were killed along its coastlines, and Tamil rebels said 1,500 people died in its territory, bringing that country's toll to more than 11,500.

Indonesia and India also reported thousands of deaths, and Thailand - a Western tourist hotspot - said hundreds were dead and thousands missing. Deaths were also reported in Malaysia, Maldives, Myanmar, Bangladesh and even in Somalia, 3,000 miles away in Africa.

Indians displaced by the tidal waves took shelter on Monday in the southern state of Tamil Nadu.

"We have ordered 15,000 troops into the field to search for survivors," said military spokesman Edy Sulistiadi. "They are mostly retrieving corpses."

Refugees in nearby Lhokseumawe, many of whom had spent the night sleeping outside on open ground, complained that little or no aid had reached them. The city's hospital said it was running out of medicine.

The earthquake's aftereffects came without warning. Witnesses said sea waters at first retreated far out into the ocean, only to return at a vicious pace. Some regions reported a crashing wall of water 20 feet high.

"The water went back, back, back, so far away, and everyone wondered what it was - a full moon or what? Then we saw the wave come, and we ran," said Katri Seppanen, who was in Thailand, on Phuket island's popular Patong beach.

Sri Lanka and Indonesia had at least a million people each driven from their homes. Warships in Thailand steamed to remote tropical island resorts to search for survivors as air force helicopters in Sri Lanka and India rushed food and medicine to stricken areas.

In Sri Lanka - an island nation some 1,000 miles west of the epicenter - about 25,000 troops were deployed to crack down on sporadic, small-scale looting and to help in rescue efforts. About 200 inmates took advantage of the chaos, escaping from a prison in coastal Matara.

The U.S. Geological Survey said the quake's magnitude was 9.0 - the strongest since a 9.2 magnitude temblor in Alaska in 1964, and the fourth-largest in a century. The quake was nearly 6 miles deep and was followed by a half-dozen powerful aftershocks, some in the 7-magnitude range.

The quake occurred where several geological plates push against each other with massive force. The USGS said a 620-mile section shifted, triggering the sudden displacement of water.

News Notes

It Was All a Big Misunderstanding

ELKHART, Ind. (*AP*) -- A woman heading home from a store was surprised to find a man accusing her of stealing his van. The 71-year-old woman was leaving Wal-Mart when a man walked in front of her van, forcing her to stop. The man then walked to the driver's side, where the woman's great-nephew had rolled down a window. "He had his body halfway through the window saying, 'You got my car! You got my car!' she said. "He was really trying to reach and grab me," she said. "He said, 'Gimme my car! You stole my car!' I started driving with him still hanging onto the car. He fell off somewhere along (the way)."

A Little Bit of Beer Goes a Long Way

NORWAY, Iowa (*AP*) -- Cattlemen are hoping to raise a better bovine with beer. About a dozen eastern Iowa farmers have been spiking their cattle feed with beer. So far, the herds are lapping it up, said cattlemen Robert Miller. They like it so much that they hesitate to eat when their feed isn't mixed with beer, Miller said. It began about a year ago when an official at Fleck Sales, a Cedar Rapids beer distributor, contacted Fisher's Feed and Fertilizer in Norway, a small town southeast of Cedar Rapids. Fisher said research shows that beer has vitamins, minerals, amino acids, carbohydrates and proteins, which all benefit cattle's diet.

Defense Great Reggie White Dies at 43

CORNELIUS, N.C. (*AP*) -- Reggie White, a fearsome defensive end for the Philadelphia Eagles and Green Bay Packers and one of the NFL's greatest players, died Sunday, his wife said. He was 43.

The cause of death was not immediately known, however White had a respiratory ailment for several years that affected his sleep, according to Keith Johnson, a pastor serving as family spokesman. An autopsy was scheduled.

"Today our beloved husband, father and friend passed away," White's wife, Sara, said in a statement. "His family appreciates your thoughts and prayers as we mourn the loss of Reggie White. We want to thank you in advance for honoring our privacy."

White died at Presbyterian Hospital, where he was taken after his wife called 911. A police officer was outside White's Tudor-style home in a gated community, and would not let a reporter approach the house.

A two-time NFL Defensive Player of the Year and ordained minister who was known as the "Minister of Defense," White played a total of 15 years with Philadelphia, Green Bay and Carolina. He retired after the 2000 season as the NFL's all-time leader in sacks with 198. The mark has since been passed by Bruce Smith.

"Reggie White was a gentle warrior who will be remembered as one of the greatest defensive players in NFL history," NFL commissioner Paul Tagliabue said. "Equally as impressive as his achievements on the field was the positive impact he made off the field and how he was as a positive influence on so many young people."

"A 43-year-old is not supposed to die in his sleep," Johnson said. "It was not only unexpected, but it was also a complete surprise. Reggie wasn't a sick man ... he was vibrant. He had lots and lots of energy, lots of passion."

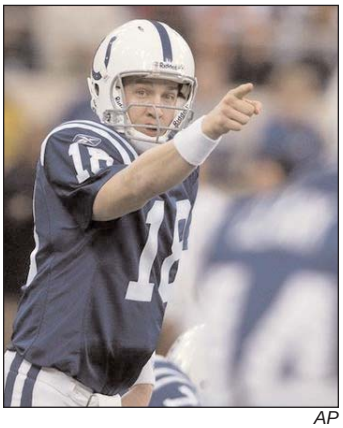
"He was a family person, a person who liked to have fun. Obviously, we're all going to really miss him," Johnson said.

White and his wife had a son and a daughter: Jeremy, a freshman at Elon University, and Jecolia, a junior in high school.

AP

Former NFL star Reggie White died Sunday, Dec. 26, 2004, of a heart attack at his home in Huntersville, N.C.

Late Rally Gives Colts No. 3 Seed



AP

Indianapolis Colts quarterback Peyton Manning shouts instructions to a teammate during the game against the San Diego Chargers Sunday.

INDIANAPOLIS (*AP*) -- All Peyton Manning wanted was a victory. The record was a bonus.

As usual, Manning delivered his best plays when the Colts needed him most.

Manning rallied the Colts from a 15-point deficit in the fourth quarter, throwing his NFL-record 49th touchdown pass of the season to force overtime. Then he led the Colts on a 61-yard drive to beat San Diego 34-31.

"The way it happened on that drive, I think Johnny Unitas would have been proud," Manning said.

The Colts (12-3), winners of eight straight, wrapped up the No. 3 seed in the AFC. San Diego (11-4), the AFC West champs, had its eight-game winning streak broken but will host a first-round playoff game.

While the Colts set several records - becoming the first team in league history to have three receivers catch 10 TDs in a season and only the fourth team in league history with three 1,000 yard receivers - the focus was not on Manning or the records.

"We are happy about the regular-season records," coach Tony Dungy said. "But we are looking for the big prize once the playoffs start."

In Brief

Moore Sets His Sights on Drugs

LOS ANGELES (*AP*) -- The Los Angeles Times reported Wednesday that at least six drug companies have released internal communications telling employees to be wary of filmmaker Michael Moore. Moore's targets have included General Motors (*Roger & Me*), the gun lobby (the Oscar-winning *Bowling for Columbine*) and President Bush (*Fahrenheit 9/11*). Moore, normally seen sporting a beard and a ball cap, has now set his sights on the health care industry, including insurance companies, HMOs, the Food and Drug Administration and drug companies.

Actor Jailed in Pakistan Released

LOS ANGELES (*AP*) -- Actor Erik Anthony Aude, who was freed from a Pakistani prison after serving two years on a drug charge, returned home Sunday night to an emotional reunion with family and friends. Aude, who had minor roles on the television show *Reba* and in the hit film *Dude, Where's My Car?* was freed Thursday from a jail in Rawalpindi, a city near Islamabad, Pakistan's capital. Aude was arrested at Islamabad airport Feb. 15, 2002, after authorities said they found 7.9 pounds of opium in a suitcase he was carrying minutes before he was to leave on a flight for Dubai, United Arab Emirates.