

New mine detector aids Bagram troops



Pvt. Jeff Salem, combat engineer, Company C, 27th Engineer Battalion, Fort Bragg, N.C., hones his skills on the Handheld Standoff Mine Detector System at Bagram Airbase. The 27th Engineer Bn. is the first unit to use the new HSTAMIDS in a combat role.

Story and photo by
Pfc. Charles D. Meseke
CTF-82 PAO

BAGRAM, Afghanistan — A combat engineer's job is slow moving at times. When it comes to clearing minefields, like the many that litter the area surrounding Bagram Air Base, careful precision must be taken with each action.

If an engineer makes a mistake when clearing mines, it could cost his life, or another soldier's life.

For this reason every piece of metal that alerts a mine detector must be marked and probed to make sure there is no hazard, explained Capt. Mike Baker, commander, Company C, 27th Engineer Battalion, Fort Bragg, N.C.

This is also what makes the new Handheld Standoff Mine Detector System so important.

The system is the newest mine detector to be used by the Army and is being used for the first time in a combat situation

by soldiers of Co. C at Bagram.

HSTAMIDS uses the standard practice of metal detection for finding mines, but also has ground-penetrating radar to help reduce false identification of land mines.

This is especially important in an area like Bagram, said Baker. Bagram's soil is littered with pieces of scrap metal that conventional mine detectors often detect as low metal antipersonnel mines.

The detector uses a combination of metal detection and density-measuring radar to determine if a mine may be present.

"You can cancel out the metal pieces that you used to have to probe for that weren't really mines at all," said Spc, Mercellus O. Fields, combat engineer, C Co.

Fields and other combat engineers were required to complete 40 hours of classes to learn how to use the HSTAMIDS.

———— See **MINES**, Page 4

Dragon Palace continues to increase offerings

By Pfc. Debralee P. Crankshaw
11th Public Affairs Detachment

BAGRAM, Afghanistan — Servicemembers keep themselves busy while deployed in many ways and soon they will be able to add another.

Dragon Palace will open a game room April 1 with six PlayStations, five 12-inch televisions and one 32-inch television.

The room will be open from 2330Z-2130Z

unless problems with the systems arise.

There will be an hour time limit for PlayStations. Reservations may be made for a specific time the day prior.

Servicemembers can check out controllers and games. Games offered for checkout include NHL 2003, Madden 2003, FIFA 2003, Need for Speed Hot Pursuit 2, Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers, 007: Agent Under Fire, NBA Live 2003, NCAA 2003, NASCAR Thunder 2003, Triple Play 2003

and SSX Tricky.

Servicemembers are encouraged to bring their own games and controllers to play others. Dragon Palace has six controllers to checkout.

"It gives soldiers something else to do — not just the television or the computer. A lot of soldiers I've talked to thought it was a good idea," said Jimmy Ferrazas, Kellogg,

———— See **GAME ROOM**, Page 3

World News (Compiled from CNN.com)

U.S. may have found Iraq chemical weapons plant

WASHINGTON — Pentagon officials on Sunday said the U.S. military has secured a facility in southern Iraq that may have been used to produce chemical weapons.

The officials cautioned that it was not clear what suspect materials may still be at the plant, which is located in Najaf, some 90 miles south of Baghdad.

The taking of the suspected chemical weapons facility was first reported by the Jerusalem Post, which said about 30 Iraqi troops, including a general, surrendered to U.S. forces of the 3rd Infantry Division.

The report also said the Iraqis tried to camouflage the facility by disguising it with sand-cast walls so that it would blend in with the surrounding desert and not be visible from the air.

At a press briefing in Qatar, senior U.S. commanders refused to confirm details of the report, but did say two Iraqi generals were in custody.



Apache helicopters wait to take off on Sunday.

Republican Guard attacked

SOUTHERN IRAQ — U.S. Apache attack helicopters attacked Iraq's elite Republican Guard units early Monday in an intense firefight that lasted about three hours, CNN's Karl Penhaul reported.

Penhaul said the helicopters encountered a "heavy, heavy barrage" of anti-aircraft fire in the battle, about 60 miles south of Baghdad. He could not immediately say whether all of the U.S. helicopters returned safely.

The attack started sometime after midnight (4 p.m. ET) and lasted about three

hours, said Penhaul, who was aboard a Black Hawk helicopter that served as the command and control craft of a unit of Apache attack helicopters. The helicopter in which Penhaul was riding was about 15-20 miles from the scene of the strike.

'Sharpest' fighting in war to date

NASIRIYA, Iraq — Iraqi forces killed and wounded several U.S. Marines Sunday around the southern city of Nasiriya in what a senior U.S. officer called "the sharpest engagement of the war thus far."

The Marines successfully repelled the attacks, but CNN's Alessio Vinci, who is embedded with 2nd Marine Division, said a troop carrier capable of carrying up to two dozen Marines was hit with a rocket-propelled grenade.

Witnesses of the troop carrier attack said at least 10 Marines were killed. But at a U.S. Central Command briefing in Qatar, Army Lt. Gen. John Abizaid said the number of dead was less than that.

"We have a number of killed in the action in Nasiriya with the Marines — I believe that number will remain less than 10 — and a number of wounded," Abizaid said.

In addition, Abizaid said, 12 soldiers from a U.S. Army maintenance unit are unaccounted for, and some were shown on Iraqi state television as prisoners.

The 12 are believed to have been captured in an ambush by Iraqi forces outside Nasiriya. CNN has decided not to show the video of the POWs or the killed soldiers.

White House 'outraged' by Iraq's treatment of POWs

WASHINGTON — White House officials are "outraged" about the apparent "brutal and cruel" treatment of U.S. prisoners of war by the Iraqi regime, a Bush official told CNN late Sunday.

"This only stiffens the president's resolve against Saddam Hussein's inhumane regime," said the official.

The president was in his residence Sunday evening receiving constant updates from the war front.

Bush spoke to reporters on the South Lawn of the White House Sunday afternoon — the first time he took journalists' questions since the military campaign began last Wednesday.

"If there is somebody captured — and it looks like there may be — I expect those people to be treated humanely," he said.

Bush said coalition forces are making "good progress" and that Iraqi President Saddam Hussein is "losing control of his country." But he emphasized, "This war has just begun."

Iraqi U.N. ambassador says POWs won't be mistreated

NEW YORK — Iraq's ambassador to the United Nations said Sunday his country will respect the Geneva Conventions and not mistreat soldiers captured during the conflict in his country.

Mohammed Aldouri was asked about videotape aired by the Arab satellite TV network Al-Jazeera showing U.S. soldiers believed to have been captured in fighting around the southern Iraqi city of Nasiriya. U.S. officials said showing images of the soldiers violated the Geneva Conventions, which prohibits subjecting prisoners of war to humiliating treatment.

Motive a mystery

CAMP PENNSYLVANIA, Kuwait — U.S. military investigators are trying to find out what prompted a disgruntled platoon sergeant to turn on his own, allegedly lobbing four grenades at tents of the 101st Airborne Division's 1st Brigade, killing one soldier and wounding 15 others in northern Kuwait, officials said Sunday.

The suspect — identified as Sgt. Asan Akbar with the 326th Engineer Battalion of the 101st — remains in custody of the military and could be sent back to the division's base in Fort Campbell, Ky., for military proceedings, officials said.

Akbar — described as a disgruntled platoon sergeant with an "attitude problem" — was in an engineering unit guarding grenades just before the incident Sunday at about 1:45 a.m.

'Mind to mind,' said the Korean to the American

Story and photos by
Pvt. 2 Terri Rorke
11th Public Affairs Detachment

BAGRAM, Afghanistan – Somewhere in Afghanistan, water is being boiled and a table is being set up for guests to arrive. A decision is being made on which flavor of tea will be concocted today. A Japanese grain tea? A rare five dollar-a-serving Pine Mushroom tea? No, the cough and cold-curing green tea is chosen. The brewing begins.

The aroma of the tea leaves fills the room. The guests are here.

"Come, sit down!" says Korean Lt. Col. Soomoon Chae, senior liaison officer, Combined Joint Task Force-180, to the two U.S. soldiers who just entered his office.

As the tea brews, so does the conversation about past days in Korea.

"I don't do this for me," said Chae, "but for others to experience my culture."

Almost daily, Chae said he invites Korean and U.S. soldiers over to his office for a good conversation and three cups of tea.

Three cups, because each one has meaning, said Chae. The first cup is for the fragrance of the tea. The second is for the color. Today green tea is drank, so it is a calm green. The third is for the sound. When the tea is poured in the cup, it sounds like a stream somewhere in nature.

Growing up in the town of Chung Yang



Lt. Col. Soomoon Chae, senior liaison officer, Combined Joint Task Force-180, relaxes over tea with Maj. Tim Watson, left, and Lt. Col. Carl Fischer, both from CJTF-180. Chae said he invites Americans over so they can experience his culture.

or Town of Blue Suns, Chae said it was his family's tradition to let the grandparents raise the children. His grandfather, Kyuhyun Chae, a famous Confucianist and scholar, began teaching the young boy at four. He educated him in many things including the art of tea.

Offering coffee to someone isn't too personal, said Chae. "If I invite you over for tea, it has meaning. Mind to mind."

With a room special for tea drinking in his Korean home, Chae said he thought it

would be a good idea to bring at least the relaxing atmosphere of the room with him. When he was packing his tea set in his Buddhist temple-like room before deploying here, his wife said to him, "You're going to Bagram. Why do you need to take luxury items with you?"

Being deployed in a place where things may get depressing and de-motivating, Chae

See **CHE**, Page 6

GAME ROOM, from Page 1

Brown and Root labor foreman/Morale, Welfare and Recreation staff. "PlayStations are expensive so most soldiers don't have the money for them."

The PlayStations and games were donated. Kellogg, Brown and Root bought the televisions and chairs.

The room still needs a coat of paint and other work before it opens.

"If there is a large demand we may expand the room in the future," said Ferrazas.

Soldiers may donate games and PlayStations to the room.

The room will also serve as a DJ booth during parties so the PlayStations will be off limits during that time.



Photo by Pfc. Debralee P. Crankshaw

The Game room in Dragon Palace is awaiting a coat of paint before its open April 1.

MINES, from Page 1

“Overall it is a more efficient system because you will not have to probe for every small piece of metal that you come across,”

- Spc. Gwinn Alva

Soldiers then qualified with the detector by finding all the training mines placed in a lane to be cleared.

After the course is completed the engineers can still be seen practicing their skills just outside their living quarters in Viper City.

“I feel confident with (the HSTAMIDS), it was easy to learn, and simple to use,” Fields said.

Its new technology of using radar and metal detection has made it one of the first true mine detectors used. Previous detectors did little more than alert an operator when there was metal content in the ground.

“The radar lets us see density changes in the ground, and that is the difference between finding pieces of scrap metal, or an actual mine,” said Spc. Gwinn Alva a combat engineer of C Co.

“Overall it is a more efficient system because you will not have to probe for every small piece of metal that you come across,” said Alva.

This efficiency will help speed up the process of clearing lanes in a minefield.

Some of the engineers estimated that with the HSTAMIDS they will be able to clear in one day what would have taken a week in the past.

Afghanistan is one of the world’s most heavily mined countries, and Bagram, a former Soviet air field is one of the worst areas, according to the engineers.

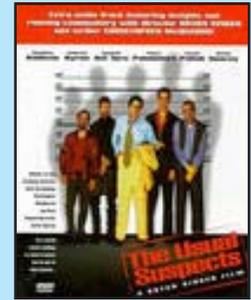
The task of clearing mines is always ongoing for C Co., and that is why the HSTAMIDS is such a welcomed tool for its effectiveness and speed.

“The HSTAMIDS is more reliable than any other mine detection system we have used.

“Overall it is the most efficient mine detector we have,” Alva said.

Bagram Air Base MWR presents

1530Z at the MWR building: “The Usual Suspects.” Five villains in New York are rounded up by police in an unconventional manner that worries them. After release, they get together for a spot of revenge, but someone else is controlling events.



Tomorrow’s movie will be “Die Hard.”

Local weather

TWO-DAY REGIONAL WEATHER FORECAST:

	Today	Tuesday
Bagram:	Rain H: 68F L: 37F	Fog H: 66F L: 39F
Kandahar:	Scattered T-storms H: 81F L: 61F	Haze H: 82F L: 55F
Kabul:	Rain H: 64F L: 39F	Fog H: 66F L: 41F
Uzbekistan:	Isolated showers H: 63F L: 48F	Mostly cloudy H: 71F L: 44F

Weather forecast courtesy of the Bagram Combat Weather Team

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Coalition Sports Zone

(Compiled from *ESPN.com*)



Patrick Vieira, right, was the difference for Arsenal.

Arsenal takes back Premiership edge

LONDON — Skipper Patrick Vieira restored Arsenal's two-point lead in the premier league on Sunday after scoring the winner in a 2-1 victory over Everton at Highbury.

France's midfielder smashed the ball home in the 64th minute after a superb solo strike by Everton teenager Wayne Rooney had canceled out Pascal Cygan's first goal for Arsenal.

With seven games remaining, the win left the champions on 66 points, two more than Manchester United who went top on Saturday with a 3-0 demolition of Fulham at Old Trafford.

Third-placed Newcastle United (61) are also in the title race, while Liverpool moved up to fifth on 52, just two points behind Chelsea, after a 3-1 victory earlier on Sunday over struggling Leeds United.

Arsenal's victory will be a much-needed morale boost for Arsene Wenger's side — four days after their exit from the Champions League in Valencia and two days before a crunch FA Cup quarterfinal replay against Chelsea at Stamford Bridge.

But the main drive on Sunday was to respond to United's impressive win, courtesy of a Ruud van Nistelrooy hat trick.

Vieira told Sky Sports: "The pressure was there because Manchester United won yesterday, and it was hard. But I think we had a really good game.

"We responded, and we're really delighted to take the three points."

Vieira, who is carrying an ankle injury and was a doubtful starter, said: "I feel pain, and I'm not 100 percent fit. But it's a situation where everyone has to give their best because we're in a good position to win the league."

McBride has two assists in return

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Brian McBride had a pair of assists in his return to Columbus as the Crew beat Panama's Arabe Unido 3-0 Sunday and advanced to the quarterfinals of the CONCACAF Champions Cup.

Edson Buddle scored twice for the Crew, who won the home-

and-home, total-goals series on 4-3 aggregate.

Kyle Martino also had a goal for Columbus.

McBride had been loaned to Everton of England's Premier League and scored four goals in eight games there.

He cut short his stay by one game to play for Columbus on Sunday and missed Everton's 2-1 loss earlier in the day to Arsenal, the Premier League leader.

In the 42nd minute, McBride flicked a high pass to Buddle, who controlled the ball with his chest and shot from just inside the penalty box past goalkeeper Diego Hoyas.

Buddle beat Hoyas to another McBride pass in the 59th minute and scored from 6 yards to give the Crew a 2-0 lead.

Martino made it 3-0 in the 70th minute, curling a 25-yard shot inside the right post.

Arabe Unido's only shot on goal didn't come until the 31st minute. Columbus finished with 12 shots on goal.

The Crew plays either CSD Communications of Guatemala or CA Monarcas Morelia of Mexico, with the first leg on the road April 9 and the second leg at home April 16.

The tournament is the club championship for North and Central America, and the Caribbean.

Inter stumbles against Udinese

MILAN, Italy — Inter Milan fell to a 2-1 defeat to Udinese on Sunday allowing champion Juventus to maintain its three-point lead at the top of Serie A.

After Juve's 2-1 defeat to AC Milan on Saturday, second-place Inter had a chance to draw level with the leaders but Hector Cuper's side could not complain about the result against Udinese, which has lost just once at home this season.

With eight games remaining, Juve lead on 57 points, followed by Inter three points behind while third-place Milan have 52 points.

Udinese, which had hit the post in the first half through Vincenzo Iaquinta, took the lead three minutes after the break when Czech midfielder Marek Jankulovski fired home from the right after a low cross from Thomas Manfredini.

Iaquinta then made it 2-0 with a close-range finish after a strong run and cross from Roberto Muzzi.

Inter fought back well though and Alvaro Recoba forced Udinese keeper Morgan De Sanctis into action with a curling free kick.

Luigi Di Biagio headed the resulting corner against the bar and Inter defender Ivan Cordoba reacted well to head in the rebound and put Hector Cuper's side back in the game.

Recoba forced another fine save out of De Sanctis but Udinese held on for a win that will provide some comfort to Juve coach Marcello Lippi after Saturday's setback.

SPORTS, from Page 5

Inverness makes first FA Cup semis

GLASGOW, Scotland — Champion Celtic were dumped out of the Scottish FA Cup when first division Inverness Caledonian Thistle pulled off its second giant-killing act in three years against the same opponents Sunday.

Caley, who won 3-1 at Celtic Park in the Scottish Cup third round three years ago, upset Celtic 1-0 with a first-half strike from Dennis Wyness to progress to their first major semifinal against Dundee or first division Falkirk at Hampden.

Holders Rangers were held to a 1-1 draw away to a spirited Dunfermline Athletic earlier on Sunday and will replay at Ibrox on April 9 with the winners meeting Motherwell. The semifinals will be played on April 19 and 20.

Caley had to withstand some torrid pressure from UEFA Cup semifinalists Celtic in the second half — in which home goalkeeper Mark Brown was outstanding — but hung on grimly to cause the tournament's biggest upset.

Celtic manager Martin O'Neill retained only three players in his starting lineup from the side who won 2-0 at Liverpool in the UEFA Cup quarterfinals on Thursday, but still felt defeat was unacceptable.

"I'm disappointed to be out the Scottish Cup, of course I am," the Northern Irishman said.

Feyenoord one point behind Ajax

AMSTERDAM, Holland — Mateja Kezman scored both goals to give Dutch league leaders PSV Eindhoven an all-important 2-0 win over nearest challenger Ajax on Sunday.

The victory may have effectively settled this season's title chase as PSV is now 10 points clear of the defending champion with only nine games left.

Kezman opened the scoring with a 10th minute penalty after Hatem Trabelsi fouled youngster Arjen Robben.

Ajax had captain Christian Chivu sent off on 70 minutes for a second bookable offense and Kezman settled the issue two minutes before time after a pass from Dennis Rommedahl.

It was his 25th goal of the season and it is now 16 games since PSV has lost to Ajax in a league match.

Ajax controlled the game, but hardly created any chances up front. "Offensively we were powerless," said coach Ronald Koeman. "We played organized football after we went a goal down but our creative players were invisible."

Chivu, who received his second booking after he threw the ball against Mark van Bommel's head, said: "We didn't play well today and the AS Roma (Champions League) match is not an excuse.

"But considering PSV's poor performance today, we missed our chance to beat them."

Ajax is through to the Champions League quarterfinals after a 1-1 draw in Rome on Wednesday but Sunday's loss means it must watch its backs domestically.

CHE, from Page 3

said, "I think it is good to keep myself calmed down." Plus he said he wanted to bring part of his Korean culture here for others to experience.

"If your cup is not empty, I can not fill your tea. You must listen. Clear your mind. Be humble, then we can talk," said Chae, quoting a sample of Buddhist philosophy.

This philosophy influenced by his grandfather, a veteran Army officer who died on the battlefield, persuaded the disciplined Korean to join the Army as a career.

Twenty-three years later, the officer has a lot of experiences under his belt.

He started out by attending the Korean Military Academy and from there has done everything from working in the Korean Embassy in London for three years to being the company commander of an infantry unit.

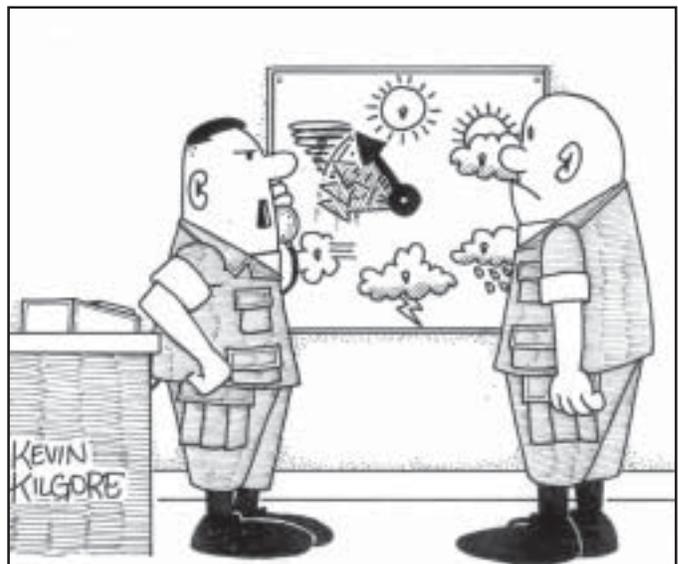
Today, the father of two is at Bagram and is sharing all his experiences with his allies. He said he invites soldiers over who have been through a tour of duty in Korea. He said this is to keep the connection between the two nations and is also his way of thanking them for serving time in his home country.

Because he shares his culture, tea and experiences to his friends, he brings a glimmer of hospitality to the middle of the desert.

This concept is displayed in his calligraphy, which is hanging up in his office.

It reads, "If you are one with the universe, every place can be your home."

"Hold on a minute, the forecast is almost done, sir."



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By Kevin Kilgore

Laugh Support