

27th Engineer Bn. – first to test IVMMD

Story and photos by
Pfc. Christina Carde
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BAGRAM, Afghanistan — After being tested in South Africa and sitting in the Army's warehouse for more than four years, the new Interim Vehicle Mounted Mine Detection system is being tested here by C company, 27th Engineer Battalion, Fort Bragg, N.C., the engineers chosen to be the first in the U.S. Army to use the system.

Afghanistan is rated one of the top five countries in the world for having the largest number of landmines. For this reason, The U.S. military decided this would be the perfect place to test the new IVMMD system to see what it can do.

"The systems arrived here in boxes as one complete kit ready for assembly," said Sgt. Sean McDonald, combat engineer team leader, 1st Platoon, C Co. "It consists of four different modules. A Meerkat that is the main mine-detection



The Interim Vehicle Mounted Mine Detector is the new state-of-the-art mine detection system designed in South Africa for clearing roads. C Company, 27th Engineer Battalion, Fort Bragg, N.C. is one of the first Army units to test the equipment.

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Bagram Army reservists seek clear answers

By Pvt. 2 Terri Rorke
11th Public Affairs Detachment

BAGRAM, Afghanistan — Working a comfortable civilian job can become settling. Everything is in place. Then the phone rings and two days later a soldier is mobilized for deployment. It's time for duty.

The spontaneity of Army Reserve soldiers deploying involves the stress of getting lives situated and organized.

With frequently asked questions stacking up, finance and reserve affairs representatives gave some answers to soldiers during a "town hall meeting" at the South Dining Facility here Saturday.

"We are working on a multitude of items to better support (United States Army Reserve) soldiers who are deployed in support of (Operation Enduring Freedom)," said Master Sgt. Becki Caldwell, Reserve Affairs Liaison, Fort Bragg, N.C.

Caldwell arrived here as Bagram's first Army Reserve liaison because the need for someone to handle Army Reservists issues increased, she said.

A lot of reservists show up here with only two sets of Desert Camouflage Uniforms, said Caldwell. She assists the 3,000 Army Reservists here with issues in finance, supply, personnel as well as many other issues.

The main issue reservists are having is the rotation situation, said Caldwell.

"Look at (being here) 270 days. Anything less is a bonus," she said.

Right now reservists deployed in the OEF area of operation are coming from jobs at the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms and the Drug Enforcement Administration. While deployed, they are work-

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World News (Compiled from CNN.com)



This building in Riyadh was ripped apart by one of the suicide bombings.

Saudi prince: Bombers planned larger operation

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia — The suicide bombers who struck Riyadh last week were planning a much bigger operation, according to Prince Bandar, the Saudi ambassador to the United States, who said Monday that he fears another devastating attack.

Speaking to reporters in Riyadh, the prince mentioned electronic “chatter,” a reference to signals from various sources that intelligence officials listen to regularly.

The chatter strongly suggests that something — it is not clear what — might be in the works, analysts said.

Just before the series of bombings in Riyadh on May 12, analysts said, there was an alarming drop in such chatter. Analysts said they are not yet seeing a similar drop.

Sources told CNN in Washington that there has been increased chatter about possible future terrorist attacks, though there has been no specific or credible information regarding any target in the United States.

Four people believed to be linked to the al-Qaida terrorist network have been detained in connection with the Riyadh attacks, said Saudi Interior Minister Prince Naif bin Abdulaziz, adding that each had prior knowledge of the bombings.

During the past few days, various officials in Riyadh, including the U.S. ambassador, have said al-Qaida operatives or other groups in the kingdom might be preparing to strike again. The threat level in Saudi Arabia is now at the highest level it has ever been, Saudi intelligence sources said.

Several reasons are behind the concern

in Saudi Arabia, the first being the attacks themselves last week. It is also known that some of those who carried out the bombings survived and fled, and have not been found, and that the suspected planners of the attacks — who are associated with al-Qaida — are believed to still be in Saudi Arabia.

Both the FBI and U.S. Homeland Security Department said in publications last week that the attacks against compounds housing mainly Westerners have the “traditional hallmarks” of al-Qaida operations, such as hitting several targets and being precisely timed.

Suicide bomber kills at least 3 in Israel

AFULA, Israel — A suicide bomber killed at least three people Monday at a shopping mall in northern Israel, police said. It was the fifth terror attack in the region since Saturday — the day top Israeli and Palestinian leaders met for the first time in more than two years.

Forty-seven people were wounded in the latest bombing in the town of Afula. Thirteen of the wounded were in serious condition, an Israeli police spokesman said.

Palestinian sources said the suicide bomber was a 19-year-old woman from a village near Jenin in the northern West Bank. The blast was set off after she was confronted by a security guard at the entrance to the Ha’amakin shopping mall. The security guard was one of the victims.

Two radical Islamic groups claimed responsibility — the Islamic Jihad and the al Aqsa Martyrs Brigades, the militant wing of Palestinian President Yasser Arafat’s Fatah movement.

The blast at the mall came hours after a young Palestinian man riding a bicycle blew himself up in Gaza, killing himself and lightly wounding three Israeli soldiers, Israel Defense Forces said. That attack took place near the Jewish settlement of Kfar Drom. Izzedine al Qassam, the military wing of the Islamic militant group Hamas, claimed responsibility for the attack.

Both Islamic Jihad and Hamas are considered terrorist organizations by the U.S. State Department.

Helicopter crash kills five Marines in Iraq

WASHINGTON — A U.S. Marine Corps CH-46 Sea Knight helicopter crashed Monday morning in Iraq, according to Pentagon officials, killing four Marines on board and a fifth who was in a waterway as part of a rescue attempt.

The twin-rotor helicopter used mainly to transport troops crashed in the waterway near Karbala, south of Baghdad, Pentagon officials said.

Officials had no other details about the crash or the rescue attempt in which the helicopter was apparently participating.

U.S. presents resolution to end Iraq sanctions

UNITED NATIONS — The United States on Monday presented to the U.N. Security Council its final version of a draft resolution that calls for lifting the sanctions on Iraq.

Members of the Security Council will spend Tuesday afternoon discussing the resolution, and a vote could come as early as Wednesday.

John Negroponte, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, said the resolution provides “a good framework for the international community to support the people of Iraq in the creation of a stable and secure society.”

Sponsors of the resolution, including the United States, United Kingdom and Spain, made at least 60 changes to the document before presenting it Monday, a U.S. official said.

Among the changes they made were lengthening the time for dismantling the oil-for-food program from four to six months, which several Security Council members had requested. They also provided for additional duties for the U.N. Special Representative to Iraq, and demanded that the representative report regularly to the council.

The revised text also leaves open the possibility of an eventual return of U.N. arms inspectors to Iraq to search for weapons of mass destruction.

Carpathian Odyssey: to jumpstart Afghan economy

Story and photos by
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RING ROAD, Afghanistan — U.S., Polish and Romanian soldiers began a 10-day Ground Assault Convoy from Kandahar to Kabul Wednesday.

Operation Carpathian Odyssey are conducting a route reconnaissance of the road, accurately describing its condition to include obstacles or impediments to the flow of traffic as well as describing all bridges and calculating their load capacity.

The survey gives road contractors an idea of the condition of the road so they may make specific plans for its repair. The only work currently underway is grading and smoothing of the road near Kabul. The project is estimated to take three years.

This is the first reconnaissance mission conducted on the road.

“Ring Road is critical to the economic recovery of the country. They don’t have rail to ship things and they don’t have rivers so if we get this road up and running again we will make the economic recovery of Afghanistan much easier,” said Maj. Mark Cerda, officer in charge, roads, bridges and tunnels section, engineers, Combined Joint Task Force-180.

Three forces were chosen for this mission for different reasons according to Cerda.

The U.S. engineer, Cerda, was chosen to accompany the Romanians because of his knowledge of roads, bridges and tunnels. The Polish engineer is an expert in reconnaissance and the Romanians were chosen because they have proven themselves very capable of organizing GACs. The Romanian engineers consist of a five-man squad, a commander, a non-commissioned officer and three soldiers.

These soldiers have performed mine reconnaissance, but this is their first time surveying a road.

“We can see if what we learn in Romania is applicable in the real world,” said 1st Lt. Mihai Ghita, Romanian Engineer officer. “In Romania we train, but here it is different because it is possible to discover minefields and booby traps. This is the best place for confirmation of good training back home — apply and



A Romanian soldier measures the overhang of a bridge during Carpathian Odyssey, a survey operation to repair Ring Road.

see the results. We do not have a chance at home because simulation cannot be real life.”

The convoy has reached Kabul and is already compiling their results.

“So far (the survey has found) a majority of the road is in dismal shape, primarily because of a lack of maintenance,” said Cerda. “Maintenance costs money and money is in short supply when fighting a war. Prevention measures have not been taken to prevent erosion and potholes have weakened the road. The road is like a rotten tooth.”



Romanian soldiers set up for the night during Carpathian Odyssey, an operation to survey Ring Road for repairs. The operation began Wednesday and will last 10 days.

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ing in their respective military occupational specialties.

Some reservists here have served more than 30 years in the military, including retired Vietnam veterans. The happy factor is sometimes lost with reservists for these reasons, said Caldwell.

In some cases, members of the Individual Ready Reserve and Individual Mobilization Unit are pulled from their homes with only a two or three day notice, said Caldwell.

“It’s tough when they have very little time to prepare themselves, their families and their employers,” she said.

Soldiers must have patience and use rumor control, she said.

Army reservists can prevent problems and locate solutions to issues with a little research.

The Army Reserve website, www.2xcitizen.usar.army.mil, can answer a lot of questions said Caldwell.

The website lets reservists view, update, or print official military personnel files, evaluation history, Active Guard Reserve packet status, retirement information and points statement, promotion information and personal contact information.

It also has numerous links to sites of interest to the Reserve community.

Every soldier should have a MYPAY account, said Caldwell. MYPAY allows servicemembers to manage pay information, leave and earning statements and more all online.

“It is the surest way (to keep track of your money),” according to Caldwell.

One thing to keep in mind as reservists search for answers is that the War on Terrorism is still going on. If reservists have specific concerns or issues, they are most likely generic to the United States Army Reserve, said Caldwell. She asks that reservists “stay motivated and focused on the mission” as solutions are being searched for.

Bagram Air Base MWR presents

1530Z at the MWR building: “Red Dragon.” FBI agent Will Graham seeks the help of Dr. Hannibal “The Cannibal” Lecter to help solve the case of “The Tooth Fairy.”



Tomorrow’s movie will be “The Mothman Prophecies.”

Local weather

TWO-DAY REGIONAL WEATHER FORECAST:

	Today	Wednesday
Bagram:	Scattered showers H: 84F L: 61F	Partly cloudy H: 81F L: 63F
Kandahar:	Partly cloudy H: 97F L: 68F	Clear H: 97F L: 66F
Kabul:	Scattered showers H: 81F L: 59F	Partly cloudy H: 79F L: 55F
Uzbekistan:	Partly cloudy H: 90F L: 54F	Sunny H: 90F L: 54F

Weather forecast courtesy of the Bagram Combat Weather Team

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Hans Vanstaden, systems mechanic, South Africa, fixes a small glitch inside an Interim Vehicle Mounted Mine Detection system. Vanstaden is part of the team that came from South Africa to train military personnel on how to operate the system.



Spc. Alva Gwinn, engineer, 1st Platoon, C Company, 27th Engineer Battalion, Fort Bragg, N.C., conducts a preventive maintenance check on a new Interim Vehicle Mounted Mine Detector.

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system, a Husky which is the center and personnel vehicle, a trailer and a red pack or replacement module that contains parts should something brake or get blown off.”

Because three out of four of these modules connect together to form the complete system, extensive training has gone into the operation of the IVMMD.

“We have been training every day for about a month on how to correctly assemble, drive and do (preventive maintenance checks and services) on the system,” said McDonald. “Since we are one of the first to ever test the system, it is important that we are proficient in operating it so we are completely prepared for anything when it comes time for a real mission.”

Along with the privilege of being the first Americans to use the system, comes the responsibility of discovering all of the problems and glitches it may have.

“The training manual that arrived with the systems from the Engineer School House in Fort Leonardwood, (Mo.), was rather vague,” said McDonald. “Many of the components that go into working the system we had to figure out for ourselves such as the assembly, mechanics and being able to correct malfunctions on the spot.”

“We have also been testing different theo-

ries to decide on the most effective method of dispatching and operating the systems on real mine-clearing missions,” McDonald added. “The IVMMD systems’ distance from each other, the speed to be maintained and the area to be cleared are all important factors that must be considered and thoroughly tested before mine clearing can begin.”

After a month of testing the IVMMD, the engineers are starting to realize what the key factors are in properly operating the system.

“Having a good sense of direction and knowing the route you’re on is very important when driving the complete system,” said McDonald. “Because the system is made up of several modules connected together, turning it around in the event that you take a wrong turn is not an option. The trailer must first be disconnected, the Husky turned around on its own, and then the trailer must be reconnected. This process can take up to an hour – time you don’t have in a real situation.”

Since the system originated in South Africa, a team of contractors and mechanics from that area were deployed here with the system to assist the engineers in their training and in developing a good Standard Operating Procedure.

“This may be the first time the U.S. is testing the system, but the South Africans have been using it in mine detection for the past 15 years,” said Shon Craig, U.S. con-

tractor, Critical Solutions International, Washington, D.C. “The system has been slightly modified to fit the needs of the U.S. military but the operation and mechanics of the system are the same.”

According to Craig, the system is fairly simple to operate, but the engineers may encounter some problems due to their area of operation.

“The terrain out here is pretty rough which may make it difficult for the engineers to stay in their lane,” said Craig. “In other areas where this system has been used, roads have already been determined. This may not be the case here so the engineers may have to use better judgment when conducting mine clearing.”

Craig and his team only have a few days left to train the engineers before they leave for their next mission.

“We are trying to give the engineers as much insight into our experience as we can before we leave,” said Craig. “Once we depart from here we will be going to Kuwait to train soldiers over there on the same system.”

Presently, there are three complete \$1 million IVMMD systems in Bagram that the engineers are testing. Once training is complete, the engineers will use the systems to clear roads throughout Afghanistan.



Coalition Sports Zone

(Compiled from ESPN.com)



Sorenstam's daunting task a test of skill and nerve

The history of golf dates back several centuries. The battle that 32-year-old Annika Sorenstam will wage at the Bank of America Colonial in Fort Worth on Thursday is much older than that.

Sorenstam didn't agree to accept a sponsor's exemption into the 114-golfer field in order to file a brief in the case of Man v. Woman. But that role, and the emotions it engenders on both sides, has been thrust upon her.

When Sorenstam steps onto the small first tee at Colonial, right next to the wall of champions, she will all but break into "Anything You Can Do, I Can Do Better." The Swedish production of "Annie Get Your Driver" will provide a snapshot, if not a definitive picture, of whether the best female golfer in the world can compete with the best males.

There's no question as to whether Sorenstam is the best that the LPGA Tour can offer. Since announcing herself by making her first victory the 1995 U.S. Women's Open, Sorenstam has won 43 LPGA tournaments, 20 of them since the beginning of 2001. She wants to move up to the next weight class, at least for one fight.

"This is a big challenge, for sure," Sorenstam said at Williamsburg, Va., where she played earlier this month in her last appearance on the LPGA Tour before the Colonial. "It's probably the biggest I will ever experience."

Sorenstam will make the most heralded debut on the Tour since Tiger Woods and his "Hello World" Nike Campaign arrived in Milwaukee in the autumn of 1996. The leader of the tournament will be a secondary news story, at least for the first 36 holes. How she plays will be dissected for meaning by golf pros, feminists and media the world over. In truth, what Sorenstam is doing is the same thing many golfers do at their own clubs — looking for a better game.

"I'm very competitive," Sorenstam said. "I'm pushing myself harder and harder." So competitive that she and her husband, David Esch, stopped playing chess for "three or four years," by his estimate, after she threw a piece against the wall in anger.

Harrington wins in playoff; no threPEAT for Tiger

ALVESLOHE, Germany — Tiger Woods rarely finishes this far back. While Pdraig Harrington beat Thomas Bjorn in a one-hole playoff to win the Deutsche Bank-SAP Open on Sunday, Woods was never in contention and finished tied for 29th place — his worst finish in a stroke-play event in two years.

Woods, trying for his third straight win in the event, was nine strokes back after a final-round 4-under 68 left him at 10-under 278.

Woods had his worst finish in an event since placing 29th at the 2001 PGA Championship, a string of 97 tournaments, excluding the WGC-Accenture Match Play and The International, a modified Stableford scoring event. His previous worst finish was a tie for 56th at the Bay Hill Invitational in 1999.

Nonetheless, Woods was pleased with his play in his first tournament since

tying for 15th at The Masters a month ago.

"I only had three bogeys the entire week," he said. "I hit good putts, but they just didn't go in. Overall, I'm pleased with the way I played."

Woods blamed some of his putting troubles on



the ragged greens, infected by a fungus called Fusarium.

"It's nothing to do with the break I took," he said. "If you can't make any putts, you can't get any momentum. If you look at the greens, they are not the smoothest in the world — that has a lot to do with it."

Woods began his final round in a steady rain, and appeared ready to make a run at the leaders after opening with two birdies. He hit his 9-iron approach at the first hole to within 2 feet, and his drive at No. 2, a short par-3, stopped 3 feet from the cup.

The charge ended at No. 3 when Woods' second shot landed in-

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Open for her third title of the year. Trailing 6-5 in the second set,

a bunker with a bad line to the hole, prompting Woods to throw his club into the rough in anger.

“I thought I could make a little bit of a run and finish in the top 10,” Woods said. The Deutsche Bank, which Woods won in 1999, 2001 and 2002, is one of two events he’ll play before the U.S. Open starts June 12.

Harrington made a 5-foot par putt on the first playoff hole to beat Bjorn for his seventh career title. Harrington rolled in a 12-foot par putt on the final hole of regulation to force the playoff. Harrington (70) and Bjorn (63) finished tied at 19-under 269.

“I was satisfied, maybe, more than jubilant,” said Harrington, who was coming off a runner-up finish at the Benson and Hedges and has finished second 19 times in his career. “I walked away thinking to myself, I’ve proved it to myself.”



Clijsters broke Mauresmo’s serve to get to a tiebreaker, then never trailed again.

“I knew she was getting close and I really tried not to give it to her,” Clijsters said. I just kept hanging in there. Last week in Berlin I had a few match points, so it’s nice to win as well.”

Clijsters, who lost in three sets to Justine Henin-Hardenne in the final of the German Open last week, also won tournaments at Sydney and Indian Wells. She is playing at the top of her game as the French Open approaches. The year’s second Grand Slam tournament starts May 26.

Mauresmo eliminated top-ranked Serena Williams and Jennifer Capriati in her previous two matches here and seemed to tire as the final went on.

Her left thigh was bandaged from the start. Two double faults by Mauresmo gave Clijsters a 5-0 lead in the final set and then Clijsters closed out the match with a drop shot.

“She had an easier match than me yesterday,” Mauresmo said. “But you’ve got to give her credit to stay in the match and finally win it.”

Former President Bush attended the match.

In the doubles final, Martina Navratilova paired with Svetlana Kuznetsova to beat Jelena Dokic and Nadia Petrova 6-4, 5-7, 6-2. It’s the third championship of 2003 for the 46-year-old Navratilova and the 17-year-old Kuznetsova. Navratilova and Kuznetsova will aim for another championship together in the French Open.

Sampras isn’t playing but is it the end?

When Pete Sampras’ coach Paul Annacone talks about the man he’s coached for the better part of 15 years, the word superstar pops up more than once. But on Thursday night, after Sampras said he’s not planning on playing the rest of the year, so did the word normal. And Sampras looked like a normal guy — a sports fan sitting courtside at the Lakers game with his wife. But still neither man called this break by the R-word.

“Although he isn’t retiring, he’s not going to play and continue not to play for the time being — just to get his bearings down and see if the fire starts to burn to get back out there,” Annacone told ESPN.com. “But right now he doesn’t want to do it halfway, so he felt like this is the best thing to do. Even though Wimbledon does have that special place in his heart, the last thing he wants to do is be over there and not be prepared.”

“I kind of have to own up to the fact that my heart’s not into it,” Sampras told ESPN’s Alex Flanagan, while attending Game 6 of the Western Conference semifinals in Los Angeles. Sampras once said he wanted to retire on Centre Court at Wimbledon. Instead, last year, the place where he won seven of his 14 Grand Slams became the site of his biggest career disappointment. He lost on an outside court in the second round. And if he can’t feel the fire to come back this year, the possibility of a glorious ending on Centre Court seems more unlikely.

“As much as you want to make things special and unique with superstars,” Annacone said, “it’s really a phase of life that he’s going through and he’s just trying to really sort it all.

Clijsters escapes trouble to win Italian Open

ROME — Two points from losing, Kim Clijsters came back to beat Amelie Mauresmo 3-6, 7-6 (3), 6-0 Sunday at the Italian



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