



## 42<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division Musicians to be Part of Boots on the Ground in Iraq *A Musical Mission, An Emotional Message*

Story and photos by SSG Raymond Drumsta, 42<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division

FORT DRUM, NY -- Like the 1st Infantry Division Band they'll be replacing, the 42nd Infantry Division Band will be bringing a musical message to the Iraqi people—a civil affairs function which is one of their missions, according to the band commander, CW2 Mark Kimes.

"Everyone assumes our wartime mission is security," Kimes said. "Our wartime mission is musical, until it becomes impractical to do so."

Kimes, who is also the bandmaster and conductor, said music is a world language. He described the band's mission as one of hope and goodwill, and band members as musical ambassadors who will be "building a bridge to the Iraqi people."

"I can foresee us playing at [Iraqi] school openings, hospitals or on special days," said Kimes.

Through the band, the Iraqi people will experience the beauty of music played by American Soldiers in front of the United States flag—which may change Iraqis' perception of Americans, said 1SGT Leslie G. Saroka.

"We can connect to people through music on a high emotional level," said Saroka. "It's a lot like giving out soccer balls, except that music is an emotional thing. It evokes higher emotions."

"It's a very subtle civil affairs mission, but very effective," Saroka added.

Like any mission, it takes skill to accomplish—and, in the case of the band—talent and musical ability, which the Army calls a 'Civilian Acquired Skills Field'. But, said Saroka, they must pass an audition, and keep their musical skills sharp with daily practice.



*TAKE FIVE...FOR TRAINING: 42<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division Band Assistant Conductor SSG Paul Myruski (right) and 42<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division Band members rehearse outside the band's orderly room. The band's repertoire includes classical, jazz, R&B and patriotic music.*

"To be proficient in a military band, you have to sustain practice one hour per day, six days a week," he said.

Recently this has been a challenge for band members, who, like all Soldiers mobilized for Operation Iraqi Freedom 3, are busy honing their soldier skills. Saroka said they've been able to squeeze 'an hour here and an hour there' of music practice into the 16-hour training days, and achieved 100 percent qualification on their M16 rifles, SAWs, and M203s in two days.

Saroka, who plays bass clarinet, said the 42nd Infantry Division Band members come from all walks of life, from police officers to stockbrokers, and that some travel up to 500 miles to be part of the unit. Most of the band members play more than one instrument. The 42nd Infantry Division Band is the first reserve component band to deploy to a war zone since World War II, Saroka said.

Trombone player SPC Anthony Wevers believes 9-11 made being a soldier more meaningful. "I'm an American citizen," he said. "I'm supposed to defend and protect the nation."

Wevers sees himself as a peacekeeper and feels the band can inspire the same positive emotions in Iraqis that they do in Soldiers. "We can show the Iraqis that we're good people," said Wevers.

Alto Sax player SGT Ryan Lucas said he is looking forward to relieving the 1st Infantry Division Band. He said he enjoys playing for the troops and boosting their morale because music reduces pressure. "Music brings all Soldiers together like a family," Lucas said.

SGT Thomas Lawson, who plays electric and acoustic guitar, agrees. *(continued on page 2)*



*JAMMIN': SGT Tom Lawson (right) lays down the rhythm while SPC Jerry Clark (left) plays a solo. Most of the 42<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division band members play more than one instrument said Band Commander CW2 Mark Kimes.*

## NEWS FROM IRAQ

### **1st Infantry Division Soldiers Detain Weapons Suppliers Near Samarra**

**TIKRIT, Iraq** – The 1st Infantry Division detained three suspected weapons suppliers and killed a number of anti-Iraqi force (AIF) members during a series of operations near Samarra on Aug. 14.

During these synchronized efforts, AIF cells repeatedly attacked the Soldiers with small arms fire and rocket-propelled grenades.

Several bombs were dropped on known AIF positions, resulting in AIF casualties.

Confiscated during the raids, were six AK-47s, one 155mm round and IED making materials.

The individuals were transported to a Multi-National Force (MNF) detention facility for questioning. No MNF Soldiers were injured in the incident.

### **Iraqi Security Forces, Task Force Danger Soldiers capture Anti-Iraqi Force members**

**TIKRIT, Iraq** - Iraqi Security Forces and Task Force Danger Soldiers captured three AIF members during a cordon and search mission near Tuz around 2 a.m. Aug. 14.

The mission was based on intelligence information that recently elected Ba'ath Party leaders were operating an AIF cell seeking to disrupt Iraqi and MNF efforts to stabilize and secure the community in the area.

The Soldiers targeted the area and captured Kathan Hussien Jassim, Abas Hussien Yahaa and Sahad Hussien Yahaa. Also found were three AK-47s, one protective mask and several notebooks and folders.

The detainees were taken to a military detention center for further questioning.

There were no Iraqi Security Forces or MNF Soldiers injured nor equipment damaged.

### **ING Soldiers Graduate from Recruit Training**

**FOB CALDWELL, Iraq** – Last Saturday, a platoon size formation of Iraqi men graduated from the Iraqi National Guard (ING) Recruit Training course at the Diyala Nassr Training Academy here.

These Iraqi men have joined the ING and are making the conscious choice to serve their country, knowing that the threat of contact with a brutal insurgent force is very real. "In the long run, I think these guys will determine the success of the country," said Capt. Jack Midyette, Headquarters Battery, 1st Battalion, 113th Field Artillery. Midyette and his team of Soldiers have taken on the mission of training a new generation of Iraqi heroes.

There is a waiting period of about 30 days or so from the time a Soldier joins the ING and attends the academy in Tikrit. "The new ING guys have not been to the academy, but they have the responsibility of manning traffic checkpoints, participating in security patrols," continued Midyette. Recognizing the need for initial training the Nassr (Nassr is the Iraqi word for Victory) Academy was established. "This course is sort of like a military orientation for the Soldiers. Hopefully this training can help save a Soldier's life," said Midyette.

"The 10 day course will cover things such as weapon familiarization, map reading, basic medical task, and convoy operations," said Capt Tim Mangum, Headquarters Battery, 1st Battalion, 113th Field Artillery. "We have to get them as a developed trained force, so that they can effectively take over the checkpoints" added Mangum. "We are close with these guys. These are our Iraqi brothers," concluded Mangum.

Diyala Province residents can expect to see more and more ING patrols, as the mission of security becomes a full time Iraqi responsibility. The 3rd Brigade of the Iraqi Army has started conducting military operations in the Diyala regional area.

### **Bill Includes Military Pay Raise and Benefits**

**WASHINGTON** - President Bush signed the Defense Appropriations Bill into law, which provides a 3.5 percent across-the-board pay raise for service members, eliminates out-of-pocket housing expenses and fully funds the Defense Health Program. The president said the raise brings the total pay raise over the last four years to nearly 21 percent.

"This money is well earned, well deserved, and well spent," he said.

The bill will also fund the global war on terror and further the transformation of the American military.

The \$417 billion bill funds the military for fiscal 2005. Congress must pass a second bill, the National Defense Authorization Act, before the department can spend the money.

Bush reiterated his commitment to military personnel. "We will support them," he said. "We'll provide them fair pay and good treatment. We will continue to ensure they have the tools they need to defeat the enemies of today. We will develop the weapons and systems to meet the threats of tomorrow."

Bush called the elimination of out-of-pocket expenses "a real boost" for military families. "The excellence and professionalism of an all-volunteer force has never been higher," he said. "America must do all we can to encourage these special Americans to stay in uniform, and that starts with taking care of their families."

The bill funds the on-going war on terror with \$25 billion in emergency appropriations to support current operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. "This money will buy more armored Humvees, more ammunition, more fuel, more spare parts," he said. "It will upgrade our helicopters with the latest equipment, allowing them to fly more safely in the dangerous theaters."

The bill also funds acquisition programs including the F/A-22 Raptor aircraft, more F/A-18E/F Hornets, guided-missile destroyers and C-17 airlifters. The bill also provides \$10 billion for ballistic missile defense programs.

The bill also funds the military of the future, including the Army's Future Combat System, the Navy's Littoral Combat Ship, and the Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps Joint Strike Fighter. In addition, the bill funds a number of communications programs that will change the face of warfare and cement the U.S. lead. (*American Forces Press Service*)

### **Band (continued from page one)**

"I'm looking forward to playing for our troops," Lawson said. "They've been over there a long time."

Lawson also sees music as a stress reducer. "When you're stressed, a couple of tunes can relax you," he said. "It can unwind you enough so you can focus, and hopefully, make it home in one piece."

"I think music is a medium that frees you," said clarinet player SGT Kristin Duarte, who once played for Hurricane Andrew refugees. She said music gives people energy, and inspires them to dance or run.

Kimes said that playing for the Iraqis will be dependent on logistical and security constraints.

"When an opportunity presents itself, we'll jump on it," said Kimes. "This is where we feel that, as a band, we can make a difference."

Kimes said the band will deploy with their weapons in one hand and their instruments in the other, so they can hit the ground ready to play.

"The Iraqis are going to see Soldiers in uniform making them smile," said Kimes. "If we can touch one person with music, and make them change their mind about why we're there and what we're doing, then we've accomplished our mission."

*RAINBOW READY NEWS is a Command Information product of the 42nd ID (M) PAO for division's post-mobilization training program.*

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