

# What do we do in Iraq?

By SSG Pat Caldwell and Capt. John Qualls

What do we do in Iraq?

This is a good question, and one asked more often than one would think. After all, we are reposturing our forces in Iraq, right? So what, exactly, do Guardsmen from eastern Oregon's 3rd Battalion, 116th Cavalry Regiment do here?

Well, the 3rd Bn. is one of the few combat arms units remaining in Iraq, and its mission appears, at first glance, to be pretty simple. We escort convoys. Or, more precisely, we escort logistics convoys throughout northern Iraq.

What are logistics convoys? They are convoys of semis that carry everything from apples to ammunition to fuel to toilet paper. Without those convoys, almost all operations in Iraq would come to a screeching halt for the coalition forces.

There is an oft-quoted saying by Napoleon that amateurs discuss tactics and professionals discuss logistics. Napoleon was not one to overlook an opportunity to make a wide, sweeping proclamation, but he was also one of the greatest military minds in history. So logistics are a pretty big deal. Back home it is a concept easy to overlook. We go to the grocery store and what we

want is there. In Iraq, those groceries are not going to be there unless the convoys get through, and it is our job to make sure they do get to their destination. What we do, in other words, is very much like the actions of the U.S. cavalry in the Old West, protecting wagons as they moved across the mountains.

The 3rd Bn.'s mission is really conducted at what we call the Convoy Escort Team (CET) level. Each team is made up of 20 to 30 soldiers. Their cavalry horses, in this case, are called Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicles, which are positioned throughout each convoy for protection. Some convoys are small—say 16 trucks—while others can sport as many as 60 semis.

So far, 3rd Bn., has logged more than 650 convoy missions since arriving in early December, traveling more than 60,000 miles. Most of these miles are uneventful but, on occasion, things can get a bit hairy.

Another series of good questions are: Protect the convoys from what? Isn't the war over? Aren't we leaving?

Those are good questions and the answers are simple. We protect the convoys from individuals who, for lack of better term, are troublemakers. They may just plain dislike the

United States; they may get paid by some other group to set an improvised explosive device; or they may just be bored and decide to attack us. The reasons vary but the fact is that there are not a lot of these people running around.

We are leaving, but there is still danger on the roads. The signs of our drawdown are everywhere, every day. But one other piece of our mission is to do the drawdown in a responsible manner. Simply packing up everything and leaving isn't an option, for a lot of reasons.

The risk is always there on the road, and the men and women from the communities across eastern Oregon put their lives on the line every time they go out on a convoy. That may be the most important yet hardest concept to grasp. There are troublemakers out there. While they are very few in numbers, the damage they can cause with even one IED is serious.

While it may be hard to judge based on other outside sources, the fact is that the Iraqis are taking over more and more of their own security duties every single day. It is an American operation that is winding down, and we are helping ensure that when we do leave, we depart in a responsible, respectful way.

# County Court news

The Morrow County Court met on June 8 in Irrigon with Judge Tallman and Commissioners Grieb and Rea in attendance.

The court reviewed and approved the minutes of the May 25 and June 1 meetings and the account payables in the net amount of \$171,384.86. The court also reviewed and approved a purchase pre-authorization for the Morrow County Health Dept. in the amount of \$2,117.82 to purchase a back-up power source to protect vaccines at the Boardman Clinic.

**Community Counseling Solutions (CCS):** Director Kimberly Lindsay stated that since it is the end of the biennium the county will be receiving a bi-annual umbrella contract for mental health services from the State of Oregon. Lindsay also stated that the contract between the county and Community Counseling Solutions is approaching renewal date. Lindsay then discussed the new building CCS is constructing in Boardman and stated they would not be providing notice for vacation until some time in July. By doing this CCS will avoid a crunch situation should the construction process hit a snag. Lindsay reported CCS will see a 6% cut in Medicaid funding this year and another 6% next year. Lindsay then provided the court with a Lakeview Heights newsletter and reported on that the numbers at Lakeview Heights reflects success and stated that the facility provides a significant saving to the state and the county as well as improving the quality of life for the residents.

**Sheriff Dept. Monthly Update:** Under-sheriff Steve Myren reported that May was a light activity month. Myren stated he is fearful that the dept. will be exceeding their budget because of large inmate medical expenses and various investigations they have encountered. Myren reported that there are currently 91 clients in the parole and probation program.

**Pubic Hearing: 2011-2012 Morrow County Budget Hearing:** Finance Director Fred Carlson provided the staff report

and reviewed spreadsheet presentations for the general funds and road fund budgets. Carlson stated that when the Budget Committee decided to reduce the road funds historically paid to the cities by \$177,500 the road fund ending balance was \$1,073,283 and the general fund ending balance is short of the million dollar amount by \$77,087 at \$922,913. Assessor/tax collector Greg Sweek stated that he wished he could say there was going to be increased value that would bring in additional tax revenue, but the projections made in March are holding firm. County treasurer Gayle Gutierrez stated that she had compared the general fund balance from May 31, 2010 to the May 31, 2011 balance and reported that it is approximately \$400,000 down.

Irrigon mayor David Burns read a statement prepared by city manager Jerry Breazeale regarding the city's need for the additional funding to keep their road maintenance program operating as it has in the past. A position statement prepared by the City of Irrigon in 2009 was also read into the record. Public Works director for Irrigon stated that he understands the county's position; however, the cuts have will have a huge impact on the City of Irrigon. Heppner mayor Les Paustian stated that he agreed with everything that was presented by Burns, adding that he was very disappointed in the budget committee and the county court for making the decision to take funding from the city. Paustian said the city budget has been cut to a bare minimum and that these funding cuts really hurt the city. Heppner city manager Dave DeMayo questioned the county's interpretation of the ORS 368.710 which discusses the distribution of "option taxes" as opposed to property taxes. Mayor of Lexington Jean Brazell stated that while Lexington does not have very many streets, they certainly have a lot of potholes that need to be repaired. Mayor of Boardman Chet Phillips read a letter regarding the road tax distribution from city manager Karen Pettigrew into the record. Phillips then stated that he agrees with the statements made by the other cities adding that Boardman has a very high level of traffic due to the Port of Morrow operations. Phillips added that he felt the county should have come to the cities before

this decision was made allowing them (the cities) to have some input in the decision making process. A lengthy discussion regarding the county's work force, insurance and budget issues ensued. The hearing was closed, with deliberation set to be continued to Wednesday June 15 in Boardman.

**Planning Dept.:** Planning Director Carla McLane provided a revised map showing the two alternate routes for the Carty Lateral Project. McLane also provided an update on the pre-disaster mitigation plan, discussed the LUBA decision regarding the wind noise and the upcoming meeting with the Navy regarding several issues.

**Emergency Management-CSEPP Closure:** Emergency management director Casey Beard, Tetra Tech Associate, Senior Engineer Mike Baker, Tetra Tech Environmental Scientist Shauna Pettey and OSU Economist Bruce Sorte provided the court with an update on the closure plan for the Umatilla Army Depot.

**Contracts:** The court reviewed, approved and signed an agreement between the County and William Perkinson to provide legal services at a rate of \$75 per hour for court appointed indigent defense counsel in both delinquency and dependency matters to the juvenile and Morrow County citizens.

**Land Use Board of Appeals re: Willow Creek Wind Noise Complaint Decision:** County Counsel Ryan Swinburnson provided the court with copies of the LUBA Final Opinion and Order. Swinburnson stated that the county's findings were not sufficient and stated that the court needs to develop more findings to support their decision. Swinburnson stated that the matter would need to be addressed within the next thirty days.

The court conducted the following business: The court reviewed and denied a request from the Morrow Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) for \$278.45 to purchase chemicals so they could hold a "Free Spray Day." The reason for the denial was due to the county's potential liability should the chemicals be misapplied. Reviewed misc. correspondences and discussed upcoming meetings.

If you would like to be placed on the list to receive county minutes, please contact Karen Wolff at (541)676-5620.

# HEMLOCK PREVALENT

-Continued from PAGE ONE

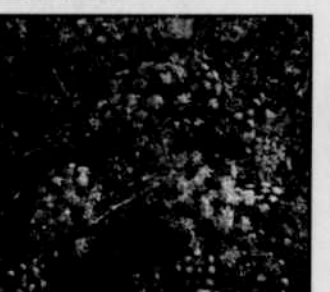
office, humans have been poisoned by mistaking the plant for parsley or wild carrot. However, cases of human poisoning are rare, and most of the danger is to cattle. Neither cutting and drying nor silage removes the poison, so growers should be careful of infestations around hay fields.

At the same time, Pranger says that, while poisonous to livestock if they ingest it, poison hemlock shouldn't be a problem for most livestock grow-

ers. "Most cattle will avoid it unless they're pushed into it by overgrazing," he says. "Plus, the most poisonous part is the crown down by the root; cattle wouldn't be eating that anyway."

Poison hemlock can be controlled by spraying, mowing after the plants bolt, or hand pulling. Pranger also says this area has a caterpillar that works as a natural control for hemlock.

"It shows up when the hemlock starts to seed and strips it down to a bare



Hemlock leaves like this one can be poisonous to cattle. -Photo by Andrea Di Salvo

stalk," says Pranger, who adds that we may start to see those caterpillars soon.

More information on hemlock can be obtained from the local extension office at 541-676-9642.

# Justice Court Report

Morrow County Justice of the Peace Ann Spicer has released the following Justice Court Report.

-Giselle Lee Moses, 36, Harrassment/B Misdemeanor, \$740 fine, no law violations for 2 years, drug and alcohol evalua-

tion with recommended treatment plan, completion of an anger management program.

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# Correction

A portion of the Morrow County School Board story that appeared in the June 15 Gazette-Times was incorrect.

The board did not approve a federally mandated "age appropriate" human sexuality course as reported. The issue was tabled and will come before the board again at the second reading set for next school board meeting planned in August.

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