



**3rd Expeditionary Sustainment Command
16th Sustainment Brigade
Public Affairs Office**

Contingency Operating Base Q-West, Iraq
DSN (NIPR) 318-827-6101
DSN (SIPR) 302-243-5104
adam.shaw@iraq.centcom.mil

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
3rd ESC Release 20081208-1

Dec 10, 2008

Logisticians knock out combatives

GRAPPLE

By Sgt. 1st Class Adam V. Shaw
16th SB Public Affairs

CONTINGENCY OPERATING BASE Q-WEST, Iraq — Eight Soldiers from the 16th Sustainment Brigade spent a week on the mat learning how to clinch, grapple, and choke during combatives training at the Morale, Welfare and Recreation Center here from Dec. 1 to Dec. 5.

“The purpose of this training is to instill the Warrior Ethos, on top of multiple other reasons this is important,” said Sgt. Travis McGruder, physical security team, Bravo Co., 16th Special Troops Battalion, 16th Sust. Bde. “It provides a realistic understanding for Soldiers to understand how combatives fits into their duties and possible situations they could be faced with in combat.”

McGruder, a “level-4” combatant, was the head instructor for the training. The Pine Mountain, Ga., native was a “level-1” and “level-2” Army combatives instructor at Fort Benning, Ga.

“I first got into combatives in 2003 when I first arrived at Benning,” said McGruder.

“The day I graduated level one, my unit was holding an open combatives tournament. My

-more-

GRAPPLE/2-2-2

team brought home 2nd place that year, falling only to the Ranger battalion.”

He spent the next few years at Fort Benning earning his level 3 and 4 certifications before being assigned to the 16th Sustainment Brigade where he became part of the PST where he serves as the team’s hand to hand combatives instructor. However, he put together this training for the entire brigade to certify Soldiers as level one combatants.

“These students came a long way since the first day and you can tell that everyone gave 110 percent,” said McGruder. “Just look at their faces and check out their bruises. That goes to show that this is real training. Level one is a foundation to build off of, it’s the starting point.”

Some Soldiers were apprehensive as to whether the training was right for them.

“I expected it to be hard and it was to a certain extent,” said Pfc. Edward Yahn, driver, PST. “I thought my size would be an issue, but with patience, you can win regardless of how big or small you are.”

The 140-pounder from North Anson, Maine, said that applying the fundamentals helped him overcome his size issue.

“Using good technique will make it so that you don’t have to use as much strength,” said Yahn. “You really just have to have a good head on your shoulders.”

Other Soldiers came into the class with a different mentality.

“I came in just trying to overpower everyone,” said six-foot-one, 190-pound, Pfc. Adam Lillo, joint network node operator, Bravo Co. “This class helped me with my techniques

-more-

GRAPPLE/3-3-3

because I didn't really know what I was doing before.”

The Eau Claire, Wis., native, who was named honor graduate for winning the class's combatives tournament, found that the training will serve as a useful tool in his military career.

“It helps with my physical conditioning for my physical training test,” said Lillo. “It also gives you the ability to overcome the mind and body.”

-30-

(Photos by Sgt. Keith M. Anderson)



grapple1

Spc. Justin Tolleson, gunner, physical security team, Bravo Co., 16th Special Troops Battalion, 16th Sustainment Brigade, chokes out his opponent, Spc. Nikifor Banchoff, joint network node operator, B. Co., during combatives training at the Morale, Welfare and Recreation Gym at Contingency Operating Base, Q-West, Iraq, Dec. 4.



grapple2

Spc. Justin Tolleson, gunner, physical security team, Bravo Co., 16th Special Troops Battalion, 16th Sustainment Brigade, chokes out his opponent, Spc. Nikifor Banchoff, joint network node operator, B. Co., during combatives training at the Morale, Welfare and Recreation Gym at Contingency Operating Base Q-West, Iraq, Dec. 4.



grapple3

Spc. Nikifor Banchoff, joint network node operator, Bravo Co., 16th Special Troops Battalion, 16th Sustainment Brigade, chokes out his opponent, Spc. Justin Tolleson, gunner, physical security team, B. Co., during combatives training at the Morale, Welfare and Recreation Gym at Contingency Operating Base Q-West, Iraq, Dec. 4.