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HANDY PAIR FIX UP STRYKER SOLDIER EQUIPMENT, MORALE IN IRAQ

By Staff Sgt. Arron Schille

2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment Public Affairs Office

BAGHDAD, Iraq -- Within the compound housing the headquarters of the 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment here is a small shop made up of four plywood walls and a tarp for a roof. What takes place inside this makeshift shop helps the “Dragoons” of the 2nd SCR accomplish their mission with a little more ease.



STAFF SGT ARRON SCHILLE

Sgt. 1st Class Chris Russell, assistant operations NCO (left), and generator mechanic Spc. Ross Gray work on a project March 21 in the shop they built in the 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment's compound in Iraq. The Soldiers are assigned to the 2nd SCR's Regimental Headquarters and Headquarters Troop.

Two Soldiers with the 2nd's Regimental Headquarters and Headquarters Troop -- assistant operations NCO Sgt. 1st Class Chris Russell and Spc. Ross Gray, a generator mechanic -- took an empty spot in the back of the compound and within a week turned it into a self-help workshop for the Soldiers of the

regiment to better their professional and personal lives.

“This shop was mainly built to ensure mission readiness,” said Russell. “The tools found in the workshop, as well as the building materials, are available for use by any of the 2nd SCR Soldiers, and were found in the garbage, abandoned.”

“If I see something sitting in one place too long, I just go ask if I can have it. Most people say it is OK with them, and then I just take and fix it,” he added.

Within the shop seems to be a tool for almost any job -- several table saws, a lathe, an air compressor, a power washer, and a variety of hand tools.

As examples of Russell and Gray’s skills, they have built racks for Soldiers to secure their weapons, and just finished fixing a wall locker -- available for any Soldier who might need it.

“We just fix it, and if someone needs it, then they can have it,” Russell said.

”I can fix just about anything right here in this shop, instead of having to send it somewhere else to get it fixed,” he said.

In addition, any Soldier can use the shop to create a special project or fix a piece of mission-essential equipment once he demonstrates a working knowledge of the tools needed for the task.

“Every Soldier has to prove to me that they can operate the equipment that they are using,” Russell said.

If a Soldier doesn’t know how to use a piece of equipment, the sergeant added, he trains and tests him.

“I like it when someone wants me to help them with something, instead of just wanting me to do it for them,” Gray said.

The 2nd SCR is a U.S. Army Europe unit headquartered in Vilseck, Germany.



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