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# Crossed Sabers

Volume I, Issue 5

"Telling the MND-Baghdad Story"

Monday, Feb. 5, 2007



(Photo by Sgt. Mike Pryor, 2nd BCT, 82nd Abn. Div. Public Affairs)

Paratroopers from the 82nd Airborne Division's 2nd "Falcon" Brigade Combat Team exit a CH-47 Chinook helicopter after landing at Camp Taji Jan. 20.

## Falcons Have Landed, 2-82 Abn. Div. in Iraq

By Sgt. Mike Pryor  
2nd BCT, 82nd Abn. Div. Public Affairs

BAGHDAD – The 82nd Airborne Division's 2nd Brigade Combat Team arrived in Baghdad this week as part of the first wave of a planned escalation of forces in Iraq's capital city.

The paratroopers from the 2nd "Falcon" Brigade, who had been based in Kuwait as a ready reserve since early January, are to be followed over the next several months by four more combat brigades, bolstering U.S. forces in Baghdad by approximately 20,000 Soldiers. The increase in troops is designed to help clamp down on violence in the city and pave the way for the Iraqi government to assume full control of Baghdad's security.

The 2nd BCT will be organized under the Multi-National Division – Baghdad, headed by the 1st Cavalry Division. The brigade will be conducting operations in conjunction with the Iraqi security forces.

"Our mission will be to secure our area of operation, hold that area, and then, at a said time, to turn that area over to the ISF," said Sgt. Maj. John Bagby, the brigade's operations sergeant major.

Paratroopers' special training and ability to adapt to changing circumstances makes them uniquely suited to overcome the obstacles of counter-insurgency warfare, Bagby said.

"They can turn on a dime if necessary, change missions, and still go out and execute," he said. "There's no doubt in my mind that paratroopers from the Falcon Brigade are ready to go out into sector and take the fight to the enemy."

The Falcon Brigade is one of the most combat-experienced units in the Army. Paratroopers from the 2nd BCT have deployed six times on short notice deployments since the Global War on Terrorism began. For many, this deployment marks their third or fourth tour of duty in Iraq.

One of the 2nd BCT's battalions just returned from a deployment in December, spending only weeks at home before being sent to Kuwait. Even so, there was little surprise within the brigade that the mission was given to the Falcons.

"Our Soldiers are willing to do whatever we ask them to do," said Capt. Priscilla Smoot, commander of Company A, 407th Brigade Support Battalion. "Paratroopers in the 82nd have always had that attitude."



(Photo by Spc. Shea Butler, 7th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

## Go Ahead... Make My Day

Sgt. Kevin McCallum, a native of Aikens, S.C., with Company C, 1st Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, looks for his next shot on insurgents during combat operations on Baghdad's Haifa Street Jan. 24. Soldiers pushed insurgents out of the terrorist hot-bed. (For full story see page 17.)

## Operation in Al-Doura Nets Caches, Suspects

By Capt. Dawn Williams  
Multi-National Division – Baghdad Public Affairs

BAGHDAD – Iraqi Army and Multi-National Division Baghdad Soldiers rescued a kidnapped Iraqi man while resuming clearing operations in a southern neighborhood of the Iraqi capital Jan. 18.

Soldiers with the 2nd Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army and elements of the 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, continued operations to clear and secure the Hadar and surrounding neighborhoods in Baghdad's Al-Doura district to disrupt insurgent and militia activities.

While searching a house in the area, the joint patrol found a man handcuffed and noticeably tortured in the basement of the residence. The victim claimed he was taken from a local market for selling bread to Americans. In the cellar, the patrol found blood soaked rags, additional signs indicating the area was being used to torture captives.

In addition to the rescued individual, searches in the

area also yielded seven caches, seven detainees and the corpses of nine murdered victims. The caches included numerous weapons, grenades, ammunition and improvised explosive device-making materials.

This section of Al-Doura is believed to be a dumping site for the bodies of murdered local nationals. Iraqi police operating in the area were called to remove the dead bodies and take the kidnapping victim to a nearby hospital for medical care.

The on-going operation in the Al-Doura district has resulted in 26 suspected insurgents detained to date, and the recovery of various weapons, ammunitions and bomb-making material.

All seven suspects detained in the operation are being held for further questioning. The weapons and ammunition uncovered have been handed over to explosive ordnance teams for disposal.

These joint efforts continue in Al-Doura to ensure the safety of the local population and improve the security of the community.

## Troop Influx Set to Secure Baghdad

The airborne has landed, and more troops are arriving in theater daily to make a determined effort to secure the streets of Baghdad.

On the cover of this issue, we highlight the arrival of the 2nd "Falcon" Brigade Combat Team of the 82nd Airborne Division.

We enthusiastically welcome them to the team.

Our leaders have laid out a plan of action for the coming months, with three basic objectives – secure Baghdad's neighborhoods, hold back sectarian violence and help build a better future for the Iraqi people.

All of us knew as we prepared for this mission that Baghdad is the centerpiece of the fight for freedom in Iraq. As Baghdad goes, so goes Iraq.

We've heard that from our leadership, our elected officials and military analysts on every news source.

Our mission is clear, though by no means easy. Our Soldiers will partner with our Iraqi counterparts to make the streets of the Iraqi capital safe for commerce, secured for quality of life initiatives by the Iraqi government and set on the path of progress.

You, our Soldiers, will pave the way for the future of this country.

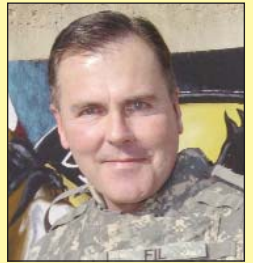
Together, we will weed out the undesirable elements that have held back Iraq from reaching its destiny – a truly free Iraq.

When I see Baghdad, I see the suffering the residents of this great city have endured, under the tyrannical rule of Saddam Hussein and then by terrorists who use violence to further their own narrow-minded political agendas.

I see school rooms filled with children, often without heat, electricity or basic supplies. Yet, Iraqi

### Pegasus 6 Sends

Maj. Gen.  
Joseph F. Fil,  
Jr.



children flock to learn.

The future of Iraq is being formulated in these schools.

By securing the neighborhoods of Baghdad we will set the conditions for the next generation of Iraqis.

These children should not have to live

in fear of car bombs in market places, abductions of friends and relatives or being stopped at an illegal checkpoint because their name identifies them as a member of a rival tribe or clan.

Over the coming months, we will take on the joint effort of securing Baghdad. I am confident that you, our Soldiers, are up to the task.

This won't be easy. The plan we're enacting relies on the full support and cooperation of the Iraqi government and Iraqi security forces. We move ahead with this plan arm-in-arm with our Iraqi brethren.

The coming months will see more Soldiers on Baghdad city streets since 2003. We are ready to take on the challenges ahead. Our training, or professionalism and our dedication to duty will prevail.

We all take the freedoms we enjoy as Americans for granted, until we leave the comfort of our homes and see the simple truth, here in Iraq.

Freedom isn't free.

All of you are part of an historic series of events. We write history with every patrol, every civil military affairs operation and every weapon we take off the streets of Baghdad.

I'm proud to lead the Multi-National Division – Baghdad, and I am proud of you and your courageous service. The wheels are in motion for the security plan for Baghdad. We're movin' out!

FIRST TEAM!

## Hitting Too Close to Home

Every day I read about another Soldier, Airman, Sailor and Marine getting killed. I never felt heartache because I didn't know them.

Well, for the first time in over four years, I feel that grief.

I know now what it's like losing a close friend. Since being in the Army, I've only lost one friend.

This is still one more than I should have.

William Joshua (Josh) Rechenmacher was born on Jan 7, 1983. He was a great friend to some.

But to me he was more. He was my first noncommissioned officer, my first drinking buddy when I turned 21. He got me out of more trouble than I can say, and to be honest, he did this for a few people.

He is known for always having a smile on his face, the baby-boy face, the cowboy hat he always had to have with him, and the catchy phrased T-shirts that everyone always got a kick out of.

But those aren't the things I can think about. I think about the times we spent talking about how we both wished that we were somewhere else. How we wished our finances were better. About how we would change the war if we were in charge. The average things NCO-Soldiers talk about.

I can remember times when he was the only NCO who looked out for my well being.

He did a lot to keep me out of trouble. And yet the times that were the funniest, were the times where we spent drinking together.

The nights we would get "tore up from the floor up" and the phases he told me at times.

Which still bring a smile to my face: "Shephard, did I ever tell you I think you're sexy?" or "Shephard, You're (expletive deleted) ugly!" Then, there was my favorite, "Kevin, you're my bestest friend." But those are just a few.

I can remember him claiming he was from Texas when everyone knew he was from Florida. I can remember the times we both went through break-ups and how the other was there. And the numerous times I helped him move. He made me spend my holidays with him if I didn't have somewhere to go. He is what I can call a true friend, a great friend.

But the best thing I remember about him is the day before he got killed I talked to him about how things were going.

I was happy to see my friend finally get his act together, and knowing in my heart he is finally happy.

Just once in his life he has everything in-line to set himself straight, and maybe just maybe he was going to get what he wanted so much -- a fresh start.

The last thing that was said between us was that he needs to watch his back, and get back home safe. He said, "Man, I'll be OK, but I can't wait to get on the gun tomorrow."

That is how Josh should be remembered - a Soldier through and through, someone who loved his job and loved being a Soldier. Josh brought out the best in people, and sometimes the worse. He always enjoyed being the center of attention.

He will be missed.

Now I ask myself what more could I have done to help?

But the answer is simple: I just have to better myself so no one has to lose another friend. Now I must pray for his family's well being, as I hope you can.

From one friend to another, Josh this one is for you.



William Joshua Rechenmacher

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(Photo by Pfc. Ben Fox, 3rd BCT 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)

## Rest in Peace

Command Sgt. Maj. James Norman, the 3-8 Combined Arms Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division command sergeant major, pays respects to his fallen Soldier, Cpl. Stephen Raderstorf, during a memorial ceremony at Forward Operating Base Paliwoda, Jan. 10. Raderstorf was killed Jan. 7

**Spc. Kevin R. Shephard II**  
Headquarters and Headquarters Company  
1st Cavalry Division



(Photo by Spc. Chris McCann, 2nd BCT, 10th Mtn. Div. (LI) Public Affairs)

## Yusufiyah New Police Station

Lt. Col. Daniel Goldthorpe (left), deputy brigade commander for the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry), speaks with Brigadier General Abed Mohammed Alwan Salih (right), commander of the Iraqi police, through an interpreter (center) while examining a proposed site for a new Iraqi police station in Yusufiyah, Iraq Jan. 13.

## Soldiers Discover Multiple Caches

### 2nd BCT, 1st Inf. Div. Public Affairs

BAGHDAD – Reacting to a tip provided by local residents, Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers discovered three large caches in the Jihad neighborhood of the Iraqi capital Jan. 24.

The timely and accurate tip provided by citizens of the area led Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, to the location of the caches.

The caches consisted of seven rocket-propelled

grenade launchers, two mortar tubes, more than 80 mortar rounds, two 30mm rockets, two heavy machine guns, two roadside bombs, one block of plastic explosive and nearly 2,000 rounds of small arms ammunition.

“The success of this mission resulted in these items being removed from the hands of the insurgents,” said Capt. Philip Hensel, 1st Bn., 18th Inf. Regt.

“(It) increases security for American and Iraqi forces and citizens by taking dangerous weapons out of the hands of insurgents and terrorists,” he added.



(Photo by 1st Lt. Jamil Brown, 1st Bn., 18th Inf. Regt.)

Weapons and munitions are laid out for inventory following three cache finds in southwestern Baghdad Jan. 24. The cache was uncovered after Soldiers were tipped off by local residents.

## Baghdad News Briefs



(Photo by Spc. Terry Self, Battery C, 1st Bn., 7th FA Regt., 2nd BCT, 1st Inf. Div.)

An Iraqi soldier from 3rd Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division helps a woman carry a sack of flour during a food drop to needy residents of a western Baghdad neighborhood Jan. 10.

## Food Drop Operations Foster Goodwill from Residents

BAGHDAD—Multi-National Division - Baghdad Soldiers, working together with Iraqi security forces over the past three weeks, have established relationships between the Iraqi troops and residents of western Baghdad.

A large part of the effort by troops from 3rd Brigade 6th Iraqi Army Division and 1st Battalion, 7th Field Artillery Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, have been food drops to underprivileged residents in western Baghdad. They conducted their second food drop to area Jan. 10.

Iraqi and U.S. troops have worked with local leaders to find which local residents were in most need of the supplies.

“We love helping our people,” said Iraqi Army Lt. Abass, “They are part of us and when they need help, we will be here to provide it.”



(Photo by Capt. David Hudson)

Soldiers from 887th Engineer Company ensure chains are secure prior to hoisting a barrier into place along the perimeter of the new combat outpost in the Ghazaliya neighborhood of Baghdad.

## Combat Outpost Built to Thwart Crime

BAGHDAD – Concrete walls and concertina wire roughly outline an area including six houses and a large open area in central Ghazaliya. Once this small area is completely encased it will be the new home for 1st Cavalry Division’s Company C, 2nd Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment.

Command Outpost Wildcard is under construction to allow Soldiers to quickly respond to violence and crime in the area. The former residents of the homes were paid to vacate the area homes and have relocated.



(US Army photo)

## Crime Doesn't Pay

Soldiers from 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division escort a suspected terrorist detained during a combined operation with Iraqi security forces in a southern portion of the Iraqi capital Jan. 15.

# Women Soldiers Gain Tools Toward Self-Defense

By Pfc. William Hatton  
7th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – The small corner of the gym usually filled with stationary bikes, treadmills and elliptical machines, is cleared out ready for the pending hand to hand attacks and counterattacks.

A group of camouflage-clad women enter the small area with eager minds ready for a combative training session set in a no-limit atmosphere.

They aren't training up to be vicious cage fighters, but are learning valuable techniques in a self-defense class.

Leaders with the 1st Cavalry Division felt a class would be beneficial for women here, said Spc. Jonte Scott, a Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers representative for the Headquarters Company, Division Special Troops Battalion, 1st Cav. Div.

"The class was set up to help females working at Camp Liberty to gain the experience and knowledge of how to handle threatening situations during their tour in Iraq," said Scott, a native of Sacramento, Calif.

One of the great things about the class is that it teaches Soldiers how to defend themselves in dangerous situations, Scott said.

After taking a self-defense class women will feel empowered, said Michael Foley, instructor of the self-defense class. Once they get out and learn how to protect themselves they really feel and walk around like they can



(Photo by Pfc. William Hatton, 7th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

**A Soldier from the 1st Cavalry Division attack other troops holding pads after learning valuable techniques in a women's self-defense class. The class provided female Soldiers with knowledge and experience on how to defend themselves in dangerous situations.**

take care of themselves, he added.

While instructing, Foley told the students that there is a four letter word he doesn't want to hear during his class, and that word is "can't." During the class Soldiers were not only able to learn new techniques and abilities, but students surprised themselves when they were given the opportunity to

apply what they learned against men holding punching and kicking pads.

"I think it's important for all women to learn how to defend themselves because it comes as a great surprise to the attacker because they don't believe we can do anything," said Spc. Diana Contreras, a participant in the class, from HHC, DSTB.

"I didn't know I could hit as hard as I did. I always wonder if I could hit that hard when the time came up," Contreras said. Being able to move around and actually kick and punch someone helped, she added.

Soldiers in the class got the opportunity to not only learn different moves, but were able to actually perform them on male Soldiers holding blocking pads, Scott said.

"Some of the girls hit pretty hard," said Spc. John Noyal, an assistant during the class from Roebing, N.J., HHC, DSTB.

It was exciting to see Soldiers who are typically quiet and small learn how to handle themselves and gain confidence if they were ever attacked, Scott said.

The thing to know is that an attacker isn't looking for a hard target, they're looking for an easy one, Foley said. After taking a class like this it gives females a sense they can take care of themselves, he added.

If any female Soldiers are interested in learning to defend themselves and get a good workout, cage fighting probably isn't a possibility, but a class on self-defense just might be the trick.



## **Don't Let This be You!** **Trusty Tips for Leave to Go Smoothly**

By Spc. Shea Butler  
7th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – Environmental and Morale Leave is meant to give troops a break from a long tour overseas. To ensure that you get the most out of your leave, follow the instructions of the Soldiers who have gone before you.

Sgt. 1st Class Kevin Patterson, with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Division Special Troops Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division, wanted to put out a few helpful pointers for those about to go on leave, so they would know what to expect.

“It makes for a smoother transition if you know what to expect,” Patterson said.

Preparation for leave should start days in advance. Soldiers tend to get excited before going home and you don't want to forget anything that will stop you from going on leave, Patterson said.

On the day before leave, turn in your weapon before 4 p.m. and make sure it is clean. You will receive a temporary memo from the company armorer stating that you have turned in your weapon so you can go to chow, Patterson said.

Before you leave make sure your room is clean and lock away all high value items.

Make sure you have three inventory sheets of all your high value items.

Keep one sheet in you wall locker, another with your supervisor and the last one on your person or in a safe place, Patterson suggested.

Check over everything you packed. Pack lightly. Everything should fit in your assault pack. Ensure you have your ID tags, ID card and a minimum of \$20. Also, bring an extra shirt, underwear, socks, shower shoes and toiletries. Chances are you might have to spend the night in Kuwait, so bring a small blanket as well, Patterson said.

Another good bit of advice is when packing liquid items like shampoo or soap make sure they are below three ounces in quantity, Patterson said. Anything larger will slow you down at security checkpoints at commercial airports.

A special warning, Patterson said, is not to have any pornographic material in your possession or on your

computer. If you are caught with it, your leave will be canceled and you will be manifested to return back to your unit where you run the risk of UCMJ action.

The night before departing, Patterson suggested troops call their battalion's personnel office and ensure they have the leave form on hand. Also, he said to make sure transportation is coordinated to the battalion area.

After preparing, he said get some sleep, because there's a long day to follow.

Now for the day you have been waiting for – departure day. Your uniform should consist of your Army Combat Uniform, boots, headgear, outer tactical vest, Army combat helmet and assault pack. Do not have ammo or magazine attached to the vest, or on your person, Patterson said.

After signing out of the unit, securing your leave form and getting transportation the airfield, there's an accountability formation and manifesting begins for a flight to Kuwait, Patterson explained.

After the short flight to Kuwait, troops spend between 8 and 24 hours there, awaiting a flight out. Soldiers turn in their OTV and ACH to a warehouse and are given a hand receipt for those items. On the return trip, that hand receipt gets troops their protective gear back. Patterson said to make sure its kept in a safe place.

Before leaving Kuwait troops sit through a minimum of four briefings and go through about several hours of lockdown and a series of shake downs, Patterson said.

There are only three entry points for leave: Germany, Dallas, and Atlanta. Patterson said the staff in Kuwait will assist you in choosing an entry point and will book flights all the way through to your final destination.

Once in the states, if that's where you're headed, Patterson said troops go through another series of shake downs and X-ray scans. There, you also receive your return flight information upon arrival to your final location. You will also be given several numbers in case of emergency.

Keep those numbers safe, Patterson suggested.

Patterson said it's roughly a two-day process to get from Baghdad to home. Knowing what to expect along the way should make things easier, he said.

## News You Can Use

### Taxes Can be Filed on Liberty

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – With the New Year upon us, tax season is around the corner. Deployed Soldiers now have the opportunity to file their taxes at a new tax center provided by the Legal Service Center here.

The Legal Service Center built a tax center next door, equipped with everything needed to file taxes, said Capt. Rob Michaels, a legal assistance attorney in the office of the Staff Judge Advocate, Multi-National Division - Baghdad.

Soldiers who want to file their taxes can come in regardless of what their circumstances, Michaels said.

He said it's not required to file taxes during a deployment, but Soldiers must file within 180 days of returning home., said Michaels, a native of Athens, Penn.

In order to file with the tax services, a copy a Soldier's W-2, social security card, and photo ID are required, Michaels said.

Soldiers can find their W-2 forms on the Mypay.com website. A copy of bank statements and interest paperwork is also helpful, Michaels said. If the right paperwork is brought, the process should only take 15 to 20 minutes.

Soldiers who still wish to prepare their own tax returns can still file at the tax center, said Michaels.

“We have computers available for anyone that needs to file,” he said. Having a one-stop-shop for every tax question is another benefit of the Camp Liberty tax center.

For more information Soldiers can call the Camp Liberty Legal Service Center at 242-4568..



(Photo by Pfc. Benjamin Gable, 7th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

**Pfc. Anthony Storey (right), an intelligence analyst with Headquarters Service Company, Division Special Troops Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division, spots his workout partner Spc. Mike Brooks, an infantryman with HSC, Jan. 16 at the Scorpion Moral Welfare and Recreation Center at Camp Liberty, Iraq.**

### Body Building Competition in April

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – Who on Camp Liberty has the best body? Soldiers here will have the chance to find out.

The date to remember is April 21. That is the day a competition that will rate bodybuilders in the area will kick off at the Scorpion Moral Welfare and Recreation center.

It may seem too early to worry about something happening in April, but for participants, the time start preparing is now.

Judges will award the best male and female contestants with a professional bodybuilding membership, among other prizes.

This officially sanctioned competition is open to all U.S. forces, male and female, Department of Defense contractors and civilians. There is a \$35 entry fee, which will enroll entrants into the International Natural Bodybuilding and Fitness Federation and provide them with a subscription to their quarterly magazine.

Soldiers with questions regarding the competition can see 1st Sgt. Woody Carter, 57th Signal Co., 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, and bodybuilder at the Scorpion MWR every Tuesday from 5 p.m. to 6 p.m., or contact him at woody.carter@us.army.mil.

# Pizza, Pizza! Party Provided to Taji Troops

By Sgt. Jon Cupp  
1st BCT, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs

CAMP TAJI, Iraq -- The generosity of an infantryman's parents working in coordination with a major pizza restaurant's corporate office provided a feast to some Soldiers here Jan. 18., the unit's Family Readiness Group and a major shipping company.

Troopers from Company B, the "Bandogs," 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment dined on Little Caesars pizza shipped to them all the way from Detroit -- a coordinated effort involving the Little Caesars Pizza Kit Fundraising Program teaming with L.S.S. Consulting, a global security consulting firm, in which both parents of a Co. B Soldier are executives, and DHL shipping who worked with the unit's Family Readiness Group at Fort Hood, Texas to get the pizzas into the hands, and stomachs of Soldiers.

More than 100 pizza kits—enough to make about 500 pizzas--were flown to Iraq and then shipped by DHL -- with the Army's help, via a military convoy-- and arrived here Jan 9. The kits were encased in a 42-cubic-foot refrigerated shipping container to keep them fresh for cooking later.

The whole pizza event came about when Walled Lake, Mich. native, Pfc. James Timmons' parents, Ned and Mary Timmons of L.S.S. Consulting, decided to send their son and his fellow Soldiers a taste of home. Ned and Mary teamed with the other companies and also paid the cost for shipping the crate.

"My parents first contacted me, so I knew (the pizzas) were coming," said Timmons. "There were a lot of people actually working to get these out here and it lets us know that there are folks out there who are grateful for what we're doing out here.

"When I saw it, the only thing I could think was 'We're definitely going to be eating some pizza!'" said Timmons laughing, explaining his amazement when first seeing the



(Photo by Sgt. Jon Cupp, 1st BCT, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)  
**Soldiers from Company B, 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment file through a mobile field kitchen in the company's motor pool to get a slice of Little Caesar's pizza Jan. 18 at Camp Taji, Iraq.**

huge shipping crate when the pizzas arrived on Taji.

The company's first sergeant explained the importance of the event to his Soldiers.

"This means a lot, and even though the guys can buy pizzas here, this is more heartfelt as it's chow from home," said 1st Sgt. Damon Perez, Co. B first sergeant and a resident of Killeen, Texas who hails from Freemont, Calif. "This really motivates the Soldiers to see that people in the states really do care and support us."

The pizzas were cooked in a mobile field kitchen which was brought to Bandog's motor pool just for this occasion, and the company enlisted the help of food service specialists from their battalion's Company E, who opened each kit and placed the sauce and the toppings on each pizza prior to

cooking. It took about 20 minutes to cook each pizza.

"Doing this was no problem," said Staff Sgt. Brent Boodoo, senior food service operations sergeant for Co. E and a native of Brooklyn, N.Y. "We'll do anything to raise the morale of the Soldiers."

Soldiers from Bandog Company spend most of their time in Iraq pulling security, going on patrols, doing humanitarian missions and assisting local Iraqi government officials with projects and other issues. The unit also searches for weapons caches and looks for improvised explosive devices, while at the same time assisting Iraqi police (IP) and Iraqi Army troops based at the Mushahidah IP station.

More times than not, the Soldiers find themselves working long hours, sometimes seven days a week, so the pizza break was well-earned, according to Capt. Adrian Spevak, Co. B commander and native of Allentown, Pa.

"This (break) is well-deserved as a lot of times they're pushed pretty hard...they're out there when it's raining, when it's cold and they'll be out there when it gets extremely hot, but they never complain about it," Spevak said. "They do a lot of events on a daily basis within the local (community) to make the lives of the Iraqis better. They're proud of what they do."

The Soldiers said they were grateful to everyone involved in making the pizza break possible and enjoyed getting the "slice of home."

"This really tastes like home, and pizza always brings a smile to my face," said Spc. Abran Gonzalez, an infantryman with Co. B and a native of San Pedro, Calif. "I never would have dreamed that I would be eating Little Caesars pizza in Iraq."

Sgt. Robert Yesia, the Co. B commander's gunner and a native of Denver, said he could not find words to express his feelings so he decided to make one up just for this occasion.

"This is much better than anything else I've had it a while. It's fantastical," he said with a laugh.



(Photos by Sgt. Jon Cupp, 1st BCT, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)

## MND-B Top General Visits Iraqi Army

Maj. Gen. Joseph F. Fil, Jr., (second from right), the commanding general of 1st Cavalry Division and Multi-National Division - Baghdad, listens intently as Brig. Gen. Jamal Mal Allah Ahmed (left), commander, 2nd Brigade, 9th Iraqi Army Division speaks through an interpreter explaining the capabilities of his brigade Jan. 15 at Camp Taji, Iraq. Fil and Ahmed's troops often work together on joint missions, performing cordon and searches and other security operations.

(Left) An Iraqi Army soldier from the 2nd Brigade, 9th Iraqi Army Division (Mechanized) runs to post Iraq's national colors at Camp Taji, Iraq during a Jan. 15 visit from Maj. Gen. Joseph F. Fil, commanding general, 1st Cavalry Division.

# Troops Keep Watchful Eye Over FOB Prosperity, IZ

By Spc. Alexis Harrison  
2nd BCT, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs

FORWARD OPERATING BASE PROSPERITY, Iraq – In order for Soldiers and civilians on the base to sleep soundly, someone needs to stay up all hours of the night to make sure no one gets in who shouldn't.

In order to keep peace and safety in the International Zone, someone needs to control all the traffic.

Twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, Soldiers from 4th Squadron, 9 Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, keep watch over the base and every single entry point into the IZ. They know it isn't glamorous, but they know it's as vital as any other mission the "Black Jack" Brigade performs.

At all hours of the day and night, someone is watching traffic and pedestrians from atop a guard tower. That someone is a trooper like Pfc. Estanislado Bella from Miami.

Bella, who is a part of Troop A, 4-9 Cav., said that if he and his friends weren't in the towers, there's no telling what might happen.

"It's one of those jobs that if it's not done, somebody's life could be at risk," Bella said. "We see a lot from up here [in the tower]. It's also a good opportunity to get to know your fellow Soldiers. It helps with the cohesiveness of the unit."

Staying up all night isn't the easiest thing to accomplish, but Spc. Yosef Spell from Philadelphia, also a part of Troop A, said working as a team can help you get through those cold Iraqi nights.

"It's a lot like a football team," he said. "You have to work together to get things done."

Spell recently helped out a friend in a big way.

His friend is married to another Soldier in the 13th Sustainment Command out of Fort Hood, Texas. In order for the two to see each other on their mid-tour leave, Spell volunteered his slot, so his buddy could be with his wife.

"A lot of us are really close, but we work together no matter what," Spell said.

Outside the base, on the outskirts of the IZ, there are Soldiers manning checkpoints at every possible entry route. These Soldiers don't sit inside a guard tower and wait for



(Photo by Spc. Alexis Harrison, 2nd BCT, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)

**Sgt. Joe Daugherty from Casper, Wy., checks a man's identification card before the man comes into the International Zone in Baghdad Jan. 7. Daugherty, along with his fellow troopers from 4th Squadron, 9th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, man the entry control points.**

something to happen. They get a hands-on view of every vehicle and person that comes inside the gates.

Soldiers from Troop B, 4-9 Cav., pay attention to the little details while doing their jobs. Some search cars and trucks, and some pull security while watching the ebb and flow of Iraqis coming and going.

The troops keep watch while an Iraqi soldier does an initial search of the vehicles coming through the gates. After the car advances, a trooper from 4-9 Cav. continues the identification checks and preliminary searches through the car and its occupant. The several steps of security aren't meant to frustrate incoming persons or impede traffic. The Soldiers from the "Blackhawk" Troop check, check and recheck for anything on the "bolo" list. Things that are on the "do not try

to bring into the IZ" list.

Cpl. Karl Sweeting, a medic from Houston, is on his second tour to Iraq. He's been busy manning the gates into the IZ. Although, he hasn't had to perform many medical duties while working, he said he still feels a sense of accomplishment after every day at work.

Pfc. Nicholas Jefferson works alongside Sweeting at one of the northern checkpoints. The Van Buren, Ark., native said he's not in the thick of things like a cavalry scout should be, but he knows what his mission is.

"I wish there was something more we could be doing," he said. "But, I know that this is our mission, so we're going to do the best we can to keep all the important people and people who want to make this place better from getting hurt."

## Black Jack Brigade Officer Follows Path Back to Iraq

By Cpl. Robert Yde  
2nd BCT, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs

FORWARD OPERATING BASE PROSPERITY, Iraq – "If you would have told me 15 years ago I would be in Iraq as an Army lieutenant at age 35, I would have probably told you, 'you were crazy,'" 2nd Lt. Jeremy Reyes said. "We can't always predict the paths that we'll take."

For Reyes, the long and unlikely path that led him to his current role as an intelligence officer for the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division took him from a small Pennsylvania town, through several years in Washington D.C. and finally to Baghdad, where he worked six-months as a civilian employee with the Coalition Provisional Authority.

Reyes grew up in Williamsport, Pa., a town best known as the home of the Little League World Series, before attending Penn State University where he earned his bachelor's degree in history with minors in German, Spanish and Middle Eastern studies.

He said that while in college he was unsure of where his life might go, but during that time he developed an increasing interest



**2nd Lt. Jeremy Reyes**

in politics that eventually led him to Washington D.C.

"There was no real set plan when I was in college as to how things would pan out," Reyes explained. "I got more political in college in terms of my interest and that's just where things led."

One of his first experiences in the political arena was working the polls for

President George H.W. Bush during his 1992 bid for re-election, and while the outcome of this election did not go the way he had hoped, Reyes said it furthered his interest in the world of politics. He eventually moved to Washington D.C. in 1996 to further pursue his interest.

After arriving in Washington, Reyes landed an entry-level research analyst job at the Republican National Committee. Reyes said he spent his days examining news articles and identifying what different political figures were saying about various topics.

"I did little profiles on things these politicians said, and they were catalogued for later use," he explained.

Reyes also did an internship in Pennsylvania Senator Rick Santorum's office, which eventually led to a full-time position. He said he started there just taking phone calls and answering mail, but over time moved up ranks.

Everything seemed to be going smoothly for him until the fateful day of Sept. 11, when his life was directly affected by the terrorist attacks of that morning.

Like most other mornings, Reyes was on his way to work at Capitol Hill. However, unlike most days when he drove to work, on

this day he was forced to take the Washington Metro into city because his car was in the shop.

After leaving from Alexandria, Va., Reyes said he decided to switch trains at Pentagon Station to continue his journey over the Potomac River.

He got off the train at Pentagon Station still unaware of the attacks in New York, and while waiting on the platform for his connecting train he heard someone shout out that there was a bomb in the station.

"It will always stick in my mind," Reyes said of that moment. "A Soldier, in what I now know to be a Class B uniform, screamed out to everyone that there was a bomb and that we should get out of the station."

He said everyone quickly cleared out of the station, running up the escalator to the surface where they were enveloped in thick smoke and shocked by the scene before them.

"The airplane hit the other side of the Pentagon, but the smoke was thick and black," he said. "It was pouring out and was thick enough that you could smell it and get

# Iraqi Police, Soldiers Provide Fuel to Iraqi Families

By Cpl. Robert Yde  
2nd BCT, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs

BAGHDAD – With most areas in Baghdad receiving a limited amount of electricity each day, families have come to depend on generators to provide power for their homes.

While this option is popular for many families, acquiring the fuel to run a generator can be a problem.

In an effort to help with the fuel shortage, Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 14th Cavalry Regiment, attached to the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, in cooperation with the Iraqi national police, distributed kerosene to the residents of the Al-Hadher neighborhood after conducting a joint cordon and search operation in the area Jan. 18.

The neighborhood is one of the poorest in Task Force 1-14's area of operations and it was evident by the crowd's enthusiasm

that the kerosene was greatly needed.

"Out of our sector, this is probably the neediest and poorest neighborhood," explained platoon leader, 1st Lt. Stephen Hornsberger. "If they needed the kerosene anywhere, it was probably here."

After spending a couple of hours searching homes in the area, Soldiers and police officers carried the cans of kerosene around the neighborhood as the locals flocked to them with their empty cans.

According to Troop C's commander, Capt. Adam Grim, giving away the kerosene is a goodwill gesture that he hopes will strengthen the developing relationship between the Soldiers, police officers and local residents.

"Our squadron commander talked to all the commanders and basically said, 'What's something good we can do as a positive thing to reintegrate the national police and build trust in the community?'" the

Orange Park, Fla. native explained. "The thing we came up with was trying to get them more access to fuel, whether its benzene, propane or kerosene."

Grim said that in the past, the Soldiers and police officers have handed out other things like blankets and clothes, but fuel seems to have the greatest effect.

"I think the thing that has the biggest impact directly is fuel," he said. "We do get a lot of clothes from the states to hand out, but fuel is a really big ticket item that a lot of people just can't get."

Although the American forces provide the fuel, they try to step back and let the national police control most of the distribution. According to Grim, this provides just another opportunity for the locals and national police to interact on a positive level.

"We complete the search and then at the end, we have the national police hand out the kerosene," he said. "It's a symbol of good will that helps the communi-

ty and national police interact on something more than just doing a search."

According to Ahmed Aadel, a police officer with the 1st Battalion, 6th Brigade, 2nd National Police Division, the INP are glad they can provide for the people of Al-Hadher. "The people here are poor people and they are happy because they get kerosene," he said.

Since the squadron started handing out kerosene, Grim said that he has seen some change in his interaction with the locals.

"It definitely helps you to get more friendly faces and more waves and people say 'Thank you,'" Grim explained. However, he noted that the fuel that his Soldiers and the police provide is only enough to last for a few days, and solving the overall problem of the fuel shortage in Baghdad will take some time.

"It's a little something we can do. It's better than not having anything, and you can directly see it helping the people," Grim said.



Residents of Al-Hadher crowd around an Iraqi national police truck delivering kerosene in the Baghdad neighborhood Jan. 18.

## Officer Follows Winding Path to Baghdad a Second Time

### Path

From Page 7

the taste in your mouth. That whole experience is certainly something that you don't ever forget."

As the acts of that tragic morning eventually led to the beginning of the War on Terrorism, Reyes said having witnessed the destruction first-hand fueled his determination to do something to help the war effort.

He found a way in 2004 when a friend told him that the Coalition Provisional Authority was looking for civilians to work in Iraq with visiting members of Congress.

Reyes arrived to Baghdad in April of that year and said because he spent much of his time working in an office, his day-to-day life had many similarities to that of his life in Washington.

"I worked in the protocol office and escorted members of Congress when they came over to visit the troops," Reyes said. "We did their scheduling and worked with the folks who did the security arrangements."

During his time in Iraq, Reyes said he began to think he could make a further contribution to the war effort if he were in uniform. By the time he returned to Washington

in October, Reyes knew he was going to join the Army and visited a recruiting station to explore his options.

"He had a pretty easy job on the recruiting side, he didn't have to sell me," Reyes explained of his recruiter. "They don't get many recruits who walk in during wartime and say 'yeah, I know what I'm in for.'"

While Reyes was excited about the prospects of his new future, he said some of his friends and family had reservations about his decision.

"Half my friends did think I was crazy," Reyes said. "I had plenty of good job options back home and this was not the most lucrative option, to come in and be a second lieutenant."

In June 2005, Reyes left his civilian life behind and reported to basic training at Fort Benning, Ga., which he described simply as "quite a shock."

"I was very civilianized and had a long history of acting independently," Reyes said. "I went from being able to make significant decisions in my workplace to having to ask to go to the bathroom."

The next step was OCS training, Reyes said there were times when the contrast between his old life and his new life caused him to reflect upon the dramatic changes that

his life was undergoing.

"My day back in Washington, in an air conditioned office with a view of the capital, writing up things on e-mail and Microsoft Word documents, versus doing STX (situational exercises) lanes and sleeping out in the dirt was a very big compare and contrast picture," he said.

After graduating Dec. 8, 2005, Reyes was sent to Fort Huachuca, Ariz., where he underwent military intelligence training, before finally moving to his permanent duty station at Fort Hood, Texas in July 2006.

Reyes said his initial impression of the unit was positive and that helped him get quickly integrated into the "Black Jack" Brigade, which was set to deploy to Iraq just a few months later.

"I liked my unit; I liked my co-workers, and I was in an MI role," said Reyes. "I felt good about deploying with the unit I got assigned to."

In early November 2006, Reyes made his return to Baghdad, this time as a Soldier.

In the short time that he has been back in Iraq, Reyes said that he has noticed some drastic differences between his previous role as a civilian, government employee and his new role as a Soldier.

"There's a side of military service that

you just can't understand from the outside," Reyes said. "The pressures: what it means for family life and then also being here and seeing what happens on a daily basis. I think it will be helpful to have that perspective."

Reyes describes his new job as helping to target terrorists and "identifying who these people are and seeing that we are able to stop them from doing some of the destructive things they're doing in this country."

Having been in Iraq before in such a different role provides Reyes with a unique perspective and he credits some of his past experiences with helping him find success in his new role as an intelligence officer.

"My knowledge from the past, both some of the academic knowledge from school and the knowledge from having been here before, has been helpful to me in being more effective in the jobs I do here," Reyes said.

At this point, Reyes said he hasn't made any decisions on whether he will return to civilian life or continue with his Army career once his term is finished. However, he said that if he leaves the Army he will probably return to Washington and continue to work for the government.

"I don't have any regrets," Reyes said. "I'm proud to come back here and help my country."



# Renovation to Improve Life in Neighborhood

By Spc. Amanda Morrissey  
5th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

AL ZAHRAH, Iraq-- It is a small neighborhood about 12 blocks long and five blocks wide, just a few miles away from Balad.

The main street is roughly paved; the rest are just dirt tracks filled with trash and mud, teeming with kids. All in all, there is nothing remarkable about Al Zahrah.

It has, however, managed to capture the



Ahmed Omran, a local civil engineer, details the progress made to the water pump station in the Al Zahrah neighborhood Jan. 4.

attention of the U.S. forces at Forward Operating Base Paliwoda. "The people in this neighborhood have been good to us here. We'd like to do something in return for them," said 1st Lt. Anthony Fazio, the projects purchasing officer for Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 3rd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment.

The unit is proposing a \$4 million renovation project that includes installing an underground sewage system with connections to each house in the area, drain culverts, sidewalks and paved roads.

The long term benefits of this project would be numerous.

The construction project would provide about 150 people employment for at least six months, as well as create other jobs, such as garbage disposal, in the effort to maintain the neighborhood, Fazio said.

Neighborhood improvements might also catch the attention of the provincial government, potentially resulting in additional funding for other projects.

The result would be an all-around economic improvement for the town, said Fazio.

The greatest benefit, however, would be the improved health of the inhabitants.

"The old sewage system backs up here, especially when it rains, causing dirty water and debris to rise to the surface," said Fazio. "The kids go out and play in this stuff, and people are getting sick."

The new sewage system and drain culverts will remove the dirty water and debris from the streets, greatly improving the living standard for the Al Zahrah residents.

"We hope that people will see the improvements made in this neighborhood, how it looks and how it works, and want the same for their neighborhoods. Then they would be willing to work with U.S. forces to stabilize the violence in their area so we can go in there and do it," said Staff Sgt. Sean Cummins, the 404th Civil Affairs Battalion team leader.

The civil affairs team works as the eyes and ears for Fazio to provide information on what projects are most wanted and needed by



(Photos by Spc. Amanda Morrissey, 5th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

1st Lt. Anthony Fazio (third from left), the projects purchasing officer for Headquarters/Headquarters Company, 3rd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment speaks with Ahmed Omran (left), a local civil engineer, and Amir ab Dalhide Morhon (second left), the mayor of Balad, through an interpreter (far right), while on a patrol through the Al Zahrah neighborhood on Jan. 4.

the people, said Cummins.

The Al Zahrah renovation is actually a continuation of a project begun by a previous unit at FOB Paliwoda, but was not completed before they were redeployed back to the United States.

Fazio and his team did not hesitate to take up the challenge of its completion when they arrived to the area.

Amir ab Dalhide Morhan, the mayor of Balad, is working with Fazio on the project.

"Even though there is a change in the commands [at FOB Paliwoda], the policy always remains the same – to work with the people of Balad," said the mayor.

Fazio patrols with the 404th Civil Affairs team to gain a better understanding of what improvements have been completed and to determine what developments still need to occur. He talked with the locals about

the problems they are having, and explained how the proposed project will help to alleviate those issues.

With the mayor's cooperation, Fazio has established several mandates to ensure the project will move forward with minimal disruptions. He intends to hire a local contractor who actually lives in Al Zahrah because the contractor will have a vested interest in making sure the project gets done, and gets done the right way.

Included in the proposal is a stipulation that locals must clean up garbage in the area before the project can get started, and that they must keep it clean once it is completed.

The approval process for the Al Zahrah renovation project could take up to two months. Once approved, the project is scheduled to be finished within six months of its start date.

## Joint Effort, Experience Will Increase Iraqi Army Readiness

By Spc. Amanda Morrissey  
5th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

BALAD, Iraq – Iraqi army troops weren't expecting to see U.S. Soldiers walking to their post, but quickly made them welcome during a visit designed to link up with key military leaders and learn more about the skills and training of the local Iraqi unit.

U.S. Soldiers from Company E, 3rd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment met up with the Iraqi army soldiers at a checkpoint in the first stage of a new plan for training Iraqi soldiers near Forward Operating Base Paliwoda.

"Today, our mission was to do a sphere of influence meeting, where we actually get together with people that are key to the area," said Sgt. 1st Class Andrew Smith, the platoon leader for Co. E.

The U.S. Soldiers visit various checkpoints in the Salah ad Din province in order to build up a positive working relationship with the Iraqi army. They want to gain a better

understanding of the Iraqi soldiers' capabilities and limitations in order to better conduct future joint operations in which the Iraqi soldiers lead the missions.

Smith offered chai tea and Iraqi cigarettes to the 1st platoon leader, Lt. Mohammed Saber al Hismawi of the 2nd Iraqi Army Company, observing social customs to demonstrate his respect for the culture. Such actions foster good will and cooperation between the U.S. and Iraqi Soldiers that are working together, said Smith.

"Right now, we're just getting to know them before conducting missions together," said 1st Lt. Alex Hooper, the platoon leader for Co. E. "We can use their connection to the community to learn of possible areas where our joint efforts need to be focused."

The primary mission of these Iraqi soldiers has been to man checkpoints along area roads, and have had limited experience with other operations. While preventing insurgents from planting roadside bombs is a vital mission in the fight against terrorism, the Iraqi soldiers must become profi-

cient in other aspects of combat operations, such as conducting raids, cordons and searches, before they can successfully secure the area without U.S. aid.

"It's kind of a reversal of roles," said Smith. "We've been doing missions which have been primarily American missions with Iraqi army support, and now we're trying to shift to where the Iraqi army is conducting the missions with American support."

The next phase will be crucial as the U.S. Soldiers work with the Iraqi Army leadership to set up joint missions that will give them the opportunity to assess what skills the Iraqi soldiers are competent in and in what areas they may need further training.

"They're actually taking the lead on these missions, and we're planning on...just being there for oversight and to make sure that we're there to give any advice," said Smith. "We're trying to bring our level of professionalism to the table to offer them lessons learned and maybe different ways that they can be effective in combating the insurgents."



(Photos by Spc. Chris McCann, 2nd BCT, 10th Mtn. Div. (LI) Public Affairs)

Soldiers of the 2nd Battalion, 15th Field Artillery Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry) Military Transition Team walk with Iraqi soldiers of the 4th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division, in a combined operation the morning of Jan. 15 near Janabi Village, Iraq. The operation, aimed at finding weapons caches and detaining terrorist suspects, netted several caches and over 80 detainees.

## Iraqi, U.S. Soldiers Clear Village, Find Caches

By Spc. Chris McCann  
2nd BCT, 10th Mtn. Div. (LI) Public Affairs

JANABI VILLAGE, Iraq — Multi-National Division - Baghdad Soldiers of the have been working hard to get the Iraqi soldiers trained to enable them to take over Iraq's security themselves.

So the recent success of the joint operation Jan. 15, which put the entire 4th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division together with Soldiers of the 2nd Battalion, 15th Field

Artillery Regiment Military Transition Team and the 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment, 2nd BCT, was a victory not only against terror, but for the troops themselves.

The operation went smoothly with 600 troops participating.

Some troops air-assaulted into the village under cover of darkness, while the main force convoyed to the village, marching in at first light to search houses and fields, seeking weapons caches and suspected terrorists.

"It went very well for such a large operation," said Capt.

Art Stringer, a native of Dardanelle, Ark., and the Field Artillery Effects Trainer, who planned much of the mission.

"It was a complex operation — the joint air assault, and a large ground assault. Once on site, we used Task Force Iron Claw, engineers and explosive ordnance disposal, and they all combined very well," Stringer said.

"Any time you can let the Iraqis test their boundaries, it's good," he said of the Iraqi Army involvement. "It's their battle space, and it helps them build confidence in themselves and in the U.S. forces."

The operation, netted 87 detainees, 12 of whom were on the Iraqi Army blacklist, and several large caches of weaponry, which included rocket-propelled grenades and launchers. A large cache of improvised explosive device making materials was also recovered, which included cell phones, wire and other hardware.

Some residents directed the troops to the homes of suspicious people.

"We got information on two of the guys on the blacklist," said Staff Sgt. Michael Myers, a native of Gasport, N.Y., who serves on a MTT, to one of the Iraqi soldiers. The squad he was with questioned a man who gave them the information.

"The Iraqi soldiers are very motivated," Myers said. "They're doing a lot better than they were at first; they're doing more complex missions. They need some more experience with map reading and such, but they did an excellent job creating a secure perimeter. They're doing well."

1st Lt. Bobby Temple, a native of Atlanta, Ga., concurred.

"They've got good situational awareness," he said. "Our navigational and communications assets are still essential to them - they don't have global positioning systems or even maps, but they're doing better. And once they've been to a place, they can get there again, no problem."

The Iraqi Army took a very active role in the searches and planning, Stringer said.

"The mentorship the U.S. forces are giving the Iraqi soldiers is very helpful. We're seeing a great increase in their ability from the hard work of our guys," he said.

"Without the effort of the Iraqi Army being reciprocated, we couldn't do this," he added.



Iraqi troops question a resident of Janabi Village during an operation there Jan. 12. The 4th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division worked in tandem with Soldiers of the 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment and the 2nd Battalion, 15th Field Artillery Regiment, both of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry) to find weapons caches and terrorist suspects.

## Respecting the dead

# Cav Troops Search Cemetery for Weapons Caches

By Spc. Chris McCann  
2nd BCT, 10th Mtn. Div. (LI) Public Affairs

STRONG POINT 142, Iraq – Multi-National Division – Baghdad troops made a careful entry into a Muslim cemetery near the former Qaqaa Water Treatment Facility on the banks of Iraq's Euphrates River Jan. 12 to search for weapons caches.

Soldiers of the 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division, attached to the 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry) had been told by local Iraqi residents that terrorists used the cemetery for storing weapons, skirted the area on a reconnaissance mission the night before ensuring that the area was clear.

At first light the next morning, 2-5 Cav troopers set out with four Iraqi Army soldiers.

They waded through canals and across muddy fields to enter the cemetery.

"Don't step on any graves," said Company A commander Capt. Richard Ince of Georgetown, Texas, as his Soldiers began moving in.

Two Soldiers had mine detectors and scanned suspicious-looking areas as other troops moved among the graves, careful not



(Photo by Spc. Chris McCann, 2nd BCT, 10th Mtn. Div.(LI) Public Affairs)

**Iraqi troops and Soldiers of Company A, 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, attached to the 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry), patrol through a cemetery near the Qaqaa Water Treatment Facility, west of Baghdad Jan. 12.**

to step on them. Many graves were elaborately protected with concrete or stone covers, but most were simply raised mounds of earth, marked with wedges of palm wood or chunks of stone.

"It was awesome," said Spc. Matthew

Fitzpatrick, a native of Philadelphia, and a rifleman with the company. "We've never been through a graveyard looking for caches."

No caches were recovered, although several tank rounds were recovered from var-

ious places.

"We really didn't find everything we wanted," said Sgt. James Farris, a rifleman and native of Tullahoma, Tenn. "But we did find things that might have benefited the anti-Iraqi forces and interrupted our movement."

Ince had an idea as to why caches weren't found – the weapons are hidden there on a very short-term basis only for quick pick-up by terrorists. He said the joint operation was successful because of the teamwork exhibited between his Soldiers Iraqi Army troops.

"It's always good when we're working with the IA," Ince said. "They're good guys and motivated to patrol. They're very much a help. The Iraqi Army soldiers are our most valuable asset and combat force multiplier."

Operations in areas like cemeteries are delicate, due to the emotional and religious overtones, but they can be critically important if terrorists are using them as staging areas.

"I felt we were respectful of the Iraqi graves," said Spc. Brian Smith of Denver, a civil affairs Soldier with Co. B, 2nd Brigade Special Troops Battalion, who works with 2-5 Cavalry. "It was kind of an uncomfortable situation, but we were respectful."

## 'Providers' Give Soldiers Necessary Tools for Missions

By Capt. Amanda Nalls  
210th BSB, 2nd BCT, 10th Mtn. Div. (LI)

CAMP STRIKER, Iraq — While the Soldiers of the

2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry) continue to push farther into sector in order to defeat the enemy, other Soldiers are working behind the scenes to help accomplish missions. The Soldiers from the

210th Brigade Support Battalion's, armament repair section is developing innovative ways to ensure that the Iraqi Army troops have the tools necessary to complete their mission.

In addition to their day-to-day work - repairing and modifying weapon systems within the brigade - the armament section has turned their attention towards repairing weapons in support the Iraqi Army.

After enemy weapons are seized from weapons caches by the maneuver units within the brigade, the weapons are brought to the armament team for inspection and repairs.

To date, the team has inspected 170 weapons, repaired more than 40, and re-issued more than 70 back to Iraqi Army and Iraqi Special Forces units.

The project, which helps ensure that the Iraqi Army is armed and prepared to defend themselves against insurgents, will continue to grow in magnitude as more enemy weapons are captured throughout the brigade's area of operations.

"My Soldiers are really working hard to complete this mission in addition to their normal job repairing weapons for the brigade," said Chief Warrant Officer Christopher Shaffer, a 210th BSB armament repair technician and native of Alliance, Ohio. "We have a small section, but they do an amazing job with the resources they have to work with."

In just a few short months, the Soldiers of the Armament Repair Section have made a lasting contribution to their fellow Soldiers and have made great strides in furthering the fight in the Global War on Terror.

"We're focusing our efforts forward," commented Lt. Col. Brian Rogers, the 210th BSB commander, and native of Bozeman, Mont.

"This is the critical year in Iraq and the 'Provider Battalion' is going to make a difference," he said.

With that guidance in mind, the Armament Section has made every effort to ensure that the Soldiers of the 2BCT, as well as their Iraqi Army counterparts, have some of the most accurate and well-maintained weapons in the country.



(Photo by Chief Warrant Officer Christopher Shaffer, 210th BSB, 2nd BCT, 10th Mtn. Div. (LI))

**Pfc. Elias Martinez (left), a native of Menteca, Calif., and Pfc. Katrina Nosbich-Stamp, a native of Farmington, N.Y., both small arms and artillery repairmen serving with the 210th Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (LI), fix weapons at Camp Striker, Iraq.**

# Pencils, Paper Place Smiles on Baghdad Kids

By Staff Sgt. Mary Rose  
7th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

CAMP SLAYER, Iraq – An infantry unit from the Kentucky Army National Guard spent the morning of Jan. 14 not patrolling the streets of Baghdad like they usually do, but delivering supplies to local school children.

Soldiers from Company C, 1st Battalion, 149th Infantry



(Photo by Staff Sgt. Mary Rose, 7th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

**Sgt. 1st Class Danny Page, Company C, 1st Battalion, 149th Infantry Regiment, Kentucky Army National Guard, stands next to the pile of school supplies to be handed out to more than 300 children who attend the Al Hamdaniyah School in western Baghdad Jan. 14.**

Regiment, loaded up an up-armored Light Medium Tactical Vehicle with wooden crates full of backpacks, pencils, pens, rulers and notepads. Then they headed out to the Al Hamdaniyah School with an entourage of humvees for security.

The troops arrived a little early for school, but it didn't take long for the children to start coming in from all directions to greet the Soldiers.

The children seemed excited to see the Soldiers and asked for pens by pretending they were writing on paper with their hands. While the Soldiers interacted with the horde of children they tried to teach them English words, to help with communication.

For the children, they were open to taking whatever the Soldiers had to give them whether it was an English word, a smile or better yet, a pen.

"It doesn't matter what you give them they'll take anything," said Spc. Jason Davenport, a medic for Company C.

The children, with their pants tucked into their socks to keep from getting muddy are willing to take what the Soldiers give because they have so little themselves. Their nine-room school house has 310 students, water damage, no electricity, no running water, no heat and many of its windows broken out, said Maj. Chris Cline, a civil affairs officer with the unit.

Along with all the damage, there is no money being given to the school to fix the problems.

"The teachers haven't been paid in three months," said Cline a native of Hodgenville, Ky. Despite that, he said the teachers still come in to teach the children who attend the school.

The supplies from U.S. Soldiers are the only thing the school has received in months, according to a teacher at the

school.

While at the school, troops unloaded the LMTV and played with the children, until it was time for classes to begin.

The children filed into the cold classrooms, after collecting their new supplies and waited for the teachers to join them for their studies.

One of the teachers, who spoke through an interpreter, said there is no school being held in many of the more populated areas around Baghdad, due to security issues. "We need security," the teacher said. "With security, we can make better education."

Security and lack of financial assistance wasn't the only problem the school had; they had children with medical needs.

Davenport assisted two girls who had ailments, but because of the limited resources on hand, he referred them to the Civil Military Operations Center's free medical clinic for local Iraqis.

"It is important for them to know that we are here to help them," said Davenport a native of Barbourville, Ky.

Even though the school is barely operational, 1st Lt. Robert Andersen, a civil affairs officer with the regiment, said he was impressed with the number of students still attending.

"For a war going on and so many children to still be in school, it shows that parents do care about the future of their children, which is a good thing," said the native of Elizabethtown, Ky.

"We could be here a hundred years and not make a dent if they don't want to help themselves," Davenport noted. He said the teachers' dedication to the children at the Al Hamdaniyah School is an example of what Iraq needs to get back on its feet.



(Photo by Staff Sgt. Mary Rose, 7th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

**Spc. Jason Davenport, a medic with Company C, 1st Battalion, 149th Infantry Regiment, Kentucky Army National Guard, guards the pens in the sleeve of his uniform while children attending the Al Hamdaniyah School in western Baghdad try to get them. Davenport, a native of Barbourville, Ky., and members of Company C dropped off school supplies and backpacks for the 310 students attending the school Jan. 14.**



(Photo by Sgt. Cheryl Cox, 1st BCT, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)

Staff Sgt. Riley Smallwood, a native of Griffen, Ga., and member of Company B, 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment and a native of Griffen, Ga., plays with young children Jan. 15 outside the newest girls and boys school in Mushahidah, Iraq. Smallwood was one of several Soldiers who visited the schools to attend ribbon cutting ceremonies and to deliver school supplies to the students.

## Three New Schools Open in Mushahidah

By Sgt. Cheryl Cox  
1st BCT, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs

MUSHAHIDAH, Iraq – It has been said that fostering education is one of many steps toward improving safety and stability for Iraq's future — its children.

The Soldiers of Company B, 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment helped the city of Mushahidah, Iraq, get one step closer to this goal by opening three new schools within the city Jan 15.

The Soldiers assisted with opening a girl's elementary school, a girl's secondary school and a boy's elementary school.

"This project is an example of the close partnership we have with the Mushahidah city council to create a secure, safe and stable environment in Mushahidah," said Capt. Adrian Spevak, the Co. B, 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment commander and a native of Allentown, Pa., during the ribbon cutting ceremony for the girls' schools.

"It is an honor and privilege to be here for the ceremony, and I look forward to continuing our close relationship with future projects," he added.

Just as Spevak said he was excited to see the children have a new place to go to school, the Mushahidah city council members said

they were also very excited.

"This is a great example for the projects in this area," said Shiek Naif Moutlak, the chief of the city council.

"We thank the coalition for all they have

done and hope for other projects in the area to help the people," he added.

And helping people is what makes all the hard work worth while.

"We have been working for six months to

get the school to a good standard for the kids," said Capt. John McGowan, the Company C, 414th Civil Affairs Battalion commander and a native of Birmingham, Ala. "By working with the Iraqi government, we have made a better place for the students to go to school."

While the council members and the Soldiers celebrated the ribbon cutting, McGowan had chance to talk to a few people at the school.

"By being here talking to the students, I know that they are very happy to have a better place to go school," he continued. "And the teachers are happy to have a good place to go to work and teach from."

The newly opened schools are a great improvement from the old schools the children were attending, according to McGowan.

"The children now have classrooms with new desks and unbroken windows," said McGowan. "They also have new school supplies that they may not have had without the help of the coalition partnership."

Before leaving the girl's secondary school, Spevak stepped into one of the classrooms to talk to the students.

"I am honored to be here to help make this school a better place," he told the girls. "It is definitely a privilege to look into the eyes of tomorrow's leaders in Iraq."



(Photo by Sgt. Cheryl Cox, 1st BCT, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)

With the assistance of a young student, Capt. Adrian Spevak, the commander of Company B, 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment and a native of Allentown, Pa., cuts a ribbon during an opening ceremony of a new school in Mushahidah, Iraq Jan. 15. Along with the ceremonies held at the three new schools, the Soldiers delivered notebooks and staplers to the students.

## The Nose Knows

# Four-Legged 'Troops' Sniff Out Explosives

By Staff Sgt. W. Wayne Marlow  
2nd BCT, 2nd Inf. Div. Public Affairs

FORWARD OPERATING BASE LOYALTY, Iraq - Two of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team's most valuable assets never talk about work, preferring to let the results speak for themselves.

Even with their quiet demeanor, they have uncovered numerous weapons caches and explosives, and have become two of the most popular members of the unit.

They are the unit's two military working dogs, Blacky and Frisko. The dogs are trained to sniff out explosives and chase down insurgents.

Getting them ready for those essential tasks is up to the handlers.

Blacky, a 2-year-old German shepherd with a dark chocolate coat and handled by Air Force Tech Sgt. Michael Jones. Jones, from Kingswood, W. Va.. The team is attached to the 2nd Battalion, 17th Field Artillery Regiment.

The other dog team with 2-17th FA consists of Frisko, a 6-year-old black-and-brown German shepherd and handler Senior Airman Adam La Barr of Rome, N.Y. La Barr.

The initial training takes about 90 days. The first step is getting the handler and dog comfortable with each other.

Handlers bathe and groom the dogs and learn each other's personalities. Next, the dogs are drilled in obedience, and they begin sniffing for explosives.

All that time and training pays off on the battlefield. Merely having a dog along pays dividends against insurgents, said Jones.

"Just seeing a dog deters them from running away or trying to pass weapons and explosives through," he said.

But the intimidation and heightened senses would be useless without human



(Photo by Staff Sgt. W. Wayne Marlow, 2nd BCT, 2nd Inf. Div. Public Affairs)

**Air Force Tech Sgt. Michael Jones, attached to the 2nd Battalion, 17th Field Artillery Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, leads Blacky on a search for explosives at Forward Operating Base Loyalty.**

input.

"The dog and handler are a team," Jones said. "One can't work without the other."

Part of the handler's role is to point out areas for the dogs to search. Handlers base the dog's training plan around areas the dog needs to improve.

"Blacky is not as good at finding things high up...so in training, I make it where he would want to go up high. I put a couple of training aids up, to show him, sometimes, it's

up there," Jones said.

In the real world, though, the trainer wouldn't know where the bomb is placed. This is where the dog's nose comes in handy, and the handler has to understand the dog.

When Blacky comes upon a suspected explosive, he reacts passively.

"He won't be aggressive, he won't paw at it," Jones said. "We don't want that, if there's a bomb in there. (The explosive ordnance disposal team) gets paid to go in and

mess with it."

Instead, Blacky sits by the suspected explosive or lies down, if it is lower. Sometimes the response can be even more subtle.

"I look for changes in his behavior, to see when he's curious about something," Jones said.

Frisko reacts in a similar way, but each dog has his own method, La Barr said.

The dogs teams' workload is intelligence-driven, but they usually go on about five missions each week. While the basic job is always the same, it's an ever-changing game.

"We adapt our techniques to what the enemy would be using," Jones said.

The dogs have found multiple weapons caches and explosives, he added. When they find something, the dogs get a treat, of sorts. Jones or La Barr breaks out a misshapen lump of rubber that vaguely resembles a beehive.

Blacky and Frisko get to play with the object as the reward for making a find.

"They know if they find something, they're going to get that one toy and they're excited," La Barr said.

While people naturally gravitate to the dogs, Jones said it's important to remember they are not pets.

"Everyone thinks they can play with them," he said. "They are trained to be handler-protective. He's still an animal."

As such, the handlers never allow anyone to pet the dogs. "That might soften them up, or it could be seen by the dog as an attack," La Barr said.

Both handlers said working with dogs is a great job.

"A lot of people over here miss their pets," La Barr said. "He's not a pet, but I have a dog I can relate to."

## Strike Force Officer's Scholarship Leads Him to Ireland

By Staff Sgt. W. Wayne Marlow  
2nd BCT, 2nd Inf. Div. Public Affairs

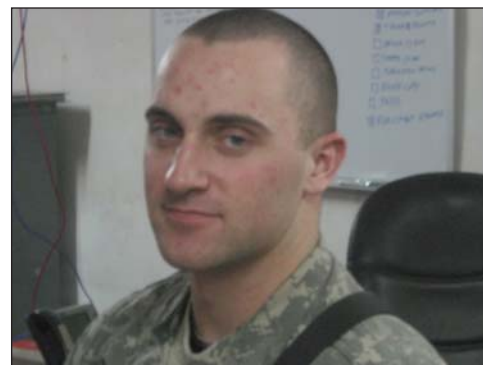
FORWARD OPERATING BASE LOYALTY, Iraq - A combat engineer platoon leader in the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division has been awarded a prestigious scholarship to study in Ireland.

1st Lt. Sean Healy of the 2nd Infantry Brigade Special Troops Battalion is one of 12 American recipients of the George J. Mitchell scholarship.

Healy will use the scholarship to pursue a master's degree in International Securities and Conflict Studies at the University of Dublin.

The Mitchell scholarship is meant to strengthen the U.S.-Irish alliance among future leaders. Awardees are selected on the basis of their academic achievements, community service, leadership abilities, and performance in an interview.

The 12 individuals selected will spend



(U.S. Army photo)

**1st Lt. Sean Healy, a Smithfield, R.I., native and member of the 2nd Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, will study in Ireland after his selection as one of 12 nationwide recipients of the George J. Mitchell scholarship.**

one year in graduate school.

When Healy learned he would deploy to Iraq, he started learning more about the

region, and this started him on his road to the scholarship.

"A while back, in order to understand what was going on, and to help bring all my guys back safely, I started reading about the Middle East and Iraq," he said. "I enjoyed the subject more than I thought I would. So that got me to thinking I could do more than just bring my guys back safely, I would like to be in a position someday to influence public policy."

Specifically, Healy hopes to explore how to stymie insurgent recruiting drives through improvements in infrastructure and use of natural resources. He plans on writing his dissertation on this subject.

"I think we need a different approach than the one we're taking right now," Healy said.

His graduate studies begin Sept. 25, but for now he's staying focused on the current mission.

"I'm going to keep my head in the game

now, but it's something to look forward to. I'm pretty excited about this opportunity," Healy said.

Healy graduated from the United States Military Academy in 2005, where he ranked fifth in a class of 910 students.

The Smithfield, R.I., native has earned the Parachutist Badge, Air Assault Badge, and the Army Physical Fitness Badge. His collegiate honors included the Commandant's Award, the Distinguished Cadet Award and the Superintendent's Award. He was also recognized with the Most Outstanding Cadet Award in his battalion of 100 cadets.

Healy captained his baseball and football teams in high school and also played basketball. He was on the power lifting team in college and also participated in the Ranger Challenge competition. His community service has included work with homeless shelters, Habitat for Humanity, Walk for Life, the Special Olympics and the March of Dimes.

# Troop's First Day on the Job a War Story

By Sgt. Marcus Butler  
4th BCT (Abn.), 25th Inf. Div. Public Affairs

ISKANDARIYAH, Iraq – For most war veterans, the stories portraying their life experiences are a collaboration of different events that spanned over years and years of fighting that add to the character of that Soldier, sailor, airman or Marine.

For one Paratrooper, he had his share of war stories to tell after his first day on the job here.

Capt. Donald William Carden, a native of Radford, Va., deployed with the 4th Brigade Combat Team (Airborne), 25th Infantry Division in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and for a few months, Carden was working out of the Forward Operating Base Kalsu, Iraq, until he received the word to be moved to this remote operating base to support the Military Transition Team stationed on the Iraqi compound adjacent to the FOB.

With less than a week's notice, Carden was packed up, on a helicopter and on his way to his new home with MiTT 248.

"This was the best course of action for the brigade and a great opportunity for me," said Carden. Carden came to the MiTT on the heels of tragedy, the team had lost two of its original members to an improvised explosive attack. Carden stepped in without missing a beat.

"I can't imagine how hard it must be for someone to join a team knowing the situation they are entering," said Maj. Philip T. Piaget, MiTT 248's team chief. "Regardless ... Capt. Carden came in saying I am here for however long you need me."

Carden's role on the team is to advise the Iraqi Army Headquarters Company, the scout platoon and the mortar platoon. On his first day on the job, Carden and his team were



(Photo by Sgt. Marcus Butler, 4th BCT (Abn.), 25th Inf. Div. Public Affairs)

**Capt. Donald Carden, a Military Transition Team member from the 4th Brigade Combat Team (Airborne), 25th Infantry Division and a native of Radford, Va., assists the 2nd "Lion" Battalion, 4th Brigade, 8th Iraqi Army Division inventory equipment in Iskandariyah, Iraq.**

ambushed by insurgents leading to a small arms fire fight. They narrowly missed an improvised explosive device that detonated right in front of Carden's vehicle and left a blast

crater eight feet wide and six feet deep.

After a harrowing inaugural mission, Carden has become a valued member of MiTT 248.

"Capt. Carden didn't come to Iraq looking to be on a MiTT, but he has the maturity, personality, and the technical and tactical skills needed for this job," said Piaget. "He is well liked by the MTT members and also by the Iraqis, which is very important."

Working with the Iraqi Army on a day-to-day basis is something that most Soldiers will never experience. However, for the MTT members, it is a way of life.

"The Iraqi Army Soldiers are some of the most professional and proficient individuals I have ever worked with," said Carden. "At the Soldier level, each and every person knows their job and does it very well."

In transition to one assignment to another, there is usually some down time given to the Soldier to get settled in and get to know your team members. Unfortunately, Carden did not have that luxury.

Sharing the mental stress load with him is his wife Capt. Carolyn Jane Carden, 725th Brigade Support Battalion, human resources officer, 4th BCT (Airborne), 25th ID, daughter Kristianna and sons Patrick and Liam.

"My wife understands the Army's mission and what has to be done," said Carden. "She is nervous about me being on the team but is supportive 100 percent."

After this deployment, Carden has plans to obtain his master degree.

Even though he has been with this team for a short time, his journey with them is just beginning.

Only time will reveal what kind of stories he will be able to tell.

"It has been a fast few weeks here," said Carden. "I am looking forward to see what happens in the days to come."



(Photo by Maj. Eric Verzola, 4th BCT, 25th Inf. Div. Public Affairs)

## Greetings

Maj. Gen. Joseph F. Fil, Jr., greets participants at the Babil province's Provincial Security Transition Assessment meeting at the Regional Embassy Office in Hillah, Iraq Jan. 24. Hillah, the capital of the Babil province, is located in the center of the Shiite heartland.

# 2nd Iraqi Army Div. Now Under Iraqi Control

By Sgt. Paula Taylor  
4th BCT, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs

AL KINDI, Iraq—Coalition Forces joined their Iraqi Army counterparts in a Memorandum of Understanding signing Jan. 15 to mark the official handover of the 2nd Iraqi

Army Division from Coalition to Iraqi control.

Prior to the signing, the Iraqi division was working under the direction of the 25th Infantry Division and commander of Multi-National Forces-North, Maj. Gen. Benjamin R. Mixon.

The memorandum signing turns control of the division

over to the Iraqi Ground Forces Command.

Signing the documents, which were written in both English and Arabic, was Gen. Jamal, commander, 2 IA, and Col. Stephen Twitty, commander, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, who was representing Mixon.

“This ceremony is so important today because the 2nd Iraqi Army Division has demonstrated their capability to lead without Coalition Forces,” said Twitty. “They have demonstrated their ability to fight terrorism and conduct themselves as a division. They will be in the lead and we will be there to assist them whenever required.”

During the ceremony, Jamal addressed the Iraqi attendees and his soldiers. “We have worked together with Coalition Forces since the formation of this division,” said Jamal. “During this time, we have been getting our equipment and training our soldiers. Now, today, we are ready to take full control of the battle space.”

“We will continue to work together and cooperate with the Coalition Forces. We are confident we will succeed because the 2nd Division has trained hard and is well equipped to deal with any situation and handle the security of Mosul,” he added.

Twitty, who also addressed the group, agreed with Jamal that the Iraqi unit is ready to take over the battle space in Mosul.

“This is truly a historic event for the people of Iraq and the 2nd Iraqi Army Division. On behalf of General Mixon, the 25th Infantry Division, and the 4th Brigade Combat Team, I would like to applaud you for this historic occasion that you are about to embark on,” Twitty said.

“This division has more than proven it is capable of bringing peace and security to the people of Mosul,” he added. “You have gained the trust and confidence of the people in the city, the Iraqi police, and Coalition Forces. Your soldiers have demonstrated the capability to destroy terrorists wherever they may hide. I look forward to watching you lead your organization throughout the streets of Mosul. You are the future of Iraq.”



(Photo by Sgt. Paula Taylor, 4th BCT, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)

Col. Stephen Twitty, commander, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, representing Maj. Gen. Benjamin R. Mixon, commander, 25th Infantry Division, signs a Memorandum of Understanding with Gen. Jamal, commander, 2nd Iraqi Army Jan. 15 in Al Kindi, Iraq. The signing marks the handover of Jamal's division from U.S. control to the Iraqi Ground Forces Command.

## Provincial Joint Coordination Center Provides Assistance

By Maj. Roderick Cunningham  
4th BCT, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs

MOSUL, Iraq – The 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division's brigade operational legal team, and the 403rd Civil Affairs Detachment conducted civil military operations center activities at the Provincial Joint Coordination Center Jan. 12.

“The PJCC provides an easy and safe means for the local citizens of Mosul to submit claims for damage to their property or persons. This process has been in place on the military installation for more than a year,” said Maj. John Hodge, commander Alpha Company, 403rd Civil Affairs Battalion, of Huntington, West Virginia.

“The purpose of the PJCC is to receive claims from Iraqi citizens who have been involved in accidents or escalation of force incidents with the Coalition Forces,” he continued.

“The residents of Mosul conveyed to the district and provincial government that they did not feel comfortable entering U.S. military installations because of possible observation by anti-Iraqi forces and potential for extortion or bodily harm,” said Hodge.

As a result of these comments Hodge explained, Coalition Forces and the Iraqi government worked together to find a location in the city that will provide the citizens



(Photo by Maj. Roderick Cunningham, 4th BCT, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)

Maj. John Hodge, A Company commander, 403rd Civil Affairs Battalion, of Huntington, West Virginia, reviews documentation to reimburse an Iraqi citizen for damages as Navy Lt. James Leineweber of Tucson, Arizona and Sgt. 1st Class Jeffrey Turner of Knoxville, T.N. (left) provide legal guidance and assistance.

what they require, thus the PJCC was established. The benefits of this location to the Iraqi people are accessibility and security.

“Coalition Forces are more than willing to accommodate the local populace in an effort to ensure that legitimate claims are handled in a timely, efficient, and accurate manner,” said Hodge. “Recently the PJCC handled 23 cases involving new filings, additional evidence, payments and denials and disbursed approximately \$23,500,” he added.

When Iraqi's make claims for damages

or injury caused by Coalition Forces, the legal team must investigate their claim. “Each week we gather new claims from Iraqis who claim they have been injured or have had their property damaged by Coalition Forces,” said Capt. Carol Brewer, brigade judge advocate, 4th BCT, 1 CD, of Long Island, N.Y. “The BOLT team gathers evidence to support or deny these claims. If they find support in our records to verify the claim, they can recommend payment, and if it is approved, they will make a payment to

the Iraqi to compensate them for the damage we caused,” she continued.

“When we can not show that the damage was caused by non-combat related actions we (Coalition Forces) must deny the claim,” said Brewer. “These Iraqis are referred to the Mosul Provincial Hall for the Iraqi government officials to address. This is a tool for the command to show the Iraqi people that we are here to help them and make it right when we do cause some injury or damage,” she said.

An example of a claim is when a man was unintentionally shot during an escalation of force, said Hodge. “Coalition Forces were patrolling when anti-Iraqi forces detonated an improvised explosive device attacking the convoy, they also began firing at them. Coalition forces returned fire and in the ensuing firefight a local national was shot and killed by a stray bullet,” said Hodge. “Even though there was no way to determine whether the local national was shot by Coalition forces or anti-Iraqi forces, Coalition forces desired to offer a condolence payment to the family of the deceased.

A payment of 3,700,000 Iraqi Dinar (\$2500 US) was paid to the widow. This payment is not an admission of guilt but rather a gift of money in an effort to lessen the burden of lost income, funeral expenses, and somewhat pain and suffering for the loss.”



## Pressuring Insurgents Makes Baghdad Safer

By Master Sgt. Dave Larsen  
1st Cavalry Division Public Affairs

BAGHDAD – Iraqi Army and coalition force troops cleared and secured a known insurgent hot-bed in the center of the Iraqi capital Jan. 24-25.

Operation Tomahawk Strike 11, led by 1st Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division and supported by Multi-National Division – Baghdad, disrupted insurgent activity on Haifa Street.

“The purpose of the past couple of days in Haifa Street was to disrupt militia-based activity in the area,” said Lt.

Col. Avanus Smiley, commander of the Fort Lewis, Wash.,-based 1st Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division.

“It was an Iraqi Army-planned event there and the purpose of the battalion was to support the Iraqi Army’s plan. Basically, the brigade was designed to go in and re-establish security in the Haifa Street area. My battalion facilitated that effort.”

The Iraqi Army and coalition forces conducted searches thoroughly, providing amplified security in the area. This was the second operation in this troubled section of Baghdad in the past three weeks.

“We’ve had an operation there in the past which was also intended to disrupt militia activity. In between that time, we were able to observe and watch what the militia groups were doing,” Smiley explained. “The Iraqi security forces came forth with a plan and they wanted coalition support. Therefore, we joined them in a combined planning effort and assisted them in the operation to disrupt militia activity and to, basically, reinstate the Iraqi Army presence in the Haifa Street area.”

In all, Operation Tomahawk Strike 11 netted one cache and detained 21 insurgents. No local residents were killed during this operation. Smiley, a native of Stellacome, Wash., said there were two major benefits from the operation beyond the capture of insurgents and munitions.

“First, any insurgent group knows that we will come wherever they are. There are absolutely zero safe havens for them,” he said. “Secondly, I think the Iraqi security forces gain a tremendous amount of confidence after something like this.”

Smiley said with more troops expected to arrive over the coming months, the security situation in the Iraqi capital should improve.

“I think any time we have an opportunity to provide forces to certain parts of Baghdad, that’s nothing but advantageous to security forces on the ground.”

Elements from the 6th Iraqi Army Division remain on Haifa Street and continue to hold the area and provide security patrols. With Operation Tomahawk Strike 11 complete, Smiley said the next step is to keep the pressure on insurgent groups within Baghdad.

“I think we’ll continue to press militia safe havens – those places and keep the pressure up on them in order to stabilize the government of Iraq.”



**Lt. Col. Avanus Smiley, commander of the 1st Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division.**



(Photo by Spc. Shea Butler, 7th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

**Sgt. Kevin McCallum, a native of Aikens, S.C., and Spc. Robert Durham, a native of Phoenix, both with Company C, 1st Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, scan for insurgent out of a window in an abandoned building on Baghdad’s Haifa Street Jan. 24.**

# ‘Tomahawk Strike 11’ Lands on Haifa Street

By Spc. Shea Butler  
7th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

BAGHDAD – The company of Soldiers starts the day before the sun, knowing in the back of their minds that it is going to be a long day full of fire fights with the enemy. As grenades detonate around them and bullets fly by, they target the enemy and engage immediately, proving that “courage is the absence of fear.”

For the second time in the past several weeks, Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division teamed up with Iraqi Army troops to take on insurgents on Haifa Street, in Baghdad’s Karkh district Jan. 24.

The Haifa Street operation, dubbed Operation Tomahawk Strike 11, aimed to disrupt insurgents in order to establish security, said Capt. Isaac Torres, commander, Company C, 1-23 Inf.

The Soldiers started the operation at 3 a.m. when they gathered for pre-combat inspections, received the updated status of the area of operation and piled in their Strykers. They were prepared for a long day. They expected enemy fire.

“We knew we were going to get fired at, and we were ready for it,” said Sgt. Kevin McCallum, a native of Aikens, S.C., with Co. C.

Their assumptions were accurate. It wasn’t long after entering their objective area that the enemy threw grenades. It was continuous from that point on.

“There was pretty much constant firing back and forth

all day with (only a) few slow periods,” McCallum said.

Despite all the noise coming from various weapons being fired, Co. C kept up communication between one another which helped the success of the mission.

“The communication was great. Everyone was relaying information about targeting and identifying the enemy. Some of it was over the radio and some was just yelling back and forth,” McCallum said. Noncommissioned officers communicated to everyone in their sectors of fire, constantly rotating around the building the company had secured. NCOs made sure that Soldiers were staying out of windows and were doing well.

While the NCOs were vigilant, the junior enlisted troops didn’t need much guidance. They have been in similar dangerous fire fights.

“They have all been in enough fire fights to know what is going on,” McCallum said. “They know all the rules of engagement.”

Training is part of what helped these Soldiers through the long day, but adrenaline helped too.

“It was a long day but there was so much adrenaline it made easier,” he said. “We took shots through some windows and adrenaline really kicked in. We immediately got on line, located the enemy and suppressed fire.”

Firing slowed down greatly towards the end of the day. When the smoke cleared, 21 insurgents had been detained and a weapons cache uncovered.

“The mission was a success,” Torres said. “The enemy was greatly disrupted and the Iraqi Army and coalition forces made an impact”

# Rainy Days Welcome, but No Break for Aviators

By Sgt. 1st Class Rick Emert  
1st ACB, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs

TAJI, Iraq – When it rains, the work pours in for the 1st Cavalry Division's 1st Air Cavalry Brigade.

Bad weather may ground the brigade's flights around Baghdad, but the work pace doesn't skip a beat as pilots, crews and mechanics catch up on training and maintenance that is vital to the endurance of the aircraft and, thus, the success of the missions.

The Department of the Army requirement is that 80 percent of the brigade's aircraft are fully-mission capable at any given time, said Chief Warrant Officer 5 Donald Washabaugh, a brigade aviation maintenance officer.

"We measure readiness of the aircraft in terms of hours, not days," said Washabaugh, a native of Collingswood, N.J. "When we have a break in flying (due to weather), we grab hold of that opportunity to work on inspections and maintenance; that increases readiness."

"When there is a weather day, and the aircraft all come down, it gives us a chance to focus on the fleet," said Priest River, Idaho, native Sgt. 1st Class Thomas Kingery, non-commissioned officer in charge of the brigade's aviation maintenance office. "We're busier when it rains. The Soldiers are a little more miserable because they're working in standing water, but they are getting necessary work done to the aircraft."

Because of operational tempo that requires many hours in the air, the aircraft may develop small problems that don't necessarily decrease effectiveness, but can develop into larger problems.

"Think about it like a car," Washabaugh said. "If you are planning a trip, of course you want to make the sure the car is running OK before you depart. If little things break during the trip, like a radio knob, you don't



(Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Rick Emert, 1st ACB, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)

**Sgt. Konata Springer, (left), and Spc. Trent Chelette, perform maintenance on an AH-64D Apache Jan. 13 at Camp Taji, Iraq. Springer, a native of Baltimore and Chelette, who hails from Mechanicsville, Va., are both from Company B, 615th Aviation Support Battalion, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division.**

want to pull over and fix it on the road. You wait until the trip is complete and fix it then. For us, when it rains, these nagging problems with the aircraft can get worked on."

However, since the crews are in the air as much as the aircraft, they can get to the problems that could ground an aircraft for major repairs, but can't really get to those smaller repairs.

"The crews are responsible for maintenance, and if they're always engaged in flights, then they don't have time for their maintenance," Kingery said. "When they can't fly because of weather, they can get to the maintenance issues that have been building up. It's maybe not the same as when they

are up in the air; it's less stressful, but they still get a sense of accomplishment, because they are getting vital work done."

Washabaugh gives all the credit to those maintenance crews.

"Those kids are the backbone of aviation," Washabaugh said. "If they don't function, then none of this works. They are the ones providing combat power; they make sure this brigade flies. We try to convey that to them – how they fit in and how important they are. The fact that they have more time when the aircraft aren't flying to focus on maintenance really prevents this from being a big problem later on."

Meanwhile, the pilots use weather down

days to both catch up on training and eliminate fatigue, which can be as detrimental to a mission as a poorly maintained aircraft.

"There may be changes in procedures that affect the pilots, and when the aircraft can't fly because of weather, the pilots get a chance to refresh their knowledge of those changes," Washabaugh said.

Although the pilots are still working when aircraft are grounded by weather, that work lacks the stress of a combat mission and helps to alleviate fatigue.

"[A down day] doesn't reset the pilots, but it takes the fatigue level out of the overall equation. It is a day with no cockpit stress," Washabaugh said.

## Taji's 'Bunker 182' Aims to Reach a New Generation of Soldiers

By Sgt. Robert Strain  
1st ACB, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – Chaplains from the 1st Cavalry Division's 1st Air Cavalry Brigade aim to instill a good moral foundation for Soldiers here through a new outreach program called "Bunker 182."

Although still in its planning stages, Bunker 182 will be a weekly event open to all Soldiers on Camp Taji. The program offers live music, games, videos and other activities that both reinforce the Army values and build a good moral and spiritual foundation for Soldiers, according to Chap. (Capt.) Ben Clark, the chaplain for the 1st Air Cavalry Brigade's 4th Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment.

The name, Bunker 182, refers to two things: a bunker, something every Soldier can relate to as providing protection, and Psalm 18:2, which reads "The Lord is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge. He is my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold."

Bunker 182 is not a worship service in the traditional sense, but more of a spiritual event aimed primarily at younger Soldiers, said Chap. (Capt.) Michael Fox, the chaplain for the brigade's 3rd Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment.

"There's nothing wrong with the way we do church," Fox said about traditional services. Fox explained that when he looks around at a traditional worship service, whether it is



(Photo by Sgt. Robert Strain, 1st ACB, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)

**Chaplains (Maj.) Charles Causey, for 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, (Capt.) Ben Clark, for 4th Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment chaplain, and. (Capt.) Michael Fox, of the 3rd Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, are behind "Bunker 182," an upcoming outreach program designed to reach younger Soldiers at Camp Taji, Iraq.**

here or at Fort Hood, Texas, he doesn't see a lot of Soldiers between 18 and 25 years old in the congregation.

In order to reach a younger generation of Soldiers, it is important to understand what motivates and influences them, the Brandon, Fla., native said.

Soldiers have a lot of negative influences around them but not a lot of positive ones, said Chap. (Maj.) Charles Causey, the brigade's chaplain, pointing out popular maga-

zines, movies and video games.

The question, Causey said, is how to reach Soldiers who like magazines that objectify women, violent video games and sexually provocative movies.

"We wanted something the common Soldier would be interested in, because they're not interested in getting up on Sunday and going to church," he said.

Causey, a native of Hugo, Minn., said it's not going to be a list of things Soldiers shouldn't do; instead, the program will expose those things for what they really are while providing positive alternatives.

"We want to provide an avenue for Soldiers to have fun, but in a way that's not destructive, a way that enforces the Army values," Causey said.

According to Clark, who hails from Austin, Texas, there will be live music, videos, guest speakers, movie clips and a number of other interactive things for Soldiers to participate in.

The chaplains are focused on developing relationships with the Soldiers to find out how things are going for them. That way, the chaplains will be able to help the Soldiers where they may be struggling in their lives, Fox said.

Causey added that although Bunker 182 will have Christian-based themes, they aren't preaching Christianity to the Soldiers.

Bunker 182 is scheduled to be at Camp Taji's Community Event Center and Theater on Sunday nights starting in February.



(Photo by Sgt. Mike Pryor, 2nd BCT, 82nd Abn. Div. Public Affairs)

## Abandon Ship!

Paratroopers from Company C, 2nd Battalion, 325th Airborne Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, practice emergency exits from their vehicle while training at Camp Taji, Iraq Jan. 24

# 82nd Airborne Commanding General Honors Paratroopers

By Sgt. Mike Pryor  
2nd BCT, 82nd Abn. Div. Public Affairs

BAGHDAD – The 82nd Airborne Division moves so fast and furious that it is sometimes difficult to find time to stop and recognize paratroopers for their achievements.

But finding time to honor troops wasn't a problem for Maj. Gen. David Rodriguez, the 82nd's commander, when he visited paratroopers from the 2nd Brigade Combat Team in Baghdad Jan. 22. In fact, it was his number one priority.

Rodriguez presented 28 medals, including a Bronze Star, to paratroopers from the Falcon Brigade during an awards ceremony Jan. 22.

"I think it's great for us to see that. It's a real morale booster for us to know that the commanding general cares about us," said Staff Sgt. Jason Walden of Chattanooga, Tenn., air operations noncommissioned officer for 2nd Battalion, 319th Airborne Field Artillery Regiment.

Most of the awards went to paratroopers who played key roles in helping the 2nd BCT deploy to Kuwait in January only days after receiving orders.

The Falcons moved more than 3,000 troops and 300 containers of equipment halfway across the world in less than a week.

"No one else in the Army can do that," said Command Sgt. Maj. Thomas Capel, the 82nd's top NCO, who was trav-



(Photo by Sgt. Mike Pryor, 2nd BCT, 82nd Abn. Div. Public Affairs)

**Maj. Gen. David Rodriguez (left), commanding general, 82nd Airborne Division, pins an Army Commendation Medal on the uniform of Capt. Peter Young, the battalion logistical officer for Special Troops Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, during an awards ceremony Jan. 22.**

eling with Rodriguez.

It was hard work to meet the deadlines necessary to deploy an entire brigade on such short notice, said Capt.

Katherine Pelz of Springfield, Ill., operations officer for the 407th Brigade Support Battalion.

"We were working 20-hour days. People were sleeping in their cars," Pelz said.

But after all the hard work, it was great to be recognized by the division commander himself, Pelz said.

The personal attention was especially gratifying, she said, in light of how much responsibility is on Rodriguez' shoulders at the moment: three brigades in combat already and another about to deploy.

"He's a busy man right now," she said.

Rodriguez also presented awards to the cooks from the brigade's dining facility, whose hard work won the facility the prestigious Connelly Award for best DFAC last year.

They were supposed to be recognized for that achievement months ago, but due to the Falcons' operational tempo, there wasn't time.

"We got out the door so fast, we didn't have time to recognize the DFAC," said Col. B. Don Farris, the 2nd BCT's commander.

Most of the cooks had no idea they would be receiving an award, let alone a medal presented by the division commander, said Spc. Bernardo Rios, of San Diego, Calif., a cook with Headquarters Company, Brigade Special Troops Battalion.

But Rios said the ceremony was a welcome surprise.

# Radio Operator Effective Translator for his Platoon

By 1st Lt. Michael Meyers II  
1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment

BAGHDAD – Often, a foreign national who serves in the U.S. military dreams of one day becoming a U.S. citizen. Many speak other languages, a useful skill for the military. Some are currently serving in Iraq as Soldiers providing freedom and security to the people of Iraq.

One of these Soldiers is Pfc. Class Mohamed Omar.

“I just want to listen to the people and hear their issues,” Omar said about serving in the Iraqi capital. “Maybe I can help.”

Omar provides his platoon a unique attribute – he speaks Arabic. He has been on a variety of missions with Company E, 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, which is attached to 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division. Omar, originally from Somalia, left his homeland when he was 16 years old.

He joined the Army in 2005, and has been a valuable asset to his company. Omar serves as his platoon leader’s radio operator and often engages in conversations with the local residents. He listens to their issues and conveys them to his leadership while out on a patrol.

Omar is currently working on his packet to apply for citizenship, and said he’s excited about serving in the U.S. Army.

His profound dedication to his new country, his



(Photo by Cpl. John Androski, 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment)

**Capt. Charles Griswald (left to right), 1st Lt. Michael Meyers and Pfc. Mohamed Omar, all from Company E, 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, attached to 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, meet with Iraqi children during a barrier emplacement operation.**

much-needed native language skill and his enthusiastic approach to the mission in Baghdad equips him, and his platoon, for success.

Omar’s leaders think of him as a “diamond in the rough.” His skills are now being used to effectively communicate important issues to Baghdad residents.



(Photo by Capt. Linwood Hilton, 2nd Bn., 12th Cav. Regt.)

**Sgt. Fay Dantzler (left) and Sgt. Maria Johnson prepare to load up and roll out with Company F, 2nd Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, to conduct joint operations with the Iraqi Army. The female Soldiers go on patrols in order to search suspicious women and children.**

## Unit Shows Why Iraq Needs a Lady’s Touch

By Capt. Linwood Hilton  
2nd Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq - Most infantry Soldiers would be a little surprised to see a female Soldier riding with them in their Bradley fighting vehicle through the streets of Baghdad.

But Soldiers of 2nd Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment, attached to 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, regularly conduct search missions with female Soldiers. The women of the battalion’s Company F are often integrated into the mission just in case local national women or children need to be searched or secured.

Due to current laws and customs, women are not allowed to be ground soldiers for the Iraqi Army. That’s where the women of Co. F come in.

Each team on patrol needs a woman on hand in order to deal with Iraqi women and children without upsetting the Iraqis cultural beliefs.

In addition to searching and securing people, the armor-clad women are also able to contribute to the education of the Iraqi troops.

“Our job right now is primarily to oversee the Iraqi Army and to guide them,” says Sgt. Tory Viveros, one of the female search team leaders.

Their most recent mission was to find any evidence of insurgent activity or any other suspicious activities, and also look for caches of AK-47’s, grenades and mortars. During the last three missions, search teams have uncovered two large arms caches, several roadside bomb building kits and detained five suspects for processing and questioning.

The job may be tough but these female troops aren’t complaining.

“I think most Soldiers can agree that they don’t want to be out there, but once you’re out, it’s fun because of the adrenaline rush. It’s exciting and dangerous at the same time,” said Sgt. Maria Johnson, who assisted in finding a hidden roadside bomb construction lab.

The feeling must be quite common because Pfc. Bobbie Hallahan commented, “We are here as female searchers providing support for the Iraqi Army. I was only scared for the first two minutes, but after that... It was hard work. I’m not going to lie. It wore me out, but it was fun and a good experience.”

On many missions, women dismount with their male counterparts and go into a location after it is cleared. The women search team troops of Co. F remain vigilant and ready for the call to assist the battalion day in, and day out.

“In the end, we are all combat arms Soldiers and have to do what needs to be done to get the mission accomplished,” said Sgt. Fay Dantzler, another member of the search team.



(Photo by Sgt. Richard Kolberg, 1st Battalion, 7th Field Artillery Regiment)

## Woof, I Found Something

**Air Force Staff Sgt. Ian Spivey and his military working dog, Rex, help to search vehicles at a Baghdad traffic control point with members of Battery C, 1st Battalion, 7th Field Artillery Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division.**

# Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Life, Teachings Honored

By Sgt. Lance Wail  
2nd BCT, 1st Inf. Div. Public Affairs

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq—"A day on, not a day off—it not only causes us to reflect, to remember, and to honor Dr. King for his many accomplishments, but it reminds us that the struggle still continues today."

Those are the words of Sgt. Maj. Rodney Gilchrist, the command paralegal noncommissioned officer for Multi-National Division - Baghdad, and keynote speaker for a service celebrating Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s life at the Engineer Chapel her Jan. 15.

"There have been enormous strides made in the areas of civil rights and equality for minorities," Gilchrist said. "We still have a long, long ways to go, even in America."

He drew in the audience by explaining that what we are doing here in Iraq is helping with the dream of working together to better humanity. Our sacrifices and effort in helping people in this country, with differing racial and ethnic backgrounds, is exactly what we are doing.

"Although you might not be able to fully enjoy it here, you still have reason to stop, to remember, and to celebrate what Dr. King and his dream stood for," Gilchrist said, pointing out troops in the front row at the event.

"(Today we) sit in the in the same room, or even at the same table, but (this) does not mean we are engaged in effective dialog," Gilchrist continued. He described how the situation in Iraq is in some ways similar to

times during Dr. King's lifetime. "In order to keep on, we need to do what Dr. King did, first and foremost: have faith. Dr. King was first, and foremost, a man of faith; a deep abiding faith. It was his faith in God that pushed him to believe that good, not only could, but would always eventually overcome evil."

Troops in attendance reflected on King's teachings.

"I used to learn [about Dr. King's struggle] in history class in school. To learn more now was motivating, I was captivated during the whole speech," said Pfc. Johnny Gasaway, a member of Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment from Angleton, Texas. He said he left with new understanding and that the style was a "unique way of preaching."

Spc. Roberta Lathan said she enjoyed the service, and found it made her want to start going to church more. Lathan, who calls Miami, Fla. home, is assigned to Company C, 101 Military Intelligence Battalion. She said Gilchrist's speech was spiritually moving and motivating.

"The presentation was great," agreed Spc. Courtney Tyus, a member of Headquarters Company, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division from Selma, Ala.. "It helped me to become more open, and to recognize that racism has greatly improved but is still there."

At the end of the service, Gilchrist asked that instead of resting on what others have done in the past, Soldiers should step up and makes a difference today. Even the smallest things make a difference, he said.



(Photo by Sgt. Lance Wail, 2nd BCT, 1st Inf. Div. Public Affairs)


Sgt. Maj. Rodney Gilchrist, a command paralegal for Multi-National Division - Baghdad, gives the keynote address at a commemorative service honoring Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in the Engineer Chapel on Camp Liberty, Iraq Jan. 15.




(Photo by Pfc. M. Benjamin Gable, 7th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

## Celebrating a King

Multi-National Division- Baghdad Soldiers laugh while performing a skit teaching tolerance during the celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday at the 1st Cavalry Division Chapel on Camp Liberty, Iraq Jan. 15.



**OPERATION IRAQI  
FREEDOM**



### DON'T GET BURNED

USE A LITTLE MATH TO DETERMINE IF  
YOUR POWER STRIP IS OVERLOADED

Power strips are rated in amps. Most power strips are rated between 10 and 15 amps. To determine if your power strip is overloaded, you first must know how much current (amps) your equipment requires. Equipment power requirements can usually be found on the data plate.

EXAMPLE

Power Strip (10 amps) plugged into: refrigerator (3 amps) + coffee maker (3 amps) + microwave (3 amps) + printer (1 amp) + shredder (5 amps) = **OVERLOAD = FIRE**

How to determine power, voltage or current

Power (watts) = Current (amps) x Voltage (volts)

Voltage (volts) =  $\frac{\text{Power (watts)}}{\text{Current (amps)}}$

Current (amps) =  $\frac{\text{Power (watts)}}{\text{Voltage (volts)}}$

LEARN NOT TO BURN

**History Made****Cav Leader Reaches Families Via Satellite**

By Amanda Kim Stairrett  
Killeen Daily Herald

FORT HOOD, Texas — Though he was in Baghdad, Brig. Gen. Vincent K. Brooks showed up at the 1st Cavalry Division's monthly town hall meeting just as scheduled — nine hours ahead of time if you really want to get technical.

Shortly after 6:45 p.m. here — or 3:45 a.m., yesterday in Baghdad — the 1st Cavalry and Multinational Division-Baghdad's deputy commander for support, appeared on three giant screens at the Fort Hood Catering and Conference Center to answer questions from the more than 400 family members and rear command soldiers in attendance.

This was the first-ever live feed from a senior leader to a group of families, and Sgt. Colby Hauser, a division spokesman, said that the Army wants live feeds like last night's to be a standard for informing family members.

The last time families heard from a senior commander, it was in a taped holiday message from Maj. Gen. Joseph F. Fil Jr., the division's commander, at the December gathering.

The live feed went really well, Hauser said after Brooks disappeared from the screens and the town hall meeting went on with its regular activities.

"We're thrilled to be able to bring the leaders forward (in Iraq) back to families so they don't have to rely on national news," Hauser said.

In his session with the crowd, Brooks gave an update on operations that the Multinational Division-Baghdad soldiers were engaged in, including training of Iraqi troops and the handover of a province back to the Iraqi security forces. He spoke about the Soldiers' morale, saying they were pleased with their facilities and that, for reasons he couldn't explain, morale was highest in units at the smallest, most remote posts.

He thanked families, saying that he was proud of the strength and toughness they have shown during the deployment.

"We are honored to fight with people like you," he said.

He added that people in the surrounding communities can help the soldiers by keeping in contact with each other and spreading the word about what is really going on in Iraq. He urged people to keep perspective on what is happening in the country and not hang on every news of violence because "things are actually going better than they appear."

"Keep up confidence," he added. "Keep up hope."

Hauser said the live meeting was also a hit with the lead-



(Photo by Spc. William Grove, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)

**1st Cavalry Division family members watch a live video feed from Baghdad during the division's Town Hall meeting at the Fort Hood Catering and Conference Center Jan. 25. More than 400 Soldiers and family members gathered to see the first live feed from the division's leadership in Baghdad.**

ers in Iraq.

"Baghdad was pretty much ecstatic over the event," he said.

The families were, too. When Brooks first appeared on the screens, a cheer erupted through the room. After he left, Col. Larry Phelps, the division's rear commander, asked the families what they thought. The success was obvious as the even louder cheers and applause rang through the building.

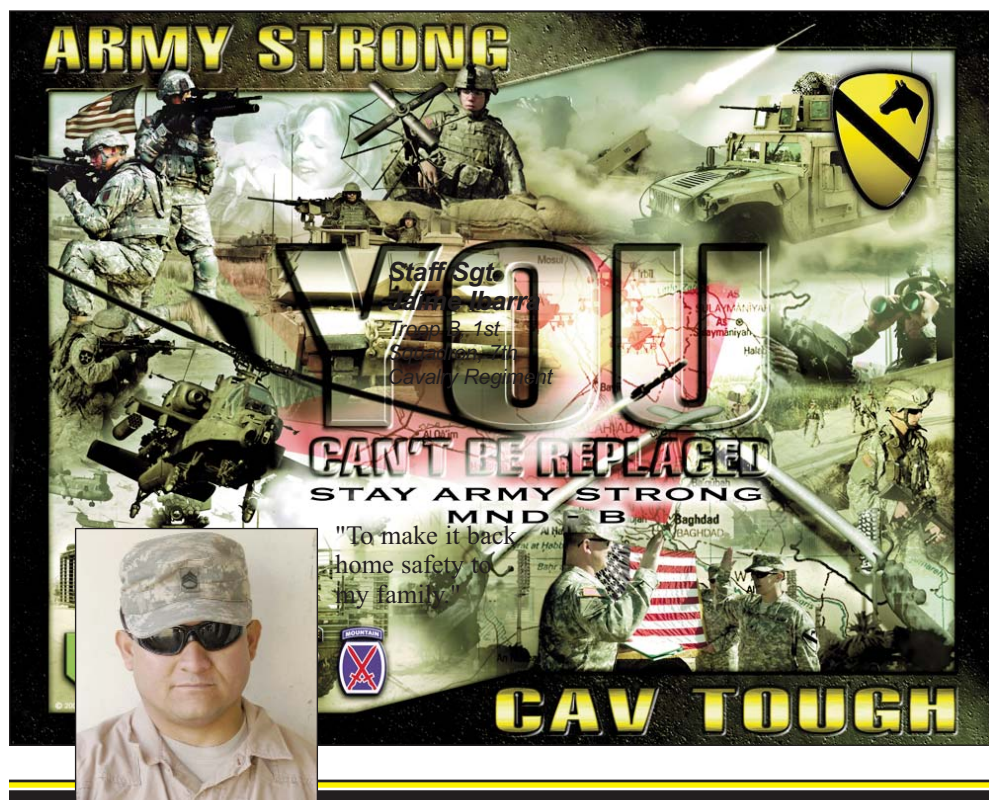
It is good for the families to see a face and hear a little bit about day-to-day life in Iraq, said Bonnie Sutherland, wife of Col. David Sutherland, commander of the 3rd Brigade Combat Team. They can't see the kind of lives the soldiers

are living during their deployment, she said, and insights from folks like Brooks help.

"I'm so happy it worked," she said of the live feed. "It was a good morale booster."

The town hall meetings, which the rear command began even before the division deployed, are successful, Sutherland said, and that is evidenced by the crowd that grows every month.

When the "monthly Cav pep rallies," as Phelps called them, started, Sutherland said some thought they would become large-scale gripe sessions. Instead, she added, families leave feeling uplifted.



# 'First Team' Soldiers Entertained by 'Raw Material'

By Spc. Ryan Stroud  
3rd BCT, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs

MUQDADIYA, Iraq - Sounds of rock, pop and rhythm and blues music filled the cold Iraqi night sky as Soldiers from the 6-9 Armored Reconnaissance Squadron, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, crammed into a small chapel for a night of music provided by the 389th Army Material Command Band, 'Raw Material,' Jan. 14.

The band made the stop at Forward Operating Base Normandy, in the Diyala province in Iraq, during their tour to provide entertainment to the Soldiers who's FOBs are not normally visited by entertainment guest.

"We have deployed many times and have noticed that many FOBs are not getting any musicians or entertainers," said Staff Sgt. Daniel Moyer, Raw Material's non-commissioned officer in charge.

"The big entertainers go to the big areas, such as FOB Anaconda and Bagdad, and we wanted to go to smaller FOBs and bring entertainment to those who might not get the chance to see those acts," he added.

The band, who specializes in many different styles of music, performed a long set of cover songs from some of today's top artist like Christina Aguilera and Kelly Clarkson, along with rock songs from harder bands, such as Rage Against the Machine.

"This time around, we wanted to do some harder material," continued Moyer. "We've covered Rage Against the Machine and Drowning Pool, but we also have been performing old R&B like Tina Turner and Chaka Chan."

"Our set-list evolves from what we think the Soldiers want to hear in the field and from our own personal musical backgrounds," said Sgt. Joseph Krafft, 389th AMC. "Since we have people who like different types of music, we all influence the set-list in different ways."

"A lot of what our group performs also depends on the vocal styling's we have to work with from our singers," added Moyer. "We try to integrate as many genres of music into our set. We are a multi-functioning band. We perform concerts, ceremonies and some of us break off to form jazz combos and other entertainment group."

Raw Material, who consists of percussion, brass, keyboards and electric guitars, played for hours to a crowd of dancing Soldiers. Their mission to entertain and raise the morale of the Soldiers was achieved.

"It was entertaining," said Pfc. Lucas Shawgo,



(Photo by Chaplain (Capt.) Soon Jung, 6-9 Armored Reconnaissance Squadron, 3rd BCT, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)

Members of the band, "Raw Material," entertain the Soldiers of the 6-9 Armored Reconnaissance Squadron, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, as they crammed into a small chapel for a night of music, Jan. 14.

Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 6-9 ARS. "It brought some needed morale out here and people were having a decent time relaxing and dancing. It was pretty good."

"It was nice to see entertainment at a small FOB," said Pfc. John Thomas, HHT, 6-9. "It seems like bigger FOBs always get the visitors so it was nice to have someone come out here and be recognized."

Both Soldiers agreed they liked that Raw Material mixed up their set-list, contributing different styles for different people.

"I liked that they mixed it up a lot," said Thomas. "They had something for everyone."

"I think it was pretty good that they played an assortment of music," added Shawgo. "Not everyone likes the same

thing but they played something for everyone."

Both Moyer and Krafft said playing for the Soldiers is always a pleasure and one of the most fulfilling parts of their jobs.

"Coming out here and playing for those Soldiers who are out there everyday on convoys or conducting raids; it's a great feeling," Moyer said. "Just to see them having fun, smiling and letting go a bit, it make the whole band feel great."

"This is the most important and most satisfying part of our job," said Krafft.

"Coming out here and providing entertainment for those who are out on the front lines, it feels good. This is the best part of what we do," he added.

## Everyone Can Find Their Mr. Right in the Movies

Happily ever after.

We have heard that phrase a thousand times, but I think only girls fantasize about it. I have never seen a little boy with a slip on his head like a wedding veil talking about his Mrs. Right, and if he did he would be forever teased by his testosterone-driven peers. I think they would rather be crushing Mom's flowers with their toy dump truck instead of talking about the perfect girl.

Girls, on the other hand, have the pleasure, or more accurately, disdain of being of being brainwashed from birth by Disney® movies. Cinderella, Snow White, Belle, Sleeping Beauty – they all have one thing in common... Prince Charming. What is so great about this guy? I don't think he is all that handsome. Apparently, he is the one who holds the key to happily ever after.

So here is how it works, 1) get cursed by an evil witch... you know, eat an apple or prick a finger, 2) find Prince Charming, 3) get hitched and then 4) poof... happily ever

### Random Reviews

Sgt. Nicole Kojetin



after.

Or... You can just watch a movie to get that warm and fuzzy feeling that comes with it. (If you haven't noticed, I have recessed back into chick-flick mode. The next column will be manlier with more explosions for my artillery buddies. I promise.)

The perfect movie for this warm fuzzy feeling is Focus Feature's *Pride and Prejudice*, a witty tale based on the American classic 19th century novel with the same name written by Jane Austen.

Our heroin, Elizabeth Bennet, portrayed

by Keira Knightly, is this adorable, sassy young woman who isn't shy about giving her opinion.

She is also the second of five girls and her mom is anxious to get them all off and married before they no longer have a house over their head.

Her eventual Mr. Right is Mr. Darcy, played by gorgeous British actor Matthew Macfadyen. He is the strong, stubborn type, who is a little too quick to judge and disgustingly rich. (If there is such a thing.)

Their tale is one of many speed bumps. It starts on the night they first met; with her overhearing him say that she was "barely tolerable." It was at that point that she vowed to despise him for the rest of her life. Not exactly the right way to start a blooming relationship.

Elizabeth finds out other despicable things about him, like him breaking up the possible marriage of his smitten best friend with her sister and disowning one of his life-

long friends because of finances. After she has all the above information about him, she really doesn't like him.

This brings us to one of the best parts of the movie. It is pouring buckets of rain and Mr. Darcy follows her and pops the question. Basically, telling her that despite the fact that he is of much better rank and stature he still wants to marry her. Instead of being honored, Lizzy is insulted and yells at him. (You go girl!)

The question still hangs in the air, as she learns piece by piece that she has misjudged him.

And eventually... poof happily ever after.

I love this movie. I think I have watched it three times in the past month.

Boys, keep this one on your list. It is a fantastic date movie.

Every girl wants to meet their Mr. Right, watch this movie with her when you get home and she will think she already has.

# Love for Hoops Unites Basketball Champs

By Sgt. Jon Cupp  
1st BCT, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – They're not related, and they all come from different backgrounds, but the players on the 1st Cavalry Division's 1st Brigade Special Troops Battalion women's basketball team here are sisters in a sense—part of the larger Army family on and off the basketball court.

With nearly three months in country, this "family" has won three consecutive, four-on-four, Camp Taji basketball tournaments.

Most recently, they won the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day tournament, played Jan. 15 in the main gym.

A common love of basketball brought the team together on Fort Hood, Texas prior to deploying to Iraq, and the team has a special chemistry said Sgt. Gloria Jackson, team member and a unit supply specialist for Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Brigade Special Troops Battalion.

"We just put something together and ran with it, and it is fun playing with the same people you play with all the time," said Jackson, a native of Florence, S.C., who played on the all-Army basketball team for two years. "We know each other's moves and understand how to work with each other. We have a lot of cohesion on the court."

"Everybody on the team has strong points, and we all work to build up each other in areas where we may be weak," said Pfc. Shusila Savea, also a unit supply specialist with HHC and a native of Tafuna Fagaima, American Samoa.

In the Morale Welfare and Recreation-sponsored four-on-four basketball tournaments, game time is limited so that all of the teams have the opportunity to play. The team that scores 21 points first, wins the single elimination matches.

The team has easily demolished most of their opponents, tallying the 21 points quickly, but their most recent victory against the 15th Sustainment Brigade was hard won, they said. Their opponents held to a 14 to 7 lead nearly until the end.

"That was the first time we've played all down, and we knew we had to pick it up," said Sgt. Roshanne Peters, a multi-channel transmission operator from Company B, 1st BSTB and a native of Houma, La..

"Picking it up" involved a quick succession of two-pointers and a few free throws. A late three-pointer by Savea



(Photo by Sgt. Jon Cupp, 1st BCT, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)  
**With a 15th Sustainment Brigade player on her heels, Sgt. Roshanne Peters, a multi-channel system transmission operator for Company B, 1st Brigade Special Troops Battalion dribbles a ball down the court Jan. 15 during a four on four women's basketball tournament on Camp Taji, Iraq.**

helped synch the win. Their efforts resulted in a 22-16 rout for the team.

"We came out a little shaky in the groove, but started pulling together, looking at the other team's strategies, seeing where they were weak and that's how we got the win," Peters said.

The five players who make up the team, including one player who is not in the 1st BSTB, said they all feel a special bond toward each other and that no one player is more important than another.

"Everyone has contributed to our success, it wasn't just

any one player, and I think as a team, we're the best," said Spc. Sharday Anderson, a food service specialist from Company E, 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment and a native of Murphysboro, Ill.

When not at work, the team can often be seen playing basketball at the gym even when not participating in a tournament.

"It's a good experience playing together and it serves as a great outlet for relieving stress, especially while we're deployed to Iraq," said Savea.

The team members said their first tastes of basketball began at early ages ranging from age five to age eight, and although they laugh and poke fun prior to their games, they said once the coin toss has taken place and the game begins—everyone gets serious.

For the team, basketball is something they said is a lifestyle they hope one day may lead to careers in the Women's National Basketball Association.

"Playing All-Army was a good experience because it allowed me to play at another level," said Jackson, who was one of the star players on her high school basketball team, and once dreamed of playing college ball. "Even if I get my college education in the military, I'll still try out for the WNBA."

Pfc. Frantreshia Miller, a cable systems installer and maintainer with Co. B, 1st BSTB echoed sentiments.

"I'm hoping to go all-Army because it may open the door for me to go pro," said Miller. "If I get out of the Army, I've also thought about trying out for college basketball and the all-Army team would be a stepping stone for that as well."

Miller, a native of Kellyton, Ala., added that if she played at the college level, her dream would be to play for coach Pat Summit and the University of Tennessee's Lady Volunteers, which has been hailed as one of the best women's teams in the National Collegiate Athletic Association.

Anderson, Savea and Peters said they also have dreams of making it to the all-Army team, playing on a college level and then striking out in the WNBA.

Citing role models ranging from Carl Malone to Michael Jordan as their influences in pursuit of their hoop dreams, these five young women stated that they are looking toward the future with optimism.

"We're going to continue being winners," said Savea.

## Black History Made in February, Diversity a hit in NFL

February is Black History Month, celebrated in the United States and within the Department of Defense the world over. Black history was also made in early February when the Indianapolis Colts take on the Chicago Bears in this year's Super Bowl Feb. 4 in Miami.

Both Tony Dungy and Lovie Smith make history by becoming the first African-Americans to coach a Super Bowl team. One of them will make history again by becoming the first winning African-American Super Bowl head coach. At press time for this column, the game is nearly two weeks away. When the paper hits the streets, we'll have a winner.

Way back in the Dec. 11 edition of Crossed Sabers, this columnist correctly predicted the Colts winning the AFC title with Nostradamus-like precision. (I also gave several good reasons why the Bears would choke at home – again – and fail to get to the Mecca of professional football. Nobody's perfect.)

Still, my pick to win it all this year, even

### Trigger Pull

Master Sgt.  
Dave Larsen



BEFORE the playoffs began was the Indianapolis Colts. Not to blow my own horn, but here's my reasons for picking Indy, in case you missed it:

*'Payton Manning may not throw 50 touchdowns passes this year, yet he's been nearly flawless through 10 games (at the time of this writing), tossing 20 TDs to only five interceptions as the Indianapolis Colts have matched the Bears with a 9-1 record of their own.'*

*There was some concern in Indy in the off-season that head coach Tony Dungy might take a year off following the tragic loss of his oldest son, but in the wake of that*

*tragedy and their collapse against the Steelers in the playoffs last season, the Colts appear to be a team on a mission – destined for greatness.*

*Known as a defensive guru for years, Dungy now rides herd on one of the most potent offenses ever seen, led by a shoo-in hall of fame quarterback.*

*I'm rooting for the Colts, who thus far have only lost once – to the Dallas Cowboys. Come playoff time, they won't lose again.'*

How's THAT for prophetic?! OK, so I took the front-runner (at the time). By the end of the season, the Colts had dropped a couple more games and gave home-field advantage away to the San Diego Chargers.

This year's Super Bowl match-up is indeed historic.

The Bears haven't been to the big game since "Iron Mike" Ditka, Walter "Sweetness" Payton and William "The Fridge" Perry shuffled off to Chi-town.

The Colts? Please! They haven't won a title since they left Baltimore.

Besides the head coaches making color-

barrier-breaking history, the real story line to play out of this contest lies with the quarterbacks.

Rex Grossman, despite going 13-3, keeps getting second-guessed, even by the home town fans.

He's under-appreciated for a guy who doesn't do anything – but win.

Peyton Manning probably even has more pressure heading into Miami. Until guiding the comeback against New England, he's never won a big game. Yet, Manning possesses hall of fame talent and a receiving corps everyone drools over.

Chicago's defense is the best in the league this year. They're not good enough to stop Indy's race to a title. My prediction: Colts 24, Bears 10.

A final note: the question of race never even enters my mind when it comes to predicting success, or failure, of a particular team or sporting event. Someday, maybe we'll all be judged by our character and not by our color. History will be made Feb. 4. Someday, maybe it won't matter.