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RAIDERS DOWN RANGE



Volume 1 Issue 9

Diary of the Soldiers of the 1st Brigade Combat Team

August 15, 2005

Raiders turn FOB Dagger over to IA

Spc. Jimmy D. Lane Jr.
1st BCT PAO

TIKRIT, Iraq-Forward Operating Base Dagger was officially handed over to the 4th Iraqi Army Division by the 1st Brigade Combat Team during a ceremony there August 14.

"This is actually a pretty historic event," said Maj. Robert M. Butts, executive officer for the 1/3 Brigade Troops Battalion. "This FOB was actually first set up by the 4th Infantry Division. They set up their base of operations here after OIF 1. This is the same place elements of the 4th Inf. Div. were stationed when they caught Saddam Hussein. It's one of Saddam's palaces being given back to the Iraqi people."

"We are proud to take this step toward taking control of the security of our country," said an Iraqi officer who wished to remain anonymous. "We will prove we are capable of this mission."

Before handing over FOB Dagger, Soldiers of 1st BCT who were living there had to coordinate moving their headquarters and moving the Iraqi Soldiers into the installation. It turned out to be a big project, and both sides ran into hurdles during the move.

"The biggest problem has been communications with the Iraqis," Butts said. "They are a division coming from a long way away, and we are a brigade that hasn't really had much interaction with them. We had to work



Spc. Jimmy D. Lane Jr.

Iraqi Soldiers look up at their national flag and render a salute during a Transfer of Ownership ceremony at FOB Dagger Aug 14.

through their Military Transition team to conduct operations."

Another Iraqi officer who wished to remain anonymous said the 4th IA Div. is comprised of mostly Kurds, and there were some concerns about moving to a predominantly Sunni region. He said the placement of the Kurdish troops would prove Iraq was becoming a unified nation.

Soldiers of 1st BCT were relocated to Forward

Operating Base Speicher, which is on the north side of Tikrit. Butts said the move was a good show of the Coalition Forces' effort to turn Iraq over to the Iraqis.

"1st Brigade moved to another FOB in Tikrit, and we are going to continue operations from there," Butts said. "The main reason we moved there was to make way for the Iraqis. I think it's bad for us to be staying in the palaces, because they are symbols of Saddam's oppression of the Iraqi people. It's better that we leave and turn them over to the Iraqis."

"The passing of this facility is a simple but solemn ceremony that vividly demonstrates the Coalition's and the Iraqi Army's commitment to the future of Iraq," said Col. Mark E. McKnight, 1st BCT commander. "This is the second base we've turned over in about three weeks. We will turn over...two more bases before the new year. It's a very good day, as we see more Iraqi flags flying over the bases."

Among those who attended were Iraqi press from Baghdad, Salah ad Din provincial leaders, 42nd Infantry Division commander Maj. Gen. Joseph Taluto and 4th IA Div. commander Maj. Gen. Abdilaziz Abdulrahman Almufti.

Soldiers go to the streets to win hearts and minds

Spc. Jimmy D. Lane Jr.
1st BCT PAO

FOB SUMMERALL, Iraq-Soldiers of Company B, 1st Battalion, 103rd Armor Regiment take a hands on approach to the mission to battle insurgents by conducting dismounted patrols. By doing these patrols, Soldiers are able to get out in the street and talk to the people.

"The dismounted patrols usually entail information gathering, information passing; you get to meet people, sheiks from towns, things of that nature," said 1st Lt. Matthew Giblin a platoon leader for Co. B, 1/103rd Armor from Bolivar, N.Y. "Other times it's to conduct a raid or possibly just a presence patrol within a village. We don't have a whole lot of information on the ground in Iraq, and it's the best way to get information. It real-



Staff Sgt. John Kintz watches rooftops for snipers while on a patrol Aug 4.

ly helps out when we need to have intelligence on the enemy, because no one knows them better than themselves."

The Soldiers believe the patrols are important to the overall mission here because they put the Soldiers in touch with the Iraqi people. In turn the Iraqis feel safer in their communities.

"The importance of the dismounted patrols is that we make our presence known out in these towns," said Sgt. Ed Stoker, a platoon medic for Co. B, 1/103rd Armor from Pittsburgh, Pa. "We're here to let these people know that we're here to protect them, provide them with some sense of security and try to get them to cooperate with us and their new Iraqi government."

While the Soldiers believe most of the people are friendly, they can't get too comfortable in their environment, as the threat of enemy attack is always there.

"One of the challenges is there may be crowding, and you're trying to make sure there's no (anti-Iraqi) forces out there," said Spc. Larry Hovanis, a driver for Co. B, 1/103rd Armor from Northern Cambria, Pa. "I always thought I was going to be nervous, you know, watching over my back to see when the AIF was going to attack, but you really don't watch out for that too often because you know you're in a friendly environment. It is in the back of your mind to watch out for that kind of stuff, but you don't think about it all the time."

"There are a lot of people," Stoker said. "You try to be friendly... but at the same time you have to be on your guard

because you don't know who you can trust out there. You don't want to become too emotionally involved with any certain person. You might forget what you're doing and miss something that might jeopardize yourself or the other guys in the platoon."

For the most part, the Soldiers enjoy spending time among the Iraqis, especially the children. There are some hurdles, but a bond exists between the Soldiers and the Iraqis in the towns they visit.

"One of the really cool things is when we go into the little villages when we're doing our (Iraqi Police) training and the kids come over and we're sitting there talking to the kids," Hovanis said. "It's kind of tough, because they're speaking Arabic and we're speaking English, but somehow there's a relationship there. They welcome the Americans to be there."

Stoker said there are up and down days while out on the patrols, but in the bigger scheme of things he believes he is making a difference. He said he hopes he is winning hearts and minds while doing his work, and at the same time is giving



Photos by Spc. Jimmy D. Lane Jr.

Soldiers of Co. B, 1/103rd Armor walk through a market place in Ash Sharqat to meet a group of Iraqi engineers August 4.

the insurgency a bad name.

"Some days it's pretty boring other days it's interesting when you're going through the towns and villages," Stoker said. "(They need) to think less about the anti-Iraqi forces out there and what they are trying to do to them and how they're trying to destabilize the new Iraqi government. We want them to have a good sense of security about where they are living and what their life is going to be like."

"I know we work hard, we're constantly on the go, we hope what we're doing here is going to help better their lives," he continued. "We don't always see the results up front, but down the road... you will hope you can say you contributed to society on a larger scale and had an effect on how the world is going today."

Lane Down Range

Reasons why vegetables can never sleep

Spc. Jimmy D. Lane Jr.
1st BCT PAO

When I was back at Fort Stewart, I didn't really have a hard time waking up. It was like I had an internal alarm clock. Even when my external alarm clock didn't work, I would still always wake up an hour before I had to be somewhere.

Since coming to Iraq, I have had a hard time waking up and going to sleep. Like many other Soldiers, I sit up at night and watch movies, play games or frequent the Morale, Recreation and Welfare center. I think that a chaotic work schedule lends to a chaotic lifestyle.

I have tried to live normally. We find the time to do physical training two or three times a week. On those days, I usually am able to fall fast asleep.

I try to talk myself into going to the gym, running a few times a week, or just doing something besides going into a vegetative state as soon as I leave work. In an environment where so much is expected of a Soldier, it is hard to motivate myself to do extracurricular physi-

cal activities.

I did go to the gym on a regular basis for about four months during the deployment. Then I went on the road, and after running around with the tankers all day every day, I was too tired to go to the gym.

I believe as Soldiers, we harbor a certain amount of self pity, and think that after a hard day's work we are entitled to self indulgence. We aren't on mission, so why not take our personal time to make ourselves feel good?

One reason is that the things we do to make ourselves feel good are usually not good for us. Eating rich foods and laying around any chance we get can distract us from mission readiness.

I have felt that way too often; let me off of work so I can disappear. After being released, I don't want to see my boss or have anything to do with work. Some Soldiers like to take pictures. After being responsible for taking official photographs all day long, I hide my camera and distance myself from it.

I know this is wrong, and I need to do



things that are better for myself. Eating too much, laying around and just opening myself up to every indulgence has got to stop. The lifestyle I and many other Soldiers are leading over here is taking a toll on our bodies and minds.

I keep saying I will work out tomorrow. I say that almost every day. Tomorrow hasn't come yet. I think what I need to do is go work out today, and every day. I will feel better about myself, and I will be able to get a good night's rest after doing so.

Someone who believed they were wise told me you should never take leisure time in the same place you sleep, because it makes it hard to fall asleep if you have been in bed all day. You should really stay out of your room until you are ready to pass out. I have yet to test that

theory, because I get off of work and immediately chill out in my rack. I watch the hours go by, and for some reason can't fall asleep until one or two in the morning. I know I have to get up in five or six hours, but I still can't bring myself to go to sleep. I lay awake, my mind racing with thoughts. I have a hard time clearing my head, because I am not physically or mentally tired.

I am going to get myself to that point today. I am going to work my mind and my body until I am ready to pass out. I know that after I do that for awhile, my body will continue to adjust until I not only have a clear conscience, but am pleased with the results of the work I put in. If you stay in a sedentary state, I don't see how your body can be tired. In other words, if you rest all day, how are you going to be able to rest at night?

I will still find time to chill in my rack. Hopefully I will not find too much time. I know many people who want to do the same. After exhausting myself, maybe I can get a good night's sleep.

Chaplain's Corner

Top ten ways to be a better, more effective Soldier

Chaplain Mark Nordstrom
1st BCT Chaplain

I'd like to address myself to Soldiers and their leaders in this edition. As our mission grows more challenging, it's good to remind ourselves it is the caliber of individual leaders and Soldiers that will secure success for us.

This is a list of lessons I've learned as an Army Chaplain. They are all linked in one way or another, to our profession as Soldiers. I offer them to you here as a sort of 'azimuth check' (a way Soldiers have of saying they are making sure they are going in the right direction).

I don't live up to all of these every day, but they serve to help me know if I'm swerving off of the straight and narrow.

1. Set the example. Be competent in everything you do: physically, morally, and professionally. Live the Army values. Earn the tab every day. Never give up.



2. It's all about getting better every day. Remember to borrow wisdom. Ask questions. Never think you know it all.

3. Develop the best trained, best led Soldiers and unit, able to execute any task assigned.

4. Never stop studying your profession and the people in it.

5. Take personal responsibility for everything in your command. Always ask yourself, "What am I doing wrong?"

6. Understand that everything is linked. "It's all a piece." What you do in one area of your life or profession has an impact on the other.

7. Always seek to serve others. Empower subordinate commanders and junior leaders and NCOs. Promote the best. Anything less is abuse of Soldiers.

8. Trust and train your commanders and staff. Every situation is a training event. Use it to prepare them for

the next level of responsibility.

9. Love Soldiers most of all. Believe in them. If they aren't performing, they are not being led.

10. Laugh at yourself. Have fun, keep your friends and don't expect more than you've already got. Be surprised when you get promoted.

11. It's all in FM 1. The Bible is the one absolute source which guides us in every area of life and our profession.

12. Be gracious with mistakes and shortcomings. Which one of us has not been guilty of failing to live up to Army standards?

There, that's a top ten list you can live with. Did I say "ten?" I gave you twelve. Two for free. And here's one more to make it a baker's dozen:

13. Keep your priorities: God, family and the Army. You will retire one day, or get out of the Army. If you still have your family, you're rich. If you still walk with God, you're blessed.

May God richly bless you.



Bird of the sun...

An Apache AH-60 helicopter passes underneath the Iraqi sun in the heat of the day while supporting the 103rd Engineers.

Spc. Jimmy D. Lane Jr.

Use the five C's to secure an IED site.

Confirm : the device
Clear : the area
Call : EOD
Cordon : the perimeter
Control : site access



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42ID Commander
Maj. Gen. Joseph J. Taluto
3ID Commander
Maj. Gen. William G. Webster
1st Bde. Commander
Col. Mark E. McKnight

1st BCT PAO
Maj. Rich Bartoszuk
1st BCT Public Affairs NCOIC
Staff Sgt. Thomas Mills
Editor
Spc. Jimmy D. Lane Jr.

Engineers look for IED to make the roads safe



Photos by Spc. Jimmy D. Lane Jr.

An Apache AH-64 helicopter flies over a spot on the highway where Co.C, 103rd Engineers and civilian security forces stopped to look at a hole in the road where they think insurgents were digging to place an IED. The engineers cruise the roads daily looking for IEDs and anything else that may prove to be a threat.

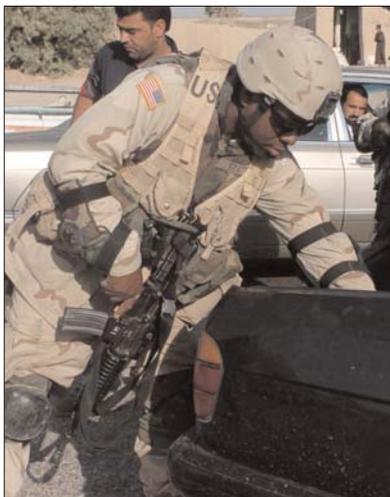
Spc. Jimmy D. Lane Jr.
1st BCT PAO

FOB SUMMERALL, Iraq—Improvised explosive devices kill more Soldiers in Iraq than any other weapon. Soldiers are constantly on the road making it safe for travel and much needed supplies brought in by combat logistics patrols. Soldiers of Company C, 103rd Engineers patrol the roads in and around Forward Operating Base Summerall at least twice a day, looking for signs of IEDs.

“Our main mission is route clearance,” said Spc. Justin Schumm, a team leader for Co. C, 103rd Engineers. “We clear all the main supply routes. We’re looking for IEDs, (vehicle borne improvised explosive devices), possible ambush points, anything like that.”

“We’re an engineer company, so we pretty much have to make sure all the routes are clear for all the logistical convoys coming through to supply all the FOBs,” said Staff Sgt. Matthew Beatty, who is from Philadelphia, Pa and a squad leader for Co. C, 103rd Engineers. “Our job is pretty dangerous. We clear the road of IEDs, the roadside bombs that are meant to interfere with those deliveries.”

The insurgents who plant the IEDs look for anyplace



Staff Sgt. Matthew Beatty, searches the trunk of a car during a traffic stop near Ash Sherkat August 6.



Civilian security contractors watch as First Sgt. Duane Sundstrom, Co. C, 103rd Engineers first sergeant, digs in a hole in the highway made by suspected insurgents near FOB Summerall.

that might provide enough cover to hide the explosives. The engineers try to spot those kinds of things and remove them to deny the enemy terrain.

(We look for) anything (on the side of the road) where an IED can be hidden,” Schumm said. “We try to move that off the side of the road to make it safer for the convoys that drive through.”

The engineers find an array of ordnance while out on mission.

“A lot of times when we go out there searching for the bombs we find them,” Beatty said. “Sometimes we see them before they see us. When we find them we call our (explosive ordnance disposal) team to destroy them, or we take care of them ourselves.”

“We find all kinds of stuff, 155 rounds, 130 rounds, we found an IED hanging from a tree

once,” Schumm said. “There’s lots of stuff out there.”

Due to the nature of their job and the time they spend cruising the roadways, the Soldiers have to be ready for enemy contact.

“When stuff is going on, I think about if anything is going to happen, and am I ready for it,” said Pfc. Jeremiah Phillips, a gunner for Co. C, 103rd Engineers. “I think about all the possibilities, like an ambush, people shooting at us, or even a (rocket propelled grenade.) If any of those things happen, I’ve got to be able to react quickly and do it in a professional manner. I’m usually not afraid when stuff is going on, but afterwards I think something could have happened to me or the people in my vehicle.”

Schumm said while he faces danger daily, the Soldiers he works with daily make his job easier.

“All the guys we go outside of the wire with every day, they’re a great bunch of guys,” Schumm said. “I’ve got my life in their hands at all times. We go out there and we just handle our business and hopefully we all make it out of here alive.”



Spc. Justin Schumm, holds his hand up to keep an Iraqi man from advancing toward him during a traffic stop.



An AH-60 Apache helicopter stirs up a cloud of dust around the vehicle of a suspected insurgent while engineers (not pictured) race to get to the scene. The individuals in the vehicle were suspected of making a hole in the road to plant an IED, and fled the scene of the incident to a nearby group of houses.

Civil Affairs, PSYOP work hard to change communities

Spc. Jimmy D. Lane Jr.
1st BCT PAO

The mission of Coalition Forces in Iraq is to rebuild the Iraqi government and win the hearts and minds of the people. Along with maneuver forces such as infantry, artillery and tank units, the Army also uses civil affairs and psychological operations teams who deal more directly with the people.

"My job entails making sure people get along with each other, making sure they are able to rebuild and work as a team, sort of like the (United States) military does," said Sgt. 1st Class Jeff Newkirk team leader for Civil Affairs Team 21 who is from Jeffersonville Ind.

The CA team meets with local leaders, evaluates plans for projects, and helps the projects come to life. The team is at a point in their mission where the Iraqis are doing the work, and the CA team is just

providing overwatch.

"We go to city council meetings...and try to help them out as much as possible," Newkirk said. "Our big goal now is to see if they can do it on their own. All we do now is sit back. If they have any questions, we try to help them out. Right now it's (working) out really well, they're doing really well on their issues."

There are many issues concerning the progress of the workforce and availability of work. Given the current situation, Newkirk said the CA team makes the best of the area's assets, and help the Iraqis improve on their environment.

"There's not a lot of work ethic here right now and there's very few jobs," Newkirk said. "In the area I'm in right now there's a lot of agriculture. There's a lot of need for farm equipment. There are drainage issues and water issues. We're working on cleaning up the Tigris River, making sure they have drainage for their farms."

PSYOP also works with the Iraqi public, but their job is a little different. They try to change the public's opinion of Coalition Forces. Doing so can make the mission of all the Soldiers in Iraq much easier.

"We pretty much go out and try to influence the public," said Sgt. Zachary Kramer, PSYOP team chief from the 324th Tactical PSYOP Company from Penrose, Colo. "The overall outcome is to change somebody's point of view or get a wanted behavior out of them. Civilians are the battle space, pretty much, if you think about it. If we can influence the public and get the majority on our side it

will make the overall battle here in Iraq much easier for us. The insurgency is fueled off of the local populace's hatred for us. If we can negate that factor then we can definitely take away the support from the (anti-Iraqi forces.)"

Sometimes Kramer's job can get difficult. One of his most important assets is being able to read how people feel about his presence in their community.

"You get a mixed review wherever you go," Kramer said. "Everybody is different. You just have to know how to approach every situation and every person. I quickly have to learn that person's attitude toward the Coalition and conditions that affect that person. I need to find their vulnerability so I can make solid arguments so I can persuade them to come to our side."

Kramer said part of his ability to influence the Iraqi public comes from the work of the CA team.

"One part of town may not be quite as pro-Coalition and the next week they love us," Kramer said. "We work a lot with CA, and you can judge a lot of that by CA and the projects they bring in. You can see the local populace's attitude change a lot with that."

Once Coalition Forces are confident the Iraqis are ready to stand alone, they will be left in charge of their own country.



Spc. Jimmy D. Lane Jr.

Sgt. 1st Class Jeff Newkirk talks with Iraqis about a finished water culvert project near the city of Ash Sharqat

Newkirk is working toward that goal. "The people here are starting to learn that we're here to help," Newkirk said. "They're starting to see that the more we help and the more they help us with the insurgents and the projects, the quicker we'll be gone. That's part of my job here. The sooner they get on their feet, the sooner we'll be gone."



Sgt. Zachary Kramer looks over a local newsletter in Ash Sharqat.

Use the five C's to secure an IED site.

- Confirm:** the device
- Clear:** the area
- Call:** EOD
- Cordon:** the perimeter
- Control:** site access

In the eyes of the children



Photos by Spc. Jimmy D. Lane Jr.

A young shepherd leads his flock across the street in Ash Sharqat. It is common to see livestock inside city limits in Iraq, as well as children tending them.



A boy pushes a wheelbarrow in Ash Sharqat.



A group of boys on bicycles watch as a convoy of humvees passes in an alley in Ash Sharqat. Children can be seen running from far distances to get a glimpse of troops and wave at them.



Two Iraqi boys keep an eye on shoppers in the marketplace.



Iraqi boys watch as Soldiers inspect a construction site in a small community near Baiji. Soldiers work with Iraqis to improve Iraqi communities through civil projects.



Two girls peek out their door and smile at Soldiers in the street.