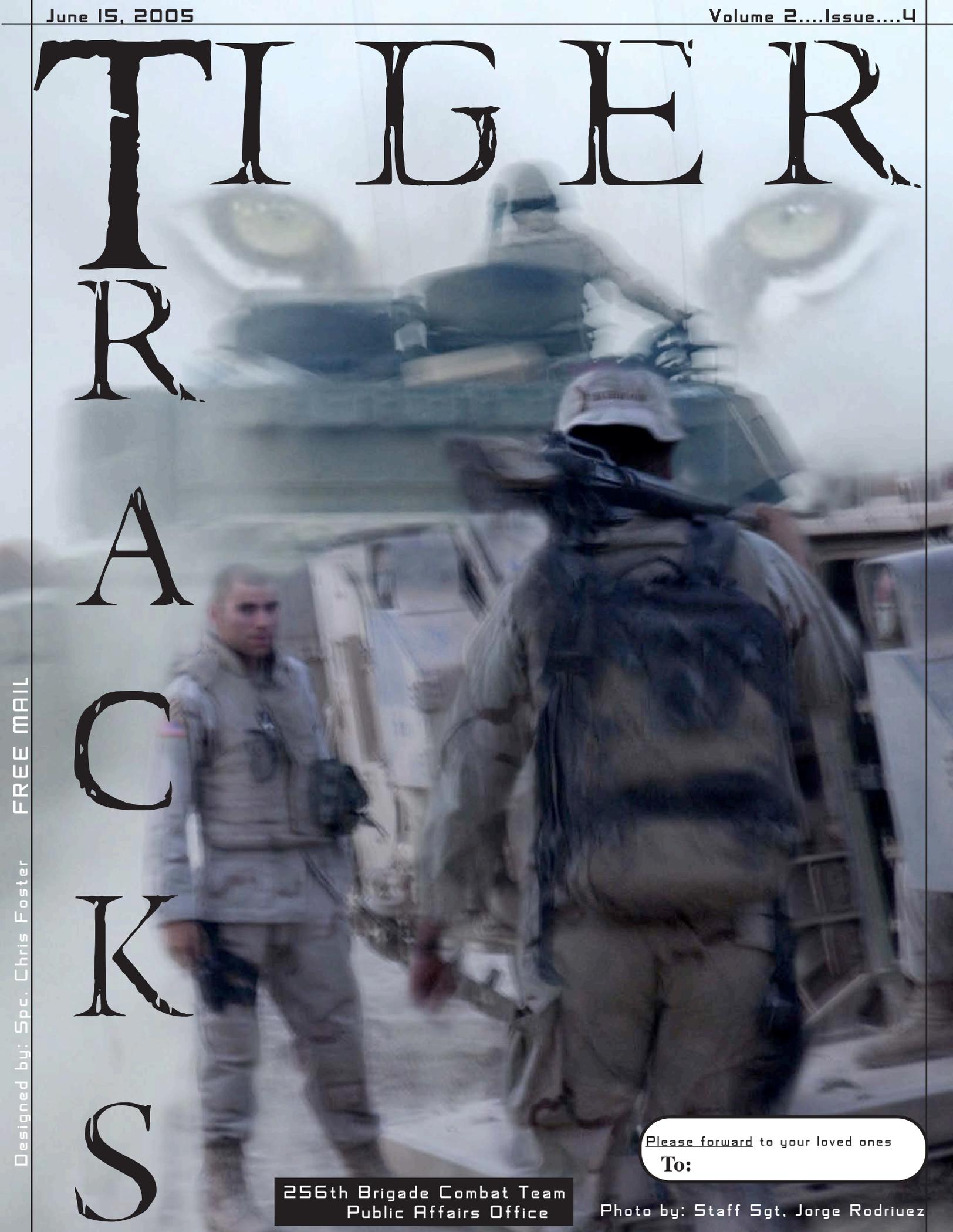


TIGER



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Designed by: Spc. Chris Foster FREE MAIL

256th Brigade Combat Team
Public Affairs Office

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Photo by: Staff Sgt, Jorge Rodriuez

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This Edition

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The *Tiger Tracks* is a publication of the 256th Brigade Public Affairs Office. This Soldier and Family Support Group newsletter contains official information and complies with the provisions of AR 360-81 and AR 25-51. Questions or concerns can be directed to the editor at taysha.deaton@us.army.mil or Soldiers can call VOIP 242-4644.

To the Families and Troops

BG John Basilica, Jr.
256 BCT Commander



As this edition of the Tiger Tracks goes to press, all members of the Tiger Brigade are enjoying the success of a recent strike operation by our partners in the Iraqi Army that resulted in the rescue of Mr. Douglas

Wood, the Australian engineer who was held hostage for about five weeks.

The operation included members of the TF 1-156 AR in support and underscored the continuing progress and success being achieved in our partnership and joint operations. Getting to this point has been a major accomplishment for the Tiger Brigade (and TF Bengal in particular) as we have led the way in helping the Cobra Brigade of the 6th Iraqi Division achieve the capability to conduct near independent operations. Leading up to the successful raid on the 15th of June, the Tigers and Cobras have joined together for a series of highly successful offensive operations in support of the 3rd Infantry Division's Operation Squeeze

Play. Cobra Venom (1-156), Cobra Lightning (2-156), and Cobra Sweep (3-156) were all joint operations in some of the most hostile areas of Baghdad. All three resulted in the capture of numerous suspected insurgents, arms and explosives. We will continue to keep the pressure on with operation Cobra Strike planned in the near future.

The Tiger Brigade is now also responsible for the 3rd brigade of the Iraqi Army. We intend to work just as hard to assist this Brigade to enable it to achieve a capability to conduct independent operations in the Western part of our zone.

I am extremely proud of all the hard work of the Tiger Brigade. The contributions you are making to the improvement of the Iraqi nation are huge and will ultimately provide the necessary means for the implementation of a freely elected and democratic government.

TIGER BRIGADE!

Editor's Note

Dear Soldiers and Families,

I would like to get more feedback from all of you. What do you want to see more or less of in the *Tiger Tracks*? Please remember this publication is yours. If you have photos, story ideas, or even your own submissions, please feel free to email them to us or bring them by the PAO office. Please keep in mind, that not all submissions will be printed, but we will showcase as much of your work as possible. Please provide us with the "who, what, when, where", when submitting photos. We look forward to showcasing your work!

1Lt. Taysha Deaton
256th BCT PAO

CSM James Mays
256 BCT Sergeant Major



NCOs ENFORCE THE STANDARDS! DISCIPLINE & SAFETY!

Soldiers and families of the Tiger Brigade, it is time to start thinking about your family reunion! We have been through a lot in the last year and you have been true Soldiers all this time. You were told when to get up, where to go, and what to do everyday of your lives. But you need to consider what your family members have been through. This deployment has been equally hard on all of us. Families, I salute you for what you are doing. You have been making all of the decisions for what is right for everyone regarding the overall welfare of

the family for the past year. It is a big job for anyone. We still have a little more to go, but families and Soldiers alike must begin to think about resuming your lives and working together as a team when we are all home together.

Lt. Col. Robert Baker, Jr.
256 BDE. Chaplain

A FATHER'S HEART:

What do you know, here it is: Father's Day. Being a father is one of the great joys of this life and I hope each father makes the most of his time and is a father to your children and a faithful husband to your spouse. There is a parable in the New Testament about a father. We call this parable, The Prodigal Son, but it could be called "The Heart of the Father." It shows primarily the love our heavenly Father has for each of us.

A young son comes to his father and asks for his share of the estate. The father divides up his estate giving parts equally to his two sons. Several days later, the youngest son takes his money and goes to a foreign land to seek his fame and fortune. After he has foolishly spent all his money, a famine came upon the land. The son wound up working in a pig pen longing for the food the pigs were eating, but he could get none. When we leave the Father, we inevitably end up in the "pig pen of life."

The young man came to his senses, and realized his father's slaves had it better than he did. He proposed in his heart to return to his father, saying he will become one of his father's hired hands, since he was no longer worthy to be a son.

Since the day the son left, the father anxiously awaited his return. One day the father saw a dust trail on the road leading to his estate. After determining this must be his

long lost son returning home, the father gave instructions to his servants to kill the fatted calf, put a ring on his son's finger and put upon his shoulders a fine linen robe.

The son bowed to the father saying he would be one of his hired hands, but the Father embraced the son and welcomed him home, just as though he had never left. The father invited his son's friends over for a cookout.

The other son, being jealous at all the attention given to his wayward brother, said to the Father, "you have never thrown a party for me and my friends or treated me the way you have your wayward son, who has now returned home." The father lovingly said to his other son, "All that I have is yours, now come and rejoice that your brother has come home." Both of these sons were guilty of the same sin, they both did not wish to spend time with the father.

Fathers, I encourage you to spend time with your spouse and children when you return home. Get to know them again and be patient and kind to them. Children form an idea of what the Father, God is like by what their earthly father is like. We have a tremendous responsibility. Let us not squander it, but do as the Bible instructs us to do, to raise up a righteous generation. Happy Father's Day from Iraq. Please call your Father on this special day if you can.

Sunday:

- 0900 Roman Catholic Mass - CH Sanchez
- 1030 Contemporary Protestant - CH Madrid / Gillett
- 1230 Gospel Protestant - CH Baker
- 1500 Traditional Protestant - CH Lucas
- 1900 Non Denominational Christian - CH Staunton

Monday:

- 0900 "The Gospel of John" - CH Lucas (p)
- 1830 Roman Catholic Mass - CH Sanchez (p)
- 1900 "R.C.I.A. Catechetical Instruction" - CH Sanchez (p)
- 1900 "The Gospel of John" - CH Lucas (s)
- 2000 "Tough Questions Bible Study" - CH Wagenmaker

Tuesday:

- 1900 "Wild At Heart" (Men's Bible Study) - CH Madrid (s)

Wednesday:

- 0900 "Old Testament Shadows of Christ" - CH Lucas (p)
- 1800 Catholic Choir practice - SPC Istre (s)
- 1830 Roman Catholic Mass - CH Sanchez (p)

Thursday:

- 1900 Midweek Worship Service - CH Gillett (p)
- 2000 "Old Testament Shadows of Christ" - CH Lucas (p)
- 0900 "Gospel According to Isaiah" - CH Lucas (p)
- 1900 Contemporary Praise Team Practice - SPC Istre (s)
- 1900 "Gospel According to Isaiah" - CH Lucas (p)

Friday:

- 1830 Roman Catholic Mass - CH Sanchez (p)
- 1900 Bible Study - SPC Dotson (c)
- 1900 Catholic Apologetic - CH Sanchez (p)
- 2000 Gospel Choir - Instrumental only practice- SGT Amis (s)

Saturday:

- 0900 Lutheran Worship Service - CH Lucas (p)
- 1800 Women's Bible Study - CH Madrid (p)
- 1900 Roman Catholic Mass - CH Sanchez (s)
- 1900 Intercessory Prayer Group - Full Gospel Service (c)
- 1900 "Every Man's Battle" - SFC Martin (p)
- 2000 Gospel Choir practice - SGT Amis (s)

Iraq and American Forces

By Spc. Erin Robicheaux

From May 29 to June 1, Soldiers of the 1st Iraqi Army Brigade and 2nd Battalion, 156th Infantry Regiment, 256th Brigade Combat Team, teamed up to bust terrorist cells in Baghdad.

During the three-day cordon-and-search mission, they captured 47 terror suspects, three of whom were terrorist cell leaders, six AK-47 rifles, 500 rounds of ammunition, and one assault rifle. Some detainees provided sworn statements on terrorists in their neighborhoods.

Staff Sgt. Jeffery Schmidt, a civilian police officer, was an assessor when his unit, Headquarters Company, 2-156th, joined A Company, 5th Battalion, 1st Iraqi Army Brigade on one of their raids. He said the operation went well and the Iraqi unit has themselves to thank for it.

"They captured a lot of people on their list, and it was good to get them out there and let them get some experience," he said. "They just need more repetition, that's how you learn."

The three-day joint mission with the U.S. forces was a definite learning event for the Iraqi Soldiers, according to 2-156th Soldiers who assisted. The Iraqis began with the process of collecting information on their patrols and eventually a target list was developed. The intelligence came largely from the civilian population.

Staff Sgt. Howard Wulforst, from Patterson, N.Y., of D Company, 101st Cavalry, attached to 2nd Battalion, 156th Infantry Regiment, 256th Brigade Combat Team, said they worked with Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 1st Iraqi Army Brigade. He said once the Iraqi Soldiers had the ball, they never let go.

"We gave them a little bit of space to let them do what they had to do, and it was good to see," he said.

The Iraqis even practiced their medical skills and cared for a casualty. As the vehicles were lined up to move into another area, one of the Iraqi Soldiers noticed a man underneath a car and pulled him out. Unknown to the troops, the man jumped off of a three-story building and broke both ankles and his back trying to escape.

"The man was a little disoriented and had clearly been hiding, you could see that he had grease all over his body, probably from the car," said Wulforst.

He said the 1st Iraqi Army Soldiers gave the man

BUST TERRORISTS



Photo by Staff Sgt. Jorge Rodriguez

Soldiers of the 1st Iraqi Army Brigade flocked the streets of Baghdad in search of terrorist cells from May 29 through June 1. Along with Soldiers of 2-156th Inf. Bn., the Iraqi Brigade captured 47 detainees, suspected of terrorist activity, or knowing of possible terrorist activities.

excellent care and quickly got him out of the area. They did an evaluation of the man's injuries and brought him to a predetermined spot for the aircraft to pick him up.

"The (Iraqi) platoon sergeant immediately had his Soldiers set up security around the perimeter and the Soldiers around the detainee were clearly caring for his wounds," said Wulforst. Once the helicopter arrived, the Iraqis moved the detainee onto it without incident.

After he was taken away, the Soldiers searched the man's home and found his identification. Once his injuries are healed, Wulforst said he will be detained for further questioning.

Staff Sgt. Joshua Robert from Breaux Bridge, La., of A Company, 2nd Bn., 156th Inf., worked with the 1st Bn., 1st IA Bde. when there was a K-9 unit assigned to them. The dogs were trained to seek out explosives and though they did not find anything, Robert said that it was still very helpful.

"It let us know that we didn't miss anything and it was also a deterrent with the suspected targets," he said. "Iraqis don't like dogs, and they definitely don't like them in their house."

After a room was secured, the K-9 unit came in and did a cursory search for explosive materials. They were not used in every house, only the more suspicious ones.

Robert said the locals appeared more cooperative with the Iraqi Soldiers, as opposed to raids he and his fellow American Soldiers participated in.

"It seemed like they welcomed them into their houses a lot more than they do us. I guess it's kind of like the small towns back in Louisiana where you know everybody, they were more willing to talk to them," he said.

Question to

I would like to know if you can clarify or address an issue for all of us in the 256th BCT.

I know that the 256th has fallen directly under the command of the 1st Cavalry Division and now under the 3rd Infantry Division. I have seen many soldiers, to include NCO's and Commissioned Officers, in the Brigade wearing various "other" combat patches. To include the 18th Airborne Corp and 10th Mountain Division. Some Soldiers say that they were on Camp Taji or Camp Justice with the 10th Mountain, others say that we fall under the 18th Airborne Corp. Everyone falls under the 18th Airborne Corp. It's for those reasons that some Soldiers wear those "other" combat patches.

I was under the impression that a Soldier needed "orders of

assignment" or at least a DA Form 4187, "attachment orders", as proof that a soldier served directly with a specific unit. When these orders are issued, doesn't the 256th lose command and control of the Soldier?

Can you please address the issue of the combat patch and maybe interview some of those soldiers that wear the "other" combat patches.

I'm in the Army Reserve, attached to the 256th, with six years of active duty. I have no vested interest in this topic. I just want to see the Soldiers wear the combat patch that they have earned.

Thank you
Sgt. George De la vega

the editor

Answer

Sgt. De la vega,

AR 670-1, Appendix F provides the guidelines for wear of the Shoulder Sleeve Insignia-Former Wartime Service (SSI-FWTS). According to the regulation a unit such as the 256th BCT which is authorized to wear its own shoulder sleeve insignia, will wear that unit's insignia as its so-called "combat patch". This is true regardless of the number of changes to the unit's alignment or operational control (OPCON) during the deployment. The regulation further provides that soldiers who are cross-leveled, assigned, attached or OPCON to deployed units will wear the insignia of that unit. Multi-National Corps Iraq policy allows soldiers to choose to wear the insignia of the next higher headquarters. There are some soldiers who are part of Task Force 1-141st who are under the operational control of the XVIII Corps "Dragon Brigade" for base defense. Soldiers in TF 1-156th, TF 2-156th and TF 1-69th were OPCON to 2nd BCT 10th Mtn. Div. at various times during the deployment of the 256th BCT. MNC-I Policy allows the soldiers who were in units OPCON to XVIII Corps and 2-10th Mtn. to wear those insignia in addition to the 3rd ID and 1st Cav. shoulder sleeve insignia. Soldiers wearing the Civil Affairs Brigade insignia as a combat patch are not authorized to do so.

Provided by Lt. Col. John Dunlap
256th BCT SJA

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Sgt. 1st Class Philip Flowers,
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Tiger Brigade Medics Provide Solutions



Maj. Wesley Thompson, from Fairfield, Ill., with HHC 1-156th AR., speaks with a man about his medical situation.

By: Spc. Erin Robicheaux

"Unfortunately, treating diabetes isn't something that you can do in one day," said Maj. Marc Dahman, from Chicago, Ill. A doctor with C Company, 199th Forward Support Battalion, or "Charlie Med," Dahman is also a trauma surgeon in his civilian career. On June 9, he and a group of medics from the 256th Brigade Combat Team joined forces to bring healthcare to the people of the Mansour area of Baghdad. Caring for cases like this diabetic patient were common obstacles throughout the course of the day.

"He had diabetes and didn't know it, this was his first diagnosis, and his situation is very traumatic," Dahman said.

"In a case like this, where it needs to be under control very soon, all we can do is identify the problem and strongly encourage the patient to see a civilian doctor," said Dahman.

The problem is the treatment for diabetes and other cases seen by them required continuous monitoring, and this is something that was not possible for the medics.

Spc. Jonathon Gandy from Mansfield, La., a medic with Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 156th Armor Regiment, is also a pre-med student at Louisiana State University at Shreveport, and agreed there were many ailments which required more extensive treatment than the

medics were equipped to give.

"One man came in with an old wound from the Iran/Iraq war; he got shrapnel in his left arm and it became disfigured," he said.

The man lost movement in his arm and according Gandy, it was virtually useless.

"He needs a prosthetic replacement, and we just don't have the resources to do that," he said.

There is hope for the people, though, according to Lt. Col. Joseph Dore, 256th Brigade Combat Team Surgeon from Charlotte, North Carolina.

"We can recommend them to the Iraqi health care system which is actually pretty advanced," said Dore. But the cost for health care is an issue for a lot of the patients seen by the 256th medics that day.

Dore also said that if the patient's needs exceed the capacity of the Iraqi providers, there is a way to work things out between the two national Embassies to benefit the patient.

Though the functionality of a field clinic is not as advanced as a hospital or traditional doctor's office, there are a number of illnesses that are treatable, according to Gandy.

"We can cure acute illnesses such as bronchial infections, colds, sinus infections, things like that," he said. But even if the patient cannot be treated with the resources of the 256th, the medical staff can still ask questions, do physical examinations, and in most cases be able to diagnose the patient right there.

A positive change that took place since the 256th BCT's earlier clinics, is the abundance of pediatric medications available.

"We started out with nothing, and we really had no idea how these clinics were going to work, or even what types of patients we would see," said Staff Sgt. Jessica Kelly, from Lafayette, La. As the assistant to the brigade surgeon, Kelly quickly learned that the majority of their patients would turn out to be children.

"With each one (clinic) you learn, and now we will be able to pass all of our knowledge onto the next unit, which is something that we didn't have," she said.

Over the months, the 256th has received donations of pediatric medications from hospitals, doctors' offices, and even the 256th personnel's colleagues.

Gandy recalled seeing a number of children at this clinic, in particular.

"A lot of them had bronchial infections, and that's something that we could cure with antibiotics," he said.

OPERATION COBRA SWEEP



Photo by Staff Sgt. Jorge Rodriguez

(Left to Right) Cpl. Andrew Smith from LaPlace, La., Command Sgt. Maj. Gary Ermantinger from New Orleans, La., Staff Sgt. Ross Gares from Violet, La., and Staff Sgt. David Prince from Sulphur, La., of Task Force Bandit, go over their plan for

Operation Cobra Sweep, a series of raids with the 4th Bn., 1st Iraqi Army Brigade.

In a series of raids on June 10 and June 11, combined forces of Iraqi and coalition forces captured insurgents targeted for terrorist activities or knowledge of crimes against such forces. Soldiers of the 4th Battalion, 1st Iraqi Army Brigade, E Troop 101st Cavalry attached to 3rd Battalion, 156th Infantry Regiment, and B Company, 3rd Battalion 156th Infantry Regiment, both of the 256th Brigade Combat Team, went after targeted terrorist cells in the Al Ameriyah district.

The Soldiers seized contraband and questionable materials, including up to 40 sticks of dynamite, 10 feet of detonation chord, two banners from the Iraqi Islamic Party reading "Americans are committing terrorism," and a significant amount of information from the local population.

Four detainees, five AK-47s, one RPK, maps, and additional contraband were confiscated by the joint

forces. Ba'ath Party books, Saddam propaganda, and photographs of individuals living in the house holding weapons were also located.

Capt. David Bauer commander of E Trp. 101st Cav., from Webster, N.Y. said that having the Iraqi Army at the forefront of the operation gave the locals confidence in their own Soldiers, and ultimately helped the outcome of the mission.

"The locals saw how professional the Iraqi Soldiers were and it increased the amount of information they gave."

Bauer said the facts gained led forces directly to some of those detained in the course of the operation.

Task Force Bandit and Iraqi Soldiers capture suspected insurgents

Iraqi Soldiers from the 4th Battalion, 1st Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division arrested four foreign terror suspects during an early-morning cordon-and-search operation in central Baghdad June 5.

The four detainees are thought to be involved with conducting terrorist activities in the Ameriyah district of the capitol.

In another operation, Iraqi Security Forces from the 2nd Public Order Battalion raided a terrorist safe-house in east Baghdad and arrested seven suspects.

When the Iraqi Forces searched the house, they found four AK-47 assault rifles, four sets of body armor, machine gun rounds, numerous radios and license plates and pictures of terrorists holding weapons. The seven suspects were taken into custody for questioning.

Capt. Stuart West, from Pineville, La., commander of B Company, 3rd Battalion, 156th Infantry Regiment, 256th Brigade Combat Team, said that the success of the 4/1 IA was due to their own intelligence gathering, as well as the combined effort from Coalition Forces.

"This was a great success in that it was a result of the joint endeavors of Iraqi and American Soldiers," said West.

This particular mission was a follow up to information gathered in earlier raids conducted by the Iraqi Soldiers. The 3-156th assisted in several previous efforts, as well.

Elsewhere, Task Force Baghdad Soldiers on patrol in central Baghdad stopped two Iraqi vehicles at around 2 a.m. When they searched the vehicles, the Soldiers found four AK-47 assault rifles with ammunition, three submachine guns, one pistol, a bulletproof vest and three ski masks. The unit detained all five suspects in both cars.

Later, a sniper team saw two suspicious men tying something to a guard rail in the median of a major highway in central Baghdad. The snipers opened fire, killing one terrorist and wounding the other. Iraqi Police cordoned off the area until an explosives team arrived on the scene.

Douglas Wood

finds safe haven in Tigerland

See page 18 for story



Photos by Chris Foster



Photo by Chris Foster



Photo by Chris Foster



Photo by 1-156th MiTT

BUSTING TERRORISTS

Continued from page 5

Sgt. 1st Class Chuck Spotten, a platoon sergeant for D Company, 101st Cav., agreed with Robert.

"Once the sun came up the civilians brought tea out for the Soldiers, they socialized with the Soldiers, and they gave them water," he said.

Spotten also described the scene as the convoy passed through the streets of Baghdad.

"As we drove around the streets it was like a Memorial Day parade," he said.

"People were cheering and clapping for their Soldiers and for us, and we had a very good feeling driving through town," he said.

A spokesman from 2-156th said the success of the mission can be attributed fully to the 1st IA Bde.

They captured every single one of the targets that were brought in, and though U.S. forces were on standby, in terms of searching the houses and executing the individual targets, it was done completely by the 1st Bde.

He said that it shows they are well equipped and well trained, and they can accomplish any given task, and proved that they can defend their area. There was no interference from Anti-Iraqi Forces and the nights were free of mishaps from the enemy.

Soldiers on the scene said the people of the area appeared pleased to see their own forces out winning the war on terror.

"They took commands from the Iraqi Army and seemed to appreciate the fact that their own Soldiers were out there doing it as opposed to coalition forces coming in," they said, "Not just in the events of the night, but when the sun came up you could see they were capable and that the entire neighborhood was happy to see them doing the exact same thing we've been doing for the last three years in this country."



Photo by Staff Sgt. Jorge Rodriguez

Soldiers of the 1st Iraqi Army Brigade suit up and move out on a night raid during a three-day series of cordon-and-search missions. Teamed up with Soldiers from 2-156th Inf.

COALITION AND IRAQI FORCES JOIN TOGETHER

Iraqi Soldiers of the 4th Battalion, 1st Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division; the 1st Iraqi Intervention Force, and 1st Ministry of Interior Commandos captured suspected Anti-Iraqi Forces during cordon-and-search missions.

Iraqi Soldiers with the 4th Battalion, 1st Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division escort a suspect after detaining him during a cordon and knock.

On June 8, the 4th Bn., 1st IA Bde., along with A Company, 3rd Battalion, 156th Infantry Regiment of the 256th Brigade Combat Team, cordoned off a targeted section of homes in the Ameriyah District for the 1st IIF to search. They brought in four detainees and material believed to be used for making improvised explosive devices and bombs. One of the suspects was positively identified by IIF personnel as a terrorist from Falluja, who is believed to conduct rebel activities out of the Abu Ghrahib District.

Capt. Aaron Duplechyn, commander of A Co. 3-156th Inf. Bn., said that the mission was successful from the very beginning. His Soldiers worked with over 400 Iraqi Security Forces to detain AIF members and confiscate bomb making materials.

"The ISF took the lead by searching house to house throughout the entire area." said the Moss Bluff,



Photo by Staff Sgt. Jorge Rodriguez

La., native. "This was a welcome sign to the local populace, because it meant that their Army was taking a more active roll in securing Iraq."

On the morning of June 9, 1st MOI Commandos captured one suspect with help from E Troop, 101st Cavalry attached to 3rd Bn., 156th Inf. Reg. and B Co., 3rd Bn., 156th Inf. Reg., 256th BCT. Task Force 3-156th set an outer perimeter for the Commandos to conduct searches for AIF and weapons caches.

Fuel cans...

potential IED force multiplier.

0062 IEDs KILL

BUSTER'S Baghdad

The best things in life

Sgt. Andrew A. Miller
100th MPAD

The man with the Louisiana accent wasn't talking to his son, he was talking about him. Yet his eyes never left his boy. He gazed at him, as if he were still trying to figure him out, despite their 22 years together. That Sgt. 1st Class Robert T. Fontenot could personally and literally look upon his son is due to a good bit of luck. Both Soldiers are assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 156th Infantry Battalion.

The fact that Spc. Cody T. Fontenot is stationed with his dad is something they both appreciate, he said. Thanks to that luck and appreciation, and in the spirit of Father's Day, the two Bradley mechanics agreed to meet and discuss the rare experience of serving with one another in a combat zone.

Such conversation, involving insight on their feelings and their bond, seemed at first to be less than comfortable for the younger Fontenot. But as the ice broke and melted away, the discussion soon became candid and sincere.

Serving with a family member is somewhat of a mixed blessing, they explained.

"The rank thing can be kind of weird," Cody said. "I can't really argue like I can at home."

"Or try to get out of something," his dad added, smiling.

From the leader's perspective, Robert has to be sure that he considers the welfare of his Soldiers to be as important as that of his son's, he said. They explained how there's also an increased level of worrying that comes with serving alongside a relative.

"When a mortar or rocket comes in, (Cody) is the first thing on my mind," Robert said. "You look for where it hit. You worry about your son."



Sgt. 1st Class Robert T. Fontenot and his son Spc. Cody T. Fontenot during a brief visit to the Camp Tigerland MWR facility. Both men, from Delcambre, La., are M2A2 Bradley Fighting Vehicle mechanics assigned to HHC, 2-156th Inf.

Earlier in their deployment, Robert was stationed at Forward Operating Base Justice. He and his son rarely saw each other, except when the elder Fontenot would convoy to Liberty each week.

"I would worry about him," Cody said. "It was a relief to see him every time."

Aside from worry and the occasional awkward conflict of family ties versus military professionalism, the men agree that having each other here is a great benefit.

"I've got someone in my unit who I know I can always turn to," said the younger Fontenot. His father agreed.

"Having someone in your family here is cool," Robert said. "You've got someone you can really talk to. I'm glad he's here with me. I just wish he wasn't here," he added with a laugh.

They admitted other than just making for an easier combat tour, sharing their experiences has created a stronger bond between them.

"At home, we didn't really have much in common," Robert said.

Continued from page 16





Did You Know

Below are key points to get you started in the right direction:

DD FORM 214

Your Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty is one of the most important documents you will ever receive and should be kept in a safe place. If at any time you wish to apply for one or more of the veterans' benefits you have earned through your military service, you will be required to submit a copy of your DD-214. Upon discharge, we strongly recommend that you take your original DD-214 copy 4 to the Clerk of Court Office in the parish courthouse where you reside and have it recorded there. By doing this you will ensure yourself of having a readily accessible copy should the original ever be misplaced or lost by fire, flood, etc.

SERVICE CONNECTED DISABILITIES

Service connected disability compensation is payable to wartime or peacetime veterans who incur or aggravate a disability while on active military service. Active military service may also include any period of active or inactive duty for training. Some important things to remember for establishing service connection (SC). It is the veterans' responsibility to file a claim for SC. Those on active duty should be advised to get treatment for any injury or illness and request copies of their service medical records. Claims for SC should be filed immediately following discharge, (if not filed while on Active Duty). Once SC is established, the

VA will provide free medical treatment for the condition(s). The VA rates disabilities from 0% to 100% disabling, depending upon the severity of the condition(s). If at any time the service connected condition(s) worsen, the veteran may request an increased rating.

COMPENSATION RATES 2005

10%	20%	20%	40%	50%
\$108.00	\$210.00	\$324.00	\$486.00	\$663.00
60%	70%	80%	90%	100%
\$839.00	\$1050.00	\$1227.00	\$1380.00	\$2299.00

Any veteran entitled to compensation and whose disability is rated not less than 30% shall be entitled to additional compensation for dependents

DEPEDENCY & INDEMNITY COMPENSATON (DIC)

The monthly rate of DIC payable to a surviving spouse is \$993. the additional allowance payable where the veteran was rated totally disabled for at least 8 years prior to death is \$208. For each dependent child under the age of 18 add \$247.

VA MEDICAL CARE

Generally speaking, all veterans are eligible to apply for medical treatment at a VA Medical Center. Under the current eligibility criteria, those who do not have any service connected disabilities are subject to a 'Means Test' to determine which Priority Group they fit into and whether or not they will have to make a co-payment for their care.

Important note: Under current eligibility criteria, military personnel who recently served in a combat zone are eligible for free medical care at a VA Medical facility, for a period of two

years following discharge from active duty, for certain conditions that 'may be related' to their period of active duty. This does not include medical problems such as a common cold or injuries from an accident which happened after the service member was discharged from Active Duty.

HOME LOAN GUARANTY

VA guaranteed loans are made by private lenders such as banks, savings & loans and mortgage companies. A major advantage of the VA Home Loan Guaranty is that it often eliminates the need for making a large down payment that is generally required in the purchase of a home. To use this program, the veteran must first apply for a Certificate of Eligibility from the VA. For those who served on active duty after August 2, 1990, to be eligible for this program they must have completed 24 months of continuous active duty **OR** the full period (at least 90 days) for which they were ordered to active duty. Exceptions to the length of service requirements would be those who were discharged earlier for hardship or because of a service connected disability.

STATE BENEFITS FOR LOUISIANA VETERANS

Veterans Civil Service Preference— Provides a five-point preference in original appointments to persons honorably discharged from the Armed Forces of the United States who served during wartime, or in a peacetime campaign or expedition if a campaign badge or expeditionary medal is authorized. Ten point preference in original appointments are accorded each honorable discharged veteran who served in either war or peacetime and has one or more service connected disabilities established with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

More to follow in next editions

CONTRIBUTIONS

Dear Ms. Melissa,

June 14, 2005

On behalf of the entire 256th Brigade Combat Team, we wish to convey our joy on your son Michael Scott Evans III. We are especially proud that you chose to name him after his Dad.

Not a day goes by that we do not think about your husband and Michael's father. I want you to know that we stand ready to help you ensure that Michael III knows about the courage, bravery, and accomplishments of his father.

Thank you for your continued support and sacrifice and as always you remain in our prayers.

Very Respectfully,
John Basilica, Jr.
Brigadier General, U.S. Army
Commanding



MY LOVE

No matter what I say in this little note the words will not express what you mean to me and our children. You have given me the best years of my life and three of the most awesome children a father could ask for. Though this year has been really hard on all of us, I want you to know how proud I am of you and all that you do to keep our house a home. You have smiled when you wanted to cry. Hung in when you wanted to give up and laughed when you felt like the world was falling down around you. I thank the Lord every single day for bringing you into my life. In my eyes you truly are a Proverbs 31 woman to every single word. You really do complete me and I look forward to spending the rest of my life with you.

THANK YOU PRINCESS

Love,
Greg

Sgt. 1st Class Greg Martin
HHC 1-156th AR

REMEMBERING



Photo by Spc. Erin Robicheaux

Brig. Gen. John Basilica, Jr. pays tribute to Linda Villar in a memorial service at the Tiger Chapel on June 8. Linda, a civilian contractor with TACOM, was killed on June 3 when a rocket hit the gym where she was working out.

Heroes in all Forms

By Spc. Erin Robicheaux

In war heroes come in all forms. On June 8, civilian contractors and Soldiers alike gathered in the Tiger Chapel at Camp Tigerland, Baghdad, Iraq, to remember one such unique hero.

Linda J. Villar was working out on the morning of June 3, when a rocket struck her gym. She did not survive the attack. Her friends and colleagues, and even those who never knew her on the dusty base in Baghdad, filed into the house of worship to pay their final respects to a woman who died in service, not only to her country, but to the Soldiers who served as well.

Born in Franklinton, La., Linda was a LAR, or logistics assistance representative under Tank-automotive and Armaments Command. She had a Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration from Southern University of New Orleans, and a Master's Degree in Organization and Business from Cambridge College. Linda followed in her husband's footsteps when she came to Baghdad as a LAR. She arrived in Iraq long enough to spend ten days with her husband and switch places with him as he was going out.

"We often teased her about the way she and Dave did the "high-five tag" swapping places like bas

ketball players," said Frank Milburn, a co-worker of Linda's.

He said that Linda was like a little sister to everyone and she looked for ways to bring everyone closer together. Her colleagues called her their "cruise director." Milburn said that she saw a need to strengthen office morale and she organized a barbecue involving various organizations of personnel.

"We found other individuals in a similar situation and feelings of oneness and camaraderie developed," he said.

Along the way, Linda was promoted to LMS, or logistics management specialist. She worked closely with units to help them prepare for deployments to Iraq. According to Milburn, she had little guidance, but gave it her best effort. Her hectic schedule was starting to wear her down in the last few months, and she often asked for assistance and support and received it to the best of her people's abilities.

"Linda had a way with people...we miss her smile, her wit, and ability to get us to do things we did not want to do," said Milburn. "We miss you little sister!"

THE FALLEN

Soldiers of the 256th Brigade Combat Team salute their friend, Sgt. David Joseph Murray, during a memorial ceremony on June 13. Murray died on June 9, while serving his country and those he loved.



Photo by Spc. Chris Foster

Memories of Murray

By Spc. Erin Robicheaux

Sgt. David Joseph Murray was born Nov. 11, 1981 in Philadelphia, Penn., the city of brotherly love. On June 9, 2005, he died among his brothers, as a public servant to his country and to the Baghdad community.

Soldiers honored their fallen friend June 13 in a memorial service at the Tiger Chapel on their base in Baghdad. Following the program, two childhood friends shared their memories of Murray, or "Ted," as people back home knew him.

"I don't know where they came up with that name," said Staff Sgt. Oliver Hartner, with a glint in his eye.

"He was so quiet, and during one of his first days on the football team the seniors didn't know what to call him, and someone said, 'We'll just call him Ted.' And it stuck. No one called him David," said Hartner.

Murray and Hartner, along with Sgt. Jeremy Blackmon, grew up together in Clinton, La., and though their lives took separate paths after they graduated high school, they were reunited in May 2004, when their unit—B Company, 1088th Engineer Battalion—was activated with the 256th Brigade Combat Team for deployment to Iraq.

Murray's platoon was on patrol in their area west of Abu Ghraib June 9 when an improvised explosive device detonated near their M113 tracked vehicle. While trying to get everyone out of the kill zone, the unit took small-arms fire from different directions and another IED went off just

10 yards away.

In the end, two Soldiers were injured and the platoon lost what members said was a great leader and friend.

"Almost the very last words he spoke to me were in concern for someone else," said Sgt. 1st Class Ben Necaie, from St. Francisville, La., Murray's platoon sergeant.

The platoon was sent approximately 4,000 pairs of shoes from their hometowns to give to the children in their area of operation. Before rolling out for his last patrol, Murray asked when they would begin distributing them.

"He was always focused on what he could do to help somebody. That loyalty, that devotion—he was just an amazing person," said Necaie.

Blackmon and Hartner fully agreed that loyalty was a huge trait in their friend, especially when it came to his job. Murray's goal in life was to become a state trooper, and he took every step over the years to ensure that he got there.

In addition to pursuing a criminal justice degree, he worked in various capacities of law enforcement. He started working in a local jail and eventually moved up to patrolling the streets.

Continued on Page 16...

Memories of Murray

Continued from Page 15...

"The day he became a road cop, he knew he was one step closer to reaching his goal, and he always took his job very seriously," Blackmon said.

They recalled how one of Murray's friends was arrested and the cuffs were put on so tight that his hand swelled up. When Murray came in for his shift and saw him sitting there, he pointed out to his detained friend that his hand was swollen. His friend asked him to take the cuffs off with the assurance that he wouldn't go anywhere.

What was Murray's response?

"No, but I'll loosen them a little bit for you."

"It didn't matter who it was, or what it was about, he followed the rules of his job to the letter," said Hartner.

Blackmon smirked, "That guy would have given his own mother a ticket."

They said Murray also took his job as a team leader in 3rd Platoon to heart. He went above and beyond the call of duty to take care of his Soldiers, to the point of taking their shifts when they were sick, exhausted from a previous mission, or just needed a day off. He did this, even if he just rolled in from a mission himself. The childhood buddies said he was a machine, he could run off of pure dedication and loyalty, and he lived his life to serve.

Blackmon and Hartner agreed that Murray died doing something he loved, doing something he was committed to and in which he believed.

Court Martials

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Pfc. Fitch, Seth, HHC 2-156th, summary court martial, ART. 78 and ART. 134. Reduction to E-2, Forfeiture of \$250.00 and 30 days confinement, suspended for 30 days. | 2. Spc. Lenton, Dennis, HHB 141, summary court martial, ART 86 AWOL. Reduction to E-3, forfeiture of 2/3 pay for one month, and 30 days confinement |
|---|---|

**Stay in neck
defilade when
in the turret.**



0068

IEDs KILL

The best things in life

Continued from Page 11...

He said his son was a young man who was mostly interested in his friends. Neither of them ever thought Cody would join the Army. They certainly never imagined they'd be stationed together, especially in Iraq. As fate would have it, they were. Due to that twist of fate, they have found that they really do have certain things in common. Robert said he's learned that his son has his father's temper. He's also learned that Cody is a hard worker and a good mechanic. But Cody's ability to take care of himself is no surprise to his father.

"I raised him to be independent," Robert said.

The conversation drifted toward themes of change, appreciation and the future. Cody spoke of his bad attitude as a slightly younger man. He mentioned trouble with the law. He remembered how he used to think he knew everything.

"The best thing my dad ever did for me was to help me straighten my life out," said Cody, with a set of serious eyes. "Without him I probably wouldn't have gotten to go to school or got a good job."

Robert proudly explained that during this deployment, and since his son first joined the Army some three years ago, he has watched his son mature into a man and become successful.

"The best thing my son has done for me was to turn his life around," Robert said.

After merely an hour, the two men had created a clear picture of themselves as Soldiers and as father and son. They are two men who have been and continue to be changed during their tour in Iraq. They are two men who have been changed by one another. As their redeployment home to Delcambre, La. slowly approaches, they both agreed that they're ready to go home. Cody said he'll want to help his 'old man' out more than before, even when his dad claims he doesn't need it. Robert said he'll let his son take his boat out, which sparked a series of smiles and chuckles that couldn't really be explained to a stranger.

Again, Robert could be seen gazing at his son. The father's look was a peculiar one, and throughout the conversation he occasionally hid it away, only to expose it once again. In fact, it was during its reappearance that the exact nature of his gaze became apparent. Here was a man who was admiring his son, a grown man. A father, who, even in a young stranger's presence, shared his feelings toward his son. A father who was bestowing upon his son one of the most rewarding displays of emotion. That look was pride.

WISHING A HAPPY FATHER'S DAY TO THOSE SERVING THEIR COUNTRY.



The pros and cons of having your son deployed with you

The Fear of dad is a better deterrent against bad behavior than a UCMJ!!

Mom and sister can check on one or the other, even if the old man can't hear his cell phone...

You lie to your wife, because your son told her that you have been volunteering to go outside the wire for the last two weeks, when you been telling her that it was another boring week in the office.

Dad are fathers 1st, friends 2nd, advisors 3rd, supply Sgt. 4th and the one to go to info for last.

256TH BCT ASSISTS IN THE RESCUE OF AUSTRALIAN HOSTAGE



By Spc. Erin Robicheaux

"I'm so glad to see you blokes!" beamed an elated Douglas Wood, in his thick Australian accent. Held hostage by insurgents for six weeks, Wood was rescued on June 15 by Soldiers of 2nd Battalion, 1st Iraqi Army Brigade, while conducting search and attack missions to locate and destroy terrorist cells in the Al Adel neighborhood of northwest Baghdad.

"The 256th Brigade conducted comprehensive offensive operations for the past month in some of the most hostile neighborhoods of Baghdad," said Brig. Gen. John Basilica, Jr., commander of the 256th Brigade Combat Team.

"Most of these operations were joint combat patrols with Iraqi Army units. We provided military transition teams who advised each unit and patrolled with them in combat operations," said Basilica.

"Mr. Wood had just been freed and given his whole life back, and of the six or seven times that he and I spoke, all he could talk about was that a group of IA Soldiers found him and what a great job they'd done," said Capt. Randy Green from Bossier City, La. Green, who is with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 156th Armor Regiment, 256th Brigade Combat Team, is the senior advisor to the 2-1 IA and was with the Iraqi unit throughout the duration of the mission. "He just couldn't stop talking about the Iraqi Army and how he couldn't believe that's who rescued him."

Wood was kidnapped in late April by terrorists claiming to be with the Shura Council of the Mujahedeen of Iraq.

Around 10 a.m. the Iraqi Soldiers were preparing to search a house when they saw movement inside. They approached, and after knocking repeatedly on the door, surrounded the house with ten Soldiers and breached the entrance. Fifteen Soldiers of the 2-1 raced in, attacked by insurgents firing bullets at their heads. No match for the Soldiers, the insurgents put up a fight, but were ultimately subdued.

When Soldiers questioned them about the figure under the covers in the bed next to them, they replied that it was a sick female. Wood later told the U.S. Soldiers that

when they were aware of military forces coming into the house, his captors threatened to shoot him if he moved or made a sound.

The insurgents, who claimed they were guards for a 15 man terrorist cell, previously murdered three other hostages just two weeks earlier. One hostage was a general for the Ministry of Interior. Soldiers also recovered 20 hand grenades and assorted fire arms and ammunition.

Extracting Wood from the site was a challenge. The insurgents told Green and IA commanders they called their friends, who were on their way to stop the forces from bringing Wood to safety.

"We set up a perimeter with us (U.S. Soldiers) on the outer cordon," said Green, "if they were going to get to Iraqis they were going to have to get through us first."

In the end they transported Wood to the 256th BCT medical facility with no further engagements with the terrorists.

Cpl. Ryan Simon from Baton Rouge, La., of C Company, 1-156th AR was at the scene when the IA brought Wood out of the house. He said at first he felt disbelief, followed by utter gratitude for the man's life.

"When it was radioed in about what was happening, I thought, 'yeah, right,' but when I saw him and saw that this was real, I was just so overwhelmed," said Simon.

Staff Sgt. Jeremecia Perry from Bossier City, La., of HHC 1-156th AR, said that this event is a definitive sign that the Iraqi Army is headed in the right direction.

"The Iraqi Soldiers are doing great things for their people and getting the bad guys out of their neighborhoods," he said.

Green agreed that at least one man knows the strength of the Iraqi Army, and testified to it over and over again.

"Mr. Wood had this constant look of disbelief, of joy and elation all at once, and he could not stop talking about the Iraqi Army," he said.

"This is proof positive of the courage and competence of the new Iraqi Army," said Basilica. "They are making excellent progress and have done a super job. This is a great day for the Iraqi Army."

256th BCT Photo Album



Spc. Dustin Ross with HHC 2-130th, receives guidance during right seat-left seat ride from a Soldier of 2-14th Inf.

Pfc. Nicholaus Dubovici poses with his brother Spc. Charlie Dubovici before going out on a mission. Both are from Woodside, N.Y., and are assigned to B Co. 1-69th Inf.



Sgt. Matthew Roberts points to an M113 track vehicle. 2nd and 3rd Plt. C-1088th Eng. clear Rte. Fatboy North Shoulder. The bank gave way underneath, and the ACE went in. When we pulled the ACE out, there were no damages, but we caught a fish.



Sgt. 1st Class Monte Broughton and Staff Sgt. Michael Brown, both with HHC 2-130th pose with their former mortar platoon leader 1st Lt. Kendal Tack E 101st Cav also pictured is 2nd Lt. Sean Welker, commander for HHC 3-156th Inf.

FALLEN SOLDIER

YOU ARE FOREVER IN
OUR HEARTS

SGT. DAVID MURRAY
BRAVO CO. 1088TH ENG.

A SOLDIER'S STORY

I WAS THAT WHICH OTHERS DID NOT WANT TO BE
I WENT WHERE OTHERS FEARED TO GO
AND DID WHAT OTHERS FEARED TO DO
I ASKED NOTHING FROM THOSE WHO GAVE NOTHING
AND RELUCTANTLY ACCEPTED THE THOUGHT OF ETERNAL
LONELINESS.... SHOULD I FAIL
I HAVE SEEN THE FACE OF TERROR
FELT THE STINGING COLD OF FEAR
AND ENJOYED THE SWEET TASTE OF A MOMENTS LOVE
I HAVE CRIED, PAINED, AND HOPED
BUT MOST OF ALL I HAVE LIVED TIMES
OTHERS WOULD SAY WERE BEST FORGOTTEN
AT LEAST I AM ABLE TO SAY THAT
I AM PROUD OF WHAT I WAS.... A SOLDIER

-ANONYMOUS

Designed by: Spc. Chris Foster

Photos by: Chris Foster