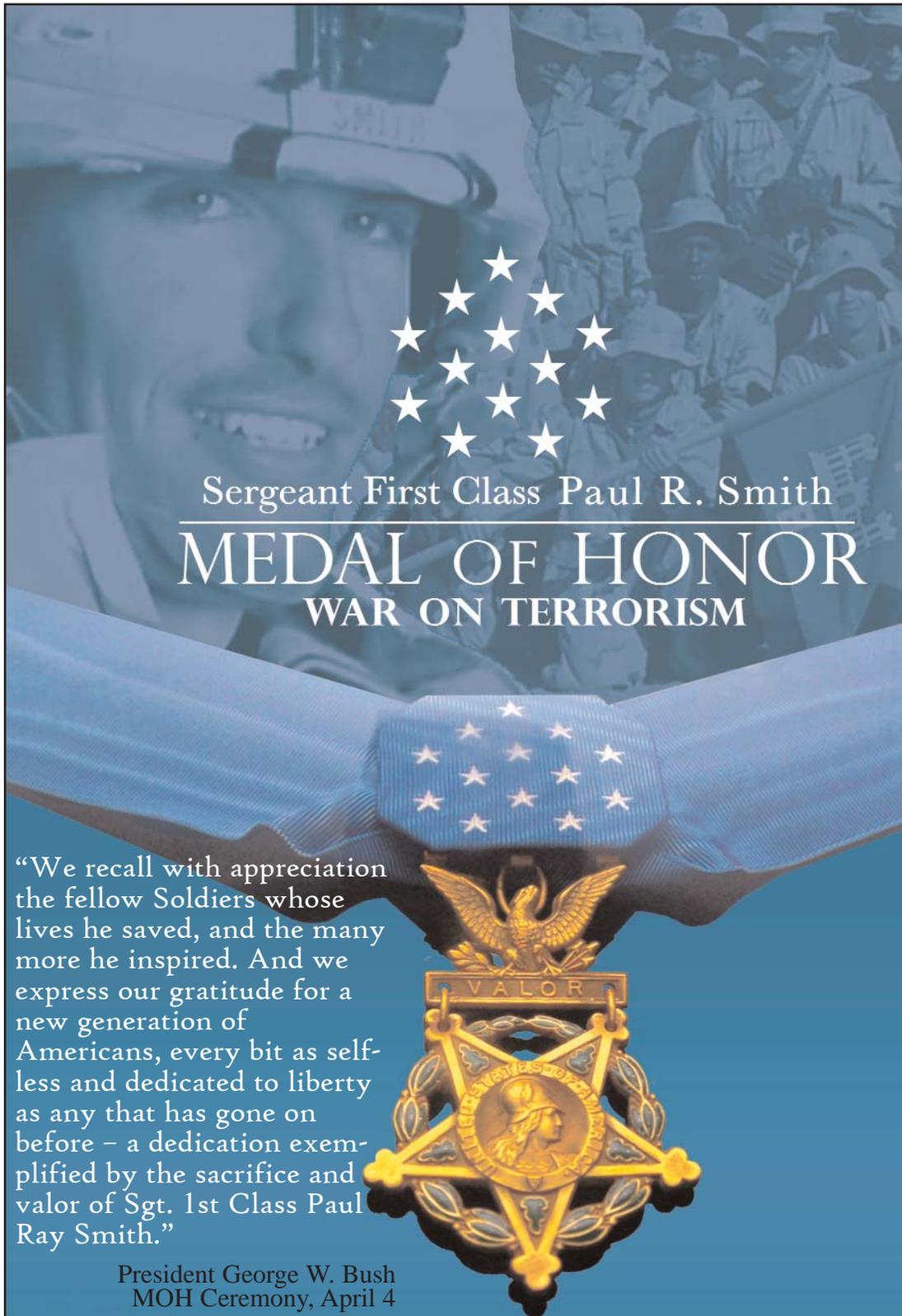




# VANGUARD POINT

Volume II, Issue 3  
April 15, 2005



Sergeant First Class Paul R. Smith  
**MEDAL OF HONOR**  
WAR ON TERRORISM

“We recall with appreciation the fellow Soldiers whose lives he saved, and the many more he inspired. And we express our gratitude for a new generation of Americans, every bit as selfless and dedicated to liberty as any that has gone on before – a dedication exemplified by the sacrifice and valor of Sgt. 1st Class Paul Ray Smith.”

President George W. Bush  
MOH Ceremony, April 4

## Inside



*1/76 FA isn't sending rounds downrange, but they're still tackling a tough mission.*



*Soldiers with 4/64 hit the streets with the IA and see many differences from OIF 1.*



*Going from hand grenades and Purple Hearts, Soldiers reach out to the Haifa St. residents.*

**President Bush bows his head as Maj. Gen. David Hicks, the Army Chief of Chaplains, delivers the invocation April 4 during a Medal of Honor ceremony honoring Sgt. 1st Class Paul Smith, killed in action during Operation Iraqi Freedom. White House photo by Eric Draper. For stories and photos, see Page 6.**



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Fifteen-year-old Sarah Emoto in an "Any Soldier Letter" shows she cares with a poem for Soldiers.

Do you have a letter to the editor, photo or story to send in?  
Send it to [raymond.piper@us.army.mil](mailto:raymond.piper@us.army.mil).  
Please include your full name and rank. If you send a photo, include what's going on in the photo, full names of people, rank, units and date.

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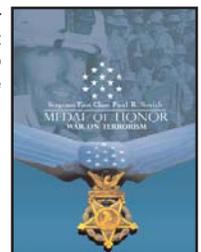
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*On the cover:*  
The poster that was designed to highlight the Medal of Honor.



# Sgt. 1st Class Paul Ray Smith: A real Soldier's Soldier

Zeno Gamble

Special to *The Vanguard Point*

WASHINGTON – Over the past two days, I have spent quite a bit of time with the family of Army Sgt. 1st Class Paul Ray Smith. His German-born wife Birgit, their son, David, and their adopted daughter, Jessica, arrived in town April 3. Members of his extended family from Germany also are here, plus a handful of his fellow soldiers who served with him in Iraq.

It has been two years since Smith was killed in action, firing a .50-caliber machine gun from atop a broken-down armored personnel carrier in a courtyard where he had been instructed to build a containment facility for detainees near the Baghdad airport. His actions that day saved more than 100 of his fellow soldiers.

We all gathered in Washington for the presentation of the Medal of Honor to Smith's son, 11-year-old David.

My friend Ernie Stewart and I had both been invited to join the Smith family. Stewart heads an organization named "Let's Bring 'Em Home." We had been helping reunite service members and their families for Christmas holidays over the years. We had done what we could in helping to take care of the family since Smith's death, and were invited to take part in the ceremonies.

David was a trooper like his father. As he stood next to his mother and his sister at the White House, David received the medal from the president. His face reflected the solemn mood of the ceremony, and his Aunt Lisa and Uncle Brad predicted that he would indeed grow up to be like his father. Later, he proved that his childhood was still intact, and he

chatted freely of video games and cartoons.

Jessica seemed distant at times, but was not shy. It appeared to me that her father's sudden recognition had affected her life, and in a positive way. When the soldiers rolled up their sleeves to show off, she showed off her own Celtic design on her lower back.

Birgit remained in the highest of spirits throughout it all. Each ceremony brought her to tears, but when she spoke I could see that her words were full of pride for her husband. Her smile never wavered, and she was strong. It was with a grin when she showed off her tattoo. A red heart containing the name "Paul Ray" was emblazoned on her left arm under the words "You're still Number 1."

John Boxler also was there. The

*Continued next page*

## THE SOLDIER

By 15-year-old Sarah Emoto in an "Any Soldier Letter" sent to the 4th BCT

Off in the distance on a hot, dusty day  
A Soldier looks on from the place where he lay

The Soldier is tired, hungry and hot  
His wounds are many from the battle he fought  
His feet are numb, his legs ache with pain  
He has done so much for so little gain

The Soldier is hurting, but his eyes show no fear  
His face is set, no signs of a tear

His mind starts to race  
His heart starts to beat, a look of resolve crosses his face

This Soldier, facing torment and toil  
Will never give up, will never fail  
Courage, valor, dedication and strength  
Keep this Soldier from facing defeat

This Soldier is one, of so many more  
Serving our country through peace and through war  
This Soldier will fight, for you and for me  
Keeping America the land of the free

Thank you dear Soldier  
For what you have done  
Wherever you go, wherever you're called  
You'll be in my heart  
Soldier and friend, hero for all

## Chaplain's corner ...

### *It's more than being in charge*

Chaplain (Maj.) Blake Bowers

4th BCT Chaplain

That long awaited day has finally arrived. Because of a change in personnel or a promotion, your in charge. Now you get to run things the way you see fit. Your going to show them how to do it right. The power and influence is yours to change lives and circumstances. You are now the leader. Is it really that easy?

In Iraq some groups have been waiting a long time for the opportunity to be in charge. Some truly desire to right wrongs. Some groups have other motives. Some truly want democracy. Many want to improve the lives of others and have the best interest of others at heart. Is it easy? Who puts leaders in their place?

Have you ever wondered what the scriptures have to say about governing and the people in charge?

The scriptures say "The authorities that exist have been established by God" Romans 13:1. For us this is very important. Whoever is selected to lead the Iraqi people in the coming days has been established by God. These decisions will impact our lives and that of our children for times to come.

Your section leader, your platoon leaders, your company commanders and all the way up the chain have all been placed by God. Good, bad and indifferent. For those who misplaced their responsibility of governance and leadership there is a consequence and they answer to God.

Take your responsibility seriously. Lead well. Follow the example of Christ. He learned to be a servant first. Before Moses led, he tended sheep. Before King David led and slew Goliath he had to kill a lion and a bear first. Before David led people he tended sheep. So there is a lot more to being a leader than being in charge. Before Jesus could lead the church he had to lead a mixed group of 12 men learning to serve them. Be a servant and serve others first. Honor your leaders and remember God put them in their place of leadership for such a time as this. 

## Continued from previous page

young man from Johnstown, Pa., had offered to become David's pen pal, knowing firsthand what it's like to lose a father. Boxler's father, Sgt. John Boxler Sr., had been killed when a Scud missile struck his camp in Saudi Arabia during Operation Desert Storm. The Smith family asked Boxler to join in attending the April 5 ceremony at the Pentagon. The visit would complete his desire to visit all three places where the 9/11 terrorist attacks occurred.

Spc. Michelle Chavez was there. She was the medic who worked on Smith after he was shot in the head. Chavez had attempted to remove his helmet to treat him, but found that the helmet was holding his head together. She worked for 30 minutes trying to save him.

Pfc. Michael Seaman was there. He had been the driver of the armored personnel carrier. He was the guy injured by a rocket-propelled grenade who did his best to keep feeding Smith ammunition during the battle. He wore an Army Commendation Medal with a valor device on his uniform.

Spc. Louis Berwald was there. He had been manning the .50-caliber machine gun on the APC before it was struck with a mortar, inflicting injuries to his face, shoulder, and hand. He was evacuated from the courtyard and later received the Army Commendation Medal with valor device and a Purple Heart.

Sgt. Matt Keller was there. He had crossed the courtyard with Smith where a Bradley fighting vehicle knocked down a gate so they could engage the enemy. He followed Smith through, firing AT-4 rockets and his weapon at enemy positions and then returned through the breach while Smith fired the .50-caliber machine gun from the armored personnel carrier. He received a Bronze Star with valor device.

Sgt. Derek Pelletier was there. He had been firing anti-tank rockets at enemy positions alongside his boss. Knowing Smith almost four years, he was a loyal and dedicated subordinate. Pelletier was awarded the Bronze Star for his action in that battle. He was awarded another Bronze Star for heroism in a later battle where he saw Smith's replacement hit by enemy fire. When he tried to pull him from the battlefield, he discovered that his boss had been cut in half. After duty in Iraq, he was admitted to the hospital for five months and then released from active duty to return to his home in Boston.

Enshrined in the Hall of Heroes at the Pentagon, Smith joined the brotherhood of Soldiers whose true valor Americans rarely see. Birgit spoke in the hall, her red-heart tattoo visible under the see-through sleeves of her blouse.

Steadying her voice and holding back tears, Birgit told us that not only was her husband tough on his troops, but also on himself. That was reflected in his ideals.

"American soldiers liberated the German people from tyranny in World War II," she said. "Today, another generation of

American soldiers has given the Iraqi and the Afghan people a birth of freedom. This is an ideal that Paul truly believed in."

Before finishing, she said she knew her husband would be proud that she had finally started the process to become an American citizen. Everyone in the Hall of Heroes applauded loudly.

It is an understatement to say that when a soldier read Smith's citation aloud, citing his "conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty" I got choked up. Maj. Al Rascon, a Vietnam War Medal of Honor recipient, standing next to me with his wife, Carol, had tears in his eyes and couldn't speak a word. Smith's battle buddies also were silent. You could hear them sniffing as each tried to hold back tears.

I felt honored that Birgit had asked me to join the family and guests. The ceremonies at the White House and the Pentagon were a prelude to a final ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery, where the sound of "Taps" brought the world to a standstill and everyone to a moment of closure. It is the saddest song in the world.

After the official ceremonies were over, about 20 of us — family, friends, and soldiers — gathered in the lounge at the Washington Hilton and talked late into the night about life, the world, politics, religion, weather and

death. The somber voices faded away as we drank beer and schnapps and brandy. Cigarette smoke wafted about as the frowns slowly turned to smiles, then laughter, as we noticed the gathering had become an impromptu wake.

Birgit's nephew Mathias shared a brew with his father and me as we talked about the overwhelming emotions of the past two days.

"You know, back home in Germany, I can only hope to see the Bundeschancellor on television," he said. "But when our family comes to America, we are greeted by the president. This is indeed a funny situation."

As the evening turned late, and our energy waned, we all parted ways. We exchanged hugs, addresses, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses. We had all been drawn together by a single tragedy resulting from an attack on our nation, and we each had to deal with the events that had led us to this time and place.

A terrorist attack, a Soldier's unwavering duty to his country, the loss of a loved one — such things are difficult to totally comprehend. — Yet from such tragedies one cannot help but feel pride. As we separated and made one last toast to Paul Ray and to Birgit, I wondered where each of us was going and if any of us would see one another again.

We knew where Birgit was going. She was going on to New York to see the World Trade Center site. She said she wanted to see what her husband had died for. I hope that the others in our group also find the closure in our lives where Paul Ray Smith had once been. 

**Editor's Note:** Zeno Gamble is a writer in the Executive Secretariat at the Pentagon.



# On the road again: Soldiers find convoy escort rewarding

Pfc. Dan Balda  
4th BCT PAO

“Headin’ out on the highway, looking for adventure and whatever comes our way,” goes a line from “Born to be Wild.” The Soldiers of 1st Battalion, 76th Field Artillery are heading out on the highway but will be just fine if the adventure stays at home in the garage.

Like many other units in Iraq, the Patriots found themselves with a mission far different than what they were trained for. Instead of directing

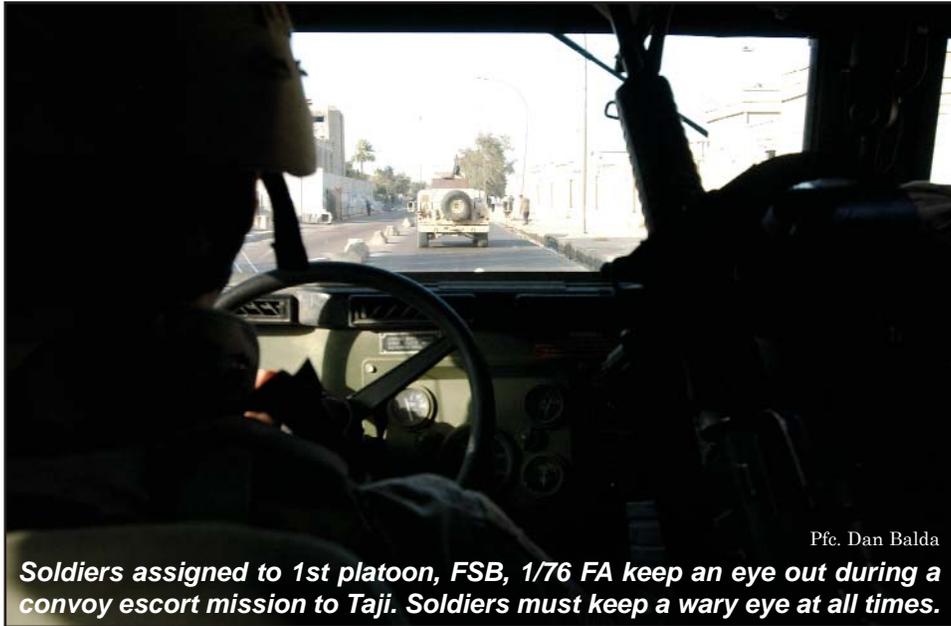
deadly and accurate fire on a target, the Soldiers now find themselves escorting various convoys around Baghdad.

“As a battalion we have driven over 90,000 miles and moved 3,600 passengers safely, 10 platoons on the road every day,” said the battalion commander Lt. Col. Daniel Pinnell, of Central Islip, N.Y.

Pfc. Roland Day, a fueller by trade, now finds himself in the gunner’s turret protecting his brothers in 1st platoon, Headquarters and Headquarters Battery.

“I wasn’t really looking to do this kind of thing when I joined the Army, but if I have to do something, I’d rather be doing this than sitting on the FOB all day,” said the Lumberton, N.C. native. “It makes time go by faster, plus it brings everybody together. We treat each other like brothers; we fuss and fight ..., and we take care of each other.”

The convoys have not come without some element of danger though said Capt. Atn “Bull” Sabat, the Forward Support Battery commander. “I’ve had one platoon get hit by an IED and received



**Soldiers assigned to 1st platoon, FSB, 1/76 FA keep an eye out during a convoy escort mission to Taji. Soldiers must keep a wary eye at all times.**

some sniper fire. We haven’t had anything really serious though.”

Sabat, a New Orleans, La. Native loves working with his Soldiers.

“The guys love this mission. We’re not sitting static somewhere for a year. We’re always on the go, always moving, it’s a lot of fun. Plus it makes the time here go faster. It keeps the guys motivated. They hate sitting around the FOB, they can’t wait to get out. They’re always asking me, ‘Sir, when are we rolling out?’ It’s great to see that in a

group of Soldiers.”

Day is an example of the kind of Soldier Sabat loves working with.

“I don’t ever want to come out of the gun truck. I like my job, I like being the gunner. I like being up there, controlling traffic, hopping curbs, I get a rush out of that. It’s nice being out there actually feeling like you’re doing something to help the guys out.”

Sgt. Cecil Munford, of Miami, believes communication has something to do with their success.

“Communication is the most important part of running the convoys,” Monford said. “I think because of our working relationship, our group has really done a great job out there. Everybody knows everybody’s job so we can step into any slot if we have to.”

Day earned the nickname, “Warning Shot” while on a convoy.

“I had to fire two warning shots. One vehicle wouldn’t stop moving towards us and the other vehicle was a suspected IED. I’d rather have to fire a warning shot and have these guys know I’ve got their backs than to have an IED roll up on us.”

## Extra training helps medics prepare for worse

1LT Marietta Squire  
HHC, 4-3 BTB PAO

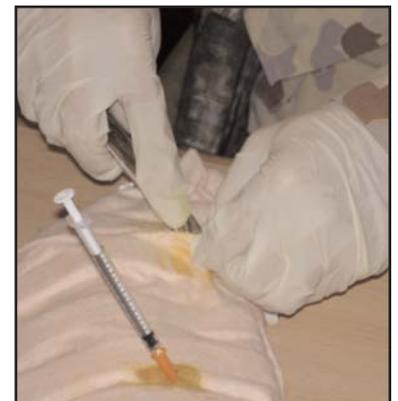
What do finger splints, IV bags, moleskin, and first aid tape all have in common? Well, to the medics from Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 4th Battalion, 3rd Brigade Troops Battalion and the Australian medics who live on Forward Operating Base Union III, these items make up artificial lungs. Every Sunday afternoon the 4-3 Brigade Troops Battalion physicians' assistant conducts medical training.

The eager to learn medics received some

hands on training this past Sunday, as the physician assistant demonstrated and showed the medics how to insert a chest tube into a patient.

The finger splints replicated ribs, the moleskin replicated skin, and the IV bag replicated the actual lung. While performing this procedure, a small incision is made, then a chest tube is inserted underneath the “ribs” and pushed further into the chest cavity, without penetrating the lung.

Hopefully these trained medics will never have to perform this procedure. However, if for some reason they do have to, they will be prepared.



# President presents first Medal of Honor for Terror War gallantry

Terri Lukach  
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON – Two years to the day after his father died saving more than 100 fellow soldiers in the battle for Baghdad’s airport, the young son of an Army noncommissioned officer accepted his father’s Medal of Honor from President Bush at a White House ceremony today.

The president presented the nation’s highest award for combat gallantry to 11-year-old David Anthony Smith, son of Army Sgt. 1st Class Paul R. Smith. Alongside the president and the boy were Smith’s widow, Birgit, and the couple’s 18-year-old daughter, Jessica.

This is the first time the Medal of Honor has been awarded for action in Operation Iraqi Freedom and the global war on terror.

Smith was part of the 3rd Infantry Division’s

buildup for Operation Iraqi Freedom, and among the first wave of soldiers that crossed the Kuwait border into Iraq on March 19, 2003, the first day of the war. He died saving the lives of at least 100 soldiers who were badly outnumbered by enemy forces.

In presenting the award, Bush described Smith as “a soldier whose service illustrates the highest ideals of leadership and love of our country.”

Bush recalled Smith’s early life and career in the Army and described the battle that took his life.

Smith’s mission, as the 3rd Infantry Division moved in to seize what is now known as Baghdad International Airport, was to build a holding area for enemy prisoners of war. “Sergeant Smith was leading about three dozen men,” Bush said, “when they were surprised by about 100 of Saddam Hussein’s Republican Guard.

“With complete disregard for his own life, and



under constant enemy fire, Sergeant Smith rallied his men and led a counterattack. Seeing that his wounded men were in danger of being overrun, ... Sergeant Smith manned a .50-caliber machine gun atop a damaged armored vehicle.

“From a completely exposed position, he killed as many as 50 enemy soldiers as he protected his men.” Bush said. “Sergeant Smith’s leadership saved the men in the courtyard, and he prevented an enemy attack on the aid station just up the road.”

Bush said Smith continued to fire until he “took a fatal round to the head. His actions in that courtyard saved the lives of more than 100 American soldiers.” Soldiers who served with Smith described him as a stern disciplinarian who demanded much of the men under his command, Bush said. Yet Smith also demonstrated incredible concern, going out of his way to make life easier for his soldiers and their families, he added.

In a letter he wrote to his parents from Iraq, but never mailed, Bush said, the sergeant called it a “privilege to be given 25 of the finest Americans we call soldiers to lead into war.” Smith said he was prepared to give “all that I am to ensure that my boys make it home.”

In addition to being the global war on terror’s first Medal of Honor recipient, Smith is the first to earn a Medal of Honor flag, authorized by Congress in 2002.

“We count ourselves blessed to have soldiers like Sergeant Smith, who put their lives on the line to advance the cause of freedom and protect the American people,” the president said. “Like every one of the men and women in uniform who have served in Operation Iraqi Freedom, Sergeant Paul Smith was a volunteer.

“We thank his family for the father, husband and son and brother who can never be replaced,” Bush continued. “We recall with appreciation the fellow soldiers whose lives he saved and the many more he inspired. And we express our gratitude for a new generation of Americans every bit as selfless and dedicated to liberty as any that has gone on before, a dedication exemplified by the sacrifice and valor of Sergeant 1st Class Paul Ray Smith.”



Staff Sgt. Reeba Critser

**Birgit Smith visits her husband’s memorial headstone April 5 at Arlington National Cemetery. Smith’s husband, Sgt. 1st Class Paul Ray Smith, was mortally wounded saving his platoon in Operation Iraqi Freedom and is the first soldier to receive the Medal of Honor in the conflict.**

## 1st Iraq Medal of Honor recipient honored at Arlington

Terri Lukach  
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON – At the foot of a hill crowned by trees and dappled by bright sunlight, the family of a certified hero unveiled a gold-lettered memorial headstone April 5 in Arlington National Cemetery.

The day before, the young widow and her two children accepted the hero’s Medal of Honor from the president. Just before they came to the cemetery, they’d seen him enshrined in the Pentagon’s Hall of Heroes. Now, the family of Army Sgt. 1st Class Paul Ray Smith — his widow, Birgit, and their two children, Jessica and David — unveiled his memorial stone before a small company of family and friends.

Smith was killed in a firefight with Saddam Hussein’s forces at Baghdad International Airport on April 4, 2003, while saving the lives of more than 100 fellow soldiers. His Medal of Honor — the nation’s highest award for valor in combat — is the first awarded for service in Operation Iraqi Freedom and the global war on terror.

Soldiers from the Army’s 3rd Infantry Division, who were part of the mission in which Smith gave his life, also were present at the ceremony.

Sgt. Maj. of the Army Kenneth O. Preston called Smith’s memorial an important reminder to soldiers past and present and to the more than 4 million people who visit Arlington each year that “freedom is not free.” He also called Smith a dedicated soldier

who “solidified the very core of our Army.”

“On that day, 100 American soldiers witnessed and learned leadership of extraordinary proportions — leadership that changed and influenced their lives forever,” Preston said. “Those 100 men will in turn lead hundreds of soldiers, who will benefit from the leadership gained from serving with Sergeant 1st Class Smith. That process will continue to be shared across the entire Army from one unit to another.” Preston said that with the permanent memorial at Arlington, Smith has “become a part of the history of our country.”

“For as long as our flag stands,” he said, “these 200 hundred acres of sacred ground will cradle our heroes and the memory of Paul’s commitment.”

The memorial erected for Smith is one of only six such markers scattered throughout Arlington.

Below the hilltop on which the ceremony took place, a sloping sea of weathered white headstones falls away as far as the eye can see. As the group was gathered, the haunting sound of “Taps” could be heard rising up from another service far below.

Following Preston’s remarks, Birgit, Jessica and David Smith approached the memorial draped in blue fabric. As the shroud was removed, Smith’s widow knelt, caressed the stone, and wiped away a tear as she kissed the marker.

A lone bugler sounded “Taps,” this time for Smith, after Birgit placed a red, white and blue wreath at the site.



White House photo by Eric Draper.

**David Smith, 11-year-old son of Sgt. 1st Class Paul Smith, holds his father’s Medal of Honor, awarded April 4 posthumously by President Bush during ceremonies at the White House.**

# Crew trades in Bradley while working with the IA

Spc. Emily J. Wilsoncroft  
3rd Inf. Div.

Staff Sgt. Juan Serrano, Spc. Noel Mata and Spc. Michael Foutch, all from B Company, 4th Battalion, 64th Armor Regiment, are used to riding around in a Bradley Fighting Vehicle, but these days, they've had to get used to something a little better suited to the streets of Baghdad.

In their old crew, Mata, from Pruce Crossing, Mich., was the Bradley's driver, and Foutch, from Cumberland, Ky., was the vehicle's gunner.

"Last time we were here to fight a war and that was it," Sgt. 1st Class Harold Hill, a D Company, 4/64 Armor platoon sergeant, explained. "Nobody was friendly. Now we're working hand in hand with the Iraqi Army."

Now, however, the positions have shifted with the mission: Serrano drives an M1114 up-armored humvee while Mata mans the hatch and Foutch rides along to provide extra security.

And instead of fighting against the Iraqis, the Soldiers are working with them.

Serrano, Mata, Foutch and their fellow B Co. Soldiers are now attached to D Co., 4/64, and most of their time is spent training and on patrol with the Soldiers of 1st Brigade, 1st Iraqi Army Division.

"We go out with the Iraqis and let them do most of the patrol mission, so eventually they can do it on their own," Serrano, a section leader from Levittown, Puerto Rico, said. "So far, the IA's doing good; they seem to be motivated and willing to learn."

Mata and Foutch agreed that the trainees have come a long way, and the daily missions have been instrumental to that progress.

During one routine patrol April 8, the IA Soldiers accompanied their U.S. counterparts to various areas in Baghdad.

"Today we're doing a joint patrol with



the Iraqi Army, patrolling the river road route on the border of the Tigris," said Hill, referencing the first stop of the morning. "A lot of times it's been used as a dumping ground. We get out there and make there haven't been any caches placed or anybody trying to cross the river. It's one of the main infiltration routes we worry about when coming outside the Green Zone."

Upon arriving at the dumping ground, some of the 1/1 Soldiers secured the perimeter while others searched for items such as weapons, unexploded ordnance and an abandoned bunker. With some coaching from 4/64 Soldiers, the IA troops were able to complete the mission without a hitch.

The next several stops along the way were what Hill, a Newell, N.C., native, called "meet and greet" areas — the residential sections of the city where Soldiers take some time to feel the pulse of the community.

"We get out and walk around, talk to the local populace, go to the local store, maybe buy a soda," Hill said. "We hang out and talk to them, see if they've had any problems, stuff like that."

As the three-vehicle convoy moved from place to place, 1/1 Soldiers moved confidently and efficiently, quick to carry out instructions given to them by their 4/64 comrades. Since most of the Iraqi Soldiers speak little English, an interpreter goes along on each mission to communicate between the two units.

Even without an interpreter, though, the smiles on the IA Soldiers' faces speak volumes about their pride in their new jobs and their desire to continue to get better at what they do.

"They're very proud people," said 2nd Lt. Bill Evans, a B Company, 1st Battalion, 184th Infantry Regiment, California National Guard platoon leader whose unit also works with 1/1. "They want to learn. We seem to do a lot for them these days, but we have to wean them from that, we have to sever those ties so they can do this on their own."

Sgt. Marcus Brister, a D Co., 4/64 squad leader, said he thinks the Iraqis' biggest improvements come from their daily involvement in the security missions.

"At first, it was like herding cats," he said of his unit's initial work with the IA Soldiers. "You could tell them what to do and where they need to go, but they're going to take their own way to get there."

Evans said the IA Soldiers' zeal has caused the biggest challenges in the way they conduct operations.

"If we get (intelligence) on someone we're looking for, we go through a whole (operation order) before we take any action," he said. "But if we send them out just to get information on the person, they'll come back, all excited, with him tied up, and say, 'We got him!' We're trying to teach them that that's not the way we do things."

"They want to do their jobs," Evans, from Torrance, Calif., added, "but they just don't have the guidance. You can't easily undo what Saddam did over 35 years."

Still, little by little, the U.S. Soldiers' joined efforts are proving to be essential in reaching the ultimate goal of turning Iraq's security over to its own Soldiers, and the need for Serrano, Mata and Foutch's Bradley is growing smaller and smaller. 



# Cottonbalers sweep Saydiyah

1st Lt. Christian Mitchell

3/7 Inf. PAO

Baghdad, Iraq — Task force 3-7 Infantry and their Iraqi counterpart, TF Lion conducted a large security sweep in the neighborhood of Saydiyah April 3 - 4.

Saydiyah has been an area of significant interest for 3/7 Inf. since the battalion arrived in Baghdad in late February.

The neighborhood is a compact, populated area and composed largely of affluent Sunnis who were prominent members of the former Ba'ath regime, along with a sizeable population of former military officers. It was also suspected to harbor one or more large militant organizations.

These militant, criminal factions were terrorizing the law-abiding citizens of the town, attacking coalition forces, and threatening death or harm to anyone who offered information about their activities.

Additionally, Cottonbaler Soldiers have encountered numerous improvised-explosive devices and small arms attacks in the Saydiyah area.

Saydiyah has accounted for more than half of all IED's found or detonated in the 3/7 Inf. area of operations. First Sgt. Joe Bulick said that there are groups of hostile males within the city, who were clearly in opposition to coalition forces.

This was evident by the daily "atmospherics" one encountered there such as people displaying open hostility during routine patrols throughout the area.

Bulick also added that it also became common for IED's to be emplaced where 3/7 Inf. Soldiers had recently patrolled.

As a result of the continued attacks against Cottonbaler Soldiers, Lt. Col. David Funk, the 3/7 Inf. commander, directed his staff and commanders to plan and conduct a security sweep to capture known or suspected anti-Iraqi forces.

The goal of the operation was to detain criminal elements in order to provide a safe and peaceful environment for the citizens of Saydiyah, as well as for multinational forces.

The operation itself involved the entire task force, with every company providing a critical element to the success of the larger plan.



3/7 Inf. Soldiers search an Iraqi man for contraband at a check point.

After establishing a large outer-cordon to prevent escape from, or reinforcement to, the targets, the battalion moved rapidly to their objectives. The TF objectives included suspected residences and meeting places of high-level leaders, as well as lower-level "operators" and weapons caches. Given the nature of the targets, the task force was prepared to apply overwhelming combat power in the event of a fight.

As one D Company platoon leader said, "... we expect a fight or spirited skirmish to occur."

However, as a result of the extensive cordon, coupled with the speed and synchronization of the companies' moves to their objectives, many targets were caught by surprise, and no shots were fired.

A crucial part of this successful operation was the participation of our Iraqi Army counterparts, the 3rd Battalion, 1st Brigade of the 6th Division (TF Lion).

The Lion platoons were integrated fully within the Task Force, with each TF Baler company having at least one Iraqi platoon attached to it. Additionally, Lion, supported by the advisors from Baler's Headquarters Co., had two objectives of

their own. This was clearly a joint operation, in which the Iraqi Army proved, once again, that they are making excellent progress.

Overall, the complex, joint operation in Saydiyah, was a success. Several targets were detained, and a few of them have been assessed as having "high intelligence value."

In addition to the detainees, the operation netted weapons, ammunition, anti-American propaganda, and large amounts of money. The long-term impact of the operation remains yet to be seen. No one believes this will end the violence completely. As D Co. commander, Craig Gibson, said, "this operation was just the beginning. It was meant to send a message to the citizens of Saydiyah, that we are here to help, and that we will not tolerate this type of insurgent activity." Gibson's assessment, one shared by all the Cottonbalers is that "yes, the insurgents have been shaken up, but this is not the end."

Whatever the future may hold, the Cottonbalers are prepared to take action and help the citizens in their area of operations. 

Safety Watch: Don't play with the critters. Some bite back

# Georgians join Georgians to provide Baghdad security

Capt. Stephen L. Gifford  
4th BCT PAO

The 4th Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division has welcomed a new infantry battalion to its ranks. And, just like most of the units in the Fort Stewart-based division, the soldiers of this battalion are from Georgia.

However, most of these soldiers don't speak English.

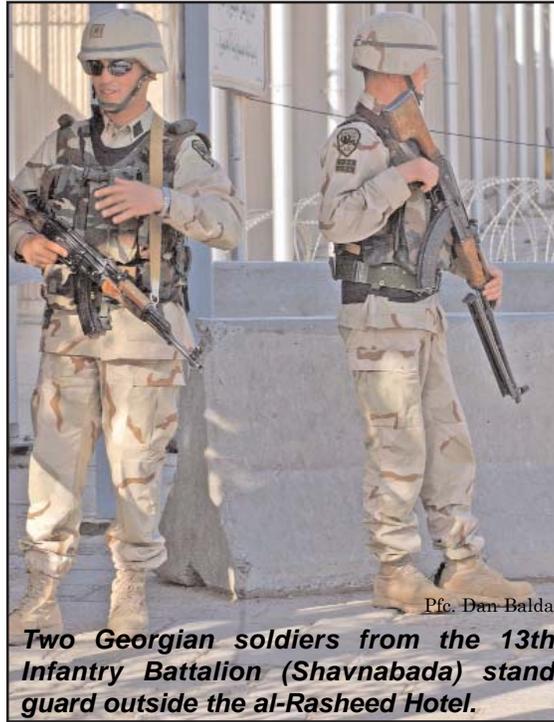
The 13th Infantry Battalion joins the 4th BCT from the country of Georgia, a former Soviet Republic located on the Black Sea between Turkey and Russia.

The 550-soldier battalion will be responsible for security at two of the most important sites in Baghdad — the al-Rasheed Hotel and the Iraqi Convention Center, the home to the newly-elected Iraqi National Assembly. The battalion will also provide security for United Nations convoys in Baghdad.

"We look forward to helping the people of Iraq launch their own democracy," said Capt. George Shengalia, the 13th Battalion commander. He pointed out that Georgia is a new democracy, and said he understands the need for security during this transition.

The 13th is called the "Shavnbada" battalion, named for a type of cloak worn by medieval warriors. The most famous shavnbada was worn by the patron saint of Georgia, Saint George. The battalion's crest includes the word "Shavnbada" in Georgian, the battalion's symbol, the Griffin, and the number 13.

The Shavnbada battalion was established with the independence of Georgia from the Soviet Union in 1991. It saw combat a



**Two Georgian soldiers from the 13th Infantry Battalion (Shavnbada) stand guard outside the al-Rasheed Hotel.**

year later, conducting an amphibious assault from the Black Sea in northwest Georgia. In 2003, the battalion received advanced training and equipment from the U.S. Marine Corps.

More than 90 percent of the soldiers currently serving in Iraq are veterans of fighting a guerilla insurgency in the South Ossetia region of the country in October 2004.

Col. Ed Cardon, the commander of the 4th BCT, welcomed the addition of the Georgian soldiers to the Vanguard Brigade.

"The Shavnbada battalion has a vital role to play in the security of Baghdad and Iraq, and I am confident in their abilities," he said. "The 13th Infantry makes a welcome addition to the Vanguard team."

He also said he's especially pleased that Shengalia has chosen to allow its soldiers to wear the 3rd Inf. Div. patch as the unit's combat patch for this deployment.

Georgian soldiers wear their unit patch on their left shoulder, as well as combat

patches and a subdued Georgian flag. They wear American-style desert combat uniforms with black flak vests and load-carrying combat equipment. On their kevlar, all soldiers wear a seven-pointed star, a common Georgian symbol.

Most of the soldiers in the 13th Bn. speak both Georgian and Russian. Most also understand a few words of English, and can read English letters and numbers. All important checkpoints and Georgian missions include interpreters.

Other coalition countries supporting the Multi-National Division-Baghdad include Estonia and Macedonia.

## Mustangs encounter variety of oddball weapons

2nd Lt. Peter Robinson  
6/8 Cav. Engineer Officer

Troopers with 6th Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, trained as scouts to gain contact with enemy maneuver forces, and to provide intelligence on the enemy threat, continue to expand their skill sets and their imaginations to cope with the oddball weapons used by insurgent forces. In some cases, insurgents' tactics have left 6/8 Soldiers scratching their heads or laughing out loud.

First, there were the reports of cutouts, plywood silhouettes of dogs placed in the middle of the road, with eyes that reflected headlights at night. Apparently intended to cause vehicles to halt near IEDs, the cutouts generated thoughtful and innovative responses from commanders. With tactical roadblocks being contemplated, one leader remarked, "Let's put some full-sized cows with reflective eyes out there. That should stop traffic."

Then there were the two bicycle

bombs. Painted after modification to disguise detonating cord as brake line, the hollow frame packed with explosives, the bicycle bombs were presumably designed to permit the erstwhile pedestrian bomber a high-speed (or at least 10-speed) approach to vulnerable targets. The fear the bicycle bombs struck in the hearts of the Americans was hard to quantify, possibly because it was confused with other emotions. At least one Cavalry officer, returning from a mission, remarked "Men, I saw a man on a bicycle today. And I thought ... well, it's a pity."

Fortunately, both bicycle bombs were captured by 6-8 CAV before they could be used, in the sort of cache seizure a scout could write home about. When the Combined Explosives Exploitation Cell arrived at the site 6/8's B Troop had secured, they recovered and seized the bikes along with a VBIED, 13 suicide vests, four fuel-soaked bags of fertilizer, 20 artillery rounds, and six propane tanks.

The latter items are effective enough



weapons, but other seizures have netted stabbing weapons, antique single-shot rifles, and on at least one occasion, a Sten gun. The Sten gun, mass-produced during World War II as an alternative to more expensive submachine guns, has no safety, and is notorious for discharging if dropped.

Having proven ineffective thus far, it remains to be seen whether Anti-Iraqi Forces will continue to use such weapons. Certainly bicycles are cheaper than cars, though their effectiveness is unproven. The real question may be whether the Scouts and fellow soldiers can cope with these eyebrow-raising tactics. So far, it seems well within their power.



**Sgt. 1st Class Harold Flowers, 4th BCT Medical NCO, changes the dressing of an Iraqi man. Soldiers and medics from 4th BCT provided medical assistance to 60 patients.**



**1st Sgt. Bobby Breeden, HHC, 4th BCT first sergeant, greets a young Iraqi girl. He said helping the children is what the MEDCAP was all about.**

# MEDCAP helps cross cultural gap

Pfc. Dan Balda  
4th BCT

Haifa Street has had a lot of nicknames, Grenade Alley and Purple Heart Row among those that can actually show up in print.

Soldiers and medics assigned to 4th Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division sought to change that when they set up a Medical Civilian Action Program April 2.

Sgt. 1st Class James Braet, a motor platoon sergeant with headquarters and headquarters company, 4th Battalion, 64th Armored had come into contact with a lot of the residents during patrols in the area.

"They had a lot of standing water that was stagnant," the Moline, Ill., native said. "We went into some of the homes and there was six inches of water on the ground. A lot of the kids had skin diseases on their face. Capt. Raymond Brovont, 4th BCT brigade surgeon, had the idea for a MEDCAP and I told him I knew of an area that could really use the help."

The medics brought everything from the stuff for basic coughs, colds, congestion to wound management. Typically the amount of supplies would be enough to run a troop medical clinic for two or three weeks. The medics treated 60 patients in the two hours they were set up, Brovont said.

"We treated everything from people who brought us their MRI's for terminal cancer, traumatic brain injuries, sores, colds runny noses, counseling on basic nutrition and dental care," Brovont, a native of

Livermore, Calif., said. "It ran the whole gamut of things you see in the states but usually people are so poor they are unable to get the treatment they need."

Brovont believes this is one of the main reasons why he came to Iraq.

"Combat is one thing, but the people understand that if we provide them with some humanity, we can show them that we care for them. Even in a place as poor as this, that's been infamous for the violence, we are out of here trying to help them and hopefully they see this as we are trying to better them as a society trying to reestablish them as a collective group."

1st Sgt. Bobby Breeden, 4th BCT Headquarters and Headquarters Company first sergeant came to the MEDCAP to help provide security but ended up watching the doctors help the people. The Midwest City, Okla., native thought there were other positives to draw from this experience other than the medical aspect.

"This kind of stuff here hopefully slows down some of the combat that we are seeing," Breeden said. "Hopefully the people become more trusting of us and be more likely to work with us."

The Iraqi civilians who were present not only saw the American Soldiers helping, they also saw the Iraqi Army taking part in bringing relief to those who needed it.

"I think this is great because it helps the IA establish rapport with their own people because there are mixed emotions with the IA and their own people," Braet said. "They are starting to win the people over as well. The people we talk to on the streets say that the IA is great, they make them feel safe.

Two months ago they weren't even able to open up their shops, now all the shops are open."

All the people involved agreed that the children who live in the area were one of the main reasons they were out there.

"I love seeing the kids leave here with a smile, being able to help them is what this is all about," Breeden said. "Being a father, this means a lot to me. You always see your kids in each of the little kids out here, that's one of the reasons why I think a lot of us want to help."

During Braet's unit many patrols on and around Haifa Street, he has seen the attitudes of the residents become more positive and more productive.

"I fill my pocket with candy everyday to hand out to the kids, sometimes we hand out stuffed animals," Braet said. "Just from handing out book bags the other day we got a huge tip on a weapons cache in the area. The guy said that because we had been handing out things for the kids he decided to tell us where the weapons were. This is the kind of stuff that's going to win the war."

Brovont had one patient in particular that really stuck in his mind.

"There was a little girl, about two years old, with big blue eyes. She was very scared, but the more I spent time with her, the more comfortable she got with me," Brovont said. "I taught her how to give a high-five, to slip me some skin. I was very happy with that. Even across cultural and language barriers, there can still be that common ground that exists with healthcare. It was a very rewarding trip out here." 

# Child injured in IED attack;



***Spc. Shane Kirk, a medic assigned to A Co., examines the wound of an Iraqi girl and cleans it up.***

2nd Lt. Robert N. Couture

1/184 Inf.

A few weeks ago an improvised explosive device took the lives of three U.S. military police officers, wounded four 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment Soldiers, as well as one of our own A Company, 1st Bn., 184th Infantry Regt. Soldiers in southern Baghdad. The detonator of the IED was captured shortly afterwards.

Insurgents not only had fatal effects on U.S. Soldiers, but also severely damaged the surrounding Iraqi neighborhood. The shrapnel from the explosion blew out windows on cars and

## *Modesto medic tends wounded girl*

homes in the surrounding area. Large shards of metal, asphalt, and cement had no discretion in the damage it caused.

Two weeks after the attack, A Co. was conducting a patrol and clearing a stretch of road in the vicinity of the previous IED. They were looking for signs of emplaced IEDs along the highway. Many locals were asked about the previous incident, but they were scared to talk; worried there would be repercussions from insurgents for talking to multinational forces.

A man came out when we searched the road near his home. He was visibly nervous and seemed uncomfortable speaking with us, but was in despair. His family soon followed him and provided him some encouragement to speak with our Soldiers.

He spoke excitedly to our interpreter, recounting the explosion of a few weeks past and pointed out the windows of his car and home that were blown out and even showed us shards of rock and metal that struck his home.

A rock the size of a golf ball had struck his young daughter during the explosion. His daughter came over and showed us a dirty and bloody dressing on her leg. Underneath, was a gash the size of silver dollar where the rock had struck her just below the knee. The dressing had not been changed since they visited the clinic, almost two weeks prior.

Spc. Shane Kirk, the medic assigned to A Co., 1/184 and native of Modesto, Calif., examined her wound and cleaned it up the best he could. He provided the family with some clean dressings and some antibiotics for their daughter, along with instructions to clean and redress the wound everyday. Antibiotics were also given to prevent infection.

This goes to show, that when the insurgents attack, it isn't only multinational forces that they are hurting, they are hurting innocent Iraqi children. 

## *Iraqi checkpoints help shut down insurgents*

2nd Lt. Peter Robinson

6-8 Cav. Engineer Officer

Standing in the hot sun day after day, equipped with automatic rifles and a handful of machine guns, a passerby can see Soldiers holding intersections throughout Baghdad. Protection for these Soldiers is offered by single layers of sandbags and a few lonely rolls of concertina wire.

They are not multinational forces or even affiliated with Iraqi Security Forces' training teams. They are Iraqis, from the 2nd Battalion, 1st Iraqi Army Brigade, and they work the city streets of their own country by locking down key avenues; preventing attacks by insurgents looking to place improvised-explosive devices on roads, or from lobbing mortar shells from areas with hasty exits.

It would be possible to doubt the commitment and motivation of a force hastily trained and under-equipped. But this particular Iraqi force is standing on its own two feet.

"Considering the resources they have,

and the training they have, their effort is above-average," said Capt. Terrence Sommers, a 6th Squadron, 8th Cavalry Regiment Soldier working with the Iraqis.

Nor are their efforts without effect; Soldiers in 6/8 Cav. give them much of the credit for the drastic reduction in attacks on MNF traveling certain key routes.

Maj. Chris Worrill, operations officer for 6/8 Cav. said that the historical data shows that the three checkpoints manned by Iraqi forces has produced a sharp decline in the number of IEDS placed in the southern edge of the al-Dora neighborhood and the number of mortar attacks against Camp Falcon.

The Iraqis of 2nd Bn. engage in many types of operations, from quick raids to deliberate cordon and searches. But their most visible role, in which Soldiers most frequently see them, is the constant overwatch they keep at road checkpoints.

At these checkpoints, the Iraqis are ideally situated to both block insurgent escape from likely firing points, and to keep an eye on neighborhoods and popular IED spots.

Besides deterring attacks, the Iraqis are excellent intelligence collection resources. This intelligence can be immediately exploited — typically by the Iraqis themselves.

"Between what they've found themselves, and what they've received from walk-ins, they've got fifteen seizures in the last two months," Sommers said.

Locals have seen the same Iraqi Soldiers manning the same checkpoints for some time. This consistency, and the consistent manner in which they respond to threats once aware of them, has earned them credibility with Iraqi civilians. There are good hopes that with continued presence throughout the sector, the success the 2nd Bn. has so far had can be extended to a broader area.

"The Iraqis don't trust you until they see you've committed to something for a while," Sommers said. "But they trust these guys, and they know the difference between these guys and others. If we can earn this trust elsewhere, we can have an even greater effect." 