



VANGUARD POINT

Volume II, Issue 4
April 28, 2005



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1-184 and 3/7 Inf. honor the memory of their fallen Soldiers.



A 1971 British operation resembles Vanguard Tempest only on the surface.



A U.S. Soldier working with an Iraqi Soldier climb the stairs of a suspected insurgent's house to look for evidence during Operation Vanguard Tempest April 11. For story and photos, see Page 4.

Photo by Spc. Ronald Shaw

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Do you have a letter to the editor, photo or story to send in? Send it to 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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703rd keeping the IZ riding

Mechanics from the 703rd FSB are staying busy as they are responsible for maintaining all of the military vehicles in the IZ. **Page 6**

'Defenders of the Green Zone' begin training

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3/7 Inf. and 1/184 honor fallen Soldiers

3/7 Inf. and 1/184 Inf. pay tribute to Cpl. Manuel Lopez III, 3/7 Inf., and Cpl. Glenn Watkins, 1/184 Inf. The ceremonies honored their sacrifice and memory. **Page 7**

Echoes of Motorman?

A 1971 British operation against the Irish Republican Army mirrors the 4th BCT's Operation Vanguard Tempest only on the surface. **Page 8**

The VANGUARD POINT is produced in the interest of the servicemembers of the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division. The VANGUARD POINT is an Army-funded newspaper authorized under provision of AR 360-1.

Contents of the Vanguard Point are not necessarily the views of, nor endorsed by, the U.S. government, Department of Defense, Department of the Army or the 3rd Infantry Division. Circulation: 2,500

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On the cover: Iraqi Soldiers breach a door before raiding a target house, in south Baghdad April 11. Soldiers from B Company, 3rd Battalion, 7th Infantry Regiment, worked with Iraqi forces to capture insurgents performing acts of terrorism within Baghdad.

Chaplain's corner ...

What happens when it just keeps getting worse?

Chaplain (Maj.) Blake Bowers
4th BCT Chaplain

Have you had one of those days when everything seems to go wrong? You get the email from the spouse at home that says one child is sick with something; another is whiny and has been for a few days.

On the way to take one of the children to the doctor, something goes wrong with the car, then when the spouse comes home, one of the children put extra soap in the washing machine and now there is water, suds and soap all over.

Next comes a phone call from a close relative about a sick family member who asks your spouse if they can leave right away to help. You get the "why aren't you here speech, I don't know if I can handle it any more," and you feel guilty. You're torn between loyalty to your unit and then to your family.

Can it get any worse? Sometimes it does. What do we do and how do we respond? Can anyone help? Let me offer a few suggestions from scripture.

There was a man named Job. First, he lost his oxen and donkeys. Then he lost his sheep and servants. Next his camels were stolen and more servants were killed.

When you thought it couldn't get any worse, his ten children died all at once. Now Job was a good guy. He was very righteous the scriptures say. Yet he gives an example how to handle adversity. He shaved his head, as a sign of grief.

First we may need to grieve as Job did. It's healthy for us. Next, he bowed down to worship. At times we have no one else to turn to except God. He is the only one who isn't overwhelmed by our circumstances. We must turn to God as Jonah did. He praised God and did not curse God. Hard to do, but he did. He still had his life, and he was breathing.

In all things we are to praise God. He wasn't praising God for the ill but for what he used to have and for God's goodness to him. Then, as if that were not enough, a little later, he was afflicted with sores. His good health was taken away. His wife lost her mind and asked him to

curse God, so he lost his wife as well.

Then he had some friends visit him. The best medicine they gave Job was their seven days of silence just sitting with him in the town garbage dump. After a while they couldn't keep quiet, and they accused him of sinning against God, and God had punished him for his sin. He had lost the support of his closest friends.

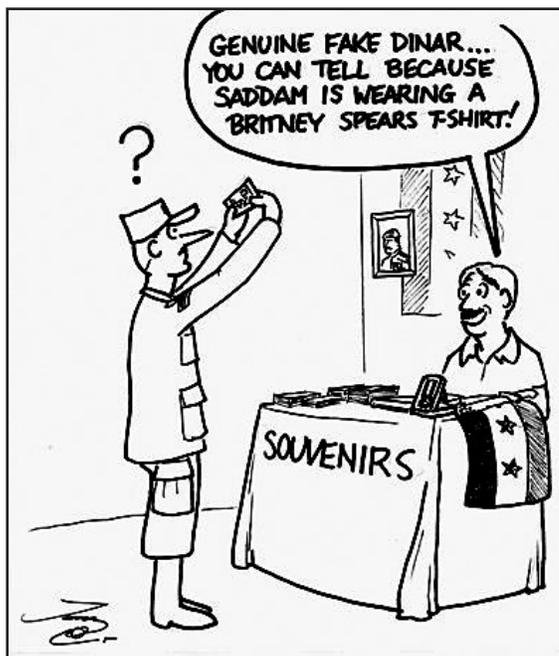
Job still maintained his relationship with God through all this. He was poor, broken in body, homeless and lonely. Job stuck with God, and God stuck with Job. In the end, the scriptures record Job saying to God "My ears had heard of you, but now mine eyes have seen you" (**Job 42:5**).

Sometimes it can get worse. God's promise is not riches and finery all the time, but the riches of his presence and the sacred fellowship that he provides us to sustain ourselves through the worst of times. Even when it can get worse. Stay with God and he will stay with you.

In the end our relationship with God is refined to a greater spiritual state and we are further along in our faith journey with God then when we started. 

Buster's

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AROUND THE POINT: STORIES FROM AROUND THE BRIGADE



Photos by Spc. Ronald Shaw

Soldiers from B Co. 3/7 Inf. prepare to enter a house during the early-morning raid dubbed Operation Vanguard Tempest.



Spc. Ira Moore from the women's search team attached to B Co., 3/7 Inf. searches an Iraqi woman living in a target house. The U.S. forces worked with Iraqi forces to capture insurgents performing acts of terrorism.

Soldiers from A Co., 1/184 Inf. prepare to roll out for Operation Vanguard Tempest.



A Soldier from B Co., 3/7 Inf. searches a house of a suspected insurgent during the operation.

Tempest sweeps through Al Dora

Large scale raid nets 67 terrorists in Baghdad

Spc. Emily J. Wilsoncroft

3rd Infantry Division

FOB FALCON, Iraq – Iraqi Army Soldiers teamed up with elements of 4th Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division for Operation Vanguard Tempest, an early-morning raid on the Baghdad neighborhood of al-Dora April 11.

Their mission?

Hunt down nearly 90 known terrorist ringleaders – anti-Iraqi forces whose charges include donating money and supplies for the building of improvised explosive devices – and bring them back to Forward Operating Base Falcon to be detained and questioned.

The raid stood out as the first to name such a high number of targets as its goal.

“We’re going in to get these high-priority targets, and we’re trying to hit everyone at once,” said Sgt. 1st Class Stephon Garrett, a platoon sergeant with C Company, 3rd Battalion, 7th Infantry Regiment. “If we get them, it’ll be like finding the Holy Grail.”

These guys are trying to kill Americans, Iraqi Soldiers and Iraqi Police,” added Pfc. Richard Kasserman, a C Co., 3/7 tank loader from Aiken, S.C. “It’s best to get ‘em off the streets as soon as possible.”

“As soon as possible” was 3 a.m. April 11, when the Soldiers began to move among the dimly-lit and nearly silent rows of houses, taking care to stop only at those homes identified in the intelligence they had been given.

Upon entering the residences, they searched for evidence of the hunted person, and if there was none, questioned the occupants to glean any available information.

“So-and-so just moved away from here,” some would say, or, “I don’t know where so-and-so could be.”

Even though some teams weren’t able to locate their assigned targets, nearly half of the suspected terrorists accompanied the Soldiers back to Falcon by sunrise.

Returning empty-handed, Garrett, from Talladega, Ala., said he would have been happy with the capture of even one of the infamous criminals.

“Even if we just save one person from an IED, I’ll feel it was a success,” he said. “We’ll be taking a lot of money out of a lot of terrorists’ hands.”

The operation’s success far exceeded that, though. At last count, the U.S. and IA Soldiers had apprehended 42 of the identified targets and an additional 25 insurgent insiders who were not on the original list.

“There are now approximately 67 criminals who are off the street for the time being,” said Capt. Raymond Hill, 1st Battalion, 184th Infantry Regiment battalion information operations officer. “It went well ... (the Soldiers) have been trained to do this and I know they executed the missions well.”

IA elements who accompanied the Vanguard Soldiers played a crucial role in the operation, according to 1st Lt. Bryan Bonnema, the platoon leader of 3rd Platoon, C Co., 3/7.

“They are a great asset,” the Clifton, Va., native said. “They know the area and they know the culture. They are our intelligence on the ground and they are definitely important ... I enjoy working with them.”

“The IA’s integrity and values have changed since the last time we were over here,” said 1st Sgt. Darren Woodland, the C Co., 3/7 first sergeant from Fayetteville, N.C. “It used to be, they saw something they wanted and took it. Now, they see there’s a right way to do things, and that you have to treat people the way you want to be treated.”

Of the hundreds of U.S. and Iraqi Soldiers who took part in the raid, none were hurt during the mission – a goal shared by everyone.

“Ultimately, we want to bring all our guys home and accomplish the mission,” Woodland said.

Sgt. 1st Class Thomas Tucker, third platoon, C Co., 3/7’s platoon sergeant, agreed.

“If I got all my guys with me, safe and sound, that’s the biggest reward,” Tucker said. “If we get the bad guys, that’s good, too.”



Photos by Spc. Emily J. Wilsoncroft

(Above) An Iraqi woman looks on as her husband is questioned by U.S. and Iraqi Soldiers

(Below) An interpreter looks through an address book found in the suspected home of an insurgent



Maintaining the time away



Pfc. Dan Balda

Pfc. Henry Partida, a refrigeration and air conditioning repair specialist, works on the air conditioning of a humvee.

Pfc. Dan Balda
4th BCT

703rd Forward Support Battalion's motto is "Maintain the Line," but it does much more than just that.

"We provide maintenance, support and repairs for everything from the basic humvees to (Tube-launched, Optically-tracked, Wire-guided) missiles and air conditioning, we do it all," said Sgt. 1st Class Greg Nettles, the maintenance control sergeant for B Company, 703rd, and a native of Linden, Ala.

703rd FSB is not just supporting the 4th Brigade Combat Team; they are also responsible for every single unit inside the International Zone regardless of what nationality they claim, according to 1st Lt. Corey Woods, B Co.'s maintenance control officer.

"Everybody in the unit knows their mission," Nettles said. "Everybody is focused on getting their job done; it's hard work. We know that the more we work, the busier we stay, the faster our time here will go by."

Keeping busy is one thing the Soldiers do not have to worry about.

Woods came to Iraq with approximately 160 Soldiers. Counting the various guard shifts and other details his unit gets tasked for, the unit is running at about 50 percent of its manpower. When Soldiers start taking leave it will drop to 40 percent, he said.

"We trained specifically for this at (the Joint Readiness Training Center),"

the Poplar Bluff, Mo., native said. "We set all kinds of tasks just to see where our breaking point would be so that we would be prepared for Iraq. We can go as low as 33 percent if we have to."

Staff Sgt. Milton Smith, a refrigeration and air conditioning repair specialist from Macon, Ga., thinks the training has helped tremendously.

"We keep really busy with all the people that want to make sure their AC is up," he said. "They line 'em up like we're Jiffy Lube out here."

This is Smith's third deployment after deploying to Kosovo and Operation Iraqi Freedom 1.

"This has been a good deployment so far," he said. "Nothing beats Kosovo, but I'm not complaining about this one. I think that the accommodations have helped us work a lot harder. Knowing that I'm going to get some good chow and have a decent bed to sleep in when the day is done makes me want to get the work done that much faster."

Even though they have only been in Iraq for about two months, Woods is confident in his Soldier's abilities.

"We've known that we were going to deploy for a year," he said. "It's amazing what these Soldiers have done with the pace we've put them through at Fort Stewart and the pace we are maintaining here. I thank these guys everyday for the job they are doing. We are trained well; when we get back we are going to have something that we can be very proud of." 

6-8 Cav. begins training 'Defenders of the Green Zone'

2nd Lt. Seth Kirchhoff
6-8 CAV Adjutant/PAO

Members of 6th Squadron, 8th Cavalry Regiment took their first steps towards the success of their new mission in Iraq April



Soldiers from 6-8 Cav. will train the Iraqi Soldiers to take over security of the International Zone.

18 — training the "Defenders of the Green Zone."

More specifically 6-8 will train the 1st Bn., 3rd Bn. and Headquarters, 5th Brigade, 6th Division Iraqi Army. The task at hand is to give the Iraqi leaders the skill sets and leadership attributes required to train competent and successful soldiers. When all is said and done 5 Bde., 6 Div. (IA) will be capable of protecting the Green Zone and its surrounding areas with out assistance from the U.S. military.

During day one of training at Muthana Airfield, located just north of the Green Zone, Lt. Col. Michael Harris, 6-8 commander, led the way as his cavalymen were introduced to the Iraqi Soldiers they will work with for the next eight weeks. Although the link up seemed awkward at first, due to the language barrier, both sides appeared eager to train and ready to learn from one another.

As explained by Maj. Chris Worrill, 6-8 Cav.'s operations officer, most of the tasks the 1,600 Iraqi soldiers will be trained on consist of basic soldier skills such as rifle marksmanship, battle drills, traffic control points and first aid.

He said, "Our goal here is not to turn the Iraqi Army into an American Army, but rather show the Iraqi leaders how we conduct business and let them make decisions on what tactics, techniques and procedures will work best for them." 

'Damn fine Soldier' remembered by peers

Pfc. Dan Balda

4th BCT PAO

FOB FALCON, Iraq — "I am Baler 6, and Cpl. Manuel Lopez III was my brother," said Lt. Col. David Funk, 3rd Battalion, 7th Infantry Regiment commander. "True we have different last names, do not come from the same place and indeed share no common ancestry that I am aware of. Nonetheless, he was my brother. In fact by my last count, I have 825 Cottonbaler brothers deployed with me here in Iraq. Four days ago the count was 826."

Members of the 3rd Infantry Division came together April 16 to honor the memory of their fallen brother, killed in a rocket propelled grenade attack.

Lopez, a native of Haverstraw, N.Y., was assigned to D Company, 3/7 Inf., as a communications specialist.

His company commander, Capt. Anthony Gibson, shared a unique bond with his Soldier outside of their work relationship.

"Our wives gave birth to two little girls on the same night at Winn Army Community Hospital back at Fort Stewart," Gibson said. "Over the next few days, we rejoiced at the sight of those two little girls, and we also cried together because God is so good. We could not understand for the life of us how we could luck out having not only one beautiful girl in our life but two now."

Though each speaker had many different things to say about Lopez, one theme permeated each of their memories.

"I remember when he received pictures of his wife and daughter in the mail," said Pfc. Henry Almonte, co-worker and friend, "He brought them to my room late at night to look at. He was so proud of them."



Pfc. Dan Balda

A Soldier plays "Amazing Grace" on the bagpipes during Cpl. Manuel Lopez III's memorial service April 16.

Chico was happier than anybody," Funk said. "He was like the proverbial kid in a candy store, jumping from one vehicle to the next on that cold Kuwaiti night setting up the radios and ensuring his buddies could talk during their upcoming escort mission. He saw it as his solemn duty to make sure his buddies could communicate on the battlefield. He knew that it would save lives."

Funk said that Lopez thought it was his responsibility to make his brothers laugh.

"He was a true and loyal friend, quick with a smile, a kind word and the occasional devilish prank just to keep the Devil's on their toes," Funk said. "He was a man who always took his job, but never himself seriously."

"Cpl. Lopez had a big heart," Perez said. "God, in his divine right, deemed it too big for Iraq, and this place is a lesser place without him. I look to the sky and know that the angels in paradise feel calm and safer for God called upon our brother and friend, a Cottonbaler who will guard the heavens as he did our country." 

Nightstalkers honor fallen comrade

Pfc. Dan Balda

4th BCT PAO

Cpl. Glenn Watkins, A Company, 1st Battalion, 184th Infantry Regiment, was honored at a memorial service at Forward Operating Base Falcon April 9.

Watkins was killed in action on April 5, when his vehicle was struck by an improvised explosive device.

Lt. Col. Patrick Frey, 1/184 Battalion Commander spoke about Watkins' children. Two of his sons serve in the military, one the 82nd Airborne Division and the other just joined the Navy. His daughter is a member of the Israeli Civil Defense Forces. His youngest son is home schooled.

"His children go out into life armed with the best examples in life that American culture has to offer," Frey said. "He was a quiet man, but we remember him for his humor. He was Jewish, but he loved Christian rock and roll. He was a Soldier, but he was no warmonger. His leadership, bearing and sacrifice served as the perfect model for every Soldier here."

Watkins' company commander shared his last conversation with the man who was remembered for his smile.

"The last time I saw him was the evening of April 4, when he was getting water for his patrol," said Capt. Keith Haviland. "I asked him how he was doing. He replied, 'I am doing great sir.' No sarcasm, no facetious-

ness. It was just 100 percent genuine. This is the way I will always remember him, a 'Cool Hand Luke' smile and a passion for the brothers he served."

Staff Sgt. Steve Nunez knew Watkins since 1998 when he first served with 1/184 and was his squad leader this time around. Watkins signed on to stay in Iraq another year to fight with his old friends in the unit.

"Us old timers were glad to have him back, he always got the job done, asking for nothing in return except a cup of coffee," Nunez said. "I'll miss you bro, see you when I get home."

Cpl. Ricardo Brizuela, one of Watkins' best friends in the unit said Watkins put his butt on the line every-

Continued next page

Echoes of Motorman?

Operations mirror each only on the surface

1st Lt. K.G Norton

B Co, 3/7 Inf., TF 1-184 Inf.

The events surrounding Operation Vanguard Tempest bear a striking resemblance to a British Army operation that took place in Northern Ireland in 1971. Faced with a determined threat from the Irish Republican Army, the British mounted Operation Motorman which scooped up more than 100 suspected IRA operators and sympathizers in one night. A closer look at the two operations, however, reveals the stark differences between the ways in which both conflicts have been fought.

At first "Motorman" was hailed as an astounding success that would break the back of the IRA. In fact, however, the British used shoddy, outdated intelligence to identify their targets. Almost none of the local IRA membership was captured that night and the vast majority of the detainees in that operation were either ex-members from years before or never involved at all.

In contrast, the targets selected for Operation Vanguard Tempest were painstakingly developed and vetted for accuracy before added to the list. While the final results of Vanguard Tempest are yet to be determined, it is clear that good intelligence will inevitably lead to success.

The results in the case of Operation Motorman were disastrous. Not only was the IRA still intact, but a majority of the local Irish population in Belfast turned against the British Army.

A comparison of the two operations also reveals procedural differences as well. The British failed to immediately process the detainees to determine the level of value of each individual. The result was that most

of the Motorman targets languished in sub-standard conditions for months or even years without being charged or tried in a British or Irish court. So far, three men have been released following Vanguard Tempest after further investigation revealed a death of evidence or a case of mistaken identity. More releases will follow as intelligence and judicial personnel sift quickly through the amount of information to determine a cause for continued detainment.

At the tactical level, a comparative analysis is also instructive. The British notoriously smashed their way through homes as they searched for evidence of IRA activity. If nothing turned up, they simply moved on without a word, leaving destruction, injury, and anger in their wake. The soldiers who take part in operations like Tempest are given strict guidance about how to act in the case of mistakes.

First, the patrol leader usually adopts an apologetic tone in dealing with the families. The soldiers also take care not to break personal belongings or throw things around in search of evidence. Everything is put back it was found.

"How would you feel if you were this family?" Capt. Paul Hilaski has asked his

men on several occasions. The point is simple but crucial to preventing locals from siding with terrorists to spite American thuggish behavior.

Often times, the level of force in entering a house was directly proportional to the threat. The result is that many homes entered during Tempest were not entered forcefully. Squads in some cases entered target houses after knocking on

the gate and being invited in by unsuspecting targets. This helped to minimize the trauma of the situation for those in the house at the time who were not considered targets (usually women and children).

Finally, the treatment of detainees after their capture is also crucial to understanding the differences between success and failure in a large-scale raid operation. The British often battered and abused the detainees taken into custody in order to extract information. Not only did this create animosity, but it led to false intelligence reports as many detainees gave bogus information to end their torture.

The Tempest detainees, on the other hand, will not be subjected to torture as it is anathema to American ideals and runs counter-productive to the basic objectives of the mission. 



Continued from previous page

day because he knew it was the right thing to do. He then read a letter Watkins wrote in case he didn't make it home safely.

"Please do not despair nor grieve for me. Be proud and talk highly of me for I have done what I was called to do. As a young boy watching the 'Green Berets' with John Wayne I knew a life in the military was my life and possibly my death. I feared not the unknown, and so I set forth on this journey knowing full well what it might mean. I must go for now, stand firm and take up this fight, oh yes I intend to fight hard for I have reason to come home. If you are reading this than you know I have failed at my task. Only life threw me a curve, a man seldom has a choice in the manner of his death. It is only the manner in which he lives that is a mark of a true warrior."

Brizuela added, "I think he fits the bill. He was my friend, I will miss you, I will see you when I see you." 



Courtesy Photo

An undated picture of Cpl. Glenn Watkins.