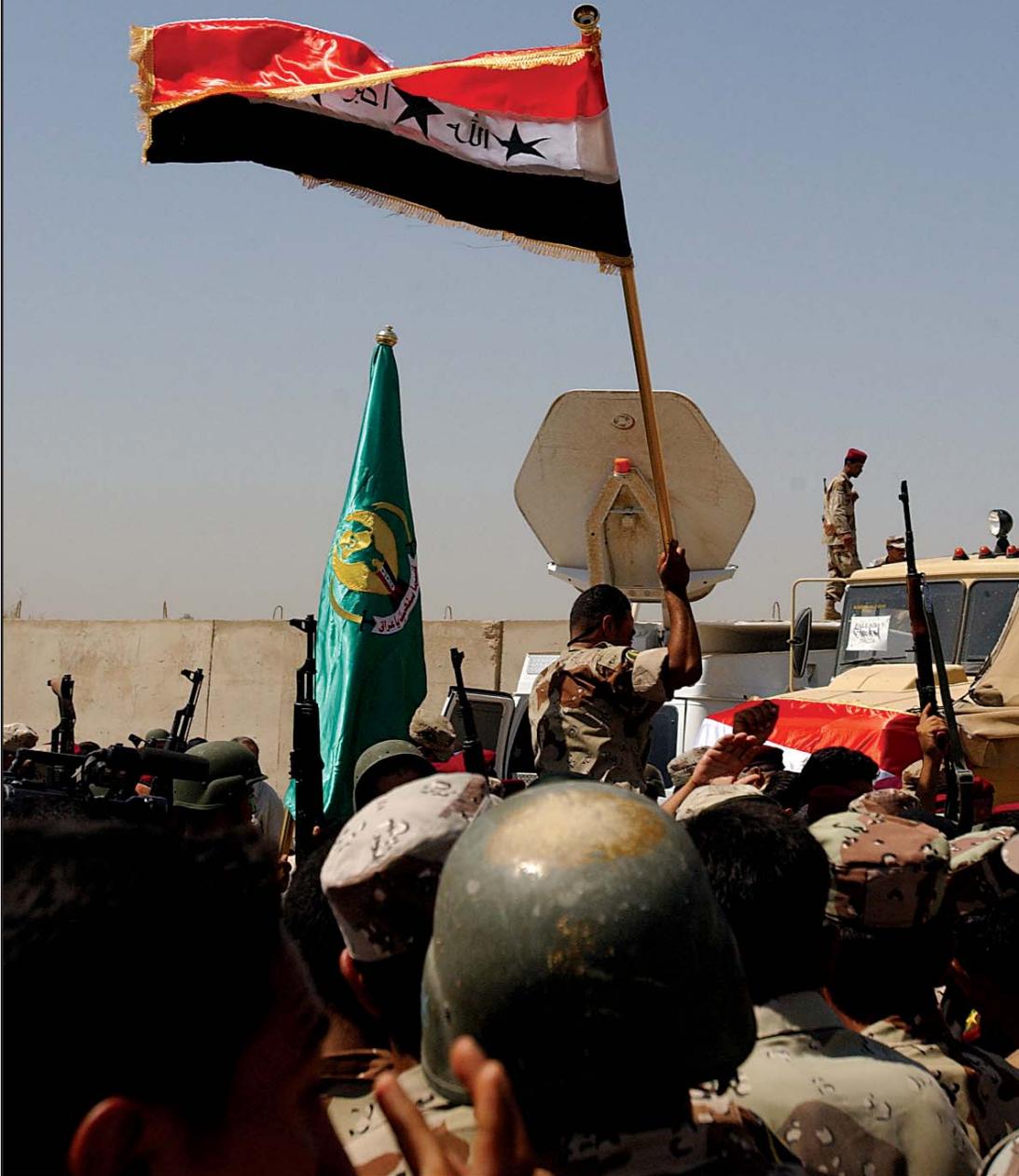




VANGUARD POINT

Volume II, Issue 9
July 14, 2005

Celebrating
the future of
Iraqi security ...



Inside



The basics for every Soldier when dealing with IEDs can be summed up with the 5 Cs.



The 4th of July was celebrated a little early but that didn't stop Soldiers from having fun.



1-76 FA and 1-184 Inf. honor their fallen comrades with separate ceremonies.

A member of the Iraqi Army Band plays during the activation ceremony of the 5th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division June 29 at Muthana airfield. For story and photos by Staff Sgt. Raymond Piper, see Page 6.



To the Point: Voices and viewpoints from around the brigade

BTB Soldiers answer call to serve

For many reasons, the Soldiers in 4-3 Brigade Troops Battalion are answering the call to continue their service in the Army. From bonuses to stabilization and a myriad of other reasons, they are raising their right hands and staying in. **Page 3**

Buster's Baghdad

Maj. James Crabtree's takes a humorous look at life in Baghdad. **Page 3**

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.

Around the Point: Stories from around the Brigade

5 Cs to combat IEDs

IEDs are one of the greatest dangers Soldiers face in Iraq. The 5 Cs give Soldiers a blueprint to combat them. **Page 4**

1-76 marks its first year in Iraq

1-76 FA was reactivated in 2004 and assigned to 4th BCT and celebrated their first birthday in Iraq. **Page 5**

Celebrating the 4th at FOB Prosperity

It was a little early, but that didn't stop Soldiers and service-members around the IZ from celebrating the 4th of July and having fun. **Page 8**

Tough times provide valuable lessons

Although it's been a tough journey at times for Lt. Col. (Doctor) Jeffery Smith, there isn't anywhere else because he's where he can help the most. **Page 9**

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

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4th Brigade Commander
Colonel Edward Cardon
4th Brigade Command Sergeant Major
Command Sgt. Maj Gary Coker
4th Brigade Public Affairs Officer
Maj. Alayne Conway
4th Brigade Public Affairs NCOIC
Staff Sgt. Raymond Piper
Staff Writer
Pfc. Dan Balda
Broadcast Journalist
Pfc. Nakisha Fonoti

On the cover:
5th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division Soldiers celebrate after the brigade's activation ceremony June 29 at Muthana Airfield.



Retention scene holds promise for troops deployed to Baghdad

Spc. Ryan Netto
A Co., 4-3 BTB

What will you say when your country calls on you? The Assassins have already answered the summons with a thunderous voice. At a time when Army recruitment is on a spin-down, A Company, 4-3 Brigade Troops Battalion is holding down the line with a wave of re-enlistees.

In the past two months, five soldiers have already raised their right hands in our nation's continuing defense. In July, three more Assassins are digging back in for another go-round. The retention scene holds more promise as windows are opened and troops look to their own future.

If money is an incentive to stay on the team, the big guns have been drawn. A Co re-enlistees received a minimum of \$11,000 with some bonuses reaching \$18,000. These are theater bonuses and not to be confused with military occupational specialty bonuses.

Staff Sgt. Robert Braun says that his cash bonus is just "gravy" on top of doing what he wanted to do since he remembers playing with G.I. Joes in his youth.

Other options that have helped to keep Alpha's players on the field include six-month school opportunities, 12-month stabilization programs, reclassification into new fields and duty stations of choice. Primarily, the troops are keeping their uniforms on because they love the job according to Assassin Retention

Noncommissioned Officer Sgt. Samuel Smith.

The Assassin family is sticking together by taking care of its troops and violently executing the mission by always remembering to "Get It Done!"



Courtesy Photo

1st Lt. John Weissenborn, A Co., 4-3 BTB executive officer reenlists Sgt. Justin Hutchinson at FOB Prosperity June 1. Sgt. Hutchinson is also assigned to A Co., 4-3 BTB and serves as the Joint Network Node team chief.

Buster's

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'Five Cs' simplify fight against IEDs

Staff Sgt. Mark St.Clair

MNF-I Public Affairs Office

CAMP VICTORY, Iraq – Five potentially life-saving words are being driven home to Coalition service members and civilians throughout the Operation Iraqi Freedom theater.

Confirm, clear, call, cordon, and control are the “Five Cs” that represent a simple set of guidelines that Coalition forces can and should use when encountering a suspected improvised explosive device.

“The reason we teach the Five Cs is because they make an easy to remember guide for (servicemembers) to follow if they suspect or find an IED,” said Alex Szigedi, operations officer, Joint Improvised Explosive Device Defeat Task Force, Camp Victory.

Using methods like the Five Cs simplifies IED awareness and “helps in the decision-making process, helping it become second-nature. They’re also on the IED Smart Card,” said Lt. Col. Ted Martin, chief, JIEDDTF. The IED Smart Card is produced by the Victory-based IED Working Group.

The IED Working Group, led by British Maj. Gen. Mark Mans, MNC-I deputy commander, meets weekly. Liaisons from major subordinate ground units, information operations delegates, ordnance-destruction contractors and others come together to discuss advances being made in the IED fight, changes in insurgent tactics and the most important issue: how to get valuable information down to where it matters — the troops on the ground.

“We’d never encountered anything like (IEDs) on the battlefield, and we’re not shy about going to people with expertise,” said Lt. Col. Ted Martin, chief, JIEDDTF. Some of the “people with expertise” have been Coalition soldiers in the British army, who have been dealing with IEDs in theaters like Northern Ireland for years. The British used a Four-C model to counter IEDs in the past, and Coalition forces in Iraq used that as a framework and adapted it to the present fight, said Martin.

Confirm

The first step when encountering a suspected IED is confirming its existence. If service members suspect an IED while performing 5- and 25-meter searches of their positions, they should act like it could detonate at any moment, even if the suspected IED turns out to be a false alarm. Using as few people as possible, troops should begin looking for telltale signs of IEDs – like wires or pieces of ordnance sticking out of the ground. As Martin said, “There’s no place like Iraq when it comes to ammunition on the ground.” So what looks like an IED may be a piece of unexploded ordnance but it should be treated like an IED until it is determined that it’s not.

While searching, troops should try to stay as safe as possible, using anything available for protection. If a better view is needed while searching, soldiers should move as safely as possible while maintaining as much distance as they can from the suspected IED to continue searching.



Joint IED-Defeat Task Force photo

When an improvised explosive device has been found and trained personnel have been called in to manage the situation, troops on the scene should cordon and control all access routes to the danger area.

Rifle scopes, binoculars and even cameras can be used to search from a safer distance. It also may be helpful to ask local Iraqis for information, but troops should never ask them to search, too. Personnel should never try to touch a suspected IED and should never try to do the job explosive ordnance disposal technicians are specially trained to do.

Clear

If an IED has been confirmed, the next step is to clear the area. The safe distance is determined by several factors: the tactical situation, avoiding being predictable and moving several hundred meters away from the IED. Everyone within the safe distance should be evacuated. If more room is needed, such as when the IED is vehicle-borne, soldiers should clear a wider area and constantly direct people out of the danger area. The only people going near the IED should be those who are there to diffuse it, such as EOD personnel. While clearing the area, soldiers should constantly be on the lookout for secondary IEDs. If any such devices are found, they should reposition to a safe area and report the find to the ranking service member on the scene. Soldiers should try not to set patterns while performing clearing procedures, so the enemy will not be able to learn from our tactics and techniques. By not setting patterns and monitoring non-Coalition personnel watching the situation, troops are better protected.

Call

While the area surrounding the IED is being cleared, a nine-line IED/UXO report should be called in. The report is much like the nine-line report used for medically evacuating

Continued next page

1-76 FA celebrates first year

Pfc. Dan Balda

4th BCT PAO

Members of the 1st Battalion, 76th Field Artillery came together June 12 to celebrate their first birthday as a reorganized unit with a combat patch ceremony held at FOB Honor.

"We have accomplished an amazing feat in our one year since activation," said Lt. Col. Daniel Pinnell, the battalion commander. "We've asked you guys to do more than you would normally do in a one year time span. We've asked you to step forward and you have. You have done an incredible job; damn good work."

The Patriots are primarily a field artillery unit in name only. They knew before deploying their main mission during Operation Iraqi Freedom would be convoy operations for the United States Embassy and the United Nations, and they have risen to the task.

Pinnell spoke to his troops after the ceremony passing on the praise from some of their more notable fares.

"The ambassador wanted to praise you for your courage under fire that occurs daily," Pinnell said. "He wanted me to remind you the importance of what you do on a daily basis, and the payoff that comes from doing it. For us, the Iraqi people and the nation both short and long term. The head of Department of Justice

We have accomplished an amazing feat in our one year since activation. We've asked you guys to do more than you would normally do in a one year time span. We've asked you to step up and you have. You have done an incredible job.

here in country wanted to offer his thanks for what you do on a daily basis. I could not be prouder of you, nor could anybody else involved in this operation."

As of June 12, the battalion has performed more than 1,621 missions, escorting more than 18,528 personnel and \$6.3 billion dollars worth of equipment, while driving more than 230,402 miles.

Pinnell knows his men have one of the most dangerous jobs in Iraq but he believes the effort that has gone into the planning will carry the day.

"We put in a lot of effort in an attempt to understand our enemy before we got here," Pinnell said. "We've spent hours a day getting the information down to the platoon leaders so that their Soldiers are ready to accomplish they given mission. We've done an exceptional job in understanding our enemy and that has translated into getting them on the run. We put troops on the trucks every day knowing that we have addressed 90 percent of what

they are going to face. But there is always that 10 percent that we can't account for."

For the senior enlisted man in the battalion, Command Sgt. Maj. David Williams, standing up a new battalion is nothing new. This is the second battalion Williams has helped start from scratch.

"I think this battalion took everything and ran with it like they had been functioning for years," said the Beaufort, S.C. native. "Usually you expect a lot of mistakes from a new battalion, but these guys have handled everything we've thrown at them."

"The junior leaders, the E-5's and lieutenants, have done an exceptional job," Williams said. "We supervised them closely for about the first 20 days, and they have taken off with it since then."

He continued, "The best part of the deployment has been seeing the young men grow, seeing them step up to the mission. They have done it better than I've ever seen before, one day after another." 

Continued from previous page

casualties, and includes the necessary information for the unit's Tactical Operations Center (TOC) to assess the situation and prepare an appropriate response to clear the IED as the threat.

Cordon

After the area has been cleared and the IED has been called in, Soldiers should establish blocking positions around the area to prevent vehicle and foot traffic from approaching the IED; make sure the safe area is truly safe by checking for secondary IEDs; and make use of all available cover. The effected area's entire perimeter should be secured and dominated by all available personnel, and any available obstacles should be used to block vehicle approach routes.

Troops should scan both near and far and look for an enemy who may be watching and waiting to detonate the IED. Insurgents often hide in locations where they can see the device and ascertain the right moment to detonate. Personnel should randomly check people leaving the area to deter attacks, again avoiding setting patterns. Establishing obstacles to control approaches to security positions is another tactic the JIEDDTF stresses, since

insurgents may try to attack local security forces using a vehicle-borne IED.

Control

Since the distance of all personnel from the IED directly affects their safety, service members should control the site to prevent someone from straying dangerously close to the IED until it is cleared. The task force stresses that no one should leave the area until EOD gives the "all clear." While controlling the site, make sure all the troops in the area know what to do if attacked with small arms or rocket-propelled grenades.

If troops are a part of a patrol or convoy that finds an IED, they should remember the Five Cs in order to deal with the situation as quickly and safely as possible. An IED that is found is still an IED attack, said the JIEDDTF. By finding the IED, it's the enemy's attack that has been disrupted.

"(The Five Cs) reinforce IED awareness and training. It's a checklist that helps you think; it's a common-sense thing ... to help people remember the proper steps when encountering an IED," said Szigedi.

(Editor's note: Information in this article was provided by the Joint IED Defeat Task Force.) 



An Iraqi woman throws confetti as Iraqi Soldiers from 5th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division pass in review during a June 29 activation ceremony at Muthana Airfield

Photos by Staff Sgt. Raymond Piper



(Above) 5th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division Soldiers pass in review during the June 29 activation ceremony at Muthana airfield.
(Left) Iraqi Soldiers demonstrate their Karate skills against one another during the ceremony.



Iraqi Army Brig. Gen. Fouad Hani Faris and Maj. Gen. William G. Webster Jr., Task Force Baghdad commander, raise the 5th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division flag during the activation ceremony.

‘Defenders of Baghdad’ go from training to mission ready

Staff Sgt. Raymond Piper
4th BCT PA NCOIC

The training started more than eight weeks ago for the “Defenders of Baghdad.” In those eight weeks they learned new tactics and strategies so they can defend their country against any threat.

The 5th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division’s training culminated with an activation ceremony at Muthana Airfield June 29.

“This is an important day for the people of Iraq,” said Maj. Gen. William G. Webster Jr., Task Force Baghdad commander during the ceremony. “These men before you are all volunteers and have sworn to defend Baghdad.”

“All of the TV stations are here so that the people can see the ceremony,” said Iraqi Army Col. Mohamed Hashim Al-

Musawy, Iraqi Army Brig. Gen. Fouad Hani Faris’ aide. “As our training goes on, the citizens, houses and the streets of Iraq will be safe. If the U.S. forces keep helping us in our training, we will control the Iraqi streets and we’ll protect the citizens from the explosions the terrorists make against the Iraqis.”

The newest Iraqi Army brigade will be responsible for defending the Green Zone and surrounding areas in Baghdad.

“I think they will play a vital role in the freedom of Iraq and Baghdad. With these Soldiers, they will show the American and Iraqi people that they are up to the task and can handle the job,” said Command Sgt. Maj. Robert Taylor, 6th Squadron, 8th Cavalry Regiment command sergeant major.

The brigade, made up of more than 2,500 Iraqi Soldiers, began training April 18 at Muthana Airfield. Soldiers from 6th Squadron, 8th Cavalry Regiment and Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 4th Battalion, 64th Armor Regt.

worked with the fledgling Iraqi Soldiers.

“They have trained hard and worked hard to get where they are at today. The activation ceremony was a turning point for the brigade from training to actually doing patrols and securing the Green Zone,” Taylor said.

Soldiers were trained on a variety of tasks that they will use on the streets of Baghdad, such as reflexive fire, basic marksmanship and clearing rooms.

“I feel proud that the Iraqi soldiers can defend the country of Iraq. I hope God will make them brave and keep them safe,” Mohamed said. “We have soldiers that are very young, and we thought that they might fail, but because of the Americans that gave us good training ... they made it.”

He added that the Iraqi Soldiers now feel proud to be a part of the Iraqi Army.

“In the past they were scared to be one of the Iraqi Army

Soldiers so no one from the terrorists would kill them, but now, there are many volunteers,” Mohamed said.

He continued, “I learned from our training ... that they have high feeling (morale) about their training and they’ve proved it during the operations that they’ve had in Dora and Haifa Street, Abu Dasheer and Karradah.”

Taylor said, “They may not be as good as American Soldiers today, but one day they will be just as good. They put their lives on the line every day, either at checkpoints or on patrols, and they are right beside us doing the same things we’re doing.”

Mohamed said that the Iraqi troops have been successful in these areas because of the U.S. Soldiers training and they will continue to get better.

He added, “I hope the same unit will train the next brigade so the new soldiers will receive the highest level of training.”



Soldiers compete to see who can pull an uparmored humvee 50 meters the fastest, during the Independence Day celebration July 1.

Photos by Staff Sgt. Raymond Piper

Soldiers celebrate the 4th in Iraq

Staff Sgt. Raymond Piper
4th BCT PAO NCOIC

It wouldn't be a celebration in the Army if the day didn't start with a run and the 4th of July celebration at Camp Prosperity July 1 was no different.

The celebration began with a five kilometer run for the Soldiers at the camp and gave an opportunity to remember Independence Day.

"I think it's good that we can be in a combat zone and celebrate our nation's holiday. It kind of makes you feel like you're at home," said Spc. Simon Tomlinson, an infantryman with B Company, 4th Battalion, 64th Armor Regiment.



Basketball and soccer were just two of the events during the day-long celebration.

Tomlinson and his team mate took first place in the 5K team competition where they had to run two miles in PTs, the last mile with their Kevlar, weapon and flak vest, then disassemble and reassemble an M16 rifle, M9 pistol and M240B and M249 machineguns.

During the day, Soldiers and Marines from within the International Zone had an opportunity to compete in a variety of sporting events, ranging from basketball to a tough man competition.

"You see the smile on the Soldiers' faces. They are pretty serious when they're playing ball, but on the sidelines you can see them laughing and joking," said 1st Lt. Curtis Phillip, E Co., 703rd FSB. "It feels pretty good to see them get a break because they have been working hard."

In addition to the sporting events, the troops competed in spades tournaments, billiard tournaments and horse shoes.

"It's a celebration ... and it feels even better over here. I'm just happy to be an American and I think you ... appreciate it more here," Phillip said.

The sporting events and games ended with a barbecue at the dining facility, rounding out the 4th of July celebration with a little slice of home.

"It's a very special day," said Lt. Col. Robert M. Roth, 4-64 Armor commander. "Sometimes when you're celebrating back in the United States you forget that ... we're all connected in a special way. It started hundreds of years ago and continues on today. It continues here in Iraq and that is why we're here because all men and women are created equally."

Tomlinson said he felt it the celebration means a little bit more here because you know that the reason you're country is free is because what servicemembers are doing here.

As the Soldiers celebrated Independence Day, it reminded them of their service and sacrifice in Iraq.

"We're here to make another people succeed in the same type of independence our country went through," Roth said.

Curtis said, "It feels good to be over here helping the Iraqis and giving them the opportunity for freedom." 



Through tough times, doctor learns life lessons

Pfc. Dan Balda

4th BCT PAO

When he speaks, one can picture him reassuring his patients, pushing his glasses off his nose to see you better or glancing over them to make eye contact. When he speaks, one can feel the passion for helping those who really need it, whether it is citizens of a developing country or a recently injured Soldier.

Lt. Col. (Doctor) Jeffery Smith, the 1st Battalion, 184 Infantry Regiment battalion surgeon didn't have to come to Iraq. He didn't have to lose his civilian medical practice. But in each instance, as with most paths he walked in life, he felt led to do something to help others.

As a self-described "average high school student," Smith chose to attend the University of Colorado (Boulder) to major in journalism. He grew up during the Watergate era and saw journalism as a way to help the little guy.

"It was a great education, but I realized that breaking a story (like the Watergate scandal), was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity," Smith said. He didn't have enough creative control over his product so went home to Hawaii to ponder his future while digging ditches to save money to go back to school.

During this time, Smith played a lot of guitar on the beach near his home. He would practice his riffs and scales while watching the waves break over the reef to escape his parents pestering him about going back to school.

"I wasn't what you would call a religious person," Smith said. "I was sitting there one night ... thinking, 'What do you want from me God? What would you have me do?' There wasn't a burning bush or anything, but all of a sudden I felt a peace come over me. And thought, 'I'll be a doctor.'"

Smith told his parents that night he was going back to school, even though he didn't know what school he was going to attend. All he knew was that he was going to be a doctor. His parents' emotions were polar opposites. "My mom was ecstatic, but my dad was angry; he didn't like doctors," Smith said.

A week later, Smith looked at a map to decide where to enroll.

He thought, "I live in Hawaii, I like to surf, I need to find somewhere where I can go to the beach." He and his parents decided Hawaii was not a choice because there were too many distractions from the rigors of studying medicine.

He knew that California was a great place to surf, knew San Diego was closer to the temperature he was used to living and that left one choice in his eyes.

"I applied to one school, the University of California San Diego, and got in," Smith said. "I found out later that it was almost impossible to get into that school. I still have no idea how I got in, I guess God took care of it."

Smith worked his way through the late nights and early mornings of medical school and his residency. He felt called to be a rural doctor because of the high level of interaction between the



Staff Sgt. Raymond Piper

Lt. Col. Jeffery Smith, 1st Battalion, 184th Infantry Regiment surgeon, examines the X-ray of a boy with a broken arm. Smith said he came to Iraq because he wanted to help.

doctor and his patients, but the deciding factor was it felt right.

Having his own practice enabled Smith to take a couple of weeks off each year to go to the less affluent areas of the world.

"My town had a lot of church groups that would go out and help people, and I would arrange to go out with them," Smith said. "I enjoy the missionary part of that."

One year Smith went to Jamaica but didn't go to any of the resorts or tourist traps.

"We went to all these little towns way up in the mountains. The folks would come out of the woodwork for help. It's hard because if we were in America, many of the conditions could be treated very easily."

"In America ... we put so much into healthcare. The people there were so happy just to have one Motrin."

Smith loved working with his patients in Georgia but believes that he stayed longer than he should have. "I just didn't fit in. I tried, but I felt like I was a square peg in a round hole."

Smith began to look for a new job, and interviewed at the University of Nevada Reno School of Medicine. He went to his annual training as an Army Reservist at Tripler Army Medical Center for two weeks while he was waiting to find out about the new position.

"I remember watching President Bush on the aircraft carrier with the sign, "mission accomplished" behind him, Smith said. "I thought, 'Well I guess they fought another war and didn't need me.'"

During the first gulf war, Smith fought the battle of "Fort Econolodge." He was ready to deploy when most of the people were told to go home to their families and they would get orders later. The orders never came.

"Eighteen years in the Army medical corps, and they don't need me," Smith thought. "My friend at Tripler said she needed me to stay an extra week," Smith said. He gave his friend the extra week,

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"Sometimes you have to let the change go through you, to see what options you have."

Continued from previous page

which ended up costing him his medical practice.

The extra week in Hawaii cost him about \$20,000 in lost work at his practice because he was still maintaining his office in Georgia, while waiting on a response for the new job.

Smith's thought was, "If you need me, and the country is at war, I'll donate that time."

While Smith was in-processing Trippler he found out he was being mobilized.

"If I knew I was being mobilized I wouldn't have gone to Hawaii," Smith said. "I would have needed that money to shut my practice down before I deployed. I had about four or five weeks to shut my practice down and to find my patients new doctors. When I left for Fort Stewart I was basically bankrupt."

Once again, God was speaking to Smith. Instead of telling him to embrace a new career, God was teaching Smith a more difficult lesson.

"To me it was God saying, 'Jeff, you need to get out of Georgia and find something new to do.' He was making me let go of something I otherwise wouldn't have let go of."

To this day, Smith holds no grudges against God. One of the factors that made the transition easier was the way the Soldiers have treated him.

"When I first got to Fort Stewart, I had a pay problem, and the Army stopped paying me," Smith said. "I didn't find out until I was almost basically out of money."

Smith was "running on financial vapors," when he finally made it to the finance office.

"It was a Thursday before a long weekend, about three or four o'clock. I went into finance and the guy was just about to close down but said he was going to do everything he could to help me, and he did. He stayed at work late that night, and somebody else came in on the weekend to work on my packet. Those are the people that make me love being in the Army."

All the changes Smith has recently faced could have discouraged his generally positive outlook on life. Instead, he learned a valuable life lesson he still holds dear to his heart.

"Sometimes you have to let the change go through you, to see what options you have," Smith said. "You can look at it negatively and say, 'Oh my gosh, what am I going to do?' I've lost this, this and this. You can sit there and go through all the things you've lost. But if you look at it positively you can say I'm going through an evolution. That change can be a good thing."

That change includes being a full-time Soldier, a change Smith has extensive respect for.

"These Soldiers are giving a year of their time in defense of their country," he said.

Smith realizes the hardships Soldiers face, especially while on deployment, but he joined because he wanted to help the Soldiers.

Smith said, "Basically I've always met good people. People in the Army have interesting personalities. My favorites are the (non-commissioned officers) and officers who have gotten past their initial contract. People who have gotten to the 10 or 12 year mark usually are the ones who are very devoted and very patriotic."

Taking care of Soldiers is what makes Smith's job enjoyable and taught him one of the most valuable life lessons regarding money versus happiness. One he could never have learned in years of medical school.

"It's fun taking care of Soldiers," Smith said. "I love my job. I have no regrets, I lost my job, but it's not the end of the world. I

took a financial hit, but honestly, money does not make you happy, it really doesn't."

He used his brother as an example.

"My brother joined the Navy as a mechanical engineer. He's well trained, very smart, but what he really wanted to do his whole life was to be a train engineer. He is so smart and capable he trained himself out of that job. He never looked at it. But now he's 50, and I know he still wishes he could go out in a yard somewhere and push trains. If that's what makes him happy, that's what he should be doing. He did it for all the wrong reasons, now he's stuck doing it, and it's too late to change. And he's only staying in it for the money, and the money owns him."

Attending a memorial service for fallen Soldiers solidified his choice.

"I was touched by the Soldiers' lives, touched by their offering," Smith said. "Seeing all these men speak about their friends. At that point money means nothing to them."

Before deploying to Iraq, Smith worked with Soldiers who were being medically discharged from the Army at Winn Army Community Hospital.

"I met some great Soldiers that had to come home with fantastic stories to tell," Smith said. "In private practice I didn't get as much time with the people. Here I was able to sit and talk with the Soldiers."

Smith could have stayed at Stewart instead of Iraq, but he has been in the Army for 18 years and wanted to do something more relevant. He could have chosen to go to a less hazardous tour in Germany but he felt his focus would be better served at FOB Falcon.

"Here it is so focused," Smith said. "For the rest of your tour you only have one focus. It's very rare for me, to do one thing at a time. Usually there are so many distractions in life, work, school, traffic; to me this is easier, personally, than being in Savannah or Germany. When I was at Fort Stewart I would go to Savannah to eat and think, 'It would be so much more fun if my wife was here.' I'd miss them so much every night it would really wear me down."

According to Smith, the best part of the job is working with the NCOs, keeping them healthy so they can, in turn, take care of the younger Soldiers.

"What I hope that I provide is that NCO making those life and death decisions outside the wire isn't sick. What's typical of the NCO corps is that they will be sick, but they'll get a mission and tell their commander, 'I'll go.' My job is to keep them healthy, but I don't want them out there if they don't have to be."

Overall, Smith receives the most fulfillment when faced with a casualty.

"There's nothing like it, and I don't mean it in a good way," Smith said. "It's just a kid lying in front of you, mangled, and you just want to get him home to his parents. I can understand that as a parent and as a Soldier." 

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

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



Artillerymen gather to remember true patriot

Staff Sgt. Raymond Piper

4th BCT PA NCOIC

Soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 76th Field Artillery Regiment gathered June 28 at FOB Honor to remember the service and sacrifice of one of their fellow patriots June 28.

“Sgt. Joseph Tackett was a patriot through and through,” said Lt. Col. Daniel Pinnell, 1-76 FA commander. “He was a superb war fighter and a stern but compassionate leader with a warm heart and strong handshake.”

Tackett died of nonbattlefield related wounds June 23.

As a fire control sergeant, he was assigned to A Battery, when C. Btry., 1st Bn., 41st FA was deactivated in May 2004. While serving with 1-41 FA he deployed to Operation Iraqi Freedom in January 2003.

“I had the privilege to have Joseph in the battery and the honor to serve with him for my two years that I have been in command. Joe was my utility guy; my guy who could do it all.” said Capt. Alric Francis, A Btry., 1-76 FA commander. “Whether it was driving the first sergeant all over Iraq during OIF 1, being a fire direction fire specialist



Staff Sgt. Raymond Piper

A Btry. 1st Sgt. Garnett Taylor pays his final respects to Sgt. Joseph Tackett during a ceremony June 28.

or leading the youngest gun truck in the battery, Joe was a consummate professional and was always willing to lend a helping

hand.”

During OIF 3 he was responsible for one of the gun trucks of the battery that provides escort to a variety of agencies.

“The results of his service here in Iraq to his Soldiers, to those he was sworn to protect, the people in Iraq and America who benefit now and will benefit far into the future from his sacrifice are immense but measurable,” Pinnell said. “He personally saved the lives of over a 1,000 dignitaries, Soldiers and civilians entrusted to his care during his 120 plus days of combat. His actions enabled the immense task of reconstruction, humanitarian aid, and the formation of elected constitutional government to proceed.”

Pinnell said “Water flows, power courses through the grid and children have schools with a chance at a better future because Joseph got the men and women who help make this possible to and from work safely each day in the face of intense terrorist pressure.”

Tackett worked hard to live up to the second platoon motto “The Best” and worked tirelessly to see that the motto was upheld, Francis said.

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Nightstalkers remember fallen brother

Spc. Jayson Howell

29th BCT Public Affairs

On June 22, members of Company C, 1st Battalion, 184th Infantry, provided security for the Al Rasheed District Council meeting, when they were attacked with small arms fire by anti-Iraqi forces. Sgt. Arnold Duplantier II, 26, was seriously wounded in the attack. Despite the valiant efforts of his fellow soldiers



Ken James

A rifle squad fires a 21-gun salute to honor Sgt. Arnold Duplantier II during a memorial ceremony

to save his life, he died soon after.

Sgt. Duplantier, “Dupe” to his friends, was born and raised in Sacramento, California. In 1999, shortly after high school, he enlisted in the California Army National Guard as an infantryman assigned to 1st Bn., 184th Inf. He married his high-school sweetheart, Tanya. Soon after, the couple had a daughter, Isabel.

Sgt. Duplantier’s has six years of service in the Army National Guard, including two tours in the Middle East. Duplantier deployed to Kuwait as part of Operation Desert Spring in 2002, where he was awarded the Army Achievement Medal. Upon returning to Sacramento, he served with distinction in a full time position at the California Army National Guard Headquarters. In August 2004, he mobilized with C Co. to FOB Falcon, in southern Baghdad. As an infantry team leader, his natural leadership and the sincere care he showed for his men won him the respect of both his troops and his superiors.

The men of Co. C remember Duplantier not only for his professionalism as a soldier, but also for his good humor and selflessness. “He was a great friend” said Sgt. Antonio Cueva, “when I was with ‘Dupe’ I could never frown ... he would make sure of that.”

Sgt. Arnold Duplantier is survived by his wife, Tanya, and his daughter, Isabel. Sgt. Duplantier’s love and affection for his family were apparent to all who knew him. He was known for proudly showing off their pictures.

For the soldiers of Co. C, 1st Bn., 184th Inf., the mission continues and life carries on, but the void left by the loss of a fellow Soldier — a brother — is palpable.

New civil affairs battalion ready to help win the peace

Spc. Christopher Mallard

CA Public Affairs

More than 800 civil affairs Soldiers from the 351st Civil Affairs Command arrived in Iraq to begin a major relief in place June. The task force began mobilizing at Camp Roberts, Calif., in April and continued on at Fort Bragg, N.C., to meet their push date. The training was intensive, exhaustive, and drew on many of the lessons learned from previous rotations to prepare Soldiers for the specific missions they will be conducting while serving overseas.

Civil Affairs has garnered significant attention over the last few years for the unique skill set and mission enhancing role they bring to theater. Generally, CA is considered an augmenting force that assists maneuver commanders by helping to separate, protect, and improve the lives of normal citizens as the war is brought to the enemy in what those who have lived it know is an asymmetrical battlefield.

Although CA is often associated with the phrase “winning the hearts and minds,” a term which grew out of the Vietnam era when much of the Foreign National support effort was conducted by Special Forces teams, do not confuse their mission with simply placing a pretty face on an often ugly war. Their missions have at times found them in the cross hairs of insurgent activity and the coalition forces effort to stamp it out.

As Operation Iraqi Freedom continues, a new battalion has come to relieve the old and begin taking on the projects, assuming the commitments and trying to forge new relationships with emerging leaders during this critical period as a new Iraq takes shape.

The 448th CA Bn. is based out of Fort Lewis, Wash. and commanded by Lt Col. John Froelicher, began assuming their duties at forward operating bases in and around Baghdad in June. Teams 3 and 4 of A Co., 425th CA Bn, out of Santa Barbara, Calif., provides direct support to 1st Battalion, 448th Infantry Regiment, took to the streets in their area of operations this week after about 10 days of left seat/right seat ride.

Civil Affairs Soldiers have been tasked with recognizing opportunities as they spring up and unfortunately, mitigating disputes when they erupt or turn into deadlock. But when success-



Courtesy Photo

The outgoing and incoming civil affairs teams pose for a picture as they conduct their relief in place.

ful, CA can be proud of their efforts of jump starting the local economy, making the political process reflect the goals of the citizenry and of course moving reconstruction forward.

Some of the many projects that the 425th will be meeting in the following year will be keeping the sub-contractors in toe and helping to improve essential services. An example of this is the water treatment plan which is beginning to treat sewage and redirecting it from flowing into and contaminating the Tigris River. Another project is helping to get a meat-packing plant back into a functional facility in the Al-Rasheed District; once it comes on line it promises to employ more than 3,000 people.

They are ever present at district and neighborhood advisory council meetings to help foster local democracy. This often times means hitting the Muhallas and conducting “atmospherics” a spontaneous but very accurate method of taking the pulse of the neighborhoods.

The company is comprised of four teams at the moment. The Civil Affairs Teams move about their area every day meeting these obligations sometimes six days a week. They roll out of the wire as subject matter experts and ready to complete the mission safely and having had a lasting imprint on the commanders they serve and the people they bring hope to. 



Staff Sgt. Raymond Piper

Soldiers from 1-76 FA fire a 21-gun salute in honor of Sgt. Joseph Tackett June 28.

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He continued, “He was an exceptional trainer who led the best gun truck ... in the battery. Joe was a dynamic leader with a can do attitude. He had the uncanny ability to discipline a Soldier and still have the Soldier maintain a positive attitude.”

Francis said, “I will always be honored to have had a Soldier of his caliber and energy in the battery. If he was here today he would tell us to continue to the mission and never quit. He was and always will be a patriot and alpha-dog Soldier. Joe I thank you for your service and you will be sorely missed.” 