



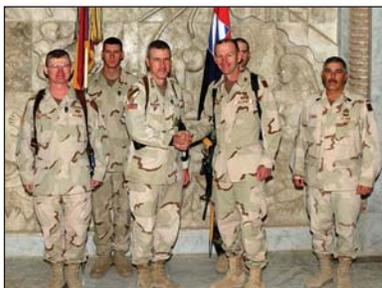
# VANGUARD POINT

Volume II, Issue 1  
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## Gone but never forgotten



### Inside



*4th Brigade takes over with a small ceremony, but what does the future hold?*



*U.S. Soldiers help students continue their education with donated school supplies.*



*3/7 Inf. and 6/8 Cav. help a neighborhood when a sewer pipe starts leaking.*

*Maj. Gen. William G. Webster, Jr. 3rd Infantry Division Commanding General, leaves a coin for two of his fallen Soldiers, during a memorial service held at Camp Falcon, March 5.*

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The brigade commander commends the Soldiers of the 4th Brigade Combat Team and welcomes the new additions to the brigade. **Page 3**

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There are many ways for Soldiers to be a positive influence on their families while they are deployed. From webcams to voice recordings, there are many ways for Soldiers to tell their family they care. Chaplain (Capt.) Lee Harms tells us how he makes an extra special connection with his family. **Page 3**

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, units and date.

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### Cottonbalers continue to add to history

The cottonbalers have a long history extending back to 1802. The battalion continues to add to it's proud lineage as it begins Operation Iraqi Freedom 3. **Page 8**

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*On the cover: Members of 6/8 Cav. mourn for their fallen friends and comrades March 5.*

# Vanguard 6 Sends ...

## 4th BCT: Ordinary people performing extraordinary missions

Col. Edward C. Cardon  
4th BCT Commander

Just six days ago, the Vanguard Team, and its Soldiers took over responsibilities for two brigade sectors from the 1st Cavalry Division. Transitions are always tough, and this one was no different. The good news is that the feedback I have received was consistent – our Soldiers performed very well and rapidly adapted to the constant changing conditions. This is possible because our brigade is made up of ordinary people who come together to perform extraordinary missions.

This adaptability and flexibility was already evident at Fort Stewart and JRTC when we fought to train while reorganizing into its new formation. We are demonstrating the same characteristics as we fight those that wish to destroy Iraq and support those who wish build Iraq's future. The Iraqis already made a clear choice for progress with the Jan. 30 elections – the first in many years. This success is the capstone for the 3rd and 5th Brigades from 1st Cavalry Division who laid a solid foundation for us. We will have to support two different elections during our tenure.

As a result of the election and growing strength of Iraq's security forces, our focus is going to shift more towards working

hand-in-hand with Iraqi security forces so Iraqis secure Iraq. We are already working with Iraqi Army battalions.

We are no longer a brigade combat team made up of six battalions of Soldiers from Fort Stewart – we have new members to our team. The Vanguard family now welcomes a battalion from the California National Guard, the 1st Battalion, 184th Infantry Regiment, as well as battalions from the Iraqi Army, a battalion from the Georgian Army, and many other battalion elements that work with us in the International Zone and surrounding areas of Baghdad. We look forward to building a strong partnership and team in the months ahead as we work to accomplish our missions in Iraq.

Though Soldiers are wounded and killed in combat operations, the Army is also suffering from losses due to accidents. We need to pull together to be aware of and identify risks and take measures to mitigate our risks. If every Soldier works together and watches



each other's back, we will reduce the number of accidents for the brigade.

I would like to personally thank each of you again for all your hard work, tremendous effort, and personal sacrifice over the past several months. Each of you is an integral part of this great combat team that has trained hard for this deployment to Iraq.

Our actions define our character and professionalism. It is our words and deeds — in what we say; in how we act; and what we accomplish — that will cause us to be respected by our friends and feared by our enemies. I am proud to serve with each one of you every day!

**VANGUARD!**

## Closing the distance

### ***Finding ways to be a positive influence on your family***

Chaplain (Capt.) Lee Harms  
Task 4-64 Chaplain

A wise man once said, "No other success can compensate for failure in the home." These are cutting words for those of us who are far from home and feel as though we are not able to impact the lives of family as we would like to.

In spite of the fact that we are not able to be with our families during deployment, many soldiers have found unique ways to remain a positive influence in the lives of their loved ones on the other side of the world.

The other day I received a letter from my 5-year-old daughter. It simply said, "I am still your princess, love Bethany."

This letter caused me to contemplate what I could do to be a positive influence on my little children so far away from home. As I looked a picture of my wife and children I thought, "My little girls are princesses to me, my son is a prince, and my wife is my queen."

My children love stories. So, although this may sound a little sappy, I sat down and wrote a story to my children about a king

who had to leave his kingdom to fight a war in a far away land. The story went on to explain that the royal family missed the king and he missed them.

However, the story went on to explained how supportive the royal family was while the king was away. It also talked about how helpful the children were in doing chores around the castle, and how this helped the time to go by so much faster. The story ended with the long awaited happy reunion of the king with his family.

Writing this story took only a few minutes. I know that my wife will laugh when she reads it, and it was a simple way for me to continue to be a part of my children's lives.

Writing a story like this may or may not be your style. However, there are many things we can do to impact our families from a distance.

Letters, email, webcam, packages, video recordings, voice recordings, pictures and prayers are all ways to impact your family at home.

Even though our families are far away, let us remember to take a moment to be a positive influence in their lives.

# HONORING THE MEMORY



The firing squad salutes their fallen comrades as Taps is played.



Soldiers bow their heads to pray during the memorial service.



Pfc. Percy Frazier salutes the kevlar, rifle and boots of the fallen Soldiers.



Brig. Gen. Karl Horst grasps the identification tags of a fallen Soldier.

## Mustangs remember their fallen brethren

Story and photos by Pfc. Dan Balda  
4th BCT PA O

Scores of Soldiers gathered under a cloud of melancholy to mourn their brothers in arms. The words on this page will not be enough to assuage the pain of the fallen Soldiers' families hurt. Hopefully they know that their sons died with honor. Hopefully they know that they will truly be missed, and I along with the rest of the division pray for them everyday.

"This afternoon we are here to honor and pay tribute to two modern-day heroes," said Chaplain (Capt.) Theiring Alexander, 6th Squadron, 8th Cavalry Regiment chaplain.

Pfc. Min Soo Choi, of River Vale, N.J., and Pfc. Landon Giles of Indiana, Pa., both of Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 6th Squadron, 8th Cavalry Regiment were killed while on a reconnaissance patrol Feb. 26, when the vehicle they were riding in was attacked by an improvised explosive device.

Choi and Giles were awarded the Bronze Star, Purple Heart, Good Conduct Medal and Combat Infantry Badge during the March 5 ceremony.

Lt. Col. Michael Harris, the battalion commander addressed his Soldiers as the bright sun attempted to break through their pain.

"We've gathered together as a troop many times in our unit's short history, safety briefings and unit runs, unfortunately, we've also come together when there has been a death in our organization," Harris said.

He shared his way of dealing with the pain of loss with his troops.

"I left the [Combat Support Hospital] after being with the two Soldiers before they passed on; I made it back to my room before I was overcome with emotion over the loss of two fine men," Harris said.

Harris then reminded the audience that with the sad times come the happy times.

"In our profession there will undoubtedly be sad times. There are dozens and dozens of glorious days – days when you are just bursting with excitement from being a Soldier, from being part of America's team."

Capt. Justin Reese, Choi and Giles' company commander shared his thoughts with the assembled mourners.

"Based on their attitude and work ethic, they were a pair of very promising Soldiers," Reese said. "Pfc. Choi traveled across an ocean in hope of becoming a citizen. He traveled across another ocean to answer the call to help others. And now after brightening so many Soldiers day with his quiet gentle demeanor he leaves us with fond memories of our all to brief time together; our symbol of freedom, opportunity and hope which brought him into our lives.

Sen. Frank Lautenberg, D-NJ, presented his parents, Jong Dae and Jae Wha Choi, with posthumous citizenship for their son.

"Pfc. Giles knew the day he showed up that we were a serious group, training for a serious mission," Reese said. "Yet he had that special gift to make those around him laugh and make a hard time go easy. We will, as they would have hoped for carry on."

Reese asked the assembled Soldiers to not let anger cloud their judgment.

"We will continue in a way that will make PFCs Giles and Choi proud of our conduct," Reese said. "I for one will miss their smiles and their courage."

Pfc. Morris Dixon, HHT, 6/8 Cav., shared some of his memories of his fallen friend and comrade.

"Giles embodied what all men should be: responsible, hardworking, compassionate," Dixon said. "He always had a desire to learn things outside of his scope of knowledge."

Alexander reminded the attendees of what the Bible has to say about losing someone near and dear to their hearts. "There is a time to mourn... a time for healing, a time for sorrow and a time for joy, a time for dancing, a time for war and a time for peace. Their faces will forever be etched

in our hearts and minds."

Harris reminded everybody of the ideals Choi and Giles gave their lives for. "Our actions in Iraq are making a great difference. Our actions during our year here will set the conditions for a safer world for generations to come."

He continued, "Men, I am proud to me a member of the greatest division in the world. I remind you to remain focused on what is ahead of us, do not dwell on the past. God bless Private Min Soo Choi, God bless Private Landon Giles, God bless their families, and God bless those who volunteer to make the world a safer place."



Soldiers assigned to 6/8 Cav. observe a moment of silence during a memorial service held at Camp Falcon.

# 4th Brigade to build on 1st Cav.'s hard work

Pfc. Dan Balda

4th BCT PA O

The 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, passed responsibility for the International Zone to the 4th Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division March 4.

"We have worked together to ensure that 4th Brigade will continue and complete all the projects that the 3rd Brigade started," said Col. John M. Murray, the 3rd BCT commander. "(4th Brigade) will continue to work with the local governments of Karkh and Karadah to identify new projects to help the Iraqi people."

The Kenton, Ohio, native also said that the 4th Bde. will continue setting the conditions for Iraq's government to fully establish itself.

Maj. Ross Coffman, the 4th Bde. operations officer said this will be accomplished by using a training methodology where the unit will work with the Iraqi security services to share information and training. The goal is to transition to the security forces doing most of the work while the 4th brigade provides a supporting role.

"This will ensure that no matter where you are in the country the Iraqi populous know that it is the Iraqis not the Americans doing the yeoman's work, day to day to make this country safe," Coffman said.

The 4th Brigade has a very large area of operations. They have replaced two brigades, the 5th BCT and the 3rd BCT. The brigade will be responsible for the area south of the IZ from the Tigris River to Baghdad International Airport to include the International Zone, the seat of government power, Coffman said.

There are two reasons 4th Bde will be able to maintain responsibility over such a large area.

"The first reason we can take over for two BCTs is the two brigades have done such a good job with the Iraqi security forces," Coffman said. "They have really laid the groundwork for this with their work with the Iraqi security forces. This allows us to have fewer Soldiers on the ground.

"The other reason is due to the reorganization and the capabilities of the brigade allow us to operate over a larger battle space and that's mainly because we have increased the capabilities at the brigade and battalion level," the Williamsburg, Va., native said. "This allows us to do multiple operations simultaneously, thereby increasing the level of safety in our AO."

Besides the obvious security-minded matters, there are other goals the 4th



Photo by Staff Sgt. Raymond Piper

**Col. John M. Murray, the commander of 3rd BCT, 1st Cav. Div., shakes hands with Col. Edward Cardon, the commander of 4th Brigade, 3rd Inf. Div., to symbolize the transfer of authority March 4.**

Brigade will work towards.

"We will support the Iraqi forces during the constitutional referendum and constitutional elections," said Col. Edward Cardon, the 4th BCT commander. "We are working towards the day where there will be no Multi National Forces in Baghdad. This is why the training of the Iraqi Army is so important."

He continued, "What we are trying to build, the terrorists are trying to destroy. We are not working against time; we are working with the level of proficiency of the Iraqi battalions. Whether that is tomorrow or six months from now, when they are ready, they will assume responsibility."

The Vanguard Brigade will also continue where 1st Cav. left off, helping to raise the quality of life for the Iraqi people.

1st Cav. has done a tremendous job in helping the Iraqi people. More than \$90 million has been focused on the improvement of essential services, such as sewers, fresh water delivery, electrical distribution and solid waste management along with numerous other projects, Murray said.

"Altogether these projects alone brought basic infrastructure necessities to more than 200,000 people in Karkh, Karadah and Zafaraniya and employed thousands of Iraqis from the neighborhoods where the projects were done," Murray said.

Among the myriad of military operations conducted with the Iraqi security forces, Murray is extremely proud of watching the 302nd Iraqi Army Battalion develop from conducting squad level operations to battalion operations.

"Now as a part of the 40th Iraqi Army Brigade they are conducting fully independent operations and are completely responsible for the security in many areas of the Karkh district," Murray said.

Of all the significant events Murray was privy to, he is most proud of the elections that occurred on Jan. 30.

"These were the first free, democratic elections in this country in over 50 years," Murray said. "Seeing normal Iraqi citizens, being protected by Iraqi Security Forces, heading to the polling stations, voting and waving their ink stained fingers despite terrorist threats was the most awe inspiring moment of my deployment here. I am profoundly grateful that I and my Soldiers were here to share and contribute what we could to accomplish one of the most historic moments in this proud country's history."

Coffman believes the job set before the 4th Bde. will be that much easier, thanks to the unit they are replacing.

"The 1st Cav. Division has made this transfer really simple, they have really set us up for success," Coffman said. "We are undoubtedly trained, capable and ready to accomplish this mission."

# Helping with the 3 Rs



Photos by Sgt. John Queen

**An Iraqi school girl from the al Qadisiyah Girls School opens a book bag of school supplies given to her by Soldiers from 4/64 and 3/8 Cav.**

## Donations help students continue education

Staff Sgt. Raymond Piper  
4th Bde. PA NCOIC

A child's education can be one the cornerstones of the foundation for his adult life. To aid Iraqi students in their studies at the al Waten Boys School and the al Qadisiyah Girls School in the 215th Apartment Complex in the International Zone Soldiers delivered a truckload of book bags filled with school supplies Feb. 23.

Soldiers from the 1st Cavalry Division's 3rd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment with 4th Battalion, 64th Armor Regiment unloaded the supplies and brought the them into the school. The teachers lined up their students to receive a school bag and coloring book.

"We're providing supplies and bags that are much needed for them to continue their education," said Lt. Col. Robert M. Roth, 4th Battalion, 64th Armor Regiment commander. "I think it shows the people that we care and want to help them anyway we can and one of the most important things we can do is education."

The Parkhill, Ky., native added, "Education is the key of success to whatever profession you take up. They know that, and we know that so it's a win-win situation."

One of the underlying themes, according to Capt. Alexander Rasmussen, Task Force 3-8 Cav.'s Civil/Military Operations officer, is to create a positive relationship



**A 1st Cavalry Division Soldier hands students backpacks and books.**

between the Soldiers and the local community, specifically the students.

"It lets the students know who we are and that we have families back at home," the Crownpoint, Ind., native explained. "They get to see us in a different light and see that we care about them."

"The Iraqi people feel they have a friendship with the American Soldiers, especially here," said Abo Alla, secretary for the neighborhood advisory council. "All the kids you see here are very happy. They feel that they received a gift to help them to continue their studies."

The Iraqi culture is very big on family and togetherness, Rasmussen said.

"In that light knowing how community is so important to them, we need to recognize that and bond with them to let them know that we will be there and work side by side to rebuild this country," he added.

There are run down schools, run down facilities because of years and years of oppression by a ruthless dictator that kept money only for the few that supported him while the rest of the country went without anything, Roth said.

"We try to infuse anything we can whether its book bags, money or a fresh coat of paint to try to get things back up and running," he added. "It's a holistic approach, helping the people and teaching the people to help themselves ... so that one day Iraq can become a great, great nation, which it will."

# Cleaning up the Abu Dasher neighborhood

When a pipe broke in the Abu Dasher neighborhood and sewage began to pour out of it, it posed a health risk to the area's residents.

Soldiers from 3rd Battalion, 7th Infantry Regiment and 6th Squadron, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Infantry Division, teamed up with a local contractor to clean up the roads and repair a broken pipe March 9.

The local contractor specializes in water pipes and cleaned the drainage ditches on the road, temporarily cleaning the sewage until a long-term project to reinforce the sewage pipes can be completed.

News about the sewage work spread fast and within minutes, more than 60 children surrounded the work site. Soldiers distributed soccer balls and other items to keep the children away from the work.



Photos by Capt. Joe Buccino, 6/8 Cav.

**A pipe began leaking in Abu Dasher neighborhood causing sewage to leak into the surrounding area and fill a drainage ditch. 6/8 Cav. worked with a local contractor to repair the pipe and drain the water from the ditch until the long-term project of reinforcing the sewer pipes can be finished.**



# Cottonbalers continue to add to unit's distinguished history

Pfc. Dan Balda

Staff Writer

Many units in the 3rd Infantry Division has long and illustrious histories, the 3rd Battalion, 7th Infantry Regiment is no different.

"3/7 is the fifth oldest regiment in the U.S. Army," said Lt. Col. David Funk, the battalion commander since July 2003. "It stands number one on the Army's Order of Merit list, in terms of date constituted, campaigns and battle streamers won, and decorations received, so we are very proud of that."

Originally formed in 1802, its first notable combat action was in the war of 1812. That is where the nickname Cottonbalers came from. During the battle of New Orleans when the Army was fighting the British at a place called Chalmett, Funk said. History has it that lacking any fortifications in the face of the British attack, the Soldiers put cotton bales on top of the levee as a defensive measure.

The United States ended up winning the battle that day Col. Andrew Jackson, the commander at that time surveyed the battlefield and remarked, "You see those Soldiers over there? They're damn fine Soldiers, Cottonbalers by God!" And that has stuck with the regiment ever since, Funk said.

There are two active battalions in the regiment. The other is the 2nd Battalion which is in the second brigade of the 3rd Infantry Division.

Another stalwart of the Army is the awarding of coins to Soldiers and civilians when they do something notable. In this facet, the Cottonbalers also stand out.

"When I first came into the battalion we were running short on coins so I had the opportunity to make a new design," Funk said. "I thought well, we are the Cottonbalers so we should have our

coin in a rectangular shape like cotton bale."

"One of the great strengths of our unit is not only the active duty Soldiers who serve in it," Funk said. "As far as I'm concerned we have the best Soldiers in the Army, but we also have a tremendously strong regimental association made up of former active-duty members called the 7th Regimental Association."

The members of the association live all over the world who have served at one time or another with the cottonbalers.

The association had their reunion in August and the Association joined with the unit for the dedication of the 7th Regimental Monument, which was built at Fort Stewart.

Spc. Knute Layman, a combat engineer assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company enjoyed the festivities surrounding the reunion.

"The leadership did an excellent job in supporting all the events surrounding the monument and the reunion," he said. "That helped me to have a positive outlook as far as serving during this deployment with this unit."

Another thing the Association has done is to commit to support the unit on this rotation to Iraq, said Funk.

During what is being called Operation Direct Support, a member of the Association is assigned to each company size element in the battalion as a sponsor for that company. They can give any kind of help or support to the company deployed forward or to the family members back at Fort Stewart, Funk said.

"It's truly is a big family of both active-duty and former active-duty members with a proud legacy and a proud heritage," Funk said. "The old saying rings true, once a Cottonbaler, always a Cottonbaler. We are very proud of the Regiment, very proud of what we do, and I have all the confidence that the regiment will uphold its great name and tradition in Iraq."

