



VANGUARD POINT

Volume II, Issue 3
March 31, 2005



*Testing to be
a future Iraqi
policeman ...*

Inside



Women's History Month highlights the accomplishments of women in America.



Military Police from the 170th MP Company remember one of their fallen.



Soldiers help a local neighborhood during Operation Aid Drop.



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In his youth, Chaplain (Capt.) Lee Harms worked with his uncle on his fishing boat in Alaska. When the ship began moving in circles, they had to work together and trust another's eyes to get them safely back to the harbor. **Page 8**

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

Testing to be an Iraqi Policeman

Despite the personal risk, scores of Iraqis showed up to try out for the Iraqi Police. A physical fitness test and medical screening began their journey to become a police officer. **Page 4, 5**

Celebrating Women's History Month

Women have, and continue, to make an impact on America. The month of March honored the accomplishments and history of women. **Page 6**

Memorial honors the memory

The Soldiers of the 170th Military Police Company gathered to honor the memory of one of their own. **Page 7**

Operation Aid Drop

A Co. 4/64 took on a special mission to provide aid to a local neighborhood. **Page 8**

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On the cover: An Iraqi works to knock out situps during a test to become a policeman.



Tusker 6: TF working in many areas

Lt. Col. Bob Roth
4/64 Armor commander

Our newest coalition partners are here in the International Zone and are conducting operations now. They are from the country of Georgia just south of Russia. They don't speak Russian, they speak Georgian and there is no similarity between the two languages. The country of Georgia was founded nearly 1,400 years ago and was named after Saint George – who is the Patron Saint of Armor. Their flag is white with a large red cross that is reminiscent of the days of the Crusades.

They are excellent soldiers and love Americans. The biggest problem we are working through is the language barrier. But as soldiers do, they always find a way to communicate.

I walked past a guard post the other day where U.S. Soldiers were training the Georgian soldiers. They were communicating via sign language. Heck, they were even joking around using sign language. We are working on getting more interpreters, but in the meantime, the soldiers are finding a way to make it work.

The task force is working in many areas, and one of which is projects to repair the Iraqi infrastructure. You never hear about these projects in the news so let me tell you what our soldiers are doing besides providing world class security.

We are spending about \$ 3.5 million to replace a sewer network in one of the poorest neighborhoods of Iraqi. Imagine

children playing in streets with raw sewage clearly visible. And if that is not bad enough, the smell will make you sick. To date, we have replaced or laid about 2,000 meters of pipe, but have another 7.5 kilometers of pipe to replace or install. This single project employs about 350 Iraqi people.

In addition, we recently completed the connector of this sewer line to 1,000 homes. This was another \$2.2 million that employed another 300 workers all in the same neighborhood. In another part of the city, we are replacing three sewage and rainwater pumps. This project is almost complete as well, and cost \$500,000.

Along the Tigris River, we are replacing a series of water pumps that pump water from the river to an irrigation canal. This water is used by farmers to grow crops and is vital to feeding people all over Iraq. The cost is approximately \$900,000 and is 50 percent complete.

But the projects don't stop there, we are repairing bridges, electrical grid networks, and providing temporary relief for a children's orphanage by buying them a generator until power is fully restored.

In the Task Force area of operations alone, we have approximately 25 to 30 projects of this magnitude that are



focused on repairing the infrastructure – just as our grandfathers and uncles did years ago in Germany and Japan after World War II.

We provide medical supplies and treatment, clothing for the poor, and school supplies.

Remember, the country infrastructure is ruined and there are many poor people. Nothing has been done for more than 30 years – except the building of huge palaces or mosques that the people were never allowed to see or use. That was Saddam Hussein's legacy for the people of Iraq.

As you can tell, there is more happening in Iraq than just bombings and terrorist acts. For whatever reason, the media won't show this side. But it is an important story that must be told.

Our soldiers are doing more than just searching and arresting terrorists and thugs. Iraq has a long way to go, but they are on the right path.

The people are grateful and wish for America and Iraq to remain friends for many years to come.

Best of all, we're helping those in need, and showing those who challenge freedom and liberty they will lose every time. Thank you all for doing what you do! 

Letter to the editor

Dear Sir,

My name is Jo Ann Giles. I am Pfc. Landon Giles' sister. Landon was with the 6/8 and was killed while on patrol on Feb. 26. I received a copy of the newsletter where you highlighted the ceremony that was held for him and his fellow Pfc. Choi, who was killed with Landon.

I just first wanted to say thank you. I hope in the next issue of the newsletter you can let our troops know how much it means to us that they honored my brother. Even the gentleman writing the article said he and the rest of the men and women would be praying for us and for the Choi family.

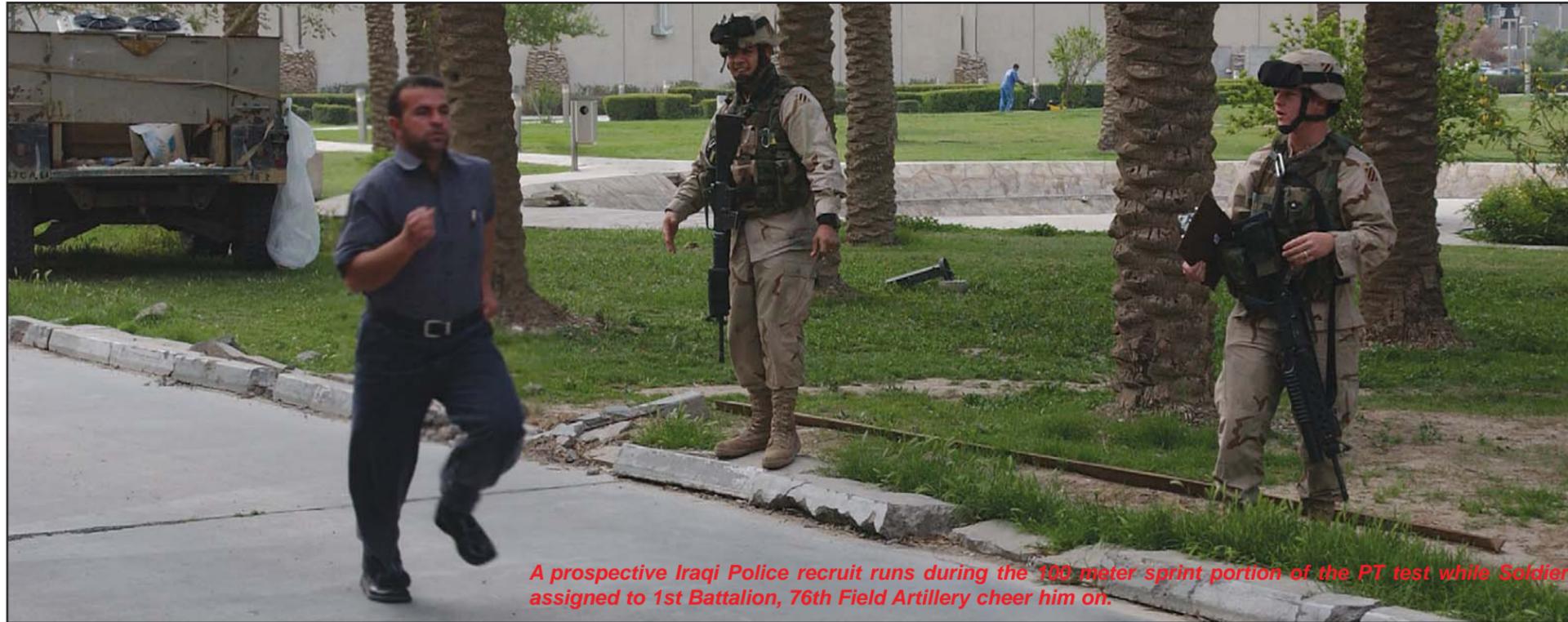
I know that Landon and Min don't need our prayers now though, for they are home. The families that they left behind, though certainly do need them and appreciate them. All the

support we have received has been overwhelming.

I cannot tell you the scores of people who have sent in cards and called us to say how sorry they were for Landon's death. He was a hero. All of you are though, and I hope that you know how much support you all have here in the United States. I could never in words express my gratitude for all that you and your brothers and sisters in arms have given us here at home. You all make us proud.

Please let all your men and women how much we appreciate them. As Landon's sister I have lost a brother, but I know you all have too. Thank you so much for your prayers, and rest assured that all of you will remain in mine until you all return home safely. God Bless you all.

Jo Ann Giles



A prospective Iraqi Police recruit runs during the 100 meter sprint portion of the PT test while Soldiers assigned to 1st Battalion, 76th Field Artillery cheer him on.



A Soldier assigned to 1/76th FA holds an Iraqis feet during the sit-up section of the physical training test.

Despite dangers, scores show up to be Iraqi Policemen

Story and photos by Pfc. Dan Balda
4th BCT PAO

More than 100 potential Iraqi Police recruits showed up at the Baghdad Convention Center March 23, to take the tests necessary to move on to the police academy in Jordan.

"These recruits come from all over the area: Sadr City, Basra, Babel," said Capt. Andrew Meehan, 443rd Civil Affairs Battalion.

The Westwood, N.J., native continued, "These guys will be in charge of patrolling various neighborhoods in and around Baghdad."

Last month 250 recruits were screened and 105 were chosen to go to the academy.

"We set very high standards for the recruitment," Meehan said. "We have no problem failing people if they don't meet any of the requirements. We expect a lot from these guys."

Meehan thought the attitude of the Soldiers in the area had something to do with the number of applicants.

"I think the Soldiers do a great job of talking to the people around the city, they motivate the people to sign up for this," he said. "It's kind of a sales job actually. As long as you treat the people with the same respect you believe you should be shown they will be more welcoming."

The potential recruits had to pass a physical training test, consisting of push-ups, pull-ups, sit-ups, a 100 meter sprint and a 1,600 meter run. Soldiers assigned to 1st Battalion, 76th Field Artillery, 4th Brigade Combat Team, helped with the PT test.

"They told me that they had a detail for me, and I told them that I would be happy to be a part of this," said Sgt. Corey Smith, Forward Support Battery 1/76 FA. "I see it as we are trying to help these guys out. We are helping to train the good guys in this area to help clean out the bad guys and to rebuild Iraq. I see a lot of motivated wannabe Soldiers out here today that want to help us out."

After the PT test, the potential recruits took a literacy test and then were screened by medics to make sure there were no pre-existing medical conditions that would strike them from service.

"As a condition for the screening all the applicants have to have at least a high school diploma," Meehan said. "That being said, the literacy test, along with the PT test is what gives a lot of these guys a no-go."



One potential recruit, who asked that his name not be used, said he was applying because of his family and his country.

"I am not doing this for money," he said. "My family has money. I am doing this because my father and brother are both IP's and because I love my country."

For him the PT test was easy.

"I play a lot of soccer, so the running was easy," he said. "I will use my running skills to chase down the terrorists."

For this Iraqi, applying to become a police officer is not just a stop-over until he finds something else he would rather do.

"I want to do this for the rest of my life," he said. "Maybe I will become a colonel or a general."

Smith, a native of Chattanooga, Tenn., was encouraged by the caliber of the men who turned out to protect their own country.

"I really think that some of these guys are going to be good cops," he said. "They will do a great job of taking over their country. Soon we'll get to the point where we are supporting them instead of them supporting us." 



A medic assigned to 703rd Forward Support Battalion checks the heartbeat of a prospective Iraqi policeman during testing held at the Baghdad Convention Center March 23.

Women's History Month

Honoring the women who have changed America

Pfc. Dan Balda

4th BCT PAO

"In some instances, it's hard being a female in the Army," said Sgt. Cassandra Mills, a medic with C Company, 703rd Forward Support Battalion. "We deal with a lot of all male units, sometimes it's hard to adjust to working with the opposite sex if you're not used to it. But overall, the Army is very fair and equal."

Besides Mother's Day, there is another time to honor the struggles and accomplishment of women who have made an impact on our country and on our lives.

In 1987 the National Women's History Project petitioned Congress to set aside March as National Women's History Month. This year's theme is "Women Change America," said Sgt. 1st Class Lui V. Salt, the 4th Brigade Combat Team Equal Opportunity Advisor.

"Women are the givers of life," said Mills. "We all have a mother, and we should always know that of all the women in the world, you should respect your mother the most."

When asked what female influenced her the most, Mills, a native of New Brunswick, N.J., said her mother.

"The woman I look up to most in this world is my mother, Mabel Crowley, that's my heart, my best friend, my life," she said. "I also look up to, God bless her, my sister, Coco Diggs, (March 24) is her birthday. She died about five years ago, even though she is four years younger than me, I still look up to her."

Sgt. Renee Blagrove, a supply sergeant with A Company, 4th Battalion, 3rd Brigade Troops Battalion agreed with Mills, "There are a lot of famous women that have influenced me, but the most important woman has been my mother. She always wanted a better life for me and worked hard for that. I've always looked up to her."

"We, as Soldiers, take part in Women's History Month for a couple of reasons," Salt, a native of Onenoa, American Samoa said. "Besides the fact that it is mandated by the president, we need to recognize and honor the contributions, sacrifices and accomplishments of American women in our great country. They have changed America's history for the better."

Blagrove, a native of East Orange, N.J., has used what she learned from her mother to help her in her own career.

"She has helped me to want to better myself, to work harder to get ahead," she said. "She has shown me that we can do things just as well as anybody else."

Another thing that both New Jersey natives agree on is that Women's History Month should not have to be set aside to be celebrated.

"I don't think it should be a month that is marked," Mills said. "We should celebrate it all the time."

"I think it's good that we have a month set aside to honor women, but you have to appreciate what women do all the time," Blagrove said. "It's just like Mother's or Father's day, even though there is a set date to honor them you should never stop giving praise where it's due. That's what I try to do. I appreciate what my mom has done for me more than anything." 



Eleanor Roosevelt
(1884-1962)

Humanitarian

Although a shy child, Eleanor Roosevelt became one of the greatest humanitarians of the 20th century.

During the Roosevelt Administration, she used her position to promote reforms to help women, minorities and poor people. In 1948, as a delegate to the United Nations, she worked brilliantly to win passage of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Sandra Day O'Connor (1930-)

Supreme Court Justice

O'Connor became the first woman Supreme Court justice when she was named by President Reagan in 1981. After graduating from Stanford Law School in 1952,



In 1979, she became the first woman on the Arizona Court of Appeals. Her service on the country's highest court has paved a way for more women in the judicial system.



Maya Angelou (1928-)

Author/Poet

Angelou is a novelist, poet, professional stage and screen writer, dancer, editor, lecturer, songwriter, and civil rights activist.

Most notable among her publications are autobiographical novels starting with *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, published in 1970, which helped establish the memoir as a popular genre.



Helen Keller
(1880-1968)

Advocate for Disadvantaged

Despite being deaf, blind, and unable to speak, Keller became an active writer and international public speaker. She

learned to communicate in 1887 with the help of Anne Sullivan. Her books and lectures helped the public recognize the talents of people with physical limitations.



Fannie Lou Hamer
(1917-1977)

Civil Rights Activist

Hamer devoted 15 years to winning voting rights for blacks in the South. Despite beatings by the police, losing her job, and being

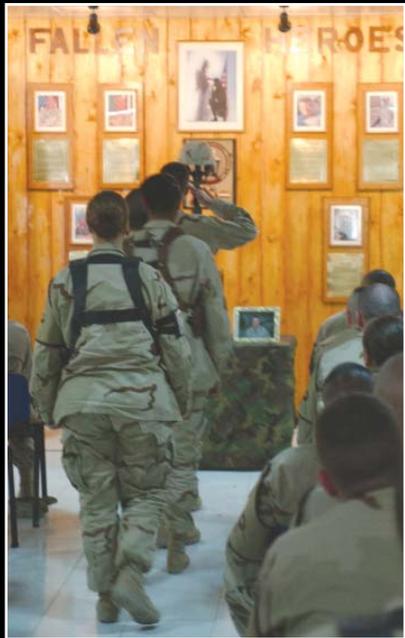
forced from her home, Hamer continued organizing and demanding recognition and power in national politics for southern blacks.

Margaret Chase Smith
(1897-1995) *Senator*

Smith served as a Maine congresswoman from 1940 to 1948 where she supported the Lend-Lease agreement with Britain and the Women's Armed Services Integration Act. From 1948 to 1973, Smith served in the Senate.

In 1964, she sought the Republican nomination for president and received 27 votes at the convention.





Soldiers line up to salute the helmet, rifle and boots of Bruce.

To those of you who knew me at all
 Remember me as the one who stood tall
 Willing to lay everything on the line
 My last gift to you ... this life that was mine
 There is nothing about my choice I regret
 I know I'll live on ... if you never forget
 The sacrifice I made that day
 And the silent words I could never say
 Stay Strong and know that you're never alone
 I gave my life so you could all make it home
 Now I live with the heroes that kept you free
 All I ask is that you remember me
 I give you my strength to keep moving on
 My spirit still lives though my body is gone
 Dry your tears, remember in your heart, hold true
 And know that I'm still here, watching over you

By Spec. Terri Eury
 Cpl. Travis R. Bruce's friend



Soldiers stand at attention after their names are called during roll call.

MPs remember fallen comrade

Story and photos by Pfc. Dan Balda

4th BCT PAO

Cpl. Travis R. Bruce, a military policeman with the 170th Military Police Company was remembered during a memorial service held in the Fallen Hero's Room at Camp Falcon, Baghdad.

"In all my time as a commander, I prayed this day would never come," said Capt. Neftali Velez, 170th company commander. "I've always feared the pain and regret of losing a Soldier in combat. When I think of Cpl. Bruce I think of selfless service and dedication."

Velez shared some memories of Bruce with his fellow mourners.

"One day while on a mission, Pfc. Bruce handed me a gold coin," Velez said. "On it was transcribed something John F. Kennedy said, 'Let every nation know, that we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe, to assure the survival and success of liberty.'"

"On the other side it said, In God we trust. As I gave him a puzzled look he

said, 'Sir, I just wanted you to have this to let you know that I am ready for whatever comes my way.' He then returned to his vehicle without saying another word.

Velez said, "I will never forget this gesture of dedication, commitment and assurance. He was willing to go the distance without any regrets."

Lt. Col. James Switzer, the battalion commander for the 504th Military Police Battalion said that Bruce couldn't accept letting down his team, his family.

"Cpl. Bruce set the example for all MP's: protect those who cannot fight for themselves, assist those who cannot help themselves, and defend our great nation," Switzer said.

One of his fellow Soldiers recalled, "He always wanted me to take a picture of him in his full gear. I think it was because he wanted to send it to an old Army veteran, his Dad, who will be waiting now for him to come home.

"He was a brave kid from Minnesota who had not one, not two, but three girlfriends at home," he said with a smile. "His life was taken from us in a quick instant, but the memory of Chickenbone will live in our hearts forever." 

Chaplain's corner ...

Safely Home: Help in steering through difficult times

Chaplain (Capt.) Lee Harms

4/64 Armor Chaplain

As a young man I used to work during the spring and summer as an Alaska fisherman for my uncle.

On one occasion the hydraulics on the boat went out and the steering system stopped working. To our dismay, we found that the boat would only go in circles.

We used the radio to call for help and began to frantically try and fix the problem. Unfortunately, we were not very far from the shore and we were afraid that our boat would run aground.

In desperation, my uncle had me hang

over the edge of the boat dragging a large net to help pull the boat straight.

Meanwhile he used a pipe wrench to try and turn the rudder while another man stood on the bow of the boat and guided us safely into the dock. We were so relieved to finally tie the boat to the dock and work on it in safety.

I have often thought about this experience and I have noticed that our lives can become like a boat with a broken steering system. Even when we least expect it, difficulties come.

At times like this, doing what once had been very easy can become very difficult. In fact, when we are facing difficulties it often takes all we can give to keep our life

facing the right direction.

As my uncle worked steer his boat with a pipe wrench, he was not in a position to see the direction the boat was headed. He had to trust another to guide us to safety.

God is willing and able to be our guide through life, and he is a perfect guide because he can see what we cannot.

The psalmist wrote, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." (Psalms 119:105)

Even though we all can expect to face difficulty, trial, and tragedy at unexpected times in our lives, we can also have peace in our hearts by knowing that we have an eternal and loving God to guide us safely home. 

Operation brings aid to locals



Photo by A Co., 4/64 Armor

Capt. Thomas Venable, a Vacaville, Calif., native, helps an Iraqi child blow bubbles. Bubbles and other children's toys were part of the items the Soldiers delivered March 21 during Operation Aid Drop.

Day-in, day-out, GSRs perform important missions

By 2nd Lt. Amanda Metz

4/3 BTB

Busy. That's the one word that describes the day-to-day activities of B Co., 4th Battalion, 3rd Brigade Troops Battalion.

Most soldiers are on 12-hour shifts, with no real day off. In fact, they often welcome tower guard because it is only eight hours and it gets them away from a computer. That's most soldiers. For the ground surveillance radars, it's a different story.

According to Global.security.org, GSR teams provide mobile, all-weather battlefield surveillance to the battalions and squadrons they support. Deployed to Iraq, they have found their mission to be everything but doctrinal.

They may not work the 12-hour shifts or have a mission everyday, and they are often under appreciated for their efforts. They are usually up before sunrise preparing for a mission. The Soldiers may not conduct patrols or raids, but their work enables B Co. to perform their mission.

Without GSRs, supplies and personnel wouldn't move. The Soldiers often transport mail and equipment to the human intelligence and signal intelligence teams at Camp Falcon. When the Trojan Spirit needed to be fixed or the commander needed a vehicle to travel to Camp Falcon, the GSRs were there to escort. When the Prophet Hammer Support Team needed to come teach a class to the SIGINT section, the GSRs were there.

In short, they may not work everyday trying to produce timely intelligence and they may not be on patrol or conducting raids, but they risk their lives every time they leave the forward operating base. They are a vital part of B Co. and we would not be able to conduct our mission if it weren't for their efforts. 

Safety Focus

Muzzle awareness: Know where your weapon is pointed, and treat it as if it was loaded all of the time.