

The Freedom Post

Published for Task Force Freedom Soldiers Serving in Operation Iraqi Freedom III

Sept. 5, 2005

visit us at www.tffpao.org

Volume 2: Issue 20

A photograph showing the silhouettes of military equipment and personnel against a bright, hazy sky at sunset or sunrise. The scene is dark, with the light source on the left creating a strong glow. The equipment includes what appears to be a vehicle with a mounted machine gun and several antennas or masts.

**Coalition Forces
Set Security in
Rawah Straight
page 6-7**



CONTENTS

PAGE	
3	<i>Iraqi PAO in the news</i>
4	<i>Sock it to me</i>
5	<i>Military Academy gets facelift</i>
6	<i>Call in the Cavalry</i>
8	<i>Police Academy open for business</i>
10	<i>101st looks for a nest</i>
11	<i>Worship offers "More to Life"</i>

A Soldier You Should Know

By Rachael Van Horn

KBR LNO

Al Qayyarah, Iraq-Private 1st Class Farris Jackson ducked into the seat of his 5-ton Army truck and wondered when one of the rounds that came out of nowhere would hit the full fuel tank. The next day, Jackson was slated to be on a plane headed home on leave. "We were in a town near Tal' Afar and there I was, sitting there with a full tank of fuel," Jackson said. "I thought I was gonna be like those guys you hear about that are killed in action just days before they were supposed to go home." It was what the 26-year-old Memphis native described as the second worst moment in his life.

Jackson made it home for leave that next early summer day. In about two weeks, he is headed home "for good," he says. Nowadays, after 11 months in country, he can be found pulling charge of quarters at the front desk of his unit, the 2nd Battalion, 8th Field Artillery headquarters.

Despite having some moments he thought he would rather be anywhere else, Jackson has never regretted joining the Army or coming to Iraq. Indeed, he gives the Army credit for making his dreams of enlarging his music business a possibility when he gets home. "I have plans to begin my hip-hop recording studio," he said. "I have already started, but when I get back, I will go to Seattle and start an 'Underground Rock' label too."

That is no pipe dream coming from this particular Soldier. While many may have dreams, Jackson has proven before that when he takes it into his mind to accomplish a goal, he doesn't stop until it is complete. He got his first chance to prove this when he attempted the first time to get into the Army and then nearly lost his second opportunity when fate came calling a second time.

"I had enlisted when I was 17-years-old," he said. But a week before graduation, Jackson's father died unexpectedly. Despite this, the younger Jackson, knowing his parents' wish for him to follow his retired Army father's career path, he still tried to go. "But the recruiters wanted me to take six months to be with my mother. "However, soon after, his mother became ill and Jackson spent the next six years caring for her. Nevertheless, both Jackson and his mother never lost their dream of the Army as a career for Jackson.

"Finally, in 2003, I enlisted and was waiting to tell my mother as a surprise for her birthday in May," Jackson said. But a week before her birthday, Jackson's mother died of a heart attack, never knowing her son had finally become a Soldier. That, just in front of his brush with the snipers in his Army truck this year was this Soldier's worst moment.

The best moment? "When I see how much difference we have made to the Iraqi Soldiers. They used to wear tennis shoes and have no uniformity, now they do. They are so proud; I know I did the right thing coming here," he said.

The Freedom Post

S T A F F

COMMANDING GENERAL

Maj. Gen. David M. Rodriguez

DEPUTY COMMANDING GENERAL

Brig. Gen. Kevin J. Bergner

COMMAND SGT. MAJ.

Command Sgt. Maj. Ricky Pring

PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER

Lt. Col. André L. Hance Sr.

366 MPAD COMMANDER

Maj. David G. Cruse

366 MPAD 1st SGT.

Sgt. 1st Class Jeffery S. Welch

EDITOR

Staff Sgt. Michele A. Uitermarkt

LAYOUT EDITOR

Sgt Daniel W. Lucas

STAFF JOURNALIST

Sgt. David J. Nunn

Sgt. John H. Franzen

Sgt. Richard W. Way

Spc. Ashly E. Mitchell

This Army funded newspaper is an authorized publication for members of the U.S. Army overseas. Contents of "The Freedom Post" are not necessarily the views of, or endorsed by the U.S. Government, Department of the Army or the Department of Defense. "The Freedom Post" is produced by the 366th MPAD, Des Moines, Iowa. The editorial content of this publication is the responsibility of the 366th MPAD Commander. It is published bimonthly by the 366 MPAD Mosul, Iraq. Contact us at: blackhorse@tffpao.org or at DNVN 522-9791

Iraqi PAOs Learn the Ropes From TFF

Story by Staff Sgt. Michele Uitermarkt,
Photos courtesy of PAO



Sgt. David J. Nunn, Photojournalist, 366th MPAD, teaches the basics of photography.

FOB COURAGE, Iraq - For some time, the terrorists in Iraq have been using the media as a means to spread lies and exploit their cause. The Coalition Forces have responded to the media battle by publishing the truth through information operations.

This is the job of an Army public affairs representative. The Task Force Freedom (TFF) Public Affairs Office (PAO) has implemented a plan to help arm the Iraqi Army, Iraqi Police, and government agencies with the knowledge to fight the media war.

Military Training Teams, who are run by U.S. Forces, have trained police and infantry Soldiers to fight in the field, but who trains and equips the officers who handle information? Recently, the TFF PAO spearheaded and implemented a course to train Iraqi officers to work with the media. Through an interpreter, the class offered subjects such as media analysis, journalism, photography, and public speaking.

"We have to engage the Iraqi Security Forces so we can eventually hand our mission off to them. This is the ground floor of public affairs in this country," said Lt. Col. André L. Hance, TFF PAO and an instructor



An Iraqi Army Public Affairs Officer studies media analysis.

for the course.

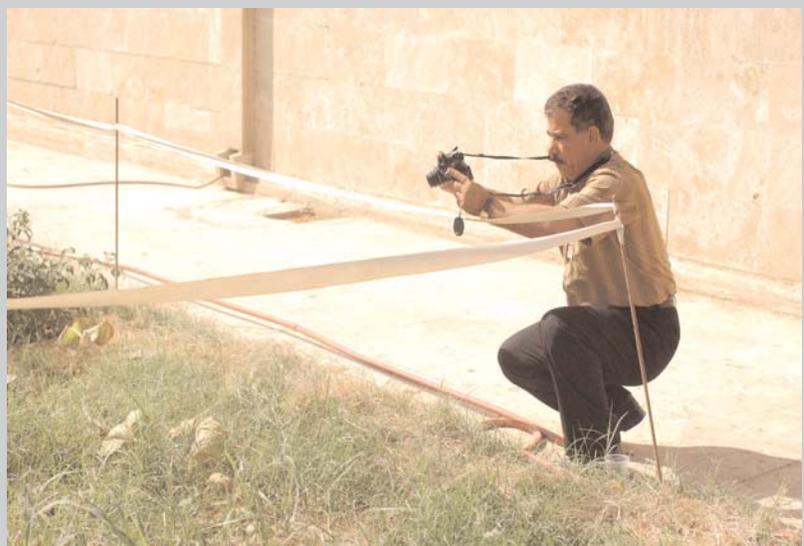
The students had an opportunity to learn about the differences between American and Iraqi media, and how to best use the Iraqi media to their advantage. They also learned to photograph and write stories to release to local media. In addition, each student was required to give a mock press conference.

"They are interested in how we do things and why," said Capt. Mark H. Walter, public relations instructor for the course. "This course helps the new Iraqi PAOs identify false information in the media and react to it."

Students were equipped with a laptop, printer, camera, and cell phone in order to carry out their newly-appointed mission.

The class will be held several times over the next few months. With four students and an auditor, the first class taught the highest levels of public affairs personnel. "We are very appreciative of the people here and the class was very useful," said Maj. Ahmed Nazal, Public Affairs Officer for the Iraqi Police in Mosul.

A ceremony was held August 26 to recognize the students for completing phase one of the public affairs training.



The Mosul Police Public Affairs Officer tries out his new camera.

Operation Socks Helps Cadets Have Healthy Feet

Mike Rogers heads a project to give MPSA Cadets new socks donated from back home.

Story and Photos by Staff Sgt. Jill L. Howe

MOSUL, Iraq - When some people see a problem, a shake of the head and "that's terrible, someone should do something," is all you hear. But Mike Rogers, who works in the supply section at the Mosul Public Service Academy, is not one of those people. After 24 years of service in the Army and 12 years as a policeman, he decided to postpone his retirement in order to come to Iraq and lend a helping hand to the fledgling police academies. While working at the Baghdad Police College, Rogers saw a problem and decided to make a difference: that problem was a shortage of socks. Some cadets had only one pair to last ten weeks, so he started Operation Socks.

"I just got tired of seeing kids with blistered and bloody feet so I decided to do something about it," said Rogers. "Many of the students arrive with nothing but the clothes on their backs and must depend on what is issued for their clothing needs. I sent a mass e-mail to my address book and received about 400 pair of socks."

"It is very humbling to see how willing people were to help. I've received socks from people I've never met who had heard about Operation Socks and wanted to help."

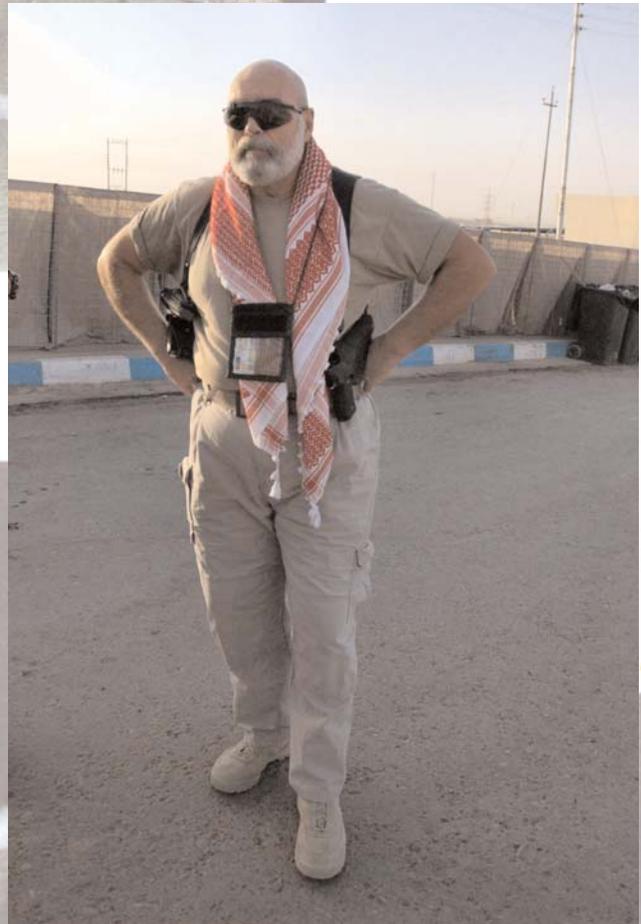
The students were surprised and grateful to receive an extra pair of socks. They thanked Mike enthusiastically, saying "shukron," (Arabic for thank you) and smiling broadly.

"I came to Iraq to help. I thought I was just going to train new police officers. The thought of Operation Socks would never have occurred to me," said Rogers. "But when I saw the problem, I had to fix it."

There are many new police and cadets who are glad the thought did occur to Mike. He added, "of course the need is still present and we can still use more donations."

Anyone interested in donating can send new socks to:

**OPERATION SOCKS
C/O MPSA
APO AE 09334**



Mike Rogers stands outside barriers at the MPSA.



Rogers hands out donated socks to an Iraqi Police Officer.

New Renovations to Zahko Military Academy

Story and Photos by Maj. Jim Street



A flat bed truck delivering building supplies stands outside a new building at Zahko.

ZAHKO, Iraq - The North Gulf Region U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, in Dahuk, is overseeing the renovation of the Military Academy there. This academy is training Iraq's future officers. The projects include renovating old facilities and building new ones.

"We are building thirteen new facilities and renovating at least five others here," said Tony Soliz, a quality assurance civil engineer representative.

"The 8.2 million dollar improvements have several local contractors and about 200 local and Turkish laborers working double shifts on the 26 different projects."

The new facilities that are being built within the complex include: a new cadet barracks, water treatment plant with a supply and distribution system, sanitary sewage system, waste water treatment plant, gymnasium, soccer field, track, Headquarters/Administrative building, parade field, Military Operations in Urban Terrain (MOUT) training village, grenade and small arms firing range, and obstacle course with rappelling tower. Other renovations or upgrades include: a power station

with electrical distribution upgrades, security improvements with lighting, dining facilities, cadre housing, swimming pool renovations, and other building improvements.

"We have had over 500 applicants for this Academy," said Lt. Col. Thomas Schalk, an American liaison officer. "We can only accept 100 of these officer candidates for the course at any one time. When they finish the course, they become 2nd lieutenants and can be stationed anywhere in the country. We also offer a platoon leadership course for existing 2nd lieutenants here."

The renovation and expansion of the Academy allows more officers to attend the course and have a better facility to train on, according to Master Sgt. Castroma Dickens, security and operations non-commissioned officer in charge for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Dahuk.

"At the rate we are working, the completion of this academy should be done by this year's end," said Soliz. "The academy is like a small city... it will be self-sufficient with all these new improvements."

2-14 Sets Security

Story and Photos by Sgt. David J. Nunn

RAWAH, Iraq - During their mission to provide a safe and secure environment for the people of Iraq, Soldiers of the 2nd Battalion, 14th Cavalry Regiment, continue through the final chapters of their deployment to break new ground in the effort to rid the country of the insurgency.

Their tour began at the northern Forward Operating Base (FOB) Sykes, tempering the living conditions for the citizens of Tal' Afar, while enforcing an aggressive stance against the insurgency campaign in their area.

These Soldiers continue their hard work to the south, at the newly established FOB Rawah located north of the City of Rawah and the Euphrates River that serves as the borderline between Syria and Iraq. This area of Iraq was suffering from being used as a portal for foreign fighters from Syria and a smuggling route used to fuel terrorism in Iraq.

"We are conducting operations here to basically disrupt the foreign fighters and insurgent activity along the Syrian border," said Capt. James Hayes, commander of C Troop, 2-14 Cav. "This area was being used to supply the enemy operations in Baghdad, Mosul, and the surrounding areas with equipment, explosives and weapons."

Apparently since the recent establishment of FOB Rawah, the

Iraqi citizens of the area have begun to enjoy better living conditions than they have ever known. The Soldiers assigned to the base have been very successful in preventing the flow of illegal traffic, and flushing out the insurgents that inhabited the area.

"These foreign fighters have come to this country to wage war on the people of Iraq and their allies," said Hayes. "One of our biggest missions here has

Straight in Rawah

been attempting to stop the flow of suicide bombers and their explosives.”

The mission becomes more successful with every operation to the border.

Members of the 2-14 Cav. have been deterring these forces with their presence along the border, heavy patrols, and by conducting hasty traffic stops. These tactics have yielded the arrests of

many hostile personnel, seizures of numerous weapon caches, vehicular

improvised explosive devices, and other weapons aimed at disrupting the peace process the Iraqi people continue to work hard to fortify.

“We feel that once it becomes known

that we are doing these operations, it will stop them from entering this part of the country,” said Hayes. “Everyone that we detain and every weapon we discover equals lives saved in this country, both of our forces and those of the free people of Iraq.”

In addition to their offensive operations against the insurgency, the Soldiers have also worked tirelessly to develop the trust of the good people of the region. They walk the streets of these villages and meet with the local people, talking with them and handing out information that reveals the truth about the damages caused by foreign and domestic fighters.

“We are just doing our jobs out here,” said Cpl. Zachery Houston, C Troop, 2-14. “We are continuing to do the same good work we started back in Tal’Afar.”

MPSA Trains Iraqi

Story and photos by Sgt. Rick W. Way

MOSUL, Iraq - The newly created Mosul Public Safety Academy (MPSA) opened its doors for the first class of Iraqi Police (IP) officers. This particular course was established not to train new recruits, but to strengthen the existing police officers.

In the early morning hours on August 21, buses pulled into the newly renovated MPSA. Over 250 academy cadets arrived to take part in the first class of the facility. Although they are here as Police Cadets, they are not new to law enforcement. The first class of cadets have been employed as Iraqi Police (IP) officers in the city of Mosul and surrounding areas. "All of the cadets are existing IPs, they just haven't been formally trained," said Capt. Kevin Pugh, commander of the 179th Military Police (MP) detachment assigned to the academy. "They probably have a decent idea of what Iraqi Police do in this country, but they should be a total package when they graduate from this academy."

The MPSA staff is a testament to the teamwork that is possible between several organizations and nationalities that make up the staff at the MPSA. The 179th MPs are always on hand to provide several services for the facility.

"The primary mission is to augment and supervise the force protection of the facility, we also advise the training and instruction," said Pugh.



Iraqi Tactical Officers March the trainees after being issued the new

"Facilitating the movement of the police cadets and providing drill instructors is also on the list of duties for the 179th."



Trainees stand in their first PT formation at the MPSA.

The 179th are not the only instructors; they also support a team of Iraqi Tactical Officers, (ITO) advising them during their training and instruction. "We already have a pretty good relationship built between my [non-commissioned officers] and the ITOs," said Pugh. "I didn't expect it to develop this quickly, they've surpassed our expectations,"

In addition to the Soldiers of the 179th and the ITOs, civilian International Police Trainers (IPTs) provide training in the classroom and firearms instruction. The IPTs are employed by Military Professional

Police of the Future



blue tactical uniforms.

Resources Inc. (MPRI), a contractor for the U.S. Department of Justice. “Everybody knows we’re here for one mission and one goal,” said Greg Jordan, an employee of MPRI, “We work side by side with the 179th MPs doing everything from filling sandbags to washing dishes. The 179th is a fantastic group of people.”

After an initial inspection of the cadets’ personal luggage, they were issued uniforms and marched to the dining facility for breakfast.

The next step in the process was a medical screening. “My job is to screen the cadets from head to toe,” said Sgt. David Edwards, a combat medic assigned to the 179th. “This is something you can’t rush. If you take shortcuts, you will have spent a lot of time and money on someone that may fall out due to a condition we might have missed.”

To aid Edwards during the important medical screenings, two of the HHT (Headquarters and Headquarters Troop) 11th Armored

Cavalry Regiment medics, Pvt. 1st Class Corey Daniels and Spc. Abram Leonard, volunteered to lend a hand. With over 250 cadets to examine, the medics must work swiftly while maintaining a thorough health screening for the cadets.

“Most of the Iraqis have not been to a doctor their entire lives, unless something really bad happened,” said Leonard. “The Iraqis are surprisingly healthy for the conditions that they live in.” All of the medics agreed that athlete’s foot was going to be the number one medical issue with the cadets.

Literacy testing and the issue of identification badges followed the medical screenings. As always with a new facility, there are bugs to be worked out, but the first day went exceptionally well and all of the cadets were soon standing tall in their fresh new uniforms for the welcoming ceremony that evening.

At the brief ceremony, MPRI employee, John Hayes, told the cadets, “We plan to make the academy the premier police academy of Iraq, a place you can be proud to say that you graduated from. Thank you for stepping up to help your country. Without you, this country will not stand.”

Iraqi Brigadier General Ahmed Hassen was also on hand and welcomed the cadets to the Mosul Public Safety Academy thanking them for their dedication and sacrifices for the future of Iraq.



Police trainees file into a classroom.

101st Looks for Best Place to “Setup Shop” in Mosul

Story and Photos by Spc. Ashly Mitchell



Maj. Gen Rodriguez and Command Sgt. Maj. Pring offer a tour to Maj. Gen. Turner and Command Sgt. Maj. Grippe and their staff.

FOB COURAGE, Iraq - Soldiers from the 101st Airborne Infantry Division (Air Assault) Higher Headquarters came to the Task Force Freedom area of operations (AO) August 9 and 10 to take a tour and find an area to build a new Tactical Operations Center (TOC) for their headquarters. The 101st will lead the next Task Force.

The Soldiers arrived at Mosul Air Field in the early morning hours and were greeted on the flight line by Maj. Gen. David Rodriguez, commander of Task Force Freedom (TFF), and Command Sgt. Maj. Ricky Pring, command sergeant major of TFF. Lt. Col. Jeff Tipton, post commander for Logistics Support Area (LSA) Diamondback and FOB Marez, started the tour with the Morale Welfare and Recreation building on LSA Diamondback.

"We're basically checking different areas in the AO to see what will work best for our needs," said Lt. Col. Ross Osborne, staff officer for the 101st. "We need an area that is going to be big enough [for the 101st headquarters] even though we will have several units within the 101st throughout the AO." While on LSA Diamondback the group also visited the theatre and the Iraqi air strip.

The group moved to FOB Marez to visit the new dining facility where they took a break for breakfast before continuing on to the 2nd Battalion, 14th

Cavalry Regiment TOC. Tipton gave a description of each area and a few ideas of what could be done to improve or build upon them. After the tour of LSA Diamondback and Marez was completed, the 101st Soldiers were flown to FOB Courage to rest and prepare for another day.

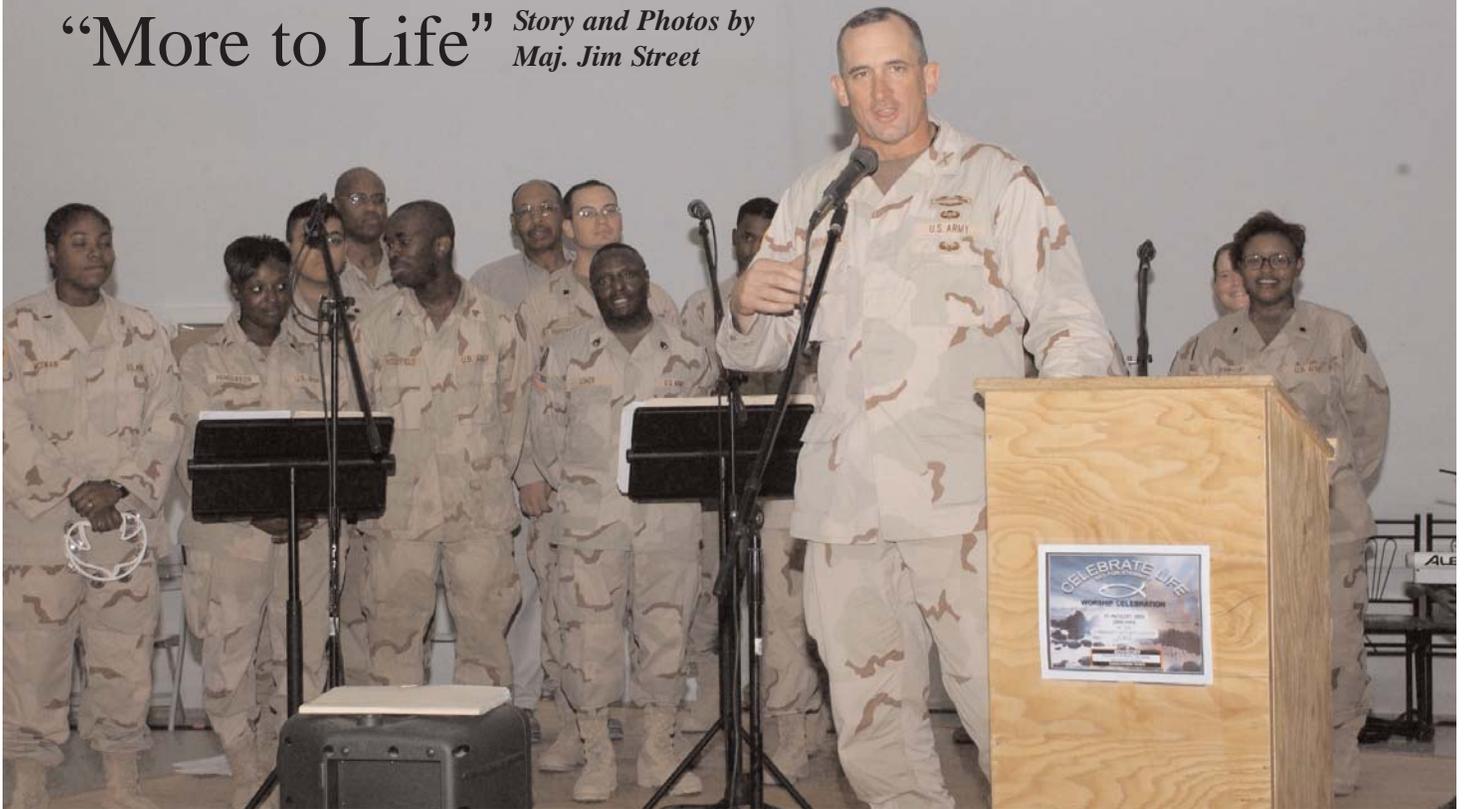
On August 10, the group set off to view the rest of the AO, beginning their tour at the Iraqi Army (IA) Base, Al Kasik. There the members of the 101st were able to meet and talk with officers from the IA and hear about their progress.

After visiting Al Kasik, the group was flown to FOB Sykes where they toured the new 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment (ACR) TOC. While visiting the TOC, the group received a briefing about past and present operations within the Tal'Afar area from Col. H. R. McMasters, 3rd ACR Commander. This gave Maj. Gen. Thomas Turner, 101st Airborne Infantry Division commander, and Command Sgt. Maj. Frank Grippe a chance to evaluate the work that has been done and formulate ideas for added progress in the future.

When the briefing was concluded, the group prepared to move to Q-West Base Complex where they would finish their tour of the AO. The 101st is currently deciding on where they will begin to set up their TOC.

Worship Ceremony Offers

“More to Life” *Story and Photos by
Maj. Jim Street*



Col. Robert Brown, SBCT commander, speaks at the Celebration of Life ceremony.

FOB MAREZ, Iraq - Three hundred Soldiers and guests of the 1st Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, Stryker Brigade Combat Team (SBCT) attended a Christian worship celebration on Sunday, August 21 at the Marez Community Activities Center. The Program's intent was to be an uplifting worship.

The ceremony included music from the Forward Operating Base Marez musicians. Chaplains Capt. Don Carrothers, Capt. James Gazaway, Capt. James Pennington and Capt. Tim Wilson addressed the audience about the power of God in your life. An additional story of one man's faith was given by Sgt. 1st Class Ronald Ockimey. Other speakers during the evening were Col. Robert Brown, SBCT commander and Capt. Kevin Seibold, 1-5 A company commander.

The celebration closed with an invitation from all the Chaplains urging those in the crowd to come forward and ask a Chaplain present to pray with them. This request to the crowd also included a call to anyone who desired, to come near the stage to kneel and pray alone.

"This event is a Celebration of Life," said Brown. "In this place, we have had sad moments and memorials of those brave Soldiers who have been killed in combat, but this evening's program is a rejoicing of what life has to offer."



Soldiers kneel to pray during the ceremony.

