



VANGUARD POINT

Volume II, Issue 15
November 2005

Cleaning the streets of terror ...



Inside



*The hard work of A Co.,
703rd keeps the brigade well
supplied.*



*ISF members teamed up with
Civil Affairs to blot out graffiti
at a future polling site.*



*The Soldiers of 1-184 Inf.
and 3-3 ACR honor their fall-
en comrades.*



A Soldier from 1st Battalion, 184th Infantry Regiment gives directions to an Iraqi Soldier from the 4th Public Order Brigade during Operation Clean Sweep. For the story and photos, see Page 11.

To the Point: Voices and viewpoints from around the brigade

Vanguard 7

The Brigade's top enlisted man explains why it's important to stay focused. **Page 3**

Through a Soldier's eyes

Sgt. 1st Class James D. Hassall looks back at the changes he's seen in Iraq. **Page 3**

Chaplain's corner

Ways to prevent escalation in your marriage. **Page 5**

Around the Point: Stories from around the Brigade

Keeping the supplies flowing

A Co., 703rd works hard to supply the brigade. **Page 7**

Chasing a musical dream

Two Soldiers at FOB Union III are pursuing their musical dream even while deployed. **Page 8, 9**

Helping to rebuild Iraq

The Brigade continues to reach out to Baghdad. **Page 10**

Working side-by-side

The POB and CA teamed up to paint a new reputation for the ISF. **Page 12, 13**

The Georgian partnership

The Georgians man two key checkpoints into the IZ. **Page 14**

Helping a stray bird

Soldiers from HHC, 4th BCT worked to nurse an ailing owl back to health and reunite it with its mother. **Page 16**

Serving at home and abroad

Three 1-184 Inf. Soldiers continue to protect and serve, even when not deployed. **Page 18 to 19**

In memory

Ceremonies remember fallen comrades. **Pages 20 to 23**

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.

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

4th Brigade Commander
Colonel Edward Cardon
4th Brigade Command Sergeant Major
Command Sgt. Maj. Louis Torres
4th Brigade Public Affairs Officer
Maj. Alayne Conway
4th Brigade PA Operations Officer
Capt. Ryan Avila
4th Brigade Public Affairs NCOIC
Staff Sgt. Raymond Piper
Staff Writer
Spc. Dan Balda
Broadcast Journalist
Spc. Nakisha Fonoti

On the cover:

Iraqi Commandos conduct clearing operations with Soldiers from 1-184 Inf. Regt. during Operation Clean Sweep.
Photo by Spc. Dan Balda



VANGUARD 7 SENDS ...

Keep your focus while on point

Command Sgt. Maj. Louis Torres
4th BCT Command Sergeant Major

Greetings Vanguard Soldiers and congratulations on another great month of hard work, dedication, and self-less service to our nation, our great Brigade Combat Team, and the 3rd Infantry Division.

As we continue to prepare for the next major event and operation next month, I remind all of our Soldiers and leaders to remain vigilant and focused on what we are doing and what we are going to be asked to do.

The days are quickly passing and the holidays will soon arrive. Although we are separated from our immediate families and loved ones, each of us can take comfort in knowing we will be spending the holidays with our adopted family, our friends and comrades.

I ask you to continue to take care of yourself, watch each others back, and keep each other straight, especially through the upcoming holiday period. Talk to each other, confer in each other, and continue to Soldier on, but do not forget our families back in the rear and the sacrifices they are making to ensure this mission is a complete success; they too need to hear from their loved ones!

As I visit and go out on missions with all our great Soldiers and troopers, I continue to take comfort in knowing that our Soldiers remain focused on the front lines.



My concern is keeping our Soldiers heads in the game prior to going out and returning from mission. We must continue to conduct effective pre-combat inspection's and pre-combat checks's, and we must ensure all our vehicles and equipment are above standard.

Make no mistake, we will not send our Soldiers into harms way without everything they need to be successful in their missions: eye and ear protection, correct uniforms,

NVG's, back-up communications, interpreters, combat loads, MRE's, water, and enough forces on the ground if something bad happens. These things are the norm for every mission no matter how long the mission is.

Upon returning, Soldiers must conduct and supervise correct clearing procedures on all weapon systems as well as after operations maintenance on all equipment, vehicles, ammunition and Soldiers. We must ensure all equipment is accounted for by doing correct sensitive items checks and services and immediately reporting any discrepancies. Debriefs, and after-action reviews must be conducted with all your Soldiers so they know what they need to work on for the next mission.

These are the important functions that leaders should continue

Continued next page

THROUGH A SOLDIER'S EYES ...

Iraq continues to change for the better every day

Sgt. 1st Class James D.
Hassall

15 November 2005

As an American Soldier, I am bothered by what passes for news concerning the situation in Iraq lately. I am disturbed because I know that an inaccurate, distorted story is being reported to the American people and the world. I know this because I am currently serving in Iraq. I have been on the ground and seen and done things that have never been and will probably never be reported.

I am a part of the 3rd Infantry Division in Baghdad. As an Infantry platoon sergeant responsible for 38 men, I have spent hundreds of hours on patrol in some of southern Baghdad's roughest neighborhoods like Al Dora and Risala.

I have witnessed the entire spectrum of the human condition in my time here: triumph and tragedy, successes and fail-

ures, birth, life and death, heroism and cowardice. I have encountered rich and poor people, Iraqi people from Shi'ite, Sunni, Kurd and Christian ethnicities. I have seen ethnic cooperation and ethnic strife. I have seen a lot and so have all of my comrades.

What bothers me is the steady stream of distortion that passes for news these days. Just today I watched an episode of Nightline in which two Iraqi men claimed to have been tortured by American Soldiers after they were detained, including the use of caged lions to try and scare them in to confessing their crimes!

The entire show portrayed American soldiers as crazed and sadistic torturers who derive pleasure from inflicting suffering on other human beings. Of course there was no counterpoint to this outrageous claim.

I have personally detained many Iraqi and foreign individuals and neither I,

nor my Soldiers ever abused or tortured anyone.

In reflecting on all I have seen in the last year, I am struck by all the changes I have seen in this country. Some changes, which seem simple, are really quite profound.

Electricity is a good example. The average American never thinks or worries about electricity or where it comes from and will it be there when it is needed. But when I arrived in Baghdad, rolling blackouts were standard. Power was on for two hours and off for up to six hours at a time. Now, power is on consistently in most parts of Baghdad. Iraqi contractors have been working on improving the infrastructure to distribute reliable electricity to the people.

That doesn't sound sexy enough to sell papers or get ratings, but it has tremendous importance to the people

Continued Page 6

Continued from previous page

to perform and assess. Remember, the mission and the responsibility for the next operation doesn't end; it's a continuous operations environment and it can be ruthless if we do not stay always ready. Stay alert, and stay alive!

I would like to thank all the Vanguard soldiers for everything you do on a daily basis. You are our nation's best, and you perform at high levels on a daily basis.

Whether you're training Iraqi Security Forces, patrolling Baghdad, or conducting humanitarian operations, you consistently give your all. Thank you!

Let's get through these final days with a tremendous level of discipline, motivation, and pride, and lets all do it safely.

Finally, as it has been my norm, I would like to recognize this month's Vanguard unsung heroes. These are great soldiers that walk among us and never ask for any form of recognition. When you see them, pat them on the back and just say thanks.

Lastly, to our home front, thank you for your tremendous sacrifices and resolve, we cherish our families and look forward to the day we will be together again. As always we will not forget our fallen brothers and we will not fail you. "Vanguard out Front!" 

VANGUARD'S UNSUNG HEROES



Spc. Robert Kinnick
Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 6th Squadron, 8th Cavalry Regiment

Serves as the personnel clerk in the squadron, and is responsible for all facets of morale and welfare for his troopers. This includes operating the squadron mail room, processing all awards, and taking care of all personnel actions, while staying highly motivated 24/7.



Spc. Jonathan Beeton
India Troop, 3rd Squadron, 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment, FOB Falcon

Has distinguished himself by providing medical treatment to all his Soldiers and troopers, including treatment saved the life of another great trooper when attacked by an IED.



Sgt. Jennifer Pazmino-Cevallos
Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 4th Brigade Combat Team

She ensures that the Brigade Commander is fully briefed on all current intelligence, events, and requirements. She is responsible for creating and maintaining the Weekly Trend Analysis Report for the battalions and she is highly motivated, competent and professional.

Buster's

a
g
h
d
a
d



Chaplain's corner ...

“Rules of Engagement” in Marriage Enrichment

Chaplain (Capt.) Chul W. Kim

1-76 FA Battalion Chaplain

Needless to say, deployment creates stress in relationships. Separations during deployment cause couples and families to adjust their daily lives. When they fail to adjust, separation cause relationships to snap, and unfortunately, some relationships come to an end. It is commonly said that deployments are to be blamed for unhealthy relationships and families as well. If this is the case, then every marriage is expected to get worse during the deployment. And there should be no problems in all marriages of the non-deployed. We all know that it is not true that every deployed-relationship gets worse, and every non-deployed-relationship faces no problems. Of course, separation brings hardship to all relationships, but it should not eradicate relationships.

Recently, a redeployment survey was conducted in 1st Battalion, 76th Field Artillery Regiment with a fairly large number of samples to probe potential issues upon redeployment. One of the questions asked was “Did your marriage get better, stay the same, or get worse as a result of deployment?” Interestingly enough, the result shows that more Soldiers responded that their marriage relationship got better. Only 27 percent said their relationship got worse, 39 percent said it stayed the same, and 34 percent got better.

Certainly deployments bring hardship and crisis into every relationship. Nobody finds delight in separation because leaving loved ones behind is a painful and heart aching event. The Chinese word for “crisis” is a compound noun with two separate meanings: danger and opportunity. This crisis of deployment can be turned into a danger which weakens the relationship or an opportunity to enhance the relationship. What really matters is what happens in us, not to us.

Human relationships are not static but very dynamic. They rarely stay the same. It gets either better or worse. If you do not put any effort into enhancing your relationship, it will not stay the same but get worse. As someone rightly said, “The greatest mistake a person can make is doing nothing.” And this is so true in human relationship.

In the middle of difficulty lies opportunity. Separation is a golden opportunity to apply this very thought. While we are sep-

arated from our loved ones, it is possible to build better relationships through self-examination, renewal of commitment, and restoration of romance. The survey proves this point.

Then how do we enhance our relationship, renew our commitment, and restore romance? Ironically, we all know the answer very well, but don't do it well – communication. It is the number one killer for all relationships and at the same time, it is the most needed skill in all relationships. This is the only way by which a husband and wife can get to know each other better. The more you know about your spouse, and make yourself known to your spouse, the better and stronger the relationship gets.

There are levels in communication: hallway talk, report talk, intellectual talk, emotional talk, and loving, genuine truth talk. In brief, hallway talk is nothing more than exchanging greetings and superficial talk. Report talk is summarizing all events taken place, just like a reporter without editorial comments: who did what, where, when, why and how. Intellectual talk is exchanging information similar to report talk but with editorial comments. Emotional talk is where you can express your feeling without worrying about not being accepted. Love, genuine truth talk, is the ultimate level of conversation in which you express your inner most thoughts. It is where you share your goals in life, career, marriage, family, and spiritual issues.

How far can you carry on your conversation with your loved one without having any trouble? Up to which level of communication can you and your spouse climb together?

Couples usually experience arguments while carrying on conversations. And it makes them feel uncomfortable, and reluctant in engaging conversation. Couples do not want arguments and disagreements. In order for them to stay away from confrontation, they choose to stay at the low levels of communication – hallway talk, and reporter talk. This is not a healthy sign. You need to move up higher where there is greater joy and happiness awaiting for you. Feelings for each other must be expressed freely and accepted honestly.

Until you reach that objective, you shouldn't quit trying. Quitting is a permanent solution to a temporary problem. Let's try again. Drop a letter to your loved ones today. Let them know how much you care, and treasure every moment with them even the times spent in separation. 

If conflict should arise between you and your spouse, please consider the following Rules of Engagement according to Dr. Smalley:

- ✓ First clarify what the actual conflict is. Make sure that you understand your spouse's feelings and needs as clearly as you can before proceeding to a resolution. Listening is vital here!
- ✓ Stick to the issue at hand. Don't dredge up past hurts or problems, whether real or perceived. But if you tend to veer off the issue, you might want to see if there is any other key factor in this conflict, such as fatigue, low estrogen, low blood sugar, stress, work

problems, or spiritual or emotional issues.

- ✓ Maintain as much tender physical contact as possible.
- ✓ Avoid sarcasm.
- ✓ Avoid “you” statement. Use the words “I feel” or “I think.”
- ✓ Don't use “hysterical” statement or exaggerations. It usually creates emotional escalation.
- ✓ Resolve any hurt feelings before continuing the conflict discussion.
- ✓ Don't resort to name calling. Don't allow the conflict to escalate your tempers. If this happens, agree to continue the discussion later.
- ✓ Avoid power statements and actions.

- ✓ Don't use the silent treatment.
- ✓ Keep your arguments as private as possible to avoid embarrassment.
- ✓ Use the “drive-thru talking” method of communication when arguing. (Drive-thru talking is repeating what you heard to ensure what you heard is correct and to confirm that is what your spouse said. This will eliminate misunderstanding which some cases cause an “escalation of force.”)
- ✓ Resolve your conflicts with win-win solutions. Both agree with the solution or outcome of the argument.
- ✓ Above all, strive to reflect honor in all your words and actions during the resolution of your conflicts.

living here.

The most profound change I have witnessed seems to be in the Iraqi people themselves. When we initially arrived in country, we were providing a lot of assistance to the Iraqis but that changed for the better. The Iraqi people now have the ability and desire to do things for themselves.

This change in attitude is best reflected in the Iraqi Security Forces which includes Ministry of Defense and Ministry of the Interior forces who are responsible for local security and counter terror operations.

When I started patrolling in the Al Dora district in February the police based there refused to leave their station. Their station looked like a small fortress with bunkers, barbed wire and barriers all around it and 38 American Soldiers had an enormous task providing day to day security for over 250,000 Iraqis in the sector.

But things were changing. Our company participated in a raid dubbed Operation Vanguard Tempest that included more than 600 forces from the Iraqi Army and various coalition forces.

The raid targeted a strong Al Qaeda affiliate operating in our sector. One of our goals was to get the Iraqi Army more involved in the action so that they could begin to take the lead in these types of operations.

My platoon had Bradley Fighting Vehicles, Humvees, and a lot of firepower. We were joined by 20 Iraqi Army Soldiers in a flatbed truck. They watched as my Soldiers took the lead entering houses, and they followed our lead. By the end of the operation they were enthusiastically leading my Soldiers into our target houses!

In May we moved to another sector, the Al Bayaa neighborhood in the Risala district. There is both a police station and an MOI compound in that sector.

The Iraqi Police were not as visible and did not interact a lot with the residents living in the neighborhoods. June 20 was a changing point for the Iraqi security forces in my sector.

What is the significance you ask? Was there an election? Was there some great speech from a political leader or Imam?



On that morning, a patrol from our company responded to a very well coordinated attack on the Al Bayaa police station and a nearby MOI compound. This coordinated attack included mortars, rocket-propelled grenades, car-bombers, and accurate, well planned machine gun fire led by more than 30 anti-Iraqi forces. Our patrol responded by returning fire, but we did not save the day. It was the Iraqis who won this fight.

In fact, it was a very decisive victory for the Iraqis as the attackers were all either captured or killed. The local MOI commander was seen leading his troops with a pistol in either hand, guns blazing like some wild-west gunslinger.

By the time significant U.S. forces arrived on the scene, the battle was very much over.

The Iraqi people saw this and it emboldened them. They suddenly seemed to realize that that they did not need the Americans to take care of all their needs. They realized that they could take care of themselves. This was a seminal moment in the growth of a viable, local security force.

We saw mentions of the battle on CNN but they summed it up as another one of the seemingly endless string of attacks on Iraqi Security Forces and failed to mention that it was a decisive victory for the ISF. They missed the real story, and so did the world.

Since then I have witnessed the MOI commandos execute many operations without direct U.S. help. I have seen the Iraqi police patrolling neighborhoods, handling traffic problems, responding to curfew violators and providing security for all manner of local events.

The Constitutional Referendum was run completely by the Iraqis. U.S. forces assisted in assessing security and were prepared to respond to emergency situations. But the day passed without incident in our sector. The Iraqi Security Forces did this all themselves.

The Iraqi people have taken notice. They are proud to be able to handle their country's problems themselves.

They would like the United States to be a good partner in business and international relations, but the Iraqi people that I have spoken with want Iraq to be able to effectively govern herself.

That is beginning to happen but how often does this get reported? How many news shows cover that angle? How many Op-Ed pieces get written on this? I haven't seen any. This is just one thing I have seen and one story I could tell. Will anyone read it? Will anyone care?

The Iraqi people are beginning to take care of themselves, and American soldiers are making a difference. Do not allow their stories to go untold. Honor the sacrifices that all of these people have made.

Tell the whole story.

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.



A pallet with supplies is loaded onto the back of truck during one of A Co., 703rd FSB's supply runs.

Spc. Dan Balda

Late night supply runs keep battalions stocked

Spc. Dan Balda

4th BCT PAO

Late at night in Iraq, while many Soldiers are tucked into their bunks dreaming of home and movies without subtitles, the Soldiers of A Company, 703rd Forward Support Battalion are readying their vehicles to bring much needed supplies to various forward operating bases in and around Baghdad.

"Currently we support 11 battalions that require all classes of supplies," said Capt. Christine Roney, the company commander. She commands a distribution company and as such, her Soldiers are out on the road every single night. They travel at night because of the lower threat level, Roney said.

According to Roney, a native of Loudonville, Ohio, the company was unaware the logistical requirement would be this large. "We have one of the largest support missions in Iraq," she said. It takes all day for the company to set up for a forward logistics element run. Everything from loading the material to staging the vehicles can keep the Soldiers busy.

Lately the focus has been on preparing for the redeployment and the coming elections. Their larger vehicles are in high demand to move containers around the FOB and to place concrete barriers around polling sites for better protection come election time.

"It can be time consuming but we have been able to get it down over the last 10 months," said Staff Sgt. Terry Elliott, the company truck master. If a vehicle is going out on the road, then that driver is responsible for making sure the vehicle has been dispatched the day of the mission.

"It cuts down on the overall maintenance time as well as making sure we don't have any vehicles break down while in sector," said Elliott, a native of Memphis, Tenn. One of the missions of the company is to recover any vehicles that break down while on the road.

"I've been very impressed (with our Soldiers)," Elliott said. "When I got here we were a little shaky on operations. A lot of the equipment was new to us, and since then we got uparmor, and we weren't sure how it was going to function. Right now we've performed more than 500 missions and not had to recover any of our

own vehicles. That's a credit to the NCOs and Soldiers doing their job everyday."

According to Roney the key to a successful distribution company is being flexible and responsible to the needs of the brigade. One of the ways that helps her company perform that function is having their own gun-truck platoon to escort their larger vehicles on their forward logistic element runs.

Instead of going outside the battalion to draw Soldiers for a traditional combat arms assignment, 1st Lt. Seth Olmstead, the gun truck platoon leader pulled from wherever he from within the Soldiers of the 703rd.

"We've got cooks, fuelers, mechanics, you name it, I've got 'em," Olmstead said. "Initially it was hard to mold them into one cohesive unit because we come from all different backgrounds different training, very few people we have had any combat arms experience."

Olmstead didn't have to look far for combat arms experience to train his Soldiers; before he received his commission he was an enlisted infantryman. He and his platoon sergeant sat down and devised a training regimen to get his Soldiers up to speed as quickly as possible.

Now it would be hard to differentiate between his Soldiers and a traditional scout or infantryman.

"We've done missions with infantry battalions here on Falcon and pulled security right along with them with no issues," said proud-papa Olmstead.

"It's fantastic. We can take people that are not traditionally combat arms guys to train up to where they are now," Olmstead said. "As far as support guys go they tend to get over looked with missions like this. We fall off the radar screen because we aren't out there going toe-to-toe with the bad guys kicking in doors."

The addition of the gun-truck platoon has added to Roney's capabilities as a commander, and added to the stellar reputation of her company.

"This company has done everything I've asked of them," she said. "A couple more months and we can take a break. Until then, I expect them to maintain their current level of excellence. 

Chasing dreams in the sand box

Soldiers embrace love of music even while deployed

Spc. Dan Balda
4th BCT PAO

For centuries Soldiers have used music to relate the emotions of being at war. From The Song of Roland written during the 11th Century detailing the Battle of Roncevaux Pass to the bard traveling with "Brave" Sir Robin in Monty Python's Search for the Holy Grail, warrior's frustrations with their command and the situations have been put to music.

For two Soldiers assigned to the 4th Brigade Combat Team, music has been a way for them to deal with the stress of serving thousands of miles away from their loved ones in a way they hope to continue once their time in the Army comes to an end.

Pfc. Christopher "David" Walls, a systems operator assigned to A Company, 4th Brigade Troops Battalion, 3rd Infantry Division has plans for his music. Known as "D Money," he has been around music his entire life. His parents have owned recording studios in Atlanta and he took an informal apprenticeship there working behind the scenes mixing the music and working on graphic design.

"My parents paid me an allowance, but I was learning how all the different stuff worked," Walls said. "Not part time or full time just something I would do even if they didn't pay me because I loved it so much."

Walls doesn't credit any one person

with getting him interested in music, but from talking to him one gets the feeling that it was a kind of inadvertent osmosis. His music relies most heavily on hip-hop influences but according to Walls, "I'm not trying to label myself or anything," he said. "When I do a song I like to include other kinds of music."

In the past his musical tastes tended towards anything without lyrics, which is strange because his greatest strength lies in his lyrical content.

"I try to sing about anything that I see is wrong with the world, I have songs about everything, love, hate basically any emotion you have felt I'll write about," Walls said.

Seeing how passionate and knowledgeable he is about the world of music one would think he had thought long and hard about joining the cutthroat world of popular music. One would be mistaken.

"One day I went to a place that had an MC performing on stage and there was about 500 people there," Walls said. "I don't know what got into me, but I just got up on stage and started free styling. I don't even

know why I got on stage; I never did it before then. That was right before I came into the Army."

He said he grew up around music but after that day it became the one thing that mattered the most to him.

"It's the only thing I really see myself doing in the future. It's where I know I'm meant to be. I know I want to do this."

"This" also includes plans for starting his own entertainment company, Street Knowledge Productions. Under this umbrella, his company will be responsible for a record label, producing music videos to include their choreography. He said he already has a number of artists ready to sign to his music label as well as a number of well-qualified people to take care of the production side of the house.

With the support of a strong staff, Walls has own goals for his music.

"I'd like to focus on creating new styles of music, I like a lot of stuff that's out there today, but I'll pretty much work with any kind of music," Walls said. "My goal and what I've dedicated my label to is making statements. I'm

going to be influencing my artists to put out a positive message."

On his second deployment, Walls has made time to work on his music and improving the sound quality. The hard part was getting the proper equipment to Iraq.

"(During Operation Iraqi Freedom I) I had a laptop and a little headset mike to record on," Walls said. Despite the unfriendly work environment, Walls still managed to record one song that made its way onto the radio in Atlanta.

With the money, he made during the first deployment he started to piece together the equip-



Continued next page

ment needed for a small recording studio. Walls admits the gear he brought with him this turn in Iraq is not as professional as the gear he is used to working with, but it does the job. His room is filled with the necessary equipment including a recording booth he constructed out of wood he found around the base. Armed with the recording basics, he is currently in the process of recording his own album and works with like-minded Soldier-artists.

"I have a lot of guys that want to come up here (Union III) to record but sometimes they can't make it," he said. "I don't mind recording for them. It's more of a hobby for me (right now)."

Sgt. Desmond Peacock, a.k.a. Quest Boogie, a chaplain's assistant assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 1st Battalion, 76th Field Artillery Regiment, introduced himself to Walls while the two of them were stationed at Forward Operating Base Honor.

"I was doing recording like (Walls) was last time in Iraq," Peacock said. "All of a sudden somebody put a bug in my ear and told me about this guy who had a complete studio and told me to check him out. We started talking, I told him my goals, he told me his goals and we were on the same wavelength. We just clicked from there. I let him hear some of the stuff I had already put down, and he told me how he could make them better. We went in there, I got in the booth and it's been magic ever since."

Peacock got his start singing in his church choir as a young boy. In 1995 when the hip-hop scene as we now know it was emerging, his brother was a DJ at Bryant College, R.I., and brought Peacock the instrumentals on tape and he would tape over them with a karaoke machine.

head," he said. He continued to write music and kept his songs with him until the chance came to put his songs on something concrete. He says that when Wall's finishes a song of his, the quality is "50 times" better than what he was doing previously.

While Wall's songs don't touch on many military themes, he does have one song called "Soldiers Repent" that deals with what he saw on his last deployment and the feelings he wrestled with. Apart from being in the booth, what really helps relax Wall's is the technical aspect of making it sound better.

"I love music," Walls said. "When I am working on my music there's nothing else that bothers me. It's like my way out. I never get stressed out as long as I work on my music. I focus on it and its like nothing else matters."

He said he hasn't been stressed out like many of the Soldiers around him who have a lot on their minds because his music helps him to put aside his worries.

Peacock's music helps him deal with the stress but his time in Iraq heavily influences his lyrical content. His album is titled "A Soldier's Vent" and covers emotions that any Soldier who as spent any time in a combat zone can relate to.

"With my job I deal with Soldiers problems on a daily basis," Peacock said. "I'm there when there is a crisis, when a Soldier is wounded; I'm there with them. Being a chaplain's assistant, it's hard to vent your emotions so I put it down on paper. Once I put it down on paper, go in the booth and then listen to it; it's like a burden lifted."

According to Peacock, "You can't be fake with what you rap about. What's more real for me than what I'm rapping about right now? Ain't nothing fake about what I'm doing right now."



Staff Sgt. Raymond Piper

Sgt. Desmond "Quest Boogie" Peacock, a chaplain's assistant with 1st Battalion, 76th Field Artillery Regiment, works on laying down a track during a recording session with Pfc. Christopher "D-Money" Walls, a systems operator with A Co., 4th Brigade Troops Battalion, 3rd Infantry Division.

still has plans to put on some shows when he returns.

Before the 1st Cavalry Division redeployed, Peacock met a fellow hip-hop artist serving in Iraq who recorded an album. After returning to the states, the Soldier signed with a major record label, helping to drive Peacock to chase his dream

"If they can make it, we can make it,"

"This might be the next fad; Soldiers rapping about what's going on over here."

Peacock sent the raw tapes to some people he knew who had record labels but he believes they didn't catch on because of the lack of professional finish on the songs.

When he enlisted in the Army he continued to collaborate with his brother and would play the finished product for his friends at Fort Carson who enjoyed it but still supplied Peacock with constructive criticism.

"It got to the point where I was coming out with too much music and too many ideas that I couldn't keep it in my

Peacock's wife tells him that it's every 16-year-old's dream to be a rapper. He doesn't disagree with her, but in his words, "I know I can do something (with my talent)."

"There are too many people that are out right now that are only out because they were at the right place at the right time. There is not a guy out right now that can sing, rap and write at the same time and make it in the game like I can."

Peacock has already received some offers to perform but being in Iraq makes it kind of hard to get to the shows, but he

Peacock said. "This might be the next fad; Soldiers rapping about what's going on over here. Rap out today is all the same same; people want to hear about Soldiers and what they go through on a daily basis."

Both Walls and Peacock agree that with the number of Soldiers who are blessed with some form of musical ability, there may be a new job in the military: music production.

Editor's Note: *Samples of Wall's work i available online at www.myspace.com/decipherflows.* 

Cleaning up trash piles bring Iraqi kids' smiles

Capt. Ryan Avila

4th BCT PAO

Task Force Baghdad Soldiers recently teamed up with a contractor in western Baghdad to transform a trash-filled lot into a soccer field for local youngsters.

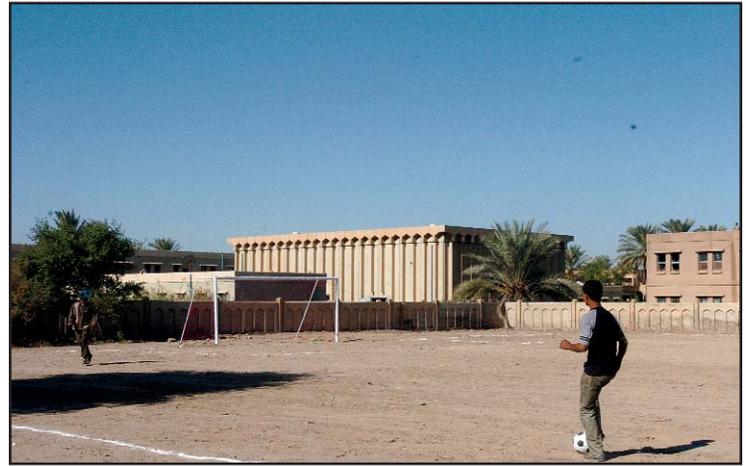
A patrol from 6th Squadron, 8th Cavalry Regiment triggered the start of the project to clear away the rubble and garbage.

Neighborhood residents showed Capt. Paul Murach, the 6-8 civil-military operations officer, a cluttered lot in a residential area a few weeks ago. The residents needed some assistance cleaning up the field which had become an eyesore

Murach contacted a local Iraqi construction contractor, and after receiving approval on financing, awarded the beautification project to him.

"The project took six days to complete at a cost of \$9,000," Murach said.

The unit sponsored a media event Nov. 3 to show off the new field for the residents and watch local children put the field to the test by practicing their soccer skills. 



Capt. Ryan Avila

A local Iraqi boy tries out his soccer footwork on a newly-cleared field in western Baghdad Nov. 3. Task Force Baghdad Soldiers and a local contractor spent six days and \$9,000 clearing the lot of trash and rubble.



Capt. Ryan Avila

A view from the inside of Quadicayah water treatment plant Oct. 27.

Americans, Iraqis to repair water treatment facility

Capt. Ryan Avila

4th BCT PAO

BAGHDAD – Efforts are underway to improve the water supply for Iraqis living in Southern Baghdad.

Soldiers assigned to 4th Brigade Troops Battalion, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division sponsored a media event Oct. 27 to showcase the beginning of a project to repair the facilities at the Quadicayah Water Treatment Plant.

The 4th BCT Infrastructure Coordination Element recently awarded a restoration project of the plant to a local engineering contracting team. When complete, the facility will provide potable water to three neighborhoods as well as residents in the International Zone. 

Medical aid, teddy bears win hearts

1st Lt. Kevin Norton

3/7 Inf. Reg.

Armed with medical supplies, teddy bears and shoes, Soldiers from 3rd Infantry Division's 3rd Battalion, 7th Infantry Regiment helped a predominantly poor neighborhood of the Al Rasheed district Nov. 1

The Soldiers of E Company, 3rd Bn., 7th Inf. Reg. spoke with local authorities in the April 9th Village about the need for medical care and supplies in the neighborhood.

On Nov. 1, about 30 families were given medical screenings by U.S. Army doctors. One resident, wounded during an improvised explosive device attack, received a wheelchair from U.S. forces.

As the locals streamed in from all directions, a couple of the Soldiers from E Co. began organizing the crowd. With the help of two local sheikhs, the Soldiers handed out essential items to the families including 100 sets of children's clothes, 200 teddy

bears and toy cars, 250 pairs of shoes and 100 personal hygiene kits.

Perhaps the most important moment came when a man brought his 4-year-old son to see the medics. The boy was born with his intestines protruding from his abdomen. Although he was brave, he was still scared as he got closer to the medics conducting evaluations.

The Army medics realized they had a case that needed further attention.

1st Lt. Daniel Sevilla, the battalion physician's assistant called for permission from Iraqi and U.S. Army authorities for the child to be seen by an Army surgeon. After he got the green light, Sevilla brought the child and his father to further treatment.

One of the platoon leaders from E Co., 3/7 Inf., 1st Lt. Ian Sullivan, was pleased with the outcome of the operation.

"From the initial security phase all the way through the medical assessment, everything went smoothly," Sullivan said. "It is missions like these that make me feel like we're making a difference." 



Sgt. Daniel Watson, a Soldier assigned to E Company, 3rd Battalion, 7th Infantry Regiment, makes a new friend in the Al Rasheed district Nov. 1. Watson participated in the medical visit that treated more than 30 families in a predominantly poor neighborhood.



A group of Iraqi Forces from the 4th Public Order Brigade prepare to search a house during Operation Clean Sweep. U.S. and Iraqi forces searched 350 houses and detained nearly 50 terror suspects during the operation Oct. 28-29.

Spc. Dan Balda

Iraqi, U.S. Forces make clean sweep of South Baghdad

Spc. Dan Balda

4th BCT PAO

Sometimes the names of operations have nothing to do with the intended result of the operation. Operation Clean Sweep was not one of those missions.

“Operation Clean Sweep was intended to clean out an area that was known to be used as a way for insurgents to come towards Baghdad from the south as well as an area that a lot of (Vehicle Borne Improvised Explosive Devices) and IEDs were coming from,” said Lt. Col. Everett Knapp, 1st Battalion, 184th Infantry Regiment commander.

In anticipation of the Dec. 15 nationwide elections, the Soldiers of 1-184 as well as members of the Iraqi Public Order Brigade and Iraqi Commandos raided about 350 residences and detained 49 suspected terrorists.

Soldiers assigned to 1-184 set up the outer cordon of the mission while others shadowed their Iraqi counterparts.

“The Iraqi Soldiers really took the lead (on this mission),” Knapp said. “They don’t need translators, they can tell who the good guys are and who doesn’t belong in a certain situation.”

During the Oct. 15 Constitutional Referendum, the election commission refused to set up a polling site despite

the assurances of 1-184 Soldiers to the areas safety. To prevent this from happening again, U.S. and Iraqi Soldiers swept through the fields clearing every building that stood in their path.

Another reason, according to Knapp, was to put an Iraqi face on the clearing operations.

“We want the people to see the ISF protecting them. This election has nothing to do with us. This whole operation is about making this area safe for the Iraqi people to see their own Soldiers protecting them.”

1st Lt. Jim Waters, C Company, 1-184 Inf., and a native of Sacramento, Calif., said his Soldiers joined the Iraqi commandos during the operation.

“The message we’re trying to convey is that the Iraqi government and the Iraqi security forces are capable of securing the country and also that the citizens of Iraq who are in cooperative support of the new government don’t have anything to fear from the power of the American military or the power of Iraq’s security forces.”

Waters’ troops and the rest of 1-184 were glad to lend a helping hand to the ISF, and Knapp looks forward to the future.

“These guys get better every single day,” Knapp said. “Their professionalism is outstanding.”



An Iraqi commando stands watch on a roof top as the house below is searched.

ISF paint a new reputation with CA's help

Spc. Dan Balda
4th BCT PAO

Under the prior regime, the Iraqi people were used to being intimidated by their security forces.

Soldiers assigned to the 1st Battalion, 4th Public Order Brigade set out Nov. 15 to change that perception. They showed up with paint rollers and paint cans to perform a two-fold mission. One mission was to cover up graffiti that adorned the walls of a school that will double as a polling site come election time. The second mission was to bring school supplies and other surprises to the children at the school.

"This will be one of the future polling sites for the upcoming elections," said 1st Sgt. Emanuel Valdez, team chief for Civil Affairs Team Four, A Company, 425th Civil Affairs Battalion. "We want to make them an 'intimidation-free' area. When (Iraqis) come out to vote they don't want to see signs that say, 'The only road to paradise is through death.' No pro-American, no pro-(Anti-Iraqi Forces graffiti), everything is wiped clean so the people can go in there and make their own decisions."

After the referendum, Valdez attended an after-action review to discuss ways in which to improve the electoral process the next time around. Once of the issues that came up was a need to improve the polling sites. Valdez then got in touch with the POB commanders and he proposed working together to improve a number of sites in Dora.

"We are trying to get the POB integrated into civil-military operations which means getting them involved in the community," said Valdez, a native of Los Angeles. "Right now they are doing a great job going out on raids going out and securing the area and running checkpoints, but what we want to do is move them to the next step, which is giving the public confidence in the POB so they can talk to them and say, 'Hey, we've got some bad guys down the street. Can you take care of it?'"

Iraqi and Americans painted side-by-side as children chased each other around the Humvees. One Soldier, with paint all over her uniform and person-jokingly remarked, "They didn't tell me in basic I'd have paint all over me."

A Soldier assigned to 1st Battalion, 4th Public Order Brigade, gives a young boy a soccer ball in Horjaeb.



After the painting was finished, the POB Soldiers grabbed the goodies from the back of the vehicles as children and elderly men alike clamored for a soccer balls. In addition to the soccer balls, the students were given backpacks filled with pencils and paper as well as Beanie Babies, which according to Valdez, are quite the rage with the children of Iraq. To show their appreciation, the children serenaded the Soldiers much to the delight of both the Americans and the Iraqis.

Staff Sgt. Ron Eberhardt, the 1st Battalion, 184th Infantry Regiment Information Operations noncommissioned officer in charge, was at the event to help coordinate the Iraqi media's coverage of the occasion.

"We wanted to show the people of Iraqi through newspapers and television how the ISF cooperate with the U.S. troops," said Eberhardt, a native of Olivehurst, Calif.

For Valdez, the key to the mission was to show the community the partnership between Iraqi and American Forces.

"It shows the local nationals that the coalition forces aren't out there by themselves and the ISF aren't by themselves; they are working in concert," he said. "Soon we'll hand it all off to them. For the locals they can see this is one team. Not Wolf Brigade, not POB not coalition forces – we are working together towards one common goal."

Some people might say that painting over graffiti and handing out stuffed animals is not going to make much of an impact on the hearts and minds of the Iraqi people but Valdez believes that the improvements might be small, but "the gesture is grand."

"Right now we have millions and millions of dollars slated for big projects but the problem is the time from start to finish is so long that people get upset and frustrated," Valdez said. "What we are trying to do is give them a little something to keep them going. We do a little improvements here and there and all of a sudden the local nationals are saying, 'Wow, these guys are actually trying to improve the area.' I know the improvements aren't the biggest, but we help a couple of schools, put in some new windows, clean up the area, that goes a long way for the people." 



Students at a school in Horjaeb sing to Iraqi Soldiers as a show of thanks after the Soldiers brought them school supplies Nov. 15.



Photos by Spc. Dan Balda

A Soldier assigned to 1st Battalion, 4th Public Order Brigade, paints over graffiti in Horjaeb Nov. 15. The Iraqi Soldiers partnered with American troops to paint over graffiti and hand out goodies.

A Russian armored vehicle belonging to the 21st Georgian Infantry Battalion stands ready at Checkpoint 18.

Staff Sgt. Raymond Piper



GUARDIANS AT THE GATE

Georgians keep key entrances safe

Staff Sgt. Raymond Piper

4th BCT PA NCOIC

The checkpoint is like many of the entrances into Baghdad's International Zone. Soldiers move among the vehicles checking IDs and vehicles, looking for anything out of place. The major difference at Checkpoint 18 is a Russian armored vehicle sits on the top of hill rather than an Abrams Tank and the Soldiers, Georgians from the 21st Infantry Battalion, can be heard speaking to each other in their native tongue as they go about their duties.

The Georgians are responsible for security at two of the entrances to the IZ as well as the Al Rasheed Hotel and the convention center. They also patrol the Baghdad Zoo.

Georgian Capt. Nick Nemsitsveridze, the battalion commander, said, "My men are disciplined and their morale is really good. They are doing their duty."

They arrived in Iraq in September and relieved the 13th Georgian Infantry Battalion.

Checkpoint 18 is the only entrance for large vehicles, such as semis and construction equipment and Checkpoint 3 leads into the Convention Center.

The battalion works indirectly with the Iraqi Police and the 5th Brigade of the Iraqi Army who give incoming vehicles a first look and check IDs before they are allowed to proceed. If a vehicle stops on the bridge near Checkpoint 18, they investigate and get it to move.

"We have trained on what to look for suspicious behavior, such as body language, posture and gestures," said 1st Lt. Timur Komladze, platoon leader.

He explained how one day at Checkpoint 3 they saw the tell tale signs that someone coming through the walk-in gate was up to no good.

When they investigated, they found the guy had a suitcase of

TNT with a timer.

"We identified him by his posture and were able to stop him before he could cause any damage or casualties," Komladze said.

Komladze's checkpoint has had mortar's land near it since they've been here and had a close call with shrapnel when a car bomber detonated near Checkpoint 2. They keep a piece of the wreckage at the checkpoint as a reminder of the explosion and the type of enemy they face in Iraq.

For Georgian 1st Lt. George Charbadze, platoon leader and 12-year-veteran of the Georgian Army, he feels he's doing his duty but there are many differences in this war than his previous combat experiences.

He said, "It's very different. In previous conflicts, they were actual military conflicts where we knew who the enemy was, where positions were, but over here we don't know who is an enemy because there is no specific way to tell what a VBIED or an IED looks like. The enemy doesn't wear uniforms so they look like everyone."

Despite the differences, Charbadze feels he is doing his duty and is prepared to execute the orders given to him by the Georgian president and minister of defense.

Although there is a language barrier, they have translators that work with them who speak Arabic, English and Russian so they are able to communicate, Nemsitsveridze said. Of course he added, it would be better if the Soldiers could speak the languages themselves, but it doesn't really interfere with the mission.

The Georgians trained just as the U.S. forces did before coming to Iraq. Their Army even prepared "smart cards" for them. The hardest part for some of the soldiers was deploying to a new place.

"We didn't really have any culture shock because our country lies between the East and West so we have been exposed to both Asian and European cultures within our borders," Nemsitsveridze said. 

1-76 Soldier helps break language barrier

Staff Sgt. Raymond Piper

4th BCT PA NCOIC

When the 1st Battalion, 76th Field Artillery Regiment began conducting right seat rides with the 13th Georgian Infantry Battalion, language was a huge barrier for the two units to benefit from each other's experience.

"We would get two or three Georgians with us on missions, but unfortunately they



Staff Sgt. Raymond Piper

Pfc. Daniel Nasereddine speaks with the 21st Georgian Infantry Battalion commander in Russian. Nasereddine helped his platoon and the 13th Georgian Infantry Battalion communicate on missions.

wouldn't have an interpreter so we wouldn't be able to communicate properly," said Capt. Ryan Avila, a former platoon leader with 1-76 FA.

Along came Pfc. Daniel Nasereddine, who was one of Avila's platoon members. Nasereddine emigrated from the Ukraine and spoke Russian, giving him the ability to communicate with the Georgians.

"With Nasereddine, I was able to find out how long they had been in the military and what kind of the training they had," Avila said.

With his Soldier's help, he was able to find out that many of the Georgians have combat experience and training specific to Iraq.

"Once I knew this, I could focus on helping them to learn the routes in Baghdad," he said.

Nasereddine was exposed to many different languages as a child because he lived in many different parts of the world.

His father is Lebanese and his mother is Ukrainian so he lived both in the Ukraine and Lebanon. He decided instead of trying to master a number of languages, to stick with English.

"Since I was a baby, I have been exposed to English, but it wasn't until I went to college that I learned the writing and grammar part," Nasereddine said.

After his parents divorce, his father immigrated to America. Eventually, his son followed him years later.

"After I finished college, I decided to move to the United States because the work environment is better here, even though I love the Ukraine."

After coming to America, he came to the self realization that he needed more self dis-

cipline and began to think about joining the U.S. Army.

"My decision to join the Army was probably the best thing I've ever done," Nasereddine said. "The main part is I like it and I always wanted to be in the Army. In my mind, it's part of the process of becoming a man."

He said one of the reasons he joined the Army was because he wants to work with languages with the NSA, FBI or a similar organization one day.

"It would be really difficult for me to get in there without joining the U.S. Army. Even in the Army I was limited in my job choices because I'm not a citizen and could not get a security clearance," Nasereddine.

Although in many cases, the Army will help non-U.S. citizens gain their citizenship faster than was not the case for Nasereddine. His father is a U.S. citizen and when he came to the United States he was under 21 so he came under a special INS program that helps him gain his citizenship.

Even in the Army it would have only been a matter of months before he could apply for his citizenship. "Although a lot of people do join for citizenship, it isn't why I joined," he said.

One of his goals once he receives his citizenship is to go to Officer Candidate School and try for military intelligence where he can apply his knowledge of languages.

Even though he has goals to reach, he feels he's on the right path.

Nasereddine said, "This deployment was a really good experience. It's a really great life experience. The way I am now can't even be compared to how I was at the beginning of the deployment. 

Patriot's Chaplain's assistant wins Battalion NCO of the Year

Master Sgt. Jack Glasscock

1-76 FA Operations NCO

Sergeant Desmond Peacock serves as the Chaplain's Assistant for 1st Battalion, 76th Field Artillery Regiment's Unit Ministry Team. He is known to many as a Soldier's Soldier because he uses his first-hand experience to gauge Soldier attitudes. His warm demeanor enables him to interact with them on a personal level and create a climate of trust and compassion. This constant interaction allows Peacock to quickly diagnose issues pertaining to morale and Soldier welfare, often before they arise. These attributes among others garnered Peacock the title of Battalion Non-Commissioned Officer of the Year for 2005. He was also chosen because of his professional knowledge, positive attitude, and his outstanding contributions to the battalion.

"It was a big accomplishment for me and it felt good to achieve something of that status," Peacock said.

He devoted countless hours preparing him for the challenge of

competing with the best NCOs in the Patriot Battalion said Chaplain (Capt.) Chul Kim, the 1-76 Battalion Chaplain. "His commitment to excellence, demonstrated leadership, and military bearing distinguish him as a true asset to the field artillery community and as a member of the Vanguard team."

Peacock is responsible for planning and coordinating religious support operations for about 500 soldiers for his battalion and has kept him busy but does not keep him from serving his battalion in other ways.

He has participated in more than 30 combat escort patrols throughout the 3rd Infantry Division area of operations and his outstanding military bearing earned Peacock a position on the battalion color guard Kim said.

"He has often been praised by the 4th Brigade Combat Team commander for his efforts," Kim said.

Peacock shared some advice with younger Soldiers.

"Stay focused and make your goals at an early stage. If you work hard, you will reap the rewards of your hard work." 

GIs abroad work for survival of creatures great and small

Non-profit animal rehabilitation agency supports efforts of Soldiers to save wildlife affected by armed conflict

WildCare Press Release

Special to the Vanguard Point

Each day brings reports more and more reports of attacks, death, and destruction in Iraq. Occasionally news of US soldiers involved in humanitarian activities trickles through, but these stories are few and far between and never succeed in describing the scope of the Soldiers' activities or the range of those benefiting from such acts of compassion. Thanks to a small owl named Ali and WildCare, a Marin, Calif., county-based animal rehabilitation organization (wildcarebayarea.org), word finally is starting to travel about how GIs have been reaching out to save wildlife damaged by the fighting in Iraq. As a result, GIs are forging stronger bonds with one another and opening up new lifelines back home with agencies like WildCare.

"It is amazing how one small owl can open up a whole world of possibilities," said Karen Wilson, executive director of WildCare. "We are proud to be able to offer aid and comfort to stranded wildlife in Iraq while at the same time supporting American Soldiers far from home. As the holidays draw near, our thoughts are with them and we wish them all a safe return."

On June 13, WildCare received an email from Sgt. 1st Class B.S. Wilkie stationed in Baghdad, who along with fellow soldiers had found and started to care for what they thought was a baby hawk.

Sgt. Sandra Boyne is responsible for finding Ali and brought him back to the unit supply room to receive proper care. She commandeered the assistance of Spc. Ashley Uentillie and Pfc. Jeannette Navarro who also had an active role in nursing the owl back to health. Word about the adopted owl spread fast and soldiers like Spc. Edward Andrews volunteered his time to care for and feed Ali. Edwards also had a big role in reintegrating Ali back to his natural habitat.

Through an exchange of emails and photos with WildCare's Director of Animal Care, Melanie Piazza, WildCare was able to identify it as either a Pallid Scops Owl



Ali the Owl

or a European Scops Owl. WildCare had been giving the soldiers general advice on how to nourish and protect the owl until its species was established, but once the GIs knew for sure they were able to rehabilitate the owl completely and ultimately reunite it with its family.

"WildCare really saved the day for us," Wilkie said. "A bunch of us fell in love with Ali immediately, but wildlife care here is so scarce that we decided to reach out to folks back home through searching on the Internet. WildCare walked us through all of the concerns we had for Ali and gave us invaluable advice on how to take care of him. Then they started to send us care packages, which made us all feel closer to home."

Following on their experience with Ali, many GIs are now going regularly to the Baghdad Zoo to help care for the birds and animals there. "The highlight was when I got to pet the Cheetah, yes pet him, Wilkie said. "He even held my leg and loved on me when I tried to walk away. That was the coolest animal experience yet." 



Ali at two-weeks old.

About WildCare

Formed in the 1994 merger of The Terwilliger Nature Education Center and The California Center for Wildlife, WildCare is dedicated to saving wildlife injured or orphaned through natural or human causes, as well as teaching sustainability to new and future generations. WildCare's mission is to inspire a vital connection among people, wildlife and the natural world through environmental education programs for more than 40,000 Bay Area children and adults; treatment services to more than 4,000 injured and orphaned wild animals each year; and advice and assistance to thousands of people who call its Living with Wildlife Hotline. For more information, visit www.wildcarebayarea.org.

Combat stress: not just a combat problem

Spc. Dan Balda
4th BCT PAO

With redeployment right around the corner, there a number of issues that Soldiers should be aware of. One of these topics is combat stress, how it affects Soldiers and how it can be helped.

According to www.hooah4health.com, the Army's health and wellness Web site, combat stress is a natural result of heavy mental/emotional work, when facing danger in tough conditions.

Tough conditions does not necessarily mean that only those Soldiers who spend most of their time out in sector will need to be wary of combat stress said Maj. Tim Carroll, a Behavioral Science Officer with C Company, 703rd Forward Support Battalion.

"There are unique (stressors) for each job somebody is doing out here," said Carroll, a native of Simonton, Texas. "Outside the wire is going to be different from a supply clerk but there is a unique inherent stress with each job. The supply clerk has a lot of occupational stress plus just being here environmentally, which can elicit a lot of the same problems."

Some of the problems that Soldiers can be on the lookout for are a pounding heart, rapid breathing, awakened by bad dreams or feeling guilty, according to Hooah 4 Health.

Some of the stress can be derived from being shot at, but there can also be the stress of getting used to the Army for younger Soldiers. The 4th Brigade Combat Team gained a number of new Soldiers when new battalions were stood up. For the Soldiers who have more time in service, there can be a "snowball effect" from Operation Iraqi Freedom I to this deployment. Once the Soldier is removed from the "fog of war," the stress can really come to a head.

"There is kind of an adrenaline-euphoria to it," Carroll said. "That transitions over time when they are removed from that environment and things start sinking in as far as what they did and that can really lead to depression or guilt."

Carroll credits the leadership with helping keep the combat stress to a minimum for the last 10 months.

"A lot of these Soldiers are getting extremely good support from their commanders, first sergeants and battle bud-

dies because they are all going through this together," he said. "This usually brings back their focus because they are a tight knit group."

Soldiers who think they exhibit one or some of the symptoms of combat stress don't need to be worried that their chain of command will be notified. The only time Carroll would report a case to a Soldier's chain of command would be if he felt the Soldier posed a danger to himself or others. The tried and true buddy system is the best way to root out possible cases Carroll said.

"A lot of guys are afraid to ask their roommates or buddies 'what's going on?' They are afraid they might spark emotions that they are not ready to deal with. This is a fallacy. It's okay to talk, its okay to ask questions, its okay to be by yourself sometimes, but somebody should still approach those people at some point to make sure they are okay."

With redeployment right around the corner, Carroll thinks Soldiers should start being aware of how things are now or are going to be when they get home.

"There is going to be that honeymoon phase during block leave where every thing is peachy-keen. You're back with family and relaxing or whatever, that will be good for most of these guys," he said.

Soldiers should really start paying attention six to 10 weeks after block leave ends and things start settling down and garrison life replaces deployment life. Panic attacks might occur and one might get scared because they don't really understand why they are experiencing something and don't feel like they are going to get better. They might feel like crying but find they can't. A lot of this can be a normal reaction in the lowering of the general stress level, but if the situation persists towards the end of the 10 weeks, they should see Carroll or one of his compatriots he said.

Family life can also shift, he said. Spouses have become more independent in their significant other's absence. Carroll says that the independence is a good thing and should be welcomed.

Regardless of the changes that occur when the brigade returns home, Soldiers should be aware that whatever they are going through has happened to another at some point. There are many opportunities

for help such as the reintegration briefings or speaking to an NCO or company commander who will know how to get the most professional help for a Soldier.

"No man is an island," stressed Carroll and the other mental health specialists at Fort Stewart are willing and eager to help however they can. 

Coping with Stress in Stability and Support Operations

The day-to-day stress that comes with stability and support operations (SASOs) can, at worst, be as bad as that of major combat. The danger may be as high, the mission less clear, some civilians hostile, and rules of engagement are stricter. It is hard to recognize threats. Concrete progress is difficult to see. There is boredom, no privacy, restricted movement, and separation from home with poor communication. Under these conditions, anyone can begin to show signs of distress, and it is important to know how you can help yourself and your buddy.

Learn effective relaxation techniques:

- play cards or sports
- write a letter or diary
- take slow, deep breaths
- talk with friends
- read a book
- imagine a favorite place

Relaxation techniques can help you refocus in action, recharge after grueling or boring work, and can help you get to sleep. Request training on relaxation techniques from mental health or combat stress control teams and unit ministry teams in your area.

What to do for yourself:

- Remind yourself that the way you are feeling is normal given the situation that you are in;
- Make certain that you get enough sleep, food, water, and exercise – if you are physically stressed, your ability to deal with the day-to-day SASO stressors is reduced;
- Focus on the mission at hand – break down objectives into smaller tasks and reward yourself with rest breaks after each task is accomplished;
- Stay tied in with buddies in your unit;
- Maintain contact with friends and family at home whenever you can – if something at home is bothering you, talk about it with your buddies, your leaders, or anyone else you trust;
- If things start to feel out of control, get with your unit sergeant, chaplain, medic, or commander ASAP

What to do for your buddies:

- Know the members of your team and welcome newcomers when they arrive—help them learn skills they need;
- Be on the lookout for sudden changes in how your buddies act – if you see such a change, ask them about it;
- Include your buddies and new guys in opportunities to relax;
- Offer encouragement and recognition when your buddies do something well;
- If you're concerned for your buddies, talk to them about how they're doing;
- If you think that your buddy may be having a really hard time and won't talk to you, get with your supervisor and let them know about your concern.

What to do for your subordinates:

- Keep your team informed of new developments as they come up but be careful not to pass on rumors – say you don't know and will tell them when you do.
- Be on the lookout for changes in behavior or performance and act to address issues before they become problems;
- Organize team events to help your soldiers relax and have some fun; give them some private time when you can.
- Check in with team members on how they're handling the deployment and how things are going back home;
- Assure they get a fair share of MWR communication.
- Talk with any soldiers about whom you are concerned and *listen* to them;
- Conduct sensing sessions as frequently as possible, and make sure soldiers' feelings are expressed and heard;
- Refer soldiers to unit chaplains, mental health or combat stress control (CSC) team assets for help if they need it.

TC#02 March 2004

 **USACHPPM**

For more information access: www.armyonesource.com

1st Lt. Jon Minnich, assigned to 1-184 Inf and U.S. Marshal in his civilian job confers with an interpreter during a raid.

Courtesy Photo



From Compton to Al Rasheed

Soldiers protect and serve in States and Iraq

Spc. Dan Balda

4th BCT PAO

It takes a sense of discipline and a willingness to sacrifice to serve in the military. Some choose to make a career out of serving in the active military. Others reach a point in their military careers when they want to join the civilian world.

For three Soldiers assigned to 1st Battalion, 184th Infantry Regiment, it wasn't enough for them to serve their country in the Army National Guard, they also decided to protect and serve their local communities. Two chose to be police officers while another chose to join the U.S. Marshals.

Cpl. Tim Scarrott, a police officer in Oakland, Calif., had always been fascinated by both professions (police officer and Soldier). His father always told him to have a career where he could put in an honest day's work for an honest day's pay and to stand for something.

"I believe that is what a police officer does," Scarrott, a native of Fairfield, Calif., said. "We protect and serve and I felt it was a worthwhile career that would give me the ability to help people."

Once he joined the police force he put his thoughts of being a Soldier by the wayside until 9-11.

"After 9-11 the U.S. invaded Afghanistan and the military was being over-stretched, there was a need for people to serve in the military, and I felt that was a calling. I love my civilian profession, but I felt there was more I could do for my nation and my community by serving in the National Guard," he said. "I chose the National Guard because I love my job, ... I wanted to help during a time of need, but when the strain is over on the military, I can return to my civilian job."

1st Lt. Jon Minnich, a native of Las Vegas, and the fire support officer for C Co., 1-184 pursued a job with the US Marshals while enlisted in the Air Force.

"I was coming up on my 10 year point in the military, and I realized that regardless if I did 20 years active duty I would still have to get out and find another career," Minnich said. "A lot of career opportunities would be closed to somebody who is 37 or 38 years old, especially in law enforcement."

Minnich had always been interested in a career in law enforcement, but his wife didn't want him to join so he chose not to join.

During the mid-90's the military was going through a downsizing period and Minnich attended a law enforcement job fair sponsored by his base's Morale Welfare and Recreation office. He spoke with a U.S Marshal representative and was impressed by what they had to offer. Things fell into place very quickly, and he

had his first class date in two months.

While in the Air Force Minnich had always considered being an officer but once he became a marshal his focus shifted. Sept. 11, 2001 made him rethink why he had joined the military and had come to a crossroads of sorts.

"I was getting close to 15, 16 years in and could have ridden my last four years out, retired and been done with it but that wasn't what I wanted to do," he said. He chose to go the officer route because a part of him had always stayed with the military.

Staff Sgt. Richard Sanchez joined the military at a young age because he wanted to jump out of airplanes. His friends told him how much they enjoyed being a part of the 82nd Airborne Division and he followed suit, eventually serving in the Special Forces. He came to the end of his contract while stationed at Fort Irwin, Calif., and decided to put himself through the Rio Hondo Police Academy. From there he joined the Compton Police Department where he has served as a gang detective since 1991.

All three men believe there is a direct correlation between the two careers, especially while deployed; which is why so many Soldiers choose to continue serving through law enforcement after serving in the military.

"Being a Soldier is a lot more dangerous and more difficult than any civilian job back home as far as set hours and a set schedule; here it is 24/7, the hours are longer and the work is more difficult," Scarrott said.

Scarrott and Minnich both work either by themselves or with a partner which makes being a Soldier in Iraq a different creature entirely.

"As a police officer you go out on a call and take reports, a lot of your work is going to be all individual effort that will later be supervised by a sergeant where as a team leader here I supervise my men directly and there's a lot more teamwork involved," Scarrott said.

For Sanchez, a gang detective, there are some comparisons with his tour of duty here even though, "Compton is not as bad as Baghdad."

"Some of these insurgents are just like gang members back home," Sanchez said. "They work in groups. They adapt to our way of working and try to counteract that. They are always trying to find a way to beat us. It's a battle."

Sanchez equates so many Soldiers working as cops for a myriad of reasons.

"I think the taking and giving of orders, the structure, (lead to

Continued next page

Army doc helps military dog stay in the fight

Pfc. Jason Jordan

1/10th Mountain Division PAO

One Task Force Baghdad physician recently had an unusual patient on his operating table.

Maj. Richard Padron, a surgeon with 10th Brigade Support Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, found himself peering intently into the mouth of a dog named Blesky as he worked on the canine's teeth.

Blesky is a military working dog who provides valuable assistance to the brigade as units conduct combat operations in the Abu Ghraib area of Baghdad.

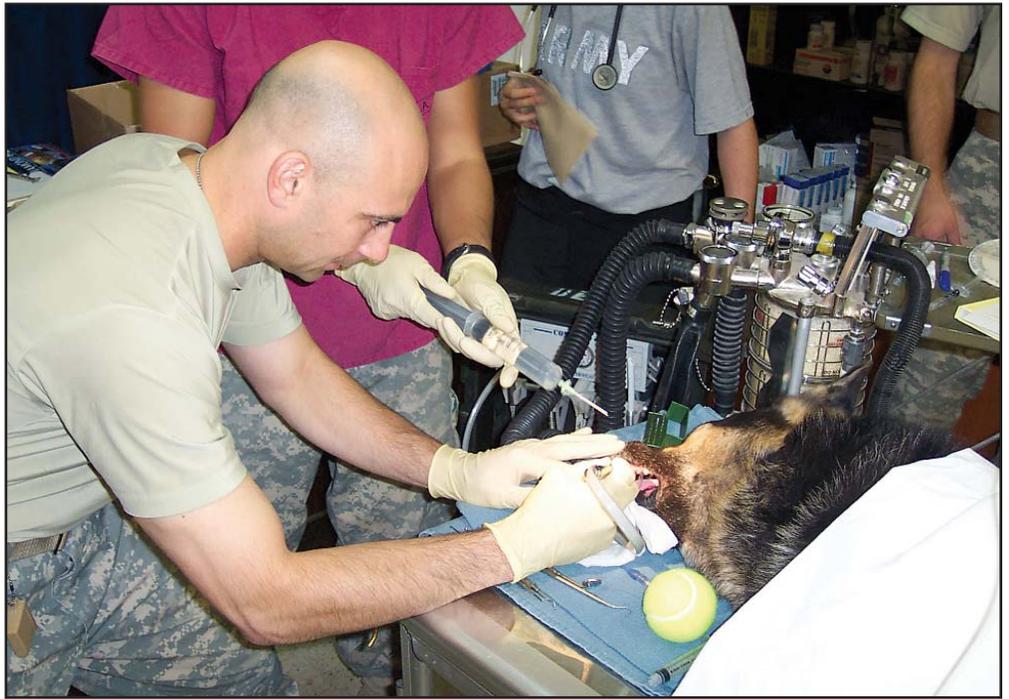
Soldiers from 1st BCT, 10th Mountain Division brought the 10-year-old German Shepherd to the surgeon in hopes the doctor could help relieve their four-legged friend's pain.

Blesky had been whimpering for a while and medics eventually narrowed the problem down to the dog's mouth.

"Blesky had already received a previous root canal, but he was in need of a new filling and it was causing him problems," Padron said.

Medics usually treat between eight and 10 military working dogs per year, but this was the first operation on any animal for Padron.

"It was very interesting operating on the dog," he said. "The anatomy of their mouth is very similar to a human's – except the angle of their teeth is different, and they are longer. I used just as much care on that fellow as I would use on my



Maj. Jerry Carbone, 464th Medical Company

Maj. Richard Padron, a surgeon with 10th Brigade Support Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, operates on a 10-year-old German Shepherd named Blesky at the 1/10th Mountain Troop Medical Clinic.

patients any other time."

The dog's handler was very concerned after Blesky was administered anesthesia for the operation, and he fretted the whole time over his best friend, said Pfc. Rafael Diaz, assistant medic on the scene.

"Blesky's caretaker was very concerned to see his best friend being operated on," Diaz said. "He stayed by his side the entire time and stroked his belly until it was over. The relief on his face

was very heartfelt."

The procedure went well, and Blesky is now back out on the streets of Baghdad, patrolling on missions with the 1/10th Mountain Div. Soldiers.

"It felt very rewarding being able to help out Blesky," Padron said. "Just like any one of us, we didn't want to see him in pain. We wanted to get him back on the streets again so he can continue helping his troops." 

Continued from previous page

the correlation)," he said. "Everything has to be done in a uniform way. You can associate what we are doing here with being a cop, patrolling the streets, gathering information, building a rapport, searching vehicles and houses – everything we do here is associated with policework."

The most unfortunate corollary for Sanchez is the loss of close friends. His platoon has been hit hard since they have been here and unfortunately, the loss has touched him from thousands of miles away. Sanchez lost his partner of nine years in August.

"I've taken my losses here, and I've taken a couple back home but we came to do a job," Sanchez said. "We came with the possibility of not coming home every time we go into sector. (In Compton) what are the odds of getting shot or hurt? It does happen but it's very rare."

Sanchez does enjoy the "perks" of being deployed. The free room and board, but he misses (as most Soldiers do) his friends and family back home and the freedom of movement.

"(After getting off work) you get to go home and reflect on what took place, at home you have different types of people with different questions approaching you: social, work, personal," he

said. "Here it is just pretty much talk about the next day what happens on patrols, what you are going to do if you get hit, after a while that is going to take a toll on you."

Sanchez enjoys the camaraderie that resides in the barracks but for him, it's not the same.

"Here you just talk about each other, and that's not necessarily a bad thing, but being an NCO you have to take care of yourself as well as the young guys," Sanchez said. "If you can't keep it together, your Soldiers won't be able to."

He compares patrols in Iraq to a roller coaster.

"Sometimes you go out there and have fun, you see something out there you can laugh about," Sanchez said. "But sometimes you go to sleep and you go out and something happens that hurts your buddies. It's an emotional challenge being in Iraq versus the states. Back home you can shut it off when you go home after work. Turn the power switch and worry about it the next morning. Here that switch is on all the time. You can be lying in bed and you hear a rocket or a mortar hit somewhere on the base."

Regardless of the emotional toll this deployment has taken on these three men, they wouldn't have it any other way. If they are not helping somebody whether it be in Compton or Al Rasheed, the world is not right. 

Transportation Department pledges '5-star' support to Guard, Reserves

American Forces Press Service

ARLINGTON, Va. – Transportation Secretary Norman Y. Mineta today pledged his department's support to employees who are also members of the National Guard and Reserve.

In a Washington, D.C., ceremony, Mineta signed a "5-Star" statement of support under a program sponsored by the National Committee for Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve.

"Today, supportive employers are critical to maintaining the strength and readiness of the nation's National Guard

■ Publicly demonstrated its support for employees who serve in the National Guard and Reserve,

■ As a federal employer, promises to safeguard job positions, support continuation of medical and dental benefits for family members, grant leaves of absence for military service without penalty of lost vacation time to those employees who serve in the Guard and Reserve, to the extent allowed under applicable laws,

■ Ensures men and women who serve in the Guard and Reserve will not be denied employment with the

"By meeting the '5-Star' ... criteria, the management of the Department of Transportation stands proudly with their Guard and Reserve employees who, like the Minutemen before them, continue to answer their nation's call to defend our way of life," Hall said. "Their personal sacrifices are essential to the strength of our nation."

Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve is a Department of Defense agency established in 1972 to gain and maintain active support from all public and private employers for the men and women of the National Guard and

"You not only have a friend here at the Department of Transportation, you have a friend in the Oval Office."

and Reserve units. I am asking all of America's employers to review and amend their current human resources policies to ensure compliance with the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act Law," said Thomas F. Hall, assistant secretary of defense for reserve affairs. "This is a significant event not only for the Department of Transportation, but for all federal civil service employees. The federal government is one of the largest employers of National Guardsmen and Reservists in the country."

The "5-Star" statement of support confirms that the Department of Transportation:

Department of Transportation nor will there be limited or reduced job and career opportunities due to service in the Guard or Reserve, and

■ Is an advocate for employee service in the National Guard and Reserve.

"You not only have a friend here at the Department of Transportation, you have a friend in the Oval Office," Mineta said, directing his comments at Guardsmen and Reservists. "Just as frontline troops cannot do their job without thousands of others in supporting roles, you cannot serve your country in the National Guard or Reserves without the support of your families and office mates."

Reserve. ESGR volunteers provide free education, consultation and, if necessary, mediation for employers of Guard and Reserve employees.

As the 1.2 million members of the National Guard and Reserve continue to perform an increasing number of unique missions that require extraordinary actions on the part of everyday citizens, ESGR will continue to be the informational agency for the employers of America's new Minutemen, agency officials said. 

(From an Employer Support of the Guard and Reserves news release.)

Hire Veterans Committee reaching out to employers, veterans

Samantha L. Quigley

American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON – "Hiring a veteran is not good will, it's just good business," the chairman of the President's National Hire Veterans Committee said Nov. 17.

T.P. O'Mahoney made his comments on the committee's strategy of marketing veterans as highly desirable employees during the group's quarterly meeting.

"(Veterans) are reliable," O'Mahoney said. "They understand discipline, they show up on time, they're drug free."

O'Mahoney said the committee achieved its goal of reaching out to 1 million employers and encouraging them to hire veterans. It's also well on its way to meeting the goal of reaching 2 million veterans.

This has been accomplished through advertisements and articles in national and trade magazines, as well as posters promoting the HireVetsFirst initiative. World War II veteran and former Sen. Bob Dole has recorded a public service announcement for the organization that encourages businesses to consider hiring veterans.

And businesses are listening.

"Home Depot ... hired 20,000 veterans (during) this last

year," O'Mahoney said in offering an example of a businesses giving veterans a hiring preference.

And he said Mac Tools company has also provided an injured veteran with a chest of tools and has pledged to make similar donations quarterly. The company also is in the process of hiring veterans as well as giving a distributorship to one eligible vet.

The Hire Veterans committee is focusing on injured veterans as well as involvement with a program called Recovery and Employment Assistance Lifelines. REALifelines reaches out to help disabled veterans find suitable work, O'Mahoney said.

HireVetsFirst is looking to reach out to high job-growth industries and is even employing the help of the nation's governors. More than 40 governors have already designated a "Hire Veteran" month, O'Mahoney said. The committee is working to see that all states and U.S. territories have similar initiatives.

These endeavors, and everything else the organization does, including taking part in job fairs, move the committee closer to its ultimate goal.

"What we want is every veteran who wants to work has an opportunity to have a good job," he said. "That's our ultimate goal." 



Staff Sgt. Sean Cannon, Spc. Casey Sullivan and Pfc. Christopher Johnson Jr. say a prayer in memory of their fallen comrades and friends during a memorial service Nov. 12.
Staff Sgt. Raymond Piper

Soldiers remember sacrifice of fallen brothers

Staff Sgt. Raymond Piper
4th BCT PA NCOIC

Soldiers and friends came together to honor the memory of four fallen Soldiers, who were cherished sons, caring fathers, and three who were loving husbands, from 3rd Squadron, 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment at Forward Operating Base Falcon Nov. 12.

First Lt. Justin Smith, Staff Sgt. Brian Freeman, Spc. Robert Pope and Pfc. Mario Reyes were killed in action Nov. 7 while conducting security operations in Southern Baghdad. Their interpreter Emad Jamal Kamal was also killed during the attack.

"These men, an example for us all, were aggressively searching vehicles to prevent the enemy from transporting contraband and improvised explosive devices through our area and into Baghdad," said Lt. Col. Ross Brown, 3-3 ACR commander.

Brown said he really got to know Smith in Kuwait. While he was walking around the motor pool monitoring the maintenance of the vehicles, he came upon Smith.

"Since I had recently taken command and didn't know the lieutenants in the squadron very well I pulled him aside and asked him about his background and family. The question about his family triggered him to immediately reach into his pocket and pull out his wallet," Brown

said.

Smith quickly opened his wallet and showed him a picture of what Brown believed to be the happiest baby in the world.

Brown said, "As I looked up at Justin I saw the same happiness and the same smile as the baby. After that day, every time Justin thought I looked out of sorts he would pull out the picture of his smiling baby boy and we would both smile at each other, my day made."

1st Lt. Tom Weitzel, 3rd platoon leader and friend of Smith, said, "He talked about his family more than any other man I know. Chances are if you only knew him slightly, he had shown you pictures of his little boy Hayden."

Capt. Scott Seidel, I Troop commander, said that Smith had an energy and spirit like no other.

"His excitement for life only paled next to his endless creativity. Whatever the problem or situation there was no boundaries. There was no thinking outside the box because there was no box."

Weitzel said, "I'm really going to miss him, but I take comfort in knowing that he believed in his country. He understood commitment and seeing things through to the end."

Brown said Freeman epitomized quiet competence. "He didn't talk much, but when he did he commanded attention and was a leader and friend that could be counted on."

"Staff Sgt. Brian Freeman was something special. When he came to 4th platoon in September I knew he was going to be a great addition to the platoon. His dedication as a soldier was unquestionable," said Staff Sgt. Sean Cannon, 4th platoon sergeant.

Freeman and Smith talked about his goals when he first came to the platoon. "He wanted to retire as a command sergeant major," he said, "and I know from the short time we worked together he would have accomplished that goal."

Seidel said, "Spc. Robert Pope had the distinction of being one of many known as 6D for he was my driver while the troop was operating in BIAP. Like any crew I got to know Spc. Pope very well. He was a New Yorker tried and true. Like any great New Yorker he saw what happened to the center of their universe in New York City, and he took the call to enlist."

He had a great sense of humor, Seidel said. "He would make me laugh as he made so many other people laugh, too."

Spc. Casey Sullivan, a close friend of Pope, said, "I never met a guy in my life who was loved and liked so much by his friends, but once you got to know him, it was easy to tell why. He would go to the ends of the earth for whatever the cause."

Spc. Robert Pope had stories that could make even the most unhappy man laugh and he and Sullivan said they would sit in his room, and **Continued next page**

Ceremony honors fallen Nightstalkers



Spc. Dan Balda

4th Brigade Combat Team PAO

Task Force Baghdad Soldiers and Iraqi Security Forces came together Nov. 1 to remember four U.S. Soldiers recently killed in terrorist attacks.

Lt. Col. William Wood, commander of 1st Battalion, 184th Infantry Regiment, and Capt. Michael MacKinnon, A Company, 1st Bn., 184th Inf. Reg., were killed by an improvised explosive device Oct. 27. Wood was posthumously promoted to colonel the day after his death.

Two other 1/184th Soldiers, Capt. Raymond Hill and Spc. Shakere Guy, were killed in action after their humvee struck an IED Oct. 29.

Col. Edward Cardon, 4th Brigade Combat Team Commander, began the ceremony by quoting Wood: "Soldiers have fallen but the line holds steady."

Cardon reminded the audience of nearly 1,500 Soldiers why they were at the memorial ceremony.

"We've come to mourn their deaths, but more importantly to honor their lives and to affirm our resolve," he said.

One by one, the fallen brothers-in-arms from 1/184th—nicknamed the Nightstalkers—were eulogized by their leaders and fellow Soldiers.

The four came from all walks of life and exemplified the diversity that makes up the Army. Guy was from Jamaica and MacKinnon was awarded his commission after graduating from West Point, said Lt. Col. Everett Knapp, 1/184th Battalion Commander.

"They have given their hearts, lives, sweat and blood to fight for freedom for the Iraqi people," Knapp said. He finished with a quote from the legendary boxer Jim Corbett: "Fight one more round. When your feet are so tired you have to shuffle back to the ring, fight one more round. When your arms are so tired you can hardly lift your hands, fight one more round. Remember that the man who fights one more round is never whipped."

Lt. Col. David Funk, commander of 3rd Battalion, 7th Infantry Regiment, said he'd only really had the pleasure of calling Wood a friend for the last couple of months. They had run into each other at

various times during their military careers but had never really developed a close friendship.

That all changed once Wood was assigned to 1-184.

"Bill Wood is a great American, a superb fellow battalion commander, a true and loyal friend and my brother," Funk said.

He bemoaned the fact it took a war to bring the two of them together.

"We have been as close as two brother commanders can be in war. He loved being 'Nightstalker 6.' He had a great sense of history and a great feeling of pride at being part of this battalion."

Getting to know Wood taught Funk a valuable lesson he was more than happy to share with everybody.

"I ask that you learn from our example and not wait too long to get to know the Soldiers next to you as Bill and I almost did," Funk said. "Life is too short for pretense and pride. I am a richer man today for having known Bill Wood. He made me a better commander, a better friend and a better person."

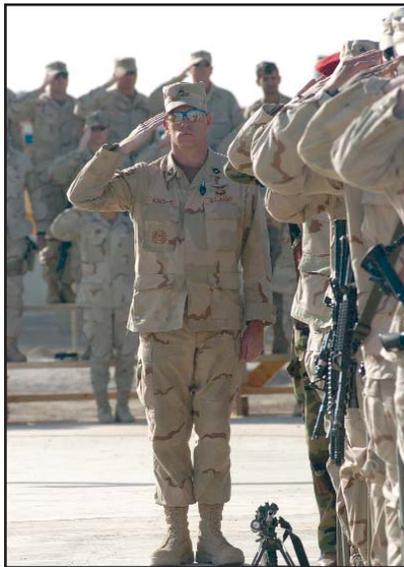
MacKinnon was remembered by his friend Capt. Danjel Bout, as a man who used his powerful will to take something that was broken and make it new again.

"From the moment he arrived (at A Co.), he treated every Soldier with dignity, grace and respect,"

Bout said. "And for that, we loved him."

Bout said MacKinnon personified America not as it is, but as it aspires to be. That manifested itself in everything he did and everything he touched. Bout shared a story to illustrate how MacKinnon was viewed by the Iraqi people he came into contact with on a daily basis.

"We were visiting a town whose sheikh had recently died and the townspeople had gathered to vote on who the next sheikh was going to be," Bout recalled. "Each of the villagers offered up their suggestions and each one got booed down. Until one person said, 'I think Capt. MacKinnon should be the sheikh.' As soon as he said that, everyone's face lit up and they all agreed. Mike kept saying 'No, no,' and then he finally asked them, 'Why do you want me to be the sheikh?' They said the same thing: 'Because you are the only one



Continued next page

Continued from previous page

we can trust.”

1st Sgt. Mark Barnes of B Company, 4th Battalion, 64th Armor Regiment shared another story about MacKinnon that had the mourners smiling and laughing in the midst of their grief.

“He didn’t like affection from men except in the conservative way in which fathers love their sons. Once on Haifa Street an Iraqi man kissed him and he looked very uncomfortable. Especially when I pointed out to him that from my angle it looked like a kiss on the lips. I told him often that we appreciated him taking one for the team. When I put it on our company website, he started his own (information operations) campaign to tell everyone that he didn’t kiss anyone, he was the one kissed.”

1st Lt. Cameron Murphy remembered Hill as a kind and gentle man who rarely had a harsh word for anyone. Hill was originally the battalion fire support officer and was in charge of plotting for lethal fire.

“Truth was, he took more delight in plotting the distribution of humanitarian assistance than in the destruction of his fellow man,” Murphy said. “His greatest fear was that his two girls were growing up too fast, that they were too cute for their own good and they were starting to attract boys.

Staff Sgt. Ron Eberhardt said that regardless of the mission before him, Hill would pack enough toys and candy for any lucky children he would meet. Hill’s favorite missions involved bringing humanitarian aid to the people of Baghdad and he often posed for pictures with the people he was directly involved with helping.

Guy was constantly going out on missions with Hill. His friend, Spc. Jose Farias, remembered Guy going to the post exchange to buy candy with his own money to share with the children he was sure to meet while helping the psychological operations team.

Guy’s company commander, Capt. Jeffrey Dirske remembered him as a fine Soldier who was willing to perform any

task, but a tanker who never forgot his first love—tracked vehicles.

“He would never let us forget about his love for the tracks,” Dirske said. “When we first got here, he was part of the personal security detachment, and I remember the excitement in his voice and face when he would talk about the tracks.”

“What we will never forget was his desire to help others and his commitment to the mission,” Farias added. “He was committed to his family, his fiancée and daughter as well as the Soldiers here.”

Cardon’s final note reminded everyone that the best way to honor the fallen Soldiers is to continue their mission.

“While we honor these brave men’s deaths, the best way for us to remember them is to take what they have left with us: professionalism, motivation, passion, resilience — the list goes on and on. Let’s take what they left us...to continue our mission, to have faith in our victory, to persevere against the enemy, to never quit or accept defeat. That is what we must do.”

Continued from previous page

ries for hours.

“I will miss Spc. Robert Pope, but know that he will never be forgotten by the people who had the honor to meet him,” Sullivan said. “For they all have lost a piece of themselves.”

Reyes immigrated to the United States with his family from Mexico and joined the Army in 2004.

“He joined the Army ... to serve his adopted country like his older brother Sgt. Ortiz Reyes who is currently serving in Taji,” Brown said.

“Pfc. Mario Reyes was 19-years-old and full of life. He came to the platoon in February shortly before we deployed,” Cannon said. “He was small in stature but his love for family and friends was larger than life.”

His friend Pfc. Christopher Johnson Jr., said he was a great man, son, friend and Soldier. “Pfc. Reyes and I were more than friends; we were brothers. Everywhere I went, he was right by my side,” he said.

Johnson remembered when they had a four-day weekend, Reyes invited him to visit his family in New Mexico. Although most of his family doesn’t speak English Reyes would translate for him and his family. When he met Reyes’ grandmother, all she wanted was for both of them to come home safe.

Johnson was with him at the checkpoint and had talked to him

a few minutes before the car bomb attack.

“It was so fast there was nothing anyone could do to prevent it. We had each other’s back until the end.”

Emad Jamal Kamal was called Bob by the troopers. He learned English working with Americans while doing laundry in Western Baghdad and had been with Ironhawk Troop from the beginning of the deployment.

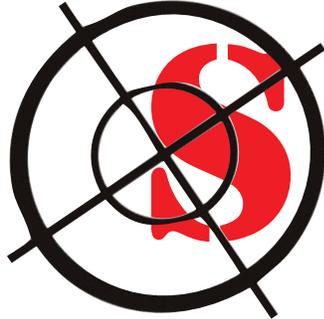
“Bob represents the best of Iraq in that he was willing to face the risks associated with fighting the insurgency in order to bring a better future to his country,” Brown said.

Seidel said, “Bob was a patriotic man that saw that Iraq could become something better. He helped our troop to better understand the culture and people that seemed so different. He broke bread with us, he lived with us and he ultimately he gave his life with us.”

Brown said, “I will never forget the confidence that these men exuded when I visited them. I will cherish my memories of them and honor them for the rest of my life.”

“We will miss these men and what made each of them special and great. For us who mourn you, our mission in Iraq is not quite finished, but never will our debt for your sacrifice and the sacrifice of your families be truly ever paid,” Seidel said. “We will go forward as a team and a family and forever hold you in our memories.”





HARPSHOOTERS

Photos from around the brigade by the Soldiers of 4th BCT



Two Soldiers from 4th Battalion, 64th Armor Regiment use an M88 tank recovery vehicle to assist in the recovery efforts to rescue trapped Iraqis in an apartment building after two car bomb explosions rocked a neighborhood in the Karrada district Nov. 18.



Blackhawks land during Operation Clean Sweep in Southern Baghdad to drop off Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 184th Infantry Regiment Oct. 28.



Iraqi Army Soldiers from 3rd Battalion, 5th IA Brigade and U.S. Soldiers from 6th Squadron, 8th Cavalry Regiment work together to offload supplies for a Nov. 18 medical assistance program along Airport Road.



The Buffalo sits next to a HEMMT in the 4th Battalion, 64th Armor Regiment motor pool. The Buffalo is the largest wheeled vehicle in the motorpool.