



# SCIMITAR

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U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. Andy Dunaway

Army Staff Sgt. Justin Clark of 3rd Platoon, Company A, 1st Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division, fires his weapon at a firing range after a joint foot patrol with Iraqi Army Soldiers to show presence in Hechel.

## Iraqi flag raised in a secure Husaybah

Story by Spc. Rick Rzepka  
Scimitar Assistant Editor

**HUSAYBAH** — Freedom is never easy.

This was the overarching theme in Husaybah as distinguished guests from the Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Defense and Coalition Forces converged on Husaybah in the Euphrates River valley. The event symbolized the securing of the port-of-entry from Syria to Iraq.

Gen. George Casey, Multi-National Force - Iraq commanding general, along with Saadoun al-Dulaimi, Iraq MOD, Brig. Gen. Ahmed Ali Muhsin Al-Khafaggi, deputy MOI support-

ing forces, and Marine Col. Stephen W. Davis watched as the Iraqi flag was raised by Iraqi Soldiers in the dusty town, which was cleared of insurgents as part on an effort to stop the flow of terrorists across Iraq's borders, Operation Steel Curtain.

"This is a historic day for Iraq," said al-Dulaimi on the success of the border operations. "I will not forget this day. The insurgents are no longer controlling the border. Our friends have helped us. We are now a country of freedom, of human rights and of peace."

As a platoon of MOD Iraqi Soldiers and a platoon of MOI 'Desert Wolves' stood under one flag, the cooperation and

resolve of the respective ministries was apparent.

"Today signifies the ability of MOI and MOD to work together," said Marine Col. Mike Pannell, 2nd Marine Division, 2nd Marine Expeditionary Force. "They should be able to operate independently by June 2006."

The progress in securing Iraq's borders is a significant step toward victory in Iraq, said Davis.

"Presence equals security," said Davis, the Regimental Combat Team 2 commanding officer. "This will bring stability to the region. Operation Steel Curtain has neutralized the

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PERSPECTIVES

# Quit complaining, you chairborne pogues

**Spc. Rick Rzepka**  
Scimitar Assistant Editor



**Spc. Rick Rzepka**

As I was just about to help myself to one of the 15 desert selections offered in the International Zone dining facility the other night, I overheard two young officers exchanging in some rather interesting conversation.

Honestly, it wasn't as interesting as it was absurd to me.

The first one was explaining to the other how he thinks "It sucks here," because he only gets 30 channels and there's never anything good on. The second one was quick to chime in with, "Yeah and what's with the PX. They never have anything."

I skipped desert.

Recently, I visited the town of Husaybah, a mostly Sunni town that is now home to a few thousand Marines from Regimental Combat Team 2 and Iraqi Army Soldiers from the 1st Brigade, 1st Iraqi Army division, who are battling insurgents and at the same time conducting humanitarian missions in an effort to stabilize the border.

I was there to cover a ceremony symbolizing the pacification of the area and in attendance were high level officials from both Coalition and Iraqi forces. A nice spread was laid out for the media and dignitaries, which included local cuisine and plenty of soda; something I was used to while living in the IZ. I was hungry, so I waltzed on over and decided to help myself. A Marine sergeant approached and asked, "Is it really fair for you to be drinking sodas and eatin' this chow? Those Marines outside haven't eaten that good in weeks," he said.

I placed the food back on the table and the ice cold soda in the cooler.

The Marine sergeant's words definitely struck me – right in the gut.

After stepping off the helicopter I saw Marines in groups of

threes and fours, talking Marine talk and all wearing a coat of dust on their mugs which made them look ghostly. I felt out of place and thought about rolling around in the dirt to blend in.

I approached them and asked where the latrine was. They laughed and pointed behind the building. There I found PVC tubes sticking out of the ground.

Those fellas had their work cut out for them up there. They were battle hardened 18 year olds with a better grasp of reality than most middle aged men back home.

On the helicopter ride back, I found my self wondering, "Have I really become that soft? Am I the chairborne pogue so many grunts despise?"

That night while those Marines slept in the sand, I slumbered in a bed with a bellyful of hot chow and the air conditioning on.

Later that week, I accompanied a squad of National Guard Soldiers from Company B, 1st Battalion, 126th Armor Brigade from Michigan on an IED hunt through the streets of Baghdad. As we patrolled the highways, the pucker factor for me was a full 10. While I envisioned fiery explosions coming

from every bit of street-side trash, my hosts were calm and collected; as if they had done this a hundred times – which they had.

"Being out here, doing what we do and interacting with the local nationals – I'll never complain about what I've got again. It really makes you appreciate things, you know," said Staff Sgt. Tom Rozema.

"Yeah," I said. "I know what you mean."

Twice in one week I had what Buddhists call 'satori,' what alcoholics refer to as a moment of clarity.

Spc. Rick Rzepka

I realized we truly are a fast-food nation that demands results now.

I'll have a cheeseburger, fries and a stable, democratic Iraq please ... Oh and I'm in a hurry so snap to it.

As warfighters, we can't let ourselves be sucked into this mentality. Sure it's nice to have some of the creature comforts of home in the FOB or in the IZ, but when our expectations get out of control, so will our egos.

And so will this war.

**"I found my self wondering, 'Have I really become that soft? Am I the chairborne pogue so many grunts despise?'"**

# Scimitar Pulse

## Who do you prefer, Ginger or Mary Ann?

"Mary Ann, because she's a down-home girl."



**Army Staff Sgt. Wayne Parker**  
Company E, 111th Aviation  
Baghdad



"Mary Ann, because she's more wholesome."

**Army Col. Bill Ivey,**  
Task Force 134  
Baghdad



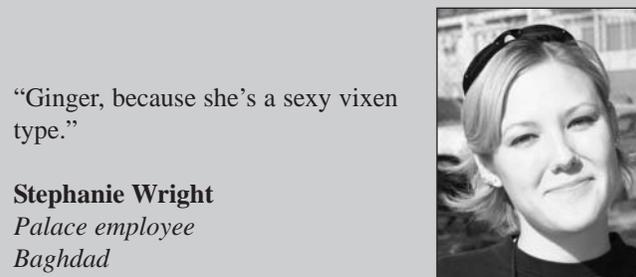
"Both, because their interesting characters."

**Garry Collins**  
Britam Defense  
Baghdad



"Ginger was hot!"

**John South**  
Dynacorp  
Baghdad



"Ginger, because she's a sexy vixen type."

**Stephanie Wright**  
Palace employee  
Baghdad



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**Command Information Chief**  
Capt. Bradford E. Leighton  
bradford.leighton@iraq.centcom.mil

**Command Information NCOIC**  
Sgt. Jeffrey M. Lowry  
jeff.lowry@iraq.centcom.mil



**Editor**.....Sgt. Jeffrey M. Lowry  
jeff.lowry@iraq.centcom.mil

**Assistant Editor**.....Spc. Richard L. Rzepka  
richard.rzepka@iraq.centcom.mil

**Staff**.....Spc. David J. Claffey  
david.claffey@iraq.centcom.mil

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## Fluent Soldier hurdles language barrier, helps Coalition Forces

Staff Sgt. Raymond Piper  
4th Brigade Combat Team

**BAGHDAD** — When 1st Battalion, 76th Field Artillery Regiment began riding with the 13th Georgian Infantry Battalion on missions, language was a huge barrier for both units.

“We would get two or three Georgians with us on missions, but unfortunately they wouldn’t have an interpreter so we wouldn’t be able to communicate properly,” said Capt. Ryan Avila, a former platoon leader with 1st Battalion, 76th Field Artillery.

Then came Pfc. Daniel Nasereddine, who was one of Avila’s platoon members. Nasereddine emigrated from the Ukraine and spoke Russian, enabling him 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 training they had,” Avila said.

With his Soldier’s help, he found that many 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,” Avila 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 in both the Ukraine and Lebanon.

After his parents divorced, his father immigrated to America. His son followed him years later.

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

After coming to America, he realized he needed more self-discipline and joined 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 in the National Security Agency, Federal Bureau of Investigation or a similar organization.

Once he receives his citizenship, he intends to go to Officer Candidate School and try for military intelligence, where he can apply his knowledge of languages.

“This deployment was a really good experience,” he said. “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.”

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**“My decision to join the Army was probably the best thing I’ve ever done. 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.”**

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Pfc. Daniel Nasereddine

# Going full circle

## Soldier flies with ‘Comancheros,’ same unit he flew with in Vietnam

Story and photo by Sgt. Susan Redwine  
159th Combat Aviation Brigade

**LSA ANACONDA** — Few Soldiers can claim to have a career spanning 38 years, but one pilot here has those bragging rights, and can also say he finished his career where he started it.

Chief Warrant Officer Michael Alford began his military career as a pilot in Vietnam with Company A, 4th Battalion, 101st Aviation Regiment in 1967, and recently was able to fly with the same company in Iraq.

Alford arrived in Iraq last year with his National Guard unit, the 1st Battalion, 126th Aviation Regiment, of Rhode Island, and has been flying UH-60 Blackhawk missions.

Alford said the veterans of Company A have an active network. He learned through Internet correspondence his old unit, nicknamed the Comancheros, would deploy to the same base as his National Guard unit.

After that, it was just a matter of touching base with his former unit to arrange a mission and come full-circle in his military career.

“Before they even arrived in country, I had been e-mailing back and forth,” Alford said. “So I had a good idea when they arrived in country and what they were going to do. I sort of

forced myself on them after that.

“One of my first rides was with the Comancheros,” he said. “I wanted one of my last flights to be with them. I don’t plan on coming back again.”

The unique nature of Alford’s mission also made an impression on current Comancheros.

“To see something like this come about and materialize is one of the most motivating things that I could have for my Soldiers and myself,” said 1st Lt. Robert Massey, a Company A platoon leader.

Alford, who works fulltime for the Social Security Administration and lives in Framingham, Mass., said he left the military after his tour in Vietnam, but joined the National Guard in 1988 because he missed flying and the camaraderie of fellow Soldiers.

Members of Company A are aware of the unique pride that keeps their unit together and can trace their lineage back to Vietnam.

Chief Warrant Officer Joshua D. Havill, a Blackhawk pilot for Company A, said in his 12 years of service he never had a unit patch until he became a Comanchero.

The unit develops a new patch for each deployment or mission. For Alford’s last mission, he was able to put on the Comanchero’s latest patch and gave his crew souvenir patches with the design he wore in Vietnam.

“The standard for earning that patch is being fully-mission qualified,” Alford said. “But you also have to be one of the guys, too. You have to earn it from your peers.”

Part of the bond the unit shares comes from the Soldier lifestyle.

“You’re away from home and 24-7 you’re around each other,” Massey said. “This is your family. You depend on each other.”

“It’s the people that make the camaraderie, that’s where the tradition lies,” he said. “The people that have come and gone from this unit ... people that are motivated and excited to do the job make it fun.”

This enthusiasm is apparent in the unit’s Soldiers.

“I think I’m blessed,” said Pfc. Richard Montgomery, Blackhawk crew chief for Company A. “There’s no other place I want to go. The people here are really wonderful and there are rich traditions. It sounds kind of corny, but I like it. It’s a lot of fun, I love flying with these guys.”

Montgomery, who also flew with Alford during the mission, said Alford was very down-to-earth and answered the many questions posed to him. Alford also said he was able to mentor the Comancheros because of his experiences in both Iraq and Vietnam.

“You have to keep in mind that you can get shot at and die any day,” he said. “You can’t get complacent. You have to keep it in your head all the time.”

Montgomery said he was able to ask about Alford’s experiences in Vietnam, how many flight hours he’s logged, the types of aircraft he’s flown and even his family.

“Knowledge drips off the guy,” Havill said.

Alford will be redeploying to the United States this month.



**Chief Warrant Officer Michael Alford shows off the patches he's worn in combat missions more than 38 years of service. The patch on his uniform is from Company A, 4th Battalion, 101st Aviation Regiment, 159th Combat Aviation Brigade, also known as the Comancheros. The patch in his right hand is his current unit serving in Iraq and the patch in his left hand the original Comanchero design from Vietnam.**



U.S. Army photo by Sgt. David Bill

Sixteenth Corps Support Group commander, Col. Victor Maccagnan, left, Al Gazi tribal Chieftain, Sheik Ali Al Manshad, and the 56th Brigade Combat Team commander, Col. James Brown cut the ribbon at the grand opening of the International Market at Camp Adder, Tallil.

# Iraqi citizens, U.S. Soldiers boost economy

## Georgians, Texans, Iraqis open local international market outside Camp Adder

Story by Spc. Tracy J. Smith  
48th Brigade Combat Team

**CAMP ADDER** — Soldiers of Georgia's 48th Brigade Combat Team and of Texas' 56th Brigade Combat Team created a legacy that reflected their southern hospitality.

The National Guard Soldiers and the people of the Al Gazi Tribe opened an international market outside Camp Adder — Talil that is the first independent market to open in the area since the fall of Saddam, said Al Gazi tribal chieftain, Sheik Ali Al Manshad.

"I am confident that this will be a continuation of the cooperation experienced by the Iraqi people of this region and the American Forces," he said.

"It will be convenient for Soldiers to get the things they need for themselves and their families at home, without having to venture far from the base. It will also be positive economically toward our financial

independence," he said.

Last minute storefront adjustments, and reassessing inventory, were an indication of the anxiousness local entrepreneurs felt as they prepared for their new customers. The bustle of preparation was underplayed by the solid reaffirmation of friendship just outside the protective barriers.

Col. Victor Maccagnan, 16th Corps Support Group commander, officiated the market opening with the 56th BCT commander, Col. James Brown.

Brown expanded on the relationships Soldiers shared in rebuilding the former dictatorship's air defense stronghold and was visibly proud in the joint efforts of the engineers of the respective brigades and the Al Gazi citizens.

"Sheik Ali and family members have actually fought alongside the coalition to overthrow Saddam ... and have been wounded in battle," Brown reminded the small gathering. "Throughout our time here

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***"I am confident that this will be a continuation of the cooperation experienced by the Iraqi people of this region and the American Forces."***

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Sheik Ali Al Manshad

the Al Gazi family has supported us. God has given us a beautiful day to open, and I believe this is a sign the market will be successful, en-shala." En shala is an Arabic phrase meaning God willing.

A snip of the ribbon by the command dignitaries and Sheik Ali brought a flood of appreciative consumers and continued a tradition of camaraderie for the military and the people of this economically-stressed region.

"I really do think it's a nice cultural

exchange," said Staff Sgt. Fran Ellison, a food service supply noncommissioned officer for the 48th and Rex, Ga. native. She took advantage of the afternoon to share tea and a smile with her friend, Sheik Saad Al-Manshad.

"When people shop here they can have something tangible to show back home, like I am enjoying this tea with my friend. They can see that and be able to share that," she said.

Engineers from the 220th Corps Support Engineer Company, 648th Engineer Battalion, 48th Brigade Combat Team celebrated the opening day by taking advantage of a few bargains.

"I think (the Ur International Market) will help reinforce community ties a great deal," said 1st Sgt. Karry Friedmeyer, the 220th's top enlisted Soldier.

"It will help the economy here and help our Soldiers by giving them a bit more variety," he said.



Combined En route Radar Approach controllers from the 332nd Expeditionary Operations Support Squadron monitor air traffic.

## CERAP controllers assist pilots

Story and photos by Senior Airman Bryan Franks  
332nd Air Expeditionary Wing

**BALAD AIR BASE** — In a cold, dark box, about the size of a small bedroom, sit the 332nd Expeditionary Operations Support Squadron Combined En route Radar Approach controllers.

The CERAP controllers maintain the airspace in central Iraq and handle air traffic for aircraft flowing in and out of Balad and Baghdad International Airport, said 1st Lt. Erin Decker, 332nd EOSS airfield flight operations officer.

"They work hard to provide a smooth and efficient operation around the tactical airspace," said Tech. Sgt. Rich Lopez, 332nd EOSS radar controller.

The controllers provide two main services for aircraft entering their airspace — approach and en route.

Approach service helps aircraft arriving or leaving an airfield or airport. Anything between five and 50 miles falls into that category, Decker said. En route service is responsible for handling the superhighways of the skies. They keep air traffic flow-

ing through central Iraq.

To perform the task, enlisted Airmen spend two hours at a time watching a radar scope, which tells them the altitude, direction and the separation from other aircraft. These Airmen conduct more than 500 operations a day.

"This is the best job you can have in the Air Force," said Senior Airman David Hyman, 332nd EOSS radar controller. "It gets busy in here, and I like it busy."

The six-member crews handle 10 to 30 operations at a time. There is one radar final controller who works each shift. Their responsibility is to assist pilots during approaches and landings during inclement weather or poor visibility, Decker said.

One of the most difficult jobs is coordinating air traffic around the tactical battle airspace, which can pop up quickly.

"This is the most complex operation I have ever seen," said Staff Sgt. Brandon Oyen, a 332nd radar air traffic controller.

The CERAP, with tower controllers, control civil air traffic in theater.

"We follow the same rules and regulations as a normal airport would back in the states for air traffic management," Decker said.

## Air Force fighters destroy terrorist hideout using JDAMS

**BALAD AIR BASE** — United States Air Force F-16s from Balad Air Base successfully bombed a booby-trapped house near Al Mahmudiyah.

Anti-Iraqi forces had attacked Iraqi Army Soldiers with an improvised explosive device. Coalition ground forces then secured and searched the area, discovering the booby-trapped house, also used as a terrorist hideout.

After an explosive ordnance disposal team investigated the house and the surrounding area was cleared of civilians, 332nd Expeditionary Fighter Squadron F-16s dropped 500-pound precision-guided bombs and destroyed the target.

"We are here to support the guys on the ground and do what ever we can to help them out," said Capt. Clay Johnson, 332nd Expeditionary Fighter Squadron pilot.

Since January there have been more than 480 air

strikes against insurgent staging areas, buildings where anti-coalition forces are hiding, motor-firing sites, improvised explosive device locations and weapons caches.

The F-16s involved in this air strike are deployed here from the 457th Fighter Squadron, Naval Air Station/ Joint Reserve Base Fort Worth- Carswell Field, Texas.

The precision-guided bombs used to help ensure the safety of ground troops, better known as GBU-38s, were Joint Direct Attack Munitions.

The JDAMS are especially designed to reduce collateral damage, limit unintended casualties and take the fight up close and personal to enemy terrorists.

More than 15,000 air strike missions have been flown in 2005 providing close-air support for coalition ground forces involved in Operation Iraqi Freedom.

# Air Force engineers 'can do'

Story by Staff Sgt. Tammie Moore  
332nd Air Expeditionary Wing

**BALAD AIR BASE** — RED HORSE, short for Rapid Engineering Deployable Heavy Operations Repair Squadron Engineers, can do just about anything and get there to do it quickly.

"Our specialty is conducting heavy construction throughout the world in a rapid manner," said Capt. Steve Thomas, project engineer with the 557th Expeditionary RED HORSE.

Airmen deployed to Southwest Asia from Balad to Kandahar Air Field in Afghanistan are working on projects ranging from expanding flight lines to building pavilions. In addition, they also help local civil engineers with additional projects.

"Once we are at a base, if we can assist them in anyway outside of the realm we are deployed to work in, we do," said Capt. Michael E. Crosse. He is the 1st Expeditionary RED HORSE Group, Balad officer in charge.

"We go where the work is," Thomas said. "When our jobs at one base are done, we leave there and head to our next assignment. During an average RED HORSE deployment, personnel often move locations several times while working on several different construction projects."

The RED HORSE Airmen are proud of being able to work at Balad.

"We are not only here to achieve the mission, we are a part of history ensuring the future of Balad Air Base and Iraq," said Chief Master Sgt. Mark Darden, 1st ERHG operations superintendent.

While at Balad, RED HORSE is working steadily to complete nine projects.

Among the larger of these include building 50,000 square feet of office and storage space for the 332nd Expeditionary Civil Engineering Squadron.

The unit already completed a \$800,000 airfield ramp widening project. Eleven Airmen had to remove 1,300 square yards of concrete and lay 6,000 tons of asphalt to finish the ramp widening said Navy Lt. Michael Popovich, exchange program officer.



U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. Vicky Murdock

Tech. Sgt. Nate Robin, 332nd Expeditionary Aircraft Maintenance Squadron, marshals a 332nd Expeditionary Fighter Squadron F-16.

# RED HORSE Airmen improve Army outpost Qayyarah-West

Story, and photos by U.S. Army Spc. Jeremy D. Crisp  
Multinational Corps – Iraq

**FORWARD OPERATING BASE QAYYARAH-WEST** – The sounds of hammers smashing nails, mixed with the whizzing of saws cutting wood, resonate through the forward Army outpost known as Q-West.

The 200-plus civil engineering Airmen of the 557th Expeditionary RED HORSE are nowhere near an airfield, or any of their Air Force brothers and sisters-in-arms.

“It’s just us flying solo,” said Senior Airman Jesse N. Gent, a structural journeyman with the RED HORSE. “We’re kind of like a contractor, and we support the Army wherever they need us.”

“We’ve had a pretty good jelling with the Army,” said Air Force Staff Sgt. Christopher M. Leonard, a structural craft team leader. “If they need something built, we’ll go build it.”

On a six-month deployment, the unit is right at home when it comes to building structures from the ground up.

The engineers are building places to sleep and a Morale, Welfare and Recreation building for the troops to use, said Leonard.

The squadron is comprised of Airmen from all over the United States and Europe, and the unit is a mix of electricians, plumbers, carpenters and engineers. Although there aren’t any runways at Q-west, airfield workers are being used as heavy equipment operators here as well.

Leonard, from Vandenberg Air Force Base, Calif., and Gent, who is a base maintainer and member of the honor guard at Cannon AFB, N. M., don’t always have opportunities to do hands-on structural work at their home duty stations. That’s why deploying with the RED HORSE is a great opportunity to get experience, said Gent.

“This is where we really learn,” Gent said. “It just gets thrown at you, and there is a wealth of experienced guys in the unit who help us out. We really get hands on with what we do and that’s what the RED HORSE is known for. I’m pretty excited to be out here and be a part of the unit.”

Not only are the Airmen capable of constructing most anything, they



**Staff Sgt. Christopher M. Leonard, structural craft team leader, 557th Expeditionary RED HORSE, drops in stabilizing blocks on a new project.**

are prepared to handle themselves on the battlefield.

Before deploying, the troops conducted a month of practical training with the Army at Fort McCoy, Wis., which has come to good use since they run convoys throughout Iraq.

“We trained on various weapons systems, convoy operations, tactical movements and close-quarter marksmanship,” Leonard said. “We came prepared for just about everything.”

Not only have the Airmen trained with Soldiers, the two recently had the chance to work together. The Army sent over some of its Soldiers to help assist the Airmen and to

learn from them as well.

“When the Army came out and worked with us, it was a lot of fun,” Gent said. “There were a lot of guardsmen, and for them to come help us out was an awesome experience. A lot of them didn’t even know carpentry, but the Army just threw us a bunch of different people in whatever career fields just to give us a hand and learn how to build the sleeping quarters.”

This dual-service relationship is nothing new. The Airmen go to technical school in Gulfport, Miss., the same place the Army sends their troopers to learn engineering.

Gent, who studied carpentry,



**Senior Airman Thomas J. Miller, a carpenter attached to the 557th Expeditionary Red Horse Squadron Iraq, cuts a stabilizing block.**



**Senior Airman Jesse N. Gent, a structural journeyman with the 557th Expeditionary RED HORSE, uses his hammer to move a stud.**

welding and sheet metal layout at technical school, said the reward is the thanks they get when a job is complete.

“It’s great when Army command-

ers come out and say ‘Hey, that’s an awesome job,’” Gent said.

“We take a lot of pride in our work and a job well done,” Leonard added.

# On the hunt with

## *Elite Iraqi border force proves to be a*

Story by Spc. Rick Rzepka  
Scimitar Assistant Editor

**HUSAYBAH** – Along the thirsty, Western border of Iraq, hundreds of Desert Wolves lurk in the pale moonlight, stalking their prey. These predators aggressively roam the desert north of Husaybah all the way to Saudi Arabia, guarding their territory from their nemesis – the desert weasels, aka terrorists.

The Desert Wolves, 2nd Brigade, 2nd region, Department of Border Enforcement, have been active in the Al Anbar province since December 2004. Since then, they have been instrumental in securing and holding areas vital to the protection of Iraq's borders.

Eighteen months ago the border area in the al-Anbar province was in complete disarray, said Army Col. Gene Kamena, Training and Doctrine Command. Kamena, who was fundamental in the creation and training of the Desert Wolves, said, "The biggest challenge was finding good men, enough weapons, uniforms and money to start operations."

The Wolves, who are made up of former Iraqi Army officers and special forces, are the brainchild of former Iraqi Minister of the Interior Falah Nakib. The goal was to rapidly develop an elite border force that could deploy quickly to border hot spots.

Along with four other Americans, Kamena took more than 600 recruits to Jordan for six weeks of training and then deployed directly to the Syrian border crossing of Waleed, where they rebuilt forts along the border.

"The general plan was to work our way to Husaybah and control that area which was always a problem due to the criminal, terrorist and tribal activity there," said Kamena. "We got into some fights and always had to fight for money, food, vehicles, water and weapons."

Over the following months, the Wolves were able to expand Iraq's border protection north, and in January 2005, they provided the only protection for the polling stations in the far west portion of the al-Anbar province.

"Once the Iraqis knew that we would live and fight with them, they accepted us," said Kamena. "It all came down to personal relationships and trust. This unit was my biggest success, because I was there to guide them and ensure they had what they needed. It is critical to understand their culture and what motivates them. This takes months to get right."

The Desert Wolves brigade is made up of both Sunni and Shi'ites said Marine Col. Mike Pannell, 2nd Marine division, 2nd Marine Expeditionary Force. "They have come together to protect their country. They are very brave and patriotic."

Over the past two years the Desert Wolves have come a long way. There are some true American heroes who deserve recognition in this effort, said Kamena. Lt. Gen. David H. Petraeus, Lt. Col. Brent Jones, Majors Kevin Reisz and Rich Heugh, along with Ryan Stiles, lived, fought and led the Iraqis to success.

"The hard work and risks have paid off. This may be the most important thing we did during our military careers," said Kamena.



An Iraqi border patrol officer is standing post looking for terrorist activities.

U.S. Marine Corps photo by Sgt Michael A. Blaha



Deputy Minister of the Interior, Supporting Forces Brig. Gen. Ali Muhsin Al-Khafaggi, gives the Wolves a pep talk in Husaybah. "The borders of Iraq are now safer thanks to (the Desert Wolves)," he said.

U.S. Army photo by Spc. Rick Rzepka

# n Desert Wolves

## *a success in pacifying Syrian border*



U.S. Marine Corps photo by Michael A. Blaha

Members of the Desert Wolves stand post outside Border Fort 12 looking for terrorist activities. Border Fort 12 is directly by the Syrian border in western Iraq. Along with U.S. Marines, the Wolves are conducting counter-insurgency operations with Iraqi Security Forces to isolate and neutralize Anti-Iraqi Forces.



U.S. Army photo by Spc. Rick Rzepka

The Desert Wolves gather after a ceremony, Nov. 30, at the youth center in Husaybah, which symbolized the pacification of the town and the securing of the Syrian border. The Wolves along with elements of the Iraqi Army were instrumental in the effort.



Courtesy photo

The Desert Wolves celebrate the capture of a terrorist in the Al Anbar province.



Capt. Cole Calloway, a general support team chief for the 451st Civil Affairs Company, hands out pens and stuffed animals to Iraqi children near a downtown children's hospital in Kirkuk.

## U.S. troops teach civil affairs to Iraqi Soldiers

Story and photos by  
Army Spc. Michael Pfaff  
133rd Mobile Public  
Affairs Detachment

**KIRKUK** — As infantrymen train the Iraqi Army for the transfer of security in Kirkuk, another group of Soldiers is showing the Iraqi troops another side to being a guardian of the citizens.

The 451st Civil Affairs Company has been working with Iraq's Cobra Brigade for the last few months showing the Soldiers how to perform civil operations.

"Initially, they did not feel comfortable working with the public," said Maj. Harry Kim, general support team chief, 451st Civil Affairs. "But, after a few joint operations, the Iraqi Army now feels comfortable conducting operations within the public."

"A lot of operations are conducted with children," Kim said. "And, now they are beginning to feel friendly

toward the Iraqi Army in their neighborhood."

Garnering that friendship with the public has been a long road for the Iraqi Army, Kim said, but they are quickly moving toward a good civil presence.

On a recent goodwill mission, Soldiers from the 451st visited a neighborhood school with the Iraqi Army.

Stuffed animals and toys were supplied by 451st Soldiers while the Iraqi Army Soldiers gave them to the children.

"We want to be out of the picture," said Sgt. Joseph Perez, team leader, 451st Civil Affairs. "We want to teach these people how to interact with the public, so we let them do the interaction. We're

kind of like the guy behind the scenes."

Major Junade Zyad, the Cobra Brigade civil military officer, ran the operation.

"The Iraqi Army is now improving their public image," Kim said. "Especially, Maj. Zyad, who acts as our counterpart in the Iraqi Army."

At the school, Zyad gave toys to Christian and Muslim children alike. Zyad said that the Iraqi Army made the children happy with the gifts.

"He is very good at dealing with the children and he works well with the media,"

Maj. Harry Kim

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***"A lot of operations are conducted with children, and now they are beginning to feel friendly toward the Iraqi Army in their neighborhood."***

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Kim said. "He's been such a great help in accomplishing our mission, which is to get the Iraqi Army to stand on their own."



Maj. Junade Zyad, an Iraqi Army Cobra Battalion civil military officer, holds a child after delivering stuffed animals and toys to her school.

# Hawaiians bring 'Aloha Spirit' to Al-Faw

## Guard unit's good attitude, work ethic infectious at Camp Victory

Story and photo by  
Staff Sgt. Julie Nicolov,  
Multi-National Corps – Iraq

**CAMP VICTORY** — New troops often do a double-take when they enter the Al-Faw Palace.

Instead of encountering quiet, stone-faced guards who methodically check security badges, troops assigned to Camp Victory are greeted with big smiles and robust welcomes from the troops of Mortar Platoon, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 299th Infantry Regiment, Hawaii Army National Guard.

The welcome wagon is headed up by Staff Sgt. Clinton Haina, assistant platoon sergeant, affectionately known as the "Ambassador of Aloha."

"People call me the Wal-Mart greeter," Haina said with a laugh.

Haina, who hails from Pepeekeo, stands next to the guard desk near the palace entrance wearing his protective vest, helmet and weapon as he greets each person who walks through the revolving doors with their full rank, a big smile and a wish for a good day.

When he isn't deployed, Haina works as a nurse at North Hawaii Community Hospital, and said he learned to have a positive attitude during his medical training.

"My boss told me that your first impression when you walk into a patient's room will make your day go easier," Haina said.

Applying that philosophy to the work he



**Staff Sgt. Clinton Haina, assistant platoon sergeant, 2nd Battalion, 299th Infantry Regiment, Hawaii National Guard, also known as "the Ambassador of Aloha" greets troops as they enter the Al Faw Palace at Camp Victory, for another day's work.**

does in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom has good results.

"Everyday when I greet officers, enlisted and civilians, they come up to me and say, 'Thank you, staff sergeant, you make our morning,'" Haina said.

Though Haina and his men were initially slotted to provide light infantry support in the Tikrit area and spent months learning how to clear buildings, conduct security patrols and set up road blocks. They realized plans had changed once they arrived in country

The men of mortar platoon have made

the best of their new assignment.

"We do things with a smile; that's the way we were brought up," said Sgt. Quintin "Chunky" Quinories, a mortar sergeant.

In the beginning of their tour, however, not everyone responded well to the spirit of Aloha. "Some people questioned, but by watching us, they found that we do know our jobs," Quinories said.

The people who work at Al-Faw Palace warmed to the Hawaiian way, and learned that it's a great morale booster.

"There's no sense in being all uptight,"

Quinories said. "Sometimes you have your days, but it's all right."

Some of the leadership even joined in on the jokes and lightheartedness.

"One sergeant major is always playing jokes," Quinories said. "At first when we started to joke with him we used to get the stink eye, but now he's always cranking on us."

The Ambassador of Aloha is glad his troops have followed his example.

"The boys at the gate are so positive, too," Haina said. "They're always greeting and smiling."

Even when the day isn't going as planned, Haina's energy prevails.

"Sometimes things don't go right. Haina looks at the positive. You look at him and think, 'It can't be that bad,'" said Sgt. 1st Class Aaron Okinaga, a platoon sergeant.

The old saying, "Smile and people will wonder what you're up to," certainly holds true in the guard shacks surrounding Al-Faw.

Keeping a positive attitude has helped the troops battle homesickness during what is for many of them their first extended period away from home. "Everyone is so close, like a family," Quinories said. "You have a family back home, but you have a family here too."

The men of mortar platoon will return to their homes and families in January.

"The people who work in the palace are always asking, 'Why are you so happy? What's the deal?' We call it the 'Aloha Spirit.' We bring the Spirit to the palace, to wherever we go," Okinaga said.

# Former social worker helps Iraqi village of Soyra

Story and photo by Sgt. Ashly N. Rice  
101st Sustainment Brigade

Helping others is second nature to Capt. Lorene Rodan. A former social worker, Rodan joined the Army four years ago and serves as the company commander of 627th Movement Control Team, 27th Movement Control Battalion.

Now deployed to Habur Gate, Rodan helps villages near the Turkish and Syrian border.

"People in the village asked for buckets and toys for various ages, including baby dolls and puzzles," said Rodan. "I picked up some paint and plaster for the schoolhouse walls. Some of the older girls wanted to color their hair, so I got hair dye too."

Boxes of donated school supplies, clothes, and shoes are packed away to hand to the families. Candy and ice-cream accompanied the donations as added treats.

The village of Soyra has 18 families, three more families than were there on Rodan's last visit. Houses are constantly under construction in this small village and are warmed by a generator that is connected throughout the houses.

Electricity for the village is one of Rodan's top priorities, as well as ordering parts and continuing to provide maintenance on the generator.

Soyra is two miles off the closest paved road, where vehicles park in order not to get stuck in the mud during the rainy and cold seasons. This makes it difficult for emergency vehicles or anyone to travel to Soyra during

those times.

"They have had a school for 13 years, but no one has ever attended it because they have not had a teacher," said Rodan. "It would be hard for a teacher to try and get to the school during a rainy day when the road is deep in mud."

Another mission is to get gravel for the road so the Soyra residents can travel more easily, and then to try and find a teacher for the village, Rodan said. She received word from the local education department, that if the school was motivated, they would assist in finding a teacher.

Right now, workers are clearing the school building of debris and painting and plastering the walls. Desks and chairs are under construction and should arrive in the weeks ahead to place inside the school, Rodan said.

Rodan said that there are other villages that need just as much help, but says her philosophy is to "get one village self-sustained and work on from there."



**Capt. Lorene Rodan plays a game with local girls on a humanitarian mission to the Kurdish village of Soyra.**

Other items on the agenda in the future for the Soyra village include obtaining the right documents needed for families to receive kerosene to warm their homes, and for medical teams to visit and give classes on hygiene and infection prevention.

Rodan divides her time to help the area: "Go to a village during the day, work and sleep at night."

## NEWS IN BRIEF

**Iraq, U.S. forces capture 33 terror suspects**

**BAGHDAD** – Task Force Baghdad Soldiers teamed up with Iraqi Security Forces to conduct Operation Thunder Blitz in southern Baghdad Nov. 29, resulting in the capture of 33 terror suspects.

Moving rapidly into the area, hundreds of U.S. Soldiers from 3rd Squadron, 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment and Iraqi forces from the 1st Battalion, 2nd Commando Brigade (Wolf Battalion) took the enemy by surprise by securing seven objectives along the Tigris River.

Operation Thunder Blitz was focused on removing weapons and terrorists from the streets prior to the Dec. 15 elections.

**Iraq Police graduate 248 from basic training**

**MOSUL** – The Iraq Police Service graduated 248 police officers on Dec. 1, from the basic police training course at the Mosul Police Academy.

The 10-week basic police training program is designed to provide fundamental policing skills based on international human rights standards to the students in preparation for assuming police officer responsibilities. The program consists of academic study of general policing topics combined with an emphasis on tactical operational policing skills.

The basic police training curriculum was recently modified to increase combat survival and police skills training, while building teamwork and cohesion. New classes were added which provide for more hands-on and practical training, specifically addressing survival skills needed by today's Iraqi Police Service.

To date, more than 51,600 Iraqi Police have completed the basic training course. An additional 37,000 police officers have completed a three-week Transitional Integration Program developed for police officers serving, with little or no basic training. TIP provides these officers with a condensed version of the 10-week course.

**Operation Rams kicks off in Ramadi**

**CAMP BLUE DIAMOND, AR RAMADI** — Approximately 100 Iraqi Army Soldiers from 3rd Battalion, 3rd Brigade, 1st Iraqi Division and 400 Soldiers from the 2/28 Brigade Combat Team, launched Operation Rams (Tallie) in Ramadi on Dec. 4.

Operation Rams is the sixth in a series of disruption operations conducted by the Iraqi Army and Coalition Forces to neutralize the insurgency and set the conditions for a successful Dec. 15 election in Ar Ramadi.

As a result of the recent operations, insurgent attacks against Iraqi civilians and both Iraqi and U.S. Forces in the Ramadi area have decreased. The operations targeted areas where al Qaeda in Iraq insurgent cells operate.

The operations have resulted in the detention of dozens of insurgents and the discovery and destruction of multiple weapons caches. Unlike recent combat operations in the formerly-held terrorist strongholds of western Al Anbar, Iraqi and U.S. Forces have met with limited and uncoordinated resistance in Ramadi.

**Coalition and Iraqi forces continue to set the stage for safe and secure election**

**BAGHDAD** – Coalition and Iraqi security forces continued to disrupt al Qaeda in Iraq terrorists during more than 450 company-level combined operations throughout the country from Nov. 26 through Dec 2.

“Fifty percent of the combat operations conducted this past week throughout the Iraqi theatre of operation were combined Coalition and Iraqi security force operations, while another 21 percent were independent Iraqi security force operations,” said Maj. Brandon Robbins, operations officer, Multi-National Corps – Iraq.

“The ability of the Iraqi Army forces to conduct these combined and independent operations is significant,” said Robbins.

Coalition and Iraqi Security forces located and cleared more than 95 caches during the week, including one of the largest caches to date in which Iraqi and Coalition forces unearthed nearly two tons of explosives near the northern Iraqi city of Kirkuk. Four truck loads of munitions, 4, 222 mortar rounds and more than 950 fuses, were rendered safe as a result.

Additionally, combined forces cleared 160 improvised explosive devices, bringing the number of IEDs found and cleared during the month of November to more than 650. Combined forces also detained more than 440 terrorists, captured or killed 31 foreign fighters and

## CHAPLAIN'S TALK

**Santa Can't Do It!**

**By Chaplain (Maj.) Robert Whitlock**  
3rd Infantry Division

It was the first week in December and I was a little down because I only had one more week before I would have to leave my family and deploy to Kuwait.

I was not looking forward to missing Christmas with my family, and I was not looking forward to explaining to my daughter that Santa

Claus could not make it snow. You see, she had written a letter to Santa asking for a special gift. She wanted it to snow on Christmas Day.

I sat my three girls down and carefully explained the limitations of Santa Claus. The bottom line

was that you have to ask Santa for something he can give. Weather control is not one of Santa's gifts. I explained that only God could control the weather and that Santa was not God, but one of His servants.

My daughter made the same mistake that many of us make on a regular basis. Briana asked Santa for

something that was impossible for him to grant. (I know some of you don't believe in Santa Claus and I don't hold that against you.)

Everyday I work with young men and women who do the same thing Briana did.

They ask their husband or wife to make them happy. They ask their

friends to keep them entertained. They think that happiness can be found if they have more money, a

newer car, bigger stereo, prettier wife, better husband, or bigger house. They are asking their loved ones and friends to do the impossible. Only God has the ability to make us truly happy. We set ourselves and our

loved ones up for failure when we seek God's gifts from any source other than God himself.

As a chaplain, I know this great truth. The scary thing is that sometimes I find myself doing the exact same thing; looking for God's gifts without looking to God.

If you are like me, then pay close attention to what I am about to say. The bottom line is, you have to ask Santa for something he can give. If you're looking for contentment, happiness, peace, and unconditional love, you must look towards God. Those things can't be found anywhere else.

May God truly bless you and yours!



**Chaplain Whitlock**

***If you're looking for contentment, happiness, peace, and unconditional love you must look towards God. Those things can't be found anywhere else.***

Chaplain Whitlock

**Entire Fallujah electric network to be upgraded**

**Story by Norris Jones**

Gulf Region Central

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

**FALLUJAH** – This city's electric network is undergoing a huge upgrade.

Michael Doty, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Gulf Region Central (GRC) project engineer, said he decided to return to Fallujah for a second year to finish the work here.

I believe in 12 months, people will be saying the city really turned things around here. That's why I came back. I knew my mission wasn't complete until we finished. The city's totally renovated electrical distribution system is going to have a very positive impact," he said.

In November, experts completed a \$620,000 assessment identifying every home and business, as well as determining load distribution, necessary repairs, upgrades, and new work required to rehabilitate the network in all 17 sectors of Fallujah, a community of 200,000 residents.

“We now know how many street lights we need, how many utility poles, what transformers are good, and how many need to be replaced throughout the city,” said Doty.

In all, about \$30 million has been earmarked.

“Our goal is to establish a dependable electrical network for 40,000 businesses and residences,” said Doty.

About 70 percent to 80 percent of the city now has access to functioning utility lines with about 12 hours of power available daily.

Most of the electric network in the northern half of

the city is operational, but there are large areas in the southern half where extensive work is needed.

Fallujah's Electric Department, in conjunction with the Ministry of Electricity, has hired additional workers and is steadily making progress getting more of the city connected.

Rebuilding Fallujah's electricity network involves the Project and Contracting Office, the Joint Contracting Command-Iraq, GRC, the Ministry of Electricity and local contractors. Lt. Col. Stephen Wilson, U.S. Marine Corps, PCO's Distribution Program Manager for the Electricity Sector, said the assessment provided a clear picture of Fallujah's requirements.

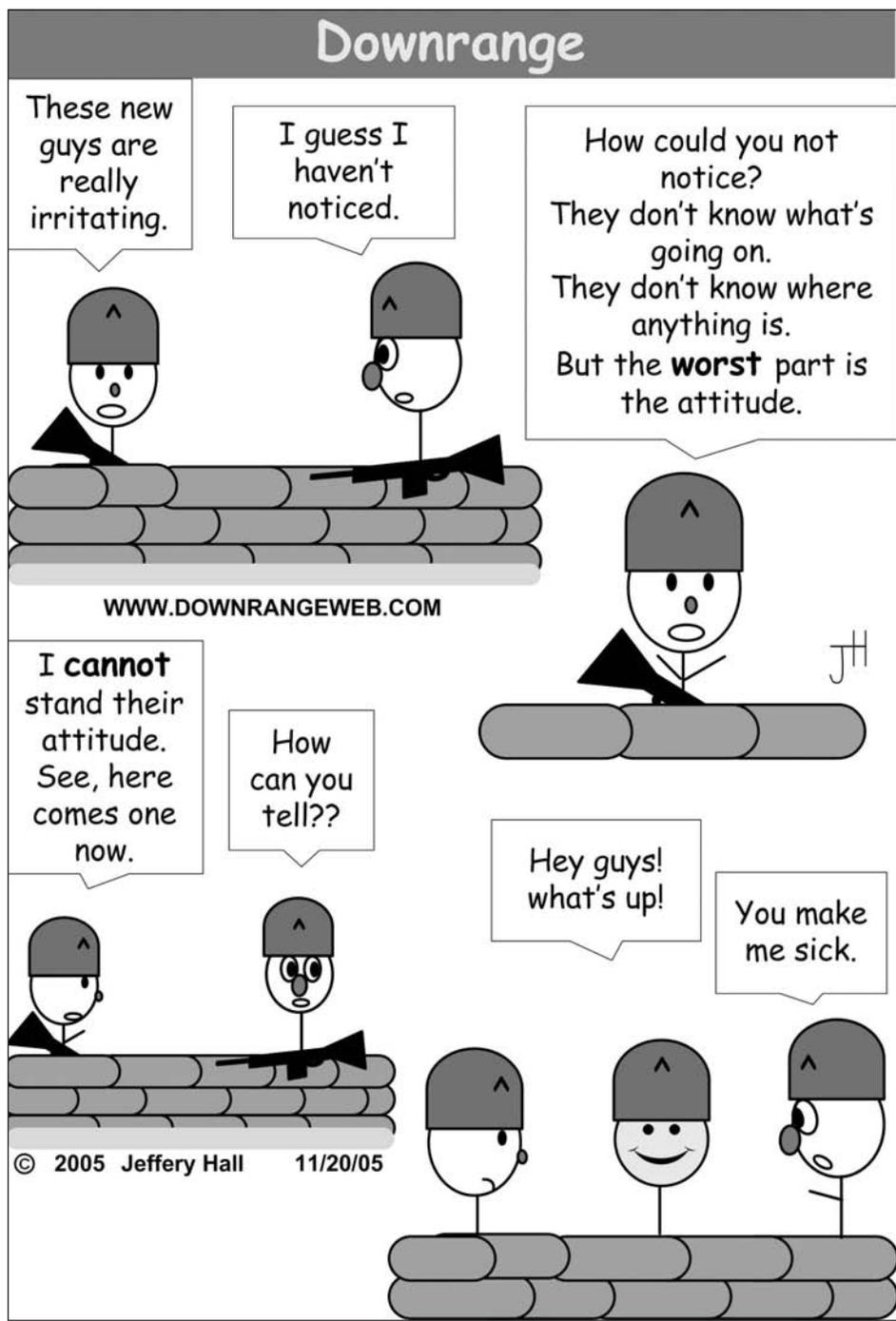
Wilson also said that they had allocated \$7.86 million to build two substations in Fallujah, doubling the number of substations there. These new additions will greatly reduce the load being placed on the existing substations and will allow a larger portion of the city's residents to receive more reliable power for longer periods,” Wilson said.

In addition, contracts will authorize up to \$6 million for utility poles, \$3 million for cable, \$1 million for streetlights, and an estimated \$2.8 million for a new Fallujah Electrical Department maintenance and storage building.

The Corps of Engineers is overseeing 59 reconstruction projects in Fallujah valued at \$87 million.

Doty will finish his second tour in November, and is confident that the team consisting of PCO, JCC-I, GRC, the Ministry of Electricity, and Fallujah's Electricity Department will have the upgrade complete. “We're definitely making a difference,” he said.

# Scimitar Slapstick

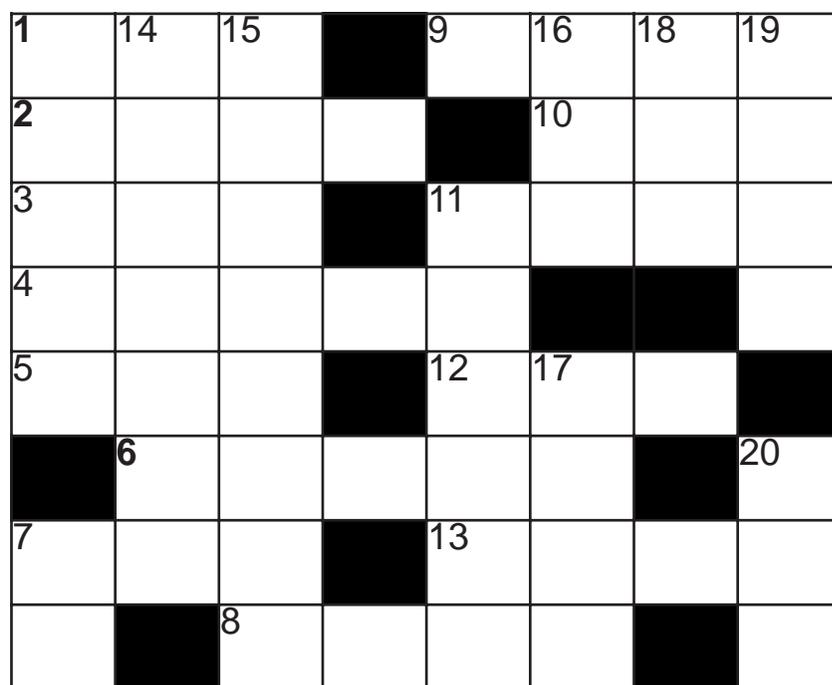


Art by Jeffery Hall



Art by Maj. James D. Crabtree

## Words of the Infidels

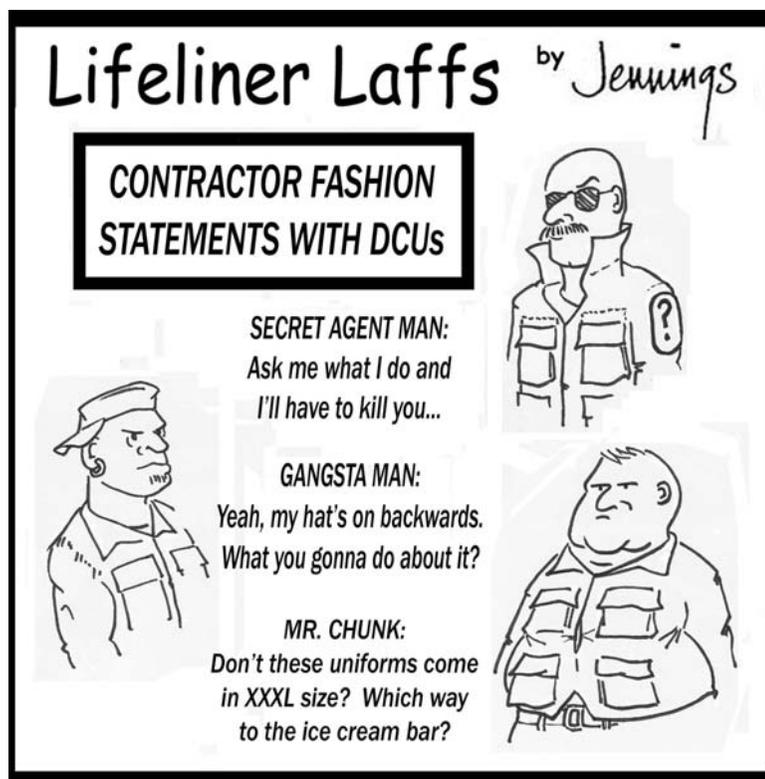


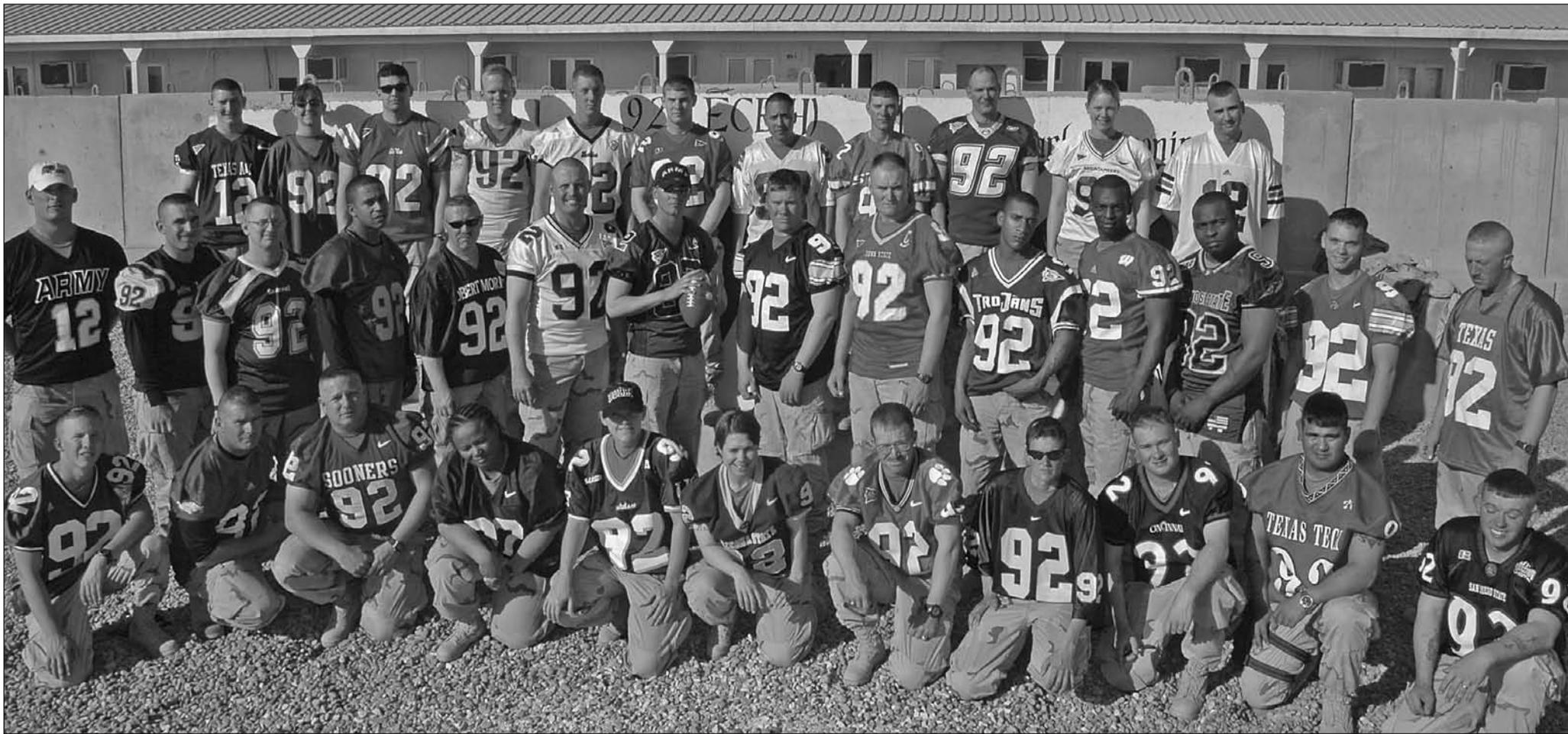
### Across

- A dead poet
- Australian rock stars
- System of measuring heat
- Special Forces command
- We'll let you know ...
- Moral obligation
- Opposite of amateur
- Tall grass
- Delicious Honey \_\_\_\_\_
- Grohl's \_\_\_\_\_ Fighters
- Oodles of time
- Blackwater dudes
- Big green bag

### Down

- \_\_\_\_\_ Blue Ribbon
- \_\_\_\_\_ Box
- Reggie Jackson, aka Mr. \_\_\_\_\_
- Ms. Krabappel's profession
- The \_\_\_\_\_ Strikes Back
- An alien spacecraft
- Saddam's weapon of choice
- Four \_\_\_\_\_ Blondes
- Chicago slugger Sammy
- Your online Army resource





Soldiers with the 92nd Engineer Battalion, 36th Engineer Group, 3rd Infantry Division pose in their new college football jerseys

# College teams donate jerseys to Soldier's memorial fund

Story and photo by Sgt. Andrew Miller  
Task Force Baghdad

**CAMP LIBERTY** – Football jerseys from around the United States were sent to Army engineers here recently — just in time for the bowl games.

More than 40 Division 1-A schools sent their jerseys to the Capt. Scott Corwin Memorial Fund, which uses all donations to benefit Soldiers of the 92nd Engineer Battalion, 36th Engineer Group, 3rd Infantry Division.

The fund was established in memory of Corwin, a 92nd

Engineer Battalion Soldier who was murdered in Savannah, Ga. on May 29, 2004. The murder remains unsolved and is under investigation.

Capt. Cleveland Dargan, 92nd Engineer Battalion plans officer, said the universities responded to requests from Greg Corwin, Scott's father and the fund manager, in his attempt to help boost the spirits of Soldiers deployed to Iraq.

"This is a good way of keeping the spirit of Scott alive," said Capt. John Dills, the officer in charge of the 92nd Engineer Battalion administration and logistics operations center. "The two things you know he loved were the military and sports."

The jerseys represent only the latest example of support from the fund, which was established just prior to the engineers' deployment for Operation Iraqi Freedom. Since the deployment, the Corwin family has hosted and sponsored several events for deployed 92nd Engineer Soldiers' family members in the Savannah area.

"This was a big boost in morale right here," said Sgt. 1st Class Ricky Nails, noncommissioned officer in charge of security and intelligence for the battalion. "(The Corwin Family) has continued to do things for our unit. You just don't see stuff like this."

## Soldier's from 48th BCT, Italy play sandlot Soccer

Story by Staff Sgt. Britt Smith  
48th Brigade Combat Team

**CAMP ADDER** — Pick up or pro? The question is what happens when a soccer game breaks out between Coalition Forces. Soldiers from the 48th Brigade Combat Team and the Italian Army lined up on either side of a soccer ball and engaged in a real game of "sandlot" ball.

The grass was definitely in short supply at Camp Adder's soccer field but not the enthusiasm level, as the two teams went at it amid the dust clouds and sand.

The level of play was surprisingly good for a bunch of Soldiers who only days before had been on patrol in the Baghdad area.

The enemy now before them wore shorts

and soccer cleats and performed as a group that obviously played together more than once.

As the teams met on the field of sand, the language barrier was overcome with the universal language of "football."

The 48th players rotated goalies as their number one keeper, Pfc. Brian Palen, 2nd Battalion, 121st Infantry Regiment, 48th BCT of Dublin, Ga. was out with a minor leg injury.

They held their own and managed to score two goals against the Italians, who

rolled up a total of six nets.

Both the Americans and Italians played well, as both teams traded kicks and passes up and down the field for more than an hour. The final score notwithstanding, the best part of the day was the chance to meet and play against people from other countries.

"It's amazing, I've never had a chance to do this. It really is two countries coming together," said Spc. Christopher Monk, a

Soldier from Company B, 2nd Battalion, 121st Infantry Regiment, 48th BCT and

resident of Eastman, Ga.

Luca Pace of the Italian Army conveyed his admiration for the American Soldier's ball handling skills as well as the opportunity to play others from another country.

"It's good to play other Soldiers, and we want to do it again," he said.

As the sun set over the dust bowl, Dawson, Ga. resident Spc. Justin Smith from Company B, 2nd Battalion, 121st Infantry Regiment, 48th BCT echoed the sentiment of his Italian counterpart.

"It's a great experience to play another country, and they are very good at playing soccer. I definitely want to do this again."

The loss on the field is only temporary, but the opportunity to make friends with other Coalition Forces is an experience that will last a lifetime.

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***"It's a great experience to play another country, and they are very good at playing soccer. I definitely want to do this again."***

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Spc. Justin Smith

# Iraqi Freedom Images



U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. James H. Christopher  
Army Pfc. Nelson Raymond, a medic assigned to Troop A, 4th Battalion, 14th Cavalry, 172nd Stryker Brigade, monitors a Force XXI Battle Command Brigade and Below System inside his Stryker vehicle in Mosul.



U.S. Navy photo by Petty Officer 3rd Class Michael D. Cole  
Navy plane captains stand by for the next launch cycle of flight operations to begin onboard the aircraft carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt. The Roosevelt is conducting maritime security operations in the Persian Gulf.



U.S. Army photo by Spc. Charles W. Gill  
Army Pfc. Janelle Zalkovsky hands out humanitarian aid items to local citizens in Thyad. Zalkovsky is attached to the civil affairs unit of the 1st Battalion, 320th Field Artillery Regiment, 101st Airborne Division.



U.S. Marine Corps photo by LanceCpl. Matthew Hutchison  
Iraqi Soldiers with the 1st Battalion, 4th Brigade, 1st Iraqi Division, patrol the street to the next home that is to be searched for weapons and signs of insurgency during an operation in Kharma.

# No winners on this island

## Soldiers find weapon caches, terrorists

U.S. Army photo by 2nd Lt. Paul Fisher

A smoke cloud rises at dusk after an explosive ordnance disposal team destroys weapons and munitions found on an island in the Euphrates River.

### Story by

**Pfc. Kelly K. McDowell**  
2nd Brigade Combat Team,  
101st Airborne Division

**BAGHDAD** — Task Force Baghdad Soldiers found multiple weapon caches on a Euphrates River island recently.

Military officials monitored suspicious activity near the river southwest of Baghdad for two weeks. When conditions were right, Soldiers from 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division sprang into action.

“The timing was right to attack the target,” said Col. Todd Ebel, the combat team’s commander.

Soldiers from the division’s 2nd Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, secured the objective and discovered three weapons caches.

Soldiers also searched surrounding homes and facilities, detaining two suspected terrorists.

In total, the Soldiers uncovered 11 500-pound bomb shells, C4 explosives, welding equipment, mortar rounds, miscellaneous bomb-making material, 57mm rockets, 40 bags of fertilizer, 12 directional charges, five 155mm rounds, 100 feet of detonation cord, three rocket-propelled grenades, eight bags of 20millimeter rounds and other munitions and explosives.

An explosive ordnance disposal team detonated the caches.

“It is likely this material was used for improvised explosive devices and possibly vehicle-borne IEDs that threaten Iraqi citizens and Coalition Forces,” Ebel said. “I could not be more proud of these 2/101st Soldiers.”



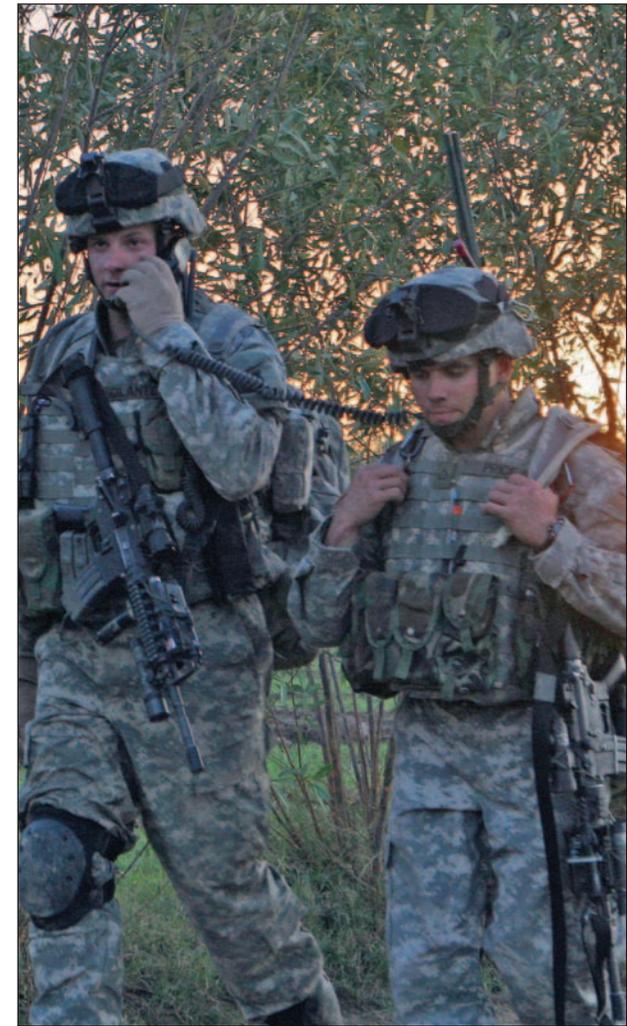
U.S. Army photo by 2nd Lt. Paul Fisher

**Soldiers of Company C, 2nd Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment walk down a pathway during a cordon-and-search mission. The Soldiers cleared an area believed to be a storage facility for insurgent ordnance**



U.S. Army photo by 2nd Lt. Paul Fisher

**Soldiers from 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division provide security along a perimeter as other Soldiers from the unit search the island**



U.S. Army photo by 2nd Lt. Paul Fisher

**Capt. Albert Vigilante, Company C commander, walks with Pfc. Brock Price as the unit searches for weapon caches.**