

# The Heart Beat

2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division

Volume 1, Issue 2

December 1, 2005



## Striking Back: 2nd BCT makes an impact in South Baghdad

**Pg. 5**  
**Making a difference  
one child at a time**

Free Mail

To:

From:

## Table of Contents

In the life of JOE, Feature Photos	3
Striking Back: 2nd BCT makes an impact in South Baghdad	4
Making a Difference one child at a time	5
Faces of the Heart	6-7
Holiday Spirit in Iraq	8
Command Sergeant Majors Notes, Chaplains Corner	9
Worship Service Reminds Soldiers to be Thankful	10
Stories continued	11

### "THE HEART BEAT" STAFF

**Editor:** Maj. Jose Garcia

**Co-Editor:** 2nd Lt. Paul Fisher

**Writers/ photographers:**

Spc. Kelly K. McDowell

Spc. George Welcome

**Video production/ broadcast journalist:**

Sgt. Joy Kroemer

The Heart Beat is an official publication of 2nd Brigade Combat Team, it is produced by the 2nd BCT Public Affairs Office. The Newsletter is in compliance with the provisions of AR 360-1. Any questions, comments, photographs or story ideas should be forwarded to the 2nd BCT Public Affairs Office.

# STRIKE 6

"STRIKE" Soldiers and Families,

### Each of You.

Keep doing what you're doing – each of you is awesome!

While I'll try, I'm not convinced my words can express to you how special each of you is.

I am honored to serve with each of you:

Each of you has and continues to sacrifice for something greater than yourselves.

Each of you is competent and skilled – each of you is a strong warrior and frankly, each of you is kicking \_\_\_!

Each of you is a peacemaker.

Each of you faces hardship and separation with courage and determination.

Each of you gives selflessly to each other and to others.

Each of you is important to our team.

Each of you is in all of our prayers.

Each of you is making a difference – you are bringing freedom to people.

Yesterday while visiting with a STRIKE unit in Al SALAAM, a poor Iraqi citizen thanked me for giving back to him his sense of life – a vision for a peaceful future, one without terror, one with opportunity, one where people are treated with dignity and respect – one with hope.

It was not I who he was thanking – it was and is each of you!

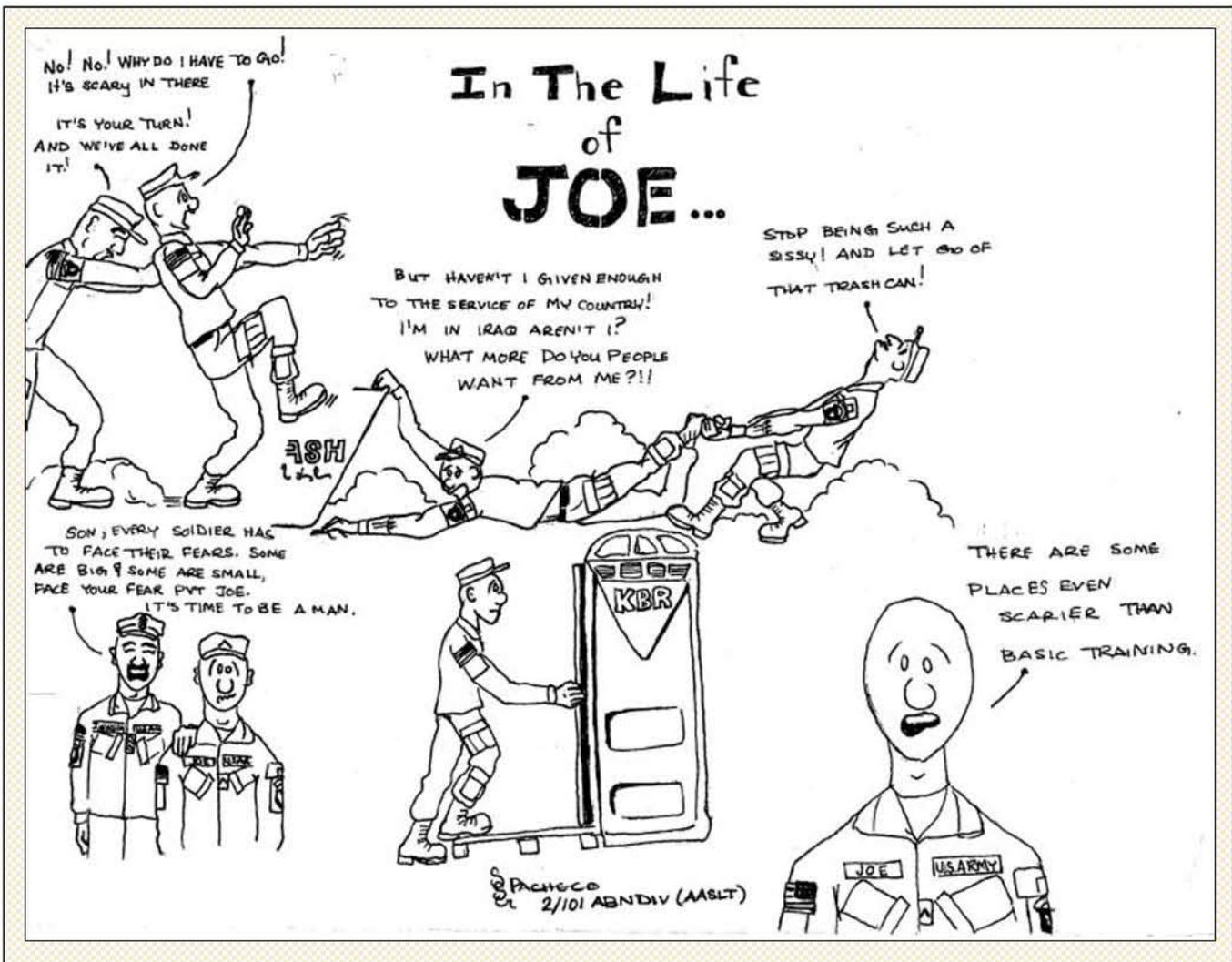
**STAY FOCUSED, STAY READY, STAY SAFE!**

**STRIKE!**

### Cover Art:

On 05 November 2005, the "Dawgs" of 3rd Platoon, Delta Company, 2-502d INF REGT located and destroyed an enemy cache consisting of 73 mortar rounds, mortar systems, a drum full of hand grenades, 6 rockets, 39 RPGs, and other munitions. From left to right, (SGT Shuan Cole of Oxford, OH, 1LT Kent Kiersey of Highland Falls, NY, SGT Charles Dollar of Hopkinsville, KY, and SGT Sean Richards of Clarksville, TN.)





# Feature Photos

This issues photos are courtesy of  
1st Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment



(Above) Soldiers pass out toys, school supplies and clothing to the Iraqi children.



(Above) Children raise their hands to answer their teachers question as Soldiers visit the Iraqi school

## STRIKING BACK: 2ND BCT MAKES AN IMPACT IN SOUTH BAGHDAD



Story by Spc. George Welcome

Photos by Spc. Kelly K. McDowell

CAMP STRIKER, Iraq—Since taking over the Southwestern Baghdad area of operations on October 31, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade Combat Team, “STRIKE” has conducted numerous successful combat missions and have been proactive in taking the fight for Iraqi freedom to the insurgents.

The brigade has raided insurgent strongholds by implementing highly coordinated air insertions and establishing patrol routes in areas that had gone unchecked for months.

Among the many critical things the brigade is doing to secure the area, finding and disarming improvised explosive devices and uncovering weapons caches are paramount.

“STRIKE” Soldiers are working incessantly to keep these dangerous weapons off the roads and out of the hands of maniacal insurgents who wish to use them.

In addition to more frequent and aggressive patrolling, special vehicles such as the ‘Buffalo’ are being used to find IEDs.

In total, the brigade has discovered and safely disposed of 75 IEDs in the time it has occupied the Southwestern Baghdad area. No small feat given the enemy’s constantly evolving methods of hiding the deadly devices.

“Every time we find IEDs we have saved two Soldiers from getting wounded in action,” said Capt. Robert Shaffer, of the brigade engineer’s office.

“The methods we are using to defeat IEDs are a lot safer than other methods being used,” Shaffer said.

Along with finding IEDs, the brigade has had great success in discovering weapons stockpiles, which would be used against coalition forces.

“We have discovered 28 weapons caches of various sizes from the end of last month through this month,” said Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Robert Foreman, also of the brigade engineer’s office.

Once these weapons are secured and documented they go through a process to ensure that they are never used.

After the cache is secured, the high profile items that are in the cache are taken to see if they have any intelligence value, Foreman said. The remainders

Continued on Pg. 11 see WEAPONS



(Above left) B Troop, 1-75th Cavalry commander Capt. Matt Ruckman examines a RPG that was found in the large weapons cache 1st Platoon uncovered Nov. 16. (Left) Soldiers get a closer look at an RPG launcher that was just one of many weapons discovered in the weapons cache 1-75th Cav. Discovered. (Bottom right ) Soldiers from 2-502nd move a barrel of rounds found at a weapons cache Nov. 5 photo courtesy of 2-502nd IR. (Bottom left) 1st Platoon, B Troop, 1-75th Cav stands for a photo next to the cache they spent over 9 hours uncovering.



# MAKING A DIFFERENCE ONE CHILD AT A TIME

Story and photos by  
Spc. George Welcome

CAMP STRIKER, Iraq—Winning a war has never been an easy task and is not likely to get easier. In times past, victory could be determined by which side inflicted the greatest number of enemy casualties or commanded the most vital strongholds.

It is true that these things are still important in determining the outcome of a conflict. However, in the war for Iraq's freedom, Soldiers are not only tasked with finding and destroying insurgents, but also winning and maintaining the trust of the Iraqi people, and providing a peace they have not had for generations.

On the morning of November 17, a joint force consisting of members from Charlie company, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 502<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Regiment, the 422<sup>nd</sup> Civil Affairs Battalion, Soldiers from the MITT team and a platoon of Iraqi army soldiers took a step in the direction of gaining the peoples' trust when they conducted a friendly walkthrough in the neighborhoods just outside of FOB Roe in Lutifiyah.

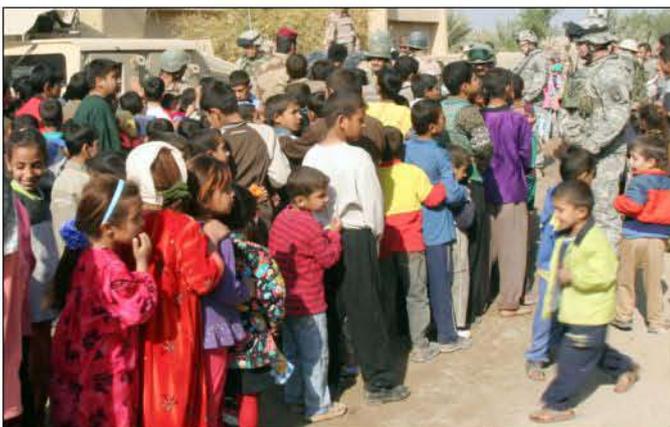
"Today's mission is a civil affairs joint effort with the Iraqi army, a schoolbag drop which consists of schoolbags provided by the Psy Ops team," said Capt. Jonathan Freyer, civil affairs team chief, Alpha Company, 422<sup>nd</sup> Civil Affairs Battalion, attached to Charlie Company, 1-502<sup>nd</sup>. "The bags have paper, pencils, soccer balls and other knick knacks the Iraqi children would appreciate."

The sun shined brightly from a cloudless blue sky as if it were trying to highlight the extreme poverty in the town below. In the first neighborhood, trash lined both sides of the street, a sure sign that the town was not receiving any municipal service.

As the joint force patrolled the area to insure it was secured, an M-1114 with a trailer full of book bags and other items slowly made its

Continued on pg. 11 see CHILDREN

**A New Gift:** (top right) A young Iraqi girl carries her brother home after receiving a schoolbag from the joint task force. **Following the Patrol:** The neighborhood children follow the Iraqi-American patrol in hopes of getting a cool schoolbag, and other neat items. **Making Youths Happy:** A young boy receives his new schoolbag adorned with the Iraqi flag. **Nice to Meet You:** Capt. Jonathan Freyer stops to say on hello to a young Iraqi boy on his bicycle. **Waiting in Anticipation:** The children get in line in order to receive their bags and other nice treats from the Soldiers who have come to visit them.



# FACES OF



Two Soldiers from 2-502nd Infantry Regiment patrol the roads in South Baghdad. (Photo by Spc. George Welcome, 2nd BCT-PAO)



2-502nd Infantry Regiment Soldiers pull security South of Baghdad. (Photo by Spc. George Welcome, 2nd BCT PAO)



Maj. Eric McFadden, HHC, 2nd BCT, and Capt. Joe Lynch, 48th BCT, visit with the children during a project safe visit in Sadr-al-Yousefiyah pump station and water plant. (Photo courtesy of HHC, 2nd BCT.)



Pfc. Fabian Reyes, B Troop, 1-75th Cav, scans the roads as he rides as the gunner for a convoy headed out to a weapons cache site. (Photo by Spc. Kelly K. McDowell, 2nd BCT PAO)



Sgt. 1st Class Brandon Cozad, 1st Platoon, B Troop, 1-75th Cav, removes a 120mm mortar round from one of many holes the Soldiers dug and found weapons hidden. (Photo by Spc. Kelly K. McDowell, 2nd BCT PAO)

# THE HEART



**Sgt. Michael Jillian, HHC 2nd Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, sits back in his lawn chair while watching the Soldiers in his scout platoon train on their weapons. (Photo by Spc. Kelly K. McDowell, 2nd BCT PAO)**



**Staff Sgt. Thomas Hines, Gunnery Sergeant, B Battery, 1st Battalion, 320th Field Artillery, instructs Pfc. Jack Gardner on aiming techniques. (Photo by Pfc. Kelly K. McDowell 2nd BCT PAO)**



**Soldiers in the "Lion's Den" lay down for some well deserved shut eye. (Photo by Spc. Kelly K. McDowell, 2nd BCTPAO)**



**Pvt. Brian Mchugh, HHC, 2nd Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, takes a moment to catch up on some reading while watching over his fellow Soldiers who try to catch a few moments of sleep after a day of filling sand bags in the "Lion's Den."**



**Soldiers stand by for three UH60 Helicopters to land on an airfield. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class David Schaul, HHC 2nd BCT)**

# Signs of holiday cheer in the hallways of Camp Striker

**M**ore and more signs of the season have appeared in the offices, tents and even the vehicles as the Holidays have quickly approached the Soldiers of 2nd Brigade Combat Team.

Every morning when the troops of HHC enter their building to begin the days work there are Christmas cards, gifts, candy and letters from all over America expressing their gratitude for the sacrifices the Soldiers are making for their country.

With Dec. 25 drawing closer more packages filled with decorations, ornaments, candycanes and presents are arriving for the Soldiers.

With each package a new decoration goes up in another office and even though the Soldiers are far away from home they are finding ways to enjoy the holiday season.

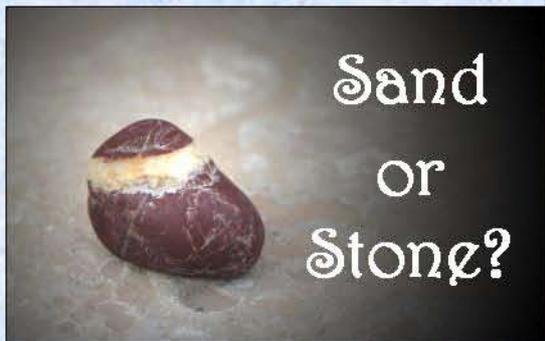
(Far right) Spc. Keeouka Williams, HHC, 2nd BCT enjoys a holiday card sent to the troops from a family in Utah. (Right) A Christmas tree sits on a fridge in the Fire Effects Coordination Cell office. (Below) A collection of holiday toys and a holiday card sit on a Soldier's desk. (Middle) A candycane and Christmas card brighten up the interior of an Army vehicle. (Below far right) Pfc. Michael Smith, HHC 2nd BCT, opens a water bottle from an elementary student filled with glitter, ribbons, candy straws and a personal note wishing who ever opens the bottle a happy holiday.



## Happy Holidays



# C h a p t e r . i n S C o r n e r



Sand  
or  
Stone?

A story tells that two friends were walking through the desert. In a specific point of the journey, they had an argument, and one friend slapped the other one in the face.

The one, who got slapped, was hurt, but without anything to say, he wrote in the sand: TODAY, MY BEST FRIEND SLAPPED ME IN THE FACE.

They kept on walking, until they found an oasis, where they decided to take a bath. The one who got slapped and hurt started drowning, and the other friend saved him.

When he recovered from the fright, he wrote on a stone:  
TODAY MY BEST FRIEND SAVED MY LIFE.

The friend who saved and slapped his best friend, asked him,  
"Why, after I hurt you, you wrote in the sand, and now you write on a stone?"

The other friend, smiling, replied:  
"When a friend hurts us, we should write it down in the sand, where the winds of forgiveness get in charge of erasing it away, and when something great happens, we should engrave it in the stone of the memory of the heart, where no wind can erase it."

Learn to write in the sand.

## A NOTE FROM THE COMMAND SERGEANT MAJOR

**S**oldiers, families and friends of-  
STRIKE,

Simplicity is a good practice. I state the obvious because I did not expect a Sergeants Major corner in this issue of the Heart Beat. Ill prepared is an understatement; Here's my inspirational message: "Thank You!"

I did mention simple, right?

Please understand this expression of gratitude is genuine. I say it every-day but rarely capitalize on the occasion for ALL to hear.

I cannot begin to acknowledge every Herculean task already tackled, nor those looming in the future. I can, however, state your efforts do not go unnoticed and I appreciate all the feats accomplished, no matter how small or large.

Thank you for your prayers, sacrifices, friendships and continued support for one another.

God Speed!

STRIKE 7



Story and photos by  
Spc. George Welcome

CAMP STRIKER, Iraq— In the United States Thanksgiving is traditionally a day when family and friends gather to reflect on the many blessings they received throughout the year.

On Thanksgiving morning, Soldiers from the “STRIKE” brigade continued that tradition by coming together to reflect and give thanks in a worship service held at the Camp Striker Chapel which started at 10 a.m.

In his opening address, “STRIKE” commander, Col. Todd Ebel, expressed the importance of being thankful, in spite of the difficult days the brigade has faced.

“A Soldier’s life can be very difficult and at the same time, it is in difficulty that it’s rewarding,” Ebel said. He also explained how the selfless spirit of Thanksgiving relates to the mission in Iraq. “We’re not asking for ourselves in Iraq. Our home is not in Iraq, our duty is in Iraq, our mission is in Iraq, to give back to people who have much less than us.”

After the invocation was given by brigade chaplain, Capt. Jimmy Nichols, the Camp Striker Gospel Choir performed a powerful rendition of the gospel standard, “He Is Wonderful”.

The sermon was given by visiting chaplain Lt. Col. James White, of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division. His message focused on the three reasons to give thanks. The first of these reasons was as White said, “It is the right thing to do.”

Chaplain White illustrated this point by telling

the story of some of the earliest settlers of the United States who had landed in Jamestown, Va. He explained how at the start of the brutal winter of 1609, the town had 609 inhabitants, but by the time the first ships had arrived in the spring of 1610, there were only 60 survivors. Instead of bemoaning their losses, the settlers came together to pay homage to God for meeting their needs.

The second reason to be thankful according to White is because thankfulness is “a prerequisite for worship.”

“Whining is an ungrateful act. It is the wrong thing to do,” said White. The preacher tells how things in life are rarely as bad as they seem, they just depend on our perspective. To further expand on the idea, he tells the tale of a married couple who live in a one room shack with their seven children. The family believes that they are in the worst of situations due to their poverty and overcrowded living condition, until their pastor suggests that they allow their “mangy” dog to live in the house with them for a couple of weeks. After time has elapsed and the nasty dog is placed back outdoors, the family is so happy he is gone with all his stink and filth that they have forgotten what they were initially complaining about.

At the end of his sermon, the chaplain gave the final reason to be thankful which was,

“The gratitude attitude is necessary for good spiritual health.” In this, the congregation was told that if they stopped to take to time to count their blessings they would find that they had much to be thankful for.

Even so far away from home the true spirit of Thanksgiving was present at Camp Striker.

## Children (Continued from Pg. 5)

way down the street.

The elderly citizens in the town waved and sent polite greetings, while the younger adults just looked on, not knowing what to think of the joint Iraqi-American force scattered throughout the neighborhood. The children on the other hand lacked the adult's trepidation and they ran alongside and behind the Soldiers and the vehicle as if the piper had come to town. As they proceeded down the street a child asked a Soldier, "*Meestair*, chocolat?" A simple request for chocolate. Despite the language barrier, some things are universal.

The first stop for the vehicle was a large field which looked as if it was once used for farming. The vehicle hauled its cargo in a semi-circle, and then straightened out. A number of excited children crowded around hoping they would receive whatever treats were in the truck.

As the kids began to become a bit rowdy, the Iraqi soldiers hollered some commands, and for the most part the children listened. The kids were then lined up in single file, and each was handed a book bag from the Iraqi soldier sitting in the trailer.

Kids of all ages seemed to be coming out of nowhere. Some had no shoes and some wore clothes that were old and tattered. There were even children who brought along others, presumably their brothers and sisters, who were not much older than themselves to come and get the gifts.

This mission in the neighborhoods of Lutifiyah served some important purposes. First, it provided young Iraqi children with supplies they need for school, supplies their families don't have access to; secondly it established an American presence in the community, one based on goodwill and trust rather than fear and last but certainly not least, it gave the Iraqi army a chance to show its concern for the welfare of their countrymen and in turn boosted the citizens esteem in its fledgling army.

The Iraqi army presenting a positive image in the neighborhoods is an important issue that was stressed by Freyer.

"This is one of the first missions where we were with an Iraqi army element at squad level or higher," Freyer said. "The Iraqi army did a great job. It was a good hands on experience that they were able to show the community that they are here to help them."

Along with the showing of goodwill, the people of Lutifiyah have expressed their appreciation of increased military presence.

"A lot of the local sheiks have asked us to do more patrols, especially in this town since they have no police," said 1<sup>st</sup> Sgt. Mark Belda, of Alpha Company 1-502<sup>nd</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> Sgt. of 1-502<sup>nd</sup>'s MITT element. "Our presence helps keep down the criminal element."

When the Soldiers handed out the last book bag of the morning, they slowly walked down the dirt road that lead back toward the camp. As the last of the Soldiers made his way to the chipped concrete barricades that block traffic from the road, a throng of Iraqi children ran behind him and up to the others screaming, "*Meestair, meestair.*" With their arms outstretched they offered the Soldiers candy which they held in their small hands, a token of friendship and trust. Mission accomplished.

## Weapons (Continued from Pg. 4)

of the items are destroyed in place, he added.

The local Iraqi people are also helping to make a difference in eliminating the insurgency in their communities. Several citizens have provided Soldiers with assistance in finding IEDs and weapons caches.

"A lot of troops on the ground are getting local national support," said Foreman. "The local nationals are starting to feel more confident and safe. Instead of just taking the backseat, they are starting to take a more active role to help us help them."

While finding the IEDs and weapons caches may present its challenges, finding the men who plant and hide them can prove even more difficult

"Occasionally we find the people who are emplacing them, and occasionally we find the people who are triggering them," said Shaffer. "That's probably the hardest part of the whole job. It's easier to find the IED than to find the guy who put it there, but we have had some success in that."

There is little doubt that the Soldiers of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade Combat Team are effectively making Baghdad safe through their tireless efforts

"We are having an impact," exclaimed Shaffer. "Every time we find an IED we make an impact. Every time we find a cache, it limits the enemy's ability to fight us."

This undertaking of finding weapons and roadside bombs has been far from easy, as the STRIKE Brigade has suffered its share of casualties. Regardless of the degree of difficulty, the one thing that remains unchanged is Strike's resolve to complete its task: Destroy insurgents and their destructive tools wherever they may be and bring peace to the people of Iraq.



**Is photography a hobby of yours?**

**Do you like to write?**

Well, we are looking for a few good writers and photographers who would like to see their names in print.

If you know of any newsworthy events, have story ideas, questions or comments let your 2nd BCT Public Affairs team know.

If you have photographs of Soldiers from your unit during newsworthy events or just having fun, let us see them.

Call Voice Over IP 242 4372, visit us at the 2nd BCT HQ or email us at [strikepaairaq@yahoo.com](mailto:strikepaairaq@yahoo.com)



Working together  
for a better Iraq

