

# The Heart Beat

2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division  
Volume 1, Issue 3 December 15, 2005



## "No Bridge To Far"

"STRIKE" Destroys  
Key Enemy Crossing



Free Mail

To:

From:

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# STRIKE 6



## Pray for Peace

It has been said "love your neighbor and hate your enemy." One man has said, "love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you."

It is also said, any man that fears only for his own personal safety and is not willing to fight for something greater than himself, is a lowly creature kept safe only by the will of greater men who willingly choose to sacrifice for others.

I believe, no, I know, these "greater men" are our STRIKE Soldiers and families. We, all of us, support a unit that that fights on the very front line. We give freely all that we have at this very time so that others, many like us and many not, can live in peace.

Our thoughts are with our loved ones always, but especially during this holiday season. I feel no one values peace more than our STRIKE family. While in South Baghdad, Iraq, we appreciate all of the support we have received from family and friends back home. Letters, emails and packages received continue to brighten our days. We also continue to more than excel in our mission. Our STRIKE team is awesome.

Therefore, during this period when we celebrate many things and we celebrate the life of one man that sacrificed for others, let us continue to pray for-

## Peace on Earth for all Good Men

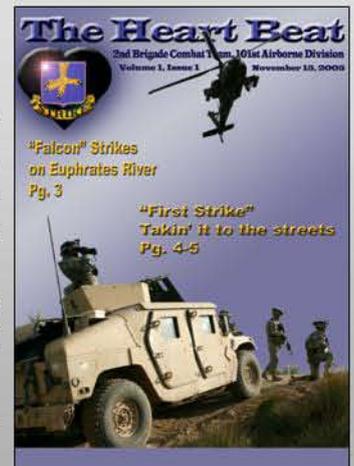
Sincerely,

Todd Ebel

STRIKE 6

### Cover Art:

C Co. 2-502nd INF sets up a blocking position as part of the outer cordon during Operation Wishbone. Operation Wishbone was an extreme success finding multiple weapons caches and resulting in the capture of two suspected terrorists. (Photo by 2nd Lt. Paul Fisher)



# No Bridge To Far: "STRIKE" Destroys Key Enemy Crossing

Story by 2nd BCT Staff

Photos by 2nd Lt. Paul Fisher

BAGHDAD, Iraq-- It was a cool evening in Iraq, which didn't affect the Soldiers of 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 502<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Regiment in the slightest. C Co. 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 502 Infantry Regiment, HHC 2-502 INF and 447 Explosive Ordnance Disposal team were more than motivated to go on a high risk mission appropriately dubbed "Operation Wishbone."

Upon arrival on the airfield where staging had began for the operation, all you could hear is hollering, the sound of a motivated infantryman. The assault started in the darkness and ended in darkness. All the fun happened during the day.

Flying over the city in Chinooks these true blue warriors had nothing else on their mind than the mission at hand. Secure this island, find some caches, find the people who own the caches and ultimately save American and Iraqi lives.

"We went in to clear the island mainly searching for any caches or possible spots that the AIF stage or plan operations," said Capt. Al Vigilante, C Co. Commander.

Within fifteen minutes of arriving on the ground HHC, 2-502 INF, seized a target house and the first weapons cache was found inside.

The island was ready to be swept. Daylight had arrived and the soldiers of C co., 2-502 INF, were already sweeping this island for weapons possibly used for insurgent activity. All you could hear throughout the island were loud yells, "I found one," and EOD would react immediately.

The Soldiers were sweeping an island no more than two kilometers long by five hundred meters wide, yet there were more weapons caches on this little piece of land than most of them had ever seen before patrolling miles and miles of terrain.

This company of infantryman was already more successful than what had been expected, but there was more to do. The people who knew of this island still had to be found. The obvious places to look were the few residences nearby. Within minutes C Co. had searched the houses and found the answer they were looking for.

They not only captured all weapons and ammunitions on the island, but the suspected terrorists that worked there. What C Co. found was more than a weapons cache, it was exactly 11 500-pound bomb shells, C4 explosives, welding equipment, mortar rounds, miscellaneous bomb making material, 57mm rockets, 40 bags of HME., 12 shape charges, 5 155mm rounds, 100 feet of detonation cord, 3 rocket propelled grenades, 8 bags of 20mm rounds, suicide

Story continued on Pg. 11 see FALCON



## Feature Photo

This issues photos are courtesy of  
2nd Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment

SPC Abbaker Mudir, takes a break from his normal duty of a US Army Interpreter for 2d Battalion, 502d Infantry Regiment to assist his Headquarters Company in improving force protection and fighting positions at a Patrol Base in South West Baghdad.

# “First Strike” Takin’ it to

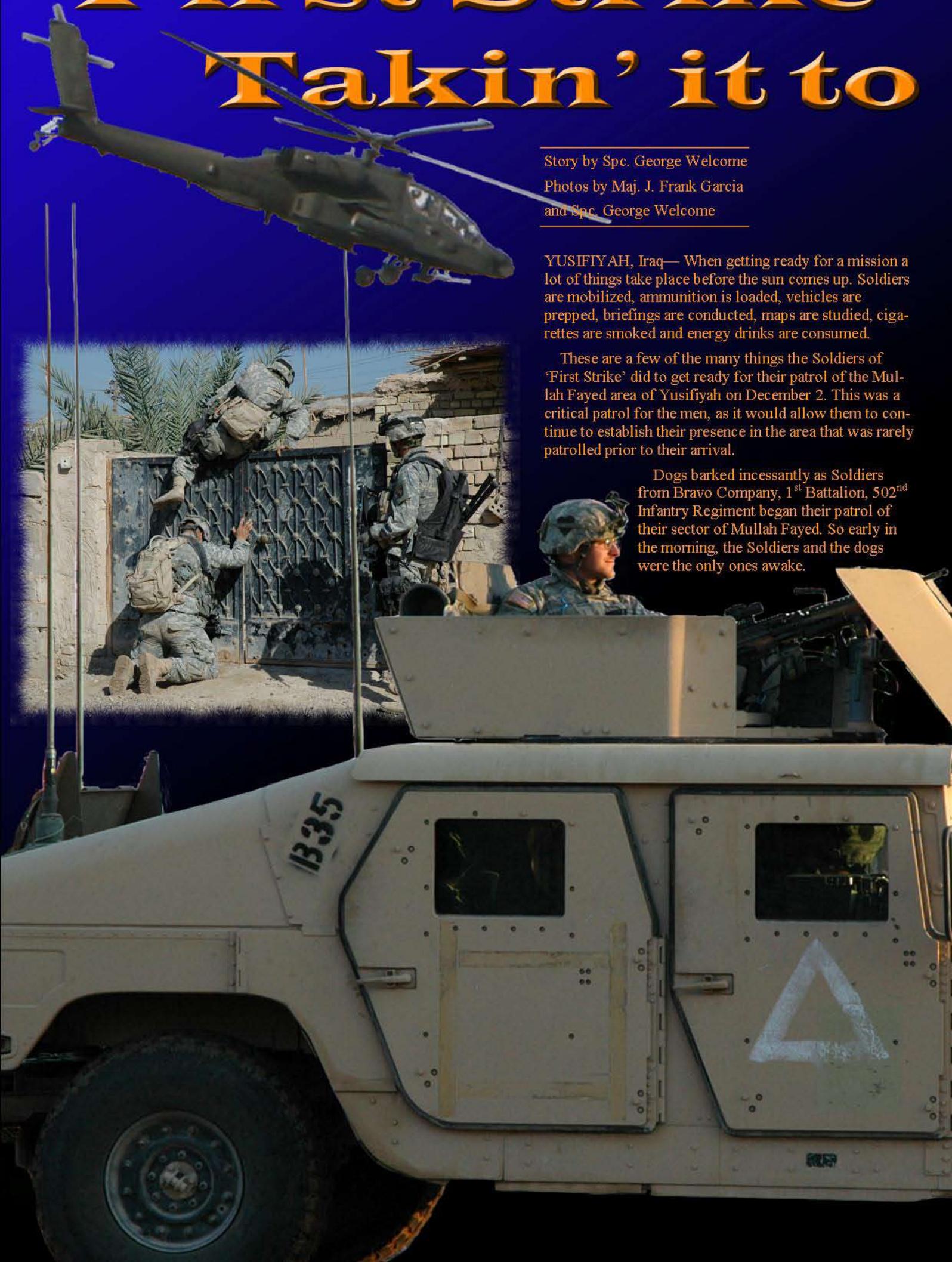
Story by Spc. George Welcome

Photos by Maj. J. Frank Garcia  
and Spc. George Welcome

YUSIFIYAH, Iraq— When getting ready for a mission a lot of things take place before the sun comes up. Soldiers are mobilized, ammunition is loaded, vehicles are prepped, briefings are conducted, maps are studied, cigarettes are smoked and energy drinks are consumed.

These are a few of the many things the Soldiers of ‘First Strike’ did to get ready for their patrol of the Mullah Fayed area of Yusifiyah on December 2. This was a critical patrol for the men, as it would allow them to continue to establish their presence in the area that was rarely patrolled prior to their arrival.

Dogs barked incessantly as Soldiers from Bravo Company, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 502<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Regiment began their patrol of their sector of Mullah Fayed. So early in the morning, the Soldiers and the dogs were the only ones awake.



# the streets

M-1114s were tactically dispersed and cordoned off the area to provide the Soldiers with security from anyone who might be trying to access the sector.

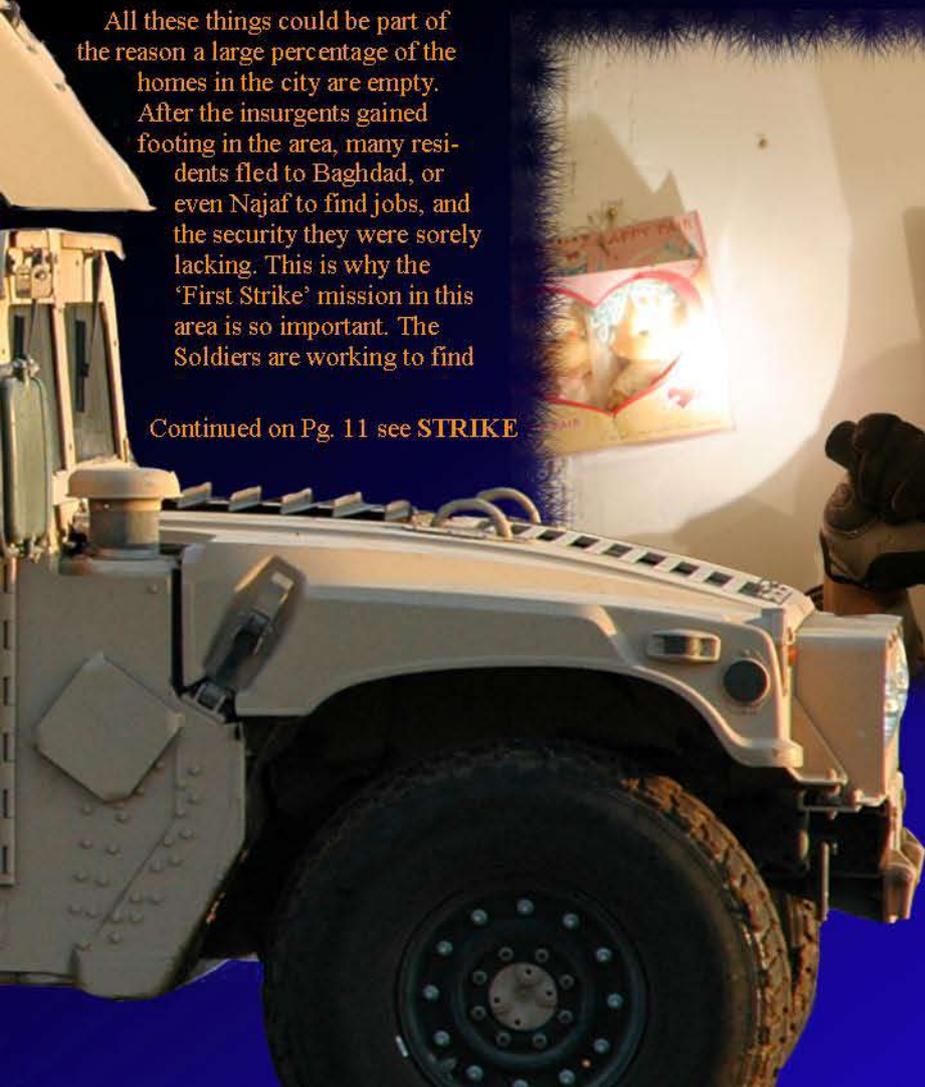
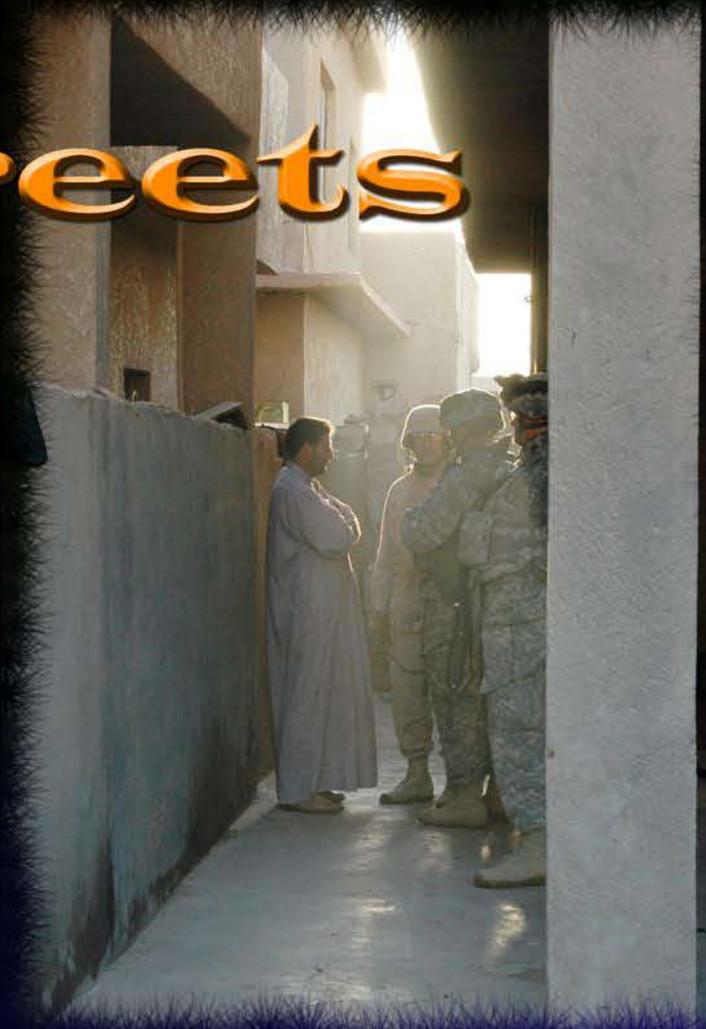
The mission was what is called a 'cordon and knock'. In this, the perimeter of an area is secured, usually by Soldiers manning machine guns in vehicles, while the Soldiers who are performing the patrol go from house to house conducting searches.

"The purpose of today's mission was to conduct a cordon and knock and see if we could apprehend some insurgents that may have been in the area," said Sgt. Kenneth Casica, a team leader in 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon. "We want these folks to realize that we are here to help them," he said of the city's residents.

By any standard, Mullah Fayed is an impoverished city. In fact, to call it such may be an understatement. Sanitation services are non-existent as garbage is strewn all about. Bare-footed children play in vacant lots overgrown with weeds. The numerous rocks and animal droppings would seem to make such play difficult, yet the kids manage to enjoy themselves, as this environment is all they know. Sad-faced dogs wander the streets, left behind by their owners. In one strange scene, a donkey perused the yard of an abandoned house for food with its companion, a mangy-looking dog. After an unsuccessful search, the pair makes their exit.

All these things could be part of the reason a large percentage of the homes in the city are empty. After the insurgents gained footing in the area, many residents fled to Baghdad, or even Najaf to find jobs, and the security they were sorely lacking. This is why the 'First Strike' mission in this area is so important. The Soldiers are working to find

Continued on Pg. 11 see **STRIKE**



(Top left) Three Soldiers climb a locked gate to search the residence. (Middle) A Soldier stands guard in the gunner position of a vehicle while a patrol secures the streets. (Top right) Soldiers speak to an Iraqi local national during a security patrol. (Photos by Maj. F. Jose Garcia, 2nd BCT PAO) (Above) A Soldier inspects the interior of an Iraqi citizens house. (Photo by Spc. George Welcome.)

# Camp Striker welcomes a taste of home

By Spc. George Welcome  
2nd BCT PAO

CAMP STRIKER, Iraq— Continuing in their ongoing quest to bring some of the comforts of home to Camp Striker, The Mayor's Cell in conjunction with AAFES has brought Pizza Hut to the camp.

The new Pizza Hut which operates out of a trailer across from the Burger King trailer is expected to be a big hit for the Soldiers stationed on Striker.

"The mayor's cell requested a fast food restaurant through Multi-National Corp Iraq, to help improve morale," said Wendy Six, manager of the Camp Striker Post Exchange.

"I think it's going to be pretty busy," said Six. "I know the only other Pizza Hut we have is over on Victory and they do really well over there."

While the menu will not be as expansive as a Pizza Hut back in the states, due mostly to the size of the trailer, a small slice of home beats none.

"We're starting off slow at first because it is a trailer and not a full sized building," Six said. "We are going to start out with the small to medium size pizzas and were going to carry some of the appetizers such as the wings and potato wedges. We are also going to bring in the garlic bread."

Now Soldiers at Camp Striker have another way besides the Dining Facility and Burger King to satisfy their appetites. After all, can anyone resist all that cheesy goodness that the new Pizza Hut will surely provide?

"PRIDE IS  
CONTAGIOUS,  
IT'S AN INFECTIOUS  
DISEASE  
WE CAN LIVE WITH"

2nd BCT Com. Sgt. Major  
Brian Stall **STRIKE7**



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)

# A SOLDIERS CHRISTMAS

'T WAS THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS  
HE LIVED ALL ALONE,  
IN A ONE BEDROOM HOUSE  
MADE OF PLASTER AND STONE.  
I HAD COME DOWN THE CHIMNEY  
WITH PRESENTS TO GIVE,  
AND TO SEE JUST WHO  
IN THIS HOME DID LIVE.  
I LOOKED ALL ABOUT,  
A STRANGE SIGHT I DID SEE,  
NO TINSEL, NO PRESENTS,  
NOT EVEN A TREE.  
NO STOCKING BY MANTLE,  
JUST BOOTS FILLED WITH SAND,  
ON THE WALL HUNG PICTURES  
OF FAR DISTANT LANDS,  
WITH MEDALS AND BADGES,  
AWARDS OF ALL KINDS,  
A SOBER THOUGHT  
CAME THROUGH MY MIND.  
FOR THIS HOUSE WAS DIFFERENT,  
IT WAS DARK AND DREARY,  
I FOUND THE HOME OF A SOLDIER,  
ONCE I COULD SEE CLEARLY.  
THE SOLDIER LAY SLEEPING,  
SILENT, ALONE,  
CURLED UP ON THE FLOOR  
IN THIS ONE BEDROOM HOME.  
THE FACE WAS SO GENTLE,  
THE ROOM IN SUCH DISORDER,  
NOT HOW I PICTURED  
A UNITED STATES SOLDIER.  
WAS THIS THE HERO  
OF WHOM I'D JUST READ?  
CURLED UP ON A PONCHO,  
THE FLOOR FOR A BED?  
I REALIZED THE FAMILIES  
THAT I SAW THIS NIGHT,  
OWED THEIR LIVES TO THESE SOLDIERS  
WHO WERE WILLING TO FIGHT.



SOON ROUND THE WORLD,  
THE CHILDREN WOULD PLAY,  
AND GROWNUPS WOULD CELEBRATE  
A BRIGHT CHRISTMAS DAY.  
THEY ALL ENJOYED FREEDOM  
EACH MONTH OF THE YEAR,  
BECAUSE OF THE SOLDIERS,  
LIKE THE ONE LYING HERE.  
I COULDN'T HELP WONDER  
HOW MANY LAY ALONE,  
ON A COLD CHRISTMAS EVE  
IN A LAND FAR FROM HOME.  
THE VERY THOUGHT  
BROUGHT A TEAR TO MY EYE,  
I DROPPED TO MY KNEES  
AND STARTED TO CRY.  
THE SOLDIER AWAKENED  
AND I HEARD A ROUGH VOICE,  
"SANTA DON'T CRY,  
THIS LIFE IS MY CHOICE;  
I FIGHT FOR FREEDOM,  
I DON'T ASK FOR MORE,  
MY LIFE IS MY GOD,  
MY COUNTRY, MY CORPS."  
THE SOLDIER ROLLED OVER  
AND DRIFTED TO SLEEP,  
I COULDN'T CONTROL IT,  
I CONTINUED TO WEEP.  
I KEPT WATCH FOR HOURS,  
SO SILENT AND STILL  
AND WE BOTH SHIVERED  
FROM THE COLD NIGHT'S CHILL.  
I DIDN'T WANT TO LEAVE  
ON THAT COLD, DARK, NIGHT,  
THIS GUARDIAN OF HONOR  
SO WILLING TO FIGHT.  
THEN THE SOLDIER ROLLED OVER,  
WITH A VOICE SOFT AND PURE,  
WHISPERED, "CARRY ON SANTA,  
IT'S CHRISTMAS DAY, ALL IS SECURE."  
ONE LOOK AT MY WATCH,  
AND I KNEW HE WAS RIGHT.  
"MERRY CHRISTMAS MY FRIEND,  
AND TO ALL A GOOD NIGHT."

This poem was written by a Marine  
stationed in Okinawa Japan.





# FACES OF

**SSG MARIO BIEVRE  
AND SPC JOSEPH  
MCGRAW BOTH LEADERS  
FROM CHARLIE COMPANY,  
2D BATTALION, 502D INFANTRY  
REGIMENT DISTRIBUTE HUMANITARIAN  
AID TO FAMILIES IN SOUTHWEST BAGHDAD**



11/23/2005

**LTC ROB HAYCOCK, COMMANDER OF  
2-502 INF REGT AND COL ALL, COMMANDER  
OF 3/4/6 IRAQI ARMY SERVE THANKSGIVING  
DINNER TOGETHER TO US AND COALITION  
FORCES AT A PATROL BASE IN  
SOUTHWEST BAGHDAD.**



**FIRST SERGEANT CREGG CANNON CHARLIE  
COMPANY 2-502 INF REGT SUPERVISES  
THE EMPLACEMENT BARRIERS TO PROTECT  
VOTERS AND COALITION FORCES  
IN THE UPCOMING ELECTIONS IN  
SOUTHWEST BAGHDAD. (NOVEMBER 2005)**

# THE HEART



**A MEDIC ASSIGNED WITH 2-502ND IN TREATS A SMALL IRAQI CHILD DURING AN AIR ASSAULT MISSION NOV. 28. (PHOTO BY 2ND LT. PAUL FISHER, 2ND BCT PAO)**

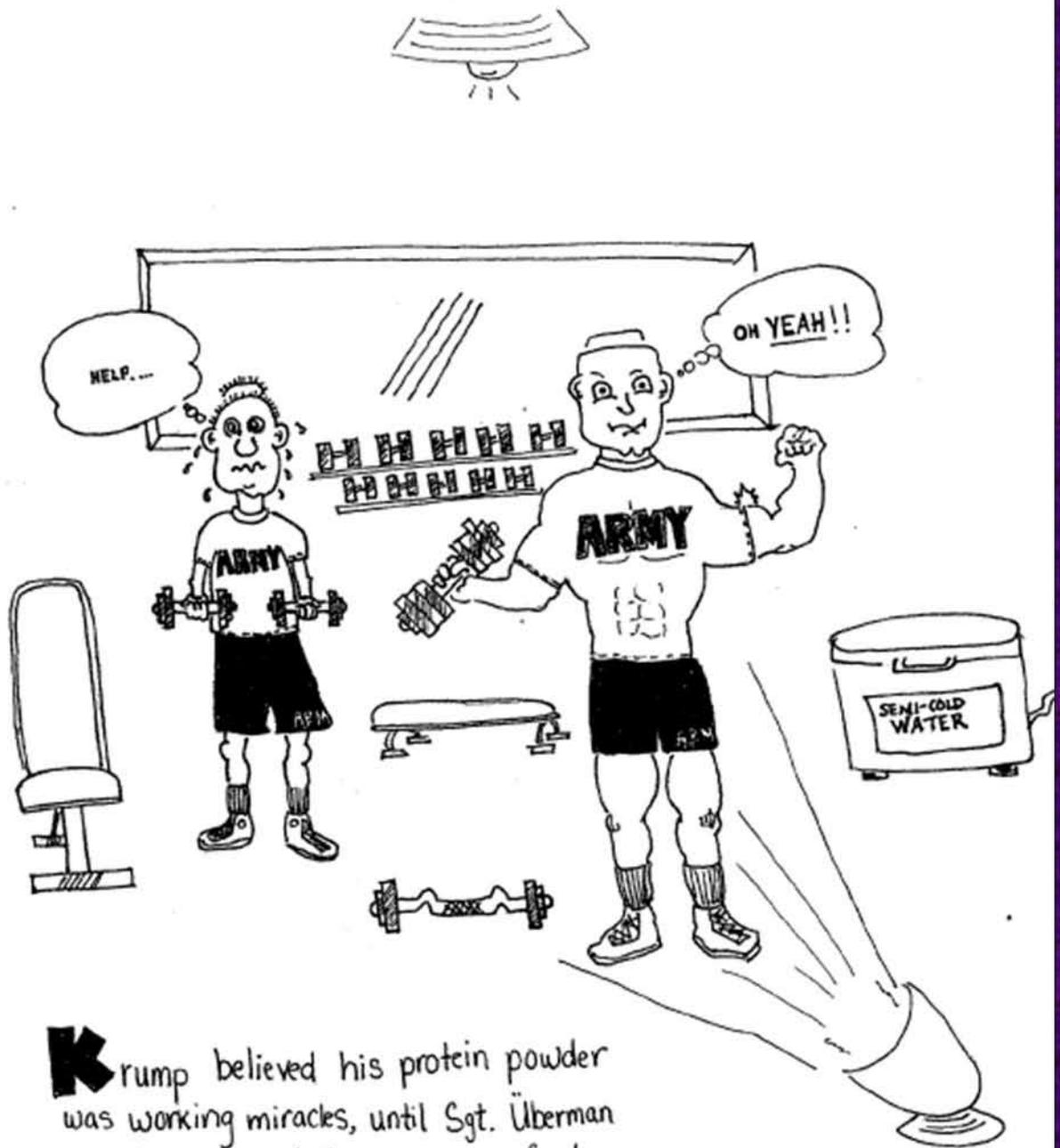


**SOLDIERS WITH 2-502ND IN CARRY WEAPONS AND MUNITIONS FOUND IN A WEAPONS CACHE DURING AND AIRASSAULT MISSION NOV. 28. (PHOTO BY 2ND LT. PAUL FISHER 2ND BCT PAO)**



**CAMP STRIKER "MAYOR" LT. COL. CHEESEBOROUGH PRESENTS MAJ. ALFONSO PLUMMER WITH THE "KEY" TO THE CAMP. (PHOTO BY SPC. KELLY K. MCDOWELL 2ND BCT PAO)**

# Roger That



**K**rump believed his protein powder was working miracles, until Sgt. Überman came in. Too bad there are no refunds on sale items at the PX.

A Cartoon by Spc. George Welcome

## FALCON (Continued from Pg. 3)

vests, IED construction equipment and an assortment of other weapons and munitions.

“Today’s mission went very well just by the sheer amount of explosives and detonation equipment that we found today,” said Vigilante.

Once all the sweeping was done and the suspected terrorists were captured, it was time to start putting together the munitions for EOD to do what they do best. Soldiers began picking up the rounds and arranging them in such a way that the detonation would destroy every round without effecting the surrounding area.

This island also had one way on and off, the bridge. The bridge had to be blown too; EOD didn’t mind taking on the extra task. The only way to end this wonderful day was with a boom, and that’s what EOD planned to do.

The three massive blasts had everyone in awe. First went the first cache that was found, next the bridge, and finally the massive cache fell to the magic of Explosive Ordnance Disposal.

“We’re showing them that we’re going after AIF in Iraq to make the area much safer that they are living in,” Vigilante said speaking about the local nationals in Iraq

The Soldiers of C Co. 2-502 INF, HHC 2-502 INF, and 447 EOD had spent less than 24 hours on the island and saved countless American and Iraqi lives, they are true

*(Below) A C Co. Soldier provides security inside a house during the island raid. Inside the house C Co. found the first of three massive caches during Operation Wishbone. (Photo by 2nd Lt. Paul Fisher)*



## STRIKE (Continued from

ways to destroy the insurgents, which in large part provides the security the people of Mullah Fayed have long missed.

In order to stabilize the area, the Soldiers and the citizens must have a basic trust, which is why during the patrol, the men took care in searching people’s homes.

The Soldiers searched for weapons, IED-making materials and any anti-coalition or anti-Iraqi forces propaganda. The searches that were conducted were thorough, yet the Soldiers still respected people’s rights and their property. At some of the abandoned homes, padlocks had to be shot off so that the Soldiers could gain access for their search. For each lock shot off, the men filled out and left a claim form that would allow the owner to be reimbursed for the broken item.

Conducting the searches in this manner did not limit their effectiveness; in it goes a long way in cultivating that fragile trust.

“This was nothing like a big raid where you go into a house and start breaking things,” said Casica. “We just asked people to open cabinets and looked around in their things. We don’t want to make more enemies than we already have.”

As the searches continued, it became obvious to the Soldiers that they probably would not find anything they were looking for, but the mission continued. Some of the Soldiers were surprised at how relatively uneventful the day was.

“We succeeded in clearing Mullah Fayed, but it’s kind of disappointing that we didn’t find anything,” said Private 1<sup>st</sup> Class Steven Green. “I was surprised by how many people weren’t home, but the ones who were there were submissive and let us look through their things.”

Even though the Soldiers of Bravo Company were slightly disappointed that they were not able to find any weapons or insurgents, they accomplished an equally important mission: creating a climate of fear for insurgents. The Soldiers do realize that their presence helps reduce the chance of the insurgency gaining a stronghold in the city.

“I feel that our patrols make a difference,” said Casica. “I guess the patrols make the insurgents nervous because they know that we know they are in the area, and we’ll push them out of this area to make the people feel safe.”

After nearly 13 hours on the streets of Mullah Fayed, the Soldiers of Bravo Company cleared the last house in their sector. Although they considered this just a routine operation, their effort was far beyond typical. It was a long successful day for the Soldiers but they know that more patrols awaited them the next day. When responsible for maintaining the peace of a city and eliminating the forces of evil, there is no such thing as a day off.

GOD BLESS AMERICA



"History will be kind to me for I intend to write it,"

-Winston Churchill