

# "The Club"



The Official Newsletter of the 1st Brigade Combat Team

## Wishing a Bastogne Christmas

December 1944, and Soldiers of the 327th Infantry Regiment found themselves manning icy foxholes around the city of Bastogne, Belgium. Hitler had just launched a desperate offensive to throw the allies off balance. Though surrounded by a German force superior in numbers to those valiantly defending the city, when the offer of surrender came in from the commander of German forces, the 101st's acting Division Commander Brigadier General Anthony McAuliffe answered with a simple determined "Nuts." Bastogne Soldiers fought determinedly and on

December 26th the siege was broken, and the citizens of

Bastogne were liberated.

Now, sixty-one years later, Bastogne Soldiers find themselves manning sandy foxholes in the heat of Northern Iraq, training and fighting alongside Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) in defense of the region.

Insurgents continue their desperate use of violence to thwart the spread of democracy and destroy stability.

Though surrounded by the threat of terror and the ever present possibility of attack, by their vote on December 15th the brave men and women of this region have responded to those seeking to disrupt the peace process and thwart the growth of democracy in Iraq with their own sim-

ple determined answer of "Nuts." Once again, Soldier's of the Bastogne Brigade celebrate the Christmas season leaning forward in the foxhole defending freedom.

These are truly exciting times. Every day we see the values of democracy and the spirit of liberty take hold as we turn more responsibility in the region back over to the Iraqi government and the brave men of the ISF. With this most recent vote, the people of Iraq have a government that will lead them through the next

stages of development; another mission accomplished as the

Bastogne Brigade continues its rendezvous with destiny.

Our Soldiers - your husbands, wives, sons, daughters, brothers, and sisters - are doing a magnificent job!

I share your great pride in their achievements. During this precious holiday season,

I ask you to remember our Soldiers in your thoughts and prayers.

God bless each of you.  
Have a Happy Holiday Season!  
Bastogne!  
Air Assault!  
Colonel David Gray



1st BCT Commander:  
Col. David R. Gray

## FOB Warrior Enjoys Holiday Concert

By: Spc. Michael Pfaff  
133rd MPAD

The 101st Airborne Division band is spreading holiday cheer and lifting spirits by departing from the typical marching band sound and playing contemporary songs for Soldiers at forward operating bases.

"We don't want to come here and play all the patriotic marches you would hear at a change of command ceremony," said Sgt. David Casper, a vocalist in the band "So, what we do is modify ourselves a little bit and we put together different types of bands."

Recently at FOB Warrior Soldiers had a chance to experience a rhythm and blues, funk band with a horn section. The show included popular songs ranging from rockabilly version of Van Morrison's "Brown Eyed Girl" to the high-pitched, must-dance "Kiss" originally performed

by Prince.

The band doesn't limit itself to one particular genre of music though, Casper said.

"The army band has a lot of versatility," Casper said. "We try to figure out what type of music is best for the venue and we go and bring that band."

"We saw people singing along with us, some people were dancing, and they're laughing with us," Casper said. "We all like to listen to our music loud, and bob our heads for a little bit, and get that party atmosphere. You aren't able to have that too much out here, so sometimes it's nice to put some music in the air and get people bobbing their heads."

Pfc. Hillary Doody, one of the newest vocalists to the band got the audience bobbing their heads during a rendition of "All I Want for Christmas Is You."

The band played three holiday songs

during the show, and as the holidays near they plan to integrate more holiday music into the performance, Casper said.

"We're trying to spread a little Christmas cheer," Casper said. "We want to just remind the Soldiers out here that it is the holiday times and even though they're out here you can still have the feeling in the air."

Doody said she believes that during the holidays the band's performances are especially important because of the impact on morale.

The band is going to continue making a difference as it gears up for several holiday performances, said Kendrick. This holiday the band's mission is to bring a little piece of home to Soldiers.

"One soldier told me at [Forward Operating Base] McHenry, 'for a moment I forgot I was out here'," said Kendrick. "And, when a soldier tells me that, we accomplished the mission."

## Combat Engineers Train Iraqi Soldiers Soldiers Teach Route Clearance Tactics

By: Spc. Barbara Ospina  
1st BCT Public Affairs

Combat engineers, from Company A, 1st Special Troops Battalion of the 1st Brigade Combat Team completed the final step in training Iraqi soldiers on route clearance techniques as part of supporting efforts of training the Iraqi Army to be self-sustaining for their country, at the Kirkuk Iraqi Military Training Base on December 6.

According to Sgt. Steve Magness, a squad leader in Company A, thorough training is only one step towards Iraqi soldiers working with the combat engineers in joint route clearance operations whenever a potential threat arises.

With improvised explosive device (IED) being the largest threat towards U.S. Forces, Iraqi citizens, and Iraqi Security Forces, training on route clearance is considered to be a necessary specialty in the overall operation of helping structure the Iraqi Security Forces.

The Iraqi unit commander selected the Iraqi soldiers from a former Iraqi bomb squad, the group volunteered to learn and conduct route clearance missions.

The training at the Kirkuk base consisted of several days full of classroom instruction, including classes on IED awareness, patrolling and weapons familiarization. The lessons learned in each

class were reinforced by hands-on exercises.

"Some of the Iraqi soldiers picked up on the material better than others," said Staff Sgt. Kevin Buras, a squad leader in the combat engineer company. "But, just like with anything else, you always catch on faster when you go out and do it."

Beginning each day with a quick refresher helped the Iraqi soldiers memorize the tactics that they will soon be employing.

The final day of class began with a quick oral review during which the Iraqi soldiers were quizzed on all the information they were taught over the past two weeks. Similar to young students, some, enthused by knowing the answer, blurted it out, while others simply raised their hands and waited to be called upon.

Once the Soldiers were confident in the trainees' knowledge, instructors and students alike loaded into U.S. tactical vehicles as one team and started practicing battle drills from previous classes.

Each one of the Iraqi soldiers completed the battle drills and smiled with confidence as they rolled out of the secured perimeter of their Kirkuk base to join the Soldiers in an hour long route clearance mission.

Upon their return, the Iraqi soldiers attended an after action review, comment-



Photo By: Spc. Barbara Ospina

Sergeant Steve Magness from the combat engineer company stands with an Iraqi soldier after completing a training exercise on searching tactics.

ing that they were ready to go out and help.

Following the Iraqi soldiers graduation on December 10, the recently trained team will go out on all route clearance missions as full-fledged members of the team. "Basically they will be our fourth squad," commented Buras.

## A "No Slack" Christmas

"*Silent night, holy night...*" the words of this Christmas carol exemplify the emotions that people of any religion feel for the Christmas holiday. Since September 2001, almost all the members of *No Slack* have spent every Christmas either preparing for combat or deployed in support of our nation's war on global terrorism. Although the holidays are less enjoyable without friends and family, and the normal trappings of festivities, the Soldiers of *No Slack* are dedicated to their mission.

It takes a special American to take on this mission. These Americans are found in the *No Slack* battalion. The Soldiers of *No Slack* understand that there are things more important than one self, indeed that there are values more important than life itself. What *No Slack* Soldiers have learned is that someone has to stand guard, has to remain vigilant, and has to sacrifice comfort, yet never be jealous of those who have chosen an easier path. Understanding this and accepting this are what will



The "No Slack" Motto as displayed in Iraq, 2005

make every subsequent Christmas holiday spent in peace that much more valuable. So on this most holy of

holidays, we thank the families who support the Soldiers of *No Slack*. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

## “Bulldogs” Attend Al Bassi Meeting

By: Spc. Barbara Ospina  
1st BCT Public Affairs

During their deployment to Iraq Soldiers of 2nd Platoon, Company A, 1st Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment are pushing to make a difference in the city of Al Bassi.

The city, like many others in the area, boasts a weekly city council meeting at which civil leaders and eight Mukhtars (religious leaders) from throughout the city come together to discuss infrastructure issues and to voice common concerns for the public.

Before the meeting, the Soldiers make a short stop to pick up members of the Iraqi Police in order to conduct a joint search and clearing of the city council building. The Iraqi police provide the primary security during the meeting.

“It’s good that they are providing their own security,” said Sgt. Andrew Becker, a team leader for 2nd Plt. “Part of the reason we’re here is to help the Iraqi’s help themselves.”

Second Lt. Tom Koh, the platoon leader, uses the meeting to help resolve



Photo By: Spc. Barbara Ospina

Soldiers of 2nd Platoon Company A, 1st Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment exit an Al Bassi City Council meeting in hopes of improvement for the city.

security issues within the area.

During their discussions leaders insist that their city is safe, and has no insurgency, so showing evidence of attacks is a key element of the meeting for Koh.

“We don’t harass their towns, so when something happens we show them pictures proving that there are security issues within their cities,” Koh commented.

“The leaders have power, but do not want to take responsibility for what happens. It’s essential for the leaders to realize that we will not let our guard down until the towns have rid the security and insurgency threat.”

See *Al Bassi*...Pg 4



The picture above was taken in Bastogne, Belgium, on Christmas day 1944

## Chaplain’s Corner

### Merry Christmas, Bastogne!

We enter into this holiday season away from our family and loved ones at home but with a different type of family called a “Band of Brothers.”

The Bastogne Brigade was named after the heroic stand in Bastogne, Belgium demonstrated by the Screaming Eagle Division in December of 1944.

Many of you know about the great one word response given to the Germans by Gen. McAuliffe when they called for the surrender of our troops. Although surrounded and outnumbered, McAuliffe knew that this was important ground and he had no intention to surrender. His response was “Nuts!”

On Christmas Eve, McAuliffe visited with captured German prisoners and wished them well. He also shared with his own men the story about his response to the surrender demand, and he presented a Christmas message, a portion of which reads:

*What’s merry about all this, you ask? We’re fighting. It’s cold. We aren’t home. All true. But what has the proud [Screaming] Eagle Division accomplished with its worthy comrades...? Just this: We have stopped cold everything that has been thrown at us from the north, east, south and west...These units, spearheading the last desperate German lunge, were heading straight west for key points when the Eagle Division was hurriedly ordered to stem the advance. How effectively this was done will be written in history; not alone in our Division’s glorious history See **Chaplain**...Pg 5*

Find Your Soldier's  
**Holiday Greeting Video**  
on the 1st BCT  
FRG Website  
go to: [www.bastogne.armyfrg.org](http://www.bastogne.armyfrg.org)

# 1st Battalion Trains Iraqi Soldiers "Above The Rest"

Soldiers of the mortar platoon for 1st Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment are training Iraqi Army Soldiers of the Hawijah area to help advance their skills in close-combat and perform joint operations with U.S. Forces.

According to 2nd Lt. Jason Lathey, the mortar platoon leader for Headquarters, Headquarters Company, 1st Bn., 327th Inf. Rgt., a platoon of about 40 Iraqi soldiers arrives every Saturday and those who achieve the standard graduate the following Thursday.

The training begins at the individual level with each Iraqi soldier learning to aim, zero and qualify with their weapon.

"The Iraqi soldiers seemed frustrated at first, but once they started hitting the target they became more motivated about training," Lathey said.

The training progressed through the week from basic rifle marksmanship to a live fire cordon and search.

Once their weapons were on target, the Iraqi soldiers went through reflexive fire training, where Soldiers guided them through how to properly turn and when to raise their weapon for close quarters marksmanship teaching the Iraqi Soldiers how to maneuver when in close spaces such as rooms or buildings.

With live rounds marking the end of another training iteration, Iraqi soldiers stood above the shoot house on giant barriers allowing a clear view inside the house, while the mortar men stacked



Photo By: Spc. Barbara Ospina

A Soldier from the mortar platoon of HHC, 1st Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment discusses training with an Iraqi soldier.

along the outside and gave a demonstration of what the Iraqi soldiers were slowly working towards. After more by-the-number demonstrations, they conducted battle drills learning how to move as a four-person team through a mock house.

"The Iraqi soldiers definitely caught onto the shoot-house the fastest," Lathey commented. "Once they saw the demonstrations, the battle drills went pretty smoothly."

As the Iraqi soldiers were getting the rhythm of moving as a team down, squad movements came as a second nature and brought together how two teams flow through a house clearing as one element.

According to Lathey within five iterations each squad was qualified on the battle drills and moved on to dry fire iterations in the actual shoot house.

The platoon's training was complete

but the late afternoon graduation marked only the beginning of joint operations with U.S. Forces.

The graduating platoon will return to the Forward Operating Base the next Saturday to link up with an assigned company and help with upcoming missions. They will work side-by-side with Soldiers as they rid cities of insurgency, and slowly take over operations in their area.

According to Lathey, once all Iraqi soldiers in the area have completed the training the Battalion will possibly up the ante.

"Depending on operation performance, the Iraqi soldiers who have completed training will return for advanced training," Lathey said. "They will train techniques of dismount movements and patrols."

The Soldiers of the mortar platoon found that the toughest part of training the Iraqi soldiers was the language barrier between the two Armies. With three interpreters on the training sight at all times, including two speaking the area dialect, the difficulty became minor throughout the training.

With Iraqi soldiers training so proficiently Lathey believes that before the Battalion's deployment in Iraq is over they will be able to hand operations over to the Iraqi Army.

"The Iraqi Army has the potential to be a very strong independent army," Lathey stated strongly.



Left: Staff Sgt. Rhoads a Soldier in 2nd Platoon, Company A, 1st Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment, walks through an Iraqi Police Station to meet up with the Iraqi Police before heading to the Al Bassi City Council Building.

Photo By: Spc. Barbara Ospina

## *Al Bassi*

Koh and his men are not the only Soldiers who attend the meeting, Civil Affairs Soldiers, members of a tactical human intelligence team, and Psychological Operation Soldiers make appearances as well. According to Koh, the city is pretty run down and has a lot of water problems which U.S. Forces are trying to help the locals resolve without actually fixing the problem for them.

"When Civil Affairs is told about issues in the city, they will propose a solution and facilitate the council with resources from Kirkuk," Koh stated.

In the end, Koh felt that this meeting went well.

"They are getting a feel for how we operate opposed to the previous unit," Koh said. "They are realizing that we are serious about our job, and that we are not lying when we say that we will go anywhere, arrest anyone, and confiscate anything that is a threat to security."

# “No Slack” Maintains Traffic Control

By: Spc. Anna-Marie Risner  
133rd MPAD

Since 9/11, random vehicle searches at military installations across the United States have become routine — one that is often tiresome and annoying for those headed to work. But on the streets of Iraq, vehicle searches and traffic stops can mean the difference between life and death.

Soldiers with 2nd Platoon, Company C, 2nd Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment, assisted Iraqi Army soldiers in setting up and manning a traffic control point in Kirkuk, Iraq.

The point occupied a small stretch of road that has seen a considerable amount of terrorist activity.

Staff Sgt. Chad Kuck, 2nd Squad leader, said many of the issues found during the day’s mission had to do with identification. Iraqis are supposed to carry state-issued ID with them. One Soldier noted, however, that despite not finding anything directly related to recent incidents, the group’s show of force was just as important.

“It’s good to show a presence out there,” said Private Brian Brown, Co. C, 2-327. “[It shows] we are going to be checking.”

One reason for the joint mission is continuing training of the Iraqi Army. 1st BCT Soldiers will be mentoring and monitoring the country’s fighting forces over the next year. Another reason, according to Kuck, is to help instill self-reliance in the still-young military.

“They’re more confident when we go out with them,” he said. “[In addition] when we go out, we can see their strengths and weaknesses.”

Kuck added that the Iraqi soldiers have made drastic improvements in the years since the Screaming Eagles left from Operation Iraqi Freedom I, mentioning that one of the biggest strides has been in accountability of troops.

Brown added another benefit to training with the Iraqi soldiers falls to Coalition Forces. He noted that while American Soldiers teach Iraqis how to be a fighting force, the Iraqi troops teach U.S. forces about their culture, way of life and language which, although the biggest barrier for some, begins to wane as each side picks up words and phrases from the other.

Despite many differences, similarities between the groups abound, and are reflected with the successful completion of a mission.

“They want to help out their country and make it as peaceful as possible,” Brown said, “and we’re here doing the same.”



Photo By: Spc. Anna-Marie Risner

Staff Sgt. Chad Kuck, a squad leader for 2nd Platoon, Company C, 2nd Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment, observes as an Iraqi Army lieutenant searches the trunk of a vehicle at a Traffic Control Point in Kirkuk, Iraq.

## Chaplain...

*but in world history. The Germans actually did surround us, their radios blared our doom. Allied troops are counterattacking in force. We continue to hold Bastogne. By holding Bastogne we assure the success of the Allied armies.*

On the 26th of December Gen. Patton was able to break through to Bastogne and the Germans began to fall back. The Soldiers holding Bastogne were thankful for the support but were willing to stand and defend even without the support.

Shortly after this, Bastogne Soldiers were tasked to seize several Belgian villages, and they accomplished this task just as they would have after a period of rest and recuperation. The fighting spirit that was seen in the Soldiers of Bastogne is very much alive in the faces of our Soldiers today. The faces of our enemy and strategies have changed drastically, but the heart of the Bastogne Soldier remains. Every time you proudly salute with “Bastogne” remember the pride and spirit of every Bastogne Soldier that has worn the Screaming Eagle patch before you. During this holiday season, you might even add “Merry Christmas Bastogne” as your greeting. Have a Merry Christmas & Blessed Holiday Season from your 1st BCT Unit Ministry Teams.

**“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble...”**

**(2 Corinthians 1:3-4)**

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Soldiers of 2nd Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment pass along 82mm mortar rounds as the 506th Air Expeditionary Group's Explosive Ordnance Disposal Flight continues to dig up rounds. Once the whole cache was extracted from the ground it totaled 15 tons.

Photo By: Spc. Barbara Ospina

## Massive Weapons Cache Discovered

By: Spc. Barbara Ospina  
1st BCT Public Affairs

With a single report from the Iraqi Army, and a little help from Soldiers of Company A, 2nd Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment, the Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) unit at Forward Operating Base (FOB) Warrior, removed approximately 4,222 TNT filled mortar rounds and more than 950 fuses near the city of Kirkuk November 27.

According to Tech. Sgt. Jennifer Wayne, an EOD team chief at the discovery site, Iraqi soldiers had loaded their vehicle with approximately 800 rounds before realizing the cache was larger than expected, so they called in a report to U.S. Forces.

The hefty load of 82 mm rounds was removed from a single mound of dirt in a field filled with similar mounds. The loose piles of dirt covered concrete blocks which were used to shield and protect the rounds, and the fuses that make the ammunition come to life.

Several 122 mm mortar rounds and a 130 mm round were unearthed along with the main cache.

Before the disposal of weapons or explosives, EOD Soldiers stockpile their findings until they have accumulated an

amount of material sufficient enough to destroy using explosives. The last controlled detonation involved 2,500 pounds of material that was discovered over a two month period. This find totaled nearly 3,631 pounds in just two days.

Wayne believes the cache, the largest she has seen during her time in Iraq, was placed fairly recently.

"I don't think it has been there long," Wayne commented. "The rounds were found underneath very loose dirt, if it had gone through a rainy season [two months of constant rain] it wouldn't be like that." According to Wayne it took some time to

figure out exactly where the rounds came from. The Chinese-made rounds were painted over to look like Iraqi rounds.

"The Iraqi's painted their own markings over the rounds," agreed Staff Sgt. Ronnie Brickey, a member of the EOD unit. "The paint markings were somewhat shiny and un-faded, which gives us another reason to believe the cache hasn't been their long."

Following the two days of digging, counting, and loading, Wayne was satisfied with the discovery.

"It was a good find, I'm glad we found it over someone else," Wayne said gratefully. "All those rounds are potential improvised explosive devices (IEDs); we just stopped that many more IEDs."

Staff Sgt. Ronnie Brickey from the 506th AEG, EOD Flight loads mortar rounds one by one keeping a close count.

Photo By:  
Spc. Barbara Ospina





# The Cache Finale

Members of the Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) flight, from the 506th Air Expeditionary Group destroyed a massive weapons cache outside Forward Operating Base (FOB) Warrior December 5. The cache, consisting of more than 4,200 mortar rounds and 950 fuses, and weighing more than 15 tons, was initially discovered buried in the ground just outside Kirkuk by Iraqi Army soldiers on November 27. Once the Iraqi soldiers began digging, they quickly realized the cache was much larger than expected and they called U.S. Forces from the 101st Airborne Division's 1st Brigade Combat Team for reinforcements. The cache took two full days of combined effort to unearth. Soldiers from Company A, 2nd Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment provided convoy and area security for the EOD unit as they rolled outside the secured perimeter of FOB Warrior hauling the weapons cache and 1,800 pounds of C-4 explosives. The three hour preparation for the 30-second explosion consisted of separating the cache into two masses approximately 25 meters apart. The wooden boxes holding all the confiscated ammunition were set side-by-side and then covered with the slender bars of C-4. Immediately thereafter, the words "fire in the hole" carried across the vast dirt range. As the words faded, an orange ball of fire erupted from the ground spitting up a mushroom cloud of smoke and dust. Ten seconds barely passed before the command was given once more, and a second blast roared skyward following the same pattern of the first. Though the cache took many long hours to gather, in less than a minute the threat of these munitions being used against Iraqi Security Forces, innocent Iraqi citizens, or U.S. Forces was terminated. "It was a good find, I'm glad the Iraqi Army found it over someone else," said Tech. Sgt. Jennifer Wayne, an EOD team chief at the discovery site. "All those rounds are potential improvised explosive devices (IEDs); we just stopped that many more IEDs."



Photos By: Spc. Barbara Ospina



Above: Two mushroom clouds blast skyward as 15 tons of confiscated weapons are destroyed.

Left: Members of the EOD Flight align wooden boxes full of mortar rounds in preparation for disposal.

Right: Tech. Sgt. Jennifer Wayne places bars of C-4 explosive on mortar rounds before disposing of them by two controlled explosions.



# A Week in the Dirt

## Support Troops prep FOB for Closure

By: 2nd Lt. Matthew Podolak  
1st STB, 1st BCT

Forward Operating Base (FOB) Gains-Mills is a very small base located near Kirkuk. Company D, 1st Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment is stationed there, patrolling the area, and training Iraqi Army soldiers. In a couple weeks however, the company will move to a new location and hand Gains-Mills completely over to the Iraqi Army. Part of the process of transitioning the base over to the Iraqis was to reduce the footprint of American Soldiers, and upgrade the existing range facilities.

From December 5 through December 12, three different elements of Headquarters Headquarters Company of the Special Troops Battalion organized together in order to accomplish the transitioning task. The mission consisted of several key tasks. There was a large scrap metal and tire pit

that needed to be back hauled to FOB Warrior for proper disposal. A large burn pit was in need of improvement for the Iraqi Army's use. There were also several areas on Gains-Mills that required earthwork in order to level out low spots. The final task was a range improvement project, where an existing range was to be converted into a 25-meter qualification range and a 25-meter zeroing range. Each range now supports 14 shooters, with fighting positions utilized at the firing line.

Support Platoon convoyed to Gains-Mills in two up armored HEMMT cargos and hauled back the piles of scrap metal, tires, and other items that needed to go back to FOB Warrior. Support Platoon also provided the battalions' most experienced engineer mechanic, Sgt. Patrick Barker, A&O Platoon, task organized from Company A, 1st STB, provided a JD450 bulldozer, a 2.5-



Soldiers of HHC, 1st STB pose for a picture together after finishing up a long week of hard work.

yard bucket loader, and some of the Army's finest engineer equipment operators to do the necessary earthwork. The BCT CBRN provided convoy security, and much insight prior to the start of the mission.

The mission initially called for two trips a day, however on the first day, Spc. Rich Patton suggested he operate the 2.5-yard bucket loader to fill the HEMMTs with all the scrap metal and it was realized that only one haul mission was needed per day. This was a good start to the mission, as

less time traveled on the roads is much safer for all. Sgt. Nardi Carrion, the support platoon's transportation section non-commissioned officer in charge, was able to utilize the small crane on the back of the HEMMT Cargo to secure several scrap cars left on the range.

By the second day, the loader had punctured a tire in the metal pile, luckily the operators and Barker were able to

fix the tire long enough to load some of the scrap tires that were lying around.

On the third day, Pfc. James Powers and Cpl. Joseph Douglas had completed a large portion of the earthwork, constructing the berm around the zero range and grading the low spots on both ranges.

By Friday, the plan was to wrap things up and head back; however the plan for the range changed. Targets and firing positions were needed and required an extra day of work and two more pieces of engineer equipment, a Bobcat with auger attachment for the targets and SEE truck for digging the firing trench. To quote Pfc. Powers, "If I was any more flexible, I'd be *elastic*."

On Monday, December 12, the platoon finished up early, and built a small guard tower between the two ranges. Needless to say I am very proud to have worked with all these Soldiers during this mission. Not only did everyone work well together, but more importantly stayed extremely flexible with the constant change of plans. Good job everyone, and I'm sure the Iraqi Army appreciates the work we've done.



Engineers from 1st STB load up scrap metal into a HEMMT as part of preparing Gains-Mills for transition for the Iraqi Army.



# Remembering...2005

Highlight Stories From the Past Year

## “No Slack” Declares Iron Platoon

Anyone can brag and say they are the best, but the challenge is working as a team and proving it. That is what every platoon within 2nd Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment tried to do as they competed in the Battalion’s “Iron Platoon” competition to determine who was most fit.

In the end it was 2nd Platoon, Company A that earned the right to be called the “Iron Platoon.”

“All the guys showed a lot of heart and dedication,” said Sgt. Aaron Brown, 2nd Platoon, Company A, 2nd Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment.

“We started training for the competition two months ago,” Brown said. “We worked hard at PT to get us where we are now.”

As the “Iron Platoon” they received an “Iron Platoon” guidon, a four-day pass, their platoon identity will be engraved on the Battalion Commander’s Army physical fitness test excellence plaque in the headquarters building, and they will be the lead for every battalion run and foot march.

Although 2nd Platoon, Co. A won the challenge, it was close. They finished just one point ahead of 3rd platoon from Company C.

“I think every event was fair and challenging,” said Sgt. Michael Lawson, Co. C, 2nd Bn., 327th Inf. Rgt. “This will just make us try harder next time.”

“Challenges bring everyone together as one,” Brown said. “They provide morale for the company as a whole.”

The newly introduced “Iron Platoon” Competition will be held twice a year to promote esprit de corps, instill competitiveness, and foster an athlete culture in “No Slack” Soldiers, said Command Sgt. Maj. Isaia Vimoto, the 2nd Bn., 327th Inf. Rgt., Sgt. Maj.

The competition includes a modified APFT (push-ups, sit-ups, and a two-mile combat run) and pull-up event. During the push-up event each Soldier must go down far enough to touch his chest on the graders fist. The combat run is done as a platoon element, with all Soldiers wearing their individual body armor (IBA). The platoon carries a casualty litter one-mile out, then, once every Soldier from the platoon has reached the mile turn-around point the platoon must then put one Soldier on the litter to represent a casualty, and run the mile back. Every Soldier in the platoon must cross the finish-line together.

“The competition allows us to really



Photo By: Spc. Barbara Ospina

Sgt. Winston Weaver, from 2nd Platoon, Company A, 2nd Battalion 327th Infantry Regiment, gives his all during the push-up event of the Iron Platoon Competition. Sergeant Aaron Brown of 2nd Plt. won the individual push-up event, helping his platoon win the overall competition.

see what level of PT the Soldiers are at,” Vimoto said. “I wouldn’t change a thing about the competition.”

## 1st BCT DFAC Rated Best in Whole Division

Soldiers of the 1st Brigade Combat Team dining facility (DFAC) recently received the Commander’s “Best Dining Facility” award, 4th Quarter 2004. “Of the eleven dining facilities on post, you are the best,” said Col. Larry Ruggly, the 101st Airborne Division Installation Commander.

Warrant Officer William Duff, 1st BCT DFAC Food Advisor, says that it’s not just the food, but “it’s the ability of the Soldiers to go the extra mile” that keeps them winning the awards.

“They are a great crew,” said Duff. “If anyone needs help, everyone is more than willing to help,” said Pvt. Norchell Samuel.

Ruggly also presented the DFAC with the 2005 Roving Quarterly Award, which stays at the DFAC until another dining facility can win the “Best Dining Facility” award, as well as a letter of commendation from Major General Thomas R. Turner, II, Commanding General of the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) and Fort Campbell.

This is the sixth time for the DFAC to win the DFAC of the Quarter.

Sgt. 1st Class George Washington and Soldiers receive the Division Commander’s Best Dining Facility award from Col. Larry Ruggly.



# 1st Battalion Builds Range “Above The Rest”



Photo By: Spc. Barbara Ospina

Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment stack on against a wall before breaching the Range 53 live fire village.

Leaders, non-commissioned officers, and Soldiers of 1st Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment have combined their efforts to bring an idea for a live fire village into a reality.

The newly built range, which includes a convoy live fire lane, is complete and open for training.

Each company from 1st Bn., 327th Inf. Rgt. went through training at the new range. Soldiers were required to go

through blank fire iteration at a rehearsal site before encountering the challenges designed to better prepare them for deployment.

“This is a very good range, one of the better by far,” said Harvey Jones, the 1st Brigade Combat Team Safety Officer.

Throughout the day iterations Soldiers navigated through the convoy live fire range en route to the village.

While moving, they had to distinguish the difference between enemy targets and non-combative obstacles such as a donkey cart and a simulated car accident blocking the road.

“Each iteration had its own scenarios with different tasks for Soldiers,” said Command Sgt. Maj. David Allard, 1st Bn., 327th Inf. Rgt. “When it comes to this range, our imagination is the limit.”

Once the Soldiers reached their objec-

tive they breached the village where their communication and maneuvering skills were put to the test. Each platoon-size element had to clear the 6-building, 16-room village of insurgents without killing any civilians.

At this point the training was only half over. While the Soldiers took a break and ate chow, waiting for the sun to set, the range was reset giving the Soldiers a whole new challenge in the dark.

The motivation was rising as the sun was setting.

“Going through a night iteration instills an extra level of confidence when Soldiers have their night optical devices, lasers and live rounds,” said Cpt. Heath Lewis, Commanding officer for Company B, 1st Bn., 327th Inf. Rgt.

The training was new for the Soldiers who wanted to learn new lessons that might save a life when it really counts.

“This village is going to save lives,” Allard said. “We gained from this village regardless of the price.”

The newly built range was constructed by the Soldiers of 1st Bn., 327th Inf. Rgt. for a considerable lower cost compared to the other training sites at Fort Campbell.

## Bastogne Family Fun Day

The day was set aside for playing hard, as opposed to the usual working hard.

Soldier and their families of the 1st Brigade Combat Team gathered for fun, comradery and food September 8, during a Brigade family fun day.

The Soldiers began their day with their final brigade four-mile run with Col. David Gray, the Commanding Officer for the 1st BCT leading the way with his staff members. A four-mile run may sound exhausting, but it was only the beginning of a warm September day filled with family and comradery.

Soldiers throughout the Brigade volunteered for many

different sporting events, including volleyball, ultimate football, and an air assault obstacle course challenge.

“Sports promote esprit de corps, and build comradery while fostering competitiveness,” said Command Sgt. Maj. Rory Malloy, the 1st BCT’s Command Sgt. Maj.

Sporting events were not the only option for families to enjoy; while many Soldiers were giving their all in their sport of choice, cheerful children ran abroad. The Brigade set up many inflatable toys for kids to play on, as well as a dunk tank for the older age group of kids.

The Brigade dining facility



Photo By: Spc. Barbara Ospina

Bastogne Soldiers and their families enjoy a day filled with sports comradery and good food.

spent the day barbecuing hamburgers and hotdogs for all involved in the fun. After a day of supporting and cheering for their favorite Soldier, fami-

ly members enjoyed the food right before the final sporting event; a softball game with Commanding Officers versus Command Sgt. Maj.’s.



## Regimental Colors Unfurl

### RSTA Battalion becomes 32nd Cavalry

The 1st Brigade Combat Team left another mark in history on August 10 when the Brigade's reconnaissance, surveillance, and target acquisition (RSTA) battalion bid farewell to the 327th Infantry Regiment's colors and welcomed a new regimental affiliation.

Change has been a part of day-to-day life at the 1st BCT throughout the past year. Now, in one of the last changes for transformation, the RSTA battalion is no longer known as the 3rd Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment, "Battle Force," rather it will bear the colors of 1st Battalion, 32nd Cavalry Regiment, into their next deployment.

Third Battalion, 327th Inf. Rgt. was first organized on September 17, 1917 at Fort Gordon, Ga., and has fought courageously throughout the years. Many veterans could tell stories of World War I and arriving by assault craft on D-Day afternoon during World War II. The unit played a big role during Operation Market-Garden, an operation that is still known as the largest wartime airborne operation in military history. This brigade earned its very name during the battle of Bastogne, where many Soldiers of the battalion held their ground against a numerically superior German force. During Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm, men of the regiment took part in the largest air assault in military history, as the 101st Airborne Division assaulted into Iraq. Most recently the unit deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Veterans of the latest operation still train and fight with the battalion today.

The Battalion's new unit designation may not have played a



Soldiers Pay their respects to The Colors before the 3rd Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment colors are retired and cased.

large role in the 327th Infantry Regiment's history, but the 32nd Cav. Rgt. has made its impact in history as well. When the United States began preparing to fight in World War II, they organized the 1st Battalion, 32nd Armored Regiment. Throughout the war, the unit was a main fighting force in Operation Cobra, accomplishing their mission in the operation by breaking through German defenses, and splitting the German units apart.

"During the Battle of Bastogne, 1st of the 32nd were part of the reinforcements sent to fill the gaps," said Sgt. Maj. Chris Fields, Command Sgt. Maj. for 1st Bn., 32nd Cavalry Rgt. "They helped fight the battle that gave this brigade their time honored name."

The unit has re-designated and activated numerous times throughout the past, eventually becoming part of the 1st Cavalry Division. In 1991, the Division used 1st Bn., 32nd Armored Rgt. on the front line while fighting into Iraq.

Before transformation, 3rd Bn., 327th Inf. Rgt. was an infantry battalion with a RSTA platoon. Now, the battalion consists of two companies of cavalry scouts and one company of infantrymen, as well as a fire support company.

"The commander and I have trained the squadron as a unified element," Fields said. "One team, one fight."

During the re-flagging ceremony, Soldiers stood in formation and watched the heritage they knew, and many had fought with, be properly folded and covered for the last time, then watched as the color bearer proudly march off the field.

This may seem like the end, but they prefer to consider it the beginning, Fields commented.

"Change is good and as we close a chapter in one unit's history we are beginning a new book with another," Fields said.



Photos By: Spc. Barbara Ospina

RSTA Commanding Officer, Lt. Col. Arthur Kandarian, and Command Sgt. Maj. Chris Fields uncased their new 1st Squadron, 32nd Cavalry Regiment Colors.

# Fifty Miles; No Sweat!

## 1st Battalion Leader Runs 50-Miles to Raise MWR Funds for Soldiers

The Army defines Selfless Service as putting the welfare of the nation, the Army, and your subordinates before your own, but 1st Lt. Peter Kyriakoulis, 1st Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment has led by example when it comes to this army value.

Kyriakoulis, a Union, N.J. native, completed a 50-mile benefit run Saturday morning, to raise morale welfare and recreation funds for 1st Bn., 327th Inf. Rgt. Soldiers.

"He cares about his Soldiers and that's what makes him a good leader," said 1st Lt. Jeremy Pflug, 3rd Battalion, 4th Brigade Combat Team, Kyriakoulis' friend since college. "He won't even be in Iraq, but he is still making sure his Soldiers are taken care of."

Kyriakoulis will be leaving his fellow Operation Iraqi Freedom Veterans and "Above the Rest" Soldiers to attend the Infantry Officers Career Course at Fort Benning, Ga., later this June.

The idea to run 50 miles actually originated while Kyriakoulis was running after work one day.

"It was just one of those work days, you know," Kyriakoulis said. "So I decided instead of stewing on the couch, being angry and flustered, I would be constructive and run until I felt better."

Half-way to Nashville and 35-miles later he felt better; he had cleared his head and decided that he wanted to raise money so his Soldiers could have a morale, welfare and recreation center while in Iraq. The center will include phones for Soldiers to be able to call home, computers, televisions, video games and potentially an Iraqi Cafe.

During the next workday Kyriakoulis discovered that the toughest part to make the idea for the MWR center a reality wouldn't be running.

As an officer he could not just donate money to the unit, because that would be a violation of numerous regulations. After consulting with the legal office he called



Kyriakoulis stretches out his strides through the last few laps finishing up an all night 50-mile run.

the American Legion.

"Luckily the American Legion was kind enough to help out," Kyriakoulis said.

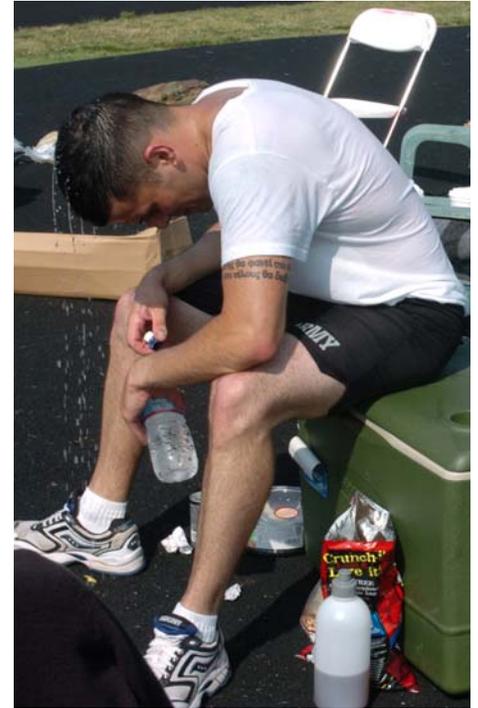
All donations would be made to the American Legion and in return the American Legion would donate the money to 1st Bn., 327th Inf. Rgt.

At the start of everything he set a goal to raise at least \$10,000.

"I was surprised at the generosity of people," Kyriakoulis said. "I have been receiving donations with letters from people I don't know and all I can say is thank-you."

A trust fund is being started by Kyriakoulis with the money that is left once the MWR center in Iraq is completed. The goal is to be able to give scholarships to outstanding Soldiers that are leaving the Army for college. Kyriakoulis will choose the recipients of the scholarships and he hopes that it will continue for many years.

Kyriakoulis began running at 7:00 p.m. Friday, but several hours into the



Photos By: Spc. Barbara Ospina

Above: Now Cpt. Peter Kyriakoulis takes a moment to cool off after crossing the 50-mile finish line.

night he hit a wall. He was tired and his body was worn out.

"The problem was I couldn't eat or I would get nauseous," Kyriakoulis said. "I've never had a problem eating while running."

He was given intravenous fluids and he kept pushing himself around the track.

"Out of the blue I thought I bet I could eat some cheesecake, so I ran to the cooler ate half a cheesecake and everything was fine," Kyriakoulis remembered.

With continued support throughout the night from fellow leaders, Soldiers and family members, Kyriakoulis finished his 50-mile run in 15 hours and 7 minutes.

"This is a tremendous and absolutely selfless accomplishment," said Lt. Col. Marc Hutson, Commanding officer for 1st Bn., 327th Inf. Rgt.

"There was never a doubt in my mind that he wouldn't be able to finish," said Elizabeth Kyriakoulis, his sister who flew in from Union, N.J. to show her support.

Nothing could sum up or symbolize the effort and determination Kyriakoulis put into a 50-mile run better than the Greek tattoo on the top of his left arm, "finish what you start."

# Adopted Units Show Thanks to Cities



Photo By: Spc. Barbara Ospina

Soldiers from Company D, 1st Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment take the time to have BBQ for Easter with their adoptive town.

Many companies of the 1st Brigade Combat Team have been adopted by cities as part of a nationwide military “adoption” program called America Supporting Americans. Two of the companies have gone out of their way to show their appreciation for all the support they receive.

## Easter Party

Company D, 1st Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment held an Easter party for all the Soldiers and their families at Eagle Park on March 19. The company extended an invitation to their adoptive city of Franklin to show their appreciation for everything the city has done for them.

Inviting Franklin City to the barbecue was a way for the Company as a whole to show their appreciation, but many Soldiers have taken it upon themselves to thank the people of Franklin City personally.

Private First Class. Neil Wolfe, the Better Opportunity for Single Soldiers representative for Co. D, 1st Bn., 327th Inf. Rgt. took the time to write

a letter to the schools and townspeople thanking them for all their support.

“I told the children I would take pictures while we’re there (Iraq) and send them back to show them what the military is like,” Neil said.

Sgt. Roland Zamora, the training non-commissioned officer for Co. D, 1st Bn., 327th Inf. Rgt. took his family to an elementary school where they spent the day visiting several class rooms and eating lunch with the children.

The holiday celebration was a day full of Easter egg hunts for children of all age groups, including a Soldier egg hunt. Select eggs contained prizes ranging from toys to a four day pass, each chosen to accommodate the group. The day was filled with Easter eggs, prizes and games, and there was plenty of barbecue to go around.

“It builds comradery, and allows everyone to come and have a good time,” Neil said.

“We are glad to help out the unit in any way we can,” said Tom Miller, the Franklin

City Mayor. “I can’t express how important it is that somebody back here supports and cares for their families.”

The company has shown their appreciation, and will continue on with many future events already scheduled.

“I personally do not have a lot of experience deal with this sort of stuff, but when you walk up and introduce yourself you can see appreciation in their faces,” Miller said.

## Reading to Children

Company C, 1st Bn., 327th Inf. Rgt. traveled to Ashland City three days in a row to read, play and answer questions for the children at the local elementary school.



Photo By: Spc. Barbara Ospina

A Soldier from Company C, takes the time to read a childrens book to kids at an elementary school in Ashland City, Tenn.

“I think that it allowed the Soldiers to share their experiences and spend time with children that have little exposure to Soldiers on a daily basis,” said Cpt. Cedric Burden, Commanding Officer of Co. C, 1st Bn., 327th Inf. Rgt. “It also made the Soldiers

feel good about themselves that they may play an important part in those children’s lives portraying a positive image of the Army, than the image that they may witness in the media later down the road.”

“I think they’re cool and they protect us,” said Jordan Moore, a 1st grader at the elementary school.

Once the Soldiers were done reading and the kids had to go to lunch the Soldiers were bussed to a park where volunteers from the community served them lunch.

Ashland City adopted the company through the America supporting Americans Organization while the unit was deployed to Iraq, and they continue to show their support in any way possible.

“We work very closely with the Family Readiness Group’s, and we are at the company pretty often,” said Faye McDonald, The Tennessee representative for America Supporting Americans.

## Bastogne Gains Authority in Iraq

With the casing of one unit’s symbolic history, the responsibility was confidently handed over to another as Regimental and Brigade Colors were proudly unfurled.

The 1st Brigade Combat Team of the 101st Airborne Division (AASLT) assembled a ceremony on October 31 to formally take over responsibility of the North Central region of Iraq from combat veterans of the 116th Brigade.

Throughout the past year, Soldiers and leaders of the 116th Brigade were led by Gen. Alan Gayhart in providing citizens of the Kirkuk Province stable Iraqi security forces as well as over 20 million dollars invested into clean water, sanitation capabilities, and many other improvements to the infrastructure.

“Brig. Gen. Gayhart, you, Command Sgt. Maj. Lewis, and the thousands of Warrior Soldiers under your command, have played a significant role in the history of the Iraqi people and their emerging freedom,” commented Commanding officer for the 1st BCT, Col. David Gray dur-



Photo By: Spc. Barbara Ospina

Colonel David Gray, and Command Sgt. Maj. Rory Malloy uncase the 1st Brigade Colors during the transfer of authority ceremony on FOB Warrior, Iraq.

ing the ceremony.

Although the responsibility has been handed over, the improvements are far from over.

Gray stood in before Warrior and

Bastogne Soldiers as well as Iraqi Police and Soldiers of the Iraqi Army offering his steadfast determination and the might and respect of 1st BCT Soldiers to the community in establishing a safe and secure environment for citizens of Kirkuk.

“We must help the Iraqi’s build their governments capacity and work side-by-side with the Iraqi Security Forces, we must take the fight to the enemy,” Gray said. “With the help of local leaders and the proud people of this region, we will help build a nation that all Iraqi’s can be proud of.”

Gray with the vision of the present and future clear in his sight posts and a firm grasp on the pistol grip concluded the ceremony by bidding a safe farewell to Gayhart and his Soldiers.

## 426 Gets Em’ Running

The mechanics of Company B, 426th Brigade Support Battalion pulls the weight of a 1,000 pound truck when it comes to their duties in a deployed environment. As the primary maintenance unit for the 1st Brigade Combat Team, these Soldiers keep all mission essential equipment up and running.

“We see everything; every type of equipment,” said Staff Sgt. Travis Langley, the shop foreman, who oversees all maintenance operations. “We support everything; basically if it comes in off the road, we fix it!”

Since taking over responsibility of the maintenance shop of Forward Operating Base (FOB) Warrior, the 426 mechanics have been working around the clock.

“I have been in this shop everyday since the day the bird landed in Iraq,” reflected Langley.

As vehicles enter the shop they are categorized by type of work required and importance to the mission, similar to a hospital triage system. The highest priority vehicles are the up-armored humvees. According to Langley, the shop has 24-hours to have up-armored vehicles fixed or have the parts on order.

“If it has armor on it, it’s gotta go,” Langley said. “It’s most important to get the up-armored trucks fixed, because those things truly save lives.”

Assembling the parts on a vehicle is nothing new for these mechanics, but working on up-armored equipment is a new experience. So, the



Photo By: Spc. Barbara Ospina

A Soldier from the 426th, BSB maintenance company replaces an engine in an up-armored humvee.

Bastogne maintenance Soldiers were extremely grateful for the continuity book left by the mechanics they replaced. The book includes tips on air conditioning repair, troubleshooting transmissions, and the suspension conversion.

“They left so much information for us; the book is huge

and contains everything we might need to know about the vehicles,” Langley said graciously.

These mechanics carry the heavy tool box not only for their battalion and not only for the 1st BCT, but for anyone who comes onto FOB Warrior needing equipment fixed.