



The LIGHTNING Bolt

Covering the 48th Brigade Combat Team

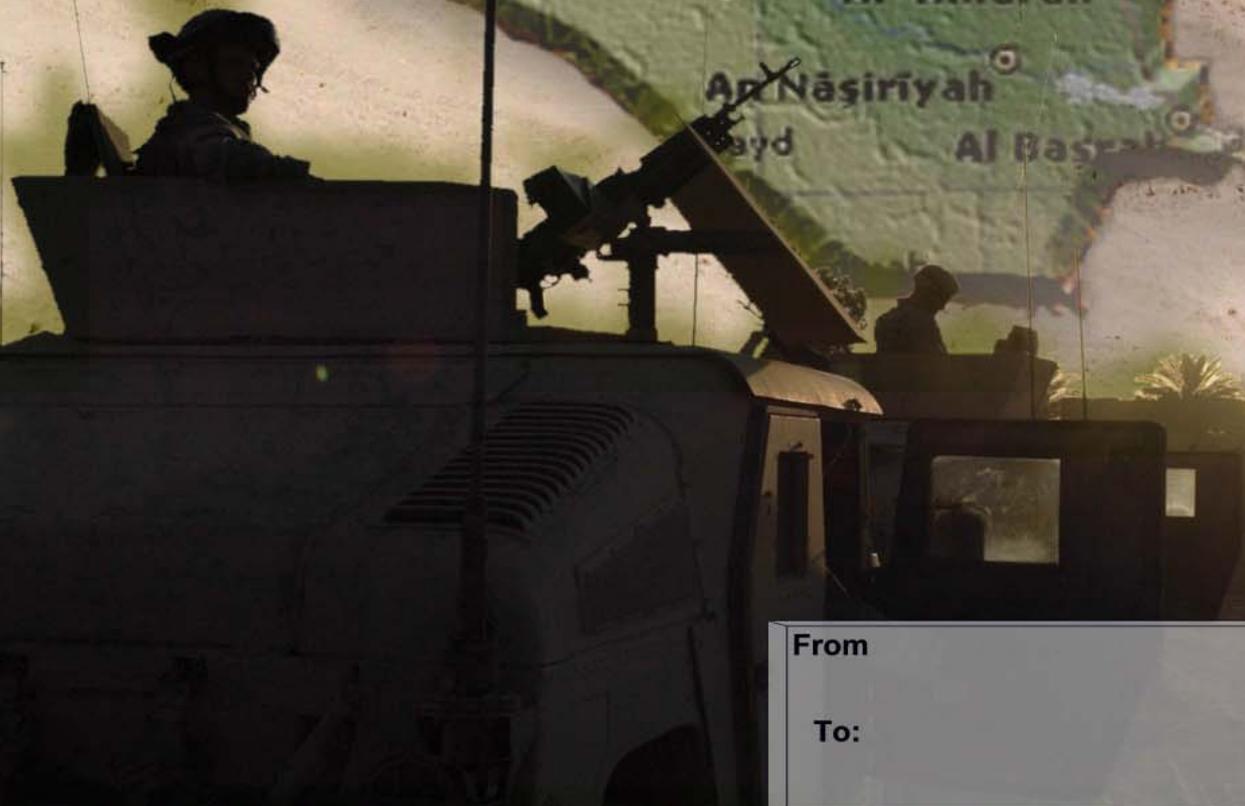
Vol. 1 Issue 9

October 1, 2005



"The relationships we are building with the Iraqi Army continues to grow because of the efforts from the Soldiers of 108th Armor and 121st Infantry Battalions. I am very proud of them and their accomplishments"

Brig. Gen. Stewart Rodeheaver
Commanding General, 48th BCT



From	
To:	

Free Mail: please forward to your family and friends

Write a personal note to family and friends, but don't forget to call home.

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On the cover: Soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 108th Armor Regiment and 2nd Battalion, 121st Infantry Regiment are at the tip of the spear for the 48th Brigade Combat Team. Cover designed by Spc. Tracy J. Smith, 48th BCT PAO.

Editor's Note:

To the Soldiers and families of the *Lightning Brigade*, allow me to make a correction to our Vehicle Recovery story on the 148th SB (Vol. 1, Issue 8 - SEP 15). In this story we stated there was an insurgent seen sitting in a palm tree filming the event. There was not an insurgent seen, nor detained, however a video camera was in the tree, the video footage was confiscated as evidence. Also other units were involved in this particular incident; however the story was focused on the Soldiers of the 148th SB. We welcome your comments and suggestions; please do not hesitate to let us know when a mistake has been made. We are here to tell your story.

Thanks for all you do! 2nd Lt. Selena Owens



The Lightning Bolt

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The Lightning Bolt is an official publication of the 48th Brigade Combat Team. It is produced by the 48th BCT Public Affairs Office. This Soldier newsletter is in compliance with the provisions of AR 360-81.

Soldiers and families, the 48th BCT Public Affairs Office welcomes your comments, stories/story ideas, photos and any other contributions you are willing to share. We are here to tell the Soldiers' Story. Help us keep everyone informed. The Lightning Bolt is your voice and we want to make sure that it's heard. Feel free to contact the PAO Staff at 242-4808 or [Email us at brigadelightningbolt@yahoo.com](mailto:brigadelightningbolt@yahoo.com)

For more information on the 48th BCT,

Visit <http://www.dod.state.ga.us>

Welcome Back Task Force Blackhawk

2nd Battalion, 130th Infantry Regiment keeps the pressure on the insurgents.

Citizens' tips lead to large weapons cache

48th BCT PAO

CAMP STRYKER, Iraq – Thanks to a tip from local residents, Task Force Baghdad Soldiers on a dismounted patrol discovered a significant weapons cache in the Radwiniyah area Sept. 17. Soldiers from 2nd Battalion, 130th Infantry Regiment, 48th Brigade Combat Team received information from local citizens about a field of buried weapons. The Soldiers searched the area and uncovered the cache of weapons. The search was then expanded and two other caches were discovered in the immediate area.

“The relationship between the Iraqi Army, Coalition Forces and the local populace grows stronger every day,” said Brig. Gen. Stewart Rodeheaver, 48th BCT commander. “This find will significantly decrease the amount of rocket and mortar attacks against the community and Coalition Forces. I am extremely proud of our Soldiers.”

Included in the weapons cache were 63 rocket-propelled grenade rounds, 23 RPG motors, 904 RPG fuses and primers, 33 68-millimeter rockets, 23 82mm mortar rounds, two 60mm mortar tubes, 12 60mm mortar rounds, 80 mortar fuses, three mortar sights and five crates of TNT. The cache was turned over to an explosive ordnance disposal team. U.S. Soldiers will continue to have a strong presence in the area to assist Iraqi Security Forces in deterring terrorist acts.

One suspected terrorist was detained in connection with the cache.

Iraqi Security Forces and Task Force Baghdad officials continue to encourage all Iraqi citizens to report suspicious behavior by e-mailing baghdadtipshotline@yahoo.com or calling one of the TIPS hotlines at 07901737723 or 07901737727.



A Soldier from 2nd Battalion, 130th Infantry Regiment, 48th Brigade Combat Team digs up a weapons cache Sept. 17 which was found after local residents provided information about its location. (Photo provided by 2/130th Infantry)

US Soldiers save lives, discover large weapons caches

48th BCT PAO

CAMP STRYKER, Iraq – Task Force Baghdad Soldiers uncovered another large weapons cache in the outskirts of western Baghdad while conducting a morning patrol on Sept. 24.

Soldiers from 2nd Battalion, 130th Infantry Regiment, 48th Brigade Combat Team, have been successful in finding weapons caches within their area of operations. In less than a month they have found six weapons caches of significant size, two of which were extremely large. Capt. James H. Alexander, Jr., an operations officer with 2nd Bn, 130 Inf. Regt., attributes this success to the troops on the ground.

“I’m very impressed with these Soldiers, they work together as a cohesive team at squad and platoon level and they get out on the ground to get the job done,” said Alexander, a Columbus, Ga. resident. The cache included 11 improvised explosive devices, one sniper rifle, 18 Motorola telephones, one mortar tube, 14 60mm mortar rounds, one artillery round, nine washing machine timers and an unspecified amount of TNT and C4 plastic explosives.

Six suspected terrorists were also detained as a result of the find.

“Even if they take one (terrorist) off the street, it is motivating, but when a find of this size comes in, we are more than pleased. These Soldiers are saving lives,” said Alexander.



Soldiers from 2nd Battalion, 130th Infantry Regiment, 48th Brigade Combat Team guard a weapons cache Sept. 17 which was uncovered after local residents provided information about its location. (Photo provided by 2/130th Infantry)

Making a Difference in the *'Triangle'*

B Co., 108th Ar. Bn. whittles away at the insurgency

*Spc. Tracy J. Smith
48th BCT PAO*

LUTIFIYAH, Iraq— Soldiers patrolling the villages of Lutifiyah, Yusifiyah and Mahmudiyah have many affectionate nicknames for their area. The most common reference is the *'feyahs.'* Others prefer the much more battle earned *'Triangle'*. As the B Company commander of the Forward Operating Base in Lutifiyah, with 108th Armor Battalion, 48th Brigade Combat Team, Captain Scott Jackels is proud of the accomplishments of his Soldiers. No matter the name, he and his Soldiers simply want to call it secure and will do what is necessary to make that happen.



Move out - Staff Sergeant Nicholas A. Baughman briefs his Soldiers prior to moving his convoy out. Baughman, tactical vehicle commander for B. Co., 108th Ar. Bn, 48th BCT, "Red Dogs", and Soldiers from his platoon were key witnesses in the Iraqi court process that resulted in the incarceration of an AIF operative in the 'Triangle'.

(Photo by Spc. Tracy J. Smith 48th BCT PAO)

"They don't get any days off," Jackels a DeKalb County police officer explained. "My Soldiers are outside the wire everyday...doing as much damage as they can to the efforts of the (insurgency). Their commitment makes my job a lot easier."

'Easier' in the sense that his officers and non-commissioned officers, like other Soldiers living and 'trolling the "Triangle", know their job and approach any task with purpose and spirit. This sense of duty has been integral in successfully flushing out the 'bad guys.' Their mission always incorporates the basics of the patrol; make it a point to stay a step ahead with your planning and always be aware of your surroundings. They call this approach the Beanie Babies and bullets theory. An illustration of the posture they must assume while working to make the citizens comfortable and safe with their constant presence.

"You can be standing outside enjoying some time playing with the kids, handing out Beanie Babies and candies," Sergeant Ashley O'Donnell describes a typical scenario.

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O'Donnell is from Ringgold, Ga., and a gunner for the "Red Dog" platoon. They must always be ready for the unexpected which means potentially engaging the enemy.

"No matter what you may be involved in, you are always out there with a 'lock and load', mentality. Everybody's gotta be on their game because you don't know what to expect from one second to the next."

As the Iraqi people prepare for democratic elections, there have been consistent attempts, in the form of threats and intimidation, from anti-coalition forces to dissuade citizens throughout Iraq not to exercise their voting privilege. "There is no doubt the insurgency puts obstacles between the people and their right to participate in the election process," said Lt. Col. Thomas Carden, the Effects Cell Coordinator for the 48th BCT. "A vote, any vote, is a vote against terrorism," added Carden, a Rincon, Ga. resident. To deter the Iraqi Army and police from protecting polling sites the AIF have applied more aggressive tactics. These atrocities and a continued willingness to help people in this region only reinforces the determination of the Lutifiyah based Soldiers. The key to their success, Jackels explains, is adaptability.

"The key to staying a step ahead is to continually adapt," reiterates Jackels. "What works today may not work tomorrow. However, if it didn't work today it may work tomorrow. Always change up. Just because you've had success with it does not mean you have to use that technique again."

Applying this technique brought about the successful conviction of an insurgent in the Iraqi courts system. (Read the full story in the October 15th edition of *The Lightning Bolt*)

Staff sergeant Nicholas A. Baughman, of Atlanta, Ga. and Soldiers from his "Red Dogs" platoon were key witnesses in the legal process and were extremely pleased with the outcome. "It was rewarding," Baughman, tactical vehicle commander for B. Co. states. "We caught someone who had been doing bad things, or in the process of doing bad things, got him off the streets and saw results immediately."

Triangle continued on page 14

Ever Vigilant - A Soldier from B Company, 108th Armor Battalion, 48th BCT keeps a watchful eye on the area surrounding the Lutifiyah based compound. (Photo by Spc. Tracy J. Smith 48th BCT PAO)



Operation Devil Strike

The largest air mobile operation in National Guard history

*Sgt David Bill
48th BCT PAO*

CAMP STRYKER, Iraq— Task Force Devil Soldiers took to the skies in the largest air mobile operation ever conducted by a National Guard unit, moving nearly 500 Soldiers from their initial pick up zone near the Baghdad International Airport to their objective in less than 60 minutes.

Operation Devil Strike was designed and organized to provide a quick strike capability to the units of the 2nd Battalion 121st Infantry, 48th BCT without bringing over 100 vehicles down a limited number of roads leading to their objective; a large power plant in the western sector of their area of operation. The mission was to search the power plant facilities for suspected terrorists, weapons caches and to ensure the facility was secure. The Russian constructed plant was suspected to be a base of local insurgent operations and weapons storage. The Devil Soldiers were tasked with all aspects of the mission; from securing the power plant's perimeter, to searching every building and tunnel on the complex. The Battalion was augmented with a platoon of engineers from Company A, 648th Engineers, who were searching tunnels, and Soldiers from Company C, 3rd Battalion, 4th Brigade of the 6th Iraqi Army Division who were to secure and search a significant sector of the power plant.

3rd Aviation Brigade, 3ID provided the aircraft support. This complex air operation was developed through coordination between the battalion operations staff, the 48th Brigade Aviation Element and the aviation assets from 3rd ID's Aviation Brigade.

"We never could have accomplished this size mission if we [2nd Battalion] had not graduated from smaller missions to eventually this large complex mission" said 1st Lt. John Avera, 2nd Battalion's S-3 Air, the architect of the air operations plan. He referred to how the battalion had progressively developed each unit's confidence by starting with smaller air operations. "Even the Iraqi Army gained experience by conducting joint air operations with us" added Avera.

"Guns and Rifles," a term used by aviators was a series of operations where 2 squads of Soldiers would be used during aerial recons, but with the capability of putting infantry Soldiers on the ground quickly when something needed to be investigated. These types of operations gave the Soldiers confidence and experience in air mobile operations" said Avera.

"This brigade has come along way when it comes to the use of aviation assets for operations" said CW4 Charles Phillips of the Brigade Aviation Element.



Morning Lights: Lights shine from UH-60 Blackhawks as they lift off carrying Soldiers from 2/121 IN on Operation Devil Strike. (Photo by Sgt David Bill 48th BCT PAO)

The Operation

The aircraft came in low over the Iraqi landscape in a line of lights as they landed in the early morning hours to collect the Devil Soldiers. As the three lifts of fourteen aircraft each continued to move warriors to the various landing zones around the plant, the Soldiers worked their way into positions that would secure the entire complex. Avera, an IT Architect for IBM from Jacksonville, Fla., designed the lift plan using his computer programming experience. His "PAX calculator," a spread sheet program he designed, developed the best combinations of Soldiers and aircraft for each rotation of aircraft so the mission could be conducted with enough troops for each phase of the mission.

"I wanted to put the most Soldiers on the right Landing Zone at the right time to accomplish the mission" said Avera.



Joint Patrol: 48th BCT and Iraqi Army Soldiers prepare to conduct a search of the power plant during Operation Devil Strike. (Photo by Sgt. David Bill 48th BCT PAO).

The mission went smoother than expected as the units moved without resistance throughout the complex. 29 suspected terrorists were detained on the compound during the early stages of the operation, 10 of which were eventually released.

Devil Strike continued on page 14

Non-Commissioned Officers Leadership Conference

Members from the Iraqi Army and Coalition Forces share thoughts on leadership.

*Sgt David Bill
48th BCT PAO*

CAMP STRYKER, Iraq—The room was filled with over 800 years of military experience as the senior non commissioned officers of the 48th Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division hosted their counterparts from the 4th Brigade of the Iraqi Army in a lively discussion about the role of the NCO and leadership development in a continuation of efforts to build up a cohesive team.

“We wanted to facilitate an initial familiarization and enhance the teamwork between the Iraqi Army and Coalition forces with respect to the senior enlisted leaders,” said James Nelson, 48th BCT Command Sgt. Major, the originator of the event.

The topics ranged from basic enlisted rank structure to the officer-NCO relationship and other topics which provided a very interactive discussion.

“We wanted to provide them with tools that they could take back with them and share with their soldiers” said Joseph Recker, 48th BCT Operations Sgt. Major, who facilitated the discussions during the day. “We provided them with NCO Leader Books and Common Task books translated into Arabic, and a CD with all the materials discussed here today.”

“What we learned here will help refresh our memories and will help us bring things together” said 4th Brigade Command Sgt. Major Nama Abdulah Arkane.



Command Sgts. Major Nama Abdulah Arkane(left) of the 4th Brigade of the Iraqi Army and James Nelson of the 48th BCT after conducting Non-Commissioned Officer Professional Development class to their senior NCOs as a way to build team work between the two units.(Photo by Sgt. David Bill 48th BCT PAO)

“We appreciate the 48th BCT and extend our thanks to them for what they have done for us.”

The discussions were focused on how NCOs can better develop their organizations and how they can continue to build on the framework of strong leadership.

“It was fun, very interactive and we learned a lot from each other,” said Nelson.

“We wanted to put together a meaningful class and hope it helps in the team building between the Iraqi Army and the Coalition Forces,” added Nelson. “I hope traditions like this continue long after the 48th Brigade returns home.”



48th BCT Command Sgt. Maj. James Nelson provides his initial remarks to an NCO Development Program class conducted with his senior NCOs and their counterparts from the 4th Brigade of the Iraqi Army.(Photo by Sgt. David Bill 48th BCT PAO)



Sgt Major Joseph Recker(center) conducts a class on the NCO Support Channels during a Non-Commissioned Officer Development class conducted by the 48th BCT for their senior NCOs and those of their counterparts from the 4th Brigade of the Iraqi Army.(Photo by Sgt. David Bill 48th BCT PAO)

“Effective leaders bring out the best in people by stimulating them to achieve what they thought was impossible.”

-F.A. Manske Jr.

Chaplain's Words

By Master Sgt. John Linstra
48th BCT Chaplain's Assistant



It was my turn to accompany our Catholic Chaplain on a visit to Mahmudiah. A routine trip for "The Flying Monk" as we call him. As we left to catch the flight back we stopped to examine a humvee that had been hit by an IED. We examined it carefully from the outside. We met one of the occupants the day before as he returned to duty. Curiosity got the better of me and I decided to look from the inside. As I opened the door, the first thing that CH (LTC) Yoakam and I noticed was the rosary hanging beside the driver's seat. There was damage inside of the vehicle except in the driver's area; there we could not see any sign of the damage.

It was as if there was invisible armor around the driver. That sparked a conversation between us on the wear of crosses and religious medals by soldiers.

There are many of us that have them, a cross on our dog tags, a St Michaels Medal, a Star of David or some other symbol of our faith. How about you? Do you carry something? If you answered yes let me ask you this....Is it a lucky charm or a sign of your faith? If you said a sign of your faith, keep it close and cherish it. Use it as a reminder of whom you serve. You see it's not the item that protects you, it's your faith. We receive a special comfort from our faith that allows us to not worry about things we can't change. Hold on to your faith and know that God loves you, every one of you.



Camp Striker Religious Services

<u>Time</u>	<u>Worship Services</u>	<u>Day</u>	<u>Location</u>
0900	Catholic Mass	M W Sun	Striker Chapel
1115	Catholic Mass	Friday	TOC conference room
1845	Catholic Mass	Saturday	Pad 6, Tent 410
0900	Devotional	Sunday	TOC conference room
1000	Contemporary Protestant	Sunday	Striker Chapel
1115	Traditional Protestant	Sunday	Striker Chapel
1030	Protestant	Sunday	Pad 6, Tent 410
1630	Protestant	Sunday	Striker Chapel
1800	LDS	Sunday	Striker Chapel
1900	Praise Service (Gospel)	Sunday	Striker Chapel
1930	Praise and Testimony	Sunday	Pad 6, Tent 410

Bible Study & Praise Choir

0630	TOC Prayer Service	Mon – Sat	TOC conference room
1800	LDS Bible Study	Wednesday	Striker Chapel
1900	Prayer/Bible Study	Wednesday	Striker Chapel
1930	Prayer/Bible Study	Wednesday	Pad 6, Tent 410
1700	Purpose Driven Life	Thursday	Striker Chapel
1900	Praise Choir Practice	Thursday	Striker Chapel

Soldiers In Action



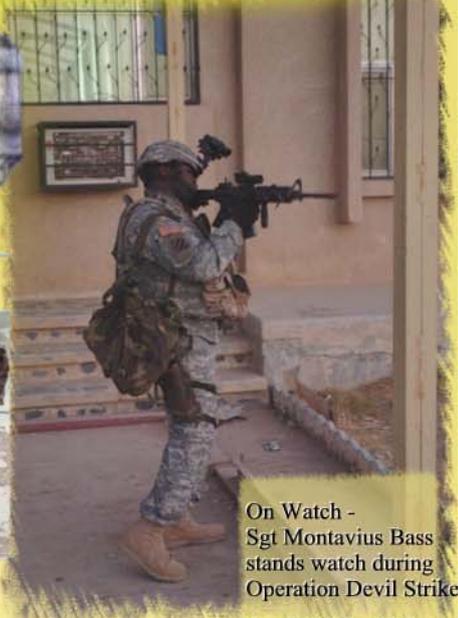
Tunneling through - Soldiers from A, Co. 648th Engineer Battalion search a tunnel during Operation Devil Strike. The joint operation was comprised of Coalition and Iraqi Armed Forces.

(photo by Sgt. David Bill, 48th BCT PAO)



Medevac - American and Iraqi Soldiers carry a wounded Iraqi Soldier to an awaiting Medevac helicopter after a rocket attack during Operation Devil Strike.

(photo by Sgt. David Bill, 48th BCT PAO)



On Watch - Sgt Montavius Bass stands watch during Operation Devil Strike

(photo by Sgt. David Bill, 48th BCT PAO)



Tightening up - Spc. Blake E. China, of Villa Rica, Ga., stabilizes the water tank on a fire truck at "Big Mahmu's" House aka Mahmudiyah, Iraq. China is a mechanic with HHC, 108th Ar., 48th BCT, 3rd ID.

(photo by Spc. Tracy J. Smith, 48th BCT PAO)



Giving - (below) Lt. Col Steve McCorkel, Commander 2nd Bn., 121st Inf. helps with distribution of school supplies to Iraqi children during a recent visit to a primary school.

(photo by Sgt. David Bill, 48th BCT PAO)

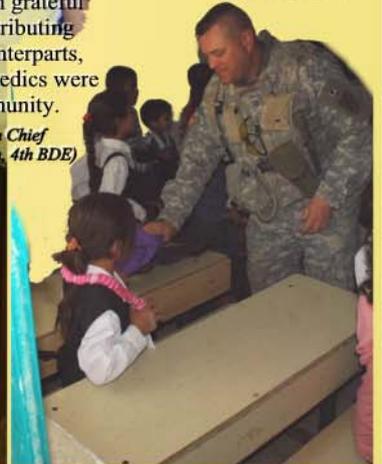
Community Outreach: An Iraqi Army Soldier poses with grateful children at the South Lutifiyah Hospital in Iraq after distributing candy and toys. The Soldiers, along with their U.S. counterparts, donated much needed supplies and an ambulance. IA medics were invited to assist the hospital staff to further aid the community.

(photo courtesy of Maj. Chris Voso, 48th BCT MIT Team Chief for IA 1st Bn, 4th BDE)



Katrina Aid volunteers - (Clockwise standing from left) SPC Sharon Williams, PFC Rudy Altman, SFC Chris Harvey, SSG Janet Hill and SFC Gail Johnson safeguard money bound for the American Red Cross to aid the victims of hurricane Katrina. They collected nearly 1600 dollars from 48th BCT Soldiers.

(photo by Staff Sgt. Britt Smith, 48th BCT PAO)



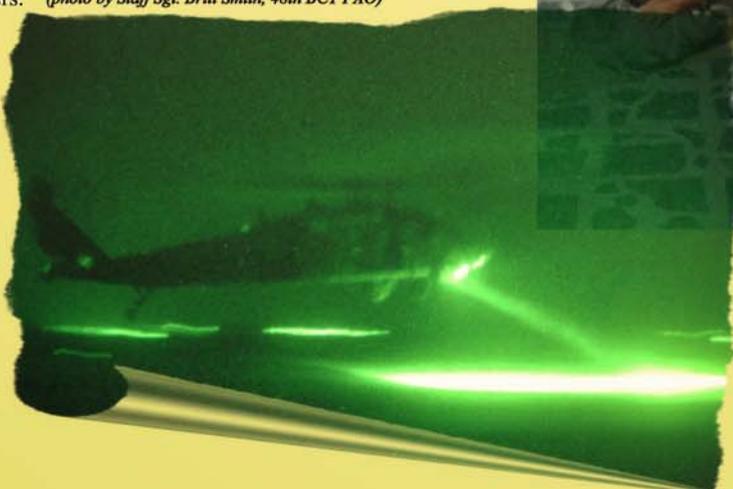
Vigilant watch - (left) A 2nd Bn., 121st Inf. Soldier participating in Operation Devil Strike maintains a respectful watch as the Iraqi citizen conducts his morning prayer ritual.

(photo by Sgt. David Bill, 48th BCT PAO)



Morning Lights - Lights shine from UH-60 Blackhawks as they lift off transporting Soldiers from 2nd Bn., 121st Inf. during Operation Devil Strike.

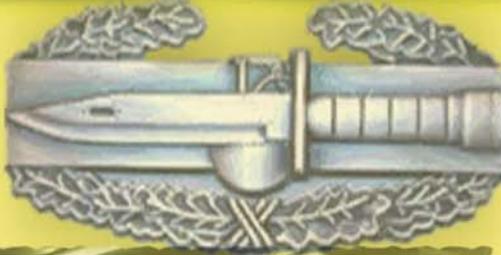
(night vision scope photo by Sgt. David Bill, 48th BCT PAO)



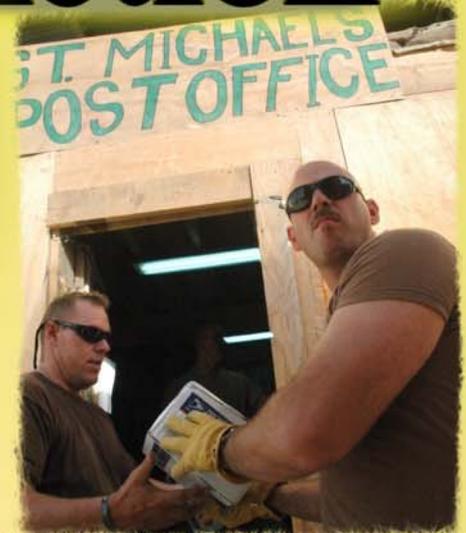
Soldiers In Action



Scanning the sector - Specialist Matthew B. Lockhart, a gunner with HHC, 108th Ar.Bn., 48th BCT, 3rd ID, protects his convoy by keeping a sharp eye on the surrounding area. Lockhart, a petroleum specialist from Villa Rica, Ga. works as a beverage salesman/distributor.
(photo by Spc. Tracy J. Smith, 48th BCT PAO)



No limits - Corporal Kendra Crump Hogans, a logistical technician with HHC, 148th SB, 48th BCT, 3rd ID, gets one on one from Billy Blanks, an actor and fitness expert famous for his Tae Bo workout regime. "It takes a special person to come to this country and do what you have committed to doing, If you weren't special everyone in the United States would be here."
(photo by Spc. Tracy J. Smith, 48th BCT PAO)



Movin' the mail - "It ain't interesting, but everybody wants their mail," Staff Sgt. Brooks Young, (right) of Kennesaw, Ga. says. With the help of squad leader Staff Sgt. Jeffery E. Davis, of Elijay, Ga. they unload precious cargo from his truck for Soldiers anxiously waiting to hear from folks back home. Both Soldiers are with HHC, 108th Ar. Bn., 48th BCT, 3rd ID based in Mahmudiyah, Iraq at FOB St. Michael.
(photo by Spc. Tracy J. Smith, 48th BCT PAO)



Cpt. John Fulk, physician's assistant for HHC, 2nd Bn., 130th Inf., 48th BCT inspects medical supplies and discusses pharmacy shortages with an Iraqi Hospital worker at Al Rasheed. Cpt. Fulk is a resident of Marion, Ill. and was on hand to evaluate the emergency room of shortages.
(photo by SGT Scott Lyerla, 2nd Bn., 130th Inf., 48th BCT)



(above) Solid punch!- Sgt. Daniel Fernandez didn't hold back, landing a solid punch that led to his winning his match, recently, at Camp Victory, Iraq. Fernandez, an electronics system repairer with 248th Military Intelligence Co., 48th BCT is a resident of Miami, Fl.
(photo by Spc. Tracy J. Smith, 48th BCT PAO)



Sgt. James D. Brandt, a heavy equipment operator from St. Louis, Mo. provides protection for Iraqis seeking assistance at the new Rahdwaniyah Community health and humanitarian service center. Brandt is a full time student assigned to 220th ENG Co., 48th BCT, 3rd ID.

First Look - A local man quietly enters the Rahdwaniyah Community health and humanitarian service center. The center, opened and manned by 48th BCT Soldiers, is the first of its kind to coexist with a civil military operations center.
(photo by Spc. Tracy J. Smith, 48th BCT PAO)

(photos by Spc. Tracy J. Smith, 48th BCT PAO)



Guarding the future- An Iraqi Army Soldier closely monitors activity during the distribution of school supplies at a school in downtown Mahmudiyah, Iraq.
(photo by Spc. Tracy J. Smith, 48th BCT PAO)

TAKE '10'

10 Questions for Lt. Col Mark London 48th BCT Operations Officer

LB-Do you believe the 48th BCT has made a difference here in Iraq during the first half of our rotation?

Absolutely, when we first got here, the Iraqi people were scared to walk down the streets of Mahmudiyah, and Yusifiyah. Since then, we've led several patrols down there and now people came out and greet us. In addition to that, IEDs on Route Tampa have been reduced. The population for the most part is friendly to us. You didn't get that feeling when we first arrived here. The sheiks (local tribal leaders) have said to Brigadier General Rodeheaver that we were the first unit that has really talked with them. I think the National Guard coming from a civilian background and having to deal with people more often than our active counterparts do a better job in the arena of engaging people and talking to them. We have police officers, counselors, teachers, people in business who deal with the public every day, I think that has made a big difference in the success of the mission.



Lt. Col Mark London receives the Combat Infantry Badge from Maj. Gen. David Poythress, The Adjutant General of Georgia.

LB-What do the Soldiers of the 48th BCT have to look forward to with the change of mission?

They can look forward to better living conditions. I think it will be in a safer environment in the sense that we will not own terrain, we won't have to go out and do patrols every day, but it is a very important mission. I don't want people to leave here and think it is going to be a "cush" job and let their guard down. It is still very dangerous no matter where we are in Iraq. Convoy security, making sure that supplies and materials get from Kuwait up to the log bases is very important, because without those supplies the Army stops moving.

LB-What are some of the more significant events you will remember about our mission here?

The integration of the Iraqi Army and working with them. The significant changes we've made are incredible, especially in 2nd Battalion's sector, where an Iraqi Army Base was built from scratch. There wasn't ever any kind of Iraqi Security Forces in that area, however, we were able to get an IA Battalion (3rd BN) there. These are things that I was personally involved in here. Obviously the loss of our Soldiers and their sacrifice, we will never forget them. What great Soldiers they were. The camaraderie that we share in this brigade is deeply felt. There's not a Soldier here that will ever forget their friends and fellow Soldiers.

LB-How have the units adapted to their current mission since arriving in Iraq?

We had to learn some lessons. It is a new environment. Our training was good but it did not really prepare us for what our mission was and we had to adapt and overcome, learn some lessons. But the Soldiers adapted well and they have become experts. They have gained valuable experience that we can take back and train Soldiers who did not have the opportunity to come over here.

LB-What has impressed you the most about the Soldiers of the 48th BCT?

Their dedication and their "can-do" attitude. They take it very seriously. I think they are very adaptive to the situation. Whatever mission we give them, they were able to adapt to it. They are professionals. You can not tell the difference between our Soldiers and the Active Duty Soldiers. The recent air assault mission we conducted is the largest air assault mission ever conducted by a National Guard unit, and likely the largest since major combat operation ceased in the war. Our Soldiers have had a lot of "first" in-theatre and that is pretty impressive.

LB-What would you like to say to the families back home about what their Soldiers are doing here in Iraq?

They should be very proud of every Soldier that has come over here. Our Soldiers continue to sacrifice their lives, being away from home and their loved ones to come here to give the Iraqi citizens a choice to have freedom and live in a democratic society. We miss them terribly, but they can be real proud of what has been done here.

LB-What has been the most demanding aspect of planning operations for the 48th BCT?

Not knowing who the enemy is. In past combat operations, rules of engagement were very clear, anyone that was combative you could eliminate. You knew who the enemy was, in a guerilla war, you do not know who the enemy is. It is hard to plan on how to kill an enemy if you do not know who he is. That has been the hardest part. Of course when we get intelligence, we act on it immediately and we have taken down many bad guys and captured a lot of the terrorists equipment.

LB-Are the Iraqi Army Soldiers ready to take over this area of operations?

It depends on which unit you talk about. Every unit is at different levels. Some units are much better than others. The 4th Brigade currently operates in our sector right now. One battalion is fully mission capable. The other three are at a mid level. Probably with another three months of training, they will be prepared to take over our sector completely. They are very dedicated. They are courageous, and not afraid to fight. They need a little more training and equipment. Logistics is very difficult for them right now. Once that is fixed, they will be ready to go. The IA, 4th Brigade has only been operational four months now. They were here about thirty days before we got here. After about nine months of training, they will definitely be ready.



LB-What have the Iraqi people told you about the changes our presence has made here?

It depends on who you talk to, for the most part Iraqi people want us to stay. We bring them security and they trust Americans. I think they eventually will want us out so they can run their own country. They really like us and they trust us. I think the way to win this war is to focus on the future of Iraq. We treat them with respect and the children love us. There is one story, that I'm reminded of, when we occupied Germany after WWII. Imagine an old man who remembers an American Soldier giving him a chocolate bar right after the war ended, that man never forgot that Soldier. That is how you win a war.

LB-What would you like to say to the Soldiers of the 48th Brigade?

I am very proud of each and every one of them. I'm proud to serve with them and to be in a leadership position of this great brigade. We've built relationships that will last a lifetime. When you go through an event like this, unless you've experienced it, people on the outside can not understand what you've gone through. The bonds of brotherhood is something that you will nver forget.

48th Brigade Operational Successes

Lightning Soldiers have made a number of historical events, such as:

- First Combat Brigade Army wide to deploy with the new ACU (Army Combat Uniform)
- The largest Air Mobile Operation by any Army National Guard unit in history and the largest since major combat operations ceased in Iraq.
- The 48th is the only Army National Guard unit to have a Brigade Aviation Element certified, combat ready.
- The only unit in-theatre that has ever replaced an engine on a HETT (Heavy Equipment Tactical Transporter).
- 2-121 IN BN Soldiers fired mortars in a combat zone, first since WWII.
- Trained an Iraqi Army Brigade, integrated them in combat operations. They soon started performing their own missions with the 48th BCT in support.
- 648th EN BN Soldiers built the Iraqi Army Lion's Den Base in 7 days.
- Awarded first Combat Awards since WWII.

48th Soldiers have also:

- Discovered over 125 Improvised Explosive Devices and found over 40 weapons caches, some of which were extremely large in size, these finds help to save the lives of local citizens, as well as Coalition Forces.
- Have conducted over 90 Coordinated Attacks.
- Have completed well over 11,000 patrols, to include nearly 1500 joint patrols.
- Have had such successful impacts on the local communities that we've had over 600 reports from local citizens on insurgent activitiy.
- Have detained over 350 suspected terrorist.
- Paid over \$135,000 in claims to local residents.

Quick Strikes

Notes from the Staff

From the Office of the Staff Judge Advocate

“Active Duty Alerts” Help Protect from Identity Theft

The last thing you want to worry about while you are deployed is someone assuming your identity to commit financial fraud. Now, you don't have to. Amendments to the Fair Credit Reporting Act allow you to place an “active duty alert” in your credit report (see the August 15, 2005 Lightning Bolt for our article on credit ratings). According to the Federal Trade Commission, (one of the agencies that enforces the FCRA), the alert requires creditors to verify your identity before granting credit in your name.

You may place an “active duty alert” on your credit report to help minimize the risk of identity theft while you are deployed. When a business sees the alert on your credit report, it must verify your identity before issuing you credit. The business may try to contact you directly, but because you're on deployment, that may be impossible. As a result, the law allows you to use a personal representative to place or remove an alert. Active duty alerts on your report are effective for one year, unless you request that the alert be removed sooner. If your deployment lasts longer, you may place another alert on your report.

To place an “active duty” alert, or to have it removed, call the toll-free fraud number of **one** of the three nationwide consumer reporting companies: Equifax, Experian, or Trans Union. The company will require you to provide appropriate proof of identity, which may include your Social Security number, your name, address, and other personal information. If your contact information changes before your alert expires, remember to update it.

- Equifax: 1-800-525-6285; www.equifax.com
- Experian: 1-888-397-3742; www.experian.com
- Trans Union: 1-800-680-7289; www.transunion.com

When you place an active duty alert, your name will be removed from nationwide consumer reporting companies' marketing lists for prescreened offers of credit and insurance for two years – unless you ask that your name be placed on the lists before then. Prescreened offers – sometimes called “pre approved” offers – are based on information in your credit report that indicates you meet certain criteria set by the offered personnel.

It is also good fraud prevention and OPSEC to destroy address labels while in theater. Your sender's information and your address information should be either shredded or destroyed with your other secret documents. Additionally, safeguard your personal information by locking items up when you are not present.

To learn more about identity theft and your credit rights under the FCRA and the Fair and Accurate Credit Transactions Act, visit ftc.gov/credit. To file a complaint or to get free information on consumer issues, visit www.ftc.gov or call toll-free, 1-877-382-4357.

ATTENTION!!

All Soldiers going on R&R Leave must attend the mandatory briefings held at the main Chapel. Briefings are held Tuesday at 0800 and 1900. The Chapel is located next to the Mayor's Cell on North Striker.



Camp Striker 5K Freedom Run Saturday, Oct 15th

The Camp Striker 5K Freedom Run is an opportunity for all runners to come together and enjoy a spirited run through Camp Striker. Race shirts from various race organizations have been donated to this event.

The Camp Striker 5K Freedom Run is being recognized as an honorary and special RRCA State 5K Championship for Georgia. The results of this race will be forwarded to the RRCA for recognition.

Major Charles “Buck” Bennett of the Golden Isles Track Club of St. Simons Island is the organizer of this event. “The RRCA commends Major Bennett's efforts to organize this event under such adverse conditions. We feel that this event warrants the RRCA Georgia State 5K Championship designation. Our wished go out for a safe successful race.”

Register at the MWR South tent.

48th BCT Soldier writes a love letter for all to read

Spc. Tracy J. Smith
48th BCT PAO

CAMP STRYKER, Iraq – Specialist Joseph Sean Brown openly admits he misses his wife’s nagging.

“She doesn’t do it often,” Brown began, laughing at the thought. “I know it’s silly but I think about her when I’m at the (Camp Striker, Iraq) truck wash. We are washing our humvees and I think about her getting on me for washing our vehicles too often. Wish I was near her to hear the sound of her voice.”

A far away look comes across the face of the Stockbridge, Ga. Soldier as he remembers what brought him to this place on the stoop to talk about Wendy. His wife of twelve years.

In his hands, among papers, folders and other military related documents is a dog-eared copy of a little known magazine that may have enhanced his ‘long-distance’ relationship. “*Military Spouse*” magazine features the wife of the Commander-in-Chief, Laura Bush, and a touching letter written by Brown in this Special Anniversary Edition. A letter from a place thousands of miles from the woman

Brown calls the most ‘wonderful wife in the world.’

The journey to the love-letter’s publishing began in a much greener environment.

“When we were at Ft. Stewart (Georgia) I saw a “*Military Spouse*” Magazine in the Post Exchange, I told her about it but I didn’t pick it up for her,”



Staying in touch - Spc. Sean Brown, a military intelligence specialist with 48th Brigade Combat Team, Task Force Baghdad, always has something to write home about. “Especially to say ‘I love you.’” (Photo by Spc. Tracy J. Smith 48th BCT PAO)



Letters from the sands - Spc. Sean Brown, a Task Force Baghdad military intelligence specialist assigned to 48th BCT, proudly displays a touching photo of his wife Wendy prior to his departing for Iraq. (Photo by Spc. Tracy J. Smith 48th BCT PAO)

said Brown, a radar/communications systems technician with 248th Military Intelligence Company, 48th Brigade Combat Team. He is slightly embarrassed by what happened next. “She fussed at me.” Wendy Brown’s complaint was not because she felt he was not being thoughtful. As the Family Readiness Group chairperson for her husband’s company, she wanted to give the magazine a “once over” to determine if it would be a good item to introduce to the other spouses and parents in the FRG.

“I got in touch with (the staff) and explained what I wanted to do, after I purchased my own copy,” Wendy explained in a telephone interview from their home. “I liked it and thought it would be a good idea for loved ones to consider subscribing and asked to have one-time trial copies sent to the house so I could pass them out,”

Brown, not realizing that his wife had requested copies for their FRG, (“She got like 200 copies of the things”), wanted to do something special for Wendy. “So we just get here (Iraq) and one night I was bored and thinking about home and decided to go to the internet café. It can be a long wait to get on the computer sometimes.” That means extra time to sit and think. That is when the “*Military Spouse*” Magazine came to mind. “I just thought, ‘I’ll be a sweet husband and send her a subscription.’ I would put a note on it to say, you know, I love you and here is your subscription to “*Military Spouse*” magazine.”

When his 30-minute opportunity came about, his first mouse-click sent him on a winning path. With credit card at the ready, a small window popped up offering a chance at a free subscription by submitting a love-letter got his attention. If the letter is selected as one of the top ten for publication, he could win a free subscription. “I said I’ll give it a shot.” Taking a chance like that motivated Brown to make daily treks to the internet café.

“I went for about a week and a half, everyday,” Brown recounted, with a glint in his eyes. “I waited in line for hours sometimes just to check my email. Then finally, I get the confirmation saying my letter had made it!”

He could not wait to tell his wife. Brown delivered the news on one of Wendy’s more emotionally hectic days.

“It was the day they had the Governors prayer vigil at the Georgia state capitol. It was a very sad and touching ceremony,” Wendy explained. “I came home, drained and all these magazines were sitting at the front door. Then Sean called and told me what he had done and I picked up a copy and read it. I had to read it about ten times before it sank in.” After calling family and friends to share the news, she took a deep breath and reflected on his gift and what it meant to share page space with the wife of the President of the United States.

“I represent a lot of the other wives in the 48th brigade and (248th MICO) whose husbands are away,” Wendy stated. She realizes that now, more than ever it is important to keep things in perspective. “I know I have a loving, caring husband but I am no different from anyone else.”

Love Letters continued on page 14

Devil Strike from page 5

“I thought it was awesome having the Iraqi Army working with us. We are helping them rebuild their country. The entire operation went smoothly” said Sgt Dustin Wells of Guilford, MO. Soldiers moved cautiously throughout the large plant facility, searching each building, trailer and shed in their assigned sectors. Locked doors did not hinder the Soldiers who opened them by using various methods, shotgun, detonating cord or just kicking them in. The complex seemed to be abandoned except for a small number of security personnel who were considered “friendly.”

As the operation continued, squads of engineers from A Company went through two large tunnels constructed with concrete walls that ran nearly the length of the compound. However all that was found in the tunnels was construction materials; wood and concrete.

The most significant event came at mid morning when 4 rockets were fired into the compound from an unknown location killing one Iraqi Army Soldier and injuring 5 IA Soldiers. With the combined efforts of the U.S. medical team and the Iraqi Army Soldiers on the ground, the wounded were treated quickly and then transported to proper medical facilities by a Medevac helicopter. This shattering event was the only negative incident in an otherwise textbook operation.

“The operation was a success because we confirmed that this facility is secure and that no insurgent activity is being conducted here.” said Lt. Col Steve McCorkel, Commander of the 2nd Battalion.

“No more significant time will be burned by watching this facility. We answered the questions about what was there at this power plant. said Avera. “We can focus the intelligence assets on something else now. It is not a safe haven for insurgents. We know the make up of the facility” added Avera.

The largest air assault operation ever conducted by an Army National Guard unit went smoothly due to the extensive planning and coordination between all levels of the organization. From the Warriors on the ground to the Aviators who commanded the aircraft, all the skills and resources required to conduct such a large scale operation were brought to bear for a successful operation.



Soldiers give a helping hand as their fellow Soldier looks through tunnels for any suspected insurgents or suspicious materials during Operation Devil Strike. (Photo by Sgt David Bill 48th BCT PAO).

Triangle from page 4

Baughman, a fleet vehicle manager in his civilian job, keeps a tally of the number of patrols they have conducted since putting boots on the ground in Lutifiyah, over 200 patrols thus far.

“We know our area like the back of our hand at this point,” Baughman confirmed. “That’s our job. We know if the slightest thing is different from the last. The operational tempo has been high and it takes its toll on the Soldiers but that doesn’t keep us from doing our job. We are successful because we work well together and can depend on each other to accomplish our mission.”

An attitude reflected throughout B Co., 108th Armor Bn. according to Jackels. The commander punctuates what drives the Soldiers’ common purpose and vigorous spirit.

“I’ve never seen a unit with a stronger bond than we have. I believe a lot of it has to do with the successes we have had and because this is just the right group of people working together at the right time, in the right place.”

Love Letters from page 13

Family responsibilities can weigh her down but she knows that being Mom, (sometimes) Dad, an ear for other family members, event organizer and “whatever else may pop-up” does not compare to the job her husband is doing in a land she may never get to visit.

“It’s funny how that is,” Brown begins, “we talk about that all the time. Like nagging, we will say, ‘you know how you used to nag at me about stuff? I wish I was there so you could nag at me’ and we laugh about it. Its just so you know...that feeling that she is there.”

In the meantime, Brown is here to do a job. To ease those times when things get a little challenging he will put his feelings on paper and he is not afraid for the world to read about them. “I get selfish sometimes. I need him to help with the kids, or wash the trucks. I think I’ve washed the truck once since he’s been over there,” Wendy added with a giggle. “But, the thing that keeps me strong is knowing he’s helping to sustain peace and helping (the Iraqi people) rebuild their country. That’s something he can’t do here. I have his love and support and he has mine, that way we both can handle our responsibilities.”

On this Sunday, Wendy is off to help with a housewarming party. It is one of those things that, under normal circumstances, he would complain about. Being in Iraq has realigned his priorities.



Soldiers In the Sand



what do you think about the 48th BCT's new mission?



"It's a new challenge going forward and working with new Soldiers in order to accomplish the mission and get each other through it and then go home."

Spc. Patrick Charles
Greenville, MS.
Co A, 148th SB



"The escort duty, the diversity, working with different nationalities, a change of pace and hopefully less hassels."

Spc. Alexander Pinckney
Gainesville, GA.
HHC 48th BCT



"Its going to be good for the troops. It's a change for everyone, I think it's going to be 100 percent better. We can take our knowledge and apply it to out new mission."

Pfc. Daniel Bradbury
St. Louis, MO
220th CSE



"I'm ready for a change. We're going to a better place, my brother is over here and I'll be closer to him."

Spc. Kelli Ellis
Murphysboro, IL.
Co. A, 133rd Sig. Bn.



"It's a transitional point, we're halfway, and I'm not moving. I'm supporting troops here at Striker. It's another mission closer to home."

Sgt. Kathy Judd
Richmond Hill, GA.
Co. B, 148th SB



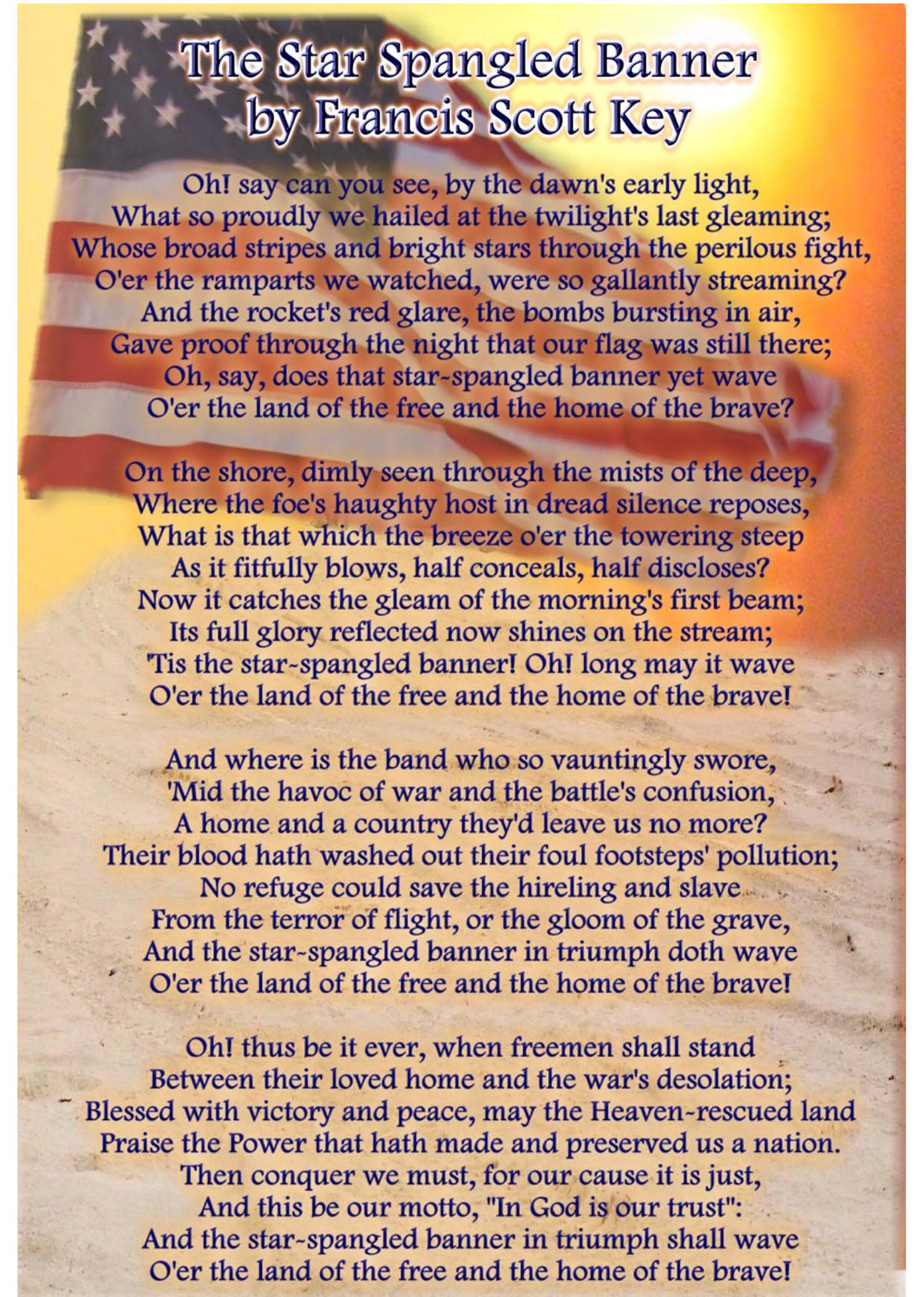
"We're making progress, we've accomplished a whole lot here and the new mission is closer to going home. We have made a difference while we were here."

Sgt. Andrew Jackson
Ochlocknee, GA.
HHC 2/121 IN

"It won't be as dangerous and as hectic. More military justice for JAG."

Staff Sgt. Latoya Westbrooks
Atlanta, GA
HHC 48th BCT





The Star Spangled Banner by Francis Scott Key

Oh! say can you see, by the dawn's early light,
What so proudly we hailed at the twilight's last gleaming;
Whose broad stripes and bright stars through the perilous fight,
O'er the ramparts we watched, were so gallantly streaming?
And the rocket's red glare, the bombs bursting in air,
Gave proof through the night that our flag was still there;
Oh, say, does that star-spangled banner yet wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave?

On the shore, dimly seen through the mists of the deep,
Where the foe's haughty host in dread silence reposes,
What is that which the breeze o'er the towering steep
As it fitfully blows, half conceals, half discloses?
Now it catches the gleam of the morning's first beam;
Its full glory reflected now shines on the stream;
'Tis the star-spangled banner! Oh! long may it wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave!

And where is the band who so vauntingly swore,
'Mid the havoc of war and the battle's confusion,
A home and a country they'd leave us no more?
Their blood hath washed out their foul footsteps' pollution;
No refuge could save the hireling and slave
From the terror of flight, or the gloom of the grave,
And the star-spangled banner in triumph doth wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave!

Oh! thus be it ever, when freemen shall stand
Between their loved home and the war's desolation;
Blessed with victory and peace, may the Heaven-rescued land
Praise the Power that hath made and preserved us a nation.
Then conquer we must, for our cause it is just,
And this be our motto, "In God is our trust":
And the star-spangled banner in triumph shall wave
O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave!