



# The Club

*The Official Newsletter of the 1st Brigade Combat Team*

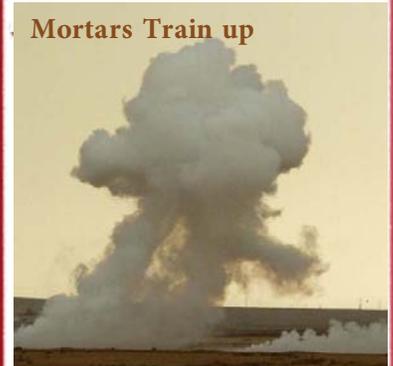
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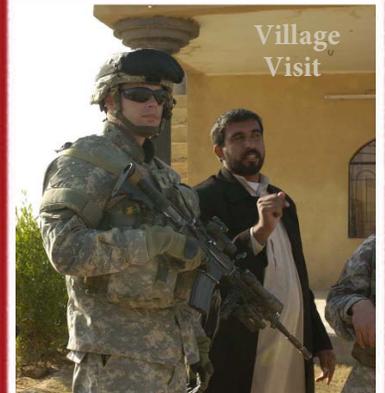
Supporting the Community



Arrows Boost Morale



Mortars Train up



Village Visit

## Honor & Country



1st BCT Commander:  
Col. David R. Gray

## Happy New Year!

A famous American poet once wrote: "We will open the book. Its pages are blank. We are going to put words on them ourselves. The book is called Opportunity and its first chapter is New Year's Day."

For soldiers of the Iraqi Army, the citizens of Iraq and Soldiers of the Bastogne Brigade, 2006 is truly an open book of opportunity filled with blank pages on which the achievements of each will be written. The events that fill those pages will be talked about for generations to come.

Since deployment to Iraq, the Iraqi Army has taken responsibility from the 1st Brigade Combat Team for two Forward Operating Bases in Northern Iraq, and plans are currently being developed for the turnover of more operating bases. As these brave men continue to train, gain experience and take over the mission of day to day security in the region, they write their role in Iraq's history as defenders of democracy.

Bastogne Soldiers took a back seat when it came to the election in December as the Iraqi Security Forces took the lead in providing security as their fellow citizens voted for democracy. The election gave the citizens of Iraq a representative national government for the first time in history. Now, with the start of the New Year, that government convenes for the first time and the citizens of Iraq have new hope.

Iraqi citizens across the region have started reaching out and raising their voices against terrorism. There have been numerous accounts of townspeople calling in, reporting suspicious activity or improvised explosive devices to local police.

The Iraqi Police are continually training and improving security in their communities. They have increased patrols and security checkpoints leading to a host of successful discoveries of weapons and caches, diminishing the threat of terrorism in their streets. The Iraqi Police are opening civil affairs departments in their stations throughout the province to help the communities in matters such as electricity, and trash clean up. The police are proving to the people that they are committed to helping the citizens in addition to providing security.

What opportunities then does the New Year hold for Bastogne Soldiers? Your sons and daughters, husbands and wives, our Soldiers, have the incredible honor of helping shape the face of a nation.

As I write this letter, Bastogne Soldiers are training and working alongside the Iraqi Army and Police forces, others are instructing and advising the Provincial Government, and yet others are helping to grow and strengthen local businesses.

This is not an easy task. Four Bastogne Soldiers recently gave their lives for Iraq's future. We honor their courage, bravery, and commitment to our country as we continue our mission. We will never forget Staff Sgt. Rickey Scott, Sgt. Dennis Flanagan, Sgt. Clifton Yazzie, and Spc. Matthew Frantz.

I am truly humbled by the extraordinary achievements of each member of this Brigade, and I look forward to reading the pages of history that we will fill during the next 12 months.

God bless our Soldiers and each of you in this New Year!

Bastogne!  
Air Assault!



## “No Slack;” Always Training

By: Spc. Barbara Ospina  
1st BCT Public Affairs

Shortly after the sun broke through the morning sky on January 7, indirect fire infantrymen (mortar men) and fire support specialists from 2nd Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment started setting up outside Forward Operating Base (FOB) Warrior for an opportunity to advance their skills.

Rain fell sporadically, growing steady as the up-armored humvees rolled out to the

range, leading the Soldiers to joke “if it ain’t raining, we ain’t training.”

Knowing that an impact area can be full of unexploded ordinance, the forward observers immediately cleared their observation point; meanwhile the mortar men were busy positioning their 81 mm “guns.”

More than 100 white phosphorus, illumination and high explosive (HE) rounds meant plenty of ordinance to launch down-range; filling the day, and much of the night, with countless explosions.

“Training exercises allow us to remain proficient at indirect firing, and forward observer skills,” said Sgt.

1st Class Jeremy Barton, the Battalion Fire Support Non-Commissioned Officer.

Back at Fort Campbell, Ky., the “No Slack” Battalion would conduct similar training exercises at least once every quarter. According to Sgt. 1st Class Jason Sager, the Battalion’s Mortar Platoon Leader, they are trying to keep that pace while deployed.

In preparation, the Soldiers spent the week prior to the

live-fire exercise conducting misfire rehearsals and gun preparation.

“They did well in rehearsals,” Sager commented. “They were prepared today.”

Soon after placed their targets, small foreign trucks so rusted that they blended in with vast dirt area, the first mission ripped over the radio.

After receiving the elevation and distance to the center of the impact area, the mortar men responded by adjusting their gun and sliding the first of many rounds to come down the mortar tube.

With the first blast, the forward observers closely watched for the familiar impact, knowing their mission also requires them to be the eyes of the firer, relaying their observations back.

Rain fell periodically throughout the exercise, but the dark clouds persistently hovered overhead, as rounds hurled through the gray sky, sending a cloud of dirt and smoke into the mix upon impact. As the last round burst high in the night sky, and the dark yellow light slowly trailed off providing sight in the darkest of nights, the Soldiers packed up their gear and scraped sticky clay mud off their boots as they climbed into the trucks eagerly anticipating hot chow that would bring their day to close.



Soldiers from Company A, 2nd Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment prepare to fire a 60 mm mortar down range during a training exercise outside FOB Warrior.

Photos By:  
Spc. Barbara Ospina

# Mayor Cell Takes Care of it

By: Spc. Michael Pfaff  
133rd MPAD

Some Soldiers may not be spearheading the attack on the insurgency in the cities and villages, but their support is an essential role in the success of those missions.

The handful of Soldiers that make up the mayor's cell, at Forward Operating Base Warrior, function as the cornerstone in maintaining the place where so many Soldiers call home in Iraq.

"You name it," said Master Sgt. Thomas Keister, the non-commissioned officer in charge at the mayor's cell. "Everything from 'A' to 'Z', we're here to take care of it and get it squared away for the Soldiers and civilians who live on this base."

Squaring away the base would require a few people with a variety of skills. Each Soldier was handpicked from many different specialties to form a diverse group of people to make sure the lengthy list of tasks get completed.

Prior to the deployment, many of these Soldiers had never met one another. But, Keister explained that this has not deterred the Soldiers from being successful.

"It was kind of rough at first," Keister said. "But, we've become a tight bunch of people here to do one mission, and that's to take care of the Soldiers and civilians."

After settling in the mayor's cell got down to business on making FOB Warrior a comfortable habitat for the Soldiers here.

The cell's responsibilities extend well beyond managing living quarters. From day one, they've been involved in projects ranging anywhere from cleaning up excessive debris to replacing housing

Pods wiped out from mortar attacks, two of which are in the process of being rebuilt.

It doesn't end there though. Anything related to grounds work, the mayor's cell makes sure gets completed. To reduce the amount of speeding in the area around the dining facility, speed bumps have been installed.

"We had materials left over from another project, so we decided to put it to use and save the government some money," Keister said.

Part of that tight bunch at the mayor's cell, Spc. Joel H. Hunt, III, was selected for his technical skills with heating and air conditioning units. He

explained that working at the mayor's cell is kind of like working as a hotel manager.

"We make sure that the people that reside on our base get taken care of," he said. "No matter how major or little, we're here to get it done."



Photo By: Spc. Michael Pfaff

The Soldiers that make it happen at the FOB Warrior Mayor's Cell take a minute to pose for a group photo.

(Cont. Pg 05...Mayor Cell)

## Chaplain's Corner

*Hanukkah*, also spelled *Chanukah*, is an 8-day festival celebrated each winter by Jews around the world. Hanukkah began way back in the beginning (all things really do begin there) when God created the world. He created us in His own image – and He "walked with us in the cool of the day..." You know the story: we sinned and disrupted that first state of our union with God – but He's been working to heal that breach ever since. God chose a man, a family and a nation through which to bring the One who would "undo" all that the fall had done.

But Satan had other plans. If he could disperse that nation and destroy that family then he could frustrate God's plan. So he sent lying prophets of seductive false religions to draw God's people into spiritual adultery. And off they went... dispersed and dejected, but not without hope. The nation was destroyed but the family line had not ended. Against all worldly expectations, the exiles returned to their homeland and began rebuilding Jerusalem and the Temple...

But Satan had other plans. He can twist almost anything good, but God can bring good out of anything twisted!

(Cont. Pg 07...Chaplain's Corner)



General George Casey, Commander of MNF-I, takes the time to reenlist Bastogne Soldiers during a visit to FOB Warrior.



Photo By: Spc. Barbara Ospina

Specialist Greg Carnathan, a Soldier in HHC, 1st Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment, takes his time aiming an arrow at the units newly established archery range.

By: Spc. Barbara Ospina  
1st BCT Public Affairs

Morale is higher at Forward Operating Base (FOB) McHenry since the Soldiers of 1st Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment, took personal time to build an archery range.

The small but picturesque range was built slowly, piece by piece, as Soldiers found enough time to hammer a nail between daily patrols and missions.

Before the building could begin, clean up was required. The area was full of decrepit tents and trash left by the previous unit. As each broken-down tent and mound of trash was hauled off, the morale-inspiring vision became more clear.

## Bows and Arrows Boost Morale

“Soldiers don’t really have a lot of spare time here, they might have three hours one day and none the next,” commented Lt. Col. Marc Hutson, Commanding Officer for 1st Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment. “So it took a couple weeks to actually get the range set-up.”

The idea for the range sprouted when Hutson was spending time with his sons prior to deployment.

“I have two sons who love hunting and fishing, so we would go bow shooting as often as possible,” Hutson reflected. “It’s a great way to spend time together before a deployment.” I was at an indoor range with my sons and I thought the range would be a good idea, from there it was only a simple matter of making it all happen.

According to Hutson several groups and stores donated equipment for the range about a month before the unit deployed. The stores kindly donated five compound bows, including one left handed, and a couple dozen arrows with targets, extra funding for the range was provided through a Morale, Welfare and Recreation (MWR) fund raised by Capt. Peter Kyriakoulis, currently working on the Military Transition Team (MITT) for 1st Bn.

Last June Kyriakoulis put together a charity run, where patriots across the states pledged money by the mile in support of the unit. As Kyriakoulis exhaustively finished his 50-mile run, he had raised more than 10,000 dollars to be used during Battalion’s next deployment.

“The best part about the range is it’s easy for someone to go out and enjoy

themselves whether they have done it before or not,” commented Spc. Shawn Wilcher, a long-time hunter and Soldier in the Headquarters Company of 1st Bn.

Specialist Greg Carnathan’s first time using a bow and arrow was at the range; he fired over 100 arrows down range. “It’s pretty addictive,” he joked. So the next day he went out and fired over a 100 more, ending his new experience with sore arms and shoulders that lasted for a few days.

The range is open to all Soldiers, even those who have never held a bow. There are Soldiers within each company on the FOB that can teach and guide them on the proper techniques of firing the weapon.

“It’s not something that you know automatically, but it’s not hard to learn either,” Hutson commented.

The range, though designed to boost morale, also helps fine tune Soldier skills.

“Firing a bow requires concentration, skill and focus; all traits that help make a good Soldier,” Hutson said confidently.

In February 2006, the Soldiers of FOB McHenry will have the opportunity to test their skills in a competition at the range.

The unit is doing its best to make improvements to the range in the short time remaining before the competition. By competition day the range will have three-dimensional targets and more shooting positions, including a six-foot stand that is currently usable but undergoing improvements.

“The range gives the Soldiers something to look forward to,” Hutson said.

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The Bastogne FRG website has been developed to assist you and your family in preparing deployments and extended temporary duty assignments. **The site is currently under construction, but will be updated frequently.**

## “No Slack” Continues

*“You must know something about strategy and tactics and logistics, but also economics and politics and diplomacy and history. You must know everything you can know about military power, and you must also understand the limits of military power. You must understand that few of the important problems of our time have, in the final analysis, been finally solved by military power alone.”*

- John F. Kennedy

As *Task Force No Slack* continues its mission in Kirkuk, it has found that the words of our president four decades ago are applicable today. In a complex environment of ethnic, tribal, political, and economic influences, Soldiers are faced with a myriad of challenges and responsibilities. On any given day a Soldier will travel through Kirkuk Province prepared to face the handshake of an Iraqi pleased to see us training with Iraqi Army, or prepared to face a hand grenade thrown by a terrorist resentful of

our strong relationship with Iraqi Police. To date the innovative and professional Soldiers of *No Slack* have successfully accomplished their tasks.

*Task Force No Slack* has conducted training and counter-insurgency operations with two Iraqi Army battalions, two Iraqi Security Infrastructure battalions, and over 17 Iraqi police districts.

These operations have defeated terrorist efforts and legitimized the Iraqi Security Forces. Most



Sergeant Robert Kelly from 2nd Platoon, Company A, 2nd Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment stands ready for a mission with Iraqi Army soldiers.

effective have been *No Slack* operations which have identified elements of terrorist networks, logistics, and support in the area of operation. These operations are developed and led by the junior leaders of the battalion, whose initiative is the single most important combat multiplier on the battlefield.

### Mayor Cell (From Pg. 03)

Private 1st Class Celina Flores, worked in the postal office in garrison, but was chosen to be part of the mayor's cell for her administration and driving skills.

Flores noted that Soldiers need a connection to the civilian contractors, and that's what the mayor's cell acts as.

“I think if it wasn't for us, a lot of people might not know what to do,” she said. “We're kind of like in-between.”

The mayor's cell also provides for Soldiers who may not actually stay on the base, but may be staying for only a night or two. They control “tent city”, which acts as a place for Soldiers-in-transit to rest before they move on.

Sergeant 1st Class Francis Monroe, manages the tent city.

Monroe explained that tent city is an important priority because there are a lot of Soldiers passing through who need a place to sleep and shower. Tent city will also act as the residence of the Soldiers here when their time comes to be relieved.

While a lot of Soldiers may cringe when they slip and call this base “home”, until they return to their homes back in the States, that is exactly what it is and the Soldiers who make up the mayor's cell are the people behind the scenes making the place the best it can be.

“It's steadily getting better,” Hunt said. “We're trying to make sure Soldiers live comfortably for our duration here.”

## Training The Trainer

By: Spc. Michael Pfaff  
133rd MPAD

Iraqi Army soldiers graduating from a “Master Trainer” program attended a ceremony at the K1 Iraqi Army base.

The training program lasted two weeks and involved coalition Soldiers training the enlisted leadership of the Iraqi Army how to better teach their own enlisted troops basic skills.

“The training for the last two weeks has been a train-the-trainer program,” said Maj. Christopher J. Kidd, a member of the 1st Brigade Combat Team's team training the Iraqi Army “We're trying to provide the Iraqi battalions with actual trainers so they don't have to rely on coalition forces to train them on basic skills.”

Over the course of two weeks, coalition trainers taught

two Iraqi non-commissioned officers from each company a variety of skills, including medical training, moving under contact, communications, and many other basic battle techniques.

Coalition forces main goal was to teach them how to teach other Iraqi soldiers how to be proficient at these tasks as well.

“The idea was not to provide them with the skills, but to provide them with techniques to pass those skills onto younger soldiers,” Kidd said.

Forty-three Iraqi soldiers entered the program; Thirty-five graduated. Other than the few who did not complete the course, coalition instructors said that the Iraqi soldiers were receptive to the training.

(Cont. Pg 08... Trainee)

# A Village Visit

“Bulldog Soldiers Build Rapport

By: Spc. Barbara Ospina  
1st BCT Public Affairs

Soldiers of 1st Platoon, Company C, 1st Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment recently took time to visit the small but quaint village of Khald Sal Khalaf in an attempt to build relations with the citizens in their area of operations.

The evening prior, the unit received reports of flashing lights and loud music coming from the village. With the possibility of celebratory gun fire, their questions would focus on recent weddings and other forms of celebration.

Upon arriving in the village, Soldiers were immediately greeted by a gentleman offering help.

Accepting the offer, the Soldiers made their way to a small colorful building.

Although the building was small, the colors and architecture symbolized its importance, making it stand out among the clay huts that comprised the rest of the village.

Before the conversation could begin, Chai (a traditional tea) was in order. Select Soldiers pulled security as 1st Lt. Patrick Smith, the 1st Platoon Leader, and the rest of his men courteously crossed their feet, taking a seat on small traditional but decorative carpets covering the floor of the well-appointed building.

“In their culture it is disrespectful to have the bottom of your feet showing,” Smith said discretely, making sure no Soldiers were being disrespectful toward their hosts.

Once seated, Smith noticed severe burns on one of the men’s hands, and immediately called for the platoon medic. The man explained to the medic that his burns were cause by a vehicle born improvised explosive device (VBIED) six months ago in Huwajah. After examining his puffy, discolored hands, and asking a few questions, the medic realized that the man would need greater medical attention for the infection or he would risk losing some of his fingers.



Photo By: Spc. Barbara Ospina

A medic from 1st Platoon, “Cold Steel” Company examines an Iraqi mans hands. The man explained that his hands were burned about six months prior by a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device in Huwajah, Iraq.

“Since the burns happened so long ago, we were unable to provide immediate medical attention,” Smith commented. “The burns had escalated into a spreading infection.”

With a translator relaying the message in Arabic, the man expressed his gratitude

and moved on to ask more pressing questions to the Soldiers.

While the tea was being prepared, Smith and his men discussed issues such as gas prices, and events of the night before.

The hour-long visit, proved helpful for both the Soldiers and the town leaders.

Once the tea and discussion session were complete, the Soldiers wrote a note inviting the gentleman with the burns to come to their Forward

Operating Base (FOB) to receive the medical attention he needed.

As the Soldiers drove out of the village, a sense of accomplishment swelled through them as they reflected on the events of the day.



Members of a Congressional Delegation take a group picture in front of the 1st BCT Club during their visit to Forward Operating Base Warrior on January 8. Senators Evan Bayh (IN), Barack Obama (IL), and Christopher “Kit” Bond (MO) joined Representative Harold Ford Jr. (TN) for a fact finding trip.

## More Than a Field Clinic

By: Spc. Barbara Ospina  
1st BCT Public Affairs

Soldiers of Company C, 426th Brigade Support Battalion, have been busy running and maintaining the Ivory Combat Clinic on Forward Operating Base (FOB) Warrior.

The clinic runs a sick call every Monday through Saturday from 8:00 a.m. until 11:00 a.m. which anyone may come and be seen for illness or injury.

"It is first come, first serve," said Spc. Sergio Del Vecchio, a medic at the clinic. "We will triage [sort patients according to priority] if necessary."

The Clinic offers level 2 medical care to anyone who might enter the doors, meaning the medics can do x-rays, dental lab work and the clinic has a patient holding area.

Although the sick call hours are time constricted, the clinic is open 24-hours a day for appointments or emergencies.

The small but efficient clinic provides care for 20 to 80 patients a day, and services are not limited to Soldiers; the medics also provide treatment to civilian contractors and local interpreters who work on the FOB.

"If there is a big sports event happening on the FOB, patients come in steadily," Del Vecchio commented.

Ivory Clinic is not just a miniature field hospital; The Soldiers at the clinic are prepared for emergency room procedures as well.

According to Del Vecchio, they have a complete trauma set up for emergency patients. "If we have mass casualties, then we call in every medic in Company C stationed on FOB Warrior," Del Vecchio said.

The set up even includes how many medics are at each of the beds and what their task is.

If needed, Del Vecchio said they can put four medics and one provider per patient, five people working together towards one common task.

Whether it is a cold, a broken ankle, or a battle wound; the medics of Company C are up to the task.

"Anything that comes in the door we can handle," Del Vecchio said confidently.



### Chaplain's Corner (from Pg. 03)

Alexander the Great conquered the known world, but died an untimely death. His generals divided Alexander's conquests and Israel became part of the Seleucid Empire. Alexander dealt graciously with the Jewish people, but in time a Seleucid king arose who did not: Antiochus decided to unify his empire by spreading the Greek culture including the Greek religion to all his lands. He desecrated the Jewish temple by slaughtering pigs on the holy altar and erecting a statue of Zeus.

Once again, against all worldly expectations, God intervened and the peasant people of Israel stood up to the mightiest army in the world and won their independence! After three years of fighting, The Jews drove the Seleucid's from Jerusalem, broke down the statue of Zeus and rededicated the Temple to the worship of the God of their fathers.

Hanukkah means "dedication." It is an annual remembrance of this mighty miracle: that God gave victory to his people, allowing them to cleanse the Temple and once again dedicate it to worshipping him. Hanukkah is also called the "Feast of Lights" because part of the rededication involved re-lighting the golden lampstand. Legend has it that only one day's supply of pure oil could be found. However, God miraculously extended that oil for 8 days. Thus the 8 days of the "Feast of Lights."

Despite Satan's plans, God continued to prepare his people for the coming of their healer. From a Christian perspective, it was less than 150 years later, "in the fullness of time," when that healer came. Herod's Temple was on its way to being the most glorious ever. Synagogue worship was established throughout the land and the healer, was born.

In a fulfillment of the Feast of Lights, to remember the dedication of the Temple, the healer came to be the light of the world. He offers a real cleansing of the true temples of our hearts, minds, souls and bodies.

May you and your loved ones experience God's richest and fullest blessings in 2006

*Your 1st BCT Unit Ministry Teams*

## "Balls" Hands Over Authority

By: Spc. Michael Pfaff  
133rd MPAD

The Iraqi Army assumed responsibility of Forward Operating Base Bernstein, marking another stride forward in the transfer of security in Iraq from coalition forces to the Iraqi Army.

The "Cobra" 3rd Battalion, 2nd Brigade, 4th Iraqi Army Division took control of the base and responsibility for the security of the surrounding region from 2nd Battalion, 320th Field Artillery Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, during a transfer of authority ceremony.

The transfer of authority ceremony took place after many months of training and joint missions with the Iraqi Army, preparing them for the eventual takeover. Lt. Col. Martin Holland, the commander

of 2nd Bn., 320th FAR recounted over 600 missions, three battalion sized operations, and countless smaller missions in a speech to the participants.

Lt. Col. Safa, commander of the Iraqi Army 2nd Brigade expressed his pride after the ceremony.

"I'm very proud of my soldiers, my officers, and the people who have died or been injured for this," Safa said.

During the ceremony, the "Balls of the Eagle" folded up their colors and the "Cobras" unfold theirs. A symbolic key to Bernstein was given to Safa by Holland.

"They've done a great job," Holland said. "I am very confident that the Iraqi Army is capable of controlling this battle space."

(Cont. Pg 09...TOA)

# Building Rapport

By: Spc. Barbara Ospina  
1st BCT Public Affairs

Soldiers of 1st Platoon, Company C, 1st Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment conducted a dismounted patrol through downtown Huwajah, Iraq on 21 December, to show the townspeople that U.S. Soldiers are here to help and support the community.

Once on foot, the Soldiers walked through downtown stopping at various stores in the market place to purchase items of interest.

“We shop at the local stores to help support the economics of the community,” said 1st Lt. Patrick Smith, the Platoon Leader for 1st Plt. “We try to buy food, or just stuff that we want.”

“Today, we had some falafel,” chimed in Staff Sgt. Hal Warner, the 2nd Squad Leader for 1st Plt.

Although walking the streets is a bit more dangerous for the Soldiers, according to Smith they want to show the community that they are not afraid to interact with the citizens of the town.

“We try to walk through the streets four to five times a week,” commented Pfc. Kevin Torres, the radiotelephone operator for Smith.

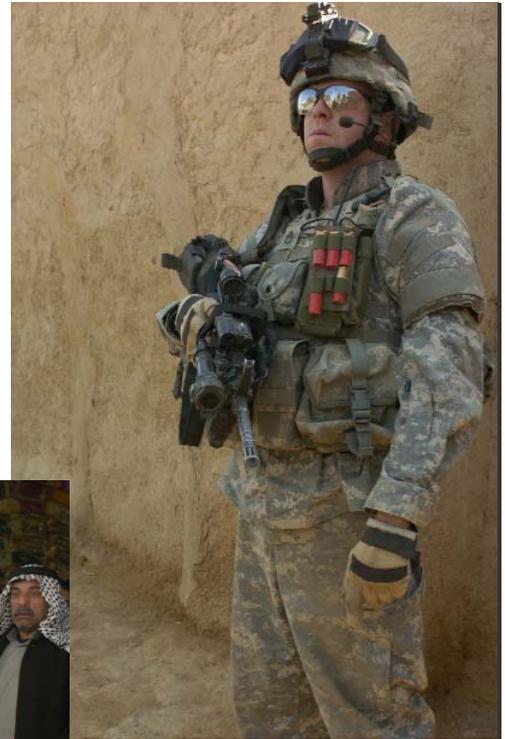
By dismounting from their vehicles, the platoon is working to re-establish a relationship between American forces and the people.

“We are showing them that we are here to help,” commented Smith. “We are not afraid to take the risk to help.”

After walking through the crowded streets, the Soldiers made their way to the house of a friendly Kurdish woman with

Soldiers of 1st Platoon, Company C, 1st Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment shop at local stores during a dismount patrol in Huwajah, Iraq in efforts to build a healthy relationship with the people.

Photos By: Spc. Barbara Ospina



whom they had met during a previous trip through town. According to Warner, while walking through downtown the week prior,

the Soldiers took fire and mistakenly kicked through the woman’s front gate. After clearing the house they ended up talking for a while and making friends. Apologizing for the gate, they paid her for the damage to her gate. More often than not, as the Soldiers are meeting and greeting the locals, their mission is cut short when bullets fly by, piercing the air. But this does not diminish the purpose of their mission.

“We will continue going to the shops and visiting with families,” commented Smith. “We want to flood the streets with U.S. presence.”

## Trainee (from Pg. 05)

“At first they were a bit skittish about the training,” said Sgt. James Davis, an instructor during the communications class “But, once we got outside doing the practical exercises they were seeing what we were talking about, from then on, it was full speed ahead.”

The real impact of the “Master Trainer” program will show in the long run when the graduates get back to their units and begin training fellow Iraqi troops. But, Davis said he is confident they will succeed.

Kidd said he is comfortable that the Iraqi graduates will go on to give lower enlisted soldiers in the Iraqi Army the skills they need to take over more battle space from coalition forces.

“As we phase out, they phase in,” Kidd said. “And, the only way to do that is if they have the skills necessary in order to train their own soldiers. They’re doing better and better every day.”



## CULTURE

*Written By: Karso, 1st BCT PAO Interpreter*

## Hajj

Hajj is an annual four day celebration in the Muslim world; literally interpreted it means visiting the house of God. The period of celebration starts with a huge feast, the second major feast of Islam. It ends with the people visiting relatives and loved ones, and each forgiving the trespasses of others against them.

The Islamic religion has five standards: testimony, which states there is only one God and Mohammed is his prophet; praying; fasting; giving alms to the poor; and, the fifth is Hajj.

In Islam, there are two major ceremonies. The first is Ramadan which is thirty days of fasting. Hajj is the second ceremony, and starts seventy days after the end of Ramadan. During Hajj, Muslims travel to Ka-ba (the house of God), which is in Mecca, Saudi Arabia and on to the Valley of Arafat where they curse Satan. While in the Valley of Arafat, travelers will throw seven stones at a wall that has been built in the valley. While the traveler is in Mecca, a relative of the Hajji (the traveler) will sacrifice a ram. This tradition has its beginning from the time of Prophet Ibrahim. While he was on his way to sacrifice his only son Ismael to God, Satan tempted Ibrahim to disobey God's order in this valley. Prophet Ibrahim cursed Satan by throwing seven rocks at him. Because Prophet Ibrahim was obedient to God's order, God provided a ram for him to sacrifice in place of Ismael his son. From that day to this, the tradition of sacrificing the ram continues on the third day of the Hajj.

Following their time in Mecca, Hajjis travel to al-Medina to visit the grave of Prophet Mohammed and pray on this sacred ground. It was the Prophet Mohammed who received the instruction from God for all Muslims to visit Mecca. Immediately after receiving the instruction, he himself traveled to Mecca with his Muslim brothers to visit Ka-ba, which started the Hajj tradition.

HISTORY

TRADITION

## HERITAGE

## TOA (from Pg. 07)

The 320th Field Artillery Regiment will leave behind a company sized element to assist in future operations if needed, but the rest will be moved to Kirkuk, Iraq. In his speech, Holland explained that the Soldiers staying behind were for further assistance in the transition.

"Coalition forces have not and will not abandon you, the citizens of Tuz and the surrounding area, or the people of Iraq," Holland said. "We will continue to work side-by-side with you and the local Iraqi governments to further develop your capabilities to self-sufficiency."

Holland trusts the Iraqi Army is prepared to ensure the safety of the citizens in Tuz and the surrounding region, and during the ceremony remarked on the success of the Iraqi Army during recent government elections.

"Working together during the elections, you enabled over

65,000 Iraqis to vote at over 40 polling sites in a democratic election free of violence or intimidation," Holland said.

Safa said the next step after assuming control of the base is to use it effectively in order to maintain the safety of the Iraqi people in the province.

"We are from the people," Safa said. "If we don't protect them, who can protect them?"

The hand over of this base is a step, but Holland said it's a big step in the right direction to letting the Iraqi people stand up and protect themselves from anti-Iraqi forces who might oppose a democratic government here.

"As we progress through turning battle space back to the Iraqis and putting them in charge, that's the right thing," Holland said. "The only way Americans can eventually pull

out is a step-by-step process. As President Bush said, as Iraqi units stand up, American units will stand down."



Photo By: Spc. Michael Pfaff

Lt. Col. Martin J. Holland, the battalion commander, hands over a symbolic key to Forward Operating Base Bernstein to Lt. Col. Safa during a transfer of authority ceremony.

# Iraqi Police Reach Out

By: Spc. Barbara Ospina  
1st BCT Public Affairs

Soldiers from the Civil Affairs Team (CAT) A, 451st Civil Affairs Battalion, joined forces with the Kirkuk Police on January 9, on a patrol to help the officers build a stronger relationship with the community, a relationship that will remain steady for their country's future.

The day's mission began with a short but direct meeting with police leaders, where the Civil Affairs Soldiers explained to the police what a good relationship with the citizens of Kirkuk would encompass.

Much coordination and planning came to life when the Soldiers rolled out of the Kirkuk Police Station conveying with two police trucks, escorting 10 officers, two trash trucks, and a bulldozer.

As the trash was cleaned off the streets, Iraqi Police, standing in the back of a patrol truck, started handing out candy and a variety of toys to children.

As the word of candy and toys traveled through the neighborhood, wide-eyed kids came running from every direction, smiles flashing as they walked off with their new prized possession. With their hands flying up in the air in hope of not getting passed by, they yelled words like "*Shakah-latah*" meaning chocolate. "After about five minutes you could tell the Iraqi Police were happy interacting with the kids," Betancourt smiled. "The kids also became more comfortable asking the police."

While the candy and toy frenzy was going on, half of the police entourage walked through the underprivileged but thankful neighborhood talking to the residents and discussing any concerns they might have.

"A large concern among the people is their trash is not being picked up as often as it should," Betancourt said. "So the schedule is going to be revised by the police."

While relationships were being built, the police also put out important information that they believe every citizen should be

aware of. The police used loud speakers in their trucks to play messages advertising Kirkuk emergency numbers.

"Most citizens get their emergency numbers off of television, which is a Baghdad only number," Betancourt stated. "When they call, all they're told is they can't help them, therefore we need to make sure they have a correct number to get help when it's needed."

The day's efforts were only a piece of the overall plan that began about a week prior with Soldiers conducting surveys throughout the Kirkuk area to achieve a realistic grasp on the community's view of the police and problems throughout their neighborhoods.

The surveys showed that the once neglected community, although thankful for their new and



Soldiers of the 451st Civil Affairs Battalion joined forces with Iraqi Police in hopes of reaching out to the people of Kirkuk, as a stepping stone for the police in building a relationship with the citizens. Officers handed out candy and toys to children while others walked around and talked to parents in the neighborhood.

Photos By: Spc. Barbara Ospina



improved local security forces, desired more personal interaction with their police force.

"The people feel that the police are not spending any time talking to them," said Staff Sgt. Ignacio Betancourt, the team Sgt. for CAT A. "Talking with the people helps build their trust."

On that note the planning and building began.

The Soldiers addressed the issues and concerns by relaying the information to the police for resolution. During a visit on



January 6, the people raised the issue that their power lines were not working well and that their trash was continuously building up. The power lines were fixed and functioning properly within hours of their visit.

In collaboration with this recent outreach to the community, businesses have come together and will be making large banners showing they are against violence.

When all was said and done the mission was a success, as citizens are starting to stand tall in support of one another and their views.

## “Balls” Battalion Embraces Change



Command Sgt. Maj. Osvaldo Colon, passes the battery guidon to 1st Sgt. Frank Alonso on 26 December 2005 at FOB Bernstein as 1st Sgt. Victor Greene and Sgt. 1st Class Jimmie Harris look on.

As part of a truly joint and combined TEAM, all the Soldiers, Airmen and civilians assigned, attached or associated with the Balls of the Eagle Battalion and Forward Operating Base (FOB)

Bernstein continue to do great work everyday. 2-320th FAR continues to support the 1st BCT mission with both maneuver operations and fires. HHB provides the command, control and communications for the battalion's wide array of missions, and their Q-36 Radar is deployed in support of FOB McHenry. Soldiers of Hammer Battery man the “Special Tactics Platoon” that provides observers, snipers, UAV coverage, combat patrols and escort security for the entire battalion. A Battery continues to have one platoon at FOB Bernstein and one platoon split between FOBs Warrior and McHenry, providing them with “hot guns,” and continues to have the “Mandingo platoon” from Alpha Co., 2-327 attached to them, helping patrol their large area. B Battery remains at FOB Bernstein actively engaged in their portion of our area. Soldiers of Golf Co, 426 Brigade Support Battalion provide first class support in all areas including the dining facility that provides hot breakfast and dinner everyday, maintenance operations, and Combat Logistics Patrols. The Battalion Military Transition Team (MiTT) is thoroughly integrated with our “partnered” Iraqi Army battalion. The Mongoose Team is largely responsible for the success we have had in preparing

the Iraqi's to assume responsibility for this area. E Battery (our Rear Detachment) continues to do great work caring for our Soldiers and equipment at Fort Campbell as well as preparing Soldiers for follow-on deployment. Thanks to E Battery and the FRG's we are able to remain focused on our missions here in Iraq.

The one constant in our Army is change, and the Balls of the Eagle has experienced several changes during the last month, and several more are yet to come. Last month Golf Co., 426 BSB executed a change of command ceremony with Cpt. Andrew Brazee relinquishing



Captain Cochran Pruett, Lt. Col. Holland, Cpt. Ed Stanley and 1st Sgt. Oscar Arroyo execute the change of command for B/2-320th FA.

command to Cpt. Casey Holler. On the 26th of December, A Battery conducted a Change of Responsibility ceremony between 1st Sgt. Greene and 1st Sgt. Alonso. Our Rear Detachment also changed commanders with Cpt. Pratt taking the reins from Cpt. Sanchez. On January 4th, Cpt. Pruett handed over command of B Battery to Cpt. Stanley, Cpt. Pruett will join the Operations Staff and Cpt. Houston will replace Cpt. Stanley on the battalion MiTT.

Our area of responsibility continues to progress towards a safe and secure envi-

ronment for the Iraqi people. On December 15th, members of the battalion, working closely with 3/2/4 Iraqi Army battalion, the MiTT, the Iraqi Police, the Iraqi Election Commission, the Tuz JCC and local governments, enabled more than 65,000 Iraqi's to vote peacefully at 42 polling sites, in an election that selected the national parliament for the next four years. The Iraqi's had the lead in planning and executing the election while our Soldiers played a re-enforcing role.

On January 5th, the Balls of the Eagle Battalion conducted a formal Transfer of Authority (TOA) ceremony, turning control of this area over to the Iraqi Army. This is a great step for the citizens of Iraq, especially for the Cobras of 3/2/4 IA. The 101st Airborne Division Commander (Air Assault), MG Turner and CSM Grippe attended the ceremony at FOB Bernstein along with Iraqi Army officials, local gov-

ernment and community leaders, and leaders of the Bastogne Brigade. This TOA, which received great media coverage in Tuz and Kirkuk, marked the first transition of battle space to the Iraqi's by a 1 BCT unit. Our great “Mongoose” MiTT will remain in this region, providing tactical over-watch, supervision, and training as they work with members of the IA staff to improve day-to-day operations. Sixty to seventy additional Soldiers will remain with the MiTT to assist with security, training and support. We will periodically rotate these troops so

that all of us become very familiar with every aspect of the battalion's operations. The majority of the battalion, will move to the 1st BCT's main FOB in the later part of January, where we will assume a new mission working with the Iraqi's to help secure critical infrastructure.

Through all of these changes and challenges, the Balls of the Eagle Battalion remains true to the 320th FA Regimental motto “Volens and Potens” (Willing and Able).

**BALLS!!**

LTC Holland

## 2006 Military Pay Increases

WASHINGTON - President George W. Bush ushered in an across-the-board 3.1 percent military pay raise, effective Jan. 1.

The new law provides a variety of benefits designed to better compensate servicemembers, improve their quality of life, bring reserve-component benefits more on par with those for the active force and promote recruiting and retention

### Among the law's most significant features are:

- An increase in the maximum reenlistment bonus offered, from \$60,000 to 90,000
- A new ceiling on hardship-duty pay, from \$300 to \$750 a month  
*(This is a maximum allowable, not a set rate)*
- A doubling of the maximum assignment incentive pay for hard-to-fill billets or assignments, from \$1,500 to \$3,000 a month, now payable either in a lump sum or installments
- A new allowance to cover the first \$150,000 in servicemembers' Group Life Insurance premiums for troops serving in Operations Iraqi and Enduring Freedom
- A new bonus of up to \$2,500 for servicemembers who agree to transfer from one service to another and serve for at least three years
- An average 5.9 percent increase in housing allowances, with authority to increase set levels temporarily by as much as 20 percent in areas affected by natural disasters or troop surges resulting from force realignments
- Payment of travel and lodging for families of hospitalized servicemembers wounded in combat zones or other designated areas.

The new law does not guarantee that all servicemembers will qualify for these pays and benefits, or that those who do will receive the highest amounts authorized. Rather, the law gives defense and service leaders the flexibility they need to tailor the force to meet operational, recruiting and retention goals.

# Awards Earned By Bastogne Soldiers

Recognition From Dec 15 – Jan 15

## Purple Heart

### 1-327 IN BN

SGT Mitchell Levart  
 SPC Corbin Foster  
 SPC Donald Logsdon  
 SPC Dustin Pearson  
 SPC Bryan Semelbauer  
 SPC Jason Sterling  
 PFC Brian Behlke  
 PFC Nicholas Topputo  
 PV2 Dustin Evitts  
 PV2 Matthew Jones  
 PV2 Russell Richards

### 2-327 IN BN

SPC Latseen Benson  
 SPC James Stuck  
 PFC Justin Leon

### 2-320 FA

PV2 Roland Buff

### 1-101 STB

PFC Vincinte Jackson

## Combat Infantry Badge

### HHC, 1 BCT

LTC Robert Benjamin  
 CSM Chris Fields  
 SFC David Bata

### 1-327 IN BN

CPT Cedric Burden  
 1LT Jason Lathey  
 2LT Eric Evans  
 2LT Michael Frank  
 2LT Thomas Koh  
 2LT Adam Snyder  
 SFC Arthur Chambers  
 SFC Andrew Murphy  
 SFC Kevin Thurman  
 SFC Steven Treadway  
 SSG Gregory Balentine  
 SSG Jason Griffin  
 SSG Michael McMath  
 SGT Damien Baker  
 SGT Jeffrey McManaway  
 SGT Andrew Niebuer

CPL Joseph Kavanaugh

SPC Matthew Ahern

SPC John Alden

SPC Andrew Atchinson

SPC Brian Bennett

SPC Sean Brady

SPC Nicholas Brewer

SPC Toby Cagle

SPC Bryce Cooke

SPC Jared Ervine

SPC Robert Evangelista

SPC Adam Fisher

SPC Edward Guzman

SPC Alan Huynh

SPC Nathan Jedziniak

SPC Roberto Jimenez

SPC Ryan Krause

SPC Donald Logsdon

SPC Timothy Lymburner

SPC William Nobles

SPC Bradley Reinhold

SPC Keith Sager

SPC Adrian Schaar

SPC Bryan Semelbauer

SPC Chong Xiong

PFC Julio Ariguzaanders

PFC Richard Bankard

PFC Brian Bankard

PFC Brian Behlke

PFC Dustin Davis

PFC Travis Fratis

PFC Andrew Gafford

PFC Duane Harris

PFC Matthew Hebert

PFC Joshua Hobart

PFC Samuel Jackson

PFC Brandon Jolley

PFC Adam Lesonik

PFC Patrick McDonald

PFC Robert Menard

PFC Alan Morr

PFC Garrett Nugent

PFC Gustavo Ortega

PFC Joseph Pineda

PFC Dustin Pearson

PFC Kodi Poirier

PFC Pedro Ramoscrespo

PFC Jason Rutherford

PFC Brock Schild

PFC Alexander Spradling

PFC Nathan Wagar

PFC DeWayne White

PFC John Wilhoite

PFC Raemond Wright

PV2 Patrick Ainsworth

PV2 Eric Alfredsen

PV2 Christopher Constant

PV2 Jose Cuellar

PV2 Michael Doherty

PV2 Dustin Evitts

PV2 Corey Foreback

PV2 Kurtis Greenwood

PV2 Ryan Rockriver

PV2 Russell Richards

PV2 Andres Vega

PV1 Eric Auld

PV1 Mark Johnson

PV1 Jason Parillo

PV1 Lyle Reudink

PV1 Billy Rose

PV1 John Weesner

### 2-327 IN BN

1LT Owen Durham

1LT Jeffrey Johnson

2LT Peter Erickson

2LT Andrew Salmo

SSG Eric Campbell

SSG Michael DaMato

SSG Adam DelVecchio

SSG Charles Kelly

SSG Charles Limerick

SSG Stuart McPherson

SSG Jeffrey Oliver

SSG Christopher Venable

SGT Eric Caudill

SGT Matthew Gilcrease

SGT Samuel Heath

SPC Kevin Bumgarner

SPC Roland Byrd

SPC Woodrow Cole

SPC Darren Draper  
 SPC Carl Jones  
 SPC Sean Rasbury  
 SPC Pranab Saha  
 SPC Phillip Scoville  
 SPC Darint Thong  
 SPC Jesse Wilson  
 PFC Anthony Atilano  
 PFC Christopher Bedford  
 PFC Colt Brent  
 PFC Harem Chavez  
 PFC Christopher Grant  
 PFC Jeremy Haley  
 PFC Daniel Johnson  
 PFC Mathew Jones  
 PFC Vinzo Smith  
 PFC Daniel Squires  
 PFC Dietrich Stallsworth  
 PFC Bryan Thomas  
 PFC Chad Whitesell  
 PV2 Calvin Anderson  
 PV2 Kenneth Atkisson  
 PV2 David Bertholf  
 PV2 Mario Braxton  
 PV2 Jason Creapeau  
 PV2 Andrew Frederick  
 PV2 Joshua Goodman  
 PV2 Kelly Holten  
 PV2 Andrew Hughes  
 PV2 William Ingram  
 PV2 Theodore Kaems  
 PV2 Joseph Morton  
 PV2 Eric Rodgers  
 PV2 Jesse Sage  
 PV2 Michael Selley  
 PV2 Roland Silavent  
 PV2 Christopher Tsaris  
 PV1 Nathan Brown  
 PV1 Daniel Buckner  
 PV1 Stephen Lavelly  
 PV1 Joshua Orban  
**1-32 Cav**  
 2LT Jeffrey French

### Combat Action Badge

**HHC, 1 BCT**

CPT Daniel Ganci  
 SGT Jonathan Lincoln

### 1-327 IN BN

2LT Jayinder Grewal  
 SSG Hadley Walker  
 SGT Tonya Cruz  
 SPC Cornell Davis  
 SPC Matthew Hicks  
 SPC Michael Marcos  
 SPC Sean Mince

### 2-327 IN BN

SSG Paul Morris  
 PFC Ryan Ahern

### 1-32 Cav

1LT Brent Eysenbach  
 SSG Christopher Campbell  
 SGT Anthony Taylor  
 SGT Scott Metcalf  
 SGT William Shively  
 SGT Michael Tidwell  
 SPC Saul Cantor  
 PFC William Crum  
 PFC Robert Dodge  
 PFC Adam Gross  
 PFC Henry Malensek  
 PFC James McCloud  
 PFC James Rode

### 2-320 FA

CW2 Charles Schneider  
 SGT Mark Saunders  
 PV2 Roland Buff

### 1-101 STB

1LT Myron Medlin  
 SFC Billy Rogers  
 SFC Vincent Wall  
 SSG Jose Acevedo  
 SSG Keith Gates  
 SSG Ryan Horton  
 SSG Jeffrey Jeliniski  
 SGT Lucas Chambers  
 SGT Nels Graham  
 SGT Joel Todd  
 SPC Jeffrey Baker  
 SPC James Burnett  
 SPC Matthew Carpenter  
 SPC Joshua Clutter  
 SPC Kenneth Fritsch  
 SPC Chad Roberts  
 SPC Henry Sizemore  
 SPC Andrew Herzog

PFC Matthew Frantz  
 PFC James Huffman  
 PFC Vincente Jackson  
 PFC Anthony Mayweather  
 PFC Roberto Mulet

### 426 BSB

SFC Lisa Rivera  
 SSG Keith Jordan  
 SGT Edward Depta  
 SGT Nicholas Marceaux  
 SGT Calvin Newkirk  
 SGT Kevin Sanders  
 SGT Douglas Tolliver  
 SPC Jobe Hoffmeister  
 SPC David Jansky  
 SPC Justin Kerby  
 SPC Edwin Lassiter  
 PFC Victor Becerrillperez  
 PFC Andrea Hemmersbach  
 PFC Omar Kinder  
 PFC Raul Salinas  
 PV2 Jeffrey Finch

### Combat Medical Badge

#### 1-327 IN BN

PFC Bryan Posson

#### 1-101 STB

SPC Nathaniel Shourds  
**426 BSB**  
 SPC Michael Tribuzzo  
 PFC Matthew Thompson

### Army Achievement Medal

#### HHC, 1 BCT

SGT Frederick Castleberry  
**2-320 FA**

PFC Jose Mayorgaruana  
**1-101 STB**

SGT Christopher Matthews  
 SPC Kenneth Fritsch  
**426 BSB**

SSG Keith Jordan  
 SPC Stephen Lane

# IN MEMORIAM



Staff Sgt. Rickey Scott  
Infantryman  
1975 - 2006

Sgt. Dennis Flanagan  
Infantryman  
1985 - 2006

Sgt. Clifton Yazzi  
Infantryman  
1982 - 2006

Spc. Matthew Frantz  
Tactical Human Intelligence  
1982 - 2006

"WE CARRIED THEM FROM THE FIELD OF BATTLE WITH HONOR AND WE WILL CONTINUE TO HONOR THEM FOREVER...FROM THIS DAY, WE WILL CARRY OUR BROTHERS IN OUR HEARTS, AND WE WILL WIN THE FIGHT." - LT. COL. MARC HUTSON