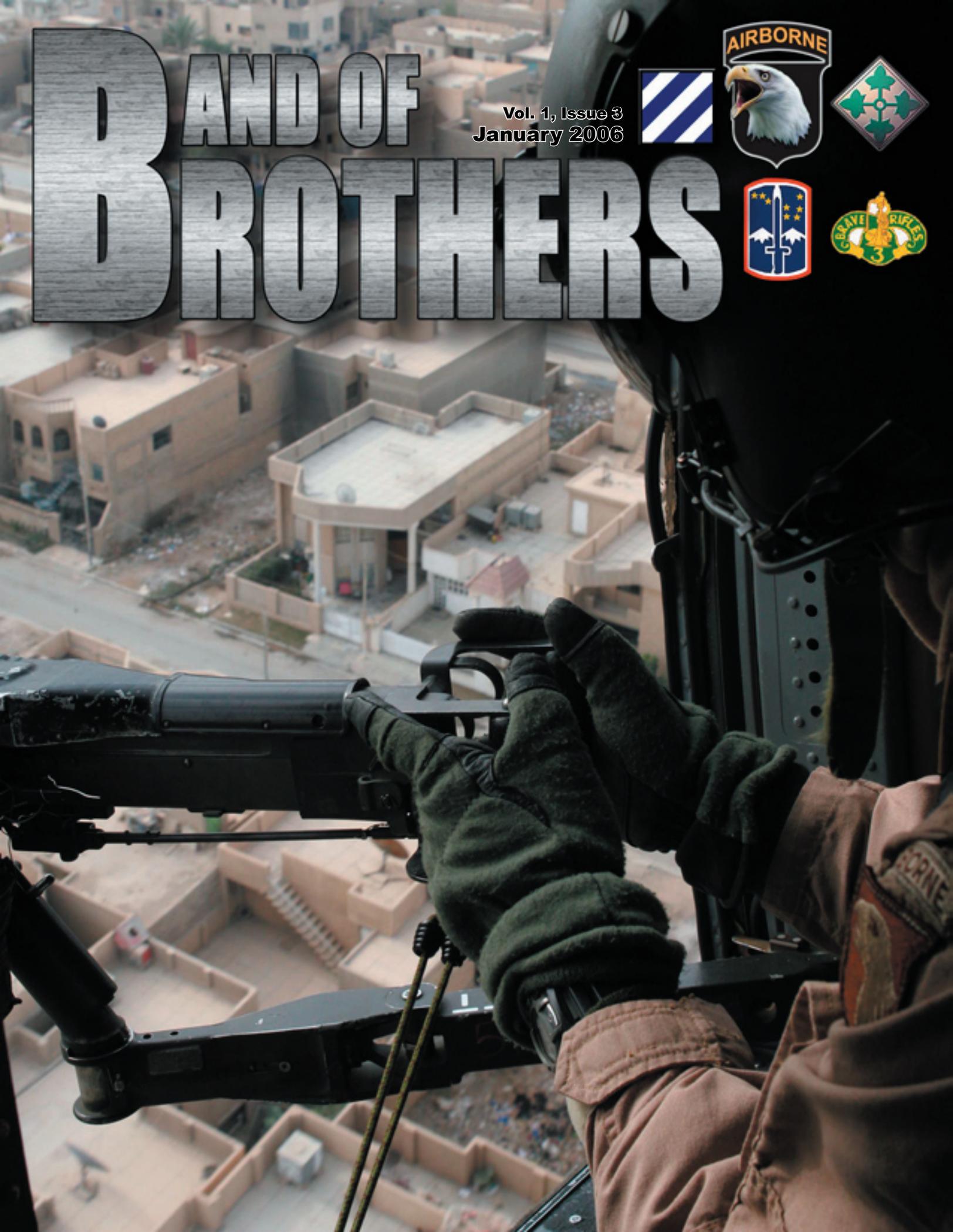


# BAND OF BROTHERS

Vol. 1, Issue 3  
January 2006





Citizens of Bayji Island wait outside their homes as Soldiers of Company A, 1st Battalion, 187th Infantry Regiment, search for insurgents during an air assault mission Jan. 5.

photo by Spc. Matthew Wrzesinski

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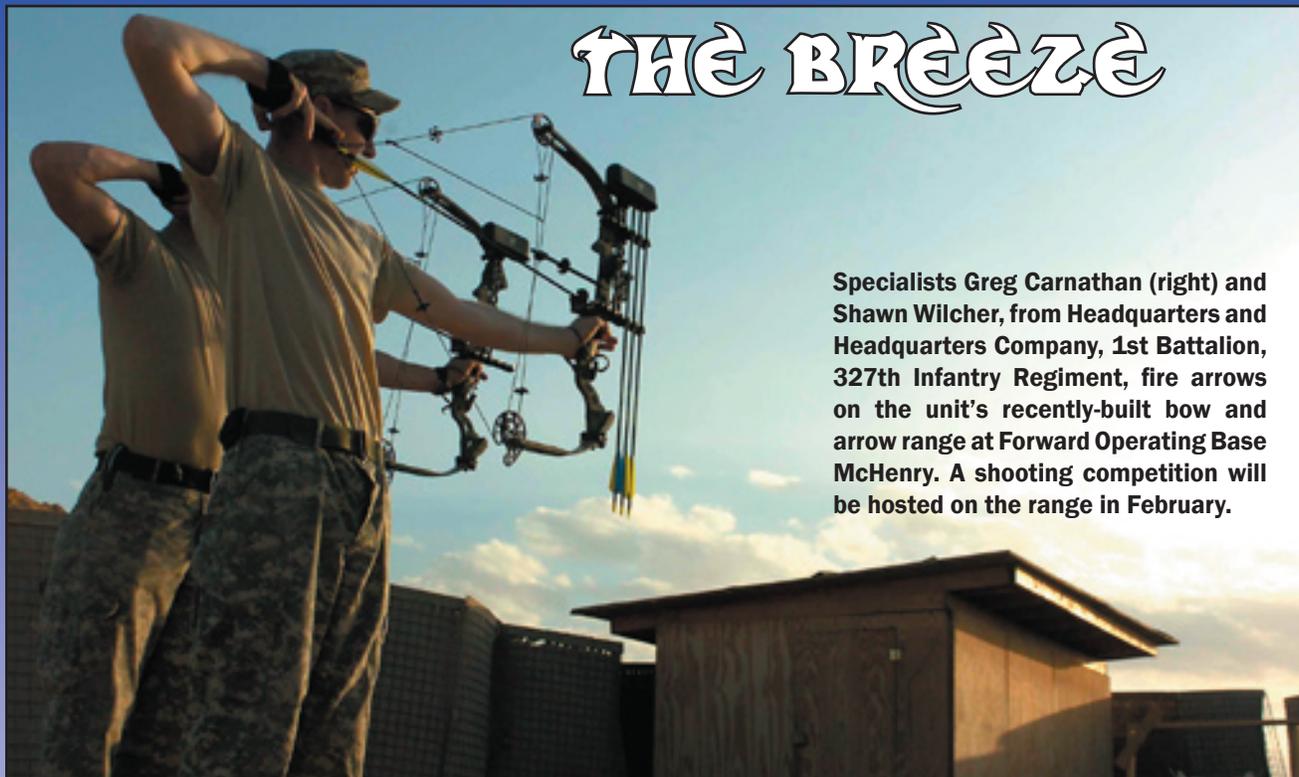
Crew chief Spc. Bobby Escarciga, 5th Battalion, 101st Combat Aviation Brigade, mans the M60D machine door gun during a flight over Baghdad, Iraq, Jan. 2.



photo by  
Sgt. Ryan Matson

# SOLDIERS SHOOT

## THE BREEZE



Specialists Greg Carnathan (right) and Shawn Wilcher, from Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment, fire arrows on the unit's recently-built bow and arrow range at Forward Operating Base McHenry. A shooting competition will be hosted on the range in February.



photos by Spc. Barbara Ospina

## BAND OF BROTHERS

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As the Soldiers of Task Force Band of Brothers celebrate a New Year, the people of Iraq celebrate a renewed hope in the future of their country because of your efforts.

The Task Force has evolved with the New Year. We welcome the addition of the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment and the 172nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team. Both units have a history of accomplishments in Iraq and their efforts in Tal Afar and Mosul have been outstanding. We also welcome the 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division from Fort Carson, Colo., who officially assumed responsibility of the Diyala Province from the 3rd Brigade Combat



Team, 3rd Infantry Division. The December elections were a success and the new government is taking shape – every one of you played a role in making that happen. You will always remember that you were there for the birth of freedom in a nation that had known only fear.

Our Iraqi partners continue to train and improve in preparation of taking the reigns of their nation's security. You are the role model and the trainer. Your actions will be observed and emulated. Live the Army Values, practice the Warrior Ethos – make sure the lessons you pass on are those worth emulating.

We continue to hand control back

to the people of Iraq, one installation at a time. After 600 missions together, the Soldiers of 2nd Battalion, 320th Field Artillery Regiment, 101st Airborne Division have given control of Forward Operating Base Bernstein to 3rd Battalion, 2nd Brigade, 4th Iraqi Army Division. We have now turned over the security operations of more than 30 installations to Iraqi Security Forces.

We have been here long enough to have a clear sense of the communities and people in our area. As you become more familiar with your surroundings don't become complacent. The enemy is there, waiting for that lapse in situational awareness. Stay vigilant and watch out for each other.

Air Assault!

The United States Army has grown up a lot in the last 231 years. What started off as a rag-tag, and often barefoot, group of men fighting a war against a well-developed nation, has become the greatest fighting force in the world.

That is why it's interesting to note that as we were once the students, broken and battered and inexperienced on the battlefield, we are now the teachers.

Back in 1778, a man by the name of Friedrich Wilhelm Augustus von Steuben arrived at Valley Forge and, under the command of Gen. George Washington, used all of the military knowledge and tactics he had acquired during his life to turn the American rebels into a well-formed and disciplined Army.

Von Steuben started by creating a company of 100 men. He trained these men and sent them out to train others. It was the first "train the trainers" program. He taught them how to march and fire in step, as well as simplified the commands to fire and reload their muskets. Steuben didn't know English, but he didn't let that stop him. When yelling and cursing at the Americans in German and French didn't work, he used



interpreters to translate his rants into English.

Steuben, who was later given the rank of Major General, is best remembered for his book Regulations for the Order and Discipline of the Troops of the United States, also known as the first "blue

book." That book became the standard by which current versions have been written.

As a modern Army, we can look back at the teachings of Steuben, and be thankful for the knowledge he imparted to us. At the same time, we must also look at what we are doing now with the Iraqi Army, and realize that we must impart our knowledge to them.

Just as von Steuben trained us, so must we now train the Iraqi Soldiers. We are creating an Army from scratch -- an Army that must be able to provide protection to the good and decent people of this country from terrorists and other forces who would seek the destruction of the new democratic government.

It is our mission to help this new Army stand up on its own to be a force for good. This will require the help of all Task Force Band of Brothers Soldiers. As a team, we will show the fledgling Army

what it takes to defend and protect. This new Army will reflect a mixture of the old Iraqi Army, and the new techniques and skills taught by its American brothers-in-arms.

As we watch these Soldiers crawl before they run, we will be able to stand back and watch the Iraqi Army, perhaps with a sense of parental pride. Just as von Steuben did, over 200 years ago, during the shaky first steps of America. At the end of this deployment, every Soldier will look back and be proud of the work that we have done here and the history we have made.

I would like to wish each one of you a Happy New Year. Please pass on to our troopers my sincere thanks for what they do for our great country on a daily basis. America, nor the world, has ever witnessed a more professional and lethal Army as ours. Each of you are the reason for this success.

The year 2006 will be defining moment for operations in Iraq. Each and every one of us must ensure that we have a positive effect on this country's future and our nations was on terror. God bless each and every one of you as you personally project American foreign policy through force of arms.

**Command Sgt. Maj. Frank Grippe  
Division Command Sergeant Major**

*The stars at night, are big and bright...*

# Deep in the heart of Iraq

**Maj. Gregory Bishop**  
1st Brigade Combat Team  
Public Affairs

**KIRKUK, Iraq** -- Typically, when Soldiers see stars in Iraq, they see them in the clear desert night sky. But this Christmas Day, despite the clouds and cold, rainy weather blanketing north-central Iraq, Soldiers on Forward Operating Base Warrior got a special visit from some stars you might only see in Hollywood.

Actress Kelly Hu, most known for her roles in *X-Men 2* and *CSI: New York*, and rock star Mitch Allan from the band SR-71 spent their Christmas with Soldiers and Airmen of FOB Warrior while on a two-week morale visit sponsored by the Ambassadors of Hollywood and the Army's Morale, Welfare and Recreation program.

After arriving via helicopter, the duo and their entourage went to the dining facility for a quick bite to eat amid stares and double-takes by mesmerized troops. Later they stopped by the 1st Brigade Tactical Operations Center for a surprise visit to see one of Hu's biggest fans – Maj. Scott Hooper, operations officer.

"This is awesome, thanks for stopping by," Hooper said with a boyish grin on his face, right before he literally swooped Hu off her feet for a photo opportunity of a lifetime.

The celebrities made their way to the "Clamtina," the FOB's after-duty place-to-be, where Allan performed a few of his band's songs and some of his own solo pieces.

Following the performance, Hu and Allan signed countless autographs and took pictures with the troops, many of whom brought their personal Kelly Hu posters and cut-outs of Hu's photo spread from the July 2005 edition of Maxim magazine.

The line of eager Soldiers and airmen coiled around the Clamtina and troops waited for hours for their moment to meet the two stars up-close.

Specialist Stephen Judd, a fire support Soldier in the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, said it was worth the wait.



photos by Spc. Barbara Ospina

**Singer Mitch Allan, from the band SR-71, and actress Kelly Hu, most known for her role in X-Men 2, pose with Spc. Stephen Judd during a USO visit to Forward Operating Base Warrior Christmas Day.**

"I love the band SR-71 and Kelly Hu is really hot," Judd said. "It was pretty cool that Mitch Allan signed his autograph to my 4-year-old son. He even knows who [SR-71] is."

Judd added, "It was nice of them to come here. It shows their patriotism. They could have stayed home with their families, but they decided to spend Christmas with us."

Hu and Allan stayed until every Soldier and Airman made it through the line.

Both of these stars have personal connections with the military. Hu's father served in the Army and her brother is currently a lieutenant colonel stationed in the Pentagon. "I've made it to Iraq and he hasn't," she joked.

Allan's father served in the Air Force. "I thought I'd take the opportunity to support the troops since I didn't have a chance to serve," Allan said.

Hu said she loved getting the chance to see first-hand what Soldiers are going through.

"It makes me appreciate them even more and it really puts everything in perspective," she said.

"For me," Allan added, "it confirms that CNN is full of [rock star expletive]." ■



**Allan plays a few of his bands hits as well as a solo for Soldiers and Airmen at FOB Warrior on Christmas night.**

# *Increased security leads to growing economy*

**Spc. Lee Elder**  
133rd Mobile Public  
Affairs Detachment

**MUKAYSHIFAH, Iraq** -- The resurgence of the Iraqi Police and a growing Iraqi Army presence have led to an economic revival in the Mukayshifah community, near Tikrit, Iraq.



photo by Spc. Lee Elder

**Sergeant Miguel Arellano, Company D, 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment, assists an Iraqi Police officer with mounting a rifle atop the police station.**

Standing on the roof of a rebuilt police station, Capt. Dene Leonard, commander, Company D, 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Infantry Division, looks over his area of responsibility.

"I've got 14 new stores going in over there," Leonard said. "I've got 120 being occupied and I've got over 30 being built. The security here is important and it plays a major role in that."

Police must remain vigilant. Their station is often the target of would-be drive-by snipers, even though armed guards are constantly stationed on the roof.

U.S. forces give the police logistical support as well. Lights are being installed on the station roof and new radios will allow the station to remain in communication with officers who are patrolling in the community.

The local police are also more confident in their abilities during this time of economic rebirth.

"When we first got here, you had a hard time getting them to come out of their building," said Staff Sgt. James Currence, platoon sergeant. "Now, they are out conducting patrols all the time and people call them if they see anything suspicious."

As the local police become more confident in their role and the community feels more secure, additional Tikrit communities will experience a similar economic renaissance. ■

## **IA Soldiers train in IED detection**

**Spc. Anna-Marie Risner**  
133rd Mobile Public  
Affairs Detachment

**KIRKUK, Iraq** -- Improvised explosive devices are the deadliest methods of attack in Iraq by terrorists. One group of Iraqi Army combat engineers has been working with Soldiers of 1st Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, to combat this problem.

Soldiers with Company A, 326th Special Troops Battalion, 1st BCT, spent three weeks training select members of Bomb Company, 2nd Brigade, 4th Iraqi Army Division, on the finer points of IED hunting. Iraqi troops were taught how to recognize placed explosive devices as well as the materials used to make the bombs.

Those chosen to receive the training were hand-selected for the mission by Lt. Col. Fuad Jihad Reda, Bomb Co. commander, and Capt. Jay Cook, commander, Co. A, 326th STB. Many of those selected for the unit had personal experiences with IEDs and were motivated to work with coalition forces, Cook said.

"One [Iraqi] Soldier was on his day off and saw someone planting an IED," Cook said. "He took his own weapon, chased down the individuals ... disabled their vehicle ... and ended up apprehending the [terrorists]."

Iraqi Soldiers were trained on basic IED awareness and driving several vehicles, which will aid in counter-IED missions. Troops also practiced mounted and dismounted patrols with U.S. forces. ■



photo by Spc. Anna-Marie Risner

**Major Gen. Anwer Hamed Amin, commander, 2nd Brigade, 4th Iraqi Army Division, stands with a Soldier from IED Platoon (center) during a graduation ceremony at Forward Operating Base Warrior.**

# ONE CHILD'S HERO..

**Sgt. Dennis Gravelle**  
138th Mobile Public  
Affairs Detachment

**MOSUL, Iraq** -- On the morning of Dec. 15, he was just a medic with the 172nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Regiment. By the end of the day, he was one child's hero.

Specialist Lucas Crowe was out on patrol during the Iraqi elections when he saw a man holding the lifeless body of his baby boy. The child had just been pulled out of the water in the flooded basement of their home and was not breathing.

Crowe noticed the child had a blue tone to his body and instinctively began first aid on the 2-year-old boy. His father knelt beside him, watching Crowe with his lifeless son. Within moments, the child became responsive and coughed up water. The crowd that had gathered to watch cheered when they heard the child cry.

"I just happened to be there," Crowe said, "I am glad that I was there to help save the boy, but it was in God's hands."

"We're very proud of Crowe," said



photo by Sgt. Dennis Gravelle

**Specialist Lucas Crowe, medic, 172nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Regiment, helps save the life of an Iraqi child in Mosul, Iraq, Dec.15.**

Staff Sgt. Clinton Johnson, HHC, 172nd SBCT, "and are even happier that the boy is breathing again."

Johnson was not the only one impressed with Crowe's actions.

While visiting Soldiers for Christ-

mas Eve, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld awarded Crowe the Bronze Star for performing a heroic act in a combat zone.

Crowe visited the child and his family two days after the incident. ■

## Soldier shot in head, walks away

**Staff Sgt. Mark Wojciechowski**  
133rd Mobile Public  
Affairs Detachment

**TIKRIT, Iraq** -- For many Soldiers, the Kevlar helmet is a necessary evil. It can be cumbersome when in the dining facility trying to handle a tray of food.

Sergeant Shawn Snyder of 3rd Infantry Division's 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment Scout Platoon, is one Soldier who will never complain about wearing his helmet again, and with good reason -- it saved his life.

Snyder's mission was to serve as an escort for an explosive ordnance disposal team.

He said he was standing up in the turret of his humvee, scanning his sector and waving off traffic, when it happened. He recalled hearing a shot and feeling "a little jerk."

Snyder quickly called out to his driver

and truck commander to ask who was firing.

Then he saw the Kevlar particles flying around. As he jumped down in the vehicle, he wondered if he was dying.

He removed his Kevlar and felt around on his head -- there was no blood. The round, most likely a 7.62mm from a sniper rifle, ricocheted off the upper left side of the helmet, shredding the outside and slightly cracking the inside.

"I didn't get a concussion, didn't even get a headache," Snyder said.

Snyder is married with a 13-month-old son. When he told his wife what had happened, "she took it as best as a wife could, knowing a round almost killed her husband a month before he got home."

Snyder immediately returned to duty, having sustained no injuries.

As for the helmet, Snyder will get to keep it upon redeployment to serve as a reminder of what could have been. ■



photo by Staff Sgt. Mark Wojciechowski

**Sergeant Shawn Snyder shows off the bullet hole in his Kevlar helmet.**

# Sexual ASSAULT

by Master Sgt. Rodney Bottoms  
101st Airborne Division  
Equal Opportunity Office

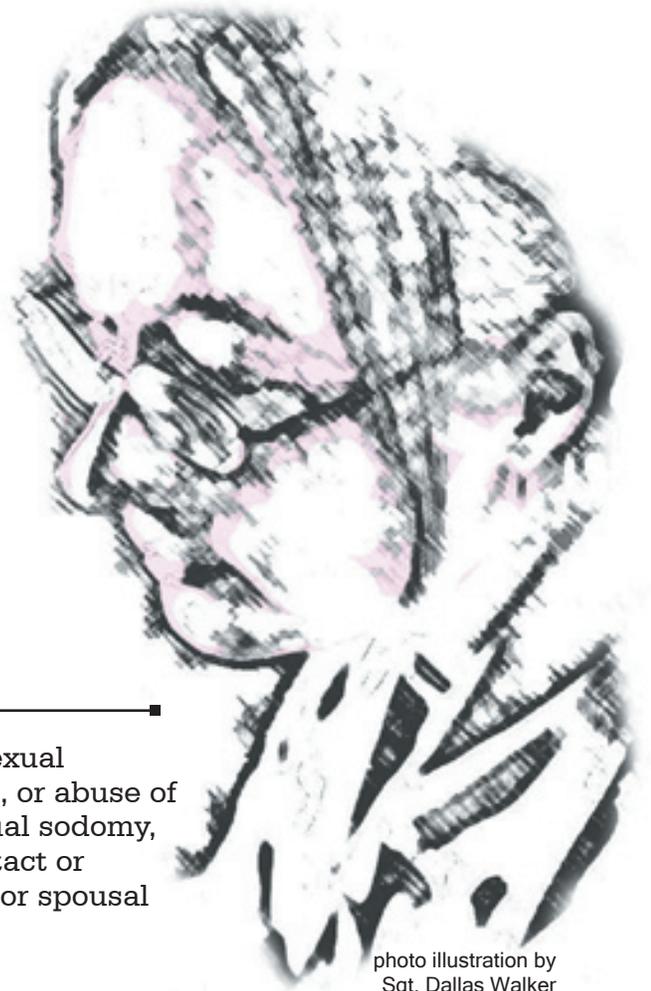


photo illustration by  
Sgt. Dallas Walker

**S**exual assault is a crime. It is defined as intentional sexual contact, characterized by use of force, physical threat, or abuse of authority. Sexual assault includes rape, non-consensual sodomy, and indecent assault -- unwanted, inappropriate sexual contact or fondling. Sexual assault can occur without regard to gender or spousal relationship or age of victim.

## Reporting process

There are several response groups for sexual assaults. They include Unit Victim Advocates (UVA), Sexual Assault Response Coordinators (SARC) or Deployed SARC, health care personnel, law enforcement and criminal investigators, judge advocates, and chaplains.

There are UVAs in all battalions and SARCs at the Division level or higher.

They will be available as long as the victim needs medical care and support throughout the process. The UVA will also advise victims of their reporting options.

The victim has two options when reporting sexual assault -- restricted and unrestricted.

### Unrestricted reporting

The preferred reporting option is unrestricted reporting. A Soldier who is sexually assaulted and desires an official investigation of his/her allegation should make an unrestricted report. This report initiates the investigative process and

victims are given the choice of receiving medical treatment, a forensic examination, advocacy services, and referrals for counseling.

### Restricted reporting

Restricted reporting allows a Soldier who is sexually assaulted to disclose the assault to specifically identified personnel without triggering an investigation, and maintain confidentiality throughout the process.

To make a restricted report, the victim must notify the SARC, UVA, health care provider or chaplain. One of the four responders will help the victim seek medical treatment and a forensic examination.

Law enforcement will not be informed nor does the chain of command become involved, thus eliminating the opportunity for offender accountability. If the victim notifies anyone else, the report will automatically be an unrestricted report. ■

**If any Soldier becomes aware of an incident of sexual assault, he/she should immediately -- within 24 hours -- report the incident to the first lieutenant colonel in the chain of command, the Criminal Investigation Division, or the military police. This policy applies to incidents that occur on or off post and while deployed. Failure to report is inconsistent with the Army Values and is punishable under Uniform Code of Military Justice.**

# Athlete's Foot

Athlete's foot is a common fungal infection that Soldiers in a deployed environment are particularly prone to. The condition easily spreads in public places such as communal showers, locker rooms and fitness centers. Usually this condition affects the spaces between your toes, but it can spread to your

toenails and the soles and sides of your feet. Changing socks, keeping your feet dry and alternating boots all help to prevent athlete's foot. Often, athlete's foot responds well to over-the-counter treatments you can apply to your skin. More severe cases may require oral medications.

## Symptoms:

- Most commonly itching, stinging and burning between your toes, especially the last two toes
- Itching, stinging and burning on the soles of your feet
- Itchy blisters
- Cracking and peeling skin, especially between your toes and on the soles of your feet
- Excessive dryness of the skin on the bottoms or sides of the feet
- Nails that are thick, crumbly, ragged, discolored or pulling away from the nail bed

## Causes:

Athlete's foot is caused by a fungus (Tinea species; aka: fungus amoungus). Although a fungus is the causative agent, laziness and general lack of situational awareness contribute to the severity of the infection and the length of time it takes to get rid of the infection. Also called tinea pedis, ringworm of the foot and dermatophytosis, athlete's foot is closely related to other fungal skin conditions, most with similar names. Tinea is a type of fungus, and pedis is the Latin word for "foot." Other common tinea infections include: ringworm of the body (tinea corporis), jock itch (tinea cruris) and ringworm of the scalp (tinea capitis).

## Treatment:

For mild conditions, your doctor may advise you to apply a prescription or over-the-counter antifungal ointment, lotion, powder or spray. Most infections respond well to over the counter topical agents. If your fungal infection is severe or doesn't respond to topical medicine, your doctor may give you a prescription oral medicine.

### OVER-THE-COUNTER TOPICAL AGENTS

- Clotrimazole
- Terbinafine
- Miconazole
- Tolnaftate

### PRESCRIPTION ORAL AGENTS

- Itraconazole (Sporanox)
- Fluconazole (Diflucan)
- Terbinafine (Lamisil)

The oral medications listed above have the potential to cause severe, life threatening adverse reactions and must be used judiciously and only under the supervision of an experienced provider.

## Should you see a doctor?

If you have a rash on your foot that doesn't improve or worsens after you've taken self-care steps, see your doctor. See someone sooner if you notice excessive redness, swelling, drainage or fever.



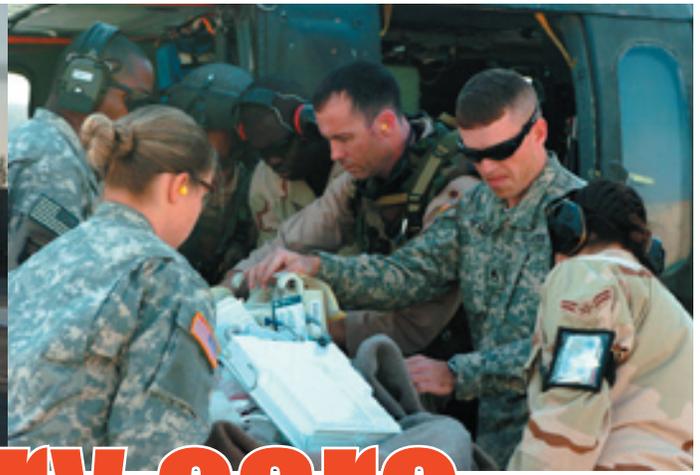
## An ounce of prevention...

These tips can help you avoid athlete's foot or ease the symptoms if infection occurs:

- Keep your feet dry, especially between your toes. Take your shoes off and expose your feet to the air and sunlight.
- Go barefoot to let your feet air out as much as possible when you're back at the "hooch."
- Wear socks that are made of natural material, such as cotton or wool, or a synthetic fiber designed to draw moisture away from your feet.
- Change your socks and underwear every day. If your feet sweat a lot, change your socks twice a day, this will also reduce the stench your feet emit and improve relationships with co-workers.
- Wear light, well-ventilated footwear. Avoid footwear made of synthetic material, such as vinyl or rubber.
- Alternate pairs of boots. This allows time for your boots to dry.
- Protect your feet in public places. Wear waterproof sandals or shower shoes in communal areas.
- LOOK AT YOUR FEET!!!! Especially if they itch.
- Treat your feet. Use an antifungal powder daily on your feet and in your boots.
- Don't borrow boots. Borrowing risks spreading a fungal infection, besides why would you put your feet in anyone's stinky boots?
- Dry your feet carefully (especially between the toes) after showering.

**Capt. Mark Maneval**

101st Airborne Division Pharmacist



# Extraordinary care packed in ordinary tents

*Theater hospital at Balad Air Base takes care of troops*

**Sgt. Dallas Walker**  
101st Airborne Division  
Public Affairs

**BALAD, Iraq** -- In a sea of tents and trailers on Balad Air Base in northern Iraq, bomb fragments are being surgically removed from a limb, medics are racing to stop someone from bleeding to death, and another life is being saved from wounds inflicted on the battlefield.

It is that sea of tents that houses the Air Force theater hospital, where service members and civilians get the most advanced medical care possible in the Iraqi combat zone.

Run by the 332nd Expeditionary Medical Group, the hospital offers both trauma and specialized medical care throughout Iraq and serves as the theater aeromedical evacuation support hub.

"If you arrive here alive, you have about a 96 percent chance of leaving here alive," said Col. (Dr.) Elisha Powell, commander, 332nd Expeditionary Medical Group.

The availability of specialized care at the hospital is like nothing seen in a combat zone in the past, making it easier to save lives, Powell said.

"What makes this hospital so successful in Iraq is that we push technology so far forward," he said. "We've never pushed specialties this far onto

the battlefield before."

The hospital boasts a staff of surgeons that specialize in procedures on the brain, heart, bones and soft tissue. It has six operating rooms and nearly everything a standard hospital has -- all in the heart of a combat zone.

Bringing medical care to the battlefield increases a casualty's chance for survival, Powell said. Although, he does not credit the hospital as being solely responsible for saving lives.

## First responders

"Medics and what they do, basic and advanced first aid, is where life saving begins," he said.

The life of a combat casualty depends largely on the first echelon of medical care. The most important aspect of that care is stopping the bleeding.

"The number one cause of preventable death in Iraq is exsanguination -- bleeding out," Powell said. "If Soldiers don't stop the bleeding and use the tourniquets put in their first aid kit, then [the casualty] probably won't make it to us."

## Dust off -- Arriving at the hospital

The sound of medevac pilots calling in their status echoes as Army and Air Force medics in the patient administration office of the hospital prepare for their landing -- the crucial first minutes

of a casualty's arrival at the hospital. Most of the casualties treated at the hospital are brought in on a medevac flight.

"I give all the credit in the world to the flight medics," said Air Force Staff Sgt. Jalkennen Joseph, emergency room medic. "I've never seen anyone perform their job above and beyond like they do. They do things you only see in movies or read about in books. They do it on a daily basis and they do it well."

The medevac crews try to get casualties to the hospital within the "golden hour" -- the first 60 minutes after injury.

"Getting patients here quickly, keeping them warm, and stopping the bleeding are the keys to life saving in trauma," Powell said.

Within minutes of landing on the hospital helipad, the medevac crew and hospital staff take the casualty to the emergency room.

## The ER

"This is [the casualty's] first stop in the hospital," Joseph said. "Our job is to stabilize the patient. We check the ABCs. We check their airways, we check to see if they are breathing, and we check their circulation."

Doctors assess the casualty in the emergency room to determine the appropriate course of action, Joseph said.



**(Left) Air Force and Army medics rush to unload a casualty from a UH-60 Blackhawk. (Center) Medics prepare a casualty for the emergency room. (Above) Medics rush a casualty into the emergency room.**

### Next stop...

The hospital staff prides themselves on quality rapid care – stabilizing patients and getting them out of the hospital.

“If a patient requires surgery to survive, it will be done here,” Joseph said. “Most of the patients we care for don’t even know they were here. Most of them are severely injured and unconscious. We stabilize them and send them to [Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in] Germany as quickly as possible.”

Patients stay at the theater hospital the shortest amount of time possible, Powell said. The goal is to perform whatever measures necessary to save their life and send them to a facility geared toward long-term care.

### The patient

The hospital provides care and treatment to anyone wounded in combat. U.S. Army Soldiers are treated more than anyone else and Coalition Forces make up 60 percent of the patient load.

The remaining 40 percent of patients seen at the hospital are local nationals, terrorists and detainees injured during combat.

“We give [Iraqis] the same medical care as anyone else,” Powell said. “We’re not MPs, we’re not [military intelligence], we are medics. Detainees get the same healthcare as the Soldiers, as the Iraqi Police, as the Iraqi Army. Our job is to provide the highest standard of medical care.”

### The team

The hospital is a mostly U.S. Air Force staff, with support teams from the U.S. Army and Navy as well as the Australian Army and Air Force. There are more than 350 medical personnel assigned to the theater hospital.

“We have all really clicked working together,” Joseph said. “We run this place smoothly, doing the same mission. We live by the hospital motto, ‘One team. One mission.’”

A majority of the U.S. Air Force personnel assigned to the theater hospital, including Powell and Joseph, come from Wilford Hall Medical Center in San Antonio – one of only two military hospitals that treat civilian trauma patients.

“Most of the patients back at Wilford Hall are drunk and just got into an accident and maybe killed somebody,” Jo-



photos by Sgt. Dallas Walker

**Colonel Elisha Powell, commander, 332nd Expeditionary Medical Group theater hospital, and Col. Jack Ingari operate on a 101st Airborne Division Soldier after an IED attack Dec. 3. Both are orthopedic surgeons at the theater hospital at Balad Air Base.**

seph said. “People here are selfless and go out and do their job. Most of the people we treat got injured serving their country. It brings me so much more joy to care for those patients.”

### Put to the test

It was a day that most medical units only train for – the day that 29 severely injured Iraqi civilians came in the hospital after multiple car bombs exploded in Balad.

“It was really chaotic because there were just too many patients,” Joseph said. “I think at first it overwhelmed the staff.”

The staff made it through, successfully. After more than 80 operations by 19 military surgeons, the same 29 civilians that came in to the hospital severely injured, left the hospital alive.

In the sea of tents, another life is being saved by a hard-working medic or an experienced surgeon with the best combat medical care available in Iraq.

“It’s an honor to be able to care for the wounded out here,” Joseph said. “It’s a lifetime experience. I can’t stress enough, it’s what we are proud and happy to do.” ■

# Iraqi Air Force visits FOB Speicher

**Spc. Lee Elder**  
133rd Mobile Public  
Affairs Detachment

**TIKRIT, Iraq** -- The 101st Combat Aviation Brigade hosted members of the fledgling Iraqi Air Force's 3rd Squadron at Forward Operating Base Speicher Dec. 21. The objective was to share the two unit's capabilities and see each unit's aircraft.

The meeting marked the beginning of a partnership between the two units and is part of ongoing efforts to help the Iraqi Air Force become self-sustaining. During their visit, the 14 Iraqi squadron members were briefed on the brigade's intelligence and operational capabilities and saw the aircraft of the 101st CAB first-hand.

"We both may learn from each other and share our common experiences to help build a more secure Iraq," said Col. Warren Phipps, commander, 101st Combat Aviation Brigade. "We can leverage both the capabilities of my brigade and the 3rd Air Force Squadron

to assist in the security of the critical infrastructure of northern Iraq."

Both units share the mission of protecting infrastructure in northern Iraq that is essential to the country's future by ensuring it is not destroyed by insurgents and other criminal elements.

The partnership between the two units is a good fit, said Navy Lt. Cmdr. Dave Schlesinger. He is head of the Coalition Advisor Support Team in Kirkuk that assists the Iraqi Air Force's rebuilding effort in that area.

"Since we share the air space, one of the biggest benefits is to learn where the 101st is flying," Schlesinger said. "It works out well since we're doing the same mission -- protecting the infrastructure of the country."

In two-and-a-half months, brigade aviators have flown nearly 2,700 missions and logged more than 20,000 flight hours. Among these missions were 10 air assault missions with Iraqi Army Soldiers, Phipps said.

Phipps' counterpart is Staff Col. Ali Salim, who is the acting commander of the 3rd Squadron.

He said his unit has six aircraft and 15 officers who have flown more than 1,000 hours, most of which are reconnaissance missions. He was grateful for U.S. support and looked forward to a deepening relationship with his Coalition counterparts.

"We are just rebuilding our Air Force," Ali said. "The most important thing is that we cooperate with each other for the security of our country." ■



photos by Sgt. Ryan Matson

**Colonel Warren Phipps, commander, 101st Combat Aviation Brigade, greets members of the 3rd Squadron, Iraqi Air Force shortly after they arrived at Forward Operating Base Speicher, Iraq, for a historic meeting with the 101st CAB Dec. 21. (Top) Captain Richard Feltzer, 6th Bn., 101st CAB shows a group from the Iraqi Air Force some of the features of the CH-47D Chinook helicopter.**

# Shadow finds lurking evil



photos by Spc. Waine Haley

**Specialist Corey Menshouse and Spc. Justin Scott, both crew chiefs on the Shadow 200 with Company B, 3rd Special Troops Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, prepare the UAV for a mission. (Below) The Shadow RQ7B UAV is launched with a beefed-up slingshot.**

## **Spc. Waine Haley**

133rd Mobile Public  
Affairs Detachment

**BAYJI, Iraq** -- Who knows where evil lurks? The Shadow knows.

The Tactical Unmanned Aerial Vehicle crews of the Rakkasans' "Voodoo Platoon," Company B, 3rd Special Troops Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, are the fortunate Soldiers that get to operate the surveillance aircraft known as "The Shadow."

The Shadow relays real-time reconnaissance and surveillance information for combat units to assist them with raids and air assaults.

The aircraft also provides intelligence to ground commanders without the enemy knowing they are under surveillance. They do this by flying at an altitude of several thousand feet, allowing for a low presence signature.

"It gives [ground troops] a better chance to see what's going on without people being aware we are watching them," said Capt. Jim Gourley, platoon leader.

The recently formed Voodoo platoon is comprised of Soldiers from many different job fields throughout the Army. The technical expertise and levels of training and responsibility required to support this mission is high.

"Some of the obstacles new units face is training issues," Gourley said.

The company was moved to Redstone Arsenal, Ala., for "new unit training" on the aircraft. Field training increases familiarity with the Shadow 2000 system, which

requires operational experience.

After completing their training in August, they returned to Fort Campbell before being deployed overseas.

"In September we were deployed to Udari Army Airfield in Kuwait," Gourley said. "We were the first unit to fly the Shadow in Kuwait."

"We're lucky to get to do this [job]. This type of responsibility is usually left to officers and upper enlisted," said Sgt. Jeffery Llamas, TUAV Operator. "These aircraft cost well over \$700,000 each."

"We have a great bunch of troops here," Gourley said. "These guys have a big responsibility and they live up to it every day." ■



# FACES OF IRAQ



photos by Spc. Michael Pfaff



# CACHE HUNTERS

# Soldiers perfect art of finding weapons caches

## Sgt. Dallas Walker

101st Airborne Division  
Public Affairs Office

**BALAD, Iraq --** They were the last platoon from their company to start doing patrols.

Composed of cooks, communication specialists, medics and a couple of infantry guys, the Soldiers of the Cobra Black One platoon, Company C, 100th Battalion, 442nd Infantry Regiment took to the streets outside of Logistical Support Area Anaconda with not much of a mission at all.

"We were like the black sheep of the battalion," said Sgt. Alika Naluai, Co. C section leader. "We would just sit on a route and pull security."

After a couple of weeks, someone gave them an idea -- one they weren't thrilled about in the beginning, but ended up paying off in the long run.

Master Sgt. Beau Tatsumura, from the battalion S3 shop, helped show the platoon the ropes of hunting for weapons caches in June.

"He really motivated and encouraged us to go out and find weapons caches," Naluai said. "We figured we'd give it a try."

The platoon spent several weeks searching, but to no avail.

"We really hated doing cache searching at first because we had no method," said Spc. McHuy McCoy, Cobra Black One medic. The team would go out and find nothing.

They ended up getting advice from 1st Lt. Ranjan Singh, Co. B platoon leader, Naluai said. His platoon had led the battalion in caches found at that point.

Singh's platoon started out much like Cobra Black One did -- unsuccessful.

"We decided we needed a system," Singh said.

According to Singh, his platoon was out on patrol one day and saw something they thought could be used to mark an area for future reference. They saw a pile of brush near the marking. Underneath it, they found a mortar tube.

From that point on, they looked for areas with similar markings and soft dirt, Singh said.

"We didn't have mine sweepers at the time, so we would look for soft dirt and stab at the ground with bayonets," he said.

Singh's platoon found 44 weapons caches, mostly between April and June.

"It kicked off a cache craze," Singh said. "Everyone wanted to check out a mine sweeper and look. Of course, they found nothing."

They found nothing because they didn't know what to look for, Singh said.

Singh and his Soldiers changed missions to finding high value individuals, so he decided to share his secret to finding caches with the Soldiers of Cobra Black One.

Then it happened. It was a day that these Soldiers would never forget -- July 27.

"Sergeant Naluai and 1st Lt. [Sam] Tagavilla came over the



photo by Sgt. Dallas Walker

**Private 1st Class Elise Lalmyen, Company C, 100th Battalion, 442nd Infantry Regiment, assembles a metal detector prior to a mission in the Alby Krawar village outside Balad, Iraq, Dec. 4. Lalmyen is a part of a group of Soldiers that searches and secures weapons cache sites in the area.**

radio and said they think they found something. Everyone got excited and waited by the radio to hear what was going on," McCoy said, who was pulling security at the time. "Then they pulled out a mortar. Then they pulled out 10 mortars. Then they pulled out 30 mortars."

According to Naluai, there were 49 mortar rounds in that first cache -- 30 60mm rounds and 19 82mm rounds.

"After that, we were hooked," Naluai said. "We would sit on a route pulling security and decide to search a canal road."

Since that first find in July, the platoon found more than 50 caches. "We had to prove ourselves to the battalion," Naluai said. "After we started to find the caches, our status has risen among our peers and our command."

**Con't on Page 18**



**Sergeant Alika Naluai, Co. C, 100th Bn., 442nd Inf. Reg., searches a roadside for weapons caches in the Abu Krawar village outside of Balad, Iraq, Dec. 4. Naluai is a part of Cobra Black One, a group of Soldiers whose mission is to find and remove weapons caches.**

Finding caches became second nature to the Cobra Black One Soldiers. It was the main focus of their daily mission, McCoy said.

"We find scrap metal all the time. All day, you long for a cache. Finally, you hit something and you hear that clunk. Now you have to dig a little more [carefully]. Eventually, you find that burlap bag. Everyone comes and waits with anticipation to see what's in the bag," McCoy said with a smile. "Then it comes across the radio, 'Cobra Black has done it again!'"

The platoon was so successful at finding caches, they ended up sharing the Tactics, Techniques and Procedures they developed on finding weapons caches with other platoons, including the one who helped them get started.

"It's beginning to work because elements who have never found a weapons cache before are beginning to find them," McCoy said in December. He produced the presentation the company uses to learn how to find caches.

"For us, it's exciting. It's like a treasure hunt. It made us feel like we were contributing to this war," Naluai said. "That makes less ammunition on the streets and less IEDs that can be made."

"It's hard work," Naluai added. "This is the glory of cache hunting. Sometimes you get it. Sometimes you don't. You have to be self motivated. It's a job with no glory. I guess the

trick to success is to think like [the enemy]. You have to learn to read the land to know how they would find it again."

The team found that not every mission was one where they return with a large stash of weapons, but every mission was one where they make their presence known in the villages they patrolled.

"I can truly say it has reduced enemy activity in our area tremendously," McCoy said. "We are coming from a point where we were dealing with [a lot of] IED attacks a week."

McCoy said the number of attacks has decreased tremendously. "It has made [terrorists] back out of this area."

On more than one occasion, the platoon has come across a site that freshly dug up, indicating they are putting pressure on the enemy to move their activity, McCoy said.

Starting off their deployment as the "black sheep" platoon, with a mix of military occupational specialties, the Soldiers of Cobra Black One made their time in Iraq invaluable to many. The platoon redeployed in early January knowing they made an impact on their area.

"Being a medic, this job is far from what I thought it would be," McCoy said. "I'm okay with it because we have cooks driving and we have commo guys gunning. This war is different. As a medic, taking IEDs off the street, I am still saving lives, just in a different way. To me, that's satisfying enough." ■

# Re-enlistment bonus increases

**Spc. Jeanine Kinville**  
101st Airborne Division  
Public Affairs

Soldiers who have not yet taken the opportunity to re-enlist in Iraq are in luck. The selective re-enlistment bonus for Soldiers with an end of term in service between Jan. 6, 2006 and Sept. 30, 2007 has added points to their bonus multipliers.

Soldiers scheduled to leave the service now until Sept. 30 are eligible for their designated category multiplier to increase by .5 and those slated to exit between Oct. 1 and Sept. 30, 2007 can add 1.5 to their number.

"If an eligible Soldier has not re-enlisted yet, I would say now is the time to jump on it," said Sgt. 1st Class David Burgoon, career counselor and head of operations for the division retention office. "The increase will also provide a larger cap on the bonus maximum, depending on the category they fall under."

Zone A for a private first class or higher with an active-duty service period between 17 months and six years receives 1.5 plus their increase.

Zone B for sergeants and higher with six to ten years of active duty will have 1 plus the increase and Zone C is for sergeants with ten to 14 years of active who are eligible for .5 with an increase. The bonus is then calculated depending on the time already served and amount of time left in the existing contract in relation to the number of proposed years in the re-enlistment.

"This would be a good time to re-enlist for Army retraining or assignment of choice and receive even more money than last month," Burgoon said. "With more options showing in our system, an increase is just the thing to benefit the Soldiers here."

For more information, visit your local re-enlistment office or unit representative. ■

## Division SOQ WINNERS



The finest Screaming Eagles from the 101st Airborne Division throughout Iraq landed on Forward Operating Base Speicher Dec. 15 and 16 to compete in the Division Soldier and Non-Commissioned Officer of the 2nd and 3rd Quarter board.

Winners were as follows:

### 2nd Quarter

**Sgt. Jeremy Howell**

Co. C, 563rd Aviation Support Battalion,  
159th Combat Aviation Brigade

**Pfc. Carlos Salcedo**

Co. B, 7th Battalion,  
159th Combat Aviation Brigade

### 3rd Quarter

**Spc. Ken Fritsch**

Co. A, Special Troops Battalion,  
1st Brigade Combat Team

**Sgt. Chris Matthews**

Co. A, Special Troops Battalion,  
1st Brigade Combat Team

# VFW passes resolution to support war in Iraq

## News Release

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** -- The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S. passed a national resolution to support the president and the war in Iraq as part of the larger global war on terrorism.

VFW Resolution 440 also stipulates that American forces should remain in Iraq in sufficient numbers until Iraqi forces can provide security for their own nation.

The out of session move by America's largest organization of combat veterans to support the war is meant to get the nation refocused on supporting the troops instead of arm-chair quarterbacking the how and why the war in Iraq began.

"You can't support the troops without supporting their mission and the president as they work to bring security and stability to a region of the world that is the centerpiece of the war on terrorism," said VFW Commander-in-Chief Jim Mueller, a Vietnam veteran from O'Fallon, Mo.

"Once the decision is made to commit our forces, our nation's number one priority must be to support the troops so that they can accomplish their mission and return home to their families with their heads held high," he said.



"Our servicemen and women recognize the importance of their mission because they are witnessing positive changes every day in the lives of the Iraqi people and the future of the Iraqi nation.

They ask for nothing less than America's unwavering support so that they can remain focused on accomplishing that mission," he said. "To withdraw our forces prematurely would be a win for the enemy and a real threat to the rest of the Middle East and to the American homeland." ■

# 3-69 Armor leaves Samarra in good hands

**Staff Sgt. Mark Wojciechowski**  
133rd Mobile Public  
Affairs Detachment

**SAMARRA, Iraq** -- The 3rd Infantry Division's 3rd Battalion, 69th Armor Regiment has wrapped up their year-long tour and handed over their area of operations in Samarra to the 101st Airborne Division.

The unit has been in Iraq for 11 months and has seen their share of combat hostility.

They have also seen the Iraqi Security Forces make noticeable changes in their abilities to protect their people from anti-Iraqi forces.

Lieutenant Col. Mark Wald, commander, 3-69 Armor, is excited about what his unit has done here in the past



photo by Staff Sgt. Mark Wojciechowski

**Specialist Julio Castillo, 3rd Battalion, 69th Armor Regiment, pulls security from his turret while patrolling the streets of downtown Samarra in preparation of the Dec. 15 elections.**

eleven months of their deployment.

"When we first arrived here in February of 2005, our mission was to kill, cap-

ture and detain the anti-Iraqi forces and get the level of enemy activity down to a point where competent, capable Iraqi security forces can step in [and] take the lead," Wald said. "We have the enemy activity down to such a significantly low level that we can now transition Iraqi security forces currently in our area of operation to take the lead where coalition forces are now in support."

Captain Matthew McCain, fire support officer for the incoming unit from the 101st Airborne Division said, "We are looking forward to working with the Iraqi security forces and building upon the great job that the 3-69 Armor has done in this area."

The Soldiers of 3rd Battalion, 187th Infantry Regiment, 101st Airborne Division, will take over operations in Samarra. ■

## JNN increases battlefield communication capabilities

**1st Lt. Jacqui N. Pruszczinski**  
101st Combat Aviation Brigade  
Public Affairs Office

**TIKRIT, Iraq** -- As the War on Terrorism continues to change, so too, have the methods of battlefield communication in Iraq.

Currently the 101st Airborne Division and signal units around the Army are employing new equipment, developed by General Dynamics, to communicate in Iraq. The newly-integrated system, known as Joint Network Node, was first used by the 3rd Infantry Division during their recent deployment. The 101st is now using it throughout Iraq.

The new system is internet-inspired, and uses commercial satellites to allow units to communicate well beyond the line-of-sight capabilities.

JNN allows for an increase in bandwidth, which in turn, increases the reliability of communications. It also supports the use of Voice-over Internet Protocol or VOIP, a satellite-based phone. This again is believed to be a more efficient use of bandwidth. Video conferencing is also supported by the JNN and has become a popular means of communicating between leaders when at different camps.

"Signal has come a long way," said 2nd Lt. Kashe Brooks, platoon leader with 101st Combat Aviation Brigade. "We don't lose links as much [as before]. We can set it up and leave it. We're not constantly playing with it."

The JNN system is replacing the long-standing Multiple Subscriber Equipment, which used line of sight capabilities along with government owned satellites. It was a self-contained military network using strictly military assets. The use of commercial satellites comes with the benefit of using outside resources for greater communication advantages and also further improvement in the system.

"The [communication capabilities] are better, steadier and

more reliable than the "comms" we offered in my last deployment working with MSE in the Node Center," said Sgt. Layton Flynn, Company C, 96th Aviation Support Battalion. "JNN as a whole seems to have a much stronger backbone."

Flynn is one of the Soldiers who works with the new system on a daily basis in Iraq.

JNN is in its first phase. The operators have had limited class time with it and are learning many of the capabilities and limitations first hand as they go along this deployment. The 101st will be the first division to use the JNN system for the entire duration of the deployment. ■



photo by Sgt. Ryan Matson

**Sergeant Layton Flynn, Company C, 96th Aviation Support Battalion, 101st Combat Aviation Brigade, connects a fiber cable to the brigade junction box on the Joint Network Node shelter on Forward Operating Base Speicher.**

# BOB ON THE FOB

by SGT Albert J. Merrifield

Yes, yes, my precious... Come to my mug... I won't let the others get you... Now, let's go see our friend Mr. Honey Bun...



## TOCroach n. (tôk' rōch)

1. Subspecies of *fobbit* usually found in offices, motor pools, or TOCs. Known for gathering up all necessary resources (especially coffee, food, network connections) before other personnel can use them. Will scatter rapidly at the mention of work. Closely related to *FOB locusts*.

Got a phrase for BOB on the FOB? E-mail it to [bobonthefob@gmail.com](mailto:bobonthefob@gmail.com), and if your suggestion is used you'll receive credit for it in the strip based on your idea!



# Rebuilding Iraq: One village at a time

photos by Sgt. Rachel Brune

Major Andy Ingalsbe, Company A, 401st Civil Affairs Battalion, tastes the difference in the texture of grains in the Jedallah Sofia granary Dec. 28 as the mill operator, Muslim Ali Hassan listens and Dr. Mohammed explains the operations. Soldiers of the 401st were present for a ribbon-cutting ceremony on the granary as well as a new well and chicken farm in the village. (Below) Mohammed stands in front of the remains of his old house and explains various projects ongoing in the village.



**Sgt. Rachel Brune**  
101st Sustainment Brigade  
Public Affairs

**QARRAYAH-WEST, Iraq** -- In late April, 2003, an elder from the small farming village of Jedallah Sofia appeared at the gates of Qarrayah-West Base Complex, just south of Mosul, with a handwritten request.

Sent by Dr. Mohammed, the local physician, the note asked for help solving a water shortage in the village.

Lieutenant Col. Frederick Wellman, at that time a major and an operations officer with 6th Battalion, 101st Aviation Brigade, took a team out to the village to meet with Mohammed.

More than two years later, projects that grew from the relationship formed between the two men came to fruition as Mohammed and Maj. Andy Ingalsbe, Company A, 401st Civil Affairs Battalion, cut the ribbon Dec. 28 on three new

facilities in the village -- a chicken farm, granary and well.

"This is a great day for my village," Mohammed said. "[The coalition forces] are doing great things here."

He said the people of the village will talk about these projects as the actions of the coalition forces for many generations, and explained that people in his village still talk about road improvements the British forces made when they occupied the country in World War I as part of the offensive against the Ottoman Empire.

"From the beginning, [Mohammed] was working for all of the villages in the area," Wellman said. "He always offered his advice and his reputation to introduce us to new folks. With his help we ended up building about 23 schools, over 30 kilometers of road improvements, [and] a clinic in his village."

Soldiers of the 401st continue the mission of reconstruction in the Jedallah Sofia village and throughout the Dahuk Province. ■

# Task Force Band of Brothers assumes control of northern Iraq, marks second time for 101st in Mosul

**Spc. Anna-Marie Risner**  
133rd Mobile Public  
Affairs Detachment

**MOSUL, Iraq** -- The Rendezvous continues.

Soldiers from Alaska to Korea gathered at Forward Operating Base Diamondback Dec. 30 to witness the turn-over of Multinational Forces-Northwest from Task Force Freedom to Task Force Band of Brothers.

Major Gen. Thomas Turner, commander, 101st Airborne Division and Task Force Band of Brothers, accepted responsibility for Nineveh and Dahuk provinces from Maj. Gen. David Rodriguez, commander, Task Force Freedom -- marking the second time the Screaming Eagles have controlled this region.

"It is with great pride that the Screaming Eagles return to Nineveh and Dahuk provinces and continue our great partnership with the people of this region," Turner said, "a partnership that is certain to make progress within Iraq."

Turner noted that TF Band of Brothers will pick up where TF Freedom left off -- working toward Iraq's independence. Much progress has been made in the region during TF Freedom's time in Iraq.

"In that ensuing period [TF Freedom's command], Iraq has held two national elections, seated a national assembly, drafted a constitution, ratified a constitution, selected a permanent government, and trained over 100 battalions of Army forces and over 100,000 police," said Lt. Gen. John Vines, commander, Multinational Corps-Iraq. "The transition has been absolutely startling and compelling ... it's been unprecedented what's been accomplished in a year."

Rodriguez also reflected on the accomplishments of his task force, not only in battle, but also in working with the people in their region.

"Very early on, with the leadership that we got to work with, we were able to build a tremendous trust and confidence between each other and the Iraqi people," he said.



photo by Spc. Anna-Marie Risner

**Lieutenant Gen. John Vines, commander, Multi-national Corps-Iraq, and Maj. Gen. Thomas Turner, commander, Task Force Band of Brothers and 101st Airborne Division, walk together after the transfer of authority ceremony at Forward Operating Base Diamondback Dec. 30.**

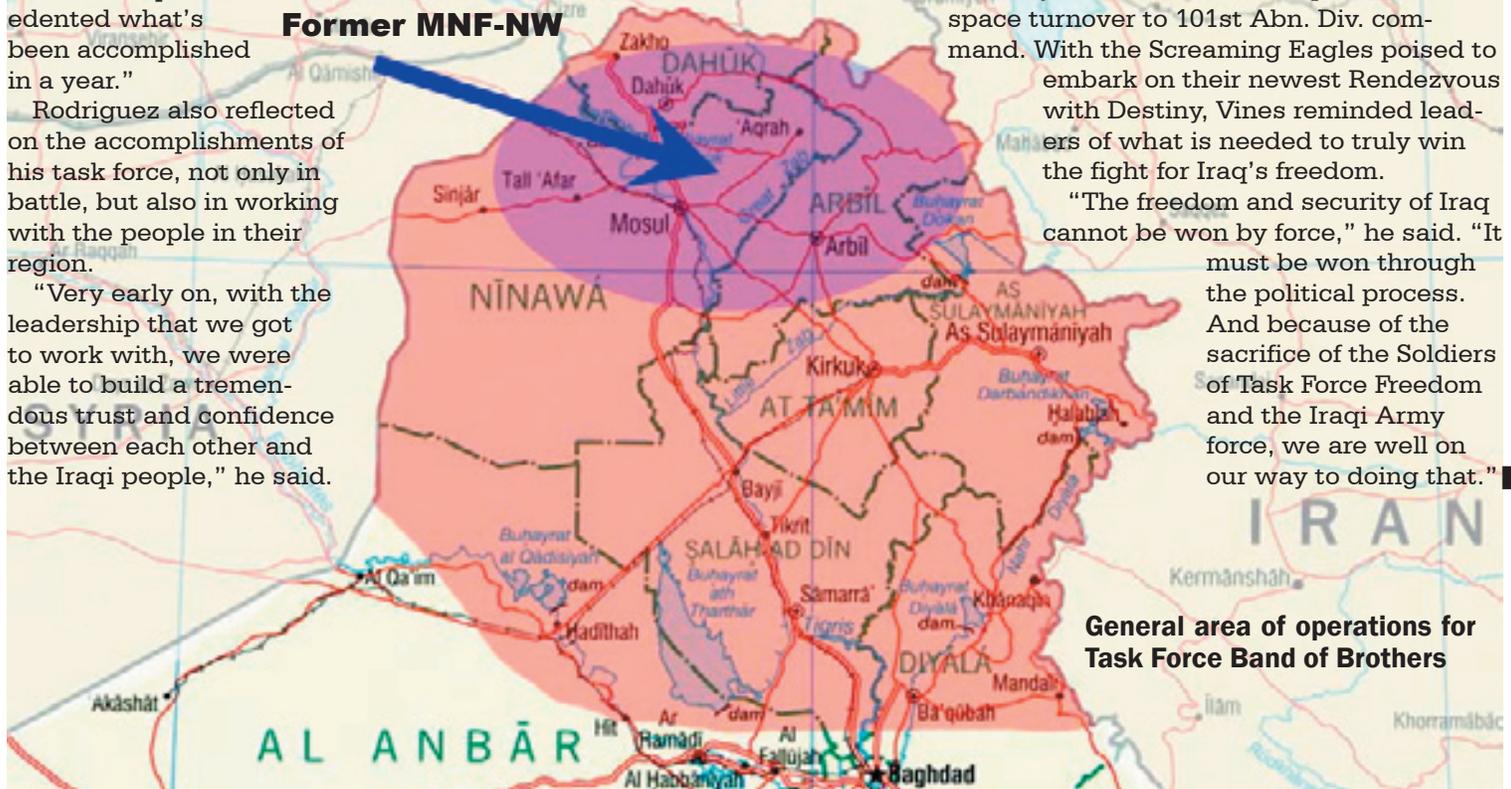
"When one looks into the Iraqi peoples' eyes and search into their souls, you will know why we are here and why we do what we do."

In addition, he noted despite their many successes, it was time for his Soldiers to return home and a new group of leaders and troops to take over.

"The Soldiers of Task Force Freedom have done their part," he said, "and now it's time to transition this battle space to Task Force Band of Brothers."

The ceremony marked the final step in battle space turnover to 101st Abn. Div. command. With the Screaming Eagles poised to embark on their newest Rendezvous with Destiny, Vines reminded leaders of what is needed to truly win the fight for Iraq's freedom.

"The freedom and security of Iraq cannot be won by force," he said. "It must be won through the political process. And because of the sacrifice of the Soldiers of Task Force Freedom and the Iraqi Army force, we are well on our way to doing that."



**General area of operations for Task Force Band of Brothers**

# THE BEATEN PATH



photos by Spc. Jeanine Kinville

**Soldiers from Pathfinder Company, 4th Battalion, 101st Combat Aviation Brigade, currently attached to 501st Special Troops Battalion, 101st Airborne Division, conduct infantry and marksmanship training at a qualification range Dec. 9, 2005 in Tikrit, Iraq. The Pathfinders perform sniper operations, conduct patrols within the 501st area of operations, and provide protective services for the 101st command group throughout Iraq while deployed with Task Force Band of Brothers.**



# 4th ID takes control in Diyala Province



photos by Spc. Jeanine Kinville

(Above) Major Gen. Thomas Turner and Col. Brian Jones stand at attention during the transfer of authority ceremony between 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, and 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division. The ceremony was held at Forward Operating Base Warhorse Jan. 11. (Right) Colonel Steve Salazar, outgoing commander, talks with troops after the ceremony.



## Sgt. Zach Mott

3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team  
4th Infantry Division Public Affairs

**BAQUBAH, Iraq** -- Diyala Province has a new military command overseeing the provincial reconstruction and building of the Iraqi Security Forces.

The 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division from Fort Carson, Colo., officially assumed responsibility of the area of operations from the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, in a ceremony on Forward Operating Base Warhorse Jan. 11. The Iron Brigade's area of operations includes the former stomping grounds of the 3rd BCT, 3rd ID as well as areas that were controlled by 3rd BCT, 101st Airborne Division, and 278th Armored Cavalry Regiment, a Tennessee National Guard unit.

"We fell in on some excellent programs and processes that are already in place throughout this province," said Lt. Col. James Rice, deputy commander, 3rd HBC, 4th ID. "We've got the staff and the battalions prepared to take the great programs ... to the next level so we can set up the Iraqis for future success."

The Iron Brigade is participating in

Operation Iraqi Freedom as part of the larger Task Force Band of Brothers, which is commanded by 101st Airborne Division commanding general Maj. Gen. Thomas Turner. The unit's mission includes training the ISF, assisting in the rebuilding of the Diyala Province infrastructure, as well as continuing to root out the anti-Iraqi forces that inhabit the region.

Provincial leaders, members of the Iraqi military as well as other coalition forces filled the FOB Warhorse hangar for the mid-day ceremony. Many attended to pay respect to the Soldiers who have helped Iraqi citizens conduct free elections as well as a constitutional referendum that is helping form the building blocks of a democracy.

"It is fitting to pause and recognize the tremendous accomplishments of the Sledgehammer Brigade," Turner said. "Colonel Steve Salazar and Command Sgt. Maj. [Jesse] Andrews and their Soldiers have added to the proud history of the Marne Division over the past 12 months once again in Iraq."

A transfer of authority ceremony marks a bittersweet change -- the end of one unit's participation in this war while it sparks the beginning of another's.

"We have just completed one of the toughest military operations that can be executed -- and that is a relief-in-place in contact with the enemy," Rice said. "The TOA ceremony means that we're prepared to take over the mission and they're prepared to go home."

The Soldiers of 3rd HBC, 4th ID moved more than 18,000 tons of equipment from the sands of Kuwait through the dangerous roads of Iraq to their current positions at forward operating bases around Iraq.

"The colonel (Col. Brian D. Jones, commander, 3rd HBC, 4th ID) and I are very proud of the Soldiers and what they have accomplished," Rice said. "We've done all of this without any significant or serious injury to one of our Soldiers."

Although the Sledgehammer Brigade has been the unit responsible for operations in this region, Iron Brigade Soldiers have been at the tip of the spear in protecting Iraqi citizens since their arrival in December.

"We've already had Soldiers in contact with the enemy," Rice said. "So far, everything has been done with great safety for our Soldiers and that's a tremendous record to try to uphold. We're going to continue working hard to do that." ■

# Looking to the heavens

## Staff weather officer warns Army pilots of desert dangers

### Sgt. Ryan Matson

101st Combat Aviation Brigade  
Public Affairs

**TIKRIT, Iraq** -- There's not too much in aviation that doesn't depend on the weather and few people understand this better than Air Force Staff Sgt. Lisa Blackwell.

Blackwell is an Air Force weather craftsman. She forecasts the weather and briefs Army pilots assigned to the 101st Combat Aviation Brigade on the visibility, sky conditions, winds, and other weather-related issues they may face during their desert flights.

Every pilot who departs Al Sahra Airfield on Forward Operating Base Speicher is required to receive a briefing prior to their flight. If the weather is too severe, a flight may have to be cancelled -- especially during the winter when fog and smoke can make flying hazardous, or in the summer when the threat is sandstorms.

"It gives me a sense of pride knowing that what we do makes such a difference in so many different aspects," Blackwell said. "Prior to having this job, I never would have thought [the weather] had a play in so many types of things -- everything in aviation all the way down to whether or not you can take a picture."

**Air Force Staff Sgt. Lisa Blackwell takes weather observations with a kestrel at the 101st Combat Aviation Brigade. The kestrel measures winds, temperature, altimeter and dew point, which is vital information for aviators planning flights.**

For the past four months, Blackwell has served as part of the 19th Air Support Operations Squadron, which includes an Air Force weather team and is attached to the 101st Combat Aviation Brigade.

Blackwell is no stranger to forecasting while deployed in a desert environment. During her 11-year Air Force career as a weather craftsman, she has twice been deployed to Bagram, Afghanistan, in addition to her current deployment to Iraq. ■



photo by Sgt. Ryan Matson



## Protect your digits

*According to the surgeon general's office, Soldiers serving in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom are experiencing a high number of burns to the hands in relation to other body parts. The risk can be reduced by wearing the fire-resistant gloves issued during the rapid fielding initiative.*

*If you did not get the nomex gloves, see your company supply office.*

# *Air assault operation nets suspects, weapons cache*

**Staff Sgt. Jesse Riggin**  
3rd Brigade Combat Team  
Public Affairs

**TIKRIT, Iraq** -- An air assault mission conducted by 1st Battalion, 187th Infantry Regiment, resulted in the capture of several suspected terrorists and the seizure of a large cache of ammunition in Muslakhah, Iraq, Dec. 23.

Elements from Company C, 1-187, landed in Muslakhah aboard UH-60 Blackhawk helicopters and began searching the village for individuals listed as being involved with terrorist activities in the area. Within one hour of touching down, they identified and detained two individuals on the list of suspects.

"Every day we win small victories," said Capt. Christopher Judge, commander, Company C. "But when we can get someone on our list, it is a huge boost."

By the day's end, the unit had apprehended six individuals.

During the air assault mission, Soldiers of Company D, 1-187, began an amphibious assault on an island in the Tigris River adjacent to Muslakhah. While patrolling the banks of the island, they discovered a cache of more than 100 mortar rounds – 45-82mm rounds and 64-120mm rounds. They also seized 20 rockets and 600 rounds of small arms ammunition.

"We are trying to make it difficult for [terrorists] to operate [in Muslakhah]," Judge said.

The town of Muslakhah, north of Al Fatah, is located near an oil pipeline that is under construction, which will bring much needed revenue to the area when complete. Attacks on the workers have disrupted its construction in the past, but have stopped since the Rakkasans took over the area on November 1st. The Rakkasans continue to work with Iraqi forces to reduce attacks and safeguard the pipeline. ■

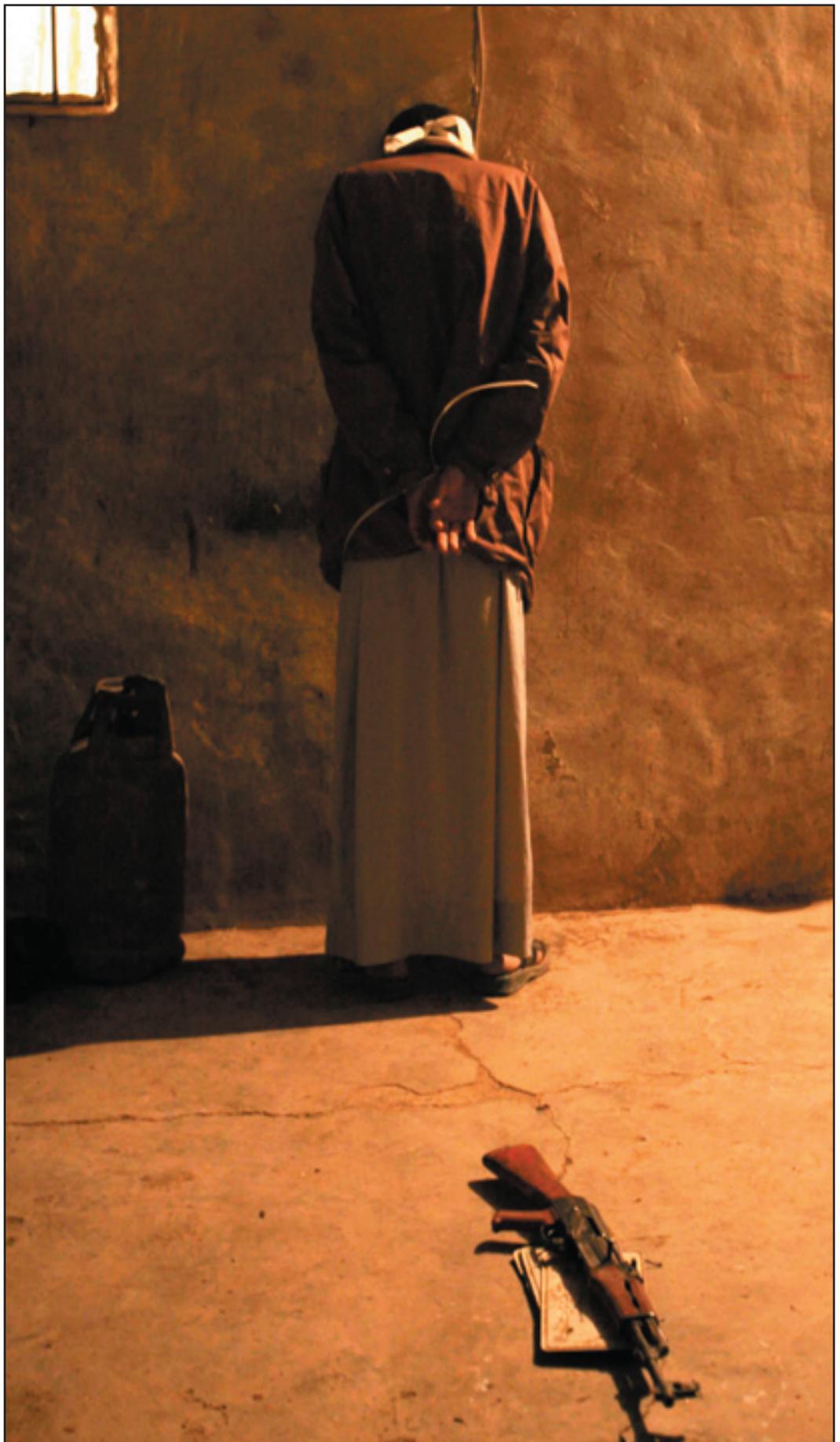


photo by Staff Sgt. Jesse Riggin

**One of six suspected terrorists detained by Company B, 1st Battalion, 187th Infantry Regiment stands behind the weapon and licence plates found during a search of his home Dec. 23.**



# TASK FORCE BAND of BROTHERS IN MEMORIAM

*Once firmly grounded upon this earth,  
these Screaming Eagles now soar in brighter skies.*

## **December 15**

**Spc. Joseph A. Lucas, 23**  
5th Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment,  
1st Brigade Combat Team,  
3rd Infantry Division  
Augusta, Ga.

## **December 20**

**1st Lt. Michael J. Cleary, 24**  
1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment,  
3rd Brigade Combat Team,  
3rd Infantry Division  
Dallas, Pa.

**Spc. Richard D. Naputi, 24**  
1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment,  
3rd Brigade Combat Team,  
3rd Infantry Division  
Talofofo, Guam

## **December 30**

**Pvt. Jonathan R. Pfender, 22**  
1st Battalion, 187th Infantry Regiment,  
3rd Brigade Combat Team,  
101st Airborne Division  
Evansville, Ind.

## **January 1**

**Staff Sgt. Christopher J. Vanderhorn, 37**  
1st Battalion, 187th Infantry Regiment,  
3rd Brigade Combat Team,  
101st Airborne Division  
Pierce, Wash.

**Sgt. 1st Class Jason L. Bishop, 31**  
33rd Cavalry Regiment,  
3rd Brigade Combat Team,  
101st Airborne Division  
Williamstown, Ky.

## **January 7**

3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment  
**Maj. Douglas A. La Bouff, 36**  
California  
**Maj. Michael R. Martinez, 43**  
Missouri

1st Battalion, 207th Aviation Regiment   
**1st Lt. Jaime L. Campbell, 25**  
Ephrata, Wash.  
**1st Lt. Joseph D. deMoors, 36**  
Jefferson, Ala.

**Chief Warrant Officer 4**  
**Chester W. Troxel, 45**  
Anchorage, Alaska  
**Spc. Michael I. Edwards, 26**  
Fairbanks, Alaska  
**Spc. Jacob E. Melson, 22**  
Wasilla, Alaska

**Spc. Clinton R. Upchurch, 31**   
3rd Special Troops Battalion,  
3rd Brigade Combat Team,  
101st Airborne Division  
Garden City, Kansas



*(These are the names that have been released as of Jan. 12)*