

Volume 2- Issue 2

March 2006



# The Club

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

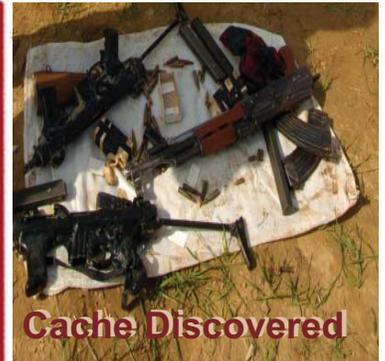
WWI WWII Vietnam Operation Desert Shield Operation Desert Storm Operation Iraqi Freedom I Operation Iraqi Freedom IV



**Operation Karkar**



**Advanced Training**



**Cache Discovered**



**Sniff Support**

## Honor & Country



**1st BCT Commander  
Col. David R. Gray**

## Progress Leads to Success

As Soldiers of the 1st Brigade Combat Team continue their mission to train Iraqi Security Forces and eliminate the insurgency, teamwork remains the central theme. The growing cooperation between units has led to the capture and killing of numerous terrorists throughout the region and the discovery of numerous weapons caches, creating an atmosphere in which the multiple ethnic and religious groups who call northern Iraq home will be able to coexist peacefully.

Henry Ford, in describing his new assembly line process, once stated that “Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success.” The camaraderie, determination, and endurance displayed by Bastogne Soldiers and our Iraqi counterparts is a demonstration of Mr. Ford’s ideal.

In February, with Bastogne Soldiers acting as advisors and providing security, the Iraqi Army took a major step forward when it conducted its first simultaneous, brigade-wide assault that resulted in the capture of several insurgents and scores of ammunition. In subsequent cordon and search missions, Bastogne Soldiers have taken more terrorists off the street and removed tons of ammunition from the terror arsenal. A crucial by-product of these successes is the growing trust and support of the Iraqi people. Citizens of the Kirkuk Province have become more willing to disclose information on enemy activities. Their intolerance for violence in the country strengthens as the concepts of democracy take root.

None of these success stories would be possible without the dedication and hard work of Bastogne Soldiers. Every cache discovered, every insurgent apprehended, and every infrastructure project started is a feather in the cap of each and every Soldier of this Brigade. For the past five months, these dedicated warriors have spent hundreds of hours clearing houses of the despots inside; teaching the Iraqi Security Forces what it means to be a public defender of the peace; and, working with local businesses and community leaders to improve the local economy, in turn improving the quality of life for every citizen in this region. In the years ahead, each and every member of this brigade will look back with pride knowing they were part of a team that brought democracy and independence to an entire country.

With these successes comes the sobering reality that Bastogne Soldiers continue to face danger each and every day. On 22 February we once again came together to mourn the loss of four of our own. Staff Sgt. Greg Gourley, Sgt. Rickey Jones, Pfc. Alan Morr, and Pfc. Chris Marion of Company C, 1-327th Infantry Regiment were brave men who volunteered to defend freedom and the American way. They paid the ultimate price and each has earned a place of honor in our hearts and in the pages of Bastogne Brigade history.

As our missions continue, your place on this team is invaluable. The support and encouragement you give to your Bastogne Soldier is just as essential as any piece of body armor or any weapon system the Army can issue; its effect on this mission is immeasurable. God bless you, and God bless each one of our Soldiers.

**Bastogne!  
Air Assault!**

## Combat Engineers Clear the Way

By: Spc. Barbara Ospina  
1st BCT Public Affairs

The Combat Engineers of Company A, 1st Special Troops Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team, travel the roads of Iraq to try and prevent life threatening explosions by finding and detonating improvised explosive devices (IED).

“Our primary mission is route clearance,” commented Sgt. John Nickolaides, a team leader for 1st Platoon, Company A. With unique training on specialized equipment before deployment, the combat engineers use their eyes, instincts and technology in support of the fight against terrorism.

Driving ahead of another convoy in support of their IED hunting mission may



Above:  
A Soldier from Company A, 1 STB pulls security on an Iraqi man while another Soldier searches the man's vehicle.

Left:  
Two Combat Engineers and an Airman from the explosive ordnance disposal unit examine a crater left by an improvised explosive device.

Right:  
A Soldier from Company A, 1 STB searches an Iraqi man.

Photos By: Spc. Barbara Ospina



seem dangerous to some, but to the combat engineers they are confident in their abilities and are watchful in their job.

“We definitely find more IEDs than actually blow up,” said Pvt. 1st Class Heath Crawford, a Soldier in 1st Platoon, Company A.

Crawford commented that during their training to be a combat engineer, they were taught about demolition, breaching, and many other special skill sets. Route clearance may not be in their job title, but it is what they know.

Combat engineers learn many differ-

ent jobs and specialties during their advanced individual training following basic combat training, but in Iraq their job is to clear the path for fellow Soldiers traveling the roads in the Kirkuk Province.

According to Nickolaides, they are not specifically tasked for 1st BCT convoys only; they will clear for any unit requesting their assistance.

Some route clearance missions last only a few hours, but the engineers always prepare for long days and nights.

“The length of our mission is dependent on what we find while we are out,”

Crawford said.

Long missions are tiring for both the Soldiers and their vehicles.

“Driving for 12 or more hours at times is hard on a vehicle,” Nickolaides commented. “But our vehicles do pretty well; we have good mechanics.”

With their up-armored vehicles running well, the combat engineers are able to support convoys rolling down the roads. They will lead the convoy out on their mission, and lead them back to where the Soldiers call home...for now.

# STB Family Readiness Group

Article Submitted By: the 1st STB Family Readiness Group

Since the battalion deployed, the STB FRG has been very busy. We have held meetings on the second Tuesday of every month. We come together as a battalion to brief spouses on any information relevant to the deployment, community activities, and post offerings. This is followed by a question and answer period with the Rear Detachment Commander. We wrap up the night by breaking into individual company level meetings. Participation has been good. In November, Mrs. Gray and Mrs. Malloy attended the meeting to distribute the new 1 BCT pins to all members.

In early October preparations began for the battalion Halloween party. Rear detachment spearheaded a majority of the planning, and FRG focused on set-up, games, and food. In addition, Rear detachment coordinated transportation for all family members to attend the MWR Haunted Trail Rides at the horse stables.

On December 17th, we had a battalion Christmas Party at the Family Readiness Center on post. The meal was pot luck, with all FRG members pitching in to help out. We had a few games and activities planned. Everyone was asked to sign a large banner to be shipped down range for all soldiers. Santa made a surprise visit, and the kids got to sit on his lap and receive a present. Pictures were taken and distributed to families a few days later. Everyone seemed to enjoy the party, it was nice to see families enjoying the afternoon and socializing. There was no formal meeting for the month of December; any news was handed out at the party.

We hope the New Year will bring lots of chances for us to get together, and to offer each other support and friendship. We have had a few issues to handle in the past

3 months, but I feel we have done an effective job. We try to help the spouses who need us, and listen to those who need to talk. We may not make everyone 100% happy, but we have let everyone know we care. We miss our soldiers, but hope they will be happy to hear we are looking out for each other, and working hard to "leave it better than we found it!"

## America Supports You

"They Also Serve"

featuring

-John Conlee



Personal Thank-You Videos

A Sincere Thanks to the families supporting Troops



Thank-You Messages



Up-to-date News

## Want to know the latest about Deployment?

YOU CAN...  
Download

\*Photos

\*Videos

\*Sounds



[www.bastogne.armyfrg.org](http://www.bastogne.armyfrg.org)

## Chaplain's Corner

We live in a small world. It is amazing that we are deployed not merely to Iraq but the very cradle of civilization. This is where the Garden of Eden and the Tower of Babel were. Kirkuk is the traditional site of the fiery furnace mentioned in the Bible in Daniel chapter 3 where Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, three of Daniel's friends, were thrown into the furnace as punishment for not bowing down to the "god" that King Nebuchadnezzar built. King Nebuchadnezzar watched as these young men were thrown into the furnace he noticed something amazing. Instead of being consumed by the flames all around them he saw a fourth figure in the fire. Instead of being bound and tied up the way they were he saw them walking about freely. He ordered that the men be brought out of the furnace and they were unharmed. They told the king that God protected them in the midst of the fire.

Do you feel the heat from the pressure and fire of deployment raging around you? Do you feel like you are all alone and wonder what to do? Do you feel bound and restrained by your circumstances? These are the times to exercise our faith. It is the time to look to God and trust him. There are some circumstances and trials that He protects us from and some that He carries us through. There are other circumstances and fires that we must go through. But we can take heart that our God who says "I will never leave you nor forsake you" will guide us through those fires as we trust Him and we will be freed from our restraints just as Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Praise be to God for His faithfulness.

Chaplain Ned Bartlebaugh  
Battalion Chaplain  
2-320th Field Artillery Regiment

## FOB McHenry has Sniff Support



Photos By: Spc. Barbara Ospina

Zeko, an explosive detection canine, takes a breather after his handler puts his specially made ballistic "doggles" on for his daily training at the newly built training course at Forward Operating Base McHenry, Iraq.

By: Spc. Barbara Ospina  
1st BCT Public Affairs

With a modified ballistic vest, a Screaming Eagle combat patch and a Combat Action Badge, Zeko, an explosive detection dog, may not look like the average Soldier, but he has definitely brought a new meaning to the phrase "man's best friend."

"He's got a good rapport with the Soldiers," commented Staff Sgt. David Silberman, Zeko's Kennel Master and partner for nearly two and a half years now.

Zeko may not be the average height of a Soldier, carry a full combat load, or even shoot a weapon, but he has become a valuable asset to the Bastogne Soldiers of 1st Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment, stationed at Forward Operating Base (FOB) McHenry, Iraq.

"Our missions are really broad; we support everything," Silberman reflected. "Every day we are learning something different for us to do."

According to Silberman, Zeko has detected explosives buried up to four feet in

the hard desert ground.

When it comes to his job, Zeko may be at the top of his game, but Silberman says he trains on a regular basis, just like Soldiers.

Silberman said it takes on average two and a half years to get an explosive dog certified, but it does not end there, each dog must also go through an annual certification. Each dog must have a minimum 95% success rate on explosive detection or the dog is decertified.

"Explosive dogs are trained in nine different explosive odors," Silberman stated confidently, while petting his partner. "He's got to find every single one; he can't

after the man, leaping into the air and locking his jaw on the Soldier's protected arm. Attempts to shake him off fail as Zeko just bites harder. Then with a single command from his handler, Zeko releases the Soldier returning to sit next to Silberman. A few seconds later, Zeko is rewarded with playful hugs and praises.

Not only does this furry four-legged Soldier pull his weight in the fight against terrorism, he has become very protective of his new Bastogne comrades.

"We get to spend a lot of time with [Soldiers], he's really close, and really protective of them," Silberman commented. "When we are taking rounds, he's watching and really alert of his Sol-



Zeko, a canine supporting Bastogne Soldiers of 1st Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment, runs through a tunnel during his daily training session.

miss them."

Although Zeko is currently tested at 98.7%, and trained in desert warfare, Silberman takes it upon himself to keep their team up to the task by training everyday.

Using a newly built training course, Zeko practices many different obstacles. Zeko warms up, walking through a small jump, followed by stairs and tunnels. The real workout starts when shouts echo through the air, followed by yelping. Silberman holds Zeko tightly, while a volunteer Soldier wearing a protective sleeve runs. Then, at the right moment Silberman releases the now vicious dog. Zeko sprints

diers, so he's got a pretty good rapport with those guys."

It isn't all work and no play for Zeko though. His kisses may be sloppy, and he has doggy breath, but Zeko has become well-known and loved among the Soldiers at FOB McHenry. During a simple strut down the gravel walk-ways, Zeko receives many playful pettings, and sometimes even a rowdy play session.

With loyalty being an Army Value this furry friend strongly possesses, many consider him the FOB pet, and even part of the 1st Battalion team.

# Soldiers Renew Vows

By: Spc. Barbara Ospina  
1st BCT Public Affairs

“For better or for worse, for richer or for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death do us part,” are powerful words spoken when a person dedicates their love to another in a marriage ceremony. Married Soldiers from 426th Brigade Support Battalion “Taskmasters”, 1st Brigade Combat Team, gathered at the Bastogne Chapel on Forward Operating Base (FOB) Warrior on Valentines Day, to rededicate their love for their spouses back home.

“The ceremony was informal,” commented Cpt. Jerry Sherbourne, the 426th BSB Chaplain. “But it was an opportunity for us who are deployed and separated, and far away, to show we meant our vows, and we still do.”

Over 30 Soldiers found time in between missions to remember their spouses back home, and rededicate their marriage vows in the joint ceremony held by Sherbourne.

“It’s a great experience for all Soldiers that are deployed to be able to express their love regardless how far away their

spouses are,” commented Lt. Col. Jeffrey Kelley, the Commanding Officer for 426th BSB.

With the longest marriage being 26 years and the shortest being less than a year, all Soldiers attended the ceremony for the same purpose; to give themselves to another for the rest of their lives...again.

Major Curtis Johnson, the Executive Officer for the 426th BSB expressed the meaning of the service perfectly when he said: “if given the opportunity to do it all over again, I would.”

The idea for the miniature ceremony was brought up to the Chaplain by Johnson, when he remembered that a similar opportunity was given to Soldiers when he was deployed to Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom I.

“It was a great way to remember my wife on Valentines Day,” said Spc. Shawn Droge, a husband for 5 years. “By renewing my marriage vows, I am promising my wife that I will be with her forever, and I love her very much.”

## CULTURE

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

### Ashura-

There are 12 lunar months in the Islamic year. During the first month, called Muharam (meaning forbidden), it is forbidden to kill, to steal, and to have war.

The first 10 days of Muharam are known as Ashura (meaning 10).

The period of Ashura started in the time of Prophet Muhammed. Muhammed traveled from Mecca to Medina where he saw that the Jewish people living in Medina were fasting. When Muhammed asked the Jews why they were fasting, they answered that this was the day God saved Prophet Musa (Moses) from the Pharaoh of Egypt, and they fast out of respect for that day. On hearing this, Prophet Muhammed declared that Muslims would fast for two days to show their respect for God saving Prophet Musa. Muslims would now celebrate on the 9th and 10th days of the Muharam.

In the year 61 AH (680 AD), the family of Imam Hussein (the grandson of the Prophet Muhammed) was murdered during the period of Ashura, on the 10th day of Muharam. The murderer then beheaded Imam Hussein, burying his head in Cairo, Egypt and the rest of his body in Karbala, Iraq. Shi'ia Muslims now use the celebration period of Ashura to also commemorate the suffering and murder of Imam Hussein and his family.

During Ashura, Shi'ia's demonstrate their sorrow by hitting themselves, displaying the pain and suffering Imam Hussein's family endured. At the end of pain and sorrow, families will come together to feast.



**Shia Muslims shed the sadness of Imam Hussein's murder by beating themselves with chains during an Ashura Ceremony.**

# Abu Takes it Upon Themselves

By: Spc. Barbara Ospina  
1st BCT Public Affairs



Left:

A Soldier from Company A, 1st Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment, observes an Iraqi soldier from his platoons "partner" Iraqi Army Platoon, during basic rifle marksmanship, and reflexive fire weapons tactics training.

Below:

Sergeant Mitchell Levart, a team leader for 2nd Platoon, Company A, carefully watches as an Iraqi soldier clears his AK-47 during a training session on basic rifle marksmanship, and reflexive fire weapons tactics.

Photos By: Spc. Barbara Ospina

**B**astogne Soldiers of 1st Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment were recently partnered with an Iraqi Army Platoon to unite the Soldiers in the fight against terrorism, and have taken extra steps towards furthering the platoon's training.

Soldiers from 2nd Platoon, Company A, 1st Battalion, took a short walk through Forward Operating Base (FOB) McHenry to a small worn-out range to continue training their "partner platoon" of Iraqi soldiers on close quarters marksmanship and reflexive fire weapons tactics.

According to Koh, the 2nd Platoon leader the Iraqi platoon is divided into two sections, allowing a group to focus on training while the other is on a combined mission with Coalition Forces.

"One day they are here at the FOB [forward operating base McHenry], and the next day they are out on a mission," Koh stated. "This allows for no time to waste, and to always be doing something."

The Bastogne Soldiers have taken it upon themselves to use their free time training the Iraqi soldiers they work side-by-side with, to help continue their soldier-skill development.

"Our main mission in Iraq is to train the security forces so they can protect



their country," Koh commented. "We can capture bad guys all day; it's training the Iraqis to capture the bad guys that will make a difference."

Sergeant Mitchell Levart, a team leader for 2nd Platoon, stated that continuous training helps basic soldier skills become second nature, and eventually, like most U.S. Soldiers, the Iraqi soldiers won't even have to think about what to do, they will just do it.

Steady training and combined missions is 2nd Platoon's strategy to help their Iraqi

counterparts.

According to Levart, integrating the Iraqi soldiers with U.S. Soldiers makes a dramatic difference in the Iraqi's performance.

"We don't separate the two Armies during missions," commented Levart. "If there is an American Soldier pulling security, then there is an Iraqi soldier pulling security with him; when we clear a room, neither [American nor Iraqi] Soldier leads, we clear it together. We are there to accomplish the same mission."

# Treadway Spots it

Article Submitted By: Company A, 1 STB

Highlighting a special Soldier from our Engineers (Alpha Company, 1st Special Troops Battalion), I'd like to introduce you to a great American hero – Spc. Ryan Treadway. Treadway is from Beckley, West Virginia and has been in the Army for three years. This is his second combat tour with this unit, and he recently reenlisted for an additional six years. Currently, Treadway's duties entail a key role within the company and it's current mission of route clearance.

Treadway and the rest of the crew, Sgt. Semsick (truck commander) and Spc. Pearson (medic) have found 23 IED's in the first three months of deployment. Treadway has spotted 11 of these.

The team has completed over 70 route clearance missions, with 1st Platoon logging over 6,000 miles. Due to Treadway's diligent maintenance and attention to detail, the team has never missed a mission due to maintenance issues. They clear 6-8 suspected IED's each mission, as well as clear debris from the roadside.

It is difficult to relate the incredibly difficult mission these Soldiers have, what with the amount of roadside debris, and attempting to visually sift through it in identifying hazards such as an IED. Adding to these difficulties, many of the local vehicles in the area are run-down and poorly maintained. Therefore, many can be seen on the side of the road conducting "maintenance," and leaving residue on the ground (oil spills, transmission fluid, etc).



One of numerous IEDs spotted by Spc. Ryan Treadway. Although the ground appears normal or just as if something was spilled, beneath the surface lies a home-made bomb.



## Team Signal

The hub of communications for the 1st BCT

Article & Photos Submitted By:  
Company C, 1 STB

The Network Operations and Security Center (NOSC) is one of the many key sections within the Brigade that often times is not very publicized, yet its mission is absolutely essential to the success of so many other elements. It is derived from a combination of extremely intelligent Soldiers that hail from the Signal Corps and beyond. The brigade signal

company, which is Company C, Special Troops Battalion, provides CW3 Newsome, SFC Andes, SSG Branch, PFC McKinnon and PFC Curry. The automations cell of the team consists of Soldiers from the Brigade S-6 shop, which includes CPT Hall, CW2 Warner, SGT Garibay, SGT Gruhn and SGT Harmon.

Though the NOSC is a product of the transformation, since arriving here in Iraq, it has taken on much greater importance with an undeniable impact. The core mission is that of ensuring that the communications, both within the brigade and beyond, are reliable and secure. They monitor both voice and data communications that travel through both intricate satellite links and fiber optic networks as the media paths. They ensure that the entire information infrastructure remains constant and direct any troubleshooting that occurs in order to restore communications.

These various communication networks support the war fighter with an unprecedented amount of data down to even platoon level. Prior to transformation, very little data flowed to this level. Now, with this huge increase of data flow, came the responsibility to better manage

the data and ensure its availability to the people that need it most. The Soldiers of Team Signal, are rising to the challenge of managing this data flow with legacy equipment that allow for larger, faster, and more reliable communications anywhere in the world. These Soldiers are essentially the Internet Service Provider (ISP), local, long distance, and cellular telephone providers, e-mail providers, satellite technicians, computer repair, local and wide area network managers, and security administrators. They truly do it all in order to provide the users the most accurate and up to date information so that they can make the most informed decision possible.

The NOSC is an excellent example of the coordinated effort that must be met in order to achieve this success. The relationships within the signal community are both far reaching and essential. It is much more than just a combined effort between the S-6 Shops and the Signal Company. We even work with a number of civilians within the area and one of the most important relationships we maintain is with the Air Force. It truly is a combined effort. It is a network of very motivated and dedicated individuals that make up **TEAM SIGNAL**.

# Unearthing Their Weapons

By: Spc. Barbara Ospina  
1st BCT Public Affairs

Flying on a hunch, Bastogne Soldiers of the 1st Brigade Combat Team, quickly dismounted from a UH-60 Black Hawk Helicopter in the heart of muddy farm land to search for a suspected weapons Cache near Hawijah, Iraq.

In just a few steps, the Soldiers, from Company D, 1st Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment, quickly spotted the smoke grenade that Soldiers from 2nd Squadron, 17th Cavalry Regiment, who had been patrolling the area from the sky in OH-58 Kiowa Helicopters, had dropped to mark a small bare area where a suspicious white bag was unusually placed in the field.

Before digging began, the Soldiers made their way to a quaint clay farm house that was near by to question those inside about any recent suspicious activity. While Kiowas circled in the air providing security for the Soldiers and support of the mission.

The Pilots of the light observation helicopters relayed any other suspicious sightings in the area, including an object about 400 meters from the initial site.

The two teams of Bastogne Soldiers



Soldiers from Company D, 1st Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment push an aerial defense weapon trailer out of a ravine in preparation for proper disposal by the explosive ordinance unit.

Photo By: Spc. Barbara Ospina

separated to each site, to ensure efficient reconnaissance of the two suspicious areas.

With one team traveling south to investigate the object recently discovered by the pilots, the other team began to dig through

the clay underneath the white bag.

The object spotted from above was actually an aerial defense weapon trailer that seated two people. The trailer was sticking half way out of the ground inside a ravine, as though the recent rains had washed away the dirt that was hiding it. In the loose dirt surrounding the trailer, the Soldiers discovered a link of bullets for the weapon, along with numerous single rounds.

Within an hour the other team of Soldiers had unearthed two sub-machine guns, an AK-47, and a large stash of ammunition for the weapons.

Following the discovery of the two caches, the Soldiers radioed for air transportation back to their forward operating base (FOB). As the unit's explosive ordinance disposal team began traveling to the site for proper disposal of the trailer and to reassure the area was thoroughly searched.

With the snap of a couple photos of the find, the gathering of evidence, the Soldiers handcuffed the military aged man living near the discovery site; then boarded the Black Hawk helicopter, ending a successful mission of diminishing the ability of anti-Iraqi forces in the area.



**Vice Chief of Staff for the Army, and former Screaming Eagle Commander, Gen. Richard Cody takes time during a visit to FOB Warrior to reenlist Bastogne Soldiers for continued service to their nation.**

# Operation Karkar



Left:

Iraqi soldiers from 2nd Battalion, 2nd Brigade, 4th Iraqi Army Division, pull security during an independent Iraqi Army Raid.

Below:

General Anwar, the Commanding Officer for the 2nd Iraqi Army Brigade, commands his troops with guidance from Col. David Gray, the Commanding Officer for 1st BCT from the air.

Photos By: Spc. Barbara Ospina



By: Spc. Barbara Ospina  
1st BCT Public Affairs

Soldiers of the 2nd Brigade, 4th Iraqi Army Division, took another important step toward independent operations early this morning as they conducted a brigade-level operation with support from Soldiers of the 1st Brigade Combat Team, that resulted in the detention of six suspected insurgents, two of which were classified “high value.”

The Iraqi Brigade’s three battalions conducted simultaneous raids, cordon and searches, and combat patrols while 1st Brigade Soldiers supported the mission by pulling outer-cordon security, air reconnaissance, and close air support. It was a combined effort to destroy known terrorist hideout locations and disrupt terrorist and insurgent activity. The Iraqi Soldiers detained six suspects, confiscated insurgent weapons, resulting in no enemies killed or wounded, and no Iraqi Army, Coalition Forces, or Civilian casualties.

The operations on the ground were only part of their overall mission.

In the midst of the ground raids, an Air Force F-16 dropped four 500-pound precision bombs Southeast of Huwajah, destroying a facility known to be an insurgent improvised explosive device (IED) observation post and hideout.

In addition to the successful execution of the operation, according to Maj. Mofuk Fathi Kdheer, the 2nd Battalion Operations Officer, every aspect of the mission was accomplished by the Iraqi Army.

After the Iraqi Brigade leaders reviewed intelligence reports received from their higher command as well as Coalition Forces, they conducted reconnaissance, and planned the mission. The leaders of the Iraqi Army collaborated with the 1st Brigade’s Military Transition Teams (MiTTs) for the successful execution

*“More missions  
will lead us to be  
responsible for  
security in Kirkuk,”  
-Maj. Mofuk Kdheer  
2nd IA Bn.*

of their plan.

“This morning there was not a [coalition] company commander or his Soldiers present for the mission,” commented Maj. Chris Kidd, the 2nd Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment Military Transition Team’s (MiTT) Officer in Charge. “There were only Iraqi soldiers and a MiTT standing in the background in an advisory role.”

From a coalition command and control aircraft, and being coached by Col. David Gray, Commanding Officer for 1st Brigade, Gen. Anwar, the Commanding Officer for the 2nd Iraqi Army Brigade, experienced the pride of commanding his forces and observing his troops during a combat operation for the first time. With a birds-eye view he was able to observe his troops movement and maintain command of all his forces spread throughout the province.

Gray added, “The Soldiers of the 1st Brigade Combat Team still maintain the dominant role in the fight against terrorism in this region, but this operation was a chance to build the skill-set of the Iraqi Forces.” Gray also commented that as the Iraqi soldiers continue to improve they will assume an increasing share of the fight.

“I hope this mission will become a small experience leading up to another large mission,” Mofuk commented. “More missions will lead us to be responsible for security in Kirkuk.”

“Coalition Forces help us day after day to do it by ourselves,” said Col. Malik Kdher Ahmed, the Commanding

(cont. Pg. 11...Karkar)

## “No Slack” Trains Iraqi Security Forces

Article and Photo Submitted By: 2-327 Inf.

As No Slack continues its mission in Kirkuk, the successful application of the art and science of this war continue to be paramount. No Slack's partnership with Iraqi Security Forces has been an essential mission and is directly linked to the success or failure of our operations in Kirkuk. Over the past few weeks No Slack's relationship with ISF was tested in a series of Iraqi led operations, but the true test has been our ability to focus ISF on the training that is required to ensure they are ready for all combat situations. The Iraqi Army and the Iraqi Police have proved to be up to the task and have excelled in the preparation for their very difficult mission.

A key No Slack training initiative was the two week Master Trainer Course, which focused on teaching junior NCOs from the Iraqi Army how to plan, resource, and execute platoon mission essential task training. As part of the course each student had to serve in an at least one evaluated leadership position at the squad and platoon level. The graduates of the course further demonstrated their leadership potential during two Situational Training Exercises that tested their ability to react to contact, treat and evacuate casualties, and conduct a deliberate attack. The course concluded with a graduation where certificates were awarded to each Iraqi Army student.

No Slack also conducted a training

event with the Iraqi Police Emergency Services Unit at the Kirkuk Patrol Base in early January. This event focused on three tasks: Close Quarters Marksmanship, Weapons familiarization and first aid. The goal was to allow each policeman to train on reflexive fire techniques, review US and Iraqi weapon capabilities, and have the opportunity to diagnose and triage a patient. The motivation and hard work of the IP was impressive, which was evident in their desire to return and continue the training at a higher level.

These training events have proved to be invaluable and have established a basis for mutual trust and confidence in the abilities of ISF and US Forces. The events have gone a long way to close the gap between the art and science of war with the end objective of winning the fight against the insurgency in the Kirkuk province.

*“There's been debate over the years about whether the profession of arms is an art or science. I think that the people who have been involved in that debate have missed the point. Fighting and winning will require the very best of both the art and the science of war.”*

*-Gen Wickham*



Left:

“No Slack” Soldiers and an Iraqi Emergency Services Unit conduct training on close quarter marksmanship and reflexive fire weapons techniques.



# Army Knowledge Online

[www.us.army.mil](http://www.us.army.mil)

# AKO

Whats your medical readiness?

**Find NEW helpful Links**

**You can now open and save your readiness file and immunization record**

# Rolling to Warrior

Article and Photos

Submitted By: 2-320 FAR

Following the transfer of authority ceremony with the “Cobras” of 3rd Battalion 2nd Brigade, 4th Iraqi Army Division, the Soldiers of 2nd Battalion, 320th Field Artillery Regiment turned over Forward Operating Base Bernstein to the Iraqi Army. The transition of the FOB was a true team effort across the 1st BCT. “Balls” Soldiers and A Co., 2nd Battalion, 327 Infantry Regiment, completed training their Iraqi counterparts preparing them to assume responsibility for the battle space around Tuz. Soldiers from 426th BSB surged additional trucks and haul assets to ensure that all equipment was moved to FOB Warrior. Finally, Soldiers from the 1st STB worked diligently to make sure that the demanding environmental standards were satisfied

FOB Bernstein. The Soldiers have also worked hard at getting a battalion tactical operations center, battery command posts, motor pool, Chaplains center and other facilities established to support the battalion’s ongoing combat operations. Much progress has been made across the board and the Soldiers of the battalion look forward to getting settled at FOB Warrior.

While the main body of the battalion will be based at Warrior, the Balls “Mongoose” MiTT remains committed to helping the Cobra’s secure and defend a free Iraq. Their work in the Tuz area continues along with some help from other elements of the Battalion, the BCT and supporting Army and Air Force elements. “Balls” Soldiers also support the BCT with fires and radar coverage at FOB McHenry. Wherever they are based, the Soldiers continue to take great pride in their role of helping to achieve of the Bastogne Brigades mission in northern Iraq.

The battalion’s main priority has shifted to the study and understanding of the critical infrastructure that exists in the Kirkuk

area. Balls Soldiers have all studied “Oil 101” a detailed briefing prepared by the battalion staff. Once again, success in this mission will demand close cooperation between all the units in the BCT, our Air Force comrades, a variety of Iraqi Security Forces and of course, the Iraqi people.

On February 6, 14 Balls of the Eagle Soldiers pledged to STAY ARMY by re-enlisting for continued service in our Army. These Soldiers were able to take advantage of many re-enlistment opportunities offered while deployed in Iraq.

Special thanks to Sgt. 1st Class Jenkins, the 2-320th Re-enlistment NCO, for his hard work in helping each Soldier

realize the opportunities they are afforded. The entire “Balls” team salutes these 14 Soldiers and many others for re-affirming their commitment to the unit and the Army.

The “Balls of the Eagle” team continues to thank our families and friends for their support, prayers and mail. We continue our mission of supporting a free Iraq and proud to be a part of the “Club.” We remain “Volens et Potens.” (Willing and Enable).

Right:

Soldiers from “Balls of the Eagle” Battalion take the time to reenlist at Forward Operating Base Warrior for continued service to our Army and Nation.



and all hazards were repaired or backhauled for proper disposal. Thanks to this combined effort the FOB transition was completed to standard and on schedule. The Main Body of the battalion closed on FOB Warrior on February 1.

Since arriving at FOB Warrior, the “Balls” Soldiers have been busy getting settled into “New” tent city while they await their containerized housing units that which were shipped from

**Karkar** (from pg. 09)

Officer for 2nd Battalion.

“Their experience and classes have helped in a very good way.”

“They did exceptionally well,” Kidd said confidently “The greatest improvement

has shown in their ability to react to change.”

According to Kidd, the evening prior to execution the 2nd Battalion leaders were given new intelligence leading them to a different suspected insurgent. Instead of taking

the easy way out and sticking with the plan, they weighed the value of the intelligence report and made a command decision to change their plan.

“We didn’t direct, or push them on which suspect they should go for,” Kidd said. “We

did not advise them, and they made the right decision.”

Today’s operation was an indicator of the Iraqi Army’s progress, and another step towards being the protectors of Iraq’s freedom

# Operation Swamp Fox

Article Submitted By: 1-32 CAV

Continuing their success in the Muqdadiyah area, 2nd Battalion, 2nd Brigade, 5th Iraqi Army Division conducted another successful operation. Operation Swamp Fox, a combined Coalition and Iraqi Army operation, successfully destroyed and detained Anti-Iraqi Forces (AIF) and denied the AIF sanctuary in a key area of Muqdadiyah. Iraqi Army Battalion, 2-2, is known as the "Tiger Battalion." Led by Col. Thær, the "Lion of the East", the Iraqi Army Battalion operates out of Forward Operat-

has been a source of AIF recruits and support since Coalition Forces arrived in Muqdadiyah. The area is lush, with numerous palm groves and tall grass growing along side the canals that crisscross the area. The northern boundary of the Bread Basket is formed by the meandering Diyala River while a large canal forms the



Above Right: Iraqi soldiers prepare to move to an objective to kick off a combined cordon and search with Coalition Forces.



Left: Colonel Thær, "Lion of the East" commands his troops on the ground during combined operation Swamp Fox. The Iraqi soldiers raided "The Bread Basket" detaining over 100 suspected insurgents.

Photos Submitted By: 1-32 CAV

ing Base (FOB) Normandy, Muqdadiyah. With his battalion of approximately 700 soldiers, Thær continues to identify and attack AIF cells throughout his area. In the most recent joint operation, Thær's staff identified numerous AIF elements working out of an area of Muqdadiyah called the "Bread Basket." Based on that, the Iraqi Army Battalion staff and Soldiers from 1-32 Cavalry Regiment, began joint preparations for what would become Operation Swamp Fox. The plan was for the RSTA Squadron to provide outer-cordon security and assist the Iraqi soldiers with coalition effects. The Iraqi soldiers, with a military transition team (MiTT) and Special Forces advisors would attack the objectives and detain terrorist suspects. Thær and Lt. Col. Arthur Kandarian, Commanding Officer for 1-32 Cav. Rgt., were ready to attack the Bread Basket.

The Bread Basket is a predominantly Sunni area of Muqdadiyah and is no stranger to coalition operations. The area

southern boundary. The Bread Basket is a rural area with farmland, orchards and vineyards that drive the economy in the area. In short, the area has limited access points and roads.

The operation began with artillery blocking fires early morning February 12. The 155mm artillery fired blocking fires to the north of the two major objectives and drive AIF south to prevent their escape.

As the Paladins from Company A, 3rd Battalion, 29th Field Artillery Regiment, "Gators", fired as two ground elements closed on the objectives. Iraqi soldiers led the movements into the objectives as RSTA Soldiers cordoned off the area. The Squadron established blocking positions to the south of the objectives while AH-64s, Apache helicopter and the Paladins prevented enemy exfil to the north.

Inside the cordon the Iraqi Army Battalion and two Air Force K9 teams moved to their targets to search for terrorist suspects. As the Iraqi soldiers moved

to search one of the target houses, AIF elements inside engaged them with direct fire. The Iraqi soldiers quickly entered the building and killed two AIF and injured another. During this engagement, the Iraqi sergeant leading the assault element into the house was wounded in the initial barrage of enemy fire, but killed both enemies regardless of his injury. Medical personnel onsite provided immediate medical attention and then the wounded sergeant returned to fight on the objective.

Following the search of the objectives, the Iraqi Army Battalion exfiltrated along routes that the RSTA Squadron secured during the operation. The final tally for Operation Swamp Fox was impressive: two AIF killed in action, one AIF wounded in action, and 104 suspected AIF detained. The Iraqi Battalion also discovered and confiscated a cache consisting of four AK47s, one AK-47 magazine, three rocket propelled grenades, one shotgun, two 122mm artillery rounds, two 120mm mortar rounds, three 60mm mortar rounds, one 82mm mortar round, artillery fuses, detonation cord, ten tailfins and one Katusha rocket.

Operation Swamp Fox is an example of Coalition Forces successfully providing tactical over watch and coalition effects. The Iraqi soldiers led the charge and conducted the actions on the objective. As the RSTA Squadron conducts tactical over watch operations, 2-2 Iraqi Army Battalion will transition to conducting successful, independent counterinsurgency operations.



## Females find Comradery among the Infantry

By: Spc. Michael Pfaff  
133rd MPAD

On the small infantry forward operating base outside of the dangerous city of Hawija, two female Soldiers have volunteered to extend their time among the legion of infantrymen stationed here.

“You imagine that typically portrayed infantry mentality before you get here, but it’s not like that at all,” said Spc. Merinda Karn-Sterner, a combat medic with Company C. 426th BSB. “Everyone here has got each other’s back, regardless of male or female.”

Karn-Sterner was attached to the 1st Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment, 1st BCT, and sent here to assist at the aid station. Admittedly, she was nervous about coming to the area.

“They showed us the map of our [area of operation] and the place that had most of the action was Hawija,” she said. “It was kind of intimidating to know that we were going to be working here.”

The danger here is obvious in the scorch marks from mortar attacks on the barriers and the Soldier’s faces, battle hardened from daily small-arms fire and IED attacks outside the base.

Despite the danger and rugged lifestyle, compared to other bases where you can find new gym complexes and coffee shops, Karn-Sterner and another female combat medic, Pfc. Class Wendy Frie, have both volunteered to extend their stay here.

Initially, the rotation was supposed to be 45 to 90 days, but the female Soldiers have found a home at Forward Operating Base McHenry.

“There aren’t a lot of comforts like other [FOB’s],” Frie said. “But, it’s comfortable to be here.”

A large part of that comfort comes from knowing that you are in good hands, Karn-Sterner said.

“I was nervous more than anything to meet my chain of command,” she said. “But, it turns out that the chain of command here is amazing.”

Part of they decided to volunteer to stay in such a dangerous

place is because in a combat-ridden area like this they could learn a great deal and put their training to use.

“A lot of medics spend 90 percent of their time training and never get to put it to use,” Karn-Sterner explained. “Out here, we put our training into action.”

The medics had an opportunity to put the rubber to the road as early as the second day at the base.

“The day after we got here we had our first trauma,” she said. “It was disturbing because I knew the guys, but it was great to be there so we could comfort them. It’s a great satisfaction knowing because of me these guys are going to go home alive.”

Frie elaborated, explaining that at larger bases medics are assigned to specialized groups to provide medical assistance, but here the medics are involved in everything from working sick call to stabilizing trauma patients.

“It’s very challenging out here,” Frie said. “But, it’s also fun and great because we learn a lot from infantrymen.”

Despite being a little intimidating, Frie said it doesn’t deter the infantrymen from being compatriots.

“These guys help us out a lot,” Frie said. “They’re pretty much like our brothers-in-arms. They look after us as much as we look after them.”

Frie and Karn-Sterner will continue to provide medical aid to Soldiers they’ve come to know as brothers at a place that feels like home to them.



# RSTA Squadron; Concrete Operations

Article Submitted By: 1-32 CAV

There has been a combined effort to prevent improvised explosive device emplacements by Iraqi soldiers and 1st Squadron, 32nd Cavalry Regiment. Beginning January 20, Soldiers from Fire Support Company and Headquarters and Headquarters Troop 1st Squadron, 32nd Cav. Regt., Battery A, 3rd Battalion, 29th Field Artillery Regiment, and 2nd Battalion, 5th Iraqi Army Brigade, began emplacing barriers blocking some of the major routes used by the residents of Muqdadiya and Coalition Forces. This has



Left: Soldiers from the 1-32 Cavalry Squadron utilize a recovery vehicle to emplace concrete barriers in support of an operation to help minimize terrorist activity in the area.



Left: Iraqi soldiers and RSTA Soldiers send the message to the local people on why concrete barriers are being placed.

Below: Soldiers from 1-32nd Cavalry Regiment and 3-29 Field Artillery Regiment, work diligently on filling in craters left by improvised explosive devices.



been a combined operation in which both Lt. Col. Thaer, Commander for the 2nd Iraqi Army Battalion, and Lt. Col. Arthur Kandarian, Commanding Officer for 1st Squadron, 32nd Cav. Regt., collectively determined that IED emplacers use these lateral routes to avoid Iraqi Army and Iraqi Police checkpoints and placed these cement barriers along specified routes to prevent IED emplacers access onto these roads

These concrete barriers both secure the route and also deny IED emplacers the freedom to maneuver along the lesser routes in the area.

It was quite a tasking for Soldiers to improvise and come up with ways to move these massive concrete barriers. While the barriers were being emplaced, Soldiers from 3rd Bn., 29th Field Artillery Regt., and Iraqi soldiers provided combined security and support for the emplacement until the routes were completely blocked.

The soldiers of 1-32 CAV also filled

in IED craters along the roadside by previous explosions with concrete. The team was led by 1st Lt. Kosters, the Executive Officer for Headquarters and Headquarters Troop for the RSTA Squadron, and 1st Lt. Trusillo the Platoon Leader for 1st Platoon, Battery A, 3rd Battalion 29th Field Artillery Regt. The Soldiers from Headquarters Troop and Battery A, repaired the craters with concrete while other Coalition Forces and Iraqi Army soldiers secured lateral routes with concrete barriers. It was an opportune chance for the local populace, of Muqdadiyah to witness the Iraqi Army and U.S. Soldiers working together repairing the devastation caused by the anti-Iraqi forces.

Concrete operations are not a new task for Kosters. He has served in Iraq with

the RSTA Squadron since September of 2005 and has already accomplished a similar mission in a separate area. In December of 2005 he was in charge of a similar operation dubbed, "Operation Asphalt." In which he led a Platoon from Headquarters Troop to provide route clearance and security over watch along another major route while a local contractor repaired craters left by previous IED detonations. This operation set the standard for future concrete and asphalt missions, including current operations to improve security in the "Bandits" area of operation.

# The Element of Surprise

By: Spc. Barbara Ospina  
1st BCT Public Affairs

The familiar sound of a magazine click echoes through the air as Soldiers file in and snap their seat belts. With a simple thumbs-up, a chilly gust of wind blows through the open doors. The security of the ground falls further below them, and the adrenalin kicks in as the Soldiers know that the element of surprise is on their side.

Bastogne Soldiers from Company D, 1st Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment, boarded UH-60 Blackhawk Helicopters and set out on an aerial traffic control point mission, using speed and shock as they searched citizens and their vehicles.

in the air to keep an eye on their comrades. Two of the Soldiers on the ground promptly set up a wooden sign stopping all traffic on the road, and then pulled security for the rest of the team. In no time at all the other Soldiers were treading through the tumbleweeds that had blown onto the road, signaling for people to get out of their cars so the searching could begin.

A colorful line of about 12 cars sat parked along the road. Soldiers chose to search one vehicle at a time, allowing them to be more aware of their sur-



Above:  
A Soldier from Company D, 1st Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment searches an Iraqi man during an aerial traffic control point mission.



Left:  
A Soldier looks out an open door of an UH-60 Blackhawk Helicopter awaiting the landing during an aerial traffic control point mission.

Photos By: Spc. Barbara Ospina

“Conducting Aerial traffic control points gives us an advantage,” commented Spc. Carson Keiser, a Soldier from 2nd Platoon, Company D. “Simply because the people on the ground don’t expect it.”

Though all of 2nd Platoon mounted for the mission, only one team (about five Soldiers) dismounted from each helicopter at each stop. After feeling the slight bump of the helicopter touching down, seat belts were quickly released and the Bastogne Soldiers rushed to dismount. With the thud of the last pair of combat boots hitting the dusty ground, the pilots lifted off, circling

roundings.

With time on their side, Soldiers politely waved the citizens out of each vehicle to be searched. While each individual was thoroughly patted down, and their pockets emptied, another Soldier checked every vehicle for any possible evidence of insurgent activity or connection. Once every glove box, trunk, hood, seat, and anywhere else items could be hidden was looked through, the passengers were allowed to return to their vehicle, and the Soldiers moved on to next search.

With the vehicle search coming to an

end, the team leader radioed back to the pilots relaying the team’s status.

“We have two vehicles left over,” ripped through the radio.

With a simple “Roger out” the pilots carefully landed. In less than two minutes all Soldiers were back on board, and the helicopter was lifting off again.

With one mission complete and the pilots circled the helicopters through the clouds; the Soldiers enjoyed the feel of air rushing through the fuselage as they mentally prepared for the next surprise search.

## Behind the Line; Support makes a Difference



Air Force Engineers from the 557th Red Horse Squadron work to improve Forward Operating Base McHenry for the Infantrymen of 1st Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment.

Photo By: Spc. Barbara Ospina

By: Spc. Barbara Ospina  
1st BCT Public Affairs

Air Force Engineers from the 557th Expeditionary Red Horse Squadron, currently deployed to Mosul Iraq, are supporting Bastogne Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 327th Infantry near Hawijah, Iraq, by increasing the quality of living on forward operating base (FOB) McHenry.

“It’s a mission worth supporting,” commented 2nd Lt. Tim Brodman, the officer in charge of the Red Horse detachment. “Working with the people here has been tremendous.”

The Air Force detachment arrived at the small FOB in January, and has been working non-stop since.

After completing a new medical aid station, three sea huts (wooden multi-purpose buildings), a military dog training course, new containerized housing units (CHU), and a modified post exchange (PX), the unit says their list of projects is drawing to a close.

“Our team started out at 23,” Brodman stated. “Since the last of our projects are almost complete we are gradually sending Airmen back to Mosul.”

With only 15 Airmen still working on the FOB, the work they are accomplishing is still top of the line.

“It’s really nice [the new aid station], and we will be able to treat more patients,” said Cpt. Mark Demuth, the Battalion Surgeon at FOB McHenry. “It was all a team effort to develop and design the aid station.”

The engineer’s accomplishments run throughout the FOB, affecting all of the Soldiers.

“You can see the change in the Soldier’s attitude because of

the work we are doing here,” said Staff Sgt. Delbert Johnson, an Airman of the Red Horse Detachment. “You definitely notice a confidence boost.”

Although the unit started out with a specific list of projects, they have been more than willing to support the Infantrymen of FOB McHenry in any way they can.

With the rain falling constantly over a four week span, the ground in one section of CHUs was flooded. Noticing the problem, the engineers dug a long trench leading into a large “Olympic swimming pool” hole. Within hours all of the water was drained.

“When Soldiers stepped out of their door they were walking through about six inches of water,” Brodman commented. “We had the equipment and time to fix the problem, so we did. That was definitely one of the most rewarding projects we have accomplished here.”

The Airmen may have come to FOB McHenry in support of the Army’s mission, but the Soldiers of the Battalion have done their best to support the engineers in return.

According to Brodman, there have been numerous times when they did not have enough material to accomplish a task and the Battalion Staff used a variety of channels to obtain the needed supplies.

No matter how small or large the projects, Airmen of the Red Horse Detachment are proud to be supporting the Bastogne Soldiers of 1st Battalion, and enjoy the atmosphere on the FOB as well.

“I love it here,” Johnson stated sincerely. “I have a better sense of pride about the work we are doing here.”

## Balls Maintains Infrastructure Security

Article and Photo Submitted By:  
2-320th FAR

The month of February has seen a return of spring-like weather to northern Iraq. The new warmth and sunshine coincide with the assumption of a new mission for the “Balls of the Eagle.” After moving to FOB Warrior with a large part of the 1st BCT, Balls Soldiers have been busy engaging with and training Soldiers in the Iraqi Security Forces. Specifically, the “Balls” focus has been on training Iraqis who are charged with protecting the infrastructure for Northern Iraq.

Each of the batteries has partnered battalions who they are training with and work with daily. This mission allows 2-320th Soldiers the chance to continue interaction with the people of Iraq. As a part of this new mission, Balls has received several partner elements to include a platoon from Task Force Phantom, the Corps LRRS Company who has conducted military skills training with the Strategic Infrastructure Battalions (SIBs). Over the coming months we will continue to work to ensure that the oil and associated indus-

Private 1st Class Brooks from 2nd Battalion, 320th Field Artillery Regiment, takes a moment to pose for a photo with three Iraqi children near Kirkuk, Iraq.



tries it supports is flowing. This task is not an easy one but 2-320th FAR is confident its Soldiers have the skill sets to make it successful.

Additionally, personnel changes continue throughout the battalion. On March 6th, Cpt. Carlo Sanchez assumed command of Battery A “Automatic.” We thank Cpt. Benny Beasley for his hard work and wish him well as he moves to the 1st BCT Staff. Sanchez comes to the battalion after serving as the Rear-Detach-

ment Commander at Fort Campbell; he turned his duties there over to Cpt. Rob Pratt at the beginning of the year. The “Balls of the Eagle” continues to provide fire support for the BCT across the area and was recently successful in deterring a mortar attack on FOB McHenry with rapid and accurate fires. Additionally, the Balls MiTT and supporting elements remains partnered with the “Cobra” battalion at FOB Bernstein and supporting the people of Tuz.

## A Leader of Soldiers

Article Submitted By: 2-327 Inf.

***“No one is more professional than I. I am a Non-Commissioned Officer, a leader of Soldiers...”***

As Task Force No Slack continues to pave the way for a free Iraq, the United States Army rewarded 35 deserving soldiers for their outstanding performance and display of leadership potential by promoting them to the rank of Sergeant. Command Sgt. Maj. Vimoto, the Battalion Command Sergeant Major, planned a recognition ceremony to properly introduce these newly promoted Sergeants into the Non-Commissioned Officer Corps. He did so by conducting a formal NCO Induction Ceremony. The ceremony served two purposes: to educate NCOs at all levels on this old Army tradition and to formally welcome new sergeants

Stick to the Basics (Marksmanship, PT, Medical, and Battle Drills)



to the time-honored corps, known as “the backbone of the Army.”

Despite the draw of combat patrols and sector missions the battalion senior NCOs managed to plan, resource, and execute this event to a very high standard. The ceremony kicked off around 4:00 p.m. local Iraq time with the entrance of the official party consisting of the Command Sgt. Maj., Deputy Command Sgt. Maj., and all six company First Sergeants. Sergeant Dunlap, a medic from

Headquarters, Headquarters Company, led the group in reciting the NCO Creed. The Command Sgt. Maj. had all newly promoted Sergeants standing with right arm raised to the square and read the “Charge to the Non-Commissioned Officers.” The Guest Speaker for the ceremony was Command Sgt. Maj. Grippe, the Division Command Sgt. Maj. He gave them a charge to stick to the basics (marksmanship, physical training, medical training, battle drills). The

Deputy Command Sgt. Maj. was smooth in his integration of a nearby explosion into his hooah speech.

The best part of the ceremony was when the newly promoted NCOs filed by the Command Sgt. Maj. to sign the Charge to the Non-Commissioned Officer. The ‘Charge’ symbolizes the NCO’s contract with the Soldiers they lead, the NCO Corps, and the United States Army.

The Ceremony concluded with all in attendance singing the Screaming Eagle Song, and the Army Song. This outstanding event culminated in a social gathering to congratulate the New Sergeants and to feast on Texas style BBQ, an Iraqi delicacy called Doma and kabob. The cake was cut by the youngest Sergeant in the group. The next Induction Ceremony is planned for May. Congratulations new NCOs, go forward and take charge...

## Whatever it Takes

Article Submitted By: 1-32 CAV

The Bandits of 1st Squadron, 32nd Cavalry Regiment continue to train the Iraqi Army and conduct operations to defeat anti-Iraqi forces (AIF) in eastern Diyala Province. Close cooperation with Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) and constant operations have led to a more capable and confident ISF. The Bandits are conducting aggressive operations and quality training to ensure the ISF continues to take the lead in defeating the insurgency.

One recent operation conducted was Operation Yorktown Flash. It was a combined air assault mission to clear cache sites and over watch critical routes in the area. In preparation for the operation, the Bandits conducted extensive planning and rehearsals with the Iraqi Army Battalion. On the morning of February 28, two UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters left FOB Normandy with Soldiers from Troop A, a Military Working Dog Team, and an Iraqi Army Company. Supported by blocking fires from a 155mm Paladin Platoon and over watched by a pair of circling reconnaissance helicopters, the search team was on the move.

The search team achieved positive effects

Right: Iraqi soldiers pull security after dismounting a Blackhawk helicopter during combined air assault with Soldiers from 1st Squadron, 32nd Cavalry Regiment.

Photo Submitted By: 1-32 CAV



by denying the AIF an area to emplace caches. The combined operation showed the populace of Muqdadiyah that the Iraqi Army is capable of combined air assault operations. During the search, Iraqi soldiers conducted information operations by actively engaging the populace and promoting cooperation between the locals and the security forces.

In addition to combat operations, the RSTA Squadron also continues to train and equip partnered Iraqi units. In January, we began providing up-armored HMMWVs

to the Iraqi Army and conducting drivers' training. Using a translator -10 and master-drivers, we are training Iraqi soldiers to drive the vehicles and conduct maintenance. After painting the vehicles, the Iraqi soldiers have begun conducting operations in their new vehicles. The vehicles significantly improve the survivability of Iraqi soldiers and increase the number of mounted patrols that the units can conduct. The new vehicles are a strong symbol of the increasing effectiveness of the Iraqi Army.

Another mission to increase the effectiveness of partnered Iraqi units is Iraqi First Responder (IFR) training. Modeled after the Eagle First Responder course, the Bandits are teaching first responder at FOB Normandy, FOB Hamrin, and Kirkush Military Training Base. Partnered Iraqi units are eager to increase their medical skills and the medics of headquarters troop have done a superb job of running multiple courses in different locations. The Iraqi graduates are grateful for the training and have commented that the skills they learn increase their confidence as they conduct operations. The knowledge that they have a medically trained soldier in their unit greatly boosts morale. So far, the Bandits have trained 159 Iraqi soldiers and certified 12 Iraqi trainers who can now conduct their own first responder course.



Bandit Soldiers conduct a combined air assault with Iraqi soldiers in an effort to diminish anti-Iraqi forces weapons, as they search for suspected caches.

Photo Submitted By: 1-32 CAV

## 426 Maintains Quality Assurance/Quality Control

By: Cpt. Lyn Graves  
133rd MPAD

Below: A Mechanic from 426th Brigade Support Battalion works on the vehicles that endure hours on end on the rough roads in Iraq.  
Photo By: Sgt. 1st Class Mike Winters



“Pre-inspections will take most of the day and are very exhaustive,” explains Carter,” and a post-inspection must be available for whenever the CLP returns, sometimes this means waiting for hours.”

“The vehicle inspections provide a screening of all vehicles before they leave on a mission to ensure that the operators are conducting a proper PMCS and also, if a serious fault is found, prevent that vehicle from leaving the FOB,” says Carter.

The goal is to minimize, as much as possible, the number of vehicular malfunctions while on missions and to maximize combat power.

“This program I’m sure has not only saved lives out on the road, but helped 426th BSB maintain the highest combat power in the Brigade. What these inspectors do helps to keep transportation assets up and running so that we can continue to support the outlying FOBs with all the necessary supplies and equipment,” Carter

**A** 1st Brigade Combat Team maintenance unit in the Iraqi theater is first to implement Quality Assurance/Quality Control in its maintenance process and has inspected over 1000 vehicles since arriving in country.

“Bravo Company is responsible for the battalion maintenance, pre and post inspections,” says Second Lieutenant Kyle Carter of Company B, 426th Brigade Support Battalion.

“The purpose of the QA/QC on the incoming vehicles is to assist the operators in conducting an after mission Preventive Maintenance Checks and Services as well as to conduct a quick check for any severe deadlining faults,” said Carter. “The intent of this being that vehicle operators would most certainly be tired and possibly a little shell shocked after coming off a long mission. With inspectors supervising the PMCS and conducting checks of their own, we ensure that no fault is missed. The goal is to send any deadlined vehicles to maintenance immediately after QA/QC is complete so that the vehicle can be repaired as quickly as possible.”

The pre and post inspections are centerpieces of the QA/QC program that Bravo Company has employed to repair vehicles quickly, though the inspections themselves are not quick.

explains.

Keeping assets up and running is a job given to only the best inspectors. The NCOs in charge of the inspections are exceptionally talented and were hand picked for their positions.

Staff Sergeant Ritchie Warmouth, QA/QC inspector, says, “QA/QC is important because it prevents vehicles from breaking down and saves lives. We catch a deficiency before it happens and causes a break-down.

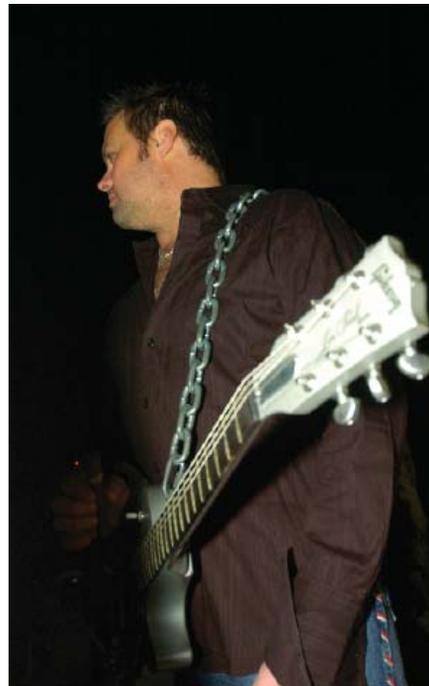
“QA/QC is different from preventive maintenance because it is more thorough and is done by a separate technician, better because we can catch a problem and fix it right there.”

A Soldier from 426th Brigade Support Battalion, inspects the underneath of an up-armored tactical vehicle to ensure it can get the job done.

Photo By: Sgt. 1st Class Mike Winters



# Montgomery Gentry Visits FOB Warrior



# Awards Earned By Bastogne Soldiers

Recognition From Jan 15-March 15

## *Bronze Star*

### **1-327 IN BN**

SGT Rickey Jones  
PFC Christopher Marion  
PFC Allan Morr

## *Purple Heart*

### **1-327 IN BN**

SGT Untiveros Enciso  
SGT Rickey Jones  
PFC Christopher Marion  
PFC Allan Morr

### **1-101 STB**

SSG Keith Gates

## *Combat Infantry Badge*

### **HHC, 1 BCT**

SFC Todd Rielly

### **1-327 IN BN**

1LT Patrick Smith  
1LT Aaron Tapalman  
1LT Joshua Wolff  
2LT Michael Sykes  
SFC James Esposito  
SFC Christopher Newsom  
SFC James Rawlston  
SGT Lopez Aguirre  
SSG James Card  
SGT Michael Dias  
SGT Alexander Garcia  
SGT Heath Johnson  
SGT Rickey Jones  
SGT Clayton Knudson  
SGT Christopher Seal  
SPC Howard Atkins  
SPC Michael Briggs  
SPC Blake Goff  
SPC Chad Hoffman  
SPC Benjamin Lane  
SPC Justin McCutchen  
SPC Terrance Ness  
SPC Kolin Reyes

SPC Joseph Rickey  
SPC Nathaniel Silver  
SPC Nathan Taylor  
SPC James Roesser  
SPC Joel Younger  
PFC Josh Chapman  
PFC John Clum  
PFC Eli Davis

PFC Casey Gursley  
PFC Brian Guzman  
PFC Preston Hale  
PFC Stephen Handlin  
PFC Andrew Hilyard  
PFC Sonny Hoskins  
PFC Duane Jackson  
PFC Manuel Leon  
PFC Christopher Marion  
PFC Christopher Myers  
PFC Michael Quarles  
PFC Roger Spain  
PFC Daryl Sullivan  
PFC Sean Szilagi  
PFC Cory Tucek  
PFC Timothy Voss  
PV2 Kevin Bednarz  
PV2 Mariyuh Haney  
PV2 Alfateik Martis  
PV2 Roger Yazzie

### **2-327 IN BN**

1LT Justin Bierens  
SFC Carl Jackson  
SFC Rashon Hill  
SSG Lawrence Kershaw  
SSG Daniel Robinson  
SGT Bradley Davis  
SGT Joseph Foutty  
SGT Matthew Somma  
SGT Mathew Helfer  
SGT David Wilburn  
SPC Christopher Bond  
SPC Stephen Cade  
SPC Zachary Caldwell  
SPC Andrew Christy

SPC Patrick Hansen  
SPC Geoffrey Harrison  
SPC Eric Kane  
SPC Igor Kudas  
SPC Jake Oubre  
SPC David Rodriguez  
SPC Patrick Ruiz  
SPC Nathan Ryan  
SPC Yosvany Solano  
PFC Stephen Avey  
PFC Jacob Getchell  
PFC Jeffrey Hannah  
PFC Robert Harrison  
PFC Andrew Hayes  
PFC Chase Hovious  
PFC Randy Johnson  
PFC Yefim Kelmanskiy  
PFC Alexander Konovalov  
PFC Nathan Miller  
PFC Juan Ospina  
PFC Carlos Ruano  
PFC Henry Rymer-Martinez  
PFC Jamie Simpson  
PFC Joshua Stoddard  
PFC Kevin VanDonsel  
PV2 Samuel Gibbs  
PV2 Gregory Miller  
PV1 Brian Brown  
**1-32 CAV**

1LT Christopher Hume  
SFC Ricky Elza  
SGT Christopher Criner  
SPC Michael Anthony

## *Combat Action Badge*

### **HHC, 1 BCT**

SSG Curtis Colbert  
SSG Nathan Dukellis  
SPC David Ewing  
PFC Victor Espericueta

### **1-327 IN BN**

1LT Craig Halstead  
1LT Sean Quinn

SPC Christopher Ballingsley  
 SPC Jason Smith  
 PFC Timothy Ally

**2-327 IN BN**

CPT Anthony Barreras  
 1LT Dustin Navarro  
 SSG Donald Day  
 SSG Leeway Scarborough  
 SGT Scott Mikell  
 SPC Daren Garis  
 PFC Clifford Edwards  
 PFC Shane Rapsey  
 PV1 Sean Bradley

**1-32 CAV**

1LT James Leidenberg  
 SPC Kyle Cunha

**2-320 FA BN**

SSG Gerald Nave  
 SSG William Stevenson  
 SSG Christopher Wooddell  
 SGT Jason Uselton

**1-101 STB**

MAJ Steven Howell  
 MAJ Jan Malaikal  
 MAJ Curtis White  
 CPT Catherine Curtis  
 CPT James Marchand  
 SFC Gerald Anderson  
 SFC James Guinn  
 SGT Marc Edgell  
 SGT Jason Eichelman  
 SGT Cory Morrell  
 SPC Jeffrey Douglas  
 SPC Jose Gandialopez  
 SPC Everardo Hernandez  
 SPC Daniel Porter  
 SPC Lynx Price  
 SPC Francisco Quiles  
 SPC Elvin Riverarios  
 SPC Jason Thompson  
 PFC Carlos Rivadeneira  
 PFC Jason Weathers

**426 BSB**

LTC Jeffrey Kelley  
 CPT Matthew Anastasi  
 1LT Craig Halstead

1LT Robert Freeman  
 2LT Joseph Jordan  
 CW2 Michael Lawrence  
 CSM William Maben  
 1SG Calvin Bell  
 MSG William Presley  
 SFC Eric Cunningham  
 SFC Gabriel Jackman  
 SFC Rodney Smith  
 SFC George Washington  
 SSG Calvin Avant

SSG Christopher Breite  
 SSG Darren Drake  
 SSG Perla Garza  
 SSG Martin Rivera  
 SSG Gary Smith  
 SGT Christo Bujarski  
 SGT Clarence Darden  
 SGT Stephen Davies  
 SGT Dale Gaura  
 SGT Michael Godsey  
 SGT Amos Goodson  
 SGT Dauntie Henry  
 SGT Scott Mikell

SGT Michael Montgomery  
 SGT LaTayna Orama  
 SGT Jason Safier  
 SGT Derrick Tarver  
 SPC Travis Beckner  
 SPC Justin Crowley  
 SPC Ronald Dunn  
 SPC Kristof Evinrude  
 SPC Daren Garis  
 SPC Thomas Gresham  
 SPC Turcios Hernandez  
 SPC Jonathan Hill  
 SPC Wesley Hiter  
 SPC Sherell Humes  
 SPC Patricia Jerkins  
 SPC Chris Land  
 SPC Patricia Munoz  
 SPC Jerry Pierre  
 SPC Lawrence Purvis  
 SPC Jonathon Sams  
 SPC Delcina De Sanon  
 SPC Weston Sedoris  
 SPC Randall Shoup

SPC Eric Smith  
 SPC Jason Smith  
 SPC Kenison Vrabcak  
 PFC Jarod Choate  
 PFC Matthew Gordon  
 PFC Carl Cox  
 PFC Jeffrey Jardine  
 PFC Gerald Jeitner  
 PFC Katie Kleeberger  
 PFC Brandon Krzyaniak  
 PFC Christal Lopez  
 PFC Mark Morgan  
 PFC Felipe Muzquix  
 PFC Daniel Robinson  
 PFC Daniel Roman  
 PFC Fredrick Turner  
 PFC Christal Wagar  
 PFC Joseph Walker  
 PFC Theresa Williams  
 PV2 Amber Bice  
 PV2 Christian Clark  
 PV2 James Droddy  
 PV2 Vondi Simmons  
 PV1 Sean Bradley  
 PV1 Michael Doran

**Combat Medical Badge**

**1-327 IN BN**

CPT Mark Demuth  
 2LT Charles Brill  
 SGT Jason McKinney  
 SPC Corbin Foster  
 PFC Timothy Carmicle  
 PFC Nicholas Jensen  
 PFC Joseph Pasquale  
 PFC Yitzcho Prengler  
 PFC Paul Williams

**426 BSB**

PFC Justin Koval

**Army Commendation**

**2-327 IN BN**

SGT Thomas Eddy  
 SPC Jacob Edwards  
 SPC Christopher Woolsey

# IN MEMORIAM

*Staff Sgt. Greg Gourley*  
1-327 INF  
1967-2006

*Sgt. Rickey Jones*  
1-327 INF  
1984-2006

*Pfc. Allan Morr*  
1-327 INF  
1985-2006

*Pfc. Chris Marion*  
1-327 INF  
1985-2006

*Pfc. Scott Messer*  
1-32 CAV  
1979-2006

"FROM THIS DAY FORWARD WHEN WE  
SPEAK OF OUR BROTHERS, IT WILL NOT  
BE IN HUSHED TONES FILLED WITH  
SORROW, BUT WITH PRIDE AND LOVE."  
-LT. COL. MARC HUTSON