The Heart Beat

2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division

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"Welcome to the Jungle"

Striking Down on Insurgents Along the Tigris

FREE MAIL

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Be strong and of a good courage.

-Josh 1:6

Each of you in STRIKE BCT displays courage; the very word suggests the valor of a Soldier. But a Soldier's valor need not be spectacular to reflect courage. While these events are truly remarkable and almost always recognized, it is the courage each of you displays daily that is most impressive.

"Courage is not to be found in a life that has never faced risks." For some of you, your display is more subtle, often not recognized, but always very real. Yours is the courage to endure, to speak with candor, to wait patiently, or to not hate -- to forgive. Indeed what each of you do as deployed Soldiers and as family members of deployed Soldiers is without question courageous.

Courage is armor
A blind man wears;
The calloused scar
of outlived despairs;
Courage is Fear
That has said its prayers.

-Karle Wilson Baker

I am always impressed by each of your examples of real courage, of good courage. I am thankful to each of you for your courage to do the right things, to remain disciplined, to stay focused, to help others heal, to keep the fight going.

I simply thank you for your courage and all that you represent – it is good.

STRIKE!
Todd J Ebel
Colonel, Infantry
Commanding

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"Welcome to the Jungle" Striking Down on Insurgents Along the Tigris

Story and photos by
Spc. George Welcome
2nd BCT PAO

CAMP FALCON, Iraq—Before sunrise on the morning of March 31, Soldiers from Company D, 1st Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment, the Military Training Team 3 from 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, and 3/1/6 Iraqi army division gathered at the helipad behind Camp Falcon's Aid Center. Over 160 Soldiers, including members of the Explosive Ordnance Disposal team and an explosives sniffing dog, took part in a major air assault dubbed Operation "Baghdad Square."

The Soldiers conducted a raid on house in the Al Rashid district that was being used as a site for making Vehicle Borne Improvised Explosive Devices, or VBIEDs.

"The air assault was directed against a battalion level target," said Capt. Robert Stoffel, officer in charge of 1-22nd IN's fire effects coordination cell. "We had good intelligence that suggested that a house in the Arab Jabur area was a VBIED making facility."

Ensuring that there would be enough Soldiers to secure the area and defeat any potential insurgents was a priority. Four UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters performed three separate airlifts in order to transport all the Soldiers to the site.

"We always make contact with the enemy where this VBIED factory is," said Capt. Jared Rudacille, commander of Company D, 1-22 Infantry.

Once all the Soldiers touched down at the target area, they immediately began their search.

The Iraqi Soldiers conducted a search for insurgents in the dense palm groves that surrounded the area.

"Our attack aviation was tracking some guys moving through the palm groves," Geissler said. "If there are bad people in this area, I would say that's them."

As the Iraqi soldiers searched the palm groves, it was apparent that the unit was a product of many hours of disciplined training.

"[Iraqi Army soldiers] get better with every mission," said Master Sgt. Brian Williams, noncommissioned officer in charge of MiTT 3, of the Iraqi soldiers. "The more time we get with them, the better they get. The more advanced notice we get on a mission, the more preparation we put into it and the better it'll be executed."

The search of the palm groves did not turn up any insurgents, but the morning was far from fruitless.

The "Dealers" of Company D located a cache, which contained various IED making materials inside a house nearby the palm groves. Explosives were also found outside of the house as well by "Jack," the explosives sniffing dog.

An EOD team was on the ground and conducted a controlled detonation, destroying the cache and the house it was found in.

The mission had only lasted six hours, but by its completion, the Soldiers of 1-22 Infantry, MiTT 3 "Strike" Soldiers and 3/1/6 Iraqi army had found and destroyed an important weapons-making facility, making the Al-Rashid area safer in the process.

(Above) Two Iraqi army soldiers secure a field during the Air Assault mission March 31. (Left) Capt. Henry Geissler, on the right, and Master Sgt. Brian Williams, both from MiTT3, take a knee while reading a map of their location.

"Strike" Soldiers Work to Improve Iraqi Army Tactics

Story by
2LT Reid Farmer

2nd Platoon, Bravo Troop, 1st Squadron, 75th Cavalry Regiment "Widowmakers", also known as "Ghost" Platoon, has been attached to the engineers of Echo Company, 1-22 INF since the 21st of January.

While with Echo Company the soldiers of the "Ghost" platoon have had the privilege of working with the Iraqi soldiers of 2nd Company, 4th Battalion, 6th Iraqi Army Division on a daily basis.

It is a job that seemed daunting at first, considering the culture and language barriers, but has now become very rewarding with the help of some very skilled interpreters and motivated soldiers on both sides.

The "Ghost" Platoon's mission includes three primary tasks. The first task is to supervise the force protection at the Iraqi Army (IA) static traffic control point (TCP) along route Tampa which monitors the flow of several thousand Iraqi civilian vehicles a day.

The TCP has proven to be a valuable addition to the Widowmaker force. Civilians passing through the TCP have reported seeing roadside bombs along the highway to the IA soldiers on several occasions. The IA soldiers then inform members of the "Ghost" Platoon who can pass the information to the necessary US forces.

"The long term goal is that someday the IA will be able to receive the civilian tips and be able to investigate and dispose of the roadside bombs by themselves," says Sgt. Steve Sakoda.

"Ghost" Platoon's second task is to train the IA forces in a variety of individual and small unit skills.

"We have been very pleased with the IA soldiers' enthusiasm and motivation to learn new skills. Earlier this month we taught them how to conduct snap TCP's, in which, while mounted, they profile passing traffic, stop specific vehicles, and search the occupants and vehicles for illegal weapons or evidence of insurgent activity," said Pfc. Bryce Banks, the "Ghost" Platoon forward observer.

Over the following week the IA successfully conducted several snap TCP's by themselves. More recently the platoon presented lessons on room clearing procedures in which the Soldiers constructed a glass house inside the IA patrol base. The IA soldiers immediately donned their equipment and formed four man stacks to clear the house.

"In this manner, the platoon is constantly improving the IA tactical skill set," said Spc. Timothy Peterson, the "Ghost" Platoon medic.

The third task for "Ghost" Platoon is to support the IA on joint operations within the Widowmaker area of operation. In the past two weeks, for example, the IA soldiers have searched every Iraqi home within a 16 square kilometer area while the Soldiers helped provide local security.

"These cordon and knock operations, as we call them, are an important step in preparing the IA to operating in the area on their own. Building strong relationships and trust with the Iraqi civilians is an essential part in fighting the insurgency," says Spc. Antoine Leblanc.

After each of these joint operations, the "Ghost" Platoon noncommissioned officers and platoon officers conduct an after action review (AAR) with the IA leadership. Like any AAR we discuss which skills performed by the IA need to be sustained or improved upon.

"Our current focus has been on convincing the IA officers to step back from the front in order to stop micro-managing the unit. The goal is to boost the officers trust in their NCO's as well as the NCO's confidence in themselves." Said Pfc. Mark Speakman. "We are reinforcing this confidence by shifting toward a train-the-trainer lesson plan in which we provide classes to the IA NCO's who then pass the knowledge on to the lower enlisted soldiers while we supervise the training."

In just over one month, this mission to train the IA has gone from being a tough task to the mission of choice for all of the soldiers in the "Ghost" Platoon.

"We have formed strong relationships with many of the IA leadership," said Pfc. Ryan Landers. "We see the progress being made as a necessary step in turning the defense of this country back over to the Iraqi Military as well as a trip home for our soldiers."

(Above) Soldiers from 1-75th CAV watch over the Iraqi army Soldiers while they conduct "Glass House" drills. (Below) A Soldier from 1-75th CAV teaches Iraqi soldiers how to perform snap Traffic Control Points through out their area of operation.

FACES OF

A "Strike" Soldier from HHC, 2nd Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, walks a small child back to her fathers arms during a population engagement in the southwest Baghdad region.

(Photo by Sgt. First Class Michael Marsh, HHC, 2nd Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment)

1st Lt. Yarnall, Company E, 1st Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment, "Eliminators", takes time while on patrol to play with the local children of Al Rashid. The children and Soldiers were picking flowers from a bush at the childrens home. 1-22nd IN from 4th ID is attached to the "Strike" Brigade.

(Photo courtesy of Company E, 1-22nd IN)

Soldiers from 1st Squadron, 75th Cavalry Regiment, take the stage during a monthly awards ceremony held April 5, at the Camp Striker MWR stage. Every month the 1-75th CAV holds a ceremony for all promotions, awards, and coin presentations earned that month.

(Photo by Spc. Kelly K. McDowell, HHC, 2nd BCT, Public Affairs)

THE HEART

Spc. Stephen Raschke 1st Squadron, 75th Cavalry Regiment, researches overseas and absentee ballot information at his desk in the Squadron offices at Camp Striker, Iraq. Raschke was appointed as the squadron Voting Assistance Officer, a position usually held by a noncommisioned officer or officer. (Photo by Cpt. Sebastian Montagne, 1st Squadron, 75th Cavalry Regiment)

Spc. Brandon Hurst (Left) and Spc. Matthew Parsons, both from 2nd Brigade Combat Team pose by a large shipping container filled with supplies for the Soldiers who lost their personal items, uniforms and gear in a fire that burned three tents on Camp Striker.

(Photo courtesy the Camp Striker Mayors Cell)

Pfc. Sheila Solis, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd BCT, smiles as celebrity Michael Mcdonald, comic from MADD TV, gives her a kiss on the cheek March 18.

(Photo by Spc. George Welcome, HHC, 2nd BCT Public Affairs)

526th BSB Soldiers Help Secure South Baghdad

Since their arrival on Camp Striker, the Soldiers supporting the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, have performed many tasks outside of normal operations.

One of the major operations conducted in support of the "Strike" Brigade, by the Soldiers of Company A, 526th Brigade Support Battalion, is the emplacement of concrete barriers to control traffic flow and provide force protection. Mass amounts of concrete have been delivered and dropped in numerous places around the brigade Area of Operations.

"I've pushed more barriers than re-supply since we hit the ground," said Staff Sgt. Benny Bigbee, platoon sergeant for heavy truck platoon.

Since the beginning of these operations, Company A Soldiers have delivered around 1,500 barriers. Texas barriers emplaced for vehicle inspection points, Jersey barriers for serpentines and scud bunkers for make-shift guard points can be seen scattered all over the southwest Baghdad area.

Initially, Company A received missions for delivery of barriers to enhance force protection around polling sites in support of the Iraqi National elections in December. These barriers facilitated the Iraqi army's protection of the polling sites.

That was just the beginning, observing the success of these barrier operations and the effectiveness of the projects, other commanders in 2nd BCT started developing plans to use barriers in their own sectors.

Company A soldiers now found themselves swamped with barrier missions setting up Traffic Control Points, guard positions, and even closing off roads all together. Company A soon employed the help of the other 526th BSB companies. Companies B, F, and D employed their recovery vehicles as movers for the large barriers almost as frequently as their intended recovery use. The unit extended the original purpose of the vehicles and managed to develop better ways to assist in the new mission of barrier movement.

Taking everything in stride in addition to their normal duties, the men and women of Company A 526th BSB have exceeded everyone's expectations.

"I just wanted to pass along a note to express my appreciation for your Soldiers' continued work ethic, professionalism, and flexibility," said Capt. Steven Cunningham, company commander of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, after working with the Company A Soldiers on one of their many barrier missions.

The Company A Soldiers of 526th BSB are making a name for themselves daily with each mission and every barrier placed, and the Soldiers' hard work and dedication to the safety of their fellow Soldiers is evident and now and forever set in concrete throughout the south Baghdad area.

(Above) A "Strike" Soldier from 526th Brigade Support Battalion helps guide a crane to hook up to a concrete barrier at one of many locations through out South Baghdad. (Photo and story courtesy of 526th BSB)

"Eliminators" of Company E Take Adaptability to the Next Level to Ensure Success for Task Force 1-22

Story by Spc. George Welcome

Photos courtesy of

Company E, TF 1-22

Doing more with less could almost become the unofficial Army slogan. Outside of their respective military occupational specialties, many Soldiers are proficient in other areas, making them valuable assets to their units.

The prospect of having to perform widely varying tasks and missions may prove to be too much for some units, but for one company assigned to 1st Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment, no task is too big.

The "Eliminators" of Company E, a forward support unit assigned to 1st Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment, prides itself on being able to accomplish any mission, anytime, anyplace.

"We have 24 hour maintenance operations; we always have Soldiers issuing fuel and we have 24 hour stand by recovery operations where we can recover vehicles at any time," said Capt. Jennifer McDonough, of New Iberia, La, commander of Company E. "My S&T platoon pushes log packs down to the patrol base we support several times a week. We are also doing a lot of engineering type work, moving barriers to set up blocking positions. We also help locals move various objects that they ask us to help with."

Along with the multitude of missions that the company has, they are also responsible for the force protection measures on Camp Falcon, monitoring traffic control points, EODT escort duty and even monitoring mosques in the local area to insure the safety of worshippers.

This is a lot of work for a company that is only 110 Soldiers strong, but McDonough says the Soldiers are taking it in stride.

"Our Soldiers enjoy the different types of jobs," said McDonough. "They definitely have the opportunity to do their job, but in addition to that, they're able to go out there and experience the culture. You can see their pride."

That pride and dedication was best displayed on the company's most treacherous mission, the recovery of 13 vehicles that had slipped off the roads and into canals.

"Shortly after we got here in the beginning of February, we were in the canals for six days recovering vehicles. I didn't hear any complaining the whole time we were out there. It was rough and the enemy action was high; I had 34 Soldiers put in for Combat Action Badges based on that six day period."

Being able to keep track of all the missions the company is involved in is an important step in ensuring that they get completed successfully.

"It's challenging keeping track of all the various missions we have taking place," said 1st Sgt. Del Robinson, of Pittsburgh, Pa. "But that's part of what we do, with the downsizing of the armed forces, it's key to manage personnel and effectively utilize their time. If you effectively manage your folks, you should be able to make every mission that comes your way."

As Soldiers begin to adapt to their area of operations and

Continued on Pg. 15 see **ELIMINATORS**

"Top Guns" Secure V

Story by

Spc. George Welcome

Al Furet, Iraq—The pungent scent of fuel filled the air as the Soldiers of 1st Battalion, 320th Field Artillery Regiment arrived at a neighborhood in the small town of Al Furet, a short distance from Baghdad International Airport on April 11.

The Soldiers came to this town in order to conduct a humanitarian patrol, handing out clothing and toys to the children and families who lived in the neighborhood. But what they came upon instead was something quite unexpected.

In a canal nearby the street's inlet lay an overturned fuel truck. The driver of the truck claimed to have been shot at by bandits passing him, causing him to steer his truck off the road and into the canal. As the canal is the chief source of water in the neighborhood, the truck had to be removed immediately.

Unexpected indeed, but the Soldiers of 1st Battalion, 320th Field Artillery have become quite familiar with the unexpected since arriving to Iraq in October.

Originally stationed in Taji, the artillerymen successfully conducted patrols and combat operations traditionally associated with the Infantry. Once their area of operations in Taji was annexed by another unit, the battalion was moved to Camp Victory, where life as they knew it would not be the same.

"In Taji, we were really just beating the streets. Our sole mission was finding insurgents and finding the people emplacing IEDs," said Staff. Sgt. Nicholas Stronczek. "Now that we are out here, especially in Al Furet and Iraqi Family Village, we are still keeping our eyes open, but we have a big mission in civil affairs giving out soccer balls, clothes and making sure that the people are doing alright."

After having been exposed the realities of combat, the Soldiers of 1-320th have been adjusting well to their new mission.

"The guys have done a great job adjusting," said Stronczek. "They have had to change their whole mind-focus, out here we have to make a really good impression on the people, and they have adapted to that really well, handing out soccer balls and candy, keeping smiles of the kids' faces. The families are really an asset to us; as long as we stay cool with them they will be cool

Victory

with us."

"Whenever we stop, we get a whole bunch of people crowded around us," said Staff Sgt. Danny Mitchell, of Alpha Battery, 1-320th of the Soldiers effect on the local population. "We come out here three times a day, so a lot of these people are familiar with us. We are having a great impact on the area."

The change from combat missions to civil affairs missions aren't the only changes the Soldiers have had to make. In coming to Camp Victory, they gained other new tasks as well.

"We run both ECP one and two and there is tower guard," stated Stronczek. "Soldiers also escort missions, escorting the local national workers around and there is inner perimeter security."

As the Soldiers waited for a crane to remove the truck from the canal, they handed out candy and toys to the kids. The children refused to accept that all of the soccer balls had been passed out and pleaded with Soldiers to give them one. They laughed and joked with Soldiers as their parents smiled and looked on. It was just another sign that the "Top Gun" Soldiers were doing well at making friends in the area.

"I know we are definitely having an impact," Stronczek said. "None of the other units that were here before us hit the street as much as we do. We really interact with the people and our interaction is a lot stronger than the people who were here before us. I can tell we are making an impact and other Soldiers can tell too, that's what keeps us doing what we do."

The street in Al Furet that had been bustling with activity was relatively empty by the time the recovery team came and began to lift the fuel truck out of the canal. Once the job was completed, the Soldiers of 1-320th headed back to Camp Victory. They had yet again encountered and conquered the unexpected.

Photo Credits (from top left and counter clockwise):

An Iraqi boy tries to convince Staff Sgt. Shane Best, HHB, 1st Battalion, 320th Field Artillery Regiment to give him a soccerball. The Soldiers were in the town of Al Furet on April 11 to hand out toys and supplies to the people who live in the area. (Photo by Spc. George Welcome) A 'Top Guns" Soldier stands guard while on patrol in the Airport Village. (Photo by Spc. Kelly K. McDowell) A medic from 1-320th FA treats a child's wounds while on patrol in the Airport Village. (Photo by Spc. Kelly K. McDowell) Soldiers from 1-320th FA conduct a foot patrol in the Airport Village. (Photo by Spc. Kelly K. McDowell) 1-320th FA Soldiers take part in a mas casualty exercise at Camp Liberty.

AUSA: "Voice of the Army, Supporting the Soldier" Benefiting the Soldier and Families Today and for the Future

Many Soldiers may have seen the magazine or heard through conversation about the association, but what is it? Why should a Soldier take time to go to the web site and find out what it is? What can the Soldier gain from being a member it?

Well, since 1950, the Association of the United States Army has supported the American Soldier both in their lives and on capital hill. Its motto is "Voice of the Army, support for the Soldier," and that is exactly what the AUSA is all about.

It is a non profit educational organization that supports all aspects of the Army from reservists to active duty, family and civilians alike. It has the power to be heard when a Soldier is in need. The AUSA has lobbied and secured better pay for the men and women who serve, and addressed other issues that affect a Soldier and their families.

"Basically this is a professional organization that is designed to lobby for the Soldiers, so that the Soldiers have a voice in congress," said Command Sgt. Maj. Brian Stall, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, who has been a member of AUSA for 20 of his 22 years in service. "The association has been the ones active in increase of pay over the last five or six years, getting better housing and working on better medical treatment."

In order for Soldiers to have a voice at capital hill they need to be members of this organization. And it is not only a voice at capital hill, the AUSA provides many money saving advantages to the Soldiers that otherwise are not available, said Stall.

"You can see all through Clarksville there are corporate members who proudly display they are corporate members," said Stall. "Those are local venders who join because they believe in the Army and they believe in the American Soldier."

It makes a difference because the association encompasses all ranks, said Stall. AUSA is not for just an officer or NCO, it is for all Soldiers.

"We are a professional Army and this is our organization," he said. "Here we are on our second venture to Iraq as a brigade, many of the people in our brigade have been here before. The first go around in Iraq we lost ten Soldiers in our brigade and AUSA supported our fallen Soldier's families substantially."

This organization benefits not only the Soldier, but the Soldier's family in many ways.

"There are so many benefits I can't list them all," Stall said. "I just want to educate the Soldiers, tell them that this is an organization that is out there for the Soldier, whether they are on for three years or a lifetime, this is their organization. I want to challenge the NCO's of our brigade to raise their Soldier's interest in this organization, tell them about it and become a member."

101ST AIRBORNE DIVISION ASSOCIATION

Like a fraternity, the 101st Airborne Division Association is pure camaraderie for the Soldiers of yesterday and the Soldiers of today.

It is an association formed by Screaming Eagle veterans for Screaming Eagle veterans. The organization was created 60 years ago and is almost 10,000 members strong. It is for any Soldier who has ever worn the famous Screaming Eagle patch, the most recognizable division insignia in the world.

The mission of the association is simple, to maintain the camaraderie and preserve the memory of those who have served in the unit, to help keep the memory and traditions of the division alive for future generations and to support the veterans and current Soldiers serving with the 101st Airborne Division.

"It was started so the veterans could come together and talk about their stories," said Command Sgt. Maj. Brian Stall, Command Sergeant Major of 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, also a lifetime member of the association. "Because friendships were made and friendships are made while serving with the division. Soldiers are establishing lifelong bonds with other Soldiers here, and this is a way to stay together."

The 101st Airborne Division Association also offers other benefits to Soldiers and their families. The association holds annual reunions rotated throughout the country as well participation in the annual celebration Week of the Eagles held at Fort Campbell, Ky., and the organization supports unit reunions.

The organization also sponsors the Screaming Eagle Support Fund which has contributed over $130,000 to support the active troops and their families and the 101st Airborne Division Association offers annual scholarships to family member.

The association is also responsible for the raising of the Division Memorial at Arlington Cemetery and the new Division Monument at Fort Campbell in remembrance of our fallen eagles both past and present.

"The Soldiers serve in the 101st, they should be proud," Stall said. "They are STRIKE Brigade, the best brigade and the Soldiers should want to join to strengthen our numbers. Every one wants to beat their chests and say they are the best, well, show me who the best is, I encourage the soldiers to join. What better place to join than in a combat zone?"

As it says on the 101st Airborne Division Association web site "Once you've worn the patch, you really never take it off."

"Strike" Mail Handlers Deliver Greetings From Home

Story by

Spc. George Welcome

Come rain, mud or shine, they are always there. And unlike their civilian counterparts, they are there seven days a week. Soldiers wait with bated breath to catch a glimpse of their vehicle, much like excited children do when waiting for the Ice Cream truck on a hot day.

They are mail handlers, and while many people would think that their job is simply handing out letters and packages, these Soldiers' work carries a far greater importance, as they are "agents of high morale".

Sgt. Daniel Luaces and Pfc. David Slaughter are the mail clerks for Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division. Their duties include picking up mail for HHC and 1st Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment.

"We pick up mail every day and every three days mail is sent down to Mahmudiyah on a log pack through [Company A, 526th Brigade Support Battalion]," said Luaces, who is the noncommissioned officer in charge of mail handling.

Luaces and Slaughter have seen many items come through the mail, but claim the strangest things they have encountered have been mop buckets and a shoe rack. They are also repeatedly asked one question.

"The most common question we are asked by people is whether or not they have a package," Luaces said.

Most people assume that mail handling is an easy task, but the task has its own special challenges.

"The biggest misconception people have about our job is that it's easy," said Luaces. "It's not easy. There really isn't a hard part, it is just tedious picking up the mail everyday and having to do the same routine."

Another Soldier who shares the work with Luaces has a similar opinion.

"A lot of people think it's just picking up mail and boxes, but it's not that easy," said Slaughter. "There is a lot of labor involved and sometimes you are tired. Some of those boxes are really heavy."

Very few people will disagree with the fact that mail call is one of the highlights of a Soldier's day. Whether it is a letter from home, a care package or something ordered online, receiving mail can make an otherwise dull day seem a bit brighter.

"Mail in a deployed environment is a major morale booster and gets people through the day," said Luaces.

"The feeling you get when you pick up the mail, then when you deliver a person's package, you see their excitement and it really boosts their day," said Slaughter.

"I really enjoy picking up the mail in the morning," said Sgt. 1st Class Scott Charlesworth, Retention NCO, 2nd BCT, a native from Lexington, Ky. "It's so nice when you go to your office in the morning and in your hand you carry a letter or package from home, it makes the day so much nicer."

Regardless of the difficulty of their work, Luaces and Slaughter do feel that people appreciate their effort.

"I think we are appreciated, because when I give a Soldier their mail and see the expression on their face, I feel like I've done a good job," Slaughter said.

By doing their job well, mail handlers not only make sure that mail is promptly picked up, organized and delivered; they promote good morale and help to keep us in touch with life back home.

(Left) Private 1st Class David Slaughter adds yet another package to the increasing pile in a conex that is used to collect mail for the Soldiers of 1-502nd IN who are in Mahmudiyah. Photo by Spc. George Welcome. (Above) Sgt. 1st Class Scott Charlesworth, HHC, 2BCT, receives a package from Sgt. Daniel Luaces, April 4. (Photo by Spc. Kelly K. McDowell)

For more information on AUSA and to find out about membership fees go to www.ausa.org

For more information about the 101st Airborne Division Association and for membership applications go to your First Sergeant or Sergeant Major.

Congratulations to the NCO and Soldier of the quarter

Sgt. Patrick Teixeira
HHT 1-75th CAV
NCO of the Quarter

Spc. David Swaim
A Trp 1-75th CAV
Soldier of the Quarter

Prevent Heat Injuries

The end of the rainy, winter season has approached, no more cool breezes on your face when you wake up in the morning, no more cold mud weighing down your tired feet and no more chilly walks back to your tents at the end of the day.

Since the beginning of March, the temperature change has not been so drastic, but it has been noticeable. The sun seems to burn a bit brighter, the cool breezes of winter are starting to feel like a blowdryer in your face and now even the small task of walking to your tent seems like a work out with all the sweat forming on your brow.

In just one short month the temperature has gone up by 13 degrees and by June the temperature will be at a toasty 106 degrees.

Heat injuries are going to happen,

but they are preventable.

Keep an eye on your friends, watch for signs of heat injuries and if there are signs of heat stroke seek medical care immediately.

HEAT CAN KILL

Prevention Works

Drink:

- Drink enough water to replace your sweat losses.
- Don't wait to feel thirsty, your body may need water before you feel thirsty.
- Remind your buddy to drink. Refill your canteens at every opportunity.
- Look at your urine. If it is dark or if you have not urinated, you need to drink more.

Eat:

- Eat meals to replace salts. Drinking too much water and not eating enough salt may be fatal.
- Do not follow low calorie diets while training in a hot environment.
- Do NOT take any dietary supplements containing ephedra (ma-huang) ANY time.

ELIMINATORS *(Continued from Pg. 9)*

become used to performing their tasks, there is the ever present danger of becoming complacent and in this fight, complacency could equal disaster.

"My guidance to my Soldiers is to take nothing for granted and to treat every mission like the first mission," said Robinson. "The leadership has to continuously remind Soldiers not to become complacent. It's easy to do with some of the comforts of living we have and getting into such a steady routine, but as leaders we have to continuously remind Soldiers that this is not a safe place."

The "Eliminator" Soldiers seem to be taking their situation well. Despite the varying missions, they understand that their job is important to the overall goal of bringing freedom to Iraq.

"The best part of my job is supplying the infantry and helping them to take out the insurgents," said Spc. James Weatherly, a native of Southaven, MS, who is a part of the supply and transportation platoon.

"We do our TCP checks twice a day. Every four days we take supplies out to patrol base two. I get a pretty good sense of satisfaction from the job I do."

"The part I like best about my job is knowing that I can bring people home safely when they get stuck out there," said Spc. Brandon Asbury, of Tazewell, Va.

"Basically, when I recover people, I get them out of the danger zone," Asbury stated. "We also help the Iraqi army build TCPs and we've helped them with a lot of barrier work so that they wouldn't have to live in the sand bunkers that they were in."

The Soldiers of Company E have a job with dual importance. Not only do they support other Soldiers, they often have missions that involve helping locals.

Spc. Jennifer Hartman of the Headquarters and Training section typifies the Company E Soldier; she is a multi-tasker. Hartman, a native of New Ringgold, Pa. is the First Sergeant's driver. When not on the road, she is responsible for maintaining the vehicle and performing a variety of administrative and training tasks.

"The best part of my job is being the First Sergeant's driver, because that's a privilege that everyone doesn't get," said Hartman. 'I've got to make sure that truck is always ready to go. Another good part of my job is getting to help the local population. When we put up barriers around the mosque, the locals really seemed to appreciate what we were doing."

By being ready for all missions to support Soldiers and local nationals, the "Eliminators" are doing their part to successfully bring freedom to Iraq.

"This company is a multifunctional, well organized, standard driven unit," exclaimed Robinson. "We're the epitome of what a supply-support unit should be and that is to meet the demands and requirements of the maneuver units and accept every mission that comes and execute it to standard."

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If you have any questions, comments, story ideas or photographs for "The Heart Beat" staff, call us at VOIP 242-4372 or email us at strikepaoiraq@yahoo.com

Cover photo design

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Photos by Spc. George Welcome

On March 31 the Soldiers of 1st Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment along side Iraqi Army soldiers conducted an air assault mission to secure a suspected bomb making facility.

STRIKE