

COBRA

VOL. I, ISSUE III

APRIL 15, 2006

STRIKE!



READY AND FORWARD

COBRA BRIGADE'S

8-10 CAV

in Baghdad ... pg. 4



Combined Operations --pg.8

1AD joins BCT fight --pg.10

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COVER PHOTO: The Rough Riders of 8th Squadron, 10th Cavalry patrol the streets of South Baghdad's Al Rasheed District in their M2A3 Bradley Fighting Vehicle. (Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Brent Williams)



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Commander: Col. Michael F. Beech

Command Sergeant Major: Command Sgt. Maj. John E. Moody, Jr.

Public Affairs Officer: Maj. Mark Cheadle

Editor/Graphics: Staff Sgt. Brent M. Williams

Staff Writer: Pfc. Jason W. Dangel

Cultural Notes: D. Saleeh

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COBRA⁶ on POINT



Col. Michael F. Beech

Over the past four months, we have seen significant improvement in the Cobra area of operations as a result of the diligent work and perseverance of the Soldiers from 1-12 Inf., 2-506 Inf., 8-10 Cav., 2-77 Field Artillery, 704th Support Bn., 4th Special Troops Bn. and our newest addition to the 4th Brigade Combat Team, Task Force 2-6 Inf.

Despite the large area for which the brigade is responsible, we have had great success conducting combat operations. There has been a decrease in attacks with the increase in the number of combined and Iraqi led operations. In the past three

months alone, we have completed over 200 missions involving raids and searches, along with over 3,200 combat patrols in central Baghdad.

Since January, we have patrolled and cleared over 6,600 miles of roadway. By keeping these routes clear of terrorists and improvised explosive devices, we allow greater freedom of movement for other crucial missions including security, essential services and governance.

The Cobra Brigade has been working alongside Iraqi security forces when conducting combat missions. During the 15 major combined operations involving the Soldiers of 4th Brigade and their Iraqi

counterparts, the level of success equal to or higher than what is seen when conducting solo operations. The Iraqi Army is showing that they are ready to take the lead due to the training that they received from the Military Integrated Transition Teams, which have been training the IA to secure their country.

Another main focus of the brigade concerns Essential Services. The Special Troops Battalion have overseen infrastructure projects worth more than \$5 million in Baghdad. These projects provide Iraqi citizens essential needs such as water, electricity, and sewage and garbage disposal.

I am proud of the enduring effort that our Soldiers have put forth in helping the Iraqi people build a more secure and prosperous country. We are winning here so we don't have to fight at home. I would also like to thank the dedication of our families and friends back home, and for all of the support which keeps us motivated and mission-oriented.

COBRA STRIKE!

F* R * O * M T H E F * R * O * N * T

Greetings Cobras!

Years ago, when my kids were much younger than they are now, my wife had an emergency in the states. She traveled alone to attend to that emergency, and the boys and I were left alone for 10 days in Germany. At the time, I was a platoon sergeant so I thought it would be too much to run a 16-man platoon and come home and handle a First Grader and toddler so I took leave.



Command Sgt. Maj. John E. Moody, Jr.

One day, after I had completed the first mission (dinner), I sat down with the kids and was preparing to eat dinner, and I looked and noticed that no one was eating. So I ask, "What's the problem?" Immediately, the First Grader replies, "Mom doesn't do it like this." Needless to say, I got that for the next ten days. Whether it was the way I prepared the food, washed the dishes or replaced things backed to where I thought they belong in our home, I was wrong, because I didn't do things the way mom did them. According to

my children, mom did it right and that was the standard; and my oldest had taken it upon him to enforce mom's standard while she was gone.

You may have found that story amusing, but the truth of the matter is that we need standards in everything that we do. Without standards, how would we measure the proficiency of a task or test? What rules would we use to ensure

uniformity of an organization? The Army's standards are established and directed by the Department of the Army and local command policies. But standards mean nothing unless they are enforced! In the example above, my 6-year old was making sure that I adhered to mom's standard. In the Army, leaders make sure that Soldiers adhere to the Army's standards. Our business is a high-stake business. Anything less than enforcing strict adherence to a standard could be costly.

We can not afford to have a vehicle turn over and kill the gunner because the vehicle

commander didn't tell the driver to slow down, or the driver wasn't licensed properly. We can not afford for a vehicle to break down on a patrol because we didn't conduct the proper PMCS prior to going on the mission. We can not afford to be on mission and realize that we left our tow bar in the motor pool because we didn't do a pre-combat check or inspection prior to movement. And finally, we can not afford to take short cuts when clearing or loading our crew served weapons.

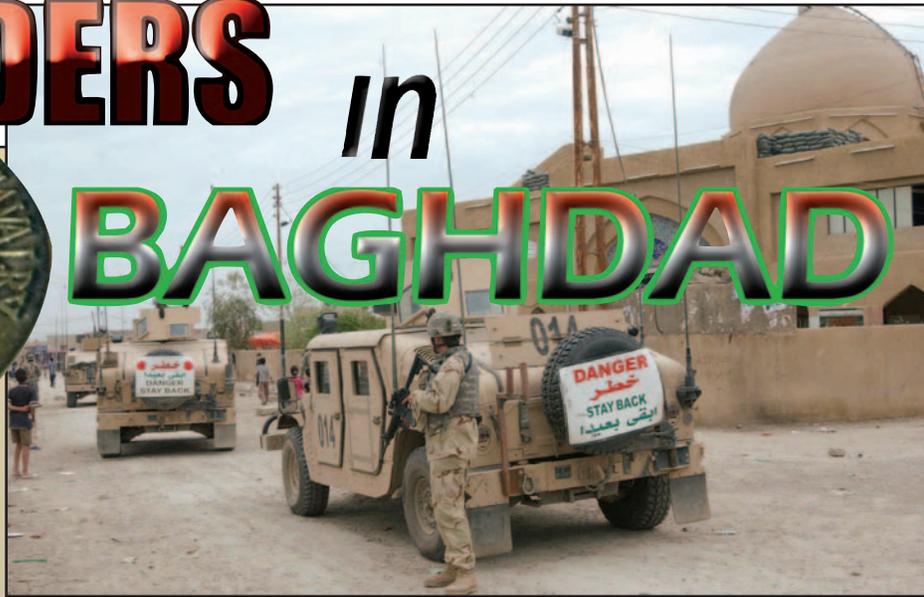
Whether its 0200 in the morning or 1400 in the afternoon, we have got to pay attention or someone's lapse in following a standard will be fatal. "Leaders" need to ensure that everyone is trained to standard on the crew served weapon that he/she is behind and that training needs to be validated every so often so as to maintain proficiency. In all of the examples above, if someone doesn't enforce the standard, it could cost someone's life. If you have been a strict enforcer, then I encourage you to continue. If not, then tighten it up a notch. We can't afford to have a lapse in a standard. Soldiers learn the standard. Leaders teach and enforce it.

Cobras!

ROUGH RIDERS

In

BAGHDAD



Story and photos by
U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Brent Williams

The Soldiers of 8th Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, maintain security for Coalition Forces in central and southern Baghdad's Al Rasheed District. Their duty is to help the new Iraqi government and its security forces take responsibility for their nation's capital.

Lt. Col. Gian Gentile Working with Iraqi Security Forces to combat anti-Iraqi forces, the Soldiers of 8-10 Cav. conduct combined patrols daily with Iraq's Ministry of Interior commandoes and Iraqi army soldiers. The combined forces patrol markets, residential areas and mosques in an effort to build trust and maintain security in the local communities.

"That is what I see as the beginning of trust between the Iraqi people and their security forces, and once we have a basic level of trust, I really believe that the ISF will be able to destroy the insurgents very quickly," said Lt. Col. Gian Gentile, squadron commander, 8-10 Cav., a native of Danville, Calif., who has more than 24 years of military service.

The Iraqi people, explained Gentile, will begin to recognize the legitimacy of the ISF once they feel that they have a security force that can fundamentally protect them from the AIF.

"I do believe that they are starting to see that ability in the ISF," Gentile said, "and that is what is going to produce, I think, peace and ultimately, the defeat of the insurgents."

Gentile recalled a recent event as an example of the challenges that lie ahead for Coalition and Iraqi Forces alike.

The Iraqi police, acting upon a tip from an Iraqi citizen that several homes in an area in South Baghdad were being used to build improvised-explosive devices, took hostile small-arms fire from a Sunni mosque in the area of the investigation, he explained. The Iraqi police returned fire. During the engagement, two officers were wounded, one seriously.

Soldiers from 8-10 Cav. responded to the Iraqi police's call for help, and a patrol in the area arrived on the scene to provide

Soldiers of the 8th Squadron, 10th Cavalry conduct security assessments with local mosque leaders in South Baghdad. The commanders of 8-10 Cav. constantly touch base with the local imams of the mosques and citizens of Baghdad to ensure that their neighborhoods are secure. This method helps to build upon the local Iraqi communities' trust in their leaders, Iraqi Security Forces and Coalition Forces.

vide medical attention to the wounded police officers.

Privately hired local guards in civilian clothes in the Sunni mosque then opened fire on the American Soldiers.

"My Soldiers quickly, aggressively and accurately returned fire to those guards in the mosque, wounding one and killing another," Gentile said.

Immediately, U.S. Forces working with their Iraqi counterparts, assessed the situation and addressed those in the mosque, using the loudspeakers in their vehicles to call for a cease fire.

Arriving on the scene shortly afterward, the senior MOI commander on the ground and the squadron commander met with the leaders in the mosque to find a peaceful solution to the tense situation.

Gentile attributes the violence to a lack of trust between the Sunni men and the predominately Shiite security forces operating in Baghdad. Recent incidents of sectarian strife created by Shiite militias posing as Iraqi Security Forces and attacking Sunni mosques has contributed to the Iraqi public's distrust.

Despite, the random violence, Gentile said he believes the basic essentials of trust are being established between the Shias and the Sunnis in his area of operations. Since the event at the Sunni mosque, his area has been relatively quiet.

"What needs to start happening quickly, right away, and this what I tell the men who live in and work at city mosques," Gentile said, "the Iraqis cannot shoot at Iraqi Police, at MOI Commandoes, because they are the legitimate security forces of the government of Iraq.

"They have to acknowledge that and cannot shoot at MOI Forces. That is where we have to start at. That is the beginning" said Gentile.

*Command Sgt. Maj. Rafael Rodriguez
Squadron Command Sergeant Major*



Command Sgt. Maj. Rafael Rodriguez, 8-10 Cav., scans the rooftops of buildings in a neighborhood in South Baghdad where sniper activity has been reported. The cavalry scouts working on the ground with Iraqi Security Forces are helping the Iraqi Army, Commandoes and police forces to refine their tactics, techniques and operating procedures, helping the ISF to take the lead in security operations in Baghdad.



Lt. Col. Gian Gentile, squadron commander, 8th Squadron, 10th Cavalry, inspects Iraqi checkpoint operations in Southwest Baghdad. The Iraqi Security Forces working the checkpoint outside the Al Amariya Mulhalla, or neighborhood, are dealing with Anti-Iraqi Forces attempting to disrupt security in their area by using snipers and planting Improvised Explosive Devices in the local communities. U.S. and Iraqi Forces are working together in South and Central Baghdad, conducting combined patrols to maintain security for the communities and defeat AIF activity in Baghdad.

The ISF contribute a lot to the Rough Riders' current mission, said Command Sgt. Major Rafael Rodriguez, 8-10 Cav.

In fact it would be impossible without them, he explained.

"There is a hell of a lot more Iraqi soldiers than American Soldiers," said Rodriguez.

"I wouldn't compare them to American Soldiers; it takes a long time to get them to that level," he said. "They contribute a lot on the checkpoints. They are doing a lot of patrols. They are doing combined patrols with us daily."

Rodriguez acknowledges that when working in the Iraqi urban environment, the mission of his cavalry squadron is considerably different than that of the light reconnaissance role for the scouts of the U.S. Army's Units of Action.

However, he added, the Soldiers of 8-10 Cav. are well-trained, confident in their skills and the ability of their equipment, and dedicated to accomplishing their mission.

"The Soldiers know they have a job to do," Rodriguez said. "They know they are making a difference. Stuff that when people watch or read a newspaper, they don't see, but the Soldier on the ground, he sees.

"He sees the little kids smile. He sees the Iraqi people making change. They are out on the ground, touching the Iraqi public. People don't appreciate what the American Soldier is doing here because they are not on the ground."

As the cavalry scouts of 8-10 Cav. secure south and central Baghdad, they are also working to train and equip the Iraqi Army, he explained.

"I look back, and I remember the Iraqi army in (2003), and the IA now, they are about 200-percent better," Rodriguez said. "They got what soldiers do — somebody is in charge of them, telling them where to go, where to be, where to orient their weapons. Now they stand — they fight."

Recognizing the long work that lies ahead for U.S. and Iraqi forces, Rodriguez said he knows that his Soldiers will be successful in their mission.

"Maybe, at the strategic level, there are challenges," he said. "At the political level, there are challenges — but at the Soldiers' level, we just do what we are told and come back."

The Iraqi people tell his Soldiers that all is not perfect right now, the command sergeant major said, but the Iraqis also tell his Soldiers that it will get better.



SCOUTS OUT!



8-10 Cav takes on all encompassing mission in southern Baghdad

Story and photos by
U.S. Army Pfc. Jason Dangel

The cavalry scout has been called the commander's eyes and ears on the battlefield.

Historically, their main responsibility has been to conduct reconnaissance operations to obtain combat information on the enemy and the area of operations for producing combat intelligence, but as today's battlefield constantly evolves, so does the scout.

A popular phrase within the ranks of the U.S. Army is "adapt and overcome," and that is exactly what Soldiers from 8th Squadron, 10th Cavalry, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division have done as they take on a wide array of missions in southern Baghdad.

"There are a lot of things involved in our job," said 1st Lt. Shawn Wiley, 2nd Platoon leader, Troop B, 8-10 Cav.

"Our primary mission is to conduct urban area (reconnaissance), but on any given day we have a responsibility to complete all kinds of missions," Wiley said, a native of Pine Bush, N.Y.

The Rough Riders from 8-

10 Cav. have come a long way from the days of cavalry scout Advanced Individual Training at Fort Knox, Ky.

On today's battlefield in the harsh and dangerous environment of Iraq the 8-10 Cav. troopers are required to



Soldiers from the 8th Squadron, 10th Cavalry, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division and Iraqi Police Commando conduct a joint patrol.

complete a handful of missions a scout from World War II would never even dream of.

Aside from urban area reconnaissance, Wiley and his men conduct lethal and non-lethal engagements, carry out strike operations on suspected insurgent strongholds, conduct raids and act somewhat as a civil affairs team all while maintaining good relationships

with the local populous in the west Rasheed District in Southern Baghdad.

The Rough Riders are also responsible for clearing supply routes of Improvised Explosive Devices and must be able to remain ready to respond to any emergency in

the battalion AO.

"A lot of the time we will respond to IEDs and other emergencies," said Spc. Max Mielke, cavalry scout, Troop B, 8-10 Cav., a native of Iowa Falls, Iowa.

"We have to always remain reactionary no matter what mission we do," he said. On a typical day Wiley and his troopers from 1st Platoon conduct mounted

and dismounted patrols, conduct raids, collect and act on intelligence, act as somewhat of a civil affairs team as they clear roads of Improvised Explosive Devices all while maintaining a Quick Reactionary Force status.

On a recent mission March 10, Troop B's 2nd Platoon of approximately 15 scouts conducted a joint patrol with Iraq's elite 1st Battalion, 4th Brigade Police Commando unit from the Iraq Ministry of the Interior.

This was the first joint patrol the platoon conducted with the Iraqi unit.

The scouts conducted a tight operation and the 40 strong Commando unit from 2-4 added excitement to the patrol.

The Commandos took control of the operation and were greeted by jubilant Iraqi citizens, a sign of the continuous improvement of the ISF.

"We have been trained very well by the Americans," said Pvt. Mohammed Rashad, 2-4 Commandos, during a patrol in a densely populated area in West Rasheed. "Our forces are ready for the mission 24 hours a day."



1st Lt. Shawn Wiley, Troop B, 8th Squadron, 10 Cavalry, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division talks with citizens of West Rasheed in Southern Baghdad during a routine patrol.

"I enjoy my job," the young Iraqi Commando said. "Everyday we are on the streets working to make this country better, and keeping our families and friends safe

in Baghdad." The West Rasheed AO has seen fewer and fewer attacks each month and Wiley credits his unit as well as the ISF for prevent-

ing terrorist actions against the people living in the area.

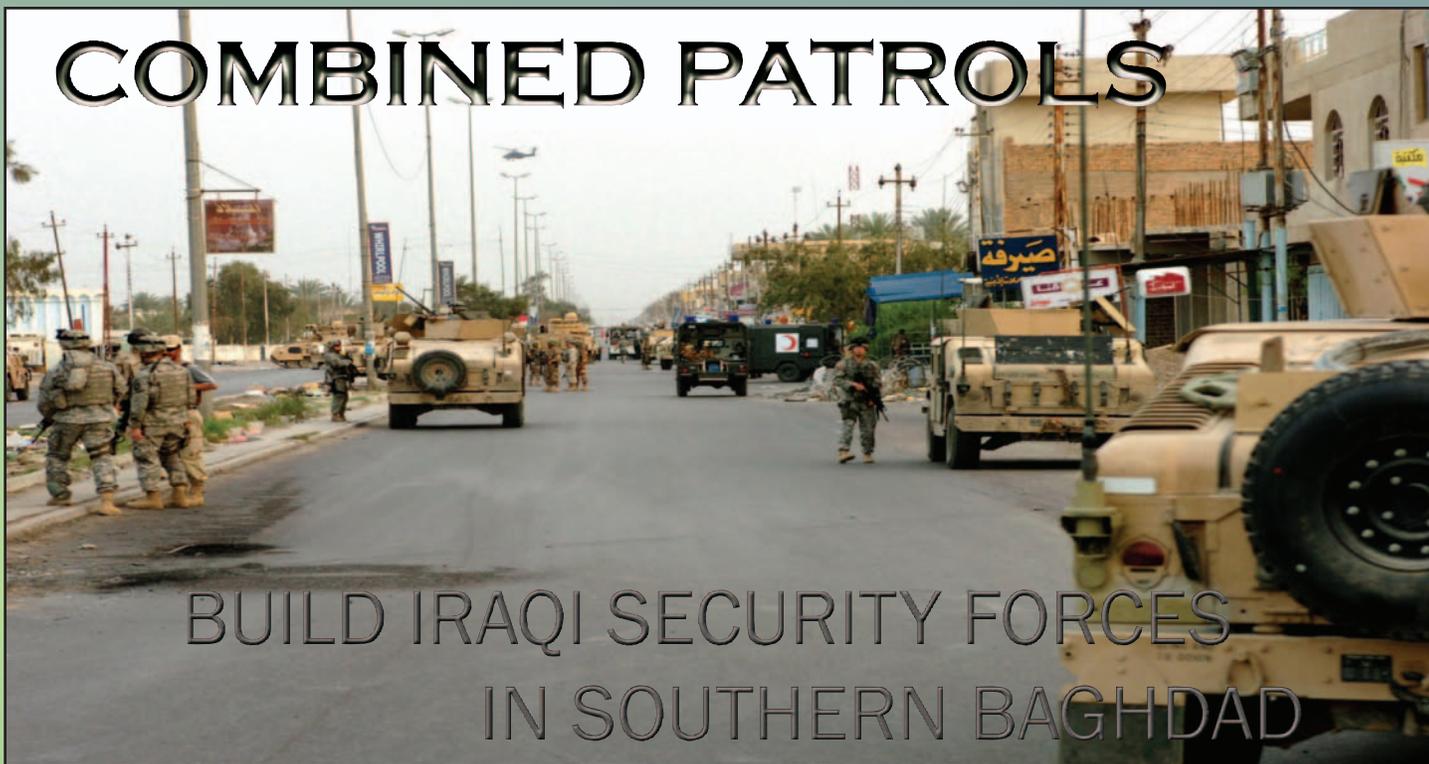
As The Rough Rider Battalion continues to conduct an all-encompassing mission in southern

Baghdad, Wiley said he looks forward to conducting joint operations with ISF personnel as security conditions continue to improve in West Rasheed.



Soldiers from 8th Squadron, 10th Cavalry, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division conduct a routine patrol in the West Rasheed District in southern Baghdad.

COMBINED PATROLS



BUILD IRAQI SECURITY FORCES IN SOUTHERN BAGHDAD

Photo by U.S. Army Spc. Brian Anderson MNC-I PAO

Soldiers in the 5th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Division, along with the 4th BCT's MITT prepare for a cordon and search of the Al Amarryia neighborhood Sunday. The Iraqi Soldiers, observed by the MITT, confiscated chemical masks and protective suits and more than 50 AK-47 assault rifles with ammunition during the operation. The mission was a response to more than 30 attacks occurring in the area over the last 30 days.

Story and photos by Spc. Brian Anderson

The 5th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Division, observed by the 4th Brigade Combat Team's Military Integrated Transitional Team, embarked on their largest mission to date, as they conducted a cordon and search of the Al Amarryia neighborhood Sunday.

The 5-6 ID confiscated chemical masks and protective suits and more than 50 AK-47 assault rifles with ammunition during the operation while instilling a sense of security in the residents of the neighborhood.

The joint operation between Iraqi Security Forces and U.S. Troops included the 8th Squadron, 10th Cavalry, which secured the outer perimeter, while the Iraqi Soldiers conducted the door-to-door searches.

Lt. Col. Gian Gentile, commander, 8-10 CAV, thought the Iraqis did well handling a mission this size for the first time.

"They were able to quickly and effectively mass two battalions into this area, secure it and begin going through homes," Gentile said. "All one has to do is watch them operate and they will

see they are well on their way to becoming an effective security force." The 4th BCT, MITT, injected advice throughout the mission to help ensure success.

"We have been training 5th Brigade for three months, and the 3rd Infantry Division was training them before we took over," said 1st Lt. Andrew Harris, operations, 2nd Battalion, 506th Infantry, 101st Airborne Division, currently attached to 4th BCT in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. "They know what they are doing, so we didn't have to help much.

"Every once and a while we would make an observation, and they would take that and use that to help them run things smoother at the next house," he continued, "but, for the most part, they were on there own."

The 5-6 ID broke up into squad size elements and worked their way through the neighborhood, often stopping for several minutes to answer the questions and concerns of the citizens.

"We have (a lot) of trouble here," said Sahar, a local resident. "It is good that the Iraqi Army is here now."

Sahar described some of the recent

violence that sparked the operation into existence to an Iraqi Soldier.

"We have kids, not much older than (me), running around with guns and threatening the people," she said. "We don't feel safe in our home."

The Iraqi soldiers operated with discipline and professionalism, as they patrolled the streets of Al Amarryia, searching every house they crossed.



Photo by U.S. Army Spc. Brian Anderson

Confiscated AK-47 assault rifles are displayed after a joint operation between the 5th Bde. 6th Iraqi Div. and 4th BCT



Photo by U.S. Army Spc. Brian Anderson

"This area is very hot," said 1st Lt. Hider Al Asadi, 5-6 ID. "We needed to be very careful, and watch out for each other."

The question ISF heard the most was, "when are we going to have permanent security in our neighborhood?"

The unit already knew the answer and

the reply came easy.

"The 5th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Division is here to support and protect you," officer after officer and Iraqi soldier after soldier would reply.

After telling the residents they will be protected and their neighborhood would be secure, the Iraqi Soldiers

Soldiers in the 5th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Division, listens to an Al Amarryia resident express his desire for security in his neighborhood during a cordon and search Sunday. The Iraqi Soldiers, observed by Military Integrated Transitional Teams, lead by the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, confiscated chemical masks and protective suits and more than 50 AK-47 assault rifles with ammunition during the operation. The mission was a response to more than 30 attacks occurring in the area over the last 30 days.

offered cards with contact information, so the Al Amarryia residents would have someone to call if or when an attack occurs in the future.

Al Asadi said the 5-6 ID will continue to train and conduct missions, both joint and independent, in the effort to secure Iraq and root out terrorism.



Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Brent Williams

A resident of Al Amariya discusses security concerns with Iraqi Soldiers patrolling in his neighborhood. The Iraqi Army's 5th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Division participated in a combined operation with the 4th Inf. Div's 4th BCT as part of operations to rout AIF operating during recent months in South Baghdad. The combined operation employed Soldiers of the 4th BCT's 8-10 Cav, working with IA to conduct security operations against AIF operating in South Baghdad.

"Remember the Regiment"



2-6th Infantry "GATORS"

Story by Pfc. Jason Dangel

A battalion-sized task force consisting of approximately 700 Soldiers from the U.S. Army's 1st Armor Division arrived in southern Baghdad to provide additional security and support for the government and citizens of Iraq.

Task Force 2nd Battalion, 6th Infantry, currently working under operational control of the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, is working hand-in-hand with the "Cobra" Brigade to mitigate terrorist activity in South Baghdad.

"We were called to Iraq to assist Multi-National Division-Baghdad, to assist in the Scales of Justice Operation here in Southern Baghdad," said Maj. Jeff Grable, executive officer, 2nd Bn., 6th Inf., 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armor Division.

"Our Soldiers received a lot of good training down in Kuwait, and now they have the opportunity to use that training and contribute to this fight," he said.

The task force's primary mission is to conduct clean and sweep operations to clear major supply routes of Improvised Explosive Devices and minimize enemy capabilities in the 4th BCT area of operations, Grable said.

Prior to arriving in Iraq, the 2nd BCT, 1st AD was

part of the Central Command Reserve, or "call forward force," and was called upon to assist in the ongoing Operation Scales of Justice, a mission to provide additional security as the Iraqi parliament begins selecting the new government, he said.

Task Force 2-6 will return to Kuwait once their mission is complete, Grable said.

The unit brings six companies to the fight to include

Artillery Regiment; and Company B, 40th Engineer Battalion.

Company B, 1st Bn., 35th AR and Battery B, 4th Bn., 27th FA are working directly with 2nd Battalion, 506th Infantry, 101st Airborne Division, currently attached to the 4th BCT, 4th Inf. Div. Soldiers from Company C, 2nd Bn., 6th Inf., are working under operational control of the 4th BCT's 8th Squadron, 10th Cavalry.

Soldiers were also required to complete additional training on their personal weapons, as well as crew-served weapons, such as the M2A3 Bradley Team Fighting Vehicle and the M2A2 Abrams Tank, Rodgers said.

According to Rodgers, Task Force 2-6 has adapted quickly to the combat environment because of the excellent training they received in Kuwait and the help received from the experienced Cobra Brigade.

Despite the short amount of time the unit has been operating in southern Baghdad, Task Force 2-6 has already seen early triumphs in their operations, Grable said.

"We have already had great success since we arrived here two weeks ago," he explained. "Attacks are on the decrease in our area of operations."

Whether Task Force 2-6 is called back to Kuwait or the unit stays to continue to assist the Cobra Brigade, Grable says his Soldiers are ready.

"Our Soldiers are very proud and excited to be with the 4th BCT, contributing to this fight," he said, "and we'll stay here until our mission is complete."



Photo by U.S. Army Pfc. Jason Dangel

Soldiers from Company C, 2nd Battalion, 6th Infantry, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armor Division, prepare for a mission at FOB Falcon in southern Baghdad.

two organic companies; Headquarters and Headquarters Company and Company C both of 2nd Bn., 6th Inf.

The other units currently attached to the task force, all from 2nd BCT, 1st AD, include Company B, 1st Battalion, 35th Armor; Batteries A and B, 4th Battalion, 27th Field

While staged at Camp Beuhring, Kuwait, the unit received extensive training in a multitude of situational training exercises to include convoy live-fire and improvised explosive device clearance, said Staff Sgt. Tyjuan Rodgers, human resources noncommissioned officer, HHC, 2nd Bn., 6th Inf.



BLACKSMITH MEDICS UPGRADE M1114 HMMWV



Story by 2nd Lt. Julie Cyr
704th Support Battalion

As U.S. Forces embark upon their fourth year in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, Soldiers continue to adapt their equipment and training to the ever-demanding needs of modern warfare and the battlefield.

During Operation Iraqi Freedom, Soldiers from the 4th Brigade Combat Team's 704th Support Battalion have been a proponent for the most recent of these evolutions, improving upon the U.S. Army's standard evacuation vehicle for treating and evacuating casualties for medical treatment.

The combat medics of Company C's Evacuation Platoon have taken the lead in transforming the M1114 Up-Armored High Mobile Multi-Wheeled Vehicle into a MEDEVAC vehicle capable of protecting Soldiers and patients alike.

First conceptualized by the 3rd Infantry Division's 703rd Support Battalion, the new up-armored evacuation vehicle was converted using an M1114 and litter chains from an M113 Tracked Ambulance.

Upon completing the transfer of authority with the 3rd Inf. Div., the "Blacksmith" medics of the 704th have taken the lead in outfitting the M1114s throughout the battalion to be used for patient evacuation.

At the beginning of Operation Iraqi Freedom, the M997 HMMWV was the Army's primary wheeled MEDEVAC vehicle. The

Field Litter Ambulance was equipped with all the medical equipment necessary to treat and transport four litter patients or eight ambulatory patients to higher levels of medical care.

Sgt. Catherine Platt, an Evacuation Platoon noncommissioned officer, describes the modified M1114 as "a lighter, quicker, safer vehicle on the battlefield" compared to the old ambulances.



Photo by U.S. Army Pfc. Jason Dangel

The inside of the newly constructed M114 HMMWV contains all the necessities to transport casualties safely and efficiently from the battlefield.

Although the FLA was a reliable evacuation asset, like the other vehicles in the "soft-skinned" M998 HMMWV family, the M997 is vulnerable to small arms fire and Improvised Explosive Devices.

When the Army began adding armor to its vehicles, only the cab of the FLA could be armored. Armor on the patient compartment would make the vehicle dangerously top-heavy.

To solve this problem, Company C, 704th SB's Evacuation Platoon modified four M1114s, equipping them for en-route care of two litter

or ambulatory patients.

Evacuation Platoon Soldiers took the litter kits, consisting of chains with hooks for securing litters, out of their tracked ambulances and installed them in the backseat of the M1114s.

The Soldiers worked with Company B, 704th SB to have holes drilled in the vehicles for installing the chains. The result of their efforts, litter patients on spine boards

can be loaded into the vehicle through one of the back doors.

The Evacuation Platoon Soldiers also modified the tactical commander's seat so they can turn around and treat patients during transport.

The Soldiers utilized the remaining space in the M1114s to stock their vehicles with medical supplies, storing larger equipment and an extra aid bag in the back hatch.

Staff Sgt. Sandra Guerra, who drove the old FLAs for the Company C Evacuation Platoon during Operation

Iraqi Freedom in 2003, praises the new M1114s for their "great maneuverability." Versatility is an additional advantage of the M1114s over the old FLAs. The modified M1114s are capable of carrying a full crew when not being used for medical purposes.

Since any gun truck could be converted for patient transport in the event of an emergency, the 704th SB has initiated the installation of litter kits and spine boards in every one of its M1114s.

The Evacuation Platoon Soldiers have assisted in the battalion effort by training Soldiers from the Gun Truck Platoon on loading patients into their newly modified M1114s.

The 704th SB Soldiers are pleased with the development and adoption of the modified M1114 as the new standard for wheeled evacuation vehicles.

The combat medics of Company C use the modified M1114s as their primary evacuation vehicle because of its superior armor protection and maneuverability and employ the company's five M997s to transport patients staying at the forward operating base.

The M1114 MEDEVAC HMMWV allows Charlie Company medics to provide the best emergency medical care possible on the battlefield while protecting Soldiers and their patients.

SPOT REPORT

Iraqi National Police from the 3rd Battalion, 4th Brigade Public Order Brigade search suspected insurgents responsible for attacks on Iraqi Security Forces and Coalition Forces in Southern Baghdad. During the operation 3-4 POB Police apprehended on suspect that was on the Iraq Ministry of the Interior's most wanted list.



Photo by U.S. Army Pfc. Jason Dangel



Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Brent Williams
Soldiers from 8th Squadron, 10th Cavalry, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division hold a group prayer before the start of a mission at Forward Operating Base Falcon in southern Baghdad April 2.



Photo by U.S. Army Pfc. Jason Dangel

Staff Sgt. Edward Chelby, Company A, 1st Battalion, 12th Infantry presses 315 lbs. during the Cobra Gym Powerlifting Competition at Forward Operating Base Prosperity March 31. The event was hosted by the FOB Prosperity Mayor Cell and the next competition will be held April 31. Prizes are available to the winners.



Photo by U.S. Army Pfc. Jason Dangel



Photo by U.S. Army Pfc. Jason Dangel

(ABOVE) Col. Michael Beech, commander, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division and Gen. Dan McNeil, Forces Command Commander, discuss operations with Iraqi Army officers from the 5th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division in central Baghdad.

Iraqi National Police from the 3rd Battalion, 4th Public Order Brigade search for bomb making materials during a raid in southern Baghdad. During the operation one individual was taken into custody for suspected attacks against Iraqi and Coalition Forces.

LEST WE FORGET



Time will not dim the glory of their deeds
General of the Armies John J. Pershing

Cobra Soldiers Remember Life of Fallen Comrade

Story by Pfc. Jason Dangel

"Corporal McKinzie's actions reflect the finest traditions of the American Combat Soldier; moving to the sound of guns and fighting to protect his fellow Soldiers. No greater love has he, than to lay down his life for his brothers."

With these words, a solemn Lt. Col. James Danna, commander, 2nd Battalion, 6th Infantry, 1st Armor Division, bid farewell to one of his Soldiers in a memorial ceremony at Forward Operating Base Falcon.

Cpl. Antoine McKinzie, 25, of Indianapolis, Ind., assigned to Battery B, 4-27



Photo by U.S. Army Pfc. Jason Dangel

Capt. Charles Cogger, commander, Battery B, 4th Battalion, 27th Field Artillery, 1st Armor Division says goodbye to one of his Soldiers during a memorial ceremony at Forward Operating Base Falcon March 24.

FA, 2nd Brigade Combat team, 1st AD, was killed when his convoy came under attack by small arms fire. The battery, serving 8th Squadron, 10th Cavalry is currently attached to the 4th Infantry Division's 4th

Brigade Combat Team.

Mckinzie, riding alone in the turret, called off directional fire over the patrol radio network manned his machine gun to gain and maintain contact with the enemy as a gun battle ensued, said Danna.

"Cpl. Mckinzie died fighting for his friends. He died fighting for his country; he died fighting for what he believed in," Danna said.

"In my book Corporal Antoine McKinzie is a true hero, and his spirit will live on forever," he continued.

2nd Bn., 6th Inf., bids farewell to brothers-in-arms

Story by Pfc. Jason Dangel

The Gators of 2nd Battalion, 6th Infantry, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armor Division bid farewell to two Soldiers at Forward Operating Base Falcon April 5.

Sgt. 1st Class Darrell Clay a cavalry scout platoon leader from Fayetteville, N.C., and Sgt. Israel Devora, a cavalry scout squad leader from Clint, Texas, both assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Bn., 6th Inf. were remembered for their bravery, honor and courage as friends said their last goodbyes to their fellow brothers-in-arms.

Clay, 34, and Devora, 23, were killed in southern Baghdad April 1, when their convoy was hit by an improvised explosive device while on patrol.

"Sgt. 1st Class Clay and Sgt. Devora's actions reflect the finest traditions of the American cavalry trooper," said Lt. Col. James Danna, commander, 2nd Bn., 6th Inf. during a speech to dozens of Soldiers attending the ceremony.

"Sgt. 1st Class Clay and Sgt. Devora died fighting for their friends and died fighting for their country," Danna said. "They both loved being cavalry troopers and at the time of their deaths they were doing what they loved."



Photo by U.S. Army Pfc. Jason Dangel

Command Sgt. Maj. Ronald Orosz says goodbye to two of his fallen warriors during a memorial ceremony at Forward Operating Base Falcon April 1.

Cobra Soldiers celebrate Women's History



Photo by U.S. Army Pfc. Jason Dangel

Soldiers from the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division gather to celebrate Women's History Month at FOB Prosperity March 28.

Story by Pfc. Jason Dangel

Soldiers from the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division came to together to celebrate Women's History Month at Forward Operating Base Prosperity's King Cobra Café March 28.

The observance, sponsored by the 4th BCT Equal Opportunity Office, gave Soldiers the chance to reflect upon the achievements women have contributed to American Society.

The celebration's theme, "Women: Builders of Communities and Dreams," featured various poems prepared by 4th BCT Soldiers and featured guest speaker Sgt. Maj. Arlene Horne, retention sergeant major, 4th Inf. Div.

Soldiers were treated to personal poems by 1st Lt. Laura Curtis, 883rd Combat Stress Clinic; Sgt. Brandon

Burnett, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 4th BCT; and a rendition of "the spoken word," or a freestyle speaking, was performed by Staff Sgt. Melvin Moore, HHC, 4th BCT.

"We have so much to celebrate during Women's History Month, both as a nation and our Army," Horne said.

"America would not be the strong and compassionate nation it is today without the remarkable contributions women have made to art, science, public service, sports, politics and countless other professions," she said.

"If the soul of a nation is to be saved, women must become its soul," Horne said, quoting the recently deceased woman pioneer Loretta Scott King, as she reflected on all the great women in American History.

According to Horne, a story that is rarely told is the story of women fighting for the right join the military to defend their nation.

"Women's struggle to defend their nation dates back to the start of this country," Horne explained.

"In the United States Military, necessity has often led women to opportunity, and when our country needed us for the job we were there," she said.

Horne said as women embark on a 150-year celebration for the right to vote they will also be celebrating a 50-year anniversary since women were granted the right to become permanent members of the nation's armed forces.

"This day is a special day," 4th Brigade Combat Team Command Sgt. Maj. John Moody. "We have come together today to remember all the accomplishments women have made throughout American history," he continued.

"There is no better place to celebrate Women's History Month than in a military setting because of all the contributions that women have made in the military," he said.

According to the Women's History Month Association, the celebration of women's history in this country began in 1978 as "Women's History Week" in Sonoma County, Calif.

In 1981, Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) and Rep. Barbara Mikulski (D-Md.) co-sponsored a joint Congressional declaration pushing for a national Women's History Week, later approved the same year.

In 1987, Congress lengthened the celebration to a month, declaring March Women's History Month.



Photo by U.S. Army Pfc. Jason Dangel

Staff Sgt. Melvin Moore, HHC, 4BCT performs a "spoken word" during the Women's History Month celebration at FOB Prosperity March 28

Did You Know?
More than 400 women, fighting on both sides, dressed up as men so they could fight beside the Soldiers during the Civil War.

COBRA'S UNSUNG HEROES

Pfc. Nathaniel Cameron, Company A, 4th STB, 4th BCT

Pfc. Nathaniel Cameron started his career in the U.S. Army a generator mechanic, but when he did, he never thought he would become a mechanic working on Unmanned Aerial Vehicles.

In the Summer of 2005, Cameron attended a ten-week course that qualified him to work on the Shadow 200 Tactical Unmanned Aerial Vehicle.

In addition to his mechanic duties, focusing on the plane's engine, Cameron also serves as a Mission Crew Chief.

One evening, in February, Cameron

was performing his Crew Chief duties preparing to launch one of the aircrafts.

The pilot commanded "launch," but Pfc. Cameron did not comply. Due to his proficiency as a crew chief and his attention to detail, he noticed that the engine was not at full throttle, as required for launch.

With utmost professionalism, he used his radio to politely remind the pilot to go to full throttle before launching the air vehicle. Had Cameron not been as vigilant in his duties, that mistake could have cost his brigade one of its

UAVs and would have left troops on the ground without aerial coverage.



Pfc. Nathaniel Cameron



Pfc. Charles Nichols, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 4th BCT

Pfc. Nichols has been assigned to HHC, 4th Brigade Combat Team since January 2005. He is in the Headquarters Platoon and has been the first sergeant's driver for more than a year.

Nichols, from Fouke Ak., enlisted in the U.S. Army Aug. 4, 2004. This is his first combat deployment.

Since being in Iraq his company has gone through several changes, one of those being that the company's executive officer was tasked to help out the Georgian Battalion at another forward operating base.

This requirement left the Company without an XO.

The decision was made to let Nichols handle all aspects of the company's Maintenance Program.

Since that time, Nichols has attended all of the battalion-level XO meetings, distributed and tracked all of the Company's maintenance forms and ensured that all faults were annotated, verified, and fixed or parts were put on order.

Nichols spearheaded the stay behind tactical vehicle turn-in. As part of this process, Pfc. Nichols had to coordinate and schedule the inspections of 15 trucks and ensure that they were brought to mission capable

status.

Once complete with the T/I, Pfc. Nichols worked with the company supply sergeant to complete all necessary paperwork. He then prepped and staged all trucks for shipment to FOB Falcon. Nichols completed this process in three days and was the first XO in the battalion to have all of his vehicles on flat racks ready for turn in.

Nichols coordinated and scheduled 20 of the Company's M1114's to receive the new gunner vehicle restraint system and combat lock retrogrades as well as several of the new

bumper kits and escalation of force PA systems and sirens.

Nichols performance over the last three months has been nothing short of superb. He is a shining example of the Army values.



Pfc. Charles Nichols

Spc. Adrian Vara, Company A, 704th SB, 4th BCT

Spc. Adrian Vara has been assigned to Company A, 704th Support Battalion for nearly four years. Like so many soldiers, he is already a veteran of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Vara has been a stellar performer since the relief in place with Alpha Company, 703rd Support Bn., 3rd Infantry Division.

Initially, he was an operator at the

Fuel System Supply Point, a system that provides fuel for FOB Falcon, the Iraqi Public Orders Brigade, and Iraqi Police, as well as units in the 4th Brigade Combat Team.

His contribution to the Petroleum and Water Platoon has enabled them to issue and receive nearly 2 million gallons of fuel during the first quarter of this deployment.



Spc. Adrian Vara

Cultural Notes: The Army of Iraq

To protect us from the enemies of our freedom



Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Brent Williams

Iraqi Army Soldiers of the 6th Iraqi Division's 5th Brigade practice drill and ceremony prior to a pass and review on the Iraqi Army's Forward Operating Base Honor in Baghdad's International Zone.

Story by D. Saleeh

All the nations have an army to defend their country.

In Iraq, the concept is different, because of the people and the history of Iraq.

More than 80 years ago, the powers who run this country established the Iraqi Army in 1921.

Iraq was run by a king, who was supported by the kingdom of Britain, and he established an Iraqi Army based on concepts seen in the Arabian armies.

Based upon Arabic ideology, the Iraqi Army based its actions on events happening in the Arab homeland. This means that if the country of Egypt was fighting in Palestine, then the Arab armies in the Middle East were fighting Egypt's wars.

As a result, the Iraqi Army fought in Palestine in 1948, and many other crises that did not concern with what the Iraqi Army was created for.

After many revolutions took place in Iraq, the Ba'ath Party took power in Iraq, and that was the worst period in the history of Iraq.

First in 1981, Saddam's regime involved the Iraqi Army in the Eight Year War with Iran without any logical reason.

During the period of 1981-1991, almost all of the revenues of Iraq went to military manufacturing, and afterward,

Saddam decided to invade Kuwait.

Saddam then used the Iraqi Army to oppress the uprisings of the Iraqis in the south and north of Iraq.

So the international community imposed sanctions on Iraq, and the Iraqi Army was neglected by Saddam because he was afraid of the Iraqi army.

After the liberation of Iraq, the people have the chance to have an army that is committed to its people and its country, and not for any one individual.

This army is not just for fighting its enemies, but they are helping the Iraqis on many fronts as they learn to treat the people with respect according to the new concepts of international law.

The day of the falling of Saddam's statue became the day of the freedom of Iraq, because the statue was representative of the dictatorship of the former regime.

So the April 9th is a great day for the Iraqi nation, and it's a good start for the Iraqi people.

It's a good start for a better future for the next generations living free and having an Army protecting the borders from the enemy's of our freedom.



Photo by Spc. Brian J. Anderson

The 5th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Division, drives past residents of Al Amarryia neighborhood during a cordon and search Sunday.

SAFETY FIRST!

DRIVING TO SURVIVE IN IRAQ

*Safety by Mr. Sean Morrill
Safety Officer
4th Brigade Combat Team
4th Infantry Division*

Driving in Iraq has its own unique challenges and situations that good drivers and Truck or Track Commanders must recognize and adapt to in order to drive and survive while accomplishing their missions.

By using Composite Risk Management, drivers and TCs can identify these hazards, and prepare for many of them ahead of time to ensure the successful completion of their mission and the safety of their troops.

What are some of the unique hazards here in Iraq? To make it easier, try looking at them in terms of tactical and accidental hazards. Use of the familiar Mission, Enemy, Time, Terrain, Troops, and Civilians acronym can help get you organized.

Tactical Hazards: For a list of tactical hazards consider some of the most common that the Enemy has employed. To counter them, get a good intelligence update for the current situation, a route status prior to departure, and know what the most likely threats are that you will face on your mission. Do a good map reconnaissance and look for choke points, overpasses, known hostile areas, and where recent attacks have occurred. Keep abreast of

recent attack techniques that have been used against us and plan ways to counter them.

Use this knowledge while preparing for your Mission to come up with controls that reduce threats in terms of equipment, communications, driving techniques, use of personal and vehicle protective equipment, and how you will employ gunners and other countermeasures during the mission.

Using scenario thinking can also help you develop controls for possible tactical hazards on the mission.

Consider a rehearsal if time permits, or do one in your head when looking at a map. Look at things that would stop the mission or cause it to fail. What are good alternate routes if your main one is blocked?

Think about what to do if you have a breakdown and how to get the essential cargo, information, or personnel through? What are your actions on contact if attacked at a chokepoint? What would you do if you receive indirect fires during an unplanned halt?

Using the 4th Infantry Division OIF Leader Handbook Card 602 can give you ideas, and outlines battle drills for what you might face.

Accidental Hazards: There are many existing and potential accidental hazards here in Iraq. When looking for these hazards

using METT-TC, consider things like the time of day the mission will be accomplished.

Are your crews rested, are your vehicle lights working; are you ensuring all vehicles are using "stop light" during the day when headlights are off, so that brake lights will function? What will the weather be like? Has it rained recently? Or will grease, oil and dust that have built up on the road make things that much more slippery? How will this affect your speeds and spacing? Multi-National Corps Iraq has set maximum speed limits in our area as 55 miles per hour maximum on hard surfaced roads; 35 MPH maximum for inclement weather; and 20 MPH maximum for unimproved roads.

Weather, visibility, traffic and road conditions may make these too fast for when your mission is being conducted. When looking at Terrain, consider the type of roads you are using. Are there canals in the area along rural roads? In these cases, you may want to consider planning to use ground guides if the tactical situation permits on narrow country roads near canals and to have combat locks off in case you need to get out fast. Making sure that drivers are licensed, gunners are qualified on the weapon system and

"crew mix" is right by pairing experienced TCs with newer drivers are some considerations here.

Civilian drivers and pedestrians pose many accidental hazards here in Iraq. Most local national drivers are not formally trained, disregard traffic signs and rules. Driving defensively to maintain the bubble, along with the use of sirens, horns, lights and gunner's Escalation of Force signals are essential in preventing collisions with civilian vehicles. Vehicle crews must maintain Situational Awareness, try to predict civilian vehicle movements and maintain distances from them on a continuous basis during the mission. Drivers must also consider where they are and adjust their driving methods based on location.

To tie all of this together, when you have identified the tactical and accidental hazards you face, and have come up with countermeasures for them, they have to be understood by everyone on the mission. Using a good convoy briefing format, such as the one found on Card 401 and 602 of the OIF Leaders Handbook can ensure your controls are briefed and followed.

Use of these tools and Composite Risk Management will greatly increase your ability to drive and survive in Iraq.

TODAY IN HISTORY

IRAQI FREEDOM DAY, April 9, 2006

To commemorate Iraq's liberation three years ago, when coalition forces removed Saddam Hussein's regime from power, the Iraqi government has declared April 9 "Iraqi Freedom Day," says U.S. Army Major General Rick Lynch, spokesman for Multi-National Force - Iraq.

4TH ID ENTERS IRAQ, April 13, 2003

Advance elements of the U.S. Army's 4th Infantry Division entered southern Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The rest of the Division follows the next day.

TITANIC SINKS, April 15, 1912

At 2:20 a.m. on April 15, 1912, the British ocean liner Titanic sinks into the North Atlantic Ocean about 400 miles south of Newfoundland, Canada.

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN DIES, April 17, 1790

On April 17, 1790, American statesman, printer, scientist, and writer Benjamin Franklin dies in Philadelphia at age 84.

REVERE AND DAWES RIDE, April 18, 1775

In Massachusetts, British troops march out of Boston on a mission to confiscate the Patriot arsenal at Concord and to capture Patriot leaders Samuel Adams and John Hancock. As the British departed, Boston Patriots Paul Revere and William Dawes set out on horseback from the city to warn Adams and Hancock and rouse the Patriot minutemen.

FIRST BLOOD IN THE CIVIL WAR, April 19, 1861

On April 19, 1861, the first blood of the American Civil War is shed when a secessionist mob in Baltimore attacks Massachusetts troops bound for Washington, D.C.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE BORN, April 23, 1564

According to tradition, the great English dramatist and poet William Shakespeare is born in Stratford-upon-Avon on April 23, 1564.

CHERNOBYL DISASTER, April 26, 1986

On April 26, 1986, the world's worst nuclear power plant accident occurs at the Chernobyl nuclear power station in the Soviet Union.

DACHAU LIBERATED, April 29, 1945

On April 29, 1945, the U.S. Seventh Army's 45th Infantry Division liberates Dachau, the first concentration camp established by Germany's Nazi regime. A major Dachau subcamp was liberated the same day by the 42nd Rainbow Division.

LOCH NESS MONSTER SIGHTED, May 2, 1933

Although accounts of an aquatic beast living in Scotland's Loch Ness date back 1,500 years, the modern legend of the Loch Ness Monster is born when a sighting makes local news on May 2, 1933.

MARGARET THATCHER SWORN IN, May 4, 1979

Margaret Thatcher, leader of the Conservative Party, is sworn in as Britain's first female prime minister.

LUSITANIA SINKS, May 7, 1915

On the afternoon of May 7, 1915, the British ocean liner Lusitania is torpedoed without warning by a German submarine off the south coast of Ireland. Within 20 minutes, the vessel sank into the Celtic Sea. Of 1,959 passengers and crew, 1,198 people were drowned, including 128 Americans.

NELSON MANDELA INAUGURATED, May 10, 1994

In South Africa, Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela is sworn in as the first black president of South Africa.

BERLIN BLOCKADE LIFTED, May 12, 1949

On May 12, 1949, an early crisis of the Cold War comes to an end when the Soviet Union lifts its 11-month blockade against West Berlin.

STATE OF ISRAEL PROCLAIMED, May 14, 1948

On May 14, 1948, in Tel Aviv, Jewish Agency Chairman David Ben-Gurion proclaims the State of Israel, establishing the first Jewish state in 2,000 years.

FIRST ALLIED JET FLIES, May 15, 1941

On May 15, 1941, the jet propelled Gloster-Whittle E 28/39 aircraft flies successfully over Cranwell, England, in the first test of an Allied aircraft using jet propulsion.



Cobra Warriors

phone home...

Story by 1st Lt. Kyle Simon
1st Battalion, 12th Infantry, 4th BCT

The "Warrior" Soldiers of the 1st Battalion, 12th Infantry, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division talked to their families face-to-face via satellite using the battalion's Video Teleconferencing system March 26.

The event was an opportunity for morale, giving Soldiers the chance to tell their families all is well in the combat zone.

Sgt. Jonathan Jenkins, computer systems analyst, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Bn., 12th Inf., setup the equipment in preparation for the event and explained that the VTC system works by broadcasting a signal on a pre-existing satellite network back and forth from Fort Hood, Texas.

Normally, he said, commanders use it for official business, but it is now being used to keep in touch with loved ones back home as well.

The VTC is a lot like a webcam, with the exception of having a much larger, crisper picture. A battalion wanting to use the VTC for conversations with their FRG simply coordinates with the Brigade and Division Jenkins explained.

When the battalion's Company D and E conducted their teleconference, the

leadership of each company spoke briefly to families at home and then passed the remaining time to their Soldiers.

Capt. Avery Stemmons, commander, Co. D, 1st Bn., 12th Inf., explained the format he used in an After Action Review.



Photo by U.S. Army 1st Lt. Kyle Simon

Pfc. Chino Thompkins, Company E, 1st Battalion, 12th Infantry, 4th Brigade Combat Team, speaks with his wife Tiffany and his children using the brigade Video Teleconferencing equipment March 26.

"First sergeant and I opened and answered a couple of quick questions for the first 5 minutes", he said. "Afterward, we gave six of our guys eight minutes apiece to talk to their families.

"The guys had the room to themselves and we had a schedule of the names, so the transition from Soldier to Soldier as well as family to family was smooth and easy," Stemmons said.

Staff Sgt. Samuel Blakes,

engineer, Co. E, said he really enjoyed speaking to his wife and kids back in Texas and looked forward to the evening.

"When they told me about this, I didn't care what was going on, I was going to be here for this," he said.

Blakes was happy that his

Jenkins explained that opportunities like this are evidence that conditions for Soldiers here today are markedly better than previous deployments.

"I was here for OIF I and the Video Teleconferencing is a lot better than just being able to call home, because you actually get to see your family", he said.

The families that attended the event in Texas were also pleased. Deanna Sump, wife of 1st Sergeant Dale Sump, Co. D, said "The families that were here today thought it was really neat."

Stemmons remarked that all the Soldiers and families appreciated the opportunity to talk to their loved ones.

"Overall," he said, "it was a huge success for our Soldiers and their families, especially the kids!"

Because of the resounding success and positive feedback regarding the VTC with families in Fort Hood, 1st Bn., 12th Inf. has scheduled two more VTC sessions this month for its Headquarters and Bravo Companies.

Leaders expect they will have a high turnout of Soldiers looking for the chance to go beyond just talking- but actually seeing their loved ones back home.

children were able to see him. "They're pretty happy. This is the first time they've actually seen me on camera," he explained.

Pfc. Chino Thompkins, also of Co. E, echoed Blakes' remarks and said, "This was better (than a phone call), because I normally don't get to see them when I talk to them."

Thompkins normally speaks to his wife Tiffany and their three children by phone about once per week.

Fitness advice by
Lt. Col. Darron L. Wright
Executive Officer, 4th Brigade Combat Team
Personal Trainer certified by the American Counsel on Exercise



COBRA FITNESS

Stay fit in the combat zone!

TOPIC OF THE MONTH:

Periodization - the key to muscle growth and strength development

The key to muscle development and growth, which in turn leads to increased strength is to practice a weight training concept, or technique called “periodization.”

Periodization is not a new concept but has long been a technique practiced by all body builders and your average weight lifter to see gains in muscle growth and increased strength.

It is nothing more than changing up your weightlifting regime every two to three weeks.

For instance, if every Monday you workout chest by using the flat bench, and the incline press using free weights, then your body develops a pattern which your major muscle groups such as your pectorals learn as this becomes muscle memory and over time you will see minimal gains either in strength or appearance.

Your muscles needs to be shocked from time to time in order to increase growth both in mass and strength. Using periodization technique, you should change from free

Periodization Workout Schedule

MON	CHEST/TRICEPS	2 TO 3 WEEKS	BICEPS/CHEST
TUE	ABS/CARDIO	change-up	ABS/CARDIO
WED	BACK	shocks	BACK/TRICEPS
THUR	SHLDR/BICEPS	major muscles	LEGS/ABS
FRI	ABS/CARDIO		CARDIO/SHLDR



Photo by U.S. Army Staff Pfc. Jason Dangel

Warrant Officer Marlene Pearce, supply, 4th Brigade Combat Team, performs the squat exercise during a workout at Forward Operating Base Prosperity. Staff Sgt. Michael Jordan provides the spot.

weights to dumbbells as a whole new chest workout such as the decline press with dumbbells or cable fly curls.

By applying this technique you will see more increase in muscle growth, and your strength will increase. This technique applies to your whole training regime, or split.

Every two to three weeks,

change up your exercises in the gym. See the chart for an example.

The key is to keep your muscles guessing--just like we do in operations throughout our battle space. Whereby, we avoid setting patterns so the enemy can target us; the same applies to your weight lifting training.

Don't develop patterns.

Shock your muscles and the goal's you will achieve sooner and see immediate results and gains.

The final key to muscle growth and increased strength is to eat healthy.

It's best to eat five small meals throughout the day versus your standard three large meals. If you do eat three heavy meals in the dining facility, make an adjustment. Eat less and add two additional meals to your diet.

These meals can be protein shakes or meal replacement bars.

By eating five small meals a day your body is constantly working to digest your food which leads to increase metabolism and aids in weight loss or cutting fat in order to build the beach physique you have always wanted.

COBRA'S LIGHT

By Chaplain (Capt.) Will Horton
4th Brigade Combat Team Chaplain
4th Infantry Division

Easter showers bring refreshing powers.

Easter is a time to reflect on the power of God and our faith to act on it. A story is told about a high school class whose teacher challenged Christians and their faith. "The Easter story is nothing but a myth," Jimmy's teacher announced a few days before Easter break. "Jesus not only didn't rise from the grave," he continued, "but there's no God in heaven who would allow his son to be crucified in the first place."

"Sir, I believe in God," Jimmy protested. "And I believe in the resurrection!"

"Jimmy, you can believe what you wish to, of course," the teacher replied. "However, the real world excludes the possibility of miraculous events such as the resurrection. The resurrection is a scientific impossibility. No one who believes in miracles can also respect science."

"God isn't limited by science," Jimmy responded. "He created science!"

Engaged by Jimmy's outspoken faith, the teacher proposed a scientific experiment. Reaching into his refrigerator, he produced a raw egg and held it up. "I'm going to drop this egg on the floor," he stated. "Gravity will pull it toward the floor with such force that the egg will certainly break." Fixing Jimmy with a look of challenge, he concluded his proposal. "Now Jimmy, I want you to pray a prayer right now and ask your God to keep this egg from breaking when it hits the floor. If he can do that, then you'll have proven your point, and I'll have to admit that there's a God."

After pondering the challenge for a moment, Jimmy slowly stood to pray. "Dear Heavenly Father," he began. "I pray that when my teacher drops the egg...it will break into a hundred pieces! And also, Lord, I pray that when the egg does break, my teacher will have a heart attack and die! Amen."

After a unison gasp, the stunned class sat in silent expectation. For a moment the teacher did nothing. At last he looked at Jimmy and then the egg. Without a word he carefully put the egg back into the refrigerator.

"Class dismissed," the teacher said sitting down at his desk.

Easter reminds us that it is not the egg or the Easter bunny that matters but the faith. When Jesus arose from the dead, it wasn't about his scientific transition from death to life. It was about his power over death. Christ died that we might have life, an eternal life.

Out on convoys, walking a foot patrol, teaching or mentoring the Iraqi military and para-military units, remember that the power of Christ's resurrection can lift you above any hardship or difficulty that threatens who you are.

Our spiritual fitness is developed in the challenges of our faith. Faith is believing in God's existence and living a life that reflects that belief. Whatever your faith background, make sure you are grounded in the Almighty God who created science and the opportunity for your faith to be tested and exposed. The teacher apparently had more faith than he thought he did. Jimmy knew that God would not strike him dead, but Jimmy also knew that his teacher would not bet his life on it.

Keep the FAITH!

PROSPERITY PALACE CHAPEL WORSHIP SCHEDULE

SUNDAY:

0930 Hours - Catholic Mass
1100 Hours - General Protestant
Contemporary
1330 Hours - General Protestant
Liturgical
1600 Hours - LDS
1830 Hours - General Protestant
Gospel

MONDAY:

1900 Hours - Bible Study (Purpose
Driven Life)

TUESDAY:

1900 Hours Gospel Bible
Study/Worship Rehearsal

WEDNESDAY:

1930 Hours Bible Study (Dust to
Glory) at 3rd fl Palace

THURSDAY:

1930 Hours Officer's Christian
Fellowship

FRIDAY:

1900 Hours Full Study (Faith)
1300 First Friday of the Month
Jewish Service

SATURDAY:

1830 Contemporary Worship
Rehearsal
1930 Gospel Worship Rehearsal

Perform First Aid for Heat Injuries

QUESTIONS

1. Identify the type of heat injury.

a. Heat cramps symptoms.

- (1) Muscle cramps of the arms, legs, or abdomen.
- (2) Excessive sweating.
- (3) Thirst.

b. Heat exhaustion symptoms.

- (1) Profuse sweating with pale, moist, cool skin.
- (2) Headache.
- (3) Weakness.
- (4) Dizziness.
- (5) Loss of appetite.
- (6) Heat cramps.
- (7) Nausea, with or without vomiting.
- (8) Urge to defecate.
- (9) Chills (goose flesh).
- (10) Rapid breathing.
- (11) Tingling of the hands and/or feet.
- (12) Confusion.

c. Heatstroke symptoms.

- (1) Flushed, hot, dry skin.
- (2) Headache.
- (3) Dizziness.
- (4) Nausea.
- (5) Confusion.
- (6) Weakness.
- (7) Loss of consciousness.
- (8) Seizures.
- (9) Weak and rapid pulse and breathing.

2. Provide the proper first aid for the heat injury.

a. Heat cramps. b. Heat exhaustion. c. Heat stroke

(a b c) Move the casualty to a cool or shady area or improvise shade.

(a b c) Loosen the casualty's clothing unless in a chemical environment.

(a b c) If conscious, have the casualty slowly drink at least one canteen of cool water.

(a) Seek medical aid if the cramps continue.

(a b c) Pour water on the casualty and fan unless in a chemical environment.

(b c) Elevate the casualty's legs.

(b c) Monitor the casualty until the symptoms are gone or medical aid arrives.

(c) Massage the casualty's arms and legs unless in a chemical environment.

(c) Seek medical assistance.