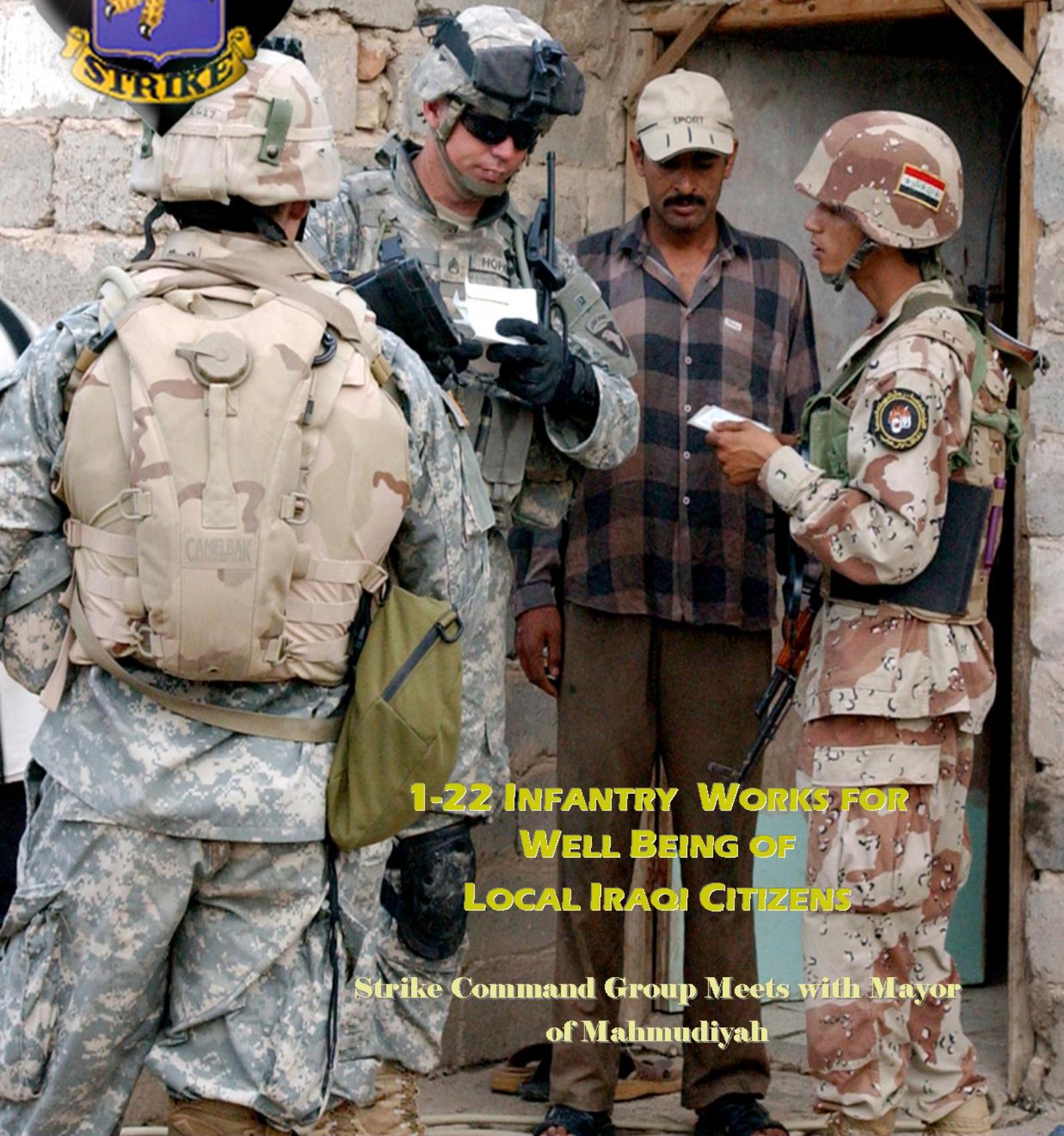


The Heart Beat

2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division
Volume 1, Issue 12
May 15, 2006



**1-22 INFANTRY WORKS FOR
WELL BEING OF
LOCAL IRAQI CITIZENS**

**Strike Command Group Meets with Mayor
of Mahmudiyah**

FREE MAIL:

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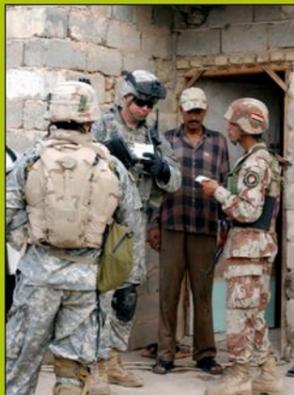
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More Than Words...

It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly... who knows the great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who have never known neither victory nor defeat.

-Teddy Roosevelt

Cover photo by:
Spc. Rodney Foliente,
363rd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment



Task Force 1-22 and 3/1/6 IA Soldiers connect with the people of Hawr Rajab

Story and Photos by Spc. Rodney Foliente

BAGHDAD — Iraqi army and Multi-National Division —



Baghdad Soldiers conducted a cordon and search mission with a primary goal of establishing connections within the community for collecting intelligence from the residents of Hawr Rajab south of Baghdad May 3.

Soldiers from 3rd Battalion, 1st Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division, conducted security searches in the area while Soldiers from Company D, 1st Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment, attached to 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, which is attached to the 4th Infantry Division, under MND-B, conducted an outer security cordon.

"We're hoping to establish future contacts to help us identify terrorist cells or threats in the area," said Capt. Jared Rudacille, commander, Co. D, 1-22 Inf. Regt.

He noted the importance of community relations and reassuring the people with a continued security presence and reminding the locals of their own role in establishing stability.

"We're only as strong as you allow us to be," said Rudacille, to a man who offered refreshments to the Soldiers. "The people of Iraq have to fight together to bring peace and stability to this country."

The man agreed and added that it is good to see a military presence, like patrols and the new Iraqi army checkpoint, so people can feel safer.

After the Soldiers thanked him for his hospitality, he, like many others in the village, took the Rudacille's contact information and stated he would call to report any terrorist or suspicious activity.



Top: Soldiers of Company D, 1-22 Inf. are kindly invited into one of the homes of a local man, during their patrol.

Bottom: A Soldier hands a piece of candy to one of the local children during the patrol.

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1-22 Soldiers Facilitate Improvement, Promote Independence for Iraqis



Story and Photos by
Spc. George Welcome

BAGHDAD -- While defeating the insurgency and bringing stability to Iraq remain the most visible in the battle for Iraqi freedom, rebuilding the daily lives of Iraqi citizens is equally as important.

In order to establish a sense of normalcy in the lives of the Iraqi people, Soldiers of 1st Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment have been actively involved in renovating schools, aid stations, and other vital buildings in their area of operations that will provide essential services to the people.

On the morning of May 13, the Soldiers of HHC, 1-22 made their way to the Hamurabi primary school to attend a dedication ceremony. In conjunction with local sheiks and councilmen, 1-22 helped coordinate the project to renovate the school.

As the bell rang, the laughing children of the Hamurabi School streamed out of the classrooms and through the sun-drenched courtyard. They had just finished examinations and were being released early. It is with these children in mind that the whole renovation project began.

"The project started on the sixth of April, it took a little over a month to complete the job," said Capt. Craig Childs, commander of HHC, 1-22 Infantry and battalion civil military operations officer. "The school itself is not in a town, the village that it serves is called Askariyah."

The work performed by the local contractors would help to make the school more inhabitable, especially for the increasing summer heat.

"They [contractors] replaced the water pump, replaced the bathroom fixtures, there were a number of broken windows that they fixed and they also put air conditioners in each classroom and attempted to clean the area. They also planted grass in the courtyard area, which was not in the scope of work, but they felt it was necessary."

These types of missions are essential to the development of the region and are a priority to the battalion.

"Lt. Col. Osborne is very interested in fixing the schools. Our two big things are fixing schools and water projects," said Childs of 1-22 Inf. Commander, Lt. Col. Craig Osborne.

Once the school dedication ceremony was complete, the Soldiers then headed to the outlying villages, where several wells were built. The wells would serve as a place where

villagers could draw potable drinking water for themselves and their animals.

"The well projects came about because of Lt. Col. Osborne's interaction with two local sheiks, Sheik Abu Dari and Sheik Abadon Dahesh of the Koresh and Askariyah villages," said Childs. "They identified the need for clean drinking water in their farming communities. I went out and talked to both of these sheiks and they took me out with a guide and showed me where the wells should go. We then sent two contractors down there to put the wells in."

Though 1-22 facilitates these projects, the emphasis is on getting the Iraqi army and government to take a leading role in creating a better community. This will then increase the people's confidence in their protectors and leaders.

"The intent is to get the Iraqis to take ownership of a lot of the fixing of things. The local leaders do a lot of the coordinating. We just facilitate and guide them in the path to improving their essential services," explained Childs.

The people have expressed their pleasure in the efforts being taken to improve their lives.

"The people are very happy with the projects that are going on," said Staff Sgt. Shawn Stahl, team chief for TPT 11-11. "It makes it easy for them to get water and the schools are getting better for their kids. I believe that they will maintain these things, due to a conversation we had with the sheiks yesterday, they know it is up to them and the government to make sure everything is maintained."

For the Soldiers one of the most rewarding things about the community improvement projects is seeing their Iraqi counterparts get involved.

"When we go out to school openings, you get to see the happiness in the children's faces," said Stahl. Not only with the kids, but with the Iraqi military, they hand out things and it makes them happy and makes them feel like they are making the changes as well. It boosts the ego of the Iraqi soldiers to be able to come out and help their people," said Stahl.

With the help of Task Force 1-22, the local Iraqi government in the villages of Askariyah, Koresh and other outlying areas are beginning to realize their potential to change their communities and the lives of the people in them for the better.

See Photos on Pg. 5

"Strike" Brigade Command Element Meets with Mayor of Mahmudiyah to Discuss the City's Future

Story and Photos by Spc. Kelly K. McDowell

BAGHDAD — In an effort to continue communication and cooperation between local government, Iraqi police, Iraqi army and coalition forces, Multi National Division-Baghdad officers visited the Mayor of Mahmudiyah, Iraq, May 3, to discuss the future of the city.



At the meeting, the mayor and the members of "Strike" discussed how Mahmudiyah is improving and ways to keep the peace in the city.

new projects and information campaigns to benefit the local citizens and Iraqi forces.

Many projects were discussed such as power, sewage, water flow and improvements to the surrounding community ranging from refurbishing schools to recruiting more police.

"Seven months ago when [2nd BCT] first arrived, no contractor would come to Mahmudiyah. When I arrived, there were only 20 projects throughout south Baghdad," Ebel said. "Today we have over 220 projects being planned or worked on right now."

In the past seven months Strike Soldiers helped complete

Col. Todd Ebel, commander, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, accompanied by his projects, information and civil affairs officers joined the mayor and the local Iraqi police chief of Mahmudiyah to brainstorm

projects on Qaa Qaa and Shee Shee Bar water treatment facilities, multiple schools, road repairs and the rebuilding of the Mahmudiyah Iraqi police station.

projects on Qaa Qaa and Shee Shee Bar water treatment facilities, multiple schools, road repairs and the rebuilding of the Mahmudiyah Iraqi police station.

"It takes time," Ebel said. "Day by day the improvements are being seen through out Mahmudiyah. I feel it is my duty to help in what ever it is the city needs to keep stable and prosperous."

The future of Mahmudiyah is within reach for the local nationals as they see more improvements to their area become a reality with the help of coalition forces and local Iraqi government.

The Mahmudiyah emergency room's improvements and refurbishing is in full swing; five electrical networks are slated to be repaired, and the reconstruction of the local sewer system is in the works.

"I am very happy for the visitation today," the mayor said. "I am willing to help and cooperate with [2nd BCT] when it comes to the security of Mahmudiyah. We are sending a clear message to the people that the Iraqi government is active."



The mayor of Mahmudiyah is flanked by Col. Todd Ebel, 2BCT commander and Lt. Col Thomas Kunk, 1-502 commander .

Photos continued from Pg. 4



Lt. Col. Craig Osborne, 1-22 Inf. Regt. commander, hands a city council members an award in appreciation for their efforts in the Hamurabi school renovation.



Sgt. Ivan Santillanes, HHC 1-22, fixes a wheel on a small Iraqi girl's walker as Private 1st Class Muhammad Pulliam, HHC 1-22 medic, looks on.

Staff Sgt. Shawn Stahl, TPT 11-11 team chief, hands out backpacks to Iraqi children on May 14.



2-101 BTB Soldier becomes first in Army to win Talon Award

Story and Photos by Spc. George Welcome

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq—In the war for Iraqi freedom, Soldiers are exposed to many dangers. The most consistently used by the enemy is the improvised explosive device, or IED. These bombs, which can be placed anywhere on a road, afford the enemy maximum destructive capability with minimal risk of contact with Soldiers.

Great emphasis is placed on finding these devices before they detonate and also on finding the people who plant them.

On April 29, a Soldier from the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division was honored with a special award for skillfully discovering IEDs.

Spc. James Layne, Company A, 2-101 Brigade Troops Battalion became the first ever recipient of the Talon Award. The award is

presented to Soldiers who are able to find five IEDs.

Layne, a native of Huntington, W. Va. found several roadside bombs on Mulla Fayyed Highway, while on a clearing mission.

"I was on Mulla Fayyed Highway with the rest of the Iron claw team and we were clearing a route to get to a crash site where a helicopter went down," explained Layne. "There was an 88 and a HEMMT stuck down there where the chopper was, so we had to sweep back up and grab some more recovery and head back down to the site."

But it would not be such a simple trip. Halfway to Yusufiyah to pick up the remaining members of the vehicle

recovery team, the Buffalo hit a pressure plate IED, rendering it inoperable. In just a lone Husky, Layne took the members of the explosive ordnance detonation team to Yusufiyah.

Once they safely arrived to Yusufiyah, the men, lead by Layne, headed back toward the damaged Buffalo, where they found one IED, which was detonated by EOD.

"I was going three kilometers an hour the whole way back to the crash site," said Layne. "It took a while; it took a minute to get there."



Brig. Gen. Robin Timmons, commander of the 16th Engineer Brigade, presents Spc. James Layne with the Talon Award on April 29, at Camp Liberty.

On the way to the crash site, Layne discovered the nine bombs. "Four of them were pressure plates, five were LRCT," he said. In total, Layne found nine IEDs while heading to the crash site.

For his amazing accomplishment in the face of danger, Brig. Gen. Robin Timmons, commander of the 16th Engineer Brigade, presented Layne with the Talon award.

The general praised Layne's actions in his closing statements.

"It's Soldiers like Layne, who was alone in a Husky, unafraid of his mission who make things happen," said Timmons. "And that's where it's at."

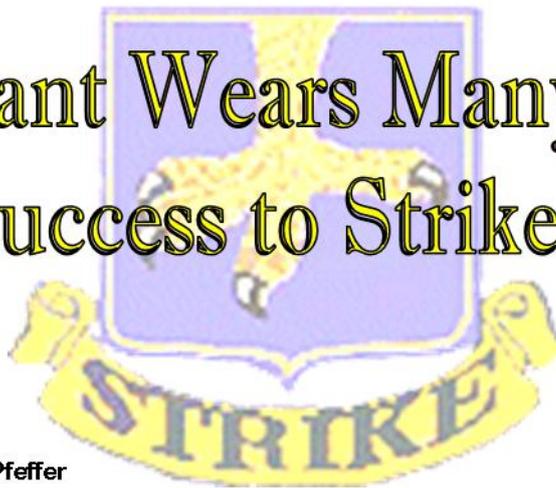
For his part, Layne insists that he was just doing his job.

"I feel good," he said about being the first Talon award recipient. "I feel like I did my job."



Spc. James Layne describes to the people in attendance the mission on which he found nine improvised explosive devices. Layne received the Talon Award on April 29.

Lieutenant Wears Many Hats to Bring Success to Strike Brigade



Story by Sgt. 1st Class Douglas Pfeiffer

Photos Courtesy of 2-502 Inf. Regt

BAGHDAD — The 2nd Brigade Combat Team has traveled a long way to fight in Iraq.



1st Lt. Chris Countouriotis is all geared up in this photo taken just before a recent mission

arrived, the medical platoon was well prepared, which gave Countouriotis the opportunity to assist the battalion in other capacities.

A vacancy was immediately available at the battle captain's desk because of a shortage of lieutenants. Countouriotis ensured that combat operations were well tracked and controlled.

"It's confusing out here; sometimes there is so much going on that it just made me feel better to hear [Countouriotis] on the radio," said Capt. Albert Vigilante, Company C, 2-502nd. "I never had to ask for anything twice, and I always knew my company would receive the utmost attention anytime that I called." Not long into the deployment, it became apparent the battalion would need an engineering officer.

For 1st Lt. Chris Countouriotis, getting to Iraq was the easy part; wading through four different job descriptions has been the tough part.

When 2nd Battalion was preparing to deploy, Countouriotis spent well over 12 hours a day preparing his medical platoon for the deployment. He conducted inventories, packed equipment, and oversaw the details surrounding the deployment of a medical staff and platoon.

There were some long days in August, but the successful deployment of a fully stocked aid station meant a smooth medical operation once the battalion put boots on the ground. After he

Routes needed to be cleared of improvised explosive devices, work need to be done building up the current patrol bases, and thousands of pieces of equipment needed to be moved.

Countouriotis took on the position, organized engineering assets, and coordinated all that needed to be done to ensure troops could move safely throughout the battlefield -- all while still serving as the battle captain for up to 14 hours a day.

When the tactical operations center staff was engulfed in combat operations, Countouriotis, or the "Count" as he became known, picked up the slack. He expressed interest in transferring to the infantry branch. His request came back approved, and Countouriotis immediately reported to Company B, 2-502nd, where he assumed a position as one of the platoon leaders.

Since his arrival in Company B, Countouriotis has been moving non stop. He can be found leading the way in the company's search for caches, insurgents and enemy mortar systems.

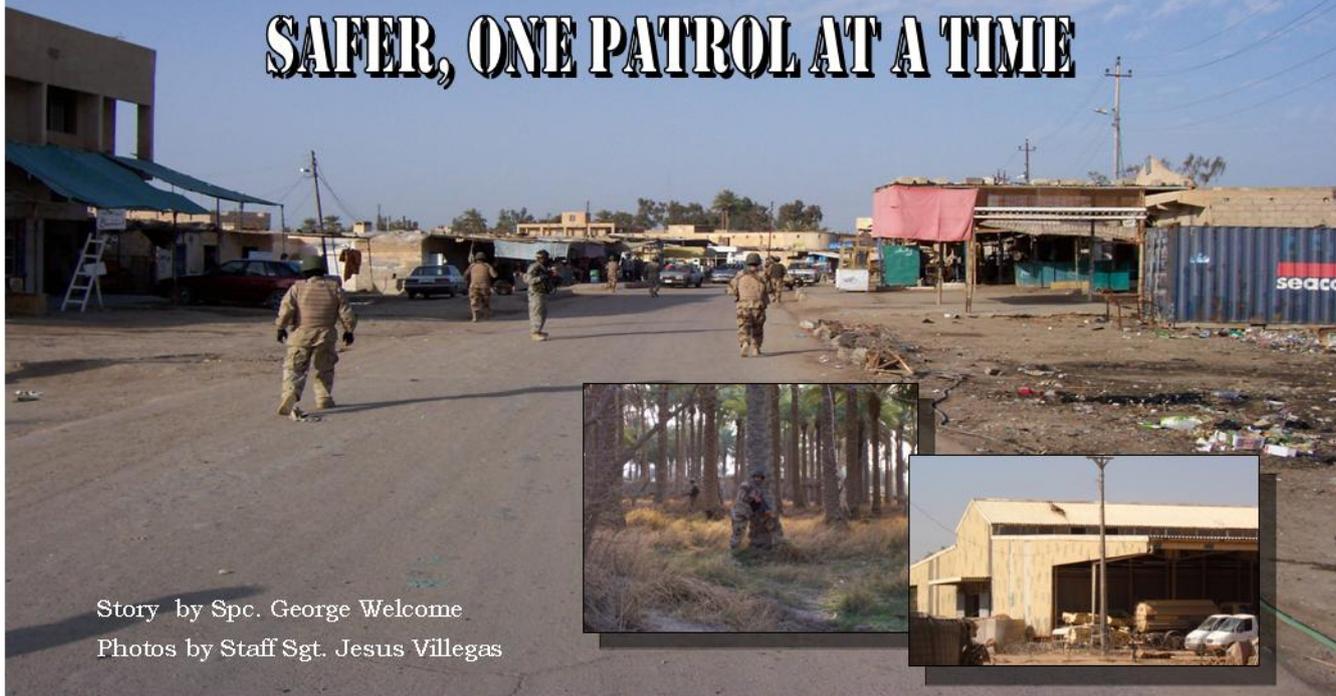
Countouriotis' family members, 1st Lieutenants Nick and Aletha Countouriotis, are also serving in the 2nd BCT in



The Lieutenants Three: The Countouriotis family takes time to pose for this combat family portrait.

Iraq. Both are members of 1st Squadron, 75th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd BCT.

MITT 4 AND 4/4/6 IA : MAKING YUSUFYIAH SAFER, ONE PATROL AT A TIME



Story by Spc. George Welcome
Photos by Staff Sgt. Jesus Villegas

YUSUFYIAH, Iraq-- Victory in the war for Iraqi freedom will not only be measured by how well American Soldiers fight, but also how well their Iraqi counterparts are trained and their ability to maintain the peace after U.S. Soldiers depart.

It is the job of the Military Training Team, or MiTT, to ensure that the Iraqi Army is ready to take on that responsibility.

MiTT 4, stationed in Yusufiyah, has been readying Iraqi Soldiers to take over an area that is very active.

"The job of the MiTT is to coach, mentor, train and report the activities of the Iraqi army, specifically 4th Battalion, 4th Brigade, 6th Iraqi army division," 1st Lt. Ryan Crosby, executive officer, MiTT 4.

Although the Iraqi army shows continuing progress, there were some difficulties facing MiTT 4 in getting the Soldiers prepared to take over the battle field.

"In Yusufiyah, our mission differs because we have a fairly new battalion," said Crosby. "We have one of the most active sectors in the "STRIKE" AO, we have a very high operational tempo and it's such a spread out area with a lot of small villages that we are tasked to support."

The missions that the Iraqi soldiers partake in vary, but it is the intent of the MiTT to see that they take a leading role in executing missions as much as possible.

"We try put them in the lead as much as possible, whenever possible," Crosby said. "We do joint route clearances, joint dismounted and mounted patrols, a lot of work at the TCPs to try to control the flow of traffic. Right now there is a mission called Desert Scorpion going on and Iraqi soldiers air assaulted in with the American Soldiers. They are right there

in the thick of things with us."

The operational relationship between U.S. and Iraqi troops is not the only sign of improvement. When an electrical fire claimed MiTT 4's living area back in February, the Iraqi soldiers opened their compound to them, thus strengthening their already burgeoning friendship.

"After the fire on February 5th when the American compound burned to the ground, the Iraqi soldiers opened their doors to us," said Crosby. "They opened up one of their bays to house all 31 soldiers that are here. They gave us room to build a TOC. Our Aid Station became a joint Aid Station. Working in such close cohesion with them we've really seen a lot of progress in our relationship and their abilities."

"The Iraqi soldiers are more focused on the mission now and they are more efficient and they adapt a lot better," said Staff Sgt. Jesus Villegas, MiTT 4's fires noncommissioned officer. "They are starting to react like we do when they make contact with the enemy."

The Iraqi soldiers aren't the only ones who are learning from this experience. The American Soldiers have learned much about Iraqi culture.

"We get to learn their culture and little things that they may do in their culture like certain gestures and phrases and when they see you trying to learn those things, they take it as you are trying to learn and bond with them," Villegas said. "When we try to speak their language, they know that we are trying to have two way communication and they respect us more for that."

The success of MiTT 4 and 4/4/6 Iraqi army division in making the Yusufiyah area safe depends on their continued cooperation and willingness to learn from each other.

Faces of the Heart



1st Lt. Sean McLoughlin, preventive medicine officer uses a monitoring tool to determine the air quality of an office on Camp Striker.



Dr. Francis Harvey, Secretary of the Army, lines up with "STRIKE" Soldiers for morning chow after a meet and greet on Camp Liberty on May 11.



Soldiers from 2-502 take up security positions as they wait to be picked up by UH-60s after a mission .



Private 1st Class Sylvester Mincey stands at the ready during a recent supply mission on Camp Liberty.



A 1-75th Cav. Soldier gets his Combat Infantryman's Badge in a ceremony on May 3

Soldiers from HHC 2BCT take up good prone positions as they prepare to engage targets at a marksmanship range on May 8.



"Strike" Soldier wins NCO of Quarter, Year Awards

CAMP STRIKER, Iraq - Soldiers in the Army, are continuously training for what will prepare them to survive in a combat situation. However, nothing could prepare Soldiers mentally more than going in front of a bunch of Command Sergeant's Major, than attending the Division Non-Commissioned Officer of the Year Board.



Story by Staff Sgt. Kellyanne Stone

Staff Sgt. Thomas E. Brutscher, common ground station analyst, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, went to division headquarters at Camp Speicher, Iraq on April 30 to mentally prepare himself for two, non stop days of constant tests and inspections.

Not only did he attend the Division NCO of the Year Board but he also attended the 4th Quarter NCO of the Quarter Board. Brutscher competed against seven other NCOs for the NCO of the Quarter Board and three NCOs for the Division Soldier of the Year. Never once did he neglect his duties or his Soldiers and diligently continued to prepare himself for one of his upcoming greatest accomplishment.

The tasks that faced Brutscher were not just tedious, but mentally straining as well. He was given an Army Physical Fitness Test, an inspection on equipment maintenance and cleanliness and written and hands on Common Task Training Test. Some training included First Aid, Radio Systems and weapons. If that wasn't enough, Soldiers had to complete a written land navigation and skill levels 2-4 examination, and this was just on the first day.

Brutscher, and the competing Soldiers, stood for a formal board where they had to answer questions on skill levels 2-4, basic soldiering, reciting the NCO Creed and other topics including Current Events. Once the formal board was completed, the moment came for sighs of relief but the adrenaline continued to run their veins as they waited for the judgment.

After hours of deliberation and counting points, Brutscher came out on top, representing the "STRIKE" Brigade for both NCO of the Quarter and 101st Airborne Division NCO of the Year.

"It takes a positive attitude and the Warrior Ethos in order to train to be the best, and achieving the standard is the ability to push one's self beyond what is expected," said Sgt. 1st Class Daniel Crowe, Brutscher's Platoon Sergeant. "He has pioneered the way for all Soldiers to achieve what is in their heart and what they know they are capable of. He is a true representative of what this Brigade stands for. All leaders dream of the day when they can work with such a powerful NCO as Staff Sgt. Brutscher."

For NCO of the Quarter, Brutscher received an Army Commendation Medal. For Division NCO of the Year, he received a Meritorious Service Medal and he will represent the 101st Airborne Division in Normandy, France, on June 6 for the Remembrance of D-Day ceremony. Brutscher will also visit wounded soldiers at Landstuhl Medical Center in Germany.

"It is a great honor to be the NCO of the Year for the greatest unit in the U.S. Army," Brutscher said. "I would like to personally thank each and every soldier in Iraq for fighting for our freedom and special thanks to 1st Sgt. Reed, Sgt. 1st Class Crowe, Master Sgt. Turner and all the other great NCOs in the "STRIKE" Brigade, who have led by example and took the time to mentor me along the way."

UAV Team Re-enlists to keep watchful eye in the sky

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq-- Retaining quality Soldiers is a mission that is critical to the Army's future. Soldiers re-enlist everyday, but it's not often that nearly an entire section re-enlists at the same time.

That's exactly what happened on April 13 on Camp Liberty, as Soldiers from 2-101 Brigade Troop Battalion's Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Team took the oath to "Stay Army" behind 4th Infantry Division headquarters.

The three Soldiers who re-enlisted were Staff Sgt. Roger Bryant, Spc. Marco Garavito and Spc. David Harris.

Bryant, a former Marine who has a military career that has spanned three decades explained why he decided to re-enlist.

"I reenlisted today because two of my Soldiers reenlisted. They're very good troops, their future as NCOs is going to be great. Since they reenlisted today, it motivated me to go ahead and join them," said Bryant, the UAV team leader.

Deciding to re-enlist in a combat zone is a monumental decision. It shows the dedication these Soldiers have to their

chosen profession.

Harris, who was questioning whether or not to stay in the Army decided to stay on the team.

"I was doing some research and to get the job that I wanted, I would need to gain more experience in my field," said Harris. "I re-enlisted to go to Fort Huachuca and become an instructor."

"I re-enlisted because I saw the opportunities that the Army had for me at this point and I didn't want to pass up those opportunities," said Garavito. "My NCOs encouraged me, so I decided to re-enlist."

Also prompting the men to re-enlist was the impact they are having on the fight against the insurgents.

"I think we are making a good impact because we have found a lot of IED emplacements and we are able to give the commanders a good view of what's going on the battlefield," Garavito said.

These Soldiers' decision to stay in the Army has ensured that the force will retain three competent professionals whose skills will help keep an eye on and defeat the enemy.



We Will Never Forget Our Fallen Eagles



*Sgt. Steve M. Sakoda
Bravo Troop, 1-75th
Cavalry*



*Private 1st Class
Travis C. Zimmerman
Bravo Company,
2-502 Inf.*



2ND BRIGADE COMBAT TEAM 101ST AIRBORNE DIVISION (AASLT)



OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM APRIL 2006