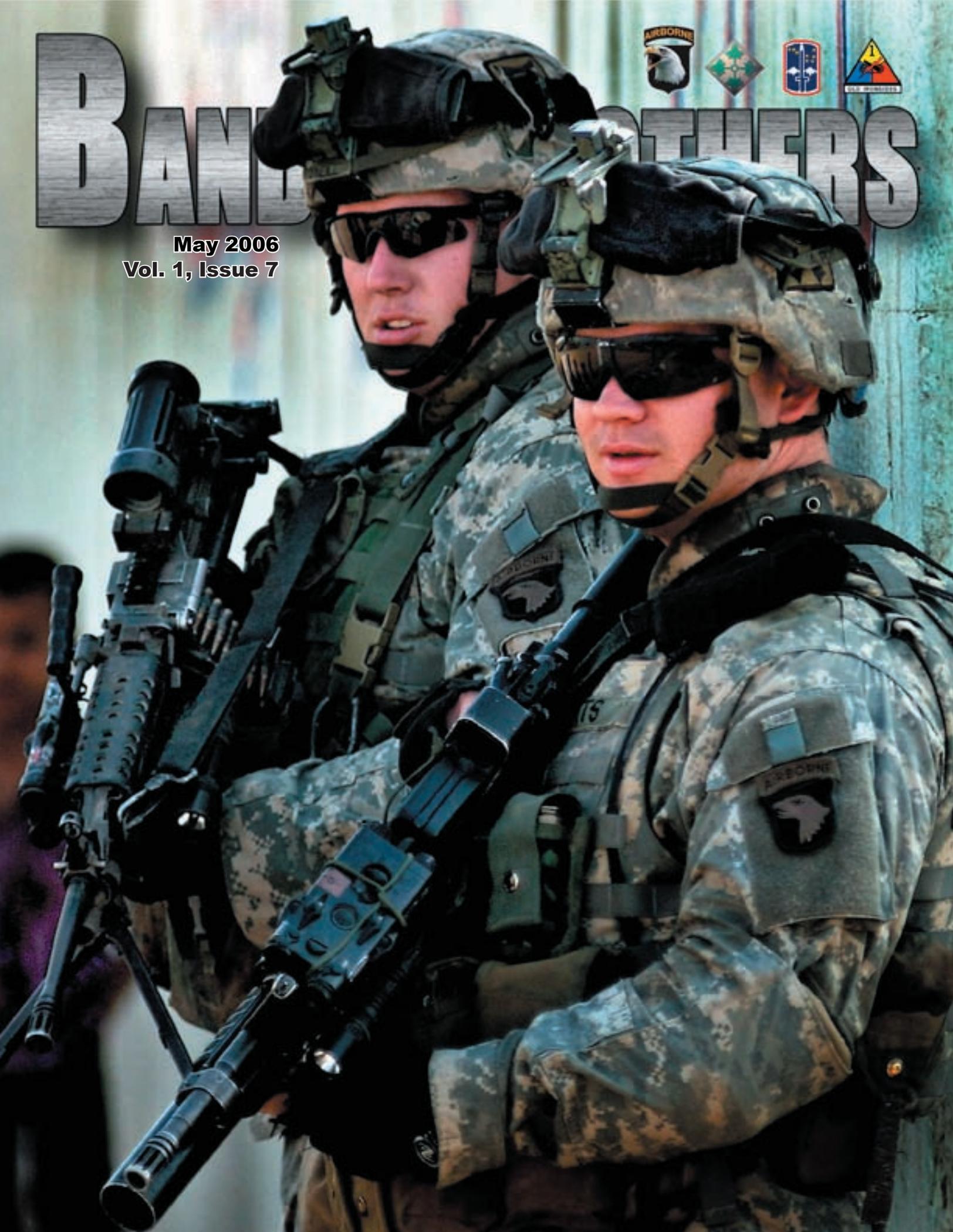


BAND MATTERS

May 2006
Vol. 1, Issue 7





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Specialist Kimberly Kissinger, Company C, 426th Brigade Support Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, and Scott Higgins, Readiness Management Support, tackle a fuel fire during training at Fire Station One on Forward Operating Base Warrior. The training, given by the station's Air National Guard crew, was meant to show the intensity and difficulty of putting out a fuel fire.

photo by Spc. Anna-Marie Hizer

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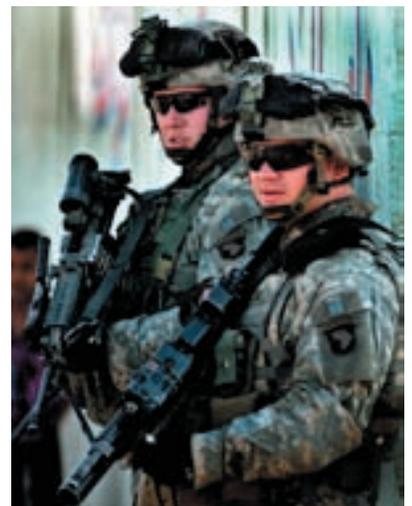
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On the cover...

Staff Sgt. Luke Murphy and Sgt. Eric Roberts, Troop C, 1st Squadron, 33rd Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, provide security for a vehicle checkpoint in Sadr City, Iraq. (For story, see page 6)

photo by
Staff Sgt. Russell Lee Klika





OPERATION COLD STEELE



photos by Sgt. Ryan Matson

(Left) A gunner and assistant gunner set up security in a field outside the town of Al Ruffayah, Iraq, during an air assault mission April 14. (Center) A Soldier from Company C, 1st Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment, pulls security. (Top) Three Soldiers set off on foot after being dropped in the small village outside of Kirkuk. (Above) Soldiers unload from a UH-60 Blackhawk from Company A, 5th Battalion, 101st Combat Aviation Brigade.

BAND OF BROTHERS

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EAGLE SENDS



Fellow Screaming Eagles and Soldiers of Task Force Band of Brothers,

As we continue in the shared struggle with our brethren in the Iraqi Security Forces to make this country a better place for all, we should pause to take a moment wherein we remember and reflect upon the great accomplishments made by fallen military heroes from America's past and present.

Every service member, whether Soldier, Sailor, Airman or Marine, who has given his or her life in the never-ending campaign to ensure the rights and freedoms of American citizens, is indeed a hero. What they have been able to achieve through their toil and pain, their blood and their souls, has made the deepest and most everlasting of impacts upon the very heart of our nation. We owe who we are and what we have become, as individu-

als and as a country, to those who, as President Abraham Lincoln once said during his famous Gettysburg Address, "gave the last full measure of devotion."

This month brings to us an important holiday as service members -- May 29. Memorial Day began as Decoration Day, and was used as a time for the remembrance of fallen Soldiers from the Civil War. As events continued to unfold in the history of our country, it was necessary from time to time for America's sons and daughters, mothers and fathers, to gather up arms and defend the ideals and rights on which our society was founded. In the course of fulfilling their duty as American citizens, many lost their lives -- in World War I, World War II, Korea, Vietnam and other major and minor military efforts. They did not die in vain.

It is our obligation as members of the American military, to spend this day recognizing the people who have died so that others may live free. But, in keeping with the traditions of Memorial Day, do not limit yourselves to only honoring American Soldiers; remember the contributions made by our patriotic and brave Iraqi brothers-in-arms.

The members of the Iraqi Army, Iraqi police, and other security forces have stepped up admirably to the daunting task of rebuilding their country and protecting every man, woman and child, from those who value terror and anarchy. The Iraqi police and Soldiers are proud to be the first line of defense against the evil that is assuredly losing ground in this global war on terror. The power and autonomy gained by the Iraqi heroes, was won only through tough, decisive battles and well-planned military operations. Iraqi Security Forces are not just fighting to preserve their way of life, they are fighting to improve the way of life for all of Iraq. They are fighting for the rights and dignities

that are owed to them by a fair and democratic government. The Iraqi service members who have died are owed a great deal of gratitude and respect from us all.

When Memorial Day arrives, remember that honor that should be bestowed upon the dead heroes of all nations involved in this coalition. What they have done has saved countless lives, and ensured that a fledgling government can grow strong and true. They have ensured that the roads are safe, medical clinics are fully stocked and schools are equipped with tools needed to educate the next generation of free Iraqis.

You don't have to limit your honoring to just one day in month. You should always be aware of what has been done for you by those who came before and by those whose lives were taken from them too soon.

Remember, members of Task Force Band of Brothers, we are so named for the brothers who are with us now, and for the brothers who we can no longer see, but who have lifted us and carried us to our rendezvous with destiny.





A mighty HoooAhhhh to all members of our Task Force Band of Brothers,

Our Task Force continues to successfully bring peace and prosperity to the people of Iraq. The allied Iraqi Security Forces that we partner with and mentor on a daily basis are doing an outstanding job. Just recently, misguided terrorist forces loyal to Zarqawi attacked several police stations and check points in the Diyala Province. Our Iraqi police forces immediately went on the defensive and fought off the attackers.

Simultaneously, Iraqi Army forces immediately went on the offensive, attacking, capturing and killing numerous terrorists. Both the Iraqi police and Army forces received minimal casualties during the long fight, soundly defeating the enemies of the Iraqi people. This is just one of the many successful operations that took place in the Task Force Band of Brothers area of operations this past month.

As I conduct daily battlefield circulation around our area of operations, I am proud to report that wherever I visit Task Force Band of Brothers Troopers, I observe troopers that are keeping the basics to heart. Physically fit, trim and confident; haircuts and hairdos to standard; uniforms and equipment that are serviceable and worn to standard; and that confident chin up, shoulders back, walking strut that marks a well-trained, self-assured warrior.

Along with keeping basic standards, Soldiers are conducting combat operations on a daily basis that are at the brain surgeon level. Troopers move out and aggressively seek the enemy. We have killed and captured many known terrorists this past month and our success will continue this month. Our use of actionable intelligence ensures that we and our Iraqi allies service targets that lead to success on our part and virtually no collateral damage to innocent Iraqis.

Along with our combat victories, we are quite successful at keeping our combat-experienced warriors in the best Army America has ever fielded. The 101st Airborne Division stats are right at 100% at this time. I am sure that by the time we leave theater, we will be up over 130%. These high retention rates are quantifiable proof of the professional warriors within our force -- a force of warriors that will once again return to Iraq and Afghanistan and bring further peace and prosperity to its people.

I want to take a moment and talk about our CREW systems. Of course I cannot get into details for obvious security reasons, but this is what I want you all to take away from this -- ensure you understand the tactical applications of each and every device. You do not need to know the technical reasons why it works. You just need to know that these devices will protect you and save your life. Understand the basics for CREW operations, including cover-

age, limitations, and which devices negate one another. Understand how to properly maintain the equipment, conduct PCIs, and know where the maintainers are located.

Most importantly, keep in mind that the CREW must be used and applied as a weapons system, not just a neat gadget. You would not depart the FOB without a weapon, or with a weapon that is not serviceable. Apply that same standard on your CREW device.

Keep the following in mind as you go about your daily business -- you personally are making a difference in this war, whether you are conducting or supporting operations.

The actionable intelligence tips that are received by Joint Coordination Centers continue to increase, demonstrating the Iraqis' confidence in their security situation. Remember that every Soldier is a sensor. The changes you see on the streets may yield the bit of data that helps the analyst answer the question that leads to another terrorist death or capture.

Finally, Memorial Day is upon us -- a day in which our nation honors those who have gone before us and paid the ultimate sacrifice. We, the warriors of Task Force Band of Brothers, will also honor the brothers of our present fight that have paid the ultimate sacrifice.

Please keep in mind our coalition allies and our Iraqi allies as we take time to honor and remember. There will be no four-day weekends for us this Memorial Day; most of you will probably be on a four-day patrol. Ensure your marksmanship and tactics make for a memorable day on the battlefield.

Thanks for all you do. God bless each and every one of you, our Task Force Band of Brothers and God Bless America.....HoooAhh.....Air Assault!

**Command Sergeant Major
Frank Grippe**

Division Command Sergeant Major

EAGLE 7 SENDS

Riding with the Cavalry

Soldiers ride into Baghdad;

story and photos by Staff Sgt. Russell Lee Klika
133rd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment



B

AGHDAD, Iraq -- On any given day, thousands of Soldiers roll "outside the wire" acting as American ambassadors to the people of Iraq. The Soldiers of 1st Squadron, 33rd Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, have taken it a little further, traveling outside their area of operations to help restore peace in an area where violence has spiked -- Baghdad.

The squadron left their area of operations north of Baiji, Iraq, in March after being tasked to support Multi-National Division-Baghdad. Each troop is supporting a sector in or near Baghdad, beefing up security and stopping the insurgency.

For the Soldiers of "Charlie" Troop C, 1-33rd Cav. Reg., the battle lies in the heart of Sadr City, Iraq. It is a city of 2.5 million people, most of whom are unappreciative of the Soldiers' presence, as is evident by the negative graffiti on the metropolitan walls. The Soldiers laugh it off.

"Charlie Troop is a very tight knit group of Soldiers," said Maj. Shawn Daniel, operations officer, 1-33rd Cav.

Reg. "Every time they move, they quickly establish themselves in the community. They bounce right back from anything thrown at them. It's phenomenal," he added referring to the four times the unit has moved since arriving in Iraq.

Shortly after rolling out the gate on a joint patrol with Iraqi Army Soldiers, an IED detonates on the night patrol -- no one is injured. The Soldiers perform a quick search of the area and continue with the patrol. After several hours of zigzagging the streets of Sadr City, 2nd Lt. Christopher Hudson, Charlie platoon leader, spots a suspicious vehicle. He radios all elements and stops the target. Weapons still at the ready, the Soldiers approach the vehicle and find two men in the back seat, gagged and flex-cuffed.

"Kidnappers," Hudson said. "The hostages are on their way to be executed."

The driver and passenger are detained and then turned over to Iraqi police.

"We just saved two lives," Hudson said. "All in a day's work."



(Top) Corporal Jared Jenkins and 1st Sgt. Arthur Abiera, Troop A, 1st Squadron, 33rd Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, search a home during a routine presence patrol on the outskirts of Sadr City, Iraq. (Left) Captain Douglas Laxson, Troop A commander, talks with adults about the brick throwing by younger children. (Above) Laxson patrols the streets with two of his Soldiers.

The patrol ends, but the paperwork consumes the rest of the night.

"It must be done right so that the charges of attempted murder and kidnapping will stick on the two detainees," Hudson added.

For the "Apache" Soldiers of Troop A, patrolling two towns near Baghdad after a four-month absence of Coalition Force presence is a tough job.

Squaretown and Triangletown, named for their shape on the map, are a spillover from nearby Sadr City.

A recent increase in insurgent activities in both towns was reason enough to bring in the cavalry troops.

The patrols present Apache convoy drivers with unique challenges, rolling along roads riddled with refuse. Patrolling on a rainy day creates window-high levels of waste that the humvees slide through -- sideways.

For an added obstacle, the overwhelming stench of rain-soaked-sewage, trash and anything else the residents of Square and Triangle towns have decided to leave on the streets threatens to nauseate the strongest of stomachs. Apache, however, is used to all this. They patrol these streets for up to 12 hours a day, trying to restore a sense of security for the residents.

"What we are trying to do out here is to make friends, to let them know that we are not the enemy," said 1st. Sgt Arthur Abiera, Troop A. "The biggest problem we have when patrolling the streets is the kids throwing rocks at us while on the ground or driving by them."

An alert Soldier spots a child waving, who then bends down to pick up a rock. The Soldier, still on his toes, yells at the child and the incident is averted. Quite often, this is not the case; the child throwing the rock is successful, breaking a window or hitting a Soldier.

"I think they are just kids having fun," said Cpl. Jared Jenkins, Apache mortar platoon squad-leader. "But when it comes to someone in our patrol getting hurt, the fun stops."

As the Soldiers provide security for Apache commander, Capt. Douglas Laxson, who is talking to local leaders, a brick whizzes past the gunner of a humvee. Abiera springs into action, assembling a team to search for the culprit. Despite their extensive search, the Soldiers head back to their vehicles empty handed.

The group's return draws a crowd and Laxson summons several elders to his location. He raises a brick and, through his interpreter, informs the elders that if the rock throwing doesn't

stop, he'll be forced to take other measures.

As the Soldiers move on, another child is spotted launching a rock and the chase is on. This time, the culprit is captured, brought to the humvee, and given a lecture, stern enough to break the language barrier.

Back in Sadr City, Charlie Soldiers have prepared for another mission -- to provide security for a forensics archaeologist hired by the U.S., who is searching for Saddam-era mass graves.

The Soldiers take up security positions while nearby children shout profanity and brandish posters of their leader -- Sadr. The forensics crew arrives and starts to dig. The top soil of the compost pile is removed, unleashing a stench that fills the air and assaults the nose. After several hours, the team comes up empty handed and moves to another location.

The daily missions of 1-33rd continue as locals taunt and disrespect the Soldiers. Even in the face of adversity, the cavalry troops will fight their way through MND-B until peace is restored to each of the communities the cavalry is patrolling. ■

resume patrols to restore peace



(Left) Private Shane Irwin, Troop C, 1-33rd Cav. Reg., provides security for a contracted forensics archeologist team at a garbage dump in Sadr City outside of Baghdad. (Above) Two Troop C Soldiers provide security at the dump site.

The Race



Chaplain (Maj.) Scott Hammond

A race not won by chance

1 Corinthians 9:24

Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize.

Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever.

Therefore, do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air

What type of training do you go through? Some people want to be strong in their faith without spiritual calisthenics. Some people wonder why they struggle in the faith, but they rarely go to church, read their Bible, or pray. Some may think that they can live sinful lifestyles and then wonder why they fail to experience spiritual victories.

A race with an audience

Hebrews 12:1-2

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us.

Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorn- ing its shame, and sat down at the right of God.

Who is this cloud of witnesses? Who is in the stands cheering you on to get up and win the race?

The fans could be friends, a spouse, parents, children, or others in heaven who have already finished the race.

As I close and consider the audience in the grandstands cheering for you and me, I am reminded of the many friends and colleagues that were at each mile marker of the COB Speicher race, cheering us on and handing out water. What a difference their encouragement and refreshments made. I am also reminded of our heavenly audience with the Lord watching over us cheering us on, praying for us, and constantly sending others to assist us in the race.

In light of the grand race run held at Contingency Operating Base Speicher April 29 and the fact that many of us have crossed the half-way point in the deployment, I thought the theme of "Running the Race" would be a great topic for spiritual reflection. Whether we are running in a PT test or a marathon, there are many parallels to running a race and daily life.

A race that requires completion

2 Timothy 4:7-8

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.

Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous Judge will award to me on that day, and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing

It's not as important how we begin the race, as it is how we finish the race.

A race hindered by others

Galatians 5:7

You were running a good race. Who cut in on you and kept you from obeying the truth?

When we stand before God, it will be only you and God. Sometimes we make excuses in serving God by reminding Him about all of the other hypocrites. If you know someone is a hypocrite, God probably knows it as well. You and I will not be able to say, to God, it is because of someone else that I stopped serving you. Focus on the Lord who is the author and perfecter of our Faith. Don't focus on others and allow them to cut you off in the race.

Not an idle race

Philippians 3:12-14

Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.

Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead.

I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

You are going one of two directions in the spiritual race: forward or backward. There is no neutrality. (Rev 3:16).

If you think you have achieved all you need to in the Faith, then you are misled.

We cannot allow the past to control the future. Past mistakes do not determine future failure. Past success do not guarantee future successes. Each day we must press on toward the goal of heaven.

BULKING UP

How to maximize your time at the gym and increase muscle mass

Capt. Reva Rogers, RD
101st Airborne Division
Dietician

Eat more protein. Too much protein is bad for you. Eat more carbs. Carbs will make you fat.

There are hundreds of books, magazines, Web sites and advertisements that promise you will learn the secret to bulking up if you follow their advice and buy their product. With so much conflicting information, it's hard to know what is real and what is fiction.

One pound of body weight equals 3,500 calories. So to gain a pound per week you should intake 500 extra calories per day. For most people, this formula works, but "hard-gainers" may need to intake more to gain weight. There are some things you can do:

EAT REGULARLY

Food is your weight gain medicine. You should eat at least three meals per day, with one or two snacks. A good pattern to follow is eating every three to five hours while you are awake. For a lot of people, this means adding a snack between lunch and dinner.

MAKE BEVERAGES COUNT

It is important to stay hydrated, but if you only consume water, you are missing a great opportunity to increase your calorie intake. Replacing some of the water you drink with fruit juice or milk will increase your intake of calories and vitamins while hydrating. Switching some of your non-caloric beverages to milk will also help bump up your protein and calcium intake.

PROTEIN & CARBOHYDRATES

Consume adequate amounts of protein and carbohydrates to fuel your activities. A lot of people focus on protein intake when trying to add muscle mass. Protein is important for muscle building, but carbo-

hydrates are too. If you do not have enough carbohydrates in your diet, your body will use the protein you eat for energy and not for repairing or rebuilding. Including a good carbohydrate source, such as bread, pasta, rice or potatoes, at each meal can help you meet your carbohydrate needs.

FOOD FOR FUEL

When eating to fuel your activities, you should consider what you do before, during and after exercise to ensure you are well-fueled and hydrated.

Before: The meal four to six hours before your workout is your primary fuel. At this meal, you should make sure you consume protein, carbs and a little bit of fat. One way to do this is to fill two thirds of your plate with high-carb options (i.e. rice, pasta, bread, potatoes, etc.) and one third with protein. If you work out in the morning before breakfast, you may want to consider consuming a light snack prior to your workout.

During: If you are working out for over 90 minutes, it can be beneficial to consume some calories during your workout. Drinking sports beverages can be a good choice as they provide you with both calories and fluid. The ready energy source you get from a sports drink also enables you to exercise for a longer period before you start to tap into the energy stored in your muscles. Consum-

ing carbohydrates during exercise helps you maintain blood sugar levels, which help you maintain a high intensity level during your workout.

After: Consuming carbs and protein immediately (within 30 to 40 minutes) after lifting promotes greater muscle adaptation. In other words, it helps you gain strength and build muscle more quickly than if you wait two or more hours to eat. By consuming carbohydrates, you will replenish your energy stores and increase insulin levels. This upswing in insulin has been linked with a decrease in protein breakdown and an increase in protein production.

By consuming protein immediately, you will have more amino acids available to be moved into your muscle cells for repairing and rebuilding. Although commercial recovery drinks can be an easy way to consume carbs and protein post-workout, you can meet your need by consuming regular foods. Chocolate milk is one example of a great recovery food. It contains protein and a good amount of carbohydrates, while providing your body with additional nutrients.

BALANCING ACT

Gaining muscle mass while trying to maintain low body fat is a tricky balancing act. Some Soldiers use commercial weight gain powders to help them put on the pounds. Although these can help you gain weight, the International Society of Sports Nutrition does not recommend using this type of supplement, because although they do lead to weight gain, on average only about 30-50% of the weight gained is muscle, while the rest is fat.

You need to consume enough calories to gain muscle mass, but not too many so you end up gaining body fat. Most athletes learn the right balance through trial and error. Weighing yourself once a week and keeping track of your measurements will help you stay on track. Good luck!

PROTEIN CONTENT OF FOODS	
Peanut Butter, 1 small tub	6.0 grams
Milk, 1 Box (skim or 2%)	6.2 grams
Chocolate Milk, 1 Box	6.8 grams
Egg Whites, 3 each	9.0 grams
Tuna, 3 oz	20 grams
Bean Burrito, one each	26 grams
Grilled Chicken, 5 oz	32 grams
Prime Rib, 6 oz	67 grams

Iraqi Soldiers headed in right direction with

GPS training



photo by Staff Sgt. Mark Wojciechowski

Soldiers from 2nd Brigade, 5th Iraqi Army Division, track a grid location on a Global Positioning System during training by the 4th Infantry Division's Military Transition Team.

Staff Sgt. Mark Wojciechowski
133rd Mobile Public
Affairs Detachment

BAOUBAH, Iraq -- Being able to track grid locations is critical to military operational success.

Soldiers from 2nd Brigade, 5th Iraqi Army Division are being trained on the use of the Global Positioning System -- a technology that has been used for many years by U.S. military and civilian personnel.

The GPS uses satellites to provide directions for the user to navigate to determined positions on the ground.

This technology has become an essential part of today's U.S. military, and is now being taught to Iraqi Army Soldiers to aid in their success. ■

IPs learn basics in shoot house training

Sgt. Dennis Gravelle
138th Mobile Public
Affairs Detachment

MOSUL, Iraq -- The Iraqi police officers that will be patrolling the streets of Mosul, will also be the first-line of security. They will most likely be the first to respond to reported insurgent activity and squash crime in the area.

Police officers were trained in the "shoot house" on the basics of searching and clearing houses by Soldiers of 1st Battalion, 17th Infantry Regiment, 172nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, on Forward Operating Base Marez in Mosul, Iraq, helping them improve vital skills in the tough road ahead for security in their nation.

"This type of training is what they will mainly be doing in the streets of Mosul," said Staff Sgt. John Sloan, 1st Bn., 17th Inf. Rgt., 172nd SBCT. "They need to know

how to do raids and that is what we are teaching them."

The shoot house is probably the most important training the IPs complete, according to Sgt. 1st Class Jason Hall, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Bn., 17th Inf. Rgt., 172nd SBCT.

"Our goal is to get the IP as proficient as they can and get them to a level to stand on their own without coalition support," Hall said. "They are eager to learn and with continued training, they will be able to handle situations without our help."

Second Lt. Ali, an IP training officer, wants the officers to train to be the best they can be, realizing that there are still many insurgents against a new government.

"We never received training like this. We have no experience on building clearing," Ali said. "These Soldiers are making us the best we can be." ■



Iraqi police officers practice searching and clearing a building during shoot house training on Forward Operating Base Marez in Mosul, Iraq. The officers were being trained by Soldiers of 1st Battalion, 17th Infantry Regiment, 172nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team.



photos by Sgt. Dennis Gravelle

Leaders in northern Iraq convene for first Governors' Conference in Mosul

**Sgt. Dennis Gravelle &
Spc. Richard Vogt**
133rd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

MOSUL, Iraq -- The 101st Airborne Division hosted the first-ever Northern Governors' Conference at the Palace of Spears on Forward Operating Base Courage April 12 for civil and military leaders in the region.

"This is a unique opportunity for us to have the provincial leaders and Iraqi Security Force leaders in one quorum to discuss issues about their individual regions," said Maj. Gen. Thomas Turner, commander, 101st Airborne Division and Task Force Band of Brothers.

The leaders discussed the highlights and accomplishments of the past year. Since 2004, the Iraqi people have elected an interim government, ratified a constitution, and elected a four-year constitutional government that was seated in March.

Iraqi Security Forces are now 103,000 strong and are taking the lead in security operations more and more every day. According to Lt. Col. Aidis Zunde, deputy chief of staff for ISF for the 101st Airborne Division, they are heading in the right direction.

"There is a significant difference in how they handle themselves today than when I first arrived here nine months ago," he said.

"Our security forces are at a level where they need to be," said Duriad Mohammad Kashmoula, Ninewa governor. "They are depending on themselves. It's all because of the help of Coalition Forces."

Three Iraqi brigades and 11 battalions are now in control of security, not only with progress being made, but with the backing and support of the Iraqi leadership.

"We are on track for 90 percent of IA battalions and 75 percent of IA brigades to be in the lead by early this summer," Turner said.

The vast majority of Iraqi police forces have completed formal training, Turner added. The force is gaining capability and



photos by Spc. Joshua Hutcheson

Major Gen. Thomas Turner, commander, 101st Airborne Division and Task Force Band of Brothers, walks with the National Security Advisor of Iraq, Dr. Mouwafek al-Rubaie, to the Governors' Conference held on Forward Operating Base Courage in Mosul, April 12. The conference was a chance for American military leaders to sit down and discuss issues of concern with the political leaders of the provinces of northern Iraq.

is starting to gain the trust of the Iraqi populace. Economic growth is helping the Iraqis as well with an estimated 2.6 percent increase in the gross domestic product during 2005.

It is expected to increase by 10.4

percent by the end of 2006, Turner said. A recent poll showed that 72 percent of Iraqis expect the national economy to grow in the next two years, and 69 percent are optimistic about Iraq's future.

Communication issues were also discussed during the conference. In 2003, there was basically no cellular phone service. Today, there are over five million cell phone subscribers and an estimated 2,000 internet cafés, according to Turner.

"Iraqis are able to connect with one another and with the world in ways they were never able to before," Turner said.

Turner added that essential services must be delivered to the people in each province -- they expect that from their government.

"It has taken many months of hard work to get this far and the next six months we will face many challenges," Turner said. "But there is no challenge Iraqis can't overcome." ■



Governors and provincial leaders from northern Iraq, including Ninewa, Diyala, Kirkuk and Salah al Din provinces, along with Iraqi Army officials, prepare to meet with leaders of Task Force Band of Brothers to discuss the future of the region.

GOING THE DISTANCE

Runners go extra mile...

Sgt. Ryan Matson

101st Combat Aviation Brigade
Public Affairs Office

TIKRIT, Iraq -- In January, Capt. Janet Tye, 47th Combat Support Hospital, and 1st Lt. Latasha Floyd were talking at a Morale, Welfare and Recreation meeting when they came up with an idea.

"We were talking about how we wanted a big event to train for other than the Army Physical Fitness Test, while we're out here in the deployed environment," Tye said. "We had heard of other marathons being done out here for Soldiers who usually run them in the states, like the Honolulu Marathon and the Boston Marathon. We thought, why don't we have one at Speicher?"

Tye's vision became a reality at 5:45 a.m. on April 29 when 355 runners lined up outside the main gym on Contingency Operating Base Speicher to run in the first-ever Rock N Roll Marathon and Half

Marathon. A total of 308 runners completed the half marathon while 47 gutted out the full marathon.

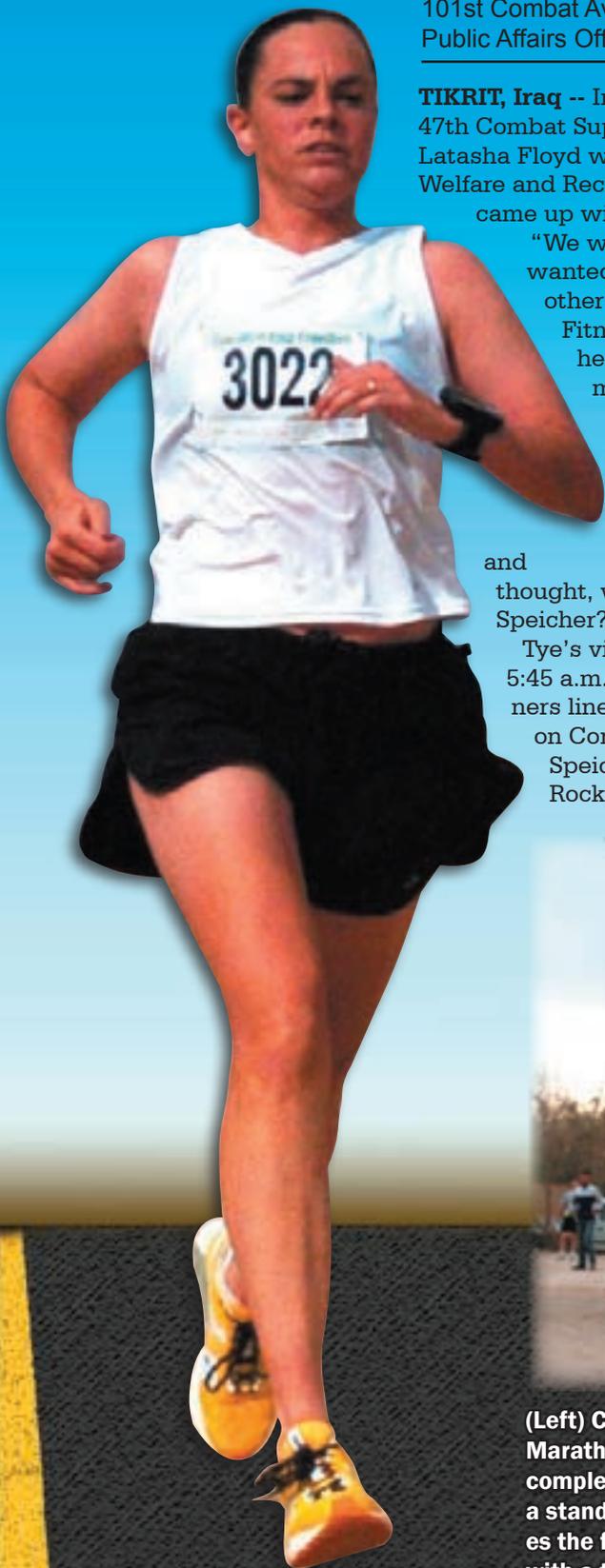
The run route, which should have been 13.1 and 26.2 miles, respectively, was a bit longer due to a miscalculated measurement. The half marathoners actually ran a distance of 15.1 miles and the full marathon runners ran around 28.8 miles.

When all was said and done, the top male finisher for the full marathon was Capt. Chris Hallows, who finished with a scorching time of 3:07:23.

Seven females ran the full marathon. The top finisher was Capt. Renee Vigilante, 501st Special Troops Battalion, who finished with a time of 3:32:01 -- good for fourth-place overall.

Captain Scott Harrington, Company C, 1st Battalion, 101st Combat Aviation Brigade, took home first place in the half marathon event, with a time of 1:34:06. Harrington was a member of Fort Campbell's Army 10-Miler team in October.

"Training up was a little harder, just consistency wise, but overall it was the same as anywhere else," Harrington said. "I had to hop in my chopper and fly a mission right afterward, so that was a little different.



(Left) Captain Renee Vigilante charges full-speed to the finish line of the Rock N Roll Marathon on Contingency Operating Base Speicher in Tikrit, Iraq, April 29. Vigilante completed the course in 3:32:01, which was mis-measured by nearly three miles over a standard marathon distance. (Above) Second Lt. Amy Swiatecki-McCabe approaches the finish line of the half marathon event in first place for females and 12th overall with a time of 1:53:47.



photos by Sgt. Dallas Walker

(Above) Specialist Meaghan Rosado cheers Capt. Stan Goligoski, both in the Military Intelligence Detachment, 501st Special Troops Battalion, 101st Airborne Division, across the finish line of the half marathon in 2:23:04. (Right) Captain Christopher Hallows, attached to the 101st Airborne Division, charges toward the finish line of the Rock N Roll Marathon in first place. Hallows crossed the finish line of the grueling 28.8-mile race with a time of 3:07:23. (Below) Sergeant Daniel Estrada and 1st Lt. Steve Showalter, 47th Combat Support Hospital, cross the finish line of the half marathon in 2:50:10. Both men hiked the entire distance carrying ruck sacks with approximately 45 pounds.



I was pretty pleased with my finish."

The top female finisher in the half-marathon was 2nd Lt. Amy Swiatecki-McCabe, 501st Special Troops Battalion, who ran the course in 1:53:47, good enough for 12th place overall. The event was her first ever half-marathon race.

"The weather held out for an awesome day for running," Swiatecki-McCabe said. "It's always nice to win, but I was just happy to have been able to experience and participate in the whole thing. I was pleased with the finish as it set a target time for future races. It gives me a goal for the

next time I run and something to work toward."

Runners came from bases throughout Iraq to participate in the race. Soldiers manned eight water points throughout the course, which started and finished at an old Iraqi soccer stadium.

Each water point had its own special theme, ranging from beach parties to an 80s car wash theme. Volunteers passed out Gatorade, water, oranges, cookies, and power bars and gel. Civilians from the COB were also on hand to volunteer to support the event, helping pass out numbers to entrants, hand out water, and prizes at the end.

Tye hoped that the race participants appreciated the location. After all, how many people can say they've run a marathon in Iraq?

"That's one of the nice things about this," Tye said. "There are a number of people out here who have never run a marathon before, maybe never run a half marathon before, and that's one of the unique things about doing it is actually doing it in Iraq rather than stateside. It was definitely special for the Soldiers out here." ■



or two in Speicher race



Patrolling Tal Afar

Private 1st Class Michael Worman, 1st Battalion, 36th Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade, 1st Armored Division, pulls security during a combat patrol in Tal Afar, Iraq, April 29.

photo by Staff Sgt. Aaron Allmon

Iraqi Army Soldiers complete validation in Mosul

Spc. L.C. Campbell

138th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

MOSUL, Iraq -- The Iraqi Army combat engineer and bomb disposal Soldiers validated their explosive skills in electrical detonation systems with help from U.S. forces April 26, at the Al Kindi training facility in Mosul, Iraq.

"I was assigned to this mission to validate the Iraq Army bomb disposal, and to validate the training they received in Basra," said Sgt. 1st Class Christopher Ellette, response non-commissioned officer technical escort, 752nd Explosive Ordnance Disposal. "This includes basic fuse identification, and basic demolition."

According to Ellette,

the class started by testing Soldiers on basic demolition procedures and non-electrical systems. The class was also required to identify unexploded ordnance and using UXO identification guides. The validation process was complete when Soldiers were tested on electrical systems and larger demolition procedures.

"Our primary mission here is to train the IA engineers and to work hand and

hand with explosive ordnance disposal to train the Iraqi bomb disposal company," said Staff Sgt. Jody Mills, 562 Engineer Company, 172nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team. "Engineers and EOD work with demolitions. They have specifically different types of missions, but they both work with explosives. It's a good fit for us to teach basic electrical systems to both groups at the same

time, so they can share their training experiences to become a stronger team."

The main goal is to prepare the bomb disposal Soldiers to work independently.

"As EOD and engineers work together they will learn what each others capabilities are," Mills said. "Its all about a team concept and helping them know their role." ■



photos by Spc. L.C. Campbell

(Top) Iraqi Army bomb disposal and combat engineer Soldiers learn how to set up electrical detonation systems at the Al Kindi training facility in Mosul, Iraq, April 26. (Above) Iraqi Army Soldiers move through a shoot house clearing rooms.



OPERATION SWIFT SWORD

Capt. Amy A. Bishop
133rd Mobile Public
Affairs Detachment

BAYJI Iraq -- Iraqi Security Forces teamed up with Coalition Forces April 26 to conduct Operation Swift Sword, a four-day operation designed to flush out suspected insurgents and search for weapons.

Soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 3rd

Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, initiated the air assault operation with the assistance of four Iraqi Army companies, the Iraqi Army scouts, 80 Bayji police officers and over 200 emergency security officers, resulting in the capture of several suspected insurgents and the seizure of weapons and ammunition.

"Terrorists have been using that area as a safe haven, basically putting pres-

sure on the locals not to say anything -- terrorizing the locals as well," said Capt. Ryan Barnett, 1st Battalion, 3rd BCT's Military Transition Team chief for the Bayji city police department. "They were happy to see that we had put some emphasis [on] that area. Several [locals] invited us in to talk further [about] the security situation in that area."

The battalion-sized operation was planned after information collected from numerous sources revealed that insurgents were retreating to the sparsely populated villages west of Bayji to hide after attacking the city. The information collected suggested that the suspected insurgents were not citizens of Bayji but outsiders from other cities.

Searches were conducted from farm to farm, and village to village, in 11 specified areas that were cordoned off in the western desert.

More than 100 artillery rounds, mortar rounds, mines, rocket-propelled grenades, and sniper rifles were found as well as 4,500 rounds of ammunition. Seventeen suspected insurgents were detained for crimes such as possessing illegal weapons and unauthorized stockpiling of ammunition.

"The operation as a whole was a very successful, not only in the aspect of the detainees that were captured but... showing the terrorists that we have the ability to move anywhere in this area," Barnett said. "There is no safe haven for them to operate." ■



photos by Capt. Amy A. Bishop

(Above) A U.S. Soldier with 1st Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, coordinates efforts with the Iraqi police emergency services unit leader to conduct a cordon and search of a village outside of Bayji, Iraq, during Operation Swift Sword. (Top) Rakkasans from the 1st Bn., 3rd BCT, provide security for a UH-60 helicopter during the reconnaissance phase of Operation Swift Sword.

“It has been a real test for me in Iraq. It’s a bigger responsibility than I expected.”

Soldier links communities to **Water**

Spc. Lee Elder
133rd Mobile Public
Affairs Detachment



HEERUP

BALAD, Iraq -- He may be young, but he’s not your average 19-year-old Army Reserve Soldier.

Specialist Vilhelm Heerup is playing a key role as a civil affairs specialist with Company C, 445th Civil Affairs Battalion, based at Forward Operating Base Paliwoda.

He is one of the main evaluators on a number of high-dollar water treatment projects funded by Coalition Forces to bring clean water to residents of Diyala Province in northern Iraq.

“He’s doing the work of a senior noncommissioned officer,” said 1st Lt. Dustin Greenhill, the civilian/military affairs officer for 1st Battalion, 8th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division. “He’s extremely mature. He’s been here for about nine months and [Operation Iraqi Freedom] has done that for a lot of young Soldiers.”

A Phoenix native, Heerup is in charge of monitoring the progress made by Iraqi contractors who are building or refurbishing water treatment plants.

He inspects the construction sites to ensure they meet prescribed milestones so that local vendors can be paid for their work. He also checks for the quality of their work to ensure it is up to the agreed-upon standards.

Working around water treatment plants is nothing new for Heerup. His father, Carl, is a civil and structural engineer who specializes in water treatment plants. A young Heerup would spend his summers working as a clerk for his father.

“His trailer was at the site and I often got to go and see these things,” Heerup said. “I asked him questions about ‘what’s this’ and ‘what’s that.’ Now, I know more than the average Joe on water treatment plants.”

Heerup joined the Army Reserve shortly after graduating from Chaparral High School in Scottsdale, Ariz., in

2004. He was trained as a civil affairs specialist at Fort Bragg, N.C., and deployed to Iraq last year.

“We use our civilian specialties and apply them other places,” Heerup said. “It’s one of the cool things about civil affairs. The fact that I know something that can help people, it’s pretty cool.”

For his part, Heerup has relished his newfound responsibilities overseeing construction projects that often run into the hundreds of thousands of dollars. At a site near the Tigris River, he charges out of his humvee and quickly walks across the site.

“This one is about 23-percent done,” he tells Sgt. 1st Class Dennis Mitchell, the battalion’s claims officer.

Mitchell pays contractors based on Heerup’s evaluations. Coalition Forces

pay for the projects at the 25-, 50- and 100-percent levels of completion.

“It’s been a big responsibility for me as a specialist,” Heerup said. “It has been a real test for me in Iraq. It’s a bigger responsibility than I expected when I came here, but I’ve been doing a good job so far. I’m happy to do that.”

Getting Iraqis access to fresh drinking water is a key part of basic infrastructure needs. Heerup believes his role is important.

He is scheduled to leave Iraq this summer, and will take on a new role this fall as a student at Northern Arizona University where he plans to study linguistics.

“I came into the Army to be a linguist,” Heerup said. “I would still take that job in a heartbeat.” ■



photos by Spc. Lee Elder

Specialist Vilhelm Heerup discusses progress on a water treatment plant construction site with 1st Lt. Dustin Greenhill. Heerup is an Army Reservist with Company C, 445th Civil Affairs Battalion, and works as an evaluator on the reconstruction of water treatment facilities in Diyala Province.



Courtesy photo

The 401st Civil Affairs Battalion, in cooperation with Concern For Kids, a non-governmental organization working in Iraq, test a water filtration system in the village of Bendaway in Dahuk, Iraq. (Below) Captain Steven Hayden, 401st CA Bn., drinks clean water from the filtration system being tested for remote areas of Iraq.

Space-age water system tested

Sgt. Dennis Gravelle

138th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

DAHUK, Iraq -- Soldiers with the 401st Civil Affairs Battalion in Dahuk, Iraq, may have found an alternative way for residents to drink clean water in the village of Bendaway.

A creek running through the small village in northern Iraq is the only natural source of drinking water for the residents. There is no filtration system for the residents, so the water is full of pesticides, fertilizers, and other chemicals used in the heavily agricultural community.

According to John Anderson, who works for a non governmental organization, Concern for Kids, the effects of tainted water can be deadly.

"This village lost 10 children in June 2003, from drinking sewer water out of the stream, because there was

no other water," Anderson said.

The NGO, in conjunction with the 401st CA Bn., are testing a space-aged portable water filtering and purification system that was originally designed for NASA, which models after the space shuttle water recycling system.



photo by
Sgt. 1st Class Eric Shadowens

"We use the same technology, with a little different configuration," Anderson said.

The portable water system being tested costs just under \$10,000 and can be the short-term solution for the water problem in the village, according to Capt. Steven Hayden, 401st CA Bn.

"There are about 300 villages in northern

Iraq that don't have potable drinking water," Hayden said. "If you were able to put storage tanks in these villages, next to a creek, someone could come out once a week and fill the tanks up. It would have a phenomenal impact." ■

*Going
the extra
mile...*



Hospital shows appreciation

Sgt. Dennis Gravelle

138th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

MOSUL, Iraq -- At the 47th Combat Support Hospital on Logistical Staging Area Diamondback, Mosul, Iraq, one commander goes out of his way to recognize wounded Soldiers treated by his staff.

Colonel James Polo, commander, 47th CSH, and native from Colorado Springs, Colo., personally gives every injured Soldier who comes to his hospital a coin that resembles a traditional military identification tag in appreciation of their service in a combat zone.

"I give every Soldier that comes through our facility, whether it's an American or Iraqi Soldier, a coin and thank them for their service and for what they have done," Polo said. "I wanted the Iraqi patients to know that this medical unit is dedicated to all life, American, Iraqi, regardless of race, religion or color."

When he first heard he was getting deployed, Polo read an article about an injured Soldier who did not know who treated him.

"I didn't want Soldiers who came into our hospital to not know they had been treated by a member of my staff," Polo said.

Polo goes through the hospital every morning and every evening, making the rounds and talking with all the patients. He personally hands them the coin.

"This forces me to remind myself of the kind of patients we see everyday so I don't lose sight of what I need to do to command a hospital," Polo said. "It also holds me accountable to make sure my folks are doing what they do everyday, which is providing excellent medical care." ■

Best of 101st vie for top honor in...



Soldier and NCO of Year Competition



Story and photos by
Spc. Joshua Hutcheson
101st Airborne Division Public Affairs Office



(Top) Sergeant Elliot Rothrock, 187th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, sets up a range card, which establishes his sectors of fire during the Common Task Testing portion of the 101st Airborne Division Soldier of the Year board held on Contingency Operating Base Speicher May 1-2. (Above) Specialist Daniel Rice, representing 501st Special Troops Battalion, races around the dirt track while Staff Sgt. Christopher Slaughter, Rice's NCO, runs next to him for motivation. Rice went on to win Soldier of the Fourth Quarter.



Staff Sgt. Jeremy Howell, 159th CAB, applies a pressure dressing on the leg of a "casualty." (Right) Specialist Katie Hooker, 101st SUA, performs a function check on an M16 rifle.



Staff Sgt. Thomas Brutscher (above), 502nd Infantry Regiment, and Spc. Chris Vanschooneveld (below), 187th Infantry Regiment, are presented awards from Maj. Gen. Thomas Turner, commander, 101st Airborne Division, for winning the NCO and Soldier of the Year titles, respectively.

TIKRIT, Iraq -- Eighteen Soldiers traveled to Contingency Operating Base Speicher, from all over Iraq, to compete May 1-2 for the prestigious honor of being the Soldier or Noncommissioned Officer of the Year for the 101st Airborne Division.

In addition, the Soldier/NCO of the Fourth Quarter competition was held concurrently, making it possible for the same Soldier or NCO to win both competitions simultaneously.

Staff Sgt. Thomas Brutscher, from 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 502nd Infantry Regiment, was one such Soldier. He won the title of both NCO of the Fourth Quarter and NCO of the Year.

"This isn't for me. There are a lot of outstanding Soldiers out in this division, dying everyday," Brutscher said of his win. "This is for them, it isn't for me."

Specialist Daniel Rice, of 501st Special Troops Battalion, emerged as the Soldier of the Fourth Quarter.

"[Rice] was honored to take on the responsibility of representing the 501st Special Troops Battalion and the 101st Airborne Division," said Staff Sgt. Christopher Slaughter, Rice's NCO, who chose him to participate in the competition. "Because in my two years of being an NCO he is the most well-rounded Soldier I've seen and he has the potential to be one of the leaders of tomorrow's Army."

Specialist Chris Vanschooneveld, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 187th Infantry Regiment, was named the

101st Soldier of the Year. This board was the third appearance for Vanschooneveld, who was the Soldier of the First Quarter. For him, the third time was the charm.

"I'm just trying to represent the Rakkasans," Vanschooneveld said. "And all the men I worked with, every one of them can do the same thing."

The competition started early with an Army Physical Fitness Test, followed by an equipment inspection of more than 40 items, and a hands-on Common Task Training test. Soldiers had to show their proficiency in things such as controlling bleeding on a simulated victim and performing a functions check on the M240, M249 and M16 weapon systems. The competitors finished off the first day with a written CTT test and written map test.

The second day of the competition was devoted to the formal board. Soldiers were asked a barrage of questions, covering all facets of being a Soldier, by five command sergeants major.

"These were some of the finest candidates I've seen since my arrival to the 101st Airborne Division," said Command Sgt. Maj. Frank Grippe, division command sergeant major. "Great PT scores, great hands-on, stiff competition across the board."

At the end of the competition, three Soldiers were awarded with the titles they all came to win. Major Gen. Thomas Turner, commander of the 101st, presented the winners with certificates and medals. Soldiers received Army Commendation Medals and NCOs received Meritorious Service Medals. ■



BOB ON THE FOB

by SGT Albert J. Merrifield

LET'S SEE, WHAT AM I FORGETTING? I'VE GOT MY NEW RUNNING SHOES, FOR GOING TO THE SHOWER, MY 4 BAGS OF CHIPS, 3 12-PACKS OF SODA, 2 NEW PT SHIRTS FOR SLEEPING IN... HEY, DID THEY JUST GET NEW MOVIES? OH, MAN, I NEED ALL THOSE, TOO! I GUESS I'LL MAKE TWO TRIPS... OH, AND THOSE NEW XBOX GAMES, TOO...



FOB locust n. (fōb'·lo·cəst)

Suggested by CPT Mathew Bunch, 501st STB

1. Migratory grazing sub-species of fobbit, often found in food courts, PX/BX, and Class I yards. FOB locusts grazing habits will cause them to completely empty any store, restaurant, or supply yard of any and all goods that anyone else could possibly want. The hoarding nature of the FOB locust means that none of the items purchased, taken, or stolen will ever be shared, but rather hidden in a secret stash for later use by the FOB locust. (See also **PX leprechaun**)

Got a phrase for BOB on the FOB? Email it to bobonthefob@gmail.com, and if your suggestion is used, you'll receive credit in the strip!



HUTCH'S TOP 10

Top 10 Places to go on Block Leave

by Spc. Joshua Hutcheson

10. Ibiza: This beautiful Western Mediterranean island lies 90 kilometers off the east coast of Spain. Ibiza is world-renowned as the southern European summer vacation spot. No weird Slovakian hostels around for miles.

9. The Borley Rectory: Also known as the "Most Haunted House in England." The Rectory, which was located on the east coast of England, in Essex, near the Suffolk border, burned down and was demolished in 1944. Did that finally stop all of the ghostly activities? That's for you to decide.

8. Buffalo, N.Y.: Specifically Labor Day weekend for the National Buffalo Wing Festival. Pig out on chicken wings bathed in dozens of different and savory sauces. Enter a wing eating contest or just dive into a kiddie pool filled with blue cheese.

7. Drakensberg Mountains: Located in South Africa, these mountains are as full of beautiful views and national

parks as they are of history. Be sure to hike to the top of Sentinel Peak for one of the most awe-inspiring, panoramic sights in the whole mountain range. Falling will give you a totally different view.

6. Katmandu: The Capital of Nepal is a city of old traditions. Wandering around this town will give you a chance to sample food, entertainment and other cultural aspects of Nepalese life. Travel and vacation packages also offer tours of the nearby Himalayas. Say hi to Bob Seger for me.

5. Ancient ruins of Machu Picchu: Rediscovered high in the Andes Mountains in 1911, this legendary city was used by the Incas, but is thought to be much, much older than that. It is said that if you touch your head to the Intihuatana Stone, it might possibly open your vision to the spirit world. At the very least it'll clear sinus problems.

4. Hong Kong: This is one of the most famous cities in China. But it's also one of the best places in China for shopping. Stop by Nathan Road in Kowloon, for whatever you need. It's the Chinese version of Rodeo Dr. but without the crazy Californians.

3. Windsor: For those who think that Las Vegas is hyped up too much, go try your luck in Windsor, Canada. This city is full of casinos and bingo parlors and you only have to be 19 years old to play at the casinos. Minimum age for the bingo parlors is 65.

2. Antarctica: It's a big continent, so you might want to limit your travels to places with cool names, such as Paradise Bay, Deception Island, Half Moon Island and, of course, the South Pole. Dress warmly; I've heard it can get a little nippy down there.

1. Your house: Be it ever so humble, there's no place like home. Plus, the rates are cheap.

Iraqi Army Soldiers on Target

Staff Sgt. Mark Wojciechowski
133rd Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

BAQUBAH, Iraq -- When it comes to protecting the people of Iraq from the insurgency, hitting the enemy target is the Iraqi Army's aim.

With the help of the 4th Infantry Division's 1st Battalion, 68th Armor Regiment Military Transition Team, Iraqi Army Soldiers are increasing their target accuracy during a three-day course that focuses on the fundamentals of basic rifle marksmanship.

The training incorporates drills, which are designed to show the Soldiers proper body position, aiming, breathing and trigger squeeze techniques. The Soldiers shoot from both the standing and kneeling positions.

"If they come into contact, it is important that they know how to shoot this way," said Staff Sgt. Chris Zuniga, course instructor and range NCOIC. "Making sure they stay consistent is what we look for. This training also helps to build the confidence of the Iraqi Army Soldiers." ■



photo by Staff Sgt. Mark Wojciechowski

An Iraqi Army Soldier takes aim with his AK-47 on the firing range in Baqubah, Iraq.

Iraqi Army unit takes control of Sinjar



photo by Spc. Richard Vogt

Iraqi Soldiers in 3rd Battalion, 3rd Brigade, 3rd Iraqi Army Division, march past the reviewing stand at the change of responsibility ceremony in Sinjar, May 3.

Spc. Richard Vogt
138th Mobile Public
Affairs Detachment

SINJAR, Iraq -- The 3rd Battalion, 3rd Brigade, 3rd Iraqi Army assumed responsibility of Sinjar from 1st Battalion, 37th Armor Regiment, 1st Brigade, 1st Armored Division in a ceremony, May 3. It is the first time that an Iraqi unit has acquired sole responsibility in this part of Iraq.

"We promise God and the people that we will be faithful Soldiers and defeat terrorists," said Col. Nasrula, commander, 3rd IA Brigade.

His unit has already detained many insurgents and found numerous weapons caches in the area they are now responsible for. The unit meets regularly with

sheiks and local leaders to build trust and cooperation between civilians and the Iraqi military.

"We will strike fear in the hearts of our enemies," said Gen. Oshay, commander, 3rd Iraqi Army Division. "May God bless this honorable and historic day as we take the lead from Coalition Forces. We have achieved a high level of readiness and are able to defeat terrorists."

The battalion marched past the reviewing stand, proudly displaying their nation's colors, signifying a new beginning for security in Sinjar.

"This is a very good day, a happy day," said Maj. Hanni, commander, 3rd IA Bn., "a day that Iraqi forces take over from Coalition forces." ■

A glimpse of IRAQ



photo by Staff Sgt. Russell Lee Kliika

(Above) A farmer tends to his stand at the market place near Sadr City, Iraq. (Top right) An Iraqi worker constructs a security wall at the newly-built Iraqi Police Station and Joint Communications Center compound in Bayji. (Bottom right) A Soldier from 172nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team talks with Iraqi Soldiers and police on the streets of Mosul during Operation Lion Hunt, which was developed to seek out insurgents and illegal weapons.

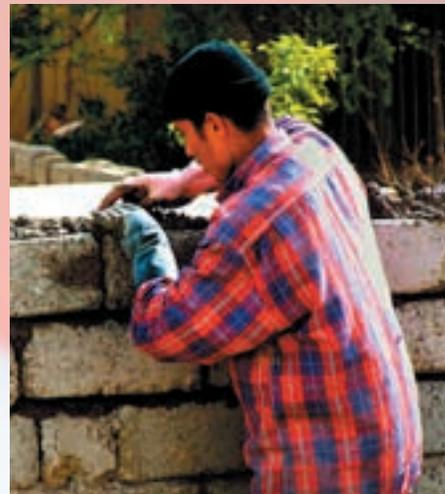


photo by Capt. Amy Bishop



photo by Staff Sgt. Steve Duga

Soldiers blaze through Fuel Fire Training

Spc. Anna-Marie Hizer
133rd Mobile Public
Affairs Detachment

KIRKUK, Iraq -- Black smoke rolled across the sky as orange flames danced in the thick fog. Soldiers from Forward Operating Base Warrior's Ivory Combat Clinic, along with civilians from Readiness Management Support, rushed forward with hand lines, extinguishing the blaze in less than 10 minutes.

Not many personnel outside of the fire station can say they helped put out a 200-gallon fuel fire. But a few 1st Brigade Combat Team medics, along with power plant employees, were able to do just that May 11, thanks to the crew of Fire Station One – the crew responsible for the FOB.

"How many people get to say they put out a pit fire in Iraq?" said Spc. Amanda Lavers, Company C, 426th Brigade Support Battalion, 1st BCT, 101st Airborne Division.

The training was set up by Air Force Staff Sgt. Charles Shank, a Montana Air National Guardsman assigned to 506th Expeditionary Civil Engineering Squadron.

Shank said the team at ICC had helped him when he needed dental treatment and he wanted to return the favor -- by offering them a unique training experience.

"We use the pit fire to stay current on our job skills," he said. "And here, there is a bonus ... we get to burn with real fuel, not propane like they have to use in the states ... so you're really putting out that fire."

Before going near the fire personnel were fully briefed



photo by Spc. Anna-Marie Hizer

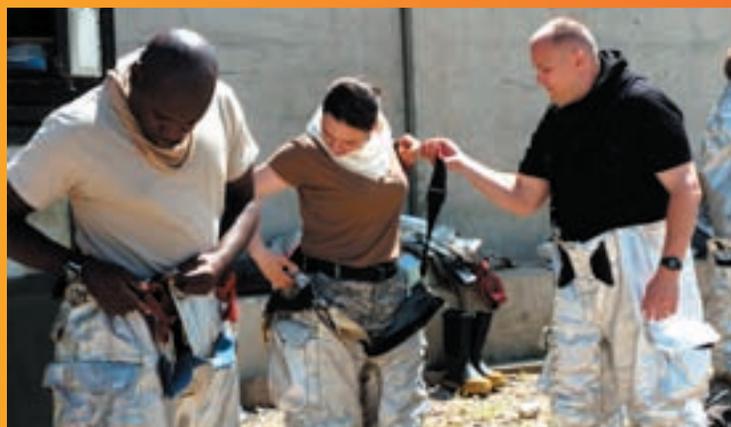
Sergeant Kenneth Smith, Company C, 426th Brigade Support Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, and Clint Baldwin, Readiness Management Support, tackle a fuel fire during training at Forward Operating Base Warrior's Fire Station One. The training, given by the station's Air National Guard crew, was meant to show the intensity and difficulty of putting out a fuel fire. (Below) Smith and Spc. Amanda Lavers, Co. C, 426th BSB, get some help putting on protective gear prior to pit fire training.

on safety issues as well as the equipment they would be using, including the fire suits that would protect them from the near 2,000 degree blaze.

"It's a rush ... you can actually stand that close and you don't feel anything," said Army Sgt. Kenneth Smith, Co. C, 426th BSB. "I have a new respect for firefighters now."

For the small group of civilians going through fire pit training, the fuel fire hit a little closer to home -- the RMS employees work with fuel on a daily basis and wanted to gain an understanding of what could happen if something went wrong.

"More than anything, its



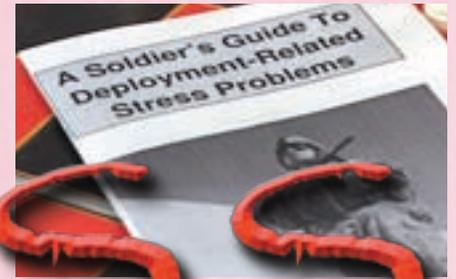
gaining knowledge of what can happen," said Dale Sells, RMS. "Now we know to stand back and let the professionals handle it."

Shank said they occasionally let other groups go through this training but the pit and the small structure

fire setup the team has on site were built to help keep Airmen-firefighters proficient on their skills.

"We don't get to use our skills very often out here -- thankfully," Shank said. "So we had to do something ... to keep trained up." ■

COMBAT STRESS



Spc. Joshua Hutcheson
101st Airborne Division
Public Affairs Office

TIKRIT, Iraq -- Though it may seem obvious, it cannot be overstated: combat is stressful. The 212th Combat Stress Control Detachment, 101st Airborne Division, Task Force Band of Brothers, is there to help.

The stress doesn't just come from being deployed in a war environment. Stress for Soldiers can come from multiple sources.

"The CSC team is designed to help Soldiers who are struggling with issues that might include problems in the unit or home-front problems," said Capt. Melissa Messina, officer-in-charge of the CSC team located on Contingency Operating Base Speicher. "Our goal is to help them deal with the issues, stay in theater, and complete the mission."

The 212th CSC Det. is headquartered



Symptoms of Stress

- Decreased interest in activities
- Feeling irritable
- Difficulty sleeping
- Change in appetite
- Self-isolation
- Depression and anxiety
- Trouble functioning at work
- Thoughts of suicide

on Forward Operating Base Diamondback, with teams spread throughout the northern Iraq area of operations.

Combat stress control can be divided into two teams: prevention and fitness. The prevention team's job is to stop stress before it occurs.

"Prevention tries to educate to prevent mental health deterioration," said Lt. Col. Rusty Rowe, division surgeon, 101st Airborne Division.

The prevention teams can travel from FOB to FOB to help unit commanders in dealing with unit stress. Briefings, classes and one-on-one counseling are all options.

"Wherever the needs are is where we go to," Messina said.

Two-person teams are usually located at FOBs McHenry, Summerall, Brassfield-Mora and Marez, Rowe said, though prevention teams are able to move to where they are needed.

Those FOBs were chosen "based on the high incidence of critical events happening in those AOs," he said.

The other half of combat stress lies in the fitness teams. There are two such teams, one located at Speicher and one at Diamondback. The purpose of the teams is to give quick, immediate therapy. The therapy involves a two- to three-day program where Soldiers are taken out of their stressful situations and given a chance to get better. The program includes classes on stress and anger management and sleep hygiene and relaxation.

"The goal of the program is to get Soldiers out of [the stressful] environment for a few days, get them treated and return them to duty," Messina said.

The fitness team makes it capable to treat Soldiers while still in theater.

"We want to treat mental health as close to the battlefield as possible in order to quickly return the Soldier to his unit," Rowe said.

Because the majority of Soldiers who visit the CSC teams are self-referred, it would help for people to be able to recognize signs of stress in themselves and their battle buddies.

"It's better for a Soldier to come to us of their own volition than to have to be referred to by their command," Messina said.

Early symptoms of stress include feeling irritable, difficulty sleeping, change of appetite, lower interest level in activities, self-isolation, depression and anxiousness, Messina said. More serious symptoms include trouble functioning while at work and feelings and thoughts of suicide.

Every Soldier being on the lookout for these symptoms is part of prevention.

"Our Soldiers' mental health is critical of sustaining active fighting and active operations in out AO," Rowe said.

Soldiers don't have to be at the previously mentioned FOBs to get help when it comes to stress. They can be referred to the CSC teams from anywhere in northern Iraq. ■

"We want to treat mental health as close to the battlefield as possible in order to quickly return the Soldier to his unit."

Lt. Col. Rusty Rowe
101st Airborne Division Surgeon

Through the Lens

photos by Spc. Barbara Ospina
1st Brigade Combat Team
101st Airborne Division





TASK FORCE BAND of BROTHERS IN MEMORIAM

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

April 8



Spc. Shawn R. Creighton, 21

4th Squadron, 14th Cavalry Regiment,
172nd Stryker Brigade
Windsor, N.C.

April 25



Pfc. Raymond L. Henry, 21

1st Battalion, 17th Infantry Regiment,
172nd Stryker Brigade
Anaheim, Calif.

April 11



Spc. Kenneth D. Hess, 26

4th Squadron, 14th Cavalry Regiment,
172nd Stryker Brigade
Asheville, NC.

April 27



Staff Sgt. Mark A. Wall, 27

2nd Battalion, 1st Infantry Regiment,
172nd Stryker Brigade
Alden, Iowa.

April 19



Pfc. Patrick A. Tinnell, 25

1st Battalion, 187th Infantry Regiment,
3rd Brigade Combat Team
Lake Havasu City, Ariz.

May 3



Pfc. Benjamin T. Zieske, 20

1st Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment,
1st Brigade Combat Team
Concord, Calif.

May 7



Staff Sgt. Emmanuel L. Legaspi, 38

1st Battalion, 36th Infantry Regiment,
1st Brigade Combat Team
Las Vegas, Nev.

(These are the names that have been released as of May 15)