



# The Striker Torch

Edition Thirty - Two

September 24, 2006



Capt. Kane Morgan, a Physician's Assistant assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 6th Infantry Regiment, speaks through an interpreter to a local Iraqi man on how to care for his daughter's ailments in Jazeera, Iraq. *Photo by Capt. Herbert Flather*

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Front Page

**Left:** An M1 tank from Company D, 1st Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment, rolls from patrol base Courage. The Company uses these armored vehicles to man static positions such as checkpoints and observation posts. *Photo by Capt. Andrew Armstrong*  
**Center:** Joseph Wilson, Company A, 1st Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment, makes some new friends while out on patrol. *Photo by 1st Lt. Robert Murray*  
**Right:** Sgt. Robert Dixon, of Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 4th Battalion, 27th Field Artillery Regiment, passes by an Iraqi woman and her son while maintaining security while on patrol in Baghdad. *Photo by Sgt. William Richards*



**Top Left:** Staff Sgt. Harold Frison (right) and Sgt. Anthony Brown (left) from Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 6th Infantry Regiment's Support Platoon drop off humanitarian assistance water at the Iraqi Police Station in Jazeera, Iraq. *Photo by Capt. Daniel Pedersen*  
**Top Right:** Pvt. Chad Gooding of Company A, 1st Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment, talks to local children while patrolling his area. *Photo by 1st Lt. Robert Murray*  
**Bottom Left:** One of 1st Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment's Stryker Vehicles in front of the crossed sabers, a landmark in Baghdad, Iraq. *Photo by Spc. John B. Ramsey*  
**Bottom Right:** Spc. John Gonzalez, of Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 4th Battalion, 27th Field Artillery Regiment, prepares to drive for a patrol near Forward Operating Base Justice, Iraq. *Photo by Spc. Joshua Ramey*

Quote of the Week:  
 - General George Patton

"It is only by doing things others have not that one can advance."





# An Infantry Soldier's Story

Story by 1st Lt. James Gibson

"No one back home will ever believe some of the things I've seen and done since I came to Iraq last December," Spc. Michael Herkelrath says of his many experiences of the past year. "I'm just so thankful for the opportunity to serve my country during this very decisive time in our nation's history." Spc. Herkelrath is an Infantryman in Company A, 1st Battalion, 12th Infantry Regiment, attached to 8th Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment, and is in his tenth month of deployment to Baghdad, Iraq.

Before he joined the Army, Spc. Herkelrath lived in Montclair, California, where he enjoyed training for feather-weight body building competitions. When asked whether or not he has ever felt homesick during his year-long deployment to Iraq, Spc. Herkelrath stated, "I guess I just really don't have that much time to think much about it. I'm either in the motor pool doing maintenance on our combat vehicles, working out at the gym, eating, or sleeping."

After considering several appealing options during his senior year at

Montclair High School, Spc. Herkelrath decided to join the ranks of the U.S. Army and volunteered to serve as an Infantryman. "Choosing the Infantry just seemed like the obvious choice for me. There's no other job I could imagine myself doing in the Army." Spc. Herkelrath explained how much more is expected and demanded of Infantry Soldiers compared to Soldiers of other branches, saying, "That's one of the reasons I love the

Infantry so much, because I know not everyone could do what my brothers-in-arms and I do everyday."

Spc. Herkelrath is the first member of his family's history to serve in the Armed Forces. "I was never influenced or pressured into joining the Army; I just knew in my bones this is what I was meant to do with my life." As he reminisces back to his days as a basic trainee at Fort Benning, Georgia, Spc. Herkelrath jokingly says, "I was so ate up back then, I was just a young kid out of



Spc. Michael Herkelrath of Company A, 1st Battalion, 12th Infantry Regiment, attached to 8th Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment, scans down a road, providing cover for his platoon, while on patrol in Baghdad, Iraq.  
*Photo by 1st Lt. James Gibson*

high school who had never even heard about the now infamous three-lettered acronym, I.E.D." It's been just over two short years since his days at Sand Hill, but Spc. Herkelrath says he's experienced a lifetime's worth of events in this short amount of time and, as a result, now feels matured and older than 20.

Spc. Herkelrath will serve out the remainder of the deployment as his squad's M249 SAW machine-gunner, a position reserved for the most responsible soldiers in his platoon, and has already displayed a "coolness under fire," during several engagements with insurgent forces. Spc. Herkelrath says that he will continue to "Close with and kill the enemy," for the rest of his days as a U.S. Army Infantryman.



Spc. Michael Herkelrath of Company A, 1st Battalion, 12th Infantry Regiment, attached to 8th Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment, mans an M240B machine gun on his Humvee while conducting operations in Baghdad, Iraq.  
*Photo by 1st Lt. James Gibson*

# The Chaplain's Corner

As C. S. Lewis once wrote, "We all agree forgiveness is a beautiful idea until we have to put it into practice."

Several years back a truck driver pulled into an all-night restaurant in Broken Bow, Nebraska. Just as his food arrived, three motorcycle riders – all wearing black leather jackets – walked up and tried picking a fight. One grabbed the trucker's hamburger, another took a fistful of his French fries, while the third started slurping coffee.

But the trucker kept his emotions in check. He calmly rose, paid at the cash register, and walked out. The waitress stood watching at the door as the trucker drove off.

When she returned, one of the

bikers sneered to her, "Not much of a man, is he?"

The waitress said, "I don't know about that, but he's sure not much of a truck driver. He just ran over three motorcycles out in the parking lot."



On one level, 'getting even' seems like a justified response to someone who has deliberately wronged us--whether it's a spouse, unit member, or classmate.

But the best way to 'get back' at people is usually the one least tried.

In the book of Romans, Paul writes, "...Never avenge yourselves. Leave that to God. For it's written, 'I will take vengeance; I will repay those who deserve it,' says the Lord. Instead, do what the Scriptures say: 'If your enemies are hungry, feed them. If they are thirsty, give them something to drink, and they'll be ashamed of what they've done to you. Don't let evil get the best of you, but conquer evil by doing good.'" (Romans 12:19-21, NLT)

Anytime you even the score, no one wins and the hate game continues. But kindness has a way of making winners of everyone.

Wishing you the very best, I'm Chaplain Anthony Horton.

## Legal Issues to think about when you redeploy

#4 Scams

When Soldiers return to home station, there are many things going on at the same time. As you begin to plan your redeployment, make sure to keep in mind that there are legal issues that need to be addressed when you return. In this 4 part series, we'll discuss some things you should do upon your return from the deployment.

Every car dealer, computer retailer, retail store, and bar in the area is anxiously awaiting your return. These retailers know you earned tax-free money and received re-enlistment bonuses, yet had little

or no opportunity to spend your money in Iraq. Do not let a slick salesman, or the offer of a "limited time only" deal sucker you out of your money. Beware of the after-market auto accessory stores with limited sales histories. Ask for references. If a car dealership is pushing you to sign a lease, Stop! Think! It is probably not in your best interest. Leasing a vehicle is rarely a good deal for Soldiers, based upon restrictions on mileage and the ability to relocate in another state or country. When an individual comes selling their products

door-to-door, Stop! Think! Is this something you need to purchase right now? Do you really need the item being sold? Can the product be purchased from a reputable store within the area? If the product is really as great as claimed, then you should be asking why it cannot be purchased at a local store. Before you sign any contract, please stop by the Legal Assistance Office and ask for help to review the document. A half-hour of your time may save you thousands of dollars and immeasurable heartache later on.



# SCORPION MWR

All events start at 2000 hours, and are located in the Scorpion MWR recreation tent.

<b>Monday, 25 September:</b>	<b>Ping Pong Tournament</b>
<b>Tuesday, 26 September:</b>	<b>NBA Live 2006 Tournament</b>
<b>Wednesday, 27 September:</b>	<b>Chess Tournament</b>
<b>Thursday, 28 September:</b>	<b>Karaoke, Spades and Dominoes Tournaments</b>
<b>Friday, 29 September:</b>	<b>9 Ball Billiards Tournament</b>
<b>Saturday, 30 September:</b>	<b>None</b>
<b>Sunday, 1 October:</b>	<b>Salsa Night and Air Hockey Tournament</b>



## You Called a Tow Truck?

Story by Capt. George Cowles

**I** imagine yourself traveling through downtown Baghdad and unexpectedly your tire falls completely off your Humvee, you get a flat, or your engine stops working. You try to recover yourself with the tow-straps and tow-bars within your convoy, but that's just not working. What do you do? If you are part of the 4th Battalion, 27th Field Artillery Regiment, you call the "Stallions" for recovery assistance.

The Iron Thunder Battalion and Service Battery, 4th Battalion, 27th Field Artillery Regiment, conducts numerous missions, and one of the most important of them is the Combat Recovery Patrol (CRP). Service Battery continues to revise its mission, and the CRP is part of it. Besides repairing vehicles, part of the job of tracked and wheeled mechanics is recovery.

Service Battery provides heavy wheeled and track recovery assets throughout the Brigade Combat Team (BCT). The wheeled recovery team focuses strictly on the recovery of Battalion assets and the tracked vehicle recovery team focuses on all the BCT's heavy recovery needs. The wheeled recovery team consists of a security element and a Heavy Expanded Mobility Tactical Truck (HEMTT) wrecker. Whenever the Iron Thunder Battalion has a Combat Logistics Patrol (CLP) or any convoy on the road, the recovery team stands ready to be called forward.

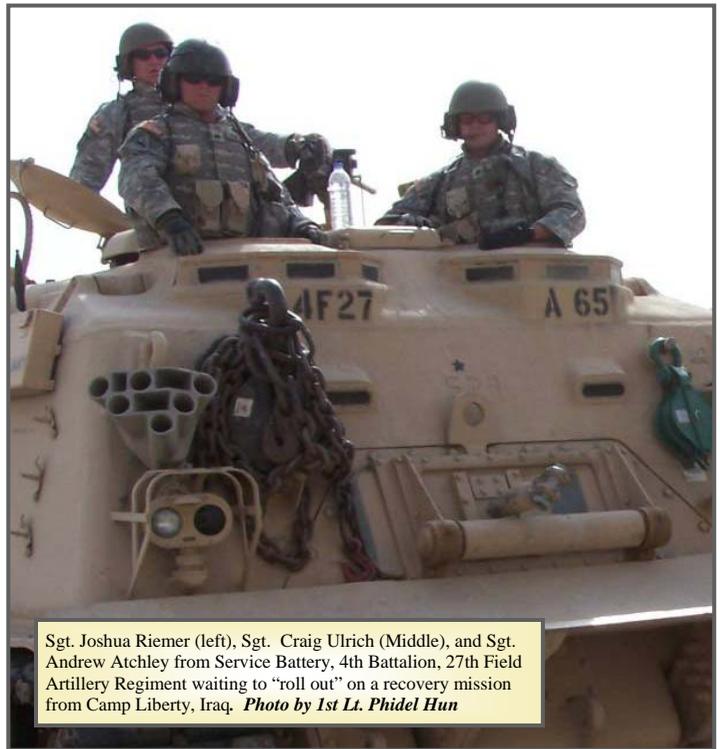
The Stallions also provide a heavy track recovery team to the BCT. This team has been called several times to recover a number of vehicles, including the Stryker Armored Vehicle, a vehicle that was unfamiliar to the Iron Thunder Battalion. These recovery missions range from a vehicle rollover to a vehicle that has encountered an Improvised Explosive Device (IED).

The team consists of two NCOs, one Soldier, and one M88A1 fully tracked recovery vehicle. Once they are notified of a recovery mission, they

have a short amount of time to gather their gear and be ready to leave. They link up with their security element and begin movement. Sgt. Joshua Riemer is the vehicle commander and Team Chief for the tracked recovery team. He recalls past missions, stating, "There are many factors and obstacles ranging from terrain, the security of the site, and condition of the vehicle that must be recovered."

His crew works tirelessly moving 100 lb. chains in full Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), which itself weighs over 65 lbs. With hard work and initiative, the team can usually recover a vehicle, depending on the severity, within a short amount of time. Spc. James Bethea states, "It's exhausting pulling those heavy duty chains around, but once the adrenaline kicks in, it gives me the extra energy I need."

These recovery missions have been very successful due to the experience, knowledge, and chemistry of the team members. Soldiers within the Battalion and the Brigade can continue to count on Service Battery to provide recovery assets whenever they need them.



Sgt. Joshua Riemer (left), Sgt. Craig Ulrich (Middle), and Sgt. Andrew Atchley from Service Battery, 4th Battalion, 27th Field Artillery Regiment waiting to "roll out" on a recovery mission from Camp Liberty, Iraq. Photo by 1st Lt. Phidel Hun

## Reenlist for an Assignment!

Have you been told in the past that you cannot make a decision on your next duty station? Tired of the Army making decisions for you? If you are within 12 months of your Date Eligible to Return Overseas (DEROS), you are 18 months of your Exit the Service Date (ETS) and you have less than 10 years Active Federal Service, you can have a say in your next duty assignment. You can reenlist for an assignment and receive a TAX FREE BONUS up to \$15,000!!! You will need to act now! Soldiers are already coming down on assignment instructions; take the first step, go see your Career Counselor today and see what is available. Yes, current retention policy restricts Initial Term Soldiers to reenlist for a maximum of two years. This will expire on the 30th of September 2006. See your Career Counselor and see what assignments are available and get locked in and reenlist on the 1st of October.

MILPER Message 06-232 states Soldiers who had 13 months between their ETS date and DEROS, prior to Stop Loss, will not have to stay in Germany. These Soldiers will PCS. Choose where you go! Reenlist for an assignment!



## Safety First

The majority of accidents during any deployment occur at the beginning and end of the rotation. Upon arrival in theater, accidents are often caused by soldiers being unfamiliar with the mission and equipment. When departing the theater the majority of accidents are caused by overconfidence and inattention to detail. Don't let it happen to you. Thinking about what you are going to do once you get home instead of concentrating on what you and those around you are doing is a quick way to injure Soldiers and damage equipment. Redeploying equipment back to Germany is inherently dangerous. Working around heavy equipment, heavy equipment transports, port facilities, wash racks, and airfields will require your full attention. Stay focused on the mission at hand and get home safely.





Lt. Col. Avanas Smiley, Commander of the 1st Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment, administers the oath of re-enlistment to Staff Sgt. George Servino, and his wife Spc. Ana Servino, in front of the crossed sabers in the International Zone, Baghdad. *Photo by Staff Sgt. Daniel Paige*



# A Family Affair

Story by 1st Lt. Matt Ewens

**O**n September 7, two Fort Lewis Soldiers reenlisted in the International Zone of downtown Baghdad. While this is a frequent occurrence in the Army, this one was special because it was a wife and husband team that decided to

best for our Family,” said Staff Sgt. George Servino. Staff Sgt. Servino is with 1st Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment, currently conducting operations in Baghdad, Iraq. His wife, Spc. Ana Servino is serving with the 296th Base Support Battalion currently

rently under the operational control of 2nd Brigade, 1st Armored Division, home based in Baumholder, Germany. Spc. Servino was able to visit her husband in Baghdad for the event, riding a Blackhawk down from Mosul a few days before the event. They

*“The biggest factor which made me reenlist was our family’s future. At this time in our lives, the Army seems to be the best for our Family,”*

- Staff Sgt. George Servino  
Co. B, 1-23 Inf. Regt.

reenlist for their future. The Servinos wanted to make it a family affair since the husband and wife are both currently deployed to Iraq; they decided to do a joint reenlistment that they both could remember.

“The biggest factor which made me reenlist was our family’s future. At this time in our lives, the Army seems to be the

stationed in Mosul, Iraq. Both of these soldiers are assigned to the 3rd Brigade of the 2nd Infantry Division, the Army’s First Stryker Brigade out of Fort Lewis, Washington.

The “Tomahawks” of 1st Bn., 23rd Inf. Regt., were moved from their parent unit to reinforce security operations ongoing in the capital city. The battalion is cur-

then shared a ride in Strykers belonging to Staff Sgt. Servino’s battalion to the Baghdad International Zone and to the old Republican Guard Parade Grounds, home to the famed Baghdad crossed sabers. The reenlistment was conducted by the 1st Bn., 23rd Inf. Regt., Battalion Commander, Lt. Col Avanas Smiley.



# An IED Hat Trick

Story by 1st Lt. Nate Rawlings

Creeping through one of the most volatile neighborhoods in Baghdad, Spc. Bradlee Barstow of 2nd Platoon, Company E, 1st Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment, does not think about the looming darkness or unfamiliar road. Instead, he focuses intently on garbage. Scanning the road for abnormal debris, recently placed refuse and generally anything out of the ordinary, Spc. Barstow, a combat engineer assigned to 1st Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment, personally discovered four IEDs in a 24-hour period--three IEDs on a single mission and another the following mission. "That was a heck of a crazy mission," Spc. Barstow said. "We bust our tails on every mission, but that night, I think we kept some really bad stuff off of the streets."

Spc. Barstow, a 21 year-old troop carrier driver from Marinette, Wisconsin, is part of a company of Combat Engineers tasked with the difficult and dangerous mission of finding IEDs before they detonate. Combat Engineers have played a large role in Operation Together Forward, Multi National Division-Baghdad's recent effort to secure Iraq's largest city. Most recently, Sappers from 2nd Platoon spearheaded the clearance mission of the



Spc. Bradlee Barstow and Pfc. Kenneth Joseph, both of Company E, 1st Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment, just before another mission from Camp Liberty, Iraq. Photo by 1st Lt. Nate Rawlings

On a recent IED clearance mission through Western and Central Baghdad, Spc. Barstow discovered three IEDs in a ten hour period. He spotted the first IED

Towards the end of the patrol, as the platoon was moving back to the base in the dark early hours of the morning, Spc.

*"We bust our tails on every mission, but that night, I think we kept some really bad stuff off of the streets."*

- Spc. Bradlee Barstow  
Co. E, 1-22 Inf. Regt.

neighborhood of Ameriyah, helping clear the way for Iraqi and Coalition Forces to combat sectarian killings in the violent capital. Spc. Barstow drove the first vehicle to enter Ameriyah, clearing the way for Iraqi Security Forces and Coalition Forces, which searched every home and building for weapons and IED making materials. 2nd Platoon patrolled the streets of Ameriyah every day for the duration of the operation and helped ensure that coalition forces did not strike a single IED during the entire operation.

on a busy stretch of highway while attempting to scan the far side of the median, when he noticed objects that didn't belong on the road's shoulder. "It just really looked out of place," Spc. Barstow said, "so we checked it out and found two mortar rounds." No less than two hours later, Spc. Barstow saw wires running across the road. He halted his convoy and traced the wire to an IED. "When we moved the grass, sure enough, we found two large artillery rounds," Spc. Barstow said.

Barstow saw a white object out of the corner of his eye. "I knew what it was right away," he said, making his third discovery of the patrol. During the following day's mission, he drove past more debris on the side of the road, "hardly out of the ordinary in [this] area," Spc. Barstow said. "But, I figured it was a perfect place to hide an IED." He investigated the area and discovered two artillery rounds. "One less IED to hurt our brothers out there."





## Conquerors Teach Iraqis Dismounted Patrol Techniques

Story by 2nd Lt. Kellen Blythe

The Iraqi Army plays a vital roll in security in the city of Ramadi and has been growing steadily in size over the last several years. Company B, 2nd Battalion, 6th Infantry Regiment, is working directly with the Soldiers of the 1st Battalion, 1st Brigade of the 7th Iraqi Army Division while operating in an area in western Ramadi. The Iraqi Army Soldiers have been instrumental in manning vital traffic control points throughout the city in coordination with Task Force Conquerors, and they are assuming greater responsibility due in part to the training and support of Company B, 2nd Bn., 6th Inf. Regt.

1st Sgt. David Shaw and a team of Soldiers from Company B recently gave classes on dismounted patrolling in urban areas to the Iraqi Soldiers. The classes began with a block of instruction in a traditional classroom setting emphasizing the importance



Soldiers from Company B, 2nd Battalion, 6th Infantry Regiment, Task Force Conqueror, simulate clearing a room for Iraqi Soldiers during a training class in Ramadi, Iraq. *Photo by TSgt. Jeremy Lock*

and value of patrolling. Once classroom instruction was complete, the Iraqi Soldiers moved on to practical application. 1st Sgt. Shaw lead the way as they conducted their first dismounted patrol through part of the Al

Anbar University campus.

“Sgt. Juan Perez and I instructed and demonstrated the U.S. Army method of patrolling and then the Iraqi leadership demonstrated methods they were taught,” said 1st Sgt. Shaw. “It was an interesting exchange of ideas.”

In time, these Soldiers will be better able to take over operational control of their section of Ramadi. Even though many of their operations are currently integrated with American Soldiers from Task Force Conqueror, the Iraqis are becoming more self-sufficient and their capability to conduct independent operations is increasing. While Coalition Forces have been effective, the ultimate goal is to see more Iraqi Security Forces including the Iraqi Army and the Iraqi Police take over the security in Ramadi. Thanks to the efforts of the Soldiers from Company B, 2nd Bn., 6th Inf. Regt., that goal is becoming a reality.



Iraqi Soldiers simulate breaching a door as part of training conducted by Soldiers from Company B, 2nd Battalion, 6th Infantry Regiment, Task Force Conqueror. *Photo by TSgt. Jeremy Lock*



**Top Left:** Spc. Anthony Smith listens while he works on the 4th Battalion, 27th Field Artillery Regiment's Command Post of the Future (CPOF). *Photo by 1st Lt. Paul Radion*  
**Top Right:** Staff Sgt. John Craig of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 40th Engineers Battalion, gives greetings to the Texas A&M football team in August, 2006 at Camp Liberty Iraq. *Photo by Sgt. Raul Montano*

**Center Left:** Capt. Drew Conover, Commander of Company A, 1st Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment, stands outside after talking with local leaders in the area. *Photo by 1st Lt. Robert Murray*

**Center Right:** Soldiers from Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 4th Battalion, 27th Field Artillery Regiment prepare to load into their vehicles, and conduct a patrol near the vicinity of Forward Operating Base Justice, Iraq. *Photo by Spc. Joshua Ramey*

**Bottom Left:** Spc. Kayla Doyle, a cook in Troop D, 8th Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment, helps clean the kitchen of the Dining Facility at Forward Operating Base Justice, Iraq. *Photo by 1st Lt. Shawn Robertson*

**Bottom Middle:** Sgt. 1st Class George Diggs, of Company A, 1st Battalion, 6th Infantry Regiment, provides security at a Ramadi medical clinic as leaders meet with the clinic director. *Photo by Capt. Herbert Flather*

**Bottom Right:** 1st Lt. Ryan Cleary, platoon leader of the Engineer Reconnaissance Platoon of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 40th Engineer Battalion, accounts for all of his personnel prior to moving back to Camp Liberty, Iraq. *Photo by Capt. Matthew Holbrook*





# Observation Post San Juan

Story by Capt. William Wable



Observation Post San Juan, manned by Soldiers of Company B, 4th Battalion, 27th Field Artillery Regiment, overlooks the terrain around Baghdad International Airport. *Photo by Capt. William Wable*

Battery B, 4th Battalion, 27th Field Artillery Regiment, "Task Force Gator," first occupied Observation Post San Juan (OP San Juan) in May 2006. The "Bears" were charged with the daunting task of guarding the perimeter of Baghdad International Airport (BIAP).

OP San Juan is located in the sparsely populated region of Radwaniyah in West Rashid, Baghdad. The OP itself is a multi-story building that was once a hunting palace founded and operated by Saddam's Ba'ath Party. It now offers an excellent platform for long-range surveillance, communications, and static self-defense.

Not only are the "Bears" able to complete their mission, they are also known for their ability

to make life tolerable in an austere environment. By balancing work and recreation, Soldiers maintain their high level of morale and continue to accomplish every mission assigned to them. Their versatility, skills, and problem solving abilities (acquired both in and out of the military) were challenged with both simple and complex problems and tasks. The esprit de corps and teamwork they share coupled with the unique individual skills produced an observation post often labeled as the best in Baghdad.

The first task was to ensure that OP San Juan was hospitable to Soldiers enduring extended stays sometimes for as much as two weeks at a time. Logistical resupply systems were streamlined and

adjusted to meet mission constraints and criteria. Communications were installed and reconfigured to offer maximum coverage to the area of responsibility. Living areas were examined and reinforced to guard against possible indirect fire and direct fire attacks. Field sanitation, rodent and insect control were both attended to and maintained. A direct fire defense plan and an effective entry control point (ECP) were also constructed.

With much work to do and operations still ongoing, the Soldiers put in "double time" to make it happen. Once the basic fundamentals of livability and survivability were achieved, position improvement began seamlessly. Air conditioning, as well as a reliable power source, were installed in order to prepare for the upcoming intense heat of summer.

Still, more improvements were requested from the Soldiers manning the position. Within weeks, they had the ability to conduct operations as efficiently as they would in any large fully-operational Forward Operating Base (FOB), as well as the ability to enjoy a secure outpost that offered a break from the heat and intensity of combat patrols.

Soldiers also constructed a workout area enabling the unit to maintain its physical fitness, a basketball court to enjoy some friendly competition, and AFN with a television viewing area just in time for this year's football season.

Needless to say, the Soldiers of Battery B, 4th Bn., 27th Field Artillery Regt., have proven the worth of hard work, not only with their operational success, but with their achievement in making OP San Juan functional and adherent to even their most special needs. OP San Juan and the time the Soldiers spent living there, will be forever engrained in the memories and sacrifices the Soldiers made while in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom 05-07.





# Soldiers prepare their minds for the return home

Story by Spc. Joshua Ramey

After nearly a year away from home, Soldiers preparing their equipment for the return trip often fail to prepare their minds for the reconnection with loved ones. Soldiers of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team are participating in classes that help address this issue. “We are creatures of habit, and our natural defense mechanism is to become self-centered during deployments,” said

Chaplain (Maj.) Anthony Horton, of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 40th Engineer Battalion, “The way we live during deployments, is not the best way to be involved in family relationships.”

“These classes help me to understand how I’ve changed, and what will be different when I get back home,” said Spc. Joe Ricks of Headquarters and Head-

quarters Company, 2nd Brigade Combat Team. He continued, “I think that my perception of the civilian world has changed since coming to the desert, and it will take a little bit of adjustment.” The reintegration classes help Soldiers to understand many of the problems that often occur after year-long deployments and how to watch out

*Soldiers Prepare - Continued on Page 13*



**Left:** Staff Sgt. Robert Clark fits Pfc. Jason Conley with side protective plates shortly after his arrival to Iraq. Both Soldiers are assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 4th Battalion, 27th Field Artillery Regiment. *Photo by Sgt. Jonathan Odell*  
**Right:** (From left to right) Sgt. Derek Calhoun, Spc. Michael Washburn, and Spc. John Allen, all of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 40th Engineer Battalion, are administered the Oath of Enlistment by 2nd Lt. Theresa Biolsi outside the Headquarters building at Camp Liberty, Iraq. *Photo by Capt. Christopher Eastburg*



MND-B Equal Opportunity in association with Division MWR proudly presents...

**Hispanic Heritage Month Extravaganza**

Saturday, 7 Oct from 2000 - 2200  
at Division MWR Stage

*LIVE!* Musical Entertainment along with a

**DANCE CONTEST!!!**



**Left:** Chaplain (Maj.) Anthony Horton of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 40th Engineer Battalion (standing) speaks to Soldiers during a re-integration class on at Camp Liberty, Iraq. *Photo by Spc. Joshua Ramey*



Soldiers Prepare - Continued from Page 12

for signs of difficulties exhibited by peers.

“The most important thing we can do is to watch out for each other,” said Pfc. Folasade Agaba, of Company B, 47th Forward Support Battalion. “We have to talk and communicate with each other, because people might not even realize their own actions or tendencies that can hurt friendships and families,” she said.

Spc. Noel Dejesus of Company B, 141st Signal Battalion, said it’s good to get into the mindset of interacting with loved ones. “You learn how to reconnect to

family members, and how to be more open. Over here, you kind of close yourself off, so these classes help make us aware that we might have changed over the past year.”

The Soldiers of the 2nd BCT will continue to take reintegration classes, and encouraged to speak to their unit Chaplains

if they require support or counseling here, or after they return to Baumholder, Germany.

**Right:** Sgt. Kristin Halsey (left front), of Company C, 47th Forward Support Battalion, discusses deployment issues with Chaplain (Maj.) Anthony Horton (right), of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 40th Engineer Battalion, during a re-integration class at Camp Liberty, Iraq. *Photo by Spc. Joshua Ramey*





# Mail Handlers of 47th FSB

Story by Spc. Sandra Pockwinse

When mail bound for deployed Soldiers hits theater transportation assets, there is almost nothing that receives a higher priority in making its way around the battlefield. The mail handlers in the 47th Forward Support Battalion maintain the flow of incoming mail to over 300 Soldiers.

Spc. Patricia Padgett of Company C, 47th FSB, and Spc. Jason Jacob of Co. B, pick up the mail from the post office everyday with the help of alternate mail handlers: Spc. Deadra Brandt, Spc. Theron Telford, and Spc. Sandra Pockwinse, all of Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment. Each mail handler works together to accomplish their mission.

The multi-step process of handling U.S. Mail includes mail pick-up, sorting each piece of mail by company, creating and posting a "you got mail" list and, finally, distributing the mail to the Soldiers. Not just anyone that can go pick up the mail or deliver it to the Soldiers. Each mail handler has to go through a certification class and on unit appointment orders. After certification is obtained, unit mail room operations are frequently subject to inspections with significant consequences. Improper handling of mail can result in investigations and disciplinary action. Lost registered or certified mail can lead to jail time. The mail handlers know the importance of mail operations and are understanding of the importance and dedication it requires to successfully process the mail.

The Non-Commissioned Officer in charge of the 47th FSB's personnel section, Sgt. 1st Class Amanda Britton, has over five years of experience running military post offices. She was an NCOIC of the Military Post Office in Fort Bragg and a deployed Area Post Office in Sarajevo. In the case of this deployment, Sgt. 1st Class Britton and her Soldiers noted that moving mail room operations from one location to another is difficult business. Storing, securing, and separating

mail must be done regardless of your location or conditions. Frequently that means conducting mail operations in a hot 20 foot trailer. Pfc. Kerissa Simpson of the personnel shop, also a certified mail handler, noted the complexity of the moves. She handled forwarding for the Battalion from Baumholder to Camp Buehring, Kuwait. Then, for Soldiers in 47th FSB's Forward Logistics Element in Ramadi, she had to set up mail forwarding from Camp Buehring to Ramadi and Al Taqaddum. Soon, she will be forwarding everyone's mail from Baghdad, Ramadi, or Al Taqaddum back to Baumholder.

Simpson has taken two tests to remain certified to handle mail and conduct mail room operations, one in Camp Buehring and one in Baghdad. "The first inspection in Kuwait was difficult because it was my first inspection and they were pretty picky. After that experience, I was ready for the inspection in Baghdad - no sweat," commented Pfc. Simpson.



**Top:** Sgt. Tal Wick, Company C, 47th Forward Support Battalion, is delighted to finally receive the package he's been anxiously waiting for. *Photo by Spc. Sandra Pockwinse*

**Bottom:** Spc. Patricia Padgett, of Company C, 47th Forward Support Battalion, redirects incoming mail as Spc. Jason Jacob waits anxiously to pick up mail for Soldiers of Co. B. *Photo by Spc. Sandra Pockwinse*

Sgt. 1st Class Amanda Britton estimates the battalion mail handlers have processed over 30,000 bags and boxes of mail in the course of the deployment.





# Ghost Troop Assists Engineers in Baghdad

Story by Capt. Jeff Barta

The Baghdad morning sun rose as a warm orange glow with bright rays of light flickering down through the palm fronds, over the date groves, and resting on the dull paint of Troop G, 1st Cavalry Regiment's armored gun trucks. For the residents of the Shula and Khadamiyah suburbs of Baghdad, recent sunrises have shed light on a group of Cavalry Troopers and Engineers erecting barriers on their street. Ghost Troopers have been heavily involved in barrier operations over the past month, providing security while Engineers from Company A, 62nd Engineer Battalion construct blocking positions and entry control points in Western Baghdad.

The operation has been met with mixed reviews from the local residents. Some who suddenly found their morning commute to work blocked were upset with the inconvenience that the Americans had caused them. Sgt. Paul Jones, a forward observer attached to Troop G,

practiced his future lawyer skills to help ease tensions. "I told them that their personal sacrifice is important for the security of Baghdad and all of Iraq," said Sgt. Jones.



Sgt. 1st Class Monroe Johnson (right) of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 40th Engineer Battalion, and Staff Sgt. Daniel Montano of the Maintenance Support Team of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 40th Engineer Battalion, supervises Iraqi contractors from 77 Construction as they load barriers from the barrier yard on Camp Liberty onto flatbed trucks. *Photo by Capt. Christopher Eastburg*

Spc. Jeremy Johnson overcame the language difficulties by drawing a picture of two arches and explaining to some locals that all traffic must now pass through the historic

Doors of Baghdad in Khadamiyah. Others were receptive to the Ghost Troopers presence. Ten year old Mussab, lucky enough to live inside the wall, said that he liked American Soldiers around his home. In between asking for chocolate and Gatorade, Mussab explained that he will be able to play football on his street now that the traffic is stopped. Pulling security for a mission can be long and exhausting. The fourteen hour patrols have been met with all kinds of twists and turns. The Engineers and Ghost Troopers have navigated through low hanging wires and narrow streets as well as recovered broken trailers and one crane that fell in a canal. After one particularly long night in the gunner's turret of a Humvee gun truck Spc. Johnson said "I'm tired and exhausted, but it's worth it." This operation is another example of the tireless lengths that Iraqi Security Forces and the Striker Brigade are going to in order to increase the security in Baghdad and create a more peaceful Iraq.

## What Do YOU Think?

"What do you do to relax when you're not out on missions?"



SSG Daniel Foster,  
Co. C, 1-23 IN

"Go to the gym, read books, listen to music."



SGT Ryan Hedgecock,  
Co. A, 1-12 IN

"I try to stay busy as best I can. I go to the gym, read Civil War novels and watch movies."



SGT Ricardo Torchon,  
HHB, 4-27 FA

"I like to go the gym and train my Soldiers."



SPC John Allen,  
HHC, 40h EN

"I play X-Box or watch football and go to sleep."



SPC Clifford Jones,  
Co. B, 47th FSB

"Keep in touch with my family and workout."

Next Week: "What Would You Like Your Families to Know About Life in Iraq?"



Lt. Col. Avanus Smiley (left), commander, 1st Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment, administers the Oath of Enlistment to (from left to right), Sgt. 1st Class Cesar Valdez, Staff Sgt. Jason Dalton, and Spc. Donald Robertson, all of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, on Sept. 17th. *Photo by Spc. Joshua Ramey*

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**We are looking for any type of submissions to include:  
letters, articles, comic strips or artwork, and photographs.**

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