

October 25, 2006

DESERT



BULLS

IMPACTING IRAQ

AL BATHA OPENS WATER
PLANT, CITY PARK

**ORIENT EXPRESS
TAKES A 'BRAKE'**

SOLDIERS KICK BACK ON
ORGANIZATIONAL DAY



Honoring

Our Fallen Soldiers

Story by Sgt. Gary A. Witte
210th MPAD

CAMP AL ASAD, Iraq – Those who knew them said Sgt. 1st Class Scott E. Nisely and Sgt. Kampha B. Sourivong both had the ability to make their fellow Soldiers smile.

Nisely, a 48-year-old Operation Desert Storm veteran and former Marine Corps officer, did so through his sense of humor, his stories from more than 25 years of military service, and his constant support of younger Soldiers.

Sourivong, who was younger than Nisely's two children, broke through a shy exterior to demonstrate a desire to help others, a thirst for challenges, and a remarkable skill at rap songs.

Both men were members of Company C, 1st Battalion, 133rd Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 34th Infantry Division. They were killed Sept. 30 during a small arms attack while providing security for a supply convoy.

"Both these men are heroes," their company commander, Capt. Robby Cain, said during an Oct. 5 memorial ceremony. "Not in the way they died, but in the way they lived."

Nisely and Sourivong were the battalion's first fatalities since the unit deployed to Iraq in April, and both were promoted posthumously, officials said.

Nisely could have retired as a Marine Corps officer, according to his record. He graduated from Marine Corps ROTC and received his commission in 1981. He rose to the rank of captain and served as an infantry company commander during Operation Desert Storm.

After leaving active duty in 1993, he entered the Marine Corps Reserves and attained the rank of major. Then in 2002, he enlisted in the Iowa Army National Guard, as a sergeant.

Members of his unit said they believe Nisely, who served as a squad leader and truck commander, enjoyed the camaraderie he was able to experience by being with Soldiers. He enjoyed sharing his stories about his experi-



Sgt. Kampha B. Sourivong at his home station in Iowa before mobilization for Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2005.

Sgt. Kampha B. Sourivong Sgt. 1st Class Scott E. Nisely

Task Force IRON



Sgt. 1st Class Scott E. Nisely at his home station in Iowa before mobilization for Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2005.

ences, his family, and mentoring the younger men – even his officers.

“He had a world of wisdom ... You name it, he’s pretty much done it,” Cain said in an interview after the ceremony. “I think a lot of guys looked at him as a father figure for that very reason.”

Many in his unit said Nisely, who lived with his wife in Marshalltown, Iowa, was a selfless leader who never took advantage of the fact he was once an officer.

“He didn’t complain once,” Gingrich said. “He always treated everyone as an equal.”

Sourivong, who joined the unit when it first mobilized in October 2005, was also known for his easygoing attitude. The 20-year-old from Iowa City, Iowa, had just joined the National Guard the year before, partly out of a desire to earn money for college, his fellow Soldiers said.

Sourivong came across as nervous and shy at first, yet he began to come out of his shell as the deployment wore on, his team leader, Sgt. Ryan E. Shaw of Norwalk, Iowa, said.

“He was the type of guy to give someone his last dollar just so they could get a soda,” Shaw said.

Shaw said Sourivong was a good Soldier, who, if he ever had a question about a task, it was never why he needed to do it, but was how he could do it right. Cain said he always tried his hardest and still carried himself with a quiet grace.

“He did everything with a smile on his face,” Cain said. “He always put 100 percent into everything he did.”

Battalion Chaplain (1st Lt.) Raymond Leach, speaking during the ceremony, talked about the loss of the two men, comparing it to the loss of Saul and his son to King David. He said like them, Nisely and Sourivong were men worth honoring.

“These men are our brothers,” he said. “They must not be forgotten. They will not be forgotten.”

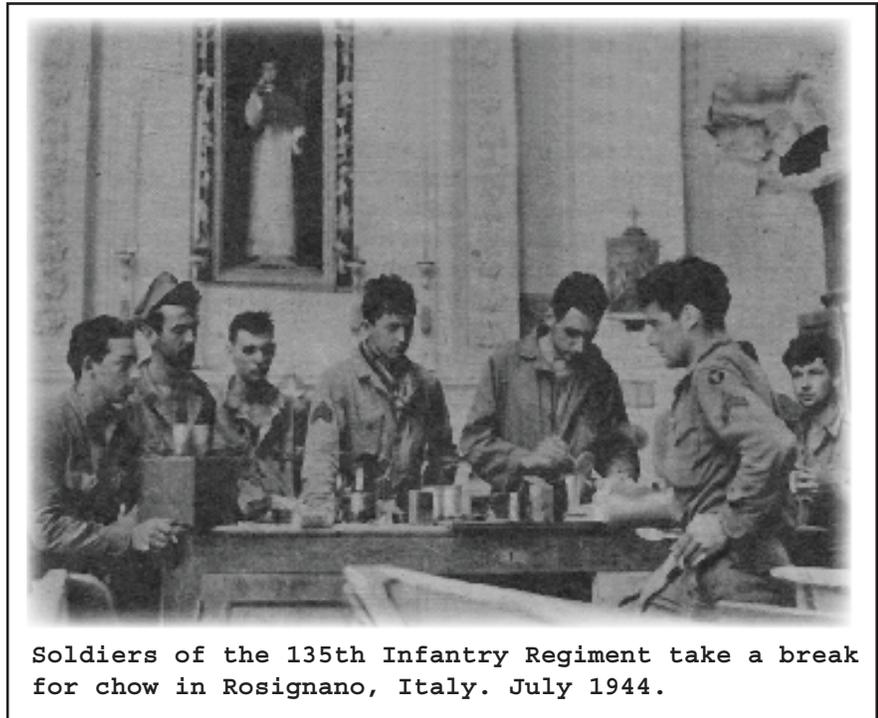


Day in Red Bull history

15-30 OCT 1944

On the move in Italy near Fornacetta

The company moved near the town of Fornacetta. While in this area, PVT Washington M. Barwick and PVT Merlin L. Adams were received as replacements. There were numerous fire missions, both day and night. We fired over 13,539 rounds. Cannon Company, 135th Infantry Regiment came in to relieve us; while they were setting up Jerry threw in a barrage of 20 rounds. PVT Franklin L. Clark of the 2nd Platoon was wounded.



Soldiers of the 135th Infantry Regiment take a break for chow in Rosignano, Italy. July 1944.

For the complete diary, log onto www.34infdiv.org/history/133cannon/4404.html

Australian Rank: Red Bulls meet the 'Red Roos'

While conducting missions in southern Iraq, Soldiers of the 1st of the 34th Brigade Combat Team may meet the Australian troops of Overwatch Battle Group (West) 1, who wear the red kangaroo patch. This week, we take a look at the upper ranks of Australian enlisted soldiers and officers to help us understand and respect our partners in the Coalition Forces in Iraq.



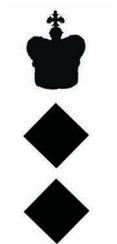
WARRANT OFFICER CLASS 2



WARRANT OFFICER CLASS 1



REGIMENTAL SERGEANT MAJOR OF THE ARMY



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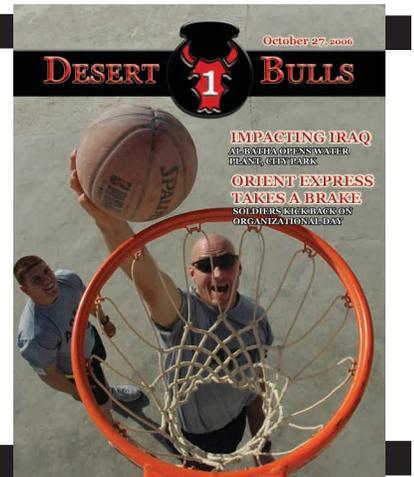
The 1/34 Brigade Combat Team
Col. David Elicerio
Command Sgt. Major Doug Julin

Desert Bulls Staff:
Capt. Mark Lappegaard, public affairs officer
Sgt. 1st Class Clinton Wood, managing editor
Sgt. Kent Westberg, broadcast journalist
Spc. Brian D. Jesness, production editor
Spc. Dustin Perry, print journalist

This newsletter is in compliance with the provisions of AR 360-1. Any photo or story submissions should be forwarded to Sgt. 1st Class Clinton Wood at clinton.wood@us.army.mil

Issue #28

On the cover:
Spc. Jimmy Gartin dunks a basketball during a pick-up game with Sgt. Stephen Bantle outside the "House of Pain" gym at the Task Force ORIENT EXPRESS organizational day at LSA Adder. Photo by Spc. Dustin Perry, 1/34 BCT PA.



LIVE FROM IRAQ: 'WILL YOU MARRY ME?'

Story by Spc. Dustin Perry
1/34 BCT PA

LSA ADDER, An Nasiriyah, Iraq – When Sgt. Adam Marti asked his girlfriend to marry him, she stood silently for 15 seconds before accepting his proposal. Hesitation like that normally wouldn't bode well for someone on the asking end of such a momentous occasion, but Marti knew it might happen when dealing with a satellite delay.

A nervous Marti, the liaison officer with Task Force THUNDER here, proposed to Heather Rock, his girlfriend of 18 months, during the fifth inning of a Sept. 30 baseball game between the Minnesota Twins and the Chicago White Sox.

"I worked up the plan over a month in advance with the idea that it would be something she would remember for a long time," he said.

Marti, a native of Mankato, Minn., was being projected onto the Metrodome's towering Jumbotron screen via a live feed when he popped the question in front of more than 45,000 screaming fans. He had been planning the surprise for a month, which was made official when "TC," the Twins' mascot, slipped an engagement ring on Rock's finger.

"She was completely surprised when I asked her, then she said, 'Yes, of course I will,'" said Marti. "I felt relieved because I was anxious. It turned out great."

Marti coordinated the proposal in conjunction with Military Appreciation Night, which was being held at the ballpark that night. About 40 of the couple's friends and family members were there, watching the game from reserved skybox seats.

Rock knew she was going to see her boyfriend that night but had no idea he was going to ask what he asked. She believed Marti had been given the chance to participate in a live video message with his mother because she had recently divorced and had two sons serving overseas. Marti's brother Ryan, who is stationed at Convoy Support Center Scania, Iraq, stood next to him during the broadcast.



Sgt. Adam Marti proposes to girlfriend Heather Rock via satellite and big screen during a Minnesota Twins game Sept. 30 at the Hubert H. Humphrey Metrodome in Minneapolis.

Under this pretense, local media personnel were able to conduct "secondary" interviews with Rock without raising suspicion or giving away the surprise – which, on a few occasions, almost happened. An initial batch of tickets with the phrase "Congratulations Heather & Adam!" printed on them was recalled before the game, and the same message was displayed in the outfield an inning earlier than the actual proposal. Rock saw neither.

After greeting his family and friends, Marti dropped to his knee and said he had a question for his girlfriend. He asked the crowd to applaud or boo depending on her response, but almost everyone had caught on at this point and immediately started cheering.

"Heather told me she had a problem hearing me because of how loud the crowd was," said Marti.

After the proposal, Marti was able to talk to his new fiancée on a cell phone until the end of the game.

"Everything went perfect," said Marti. "She told me she couldn't have imagined (my proposal) to be any better, and she couldn't have been more surprised. It's not every day you get to totally overwhelm your significant other."

ORIENT EXPRESS OF

7th Transportation Battalion t

Story and photos by

Spc. Dustin Perry, 1/34 BCT PA

LSA ADDER, An Nasiriyah, Iraq –

After working for more than six months without a day off, Soldiers of Task Force ORIENT EXPRESS were treated to a much-deserved evening of recreation and relaxation, the unit's commander said.

The task force held an organizational day Oct. 6 at the Morale, Welfare and Recreation tent and the sports area outside the nearby gym, incorporating a wide range

of activities in which the Soldiers could participate.

Following an opening ceremony, things kicked off immediately inside the MWR tent: Tournaments began for Spades, dominoes, billiards and the Xbox games *Halo 2* and *Madden 2007*. Soldiers from each of the four units that comprise the task force could sign up to compete against each other but were also welcome to grab a soda and simply relax on one of several dozen couches inside the tent.

Outside, athletic events such as horseshoes, three-legged racing, balloon tossing, tug 'o war, volleyball and basketball attracted large numbers of Soldiers looking to showcase their skills and earn points for their unit. Other events included a bench press competition inside the gym and a laundry-bag sack race.

The distinctive smell of barbecued meats sizzling on a grill wafted through the air as dinner preparations began. T-bone steaks, chicken, hot dogs and hamburgers were served shortly after.

Lt. Col. Allen Kiefer, task force commander, said preparation for the organizational day began around the end of July because he wanted to have sufficient planning to hold the event at or near the halfway point of the Soldiers' deployment.

"I had thought we needed some kind of a morale-building or enhancing event ... just to keep [the Soldiers'] heads in the game and give them a chance to take a couple moments to get a break," said Kiefer. "We don't have any regular days off in the battalion and we haven't since we've been here, so I felt we should take an afternoon and just get some camaraderie and ... give them an opportunity to let their hair down, so to speak."

The event exceeded Kiefer's expectations in terms of execution, participation and the morale of the troops, he said. He observed the different events throughout the day



ORG. DAY

akes a 'brake'

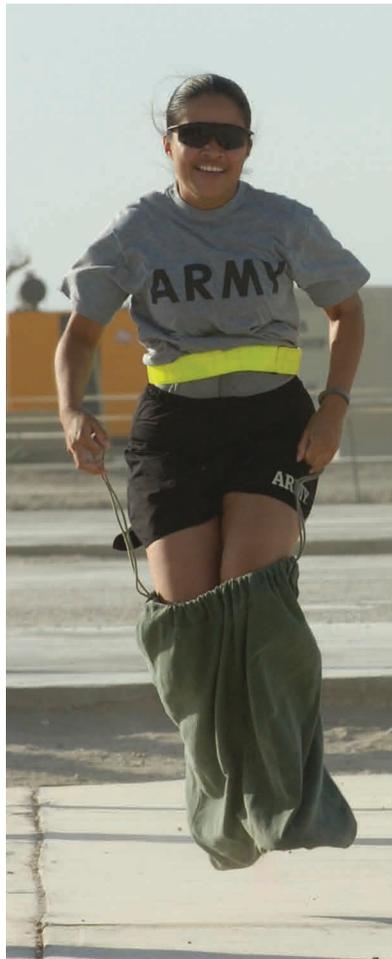
and said he was very conscious of the Soldiers and how motivated they were.

"The (operational tempo) we have, running pretty much seven days a week ... puts a lot of strain on the Soldiers," said Kiefer. "They need to have an opportunity to take a few moments and forget about the events that are going on around them and ... this seemed like a pretty good opportunity to do that."

Spc. Leona Noe, a truck driver for the 308th Transportation Company, spent most of the organizational day hanging out, talking with friends and even participating in a few of the events.

"I had a good time. I enjoyed playing volleyball [and] lifting weights," said Noe, whose team placed third in the bench press competition. "It was great to finally have a day off. We work nonstop, pretty much. Even on our 'days off,' we have to go down to the motor pool and work on our trucks, [but] it was nice not to have to do that today."

When all the events were completed, points were tallied for each event and trophies were awarded to the top three units. The task force's headquarters and headquarters detachment won; 250th Transportation Company placed second; and the 308th nabbed third.



Opposite page, left: Sgt. Steve Vanderhye (right) 250th Transportation Company, attempts a spike against Sgt. Zeke Hamilton, Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 7th Transportation Bn., during their volleyball match.

Middle: Sgt. Michael Artalejo, a 1451st Transportation Company truck commander, leads his team during a tug 'o war competition

Left: Spc. Norka Celentano, Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 7th Transportation Bn., hops toward the finish line during a laundry-bag sack race.

Below: Staff Sgt. James Davis, 1451st Transportation Company convoy squad leader, throws a horseshoe during a match.



New beginning Al Batha city



**Story by Spc. Dustin Perry
1/34 BCT PA**

LSA ADDER, An Nasiriyah, Iraq – A pair of ceremonies were held Oct. 5 in Al Batha, Iraq, to officially mark the opening of a new water treatment plant and a renovated park and playground there, both of which were built in conjunction with ongoing assistance from the U.S. military.

Lt. Col. Larry Herke, executive officer of the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 34th Infantry Division, spoke at the event, along with Al Batha Mayor Ali Al-Shershah and Gov. Iziz Khadim Alwan of the Dhi Qar province.

During his speech, Herke said he chose to help Al Batha because of the “good working relationship” between the town and U.S. forces, and the “potential for success.”

“We all know of areas in Iraq that need help,” said Herke. “Working together, we can show the rest of Iraq what success looks like.”

In the last six months, more than \$1 million in various projects in Al Batha have been completed, said Herke. These projects have also created employment

for more than 500 local workers, he added. The water treatment plant cost about \$1.3 million to build, said Herke.

“We all know how important water is to our health, agriculture and economic development,” said Herke. “This water treatment plant is an example of the Iraqi government making progress and restoring basic services to the people of Iraq.”

Herke also noted several other projects that have come to fruition since he arrived in Iraq, including the building of a new school and an additional water treatment plant, newly constructed roads and donations of school supplies, clothing and toys.

Both Al-Shershah and Alwan lauded the efforts of the 1/34 BCT for their

ings for izens' future

Left: Gov. Iziz Khadim Alwan of Dhi Qar province (left), Lt. Col. Larry Herke and Al Batha Mayor Ali Al-Shershhab place a keystone to commemorate the ongoing civil projects to improve the water network in the Al Batha community. Photo by Spc. Brian D. Jesness, 1/34 BCT PA.

Middle: Al Batha children playing on the swings of the renovated park. Photo by Spc. Dustin Perry, 1/34 BCT PA.

Below: Local children of Al Batha rushing to be the first one to the top of the slide at the playground. Photo by Spc. Dustin Perry, 1/34 BCT PA.



assistance in the building of each of the facilities.

“Yes, we are a rich country, but we have been afflicted by destructing wars and tyranny that knew no limit, which brought us to where we are today,” said Al-Shershhab. “For that reason, I use this opportunity in the presence of our generous friends and I urge them and our friendly and giving countries to work toward constructing quality projects that service generations of the sons of our region.”

Following the speeches, everyone proceeded to the playground where Alwan placed a time capsule under the keystone with concrete and opened the park gates. Children were then allowed to play on the slides and swing sets.

**SPOTLIGHTING THE 1ST
OF THE 34TH BCT'S CIVIL
MILITARY OPERATIONS
EFFORTS IN IRAQ**

IMPACT ING IRAQ



Military Justice Log

■ A Soldier from Task Force ORIENT EXPRESS received a company grade Article 15 for being disrespectful in language to an officer and NCO. He was reduced to private; received a forfeiture of \$333; and was given extra duty for 14 days.

■ A Soldier from Task Force ORIENT EXPRESS received a field grade Article 15 for having a negligent discharge. He was reduced to private first class, which was suspended; received a forfeiture of \$846 per month for two months; and was suspended for one month.

■ A Soldier from Task Force ORIENT EXPRESS received a field grade Article 15 for not ensuring her Soldier's weapon was cleared before entering the FOB. She was reduced to specialist, which was suspended; and received a forfeiture of \$200 per month for two months.

■ A Soldier from Task Force ORIENT EXPRESS received a field grade Article 15 for displaying pornography on an MWR computer. He was reduced to sergeant, which was suspended; received a forfeiture of \$973 per month for two months; and was put on restriction for 60 days.

■ A Soldier from Task Force SABER received a field grade Article 15 for violation of General Order No. 1 (alcohol). He was reduced to specialist; received a forfeiture of \$1,009 per month for two months, which was suspended; and was given extra duty and restriction for 45 days.

■ A Soldier from Task Force SABER received a field grade Article 15 for violation of General Order No. 1 (alcohol). He was reduced to private first class; reduced to private, which was suspended; received a forfeiture of \$713 per month for two months, which was suspended; and was given extra duty and restriction for 30 days.

■ A Soldier from Task Force ORIENT EXPRESS received a field grade Article 15 for having a negligent discharge. He was reduced to sergeant, which was suspended; received a forfeiture of \$1,263 per month for two months, which was suspended; and received a forfeiture of \$1,000 per month for two months.

■ A Soldier from Task Force WOLVERINE received a company grade Article 15 for being disrespectful in language toward an officer and not obeying a lawful order. He was reduced to private first class.

■ A Soldier from Task Force ORIENT EXPRESS received a field grade Article 15 for assaulting an NCO. The Soldier was found not guilty of the incident.

■ A Soldier from Task Force ORIENT EXPRESS received a company grade Article 15 for being disrespectful in language toward an NCO. He was reduced to private first class, which was suspended; received a forfeiture of \$394; and was given extra duty for seven days.

■ A Soldier from Task Force SABER received a company grade Article 15 for having a negligent discharge. He received forfeiture of \$470, which was suspended; and was given extra duty and put on restriction for seven days.

■ A Soldier from Task Force ORIENT EXPRESS received a field grade Article 15 for assaulting a lower enlisted Soldier. He was reduced to specialist, which was suspended; received a forfeiture of \$250 per month for two months; and was given extra duty for 14 days.

Minnesota offers tax credit for service in combat zone

By Maj. John Engels, 1/34 BCT Command Judge Advocate

Effective for the 2006 tax season, Minnesota has created an additional tax benefit for Minnesota Soldiers who served in a hazardous duty area after Sept. 11, 2001. Service in Iraq, Afghanistan, Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Pakistan, and several other Middle Eastern countries qualify for this tax credit. If the income you earned on active duty was not taxed by the federal government and you are a resident of Minnesota, you are eligible for this tax credit.

The tax credit pays \$59 per month for every month you served on active duty in a qualifying location. If you serve only one day in a month, the entire month counts for purposes of the credit. To claim the credit, you must file form M99, Credit for Military Service in a Combat Zone, and attach the required documentation. The form will be available in November on the Minnesota Department of Revenue Web site, will be accepted for filing starting in December, and payments will be made beginning in January 2007.

To get the credit, you must provide documentation with the M99 tax form to prove you served on active duty. The documentation required for National Guard and other Reserve Soldiers is a copy of your DD-214 form for each period of qualified service. For active duty Soldiers, you need to submit a copy of your leave and earnings statement for each qualifying month of service. The documentation must show your home of record was in Minnesota during the months of qualifying service. You can file in 2006 for all prior periods of qualifying service since Sept. 11, 2001, without amending any of your prior tax returns.

Many of our Soldiers will not owe any state or federal income tax for 2006 because their income earned in Iraq is excluded from taxation. Even if you did not pay money to Minnesota, the state will pay you for this credit. There is no limit to the total amount a person can collect from this tax credit. This credit can amount up to \$708 per year of deployed service.

'The Nod'

By Chap. (Capt.) Corey Bjertness
Task Force THUNDER Chaplain

The last minutes at the airport with your family waiting to fly off to war are unique. There is no right way to say goodbye under these circumstances. It is something impossible to do well – success is measured by the fact you got through it.

In the midst of the awkward last moments with my family, I noticed another Soldier. Across the crowded terminal, we made eye contact and did what men do – we nodded to one another. In that nod, we recognized the fact we were members of the same fraternity, the military. In a glance of understanding, he said to me, “I have been where you are; stand strong – I have your back.” I repeated the message.

I was the last to board the plane. I hugged my children, kissed my wife and stood and watched them walk away. When I turned to board the airplane, the ticket agent, a man in his 50s, handed me a ticket and said, “I upgraded you to first class ... Vietnam, 1971.” We nodded and shared the strength of fraternity – the knowledge that we are in this together. Returning to Iraq, these two nods cycled through my head like laundry in a washing machine. I tried to get every thing out of them I could.

Here’s what I decided: Everyone is on their way to war; some to Iraq, some to the job they hate, some to the marriage that no longer produces happiness, and some to the countless battle grounds of personal heartache.

Here’s the other thing I decided: We’re not alone. At best, faith is a simple message. God gave us “the nod.” In his final words, Jesus said, “It is finished!” Bowing his head, he gave up his spirit. He said, in that last act of grace, “I have been where you are; stand strong – I have your back.” Regardless of the wars you find yourself in, the message remains the same: God is with you. It’s going to be OK.



CHAPLAIN'S CORNER



Left: Task Force Iron Soldiers after completing the Army 10-mile run Oct. 8 at Camp Al Asad. Pfc. John Lennox, (left), Spc. Jesse Espinosa, 1st Lt. Christopher Donlin, Sgt. Shane Rislove, 1st Lt. Matt McGee, Sgt. 1st Class Carl Spoerl, Command Sgt. Maj. Joel Arnold and Capt. Cory Paul. Photo by 2nd Lt. Matthew Parrino, Task Force IRON UPAR.

IN OUR SIGHTS



Right: Spc. Sadie Brehmer, Task Force THUNDER, hands out school supplies to local Iraqi children. Photo by Capt. Paul Rickert, Task Force THUNDER UPAR.

Below: 1st Lt. David Pergande, Task Force WOLVERINE, waves to his fellow Soldiers as he nears the finish line of the Tallil 10-Miler Oct. 8 at LSA Adder. Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Clinton Wood, 1/34 BCT PA.

