

Pilot leads fight against sectarian violence

By Spc. Nathan Hoskins
1st ACB Public Affairs

CAMP TAJI, Iraq - He grew up in Portage, Indiana, a town not far from the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore, where he and his family would go out on a snowy day and sled and play tackle football.

Now, this 1st Cavalry Division Soldier is flying over the country of Iraq as an AH-64 Apache pilot, seeking out and destroying those who wish to harm others and protecting those who wish to bring peace to this embattled country.

Chief Warrant Officer 4 Steven Kilgore, the master gunner for the 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, works day in and day out to ensure the sectarian violence that plagues Baghdad, and more specifically Sadr City, is squelched

One evening in late November, after being delayed in order to provide safe passage for a ground unit, Kilgore and his wing man were returning back to the forward operating base to refuel.

He noticed a flash out of the corner of his eye that immediately rang some alarms in his mind.

"Because of that delay, as we were passing Sadr City, we witnessed [some insurgents] launching one rocket after another; six total rockets from about the middle of Sadr City. The first launch



(Photo by Spc. Nathan Hoskins, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade Public Affairs)

Chief Warrant Officer 4 Steven Kilgore, master gunner, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st ACB, 1st Cav. Div., checks the 30mm chain gun during a pre-flight inspection Dec. 5 of the AH-64 Apache helicopter.

caught my eye," Kilgore said.

What was unique about this incident, he added, was that it was all caught on tape.

"We got our sights on it, so we were actually able to record the launches on tape, which is something that you don't normally get," Kilgore said.

With many years of experience in an

attack helicopter, Kilgore's skill shines through even in such tense situations. The professionalism is heard throughout the tape, said Baton Rouge, La., native Lt. Col. Charles Dalcourt, the brigade operations officer, for 1st ACB.

After getting approval from the nearby

"Ironhorse" troops watch EOD's back while "outside the wire"

By Sgt. Jon Cupp
1-1 Cav. Public Affairs

CAMP, TAJI, Iraq - As explosive ordnance and disposal (EOD) teams go about doing their jobs clearing roads and other areas of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and destroying insurgent weapons caches, who has their backs and helps them with security?

For EOD teams who work with Soldiers of the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division here, the job of escorting these teams on their missions falls to three teams from Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Brigade Special Troops Battalion.

Once units from the brigade discover an IED or weapons cache, EOD is called

to help units with the disposal. The escort teams then leave with EOD in a convoy.

"We get out to them (the units) as quickly and efficiently as possible, we don't want to leave them exposed," said 2nd Lt. Estan Davis, Nuclear, Biological and Chemical Reconnaissance platoon leader with HHC, 1st BSTB.

Although, the Ironhorse

brigade has only been in country for a relatively short period of time, the teams have already had their first experiences going on missions with EOD.

"They're confident and the training they've received prior to the deployment really prepared them, but you're never ready to act until you actually

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Apache pilot stops rocket attack in east Baghdad

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ground unit and their tactical operations center, and despite being very low on fuel, Kilgore said they engaged the enemy.

"Whether it was sectarian or actions against U.S. forces, [it] just didn't matter to us. We knew we needed to go in and take care of business. We got sight on the rocket launchers; we got sight on the personnel coming up to start to break down the rocket launchers ... these are the kind of people we need to get rid of," Kilgore said.

With skill and precision, the enemy was destroyed along with their ability to continue to maintain sectarian violence, he said.

"I hope we showed both sides that are involved in the sectarian violence that it doesn't matter who you are, it doesn't matter what your purpose is. Right now, as Iraq tries to get itself stabilized, if we catch you

doing something that you shouldn't be doing ... we're going to come get you," Kilgore said.

Once the enemy and launchers were destroyed, Kilgore headed back to his base camp with both 'fuel-low' warning lights lit up, he said

"If I hang out too much longer I'm going to land with no gas ... or not land, as the case may be," reflected Kilgore.

"I fly over these 'Joes' everyday. These guys are out there. They've got a tough job. They're out there and people are trying to blow them up ... and these guys are going out there and overcoming that and accomplishing the mission every day," said Kilgore with conviction.

With many jobs and many aspects to each of them, Kilgore stays busy, but he is always on top of his game. It is necessary to keep the rampage of sectarian violence to a minimum, if not eradicate it com-



(Photo by Spc. Nathan J. Hoskins, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade Public Affairs)

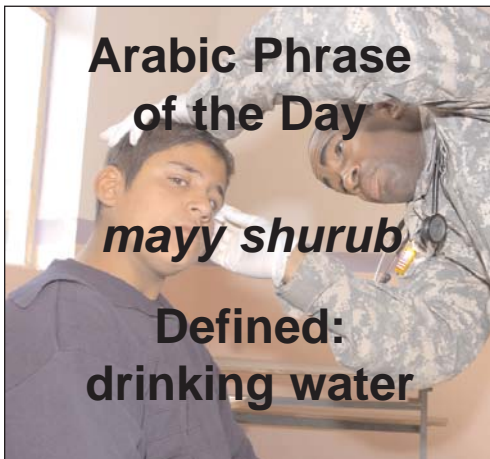
Chief Warrant Officer 4 Steven Kilgore gets suited up Dec. 5 while standing beside two Hellfire missiles.

pletely, said Kilgore

"We're out there. We're forward. We're fighting the enemy on the ground of our choosing," he said.

"It's a tough fight, but it's a

necessary fight. As long as that fight is necessary, that's going to continue to motivate me to continue to do the job I'm doing. These people are worth my best effort."



**Arabic Phrase
of the Day**

mayy shurub

**Defined:
drinking water**

Iraq 3-Day Weather Report



Today

High: 65
Low: 37



Tomorrow

High: 68
Low: 35



Saturday

High: 59
Low: 43

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Troops enjoy keeping EOD Soldiers safe, change of mission

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experience a real situation," said Davis. "We were hit on one of our last missions and we reacted just like in a battle drill."

"It really proved to me the

benefit of doing those battle drills, and our guys reacted like they were supposed to do and they got it right," he added. "The Soldiers really feel good about getting out there and contributing to the safety of the EOD teams in the area of operations." Rather than dreading

or fearing missions, Soldiers of these EOD escort teams said they welcome the opportunity to get away from the camp.

"I like keeping all the troops safe, but I don't like being stuck inside (Camp Taji)," said Houston native, Spc. Allan Montoya, a communications specialist for who pulls security on one of the teams and also serves as a gunner, explaining that when Soldiers stay on a camp without going out, they tend to get a little stir crazy.

Montoya, no stranger to Iraq, served his last deployment near Sadr City where he worked forward operations base security and on convoys.

"Being outside the wire with my team is where I want to be, they're like my family," Montoya added.

"I love it," said Spc. Jody Ghisoiu, a medic and a native of Erie, Pa. "I don't like being

stuck in a vehicle for 10 hours. When we're on the road, I want to be out there pulling security."

Eventhough she likes her primary military occupational specialty, Ghisoiu said she hopes there's no need for her services.

"If I'm doing my job, it means someone's been hurt or may die," said Ghisoiu. "You hope for the best, but if it comes down to it, I'll do anything I can to save a life."

Ghisoiu, who has two sons, is spending her first tour in Iraq. She said her first mission outside the gates of Taji in which she witnessed EOD's disposal of a huge weapons cache, left a lasting impression on her.

"The best part was getting the chance to see EOD blow all that stuff up before it had a chance to hurt someone," she said.



(Photo by Sgt. Jon Cupp, 1st BCT, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)

Spc. Allan Montoya, a humvee gunner and communications specialist for HHC, 1st BSTB, 1st Cav. Div. performs a functions check on his M-240 machine gun on Camp Taji, Iraq prior to an escort mission.



(Photo by Warrant Officer Don Ellibee, 4th BCT (ABN), 25th Inf. Div.)

Paratroopers lend a hand

Command Sgt. Maj. David Turnbull and Sgt. 1st Class Scott Self, both members of the 4th Brigade Combat Team (Airborne), 25th Infantry Division, hand out pens and other school supplies to children in the fish farm region of Iskandariyah, Iraq, Dec. 14.



(Photo by Sgt. Paula Taylor, 4-1 Cav. Public Affairs)

Soldiers from the 4th BCT, 1st Cavalry Division and Iraqi army troops patrol the streets of Mosul, Iraq, Dec. 14.

Operation Samson hits streets of Mosul

**By Sgt. Paula Taylor
4-1 Cav. Public Affairs**

MOSUL, Iraq - In a joint effort called Operation Samson, Coalition Soldiers of the 1st Squadron, 9th Cavalry Regiment, the 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment., and the 2nd Battalion, 2nd Iraqi Army Brigade conducted security checks throughout the Ninewa Province Dec. 14.

The purpose of the mission was to maintain pressure on neighborhoods known to be controlled by anti-Iraqi forces within Mosul, and to show the American forces working together with the Iraqi security forces.

"Today we went and did a joint cordon and knock with the Iraqi army," said Sgt. 1st Class Michael Massarelli, platoon

sergeant, A Troop, 1-9 Cavalry.

The main focus for Massarelli's group was the Al Zaria and Al Islah areas. "We basically split the sector in half, with 1st platoon in one area and 2nd platoon in another. We searched block by block."

"We were there to spread the word amongst the local nationals that the coalition forces are working in conjunction with Iraqi army forces," said Staff Sgt. Jared Heisler, Bradley fighting vehicle commander, A Troop, 1-9 Cavalry. "We were checking the area and searching houses for any personnel of suspected enemy activity because that is just off a route that has a lot of improvised explosive devices planted on it."

Bradley fighting vehicles and up-armored Humvees were

positioned around the outer perimeter, alongside of Iraqi army vehicles to provide security for the troops working inside the town, going door-to-door. There were also several vehicles placed inside the area of operation to add to the safety of those working within the area of operations.

As with any operation, communication played a vital role in the mission's success. "When [Massarelli] was on the ground, I was on the radio relaying information to higher up and talking to the platoon, keeping them informed on what was going on," said cavalry scout Pfc. David Vance, driver for the command truck.

"The mission was a success," said Massarelli. "We were on the ground with the Iraqi army. The general public

seemed happy with what they were seeing.

"All of our local leader engagements worked out well. They let us into their homes, treated us with respect and answered all of our questions. This allowed the general public to see the Iraqi security forces taking that first step forward, not the coalition forces."

"I think it went well," said Heisler, who was responsible for securing the outer perimeter. "A lot of people got to see us working together with the IA. Hopefully it boosts the local nationals' confidence in everybody here so maybe they'll start reporting the AIF."

"I look forward to working with them again," said Massarelli. "It's a good outfit. I'm ready for the next mission with them."