



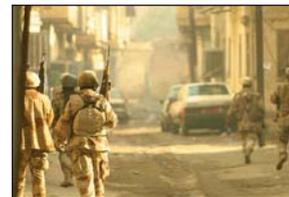
Helping Prevent Disease on the Farm

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# Crossed Sabers

Volume I, Issue 3

"Telling the MND-Baghdad Story"

Monday, Jan. 22, 2007



(Photo by Maj. Chris Cline, 1st Battalion, 149th Infantry Brigade)

**Sgt. 1st Class Todd Hensley, a native of Barbourville, Ky., with 1st Battalion, 149th Infantry Brigade, Kentucky Army National Guard, unloads a truck full of food for the local residents of Al-Furat, Iraq Jan. 7.**

## Mountain Troopers Supply Food to People of Al-Furat

By Spc. Shea Butler  
7th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

AL-FURAT, Iraq – It was a common meeting between a coalition commander and an Imam. A normal conversation commenced between them. After discussing pressing issues the meeting ended with a handshake and a firm promise to help local residents.

"We didn't have much time to prepare but we got the job done, and we made a promise," said 1st Lt. Robert Andersen, 1st Battalion, 149th Infantry Brigade, Kentucky Army National Guard.

Within 48 hours of that promise, Soldiers from 1-149th "Mountain Warriors" quickly responded to the needs of the people of Al-Furat. They delivered enough food Jan. 7 for 300 people to live off of for a week.

"It was a quick mission. It only lasted 15 to 20 minutes," said Andersen. "We were able to deliver all kinds of food products and blankets."

Security was in place in and around the

neighborhood which allowed the Soldiers to move around freely and complete the mission.

Al-Furat is a Sunni neighborhood surrounded by Shiites.

They needed a little help and coalition forces were willing to do so, said Maj. Chris Cline, a Hodgenville, Ky., native serving with the 1-149th.

"Security was a big part of the mission too," said Anderson, an Elizabethtown, Ky., native. "Without the security the mission would have been more difficult."

"The locals were very thankful and willing to help unload the food," Cline said. "They were cooperative."

The Mountain Warriors didn't have much time to prepare for the mission because the people were in need, but it was completed without any complications, Andersen said.

"I credit the success of the mission to the fact that we are National Guard (Soldiers)," Cline said. "We are used to doing humanitarian missions in the states, as well."



(Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Kap Kim, 2nd BCT, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)

## Eye on Target

**Sgt. Maj. Jeffrey Seidel, Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, keeps a sharp eye on the situation, while the rest of the Infrastructure Coordination Element team checks out a local sewage pump. The ICE team's job is to help bring back essential services like electricity and garbage disposal back to the Iraqi capital. (See story on Page 7)**

## Arrowhead Strike III: Suspects Detained, Weapons Taken, Locals Assisted

By. Capt. Isaac Carson  
Multi-National Division – Baghdad Public Affairs

BAGHDAD – Elements of Multi-National Division-Baghdad along with Iraqi Army elements conducted a clearing operation designed to disrupt insurgent activities and deny urban support zones to terrorists from Jan. 1 to Jan. 5 in Hurriya, a northwestern neighborhood of the Iraqi capital.

While conducting Operation Arrowhead Strike III, elements from the 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division and 1st Battalion, 1st Brigade, 6th Iraqi

Army Division detained 16 suspected insurgents, found seven illegal weapons caches and conducted a civilian medical assistance operation.

Soldiers confiscated illegal arms to include: 13 rocket propelled-grenade launchers, 17 AK-47's with 20 AK-47 magazines, five rifles, two machine guns, 19 pistols, six mortars, and 12 blocks of C-4 explosives.

They also seized three rocket-propelled grenades, two rocket-propelled grenade stabilizer shafts, and six rocket-propelled grenade booster rockets, along with identification cards, maps, insurgent propaganda, and 3.25 million Iraqi Dinar and \$2,200 in U.S. currency.

In addition to making the area safer by getting illegal weapons off the street, the troops also aided the local community.

With the support of Task Force 2nd Battalion, 3rd Infantry Regiment, Iraqi troops provided medical care to the local population.

Iraqi medics treated and gave medication out to approximately 2,000 Iraqi civilians during this operation.

Iraqi Army personnel also handed out blankets to those waiting in line, and passed out candy, soccer balls, stickers and gum to the waiting children who were waiting with their parents.

# Negligent Discharges No Accident

Sergeant's Business. I'm positive every noncommissioned officer in Multi-National Division – Baghdad has heard the term. I hope that we all understand what it means.

Over the past several months, we've had far too many negligent discharges by our troops. Notice, I say "negligent," and not "accidental." The only accidental discharge occurs when there is a serious malfunction of a weapon. We're not seeing that.

What we've seen are leaders not taking the time to follow established safety procedures, or ensure their subordinates are doing the same. What we've seen is a lack of discipline.

Negligent discharges occur when we don't follow the proper procedures. They occur because a leader didn't make sure standards were met by every member of their team.

The excuses are varied. It was late. It was dark. We were tired. The chow hall was closing soon.

Negligent discharges occur when leaders allow their troops to cut corners.

It has to stop.

Up to now, we've had some troops kill some clearing barrels. OK, you say, that's not too bad. That's what they're for. No problem, right? Wrong!

What about when we don't do the right thing and someone gets wounded or worse yet, killed? We've had some Soldiers wounded due to negligent discharges. One is too many.

Treat clearing your weapons systems as a battle drill. That's what it is. Do it correctly, every time. Work on it over and over. Practice will make you proficient. You'll do it automatically every time you come in from a combat patrol.

Everyone needs a leader or battle buddy to check them out as they clear their weapon. It's not a 'senior occupant' responsibility. It's everyone's responsibility. I outrank everyone with my personal security detachment, but their noncommissioned officer in charge clears me at the barrel

## Pegasus 9 Sends

Command Sgt. Maj. Philip Johndrow



every time we roll back into the gate.

At night, use a flashlight. If you're running behind, don't take short cuts. When that round goes off, 'accidentally,' you're going to miss wherever you were going anyway.

Over the years, we've all heard tragic stories told time and time again in the media of children who play with firearms in their parents home and either shoot themselves or

shoot a sibling or a friend.

The parents of those children have to live with the realization, every single day for the rest of their lives that a child died because of their negligence.

This is not to compare our troops to wayward children, or our leaders as their negligent parents. It's simply a wake up call to us all to do the right thing, every time, before tragedy strikes.

Baghdad is a dangerous place. There are enough hazards outside the wire, and in some places inside the wire, for us to deal with on a daily basis.

NCO business is taking care of Soldiers – training them, mentoring them and keeping them safe. 'Mission first, Soldiers always' is what the noncommissioned officer corps is all about. We fail in that mission when we let our guard and standards down. I challenge all leaders within this division, NCOs, officers and Soldiers themselves, to adhere to standards and maintain discipline in all that they do.

We have the greatest fighting force in the world collected here in the Iraqi capital. We have the best equipped and finest trained force in the world. We owe them the best leadership.

Leaders will lead. We will enforce standards and maintain a disciplined force. Taking simple safety precautions at a clearing barrel after coming in off of a patrol isn't too much to ask.

And I'm not asking, I'm demanding. Sergeants, make it happen.

FIRST TEAM!

## Letters to the Editor

Dear Sirs,

I am writing to comment on your article, "First Time in 40 Years; 2ID Brigades Conduct Operation," on page 4 of the Jan. 8., 2007 edition of *Crossed Sabers*.

The article states that the 2nd and 3rd Brigades of the 2nd Infantry Division worked side-by-side in World War I and later in Korea, and that the Army deactivated the 3rd Brigade in 1939.

To my knowledge, this first statement is not true, and the second one is misleading. During World War I, the 2nd Inf. Div. was organized as a square division, consisting of the 3rd and 4th Brigades (according to the numbering system of the time, Regular Army infantry brigades were numbered sequentially from 1 to 50, with 1st and 2nd Brigades assigned to the 1st Infantry Division, 3rd and 4th Brigades assigned to the 2nd Infantry Division, etc.). The 3rd Brigade was composed of the 9th and 23rd Infantry Regiments (US Army). The 4th Brigade was composed of the 5th and 6th Marine Regiments. This peculiar arrangement of one Army Brigade and one Marine Brigade was arrived at in France in 1917 due to shortages in the flow of US Army infantry regiments.

After the war, the 2nd Inf. Div. retained its square structure of two brigades until 1936, when the Army selected the division as the testbed for a new triangular division concept that eliminated the brigade headquarters and had three infantry regiments reporting directly to the division commander. The three infantry regiments of the 2nd Inf. Div. were the 9th, 23rd, and 38th. This organization was declared permanent in 1939 and the rest of the Army went to the triangular infantry division structure without brigades, except a few special divisions which retained brigades (including 1st Cavalry Division). 2nd Inf. Div. fought as a triangular division without brigade headquarters in both World War II and the Korea War.

After the Korean War, the 2nd Inf. Div. moved around at various posts in Washington and Alaska. The division was deactivated in 1957 and then reactivated in 1958 at Fort Benning. Between 1961 and 1963, the Army had reintroduced the brigade headquarters into each division using the ROAD (Reorganization Objective Army Divisions). Each division was to have three maneuver brigade headquarters.

In 1965, with the activation of a new airmobile division at Fort Benning using the lineage of 1st Cav. Div. to reflag units from the experimental 11th Air Assault Division, the 1st Cav. Div. brigades in Korea were reflagged as brigades in the 2nd Inf. Div. in July of that year.

Thus, 2nd and 3rd Brigades of the 2nd Inf. Div. did not fight side-by-side in World War I, nor in Korea. The Army deactivated most brigade headquarters in 1939, including the 3rd and 4th Brigade HQs that had been under 2nd Inf. Div. The current 1st Brigade, 2nd Inf. Div., traces its lineage back to the 3rd Brigade of World War I. No other maneuver brigade headquarters in 2nd Inf. Div. traces this lineage to World War I, though some of the individual battalions in the current 2nd and 3rd Brigades do.

Respectfully,  
Lt. Col. James Raymer

Lt Col. Raymer,

Thank you for clarifying that though the units had word on similar missions, they were not truly side-by-side. With Multi-National Division - Baghdad being such a melting pot a little history can help all of our Soldiers understand the significance of being part of their division. We may be adding pages to our history book every day, but it is important to understand the chapters before us.

We look forward to hearing from all our readers. (For contact info see far left in gray box. Letters will be edited for style and length.)

Thank you for your time,  
Sgt. Nicole Kojetin  
Editor, *Crossed Sabers*

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

## CG Visits Taji

Maj. Gen. Joseph F. Fil, Jr. (center), commanding general, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, receives a mission brief from Lt. Col. Scott Efflandt, commander, 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, at Camp Taji, Iraq Jan. 10. During his trip, he also visited 1st "Ironhorse" Brigade Combat Team Soldiers from the 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment at the Mushada Iraqi Police Station.



## New Slogan Hits Cav Country

By Spc. Shea Butler  
7th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – Army slogans have come and gone.

They have adapted to the generations. You all remember “Be all that you can be” and the most recent “Army of One,” but the Army has now changed the slogan to “Army Strong” to embody the spirit and guts of the new age Army, an Army at war.

Using pictures taken from the most recent deployment to Iraq, the Multi-National Division- Baghdad now has a new retention poster.

“The poster represents all of us in MND-B. All of the division patches are shown on the poster,” said Sgt. Maj. Derek Dahlke, the division command career counselor.

The new poster is about to hit the streets of Baghdad and some of the troops are inspired by it.

“I love all of the pictures on the poster,” said Staff Sgt. Nick Strong, with Headquarters and Headquarters

Company, 1st Cavalry Division. “I am trying to get the poster as the background on my computer.”

The poster has more than just pictures. There are a few inspiring words as well.

“The most important part of the poster is the phrase ‘You can’t be replaced.’ It is true. Every Soldier, no matter what your job or rank is in the Army, you can’t be replaced,” Dahlke said.

Others have a different take on what the phrase “You can’t be replaced” means.

“Cav can’t be replaced. We are the best unit in the Army,” said Sgt. Hal Spiller, HHC, 1st Cav. Div. “The poster just makes me want to stay Cav.”

The First Team has taken a new approach on the Army Strong theme and added their own Cav touch with the phrase “Cav Tough” tagged on to the end of the Army slogan.

If Spiller’s reaction to the new poster and the new slogan are any indication, the division retention office has hit the mark as their latest product hits the streets of Baghdad.

### Authorized Space Heaters



**Fight carbon monoxide poisoning, use the correct heater.**

\*Non-standard, un-venting commercial heaters are not authorized for use under any conditions inside buildings, tents or any other enclosed areas unless approved by the first general officer in the chain of command.\*

\*See your safety office for more information.

## Baghdad News Briefs



(U.S. Army Photo)

Troops from 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment stand guard near their cache find Jan. 9 near the village of Arab Salman Salman, Iraq. The Soldiers uncovered seven weapons caches, including weapons, munitions and improvised explosive device-making materials during a combat patrol north of Baghdad.

### Troops Discover 7 Weapons Caches North of Iraqi Capital

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – While performing a combat patrol, 1st Cavalry Division troops discovered seven weapons caches and improvised explosive device-making materials near the village of Arab Salman Salman, Iraq Jan. 9.

Soldiers from 2nd Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, uncovered the caches, which included 51 rocket-propelled grenade rounds; 11 RPG launchers; two assault rifles with 13,000 rounds of ammunition; six 57mm rockets; eight plastic explosives; two 120mm artillery shells; two 137mm missiles; 225 pounds of explosives; and other IED-making materials.

An investigation is currently underway to find those responsible for stashing the weapons.



(Photo by Spc. L.B. Edgar, 7th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

Spc. Craig Morrison, emergency on-call runner, Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 15th Personnel Services Battalion, 15th Sustainment Brigade, 13th Sustainment Command Expeditionary, 1st Cavalry Division receives his combat patch from Sgt. 1st Class Zenalia Moses, a detachment sergeant, on Camp Liberty, Iraq, Jan. 6.

### Personnel Troops Earn Combat Patches

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – Soldiers of 15th Personnel Services Battalion, received their Shoulder Sleeve Insignia for War-Time Service here at the ceremony Jan. 6.

The ceremony honored the Soldiers of 15th PSB for their contribution to the on-going mission, Sgt. Randi Richards, personnel noncommissioned officer, Detachment 4, 847th Personnel Services Battalion, 15th Personnel Services Battalion, 15th Sustainment Brigade, 13th Sustainment Command Expeditionary, 1st Cavalry Division.

**Medics to the Rescue:****Three Iraqi Children, Grandfather Helped**

By Spc. Courtney Marulli  
2nd BCT, 2nd Inf. Div. Public Affairs

CAMP CORREGIDOR, Iraq - The fast actions of medics in the 1st Battalion, 9th Infantry Regiment helped save the lives of three Iraqi children and their grandfather after mortar attacks by insurgent attacks.

The aid station medics received the family and provided medical care until the four casualties could be transported for further treatment.

Sgt. 1st Class Brian W. Meade, of Elkhorn City, Ky., the medical platoon sergeant for Headquarters and Headquarters Company, was on duty when the casualties arrived.

Meade said one of the children, a 12-year-old, sustained an open fracture to his left femur. A 6-year-old received a shrapnel wound to the neck. The third child, age 12, had a wound to the left eye.

The children's grandfather was hit with shrapnel in his back, but despite the seriousness of the injuries, Meade said none of them were life-threatening.

All the medics treated each patient like they would any injured Soldier, Meade said.

"It's great," he said. "I'm proud of these guys." Meade said he is proud of his medics ability to put emotions aside when working on children. Many of them have children of their own, which can make treating a child more difficult.

Sgt. Scott E. Meyers, of Lincoln, Neb., the battalion aid station non-commissioned officer in charge for Headquarters and Headquarters Company, said everyone helps all who come to the aid station.

"We help anyone when they come in here," he said. "We fix them up and get them out."

Meyers said a lot of the professionalism in tragic situations comes from the extensive training the medics received before deploying. He said his medics are outstanding.

"We have a great team of medics here," he said. "We don't have to tell people what to do."

Meyers said approaching children when they are undergoing trauma is one of those situations. When children are brought into the aid station, Meyers said the medics talk very calmly to them.

"They come in really confused and scared," he said.

An interpreter is brought into the aid station and Meyers



(Photo by Spc. Courtney E. Marulli, 2nd BCT, 2nd Inf. Div. Public Affairs)

**Spc. Adam DeCap (left to right), Sgt. Scott Meyers, and Sgt. 1st Class Brian Meade from of medics in the 1st Battalion, 9th Infantry Regiment, saved four Iraqis with their quick actions.**

said the medics talk to the children and tell them exactly what they are about to do and if it will hurt.

"Everything went well," Meyers said of treating the children and their grandfather. "I am glad to help out. It felt good to help the civilians. It shows ... that we're here to help out. Hopefully, that will help in the community."

Spc. Adam J. DeCap, of Hillside, Ill., a treatment NCO, said he felt good after helping the three children and their grandfather.

"It shows the Iraqi people...you're here to help out in

more ways than one," DeCap said. Treating the three children wasn't an easy task, DeCap said, as he has nieces and nephews that age.

"I was an EMT (emergency medical technician) before joining the Army and working on kids has always been hard for me," he said.

It's also hard to work on children, DeCap said, because it's hard to see the damage that occurs in combat. However, when the time come to aid a casualty, DeCap said he puts his job in the forefront of his mind and goes on auto pilot.

**Honoring Our Fallen Heroes**

Sgt. Charles Allen, 296 BSB, 3rd SBCT, 2nd Inf. Div.

Spc. Luis Ayala, 2-8 Cav, 1st BCT, 1st Cav. Div.

Pfc. Joe Baines, 1-7 Cav, 1st BCT, 1st Cav. Div.

Spc. John Barta, 1-12 Cav, 3rd BCT, 1st Cav. Div. (MND-N)

Pfc. Ryan Berg, 1-12 Cav, 3rd BCT, 1st Cav. Div. (MND-N)

Pfc. Alan Blohm, HHC, 4th BCT, 25th Inf. Div.

Sgt. John Bubeck, 9th Eng., 2nd BCT, 1st Inf. Div.

Spc. Eric Caldwell, 2-8 Cav, 1st BCT, 1st Cav. Div.

Spc. Lawrance Carter, 1-18 Inf., 2nd BCT, 1st Inf. Div.

Sgt. Jason Denfrund, 2-14 Inf., 2nd BCT, 10th Mtn. Div.

Spc. Dustin Donica, 3-509 Inf., 4th BCT, 25th Inf. Div.

Spc. Scott Dykman, 1-501 Inf., 4th BCT, 25th Inf. Div.

Spc. Elias Elias, 3-61 AR, 2nd BCT, 2nd Inf. Div.

Pfc. Nathaniel Given, 4-31 Inf., 2nd BCT, 10th Mtn. Div.

Spc. Jeremiah Johnson, 3-509 Inf., 4th BCT, 25th Inf. Div.

Staff Sgt. Henry Kahalewai, 1-14 Cav, 4th BCT, 4th Inf. Div.

Pvt. Clinton McCormick, 2nd BSTB, 2nd BCT, 2nd Inf. Div.

Staff Sgt. Jacob McMillan, 3-509 Inf., 4th BCT, 25th Inf. Div.

Sgt. Christopher Messer, 4-31 Inf., 2nd BCT, 10th Mtn. Div.

Pfc. Raymond Mitchell III, 2-14 Inf., 2nd BCT, 10th Mtn. Div.

Staff Sgt. Brian Mintzlaff, 2-8 Cav, 1st BCT, 1st Cav. Div.

Sgt. Jae Moon, 2-12 Inf., 2nd BCT, 2nd Inf. Div.

Pfc. Andrew Nelson, 9th Eng., 2nd BCT, 1st Inf. Div.

Pfc. William Newgard, 1-26 Inf., 2nd BCT, 1st Inf. Div.

Spc. Curtis Norris, 210 BSB, 2nd BCT, 10th Mtn. Div.

Spc. Aaron Preston, 9th Eng., 2nd BCT, 1st Inf. Div.

Spc. Steven Raderstorf, 3-8 Cav., 3rd BCT, 1st Cav. Div. (MND-N)

Spc. Jonathan Schiller, 215 SB, 3rd BCT, 1st Cav. Div. (MND-N)

Spc. Joshua Sheppard, 642 Eng., 1169 Eng.

Spc. Richard Smith, 215 SB, 3rd BCT, 1st Cav. Div. (MND-N)

Staff Sgt. David Staats, 1-7 Cav, 1st BCT, 1st Cav. Div.

Spc. Matthew Stanley, 1-7 Cav, 1st BCT, 1st Cav. Div.

Pfc. Seth Stanton, 1-7 Cav, 1st BCT, 1st Cav. Div.

Spc. Joseph Strong, 3-509 Inf., 4th BCT, 25th Inf. Div.

Spc. John Sullivan, 2-17 FA, 2nd BCT, 2nd Inf. Div.

Spc. Douglas Tinsley, 3-509 Inf., 4th BCT, 25th Inf. Div.

Spc. Thomas Vandling, 303 TPC, DSTB, 1st Cav. Div.

Pfc. Robert Volker, 1-5 Cav, 2nd BCT, 1st Cav. Div.



(Photo by Spc. Chris McCann, 2nd PAO, 10th Mtn. Div. (LI) Public Affairs)

A humvee door is pulled off during a demonstration of the Rat Claw, a flat, steel hook developed by Bill Del Solar, the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (LI) safety officer. Del Solar, a native of Erie, Penn., developed the Rat Claw to aid in extracting Soldiers from Humvees when their doors are damaged or wedged shut, which will assist in recovering Soldiers after a roll-over.

# Safety Officer Develops Lifesaving Tool

By Spc. Chris McCann  
2nd BCT, 10th Mtn. Div. (LI) Public Affairs

CAMP STRIKER, Iraq — One of the top killers of Soldiers in Iraq isn't necessarily combat-related.

Since operations began in March of 2003, many Soldiers have been killed when they can't escape a humvee — often because it has rolled into one of Iraq's numerous irrigation canals.

When an armored truck is upside-down or on its side, it can take three Soldiers to push a door open enough to get out, and if the doors are sunken into the mud, it can be nearly impossible.

"If you go into a canal, there's a really good chance you won't come out alive," said Bill Del Solar, the safety officer for 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry).

Del Solar has been working to change that.

Because a Soldier's chances of being in a vehicle roll-over are relatively high, and the odds of making it out relatively low, Del Solar worked, during his last rotation to Iraq in 2004 and 2005, to develop what is known as the Rat Claw.

"We were having trouble with vehicles," said Del Solar, who is seeing the fruits of his labor on his second deployment to Iraq. "We saw the combat locks, and that Soldiers couldn't get out."

Combat locks keep the doors shut in the event of an improvised explosive device detonation, shielding the passengers.

But they make the door harder to open — which can be

just as deadly.

"The fire chief and I put our heads together to figure out what we could do," said Del Solar, a native of Erie, Penn. "We realized if you could get your hooks in, you could get the Soldiers out."

After some experimentation, they developed the Rat Claw, a flat, steel hook that attaches to almost anything — the humvee's built-in winch or towing hook, a chain set, or aircraft cable. One tug with another vehicle can open the door, or if necessary pull it completely off.

"If you get a little momentum, you can pull anything off," Del Solar said.

From start to finish, the operation takes less than a minute under ideal circumstances.

"In the worst case, from the time the vehicle goes into the water until they can get the door open, three minutes," he said.

The human brain can go three to four minutes without oxygen before suffering damage, he added.

"It's a reasonable amount of time for a rescue," he said.

The 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment, 2nd BCT, 10th Mountain Division had to use the Rat Claw recently when a humvee was flipped over in an roadside explosion. The doors were damaged by the force of the blast, but Soldiers were able to open the vehicle and extract their wounded comrades, including Lt. Col. Michael Infanti, their battalion commander.

"I remember I was pinned inside the truck," said Infanti, a Chicago native. "Fuel was dripping on me, I was in pain. But the Soldiers did extremely well, and the Rat Claw

worked. It took one try and I was out of the vehicle.

"Honestly, I don't know how they would've gotten me out with the equipment we had on hand, if we didn't have the Rat Claw," he said. "I will live to fight again another day."

The Rat Claw can be used to turn a vehicle over or even pull it completely out of a canal.

"We hope it will save lives by making it easier for fellow Soldiers to rescue each other," said Del Solar.



(Photo courtesy of the Multi-National Division - Baghdad Safety Office)

A humvee is flipped upside down after an accident. In instances like this the, the Rat Claw, a flat steel hook developed by Del Solar, a 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (LI) safety officer, can aid in extracting the Soldiers inside.

# Iraqi Army Celebrates 86th Birthday

By Sgt. Jon Cupp  
1st BCT, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – Iraqi Army troops teamed up with their U.S. counterparts to celebrate the Iraqi Army's 86th birthday Jan. 6 here.

Iraqi Army troops from the 2nd Brigade,



**Brig. Gen. Jamal Mal Allah Ahmed, commander, 2nd Brigade, 9th Iraqi Army Division (Mechanized) and Col. Paul E. Funk II, commander, 1st "Ironhorse" Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, share in a light-hearted moment after cutting a cake, commemorating the Iraqi Army's 86th birthday Jan. 6**

9th Iraqi Army Division (Mechanized) along with U.S. Soldiers from various military transition teams celebrated the day with speeches, food and a cake cutting.

The traditional date for the Iraqi Army's activation is Jan. 6, 1921 when King Faisal (bin Hussein) I established the first true Iraqi Army battalion, called the Musa Binja Far or "the Moses" Battalion, in Baghdad.

Iraqi Army Brig. Gen. Jamal Mal Allah Ahmed, the commander of 2nd Bde., 9th IA Div. opened the ceremony with a speech prior to a cake cutting ceremony.

"Every year we come together to celebrate and remember the history of the Iraqi Army," he said. "Today we are working with our American friends to help all of the Iraqi people. In this new year of 2007, we ask God to help us rid Iraq of terrorists, and we come together today to honor all (past and present) Iraqi soldiers and all the people of Iraq."

In addition, Ahmed said he has nothing but gratefulness and praise for the efforts of all of the people who are working "hard together," to help the new Iraqi government along by working to maintain security and stability in Iraq.

He then cut the birthday cake with the assistance of Col. Paul E. Funk II, commander, 1st "Ironhorse" Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, and a native of Roundup, Mont and the Iraqi and U.S. troops feasted on traditional Iraqi meals.

For Capt. Khalid Hassan, an engineer with the 2nd Bde., 9th IA Div., the commemoration, he said, marks a time for writing a new history for a new Iraq.

"I'm glad that our Army is making a new start, and I'm glad to work with the



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

**Brig Gen. Jamal Mal Allah Ahmed (far right), commander of the 2nd Brigade, 9th Iraqi Army Division (Mechanized) and Col. Paul E. Funk II (second from right), commander of the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, joined with Iraqi Army and U.S. Soldier as they shared in a traditional Iraqi meal in commemoration of the Iraqi Army's 86th birthday Jan 6. on Camp Taji, Iraq.**

American Army which has a very good system and very good Soldiers," Hassan said. "But the Iraqi Army needs more time to finish it's job (of transitioning). The Iraqi Army mission is very difficult but our hope is for peace for our families, our country and the same for the Americans."

Capt. Kevin Caflin, an advisor to the 9th IA Div. who belongs to the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Brigade Special Troops Battalion, spends his time working with the Iraqi troops on various force protection issues and creating engineering products

such as building training lanes, check points and training facilities for the Iraqi troops.

For him, getting the opportunity to spend time with his Iraqi counterparts during the commemoration was a worthwhile experience.

"It was a great honor to be invited here to join (the Iraqis) in their celebration," said Caflin, a native of Belvidere, N.J. "It's a great tradition being able to celebrate Iraqi history and there's nothing that compares to sharing in the camaraderie with our Iraqi brothers."



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

## Meeting the Top Of the Food Chain

Macedonian Soldiers from the Macedonian Special Forces "Wolves" Battalion met their president, Branko Crvenkovski (left) during his visit to Camp Taji, Iraq Jan. 7. Crvenkovski took the time to talk to his Soldiers, to see some static displays, present gifts to his troops, and to dine and meet with senior leaders of the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, the unit his troops work with in Iraq.



(Photos by Sgt. 1st Class Kap Kim, 2nd BCT, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)

Sgt. Maj. Jeffrey Seidel Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, hands out some candy to the local children. Seidel is part of the Infrastructure Coordination Element, which was created to help get essential services such as running water and electricity back to the Iraqi capital.

## They All Scream for ICE Team

# Black Jack Soldiers Engineer Baghdad's Future

By Sgt. 1st Class Kap Kim  
2nd BCT, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs

BAGHDAD – One the biggest efforts in rebuilding Baghdad is concentrating on the very things many have taken for granted: central services such as sewer systems; clean running water; electricity; and trash disposal.

In the past few years, many Iraqis have had to without many of these necessities.

So, the responsibility of helping bring all these services back to Baghdad has fallen on a few members of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team's Special Troops Battalion.

These members make up the Infrastructure Coordination Element. Each person was selected because of his engineering background and each are taking on a specific task.

Although 1st Lt. Andrew Webber, Headquarters Company, BSTB, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, is a chemical officer back at Fort Hood, Texas, here he serves on the ICE as a project manager for water and sewer projects. Within his duties, he deals with municipalities and help them develop plans and provides funding and a quality control team to facilitate projects.

"When the city needs something done, we develop the scope and course of action," he said. "I also give the funding and supervise [the project]."

According to Capt. Marc Motyleski, the ICE officer-in-charge, the overall purpose of the ICE is to develop, manage, and synchronize both infrastructure and large scale construction projects within the Black Jack's area of responsibility.

The ICE is also the unit's primary liaison with the Amanat, or the Baghdad City government, local district utility directors, and outside agencies.

"Ultimately, it is the ICE's responsibility to interpret the commanders' intent and develop a critical path that will accomplish the overall mission, which is to assist the Iraqi people in rehabilitating and reconstructing the city of Baghdad in order to provide the local citizens a reliable and efficient infrastructure," said Motyleski of Woodbridge, Va. "To develop that critical path the project management team is required to synchronize our own efforts with those of the local government and outside agencies. This synchronization is vital in the development of a systematic and effective reconstruction plan that will ultimately meet the commander's intent."

The ICE Team usually deals with projects around the neighborhood of \$500,000 or less, said Webber, a Raymond, Wash. native. Larger projects usually go to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

The team's mission takes them outside the wire into the many different muhalla's, or villages, to different project sites such as sewage plants, electric plants, schools, clinics, and many others.

Currently, within the southeastern part of Baghdad, the ICE is working on a landfill. According to Motyleski, it will be the largest one in the area at 12,000 square meters, and should be able to satisfy trash collection in Al-Doura and Al-Rasheed areas for a year.

It's these improvements that make the ICE Soldiers feel



A couple of young children come out to greet the Soldiers while they were inspecting a sewage pump.

good about what they do.

"It's gets me out of the FOB (Forward Operating Base) and interacting with the locals," Motyleski said. "It just makes me feel like I have an effort in building a new life for these people."

# Iraqi National Police Work as Reaction Force

## Special Police Transition Team

BAGHDAD—The Airport Road was once one of the most violent and dangerous roads in the country. Roadside bombs, small-arms and rocket-propelled grenade attacks were an everyday occurrence. Visiting dignitaries, news reporters and the soldiers tasked with providing security were well aware of these dangers along this five-mile stretch, known to the coalition forces as Route Irish.

Things began to change in late 2004 and early 2005. The coalition recognized the critical importance of this main artery between Baghdad International Airport and the International Zone, located in the heart of Baghdad. A new focus was given to clear the road of debris, reduce the number of “blind spots,” and control access to the highway. Slowly, the number of attacks on Route Irish fell until it became one of the safest and most secure, and most heavily traveled main highways in Baghdad.

It was during this time that the 1st Mechanized Brigade, Iraqi National Police took the lead in providing security along the Airport Road.

The 1st Mechanized Brigade is the heavy-hitting reaction force for the Iraqi National Police. Based in Baghdad, its two battalions use a combination of fast Chevrolet pickup trucks and heavily-armored, six-wheeled vehicles used by Army military police units, to man checkpoints and run patrols along Route Irish. But their responsibility does not stop there; the 1st Mechanized Brigade was designed to quickly deploy throughout the region to augment security operations wherever they are needed.

Colonel Emad, commander of 3rd Battalion, 1st Mechanized Brigade, is a soft-spoken, relentlessly determined, and realistic individual. He recognizes the need for a different mindset when confronting the security



(Photo by Capt. Jared Levant, 3rd Special Police Transition Team)

**Policemen from the 3rd Battalion, 1st Iraqi National Police Brigade conduct weapons training on the M2 .50 caliber heavy machinegun.**

issues of contemporary Iraq.

“We are all Iraqis fighting for the Iraqi government,” he said through an interpreter, emphasizing the need to look past sectarian divisions when it comes to performing his role in the National Police.

Public distrust for the National Police is perhaps the biggest obstacle to effective policing. The intelligence officer for 3rd Battalion, Major Hamza, agrees.

“The people should feel safe so they can come to the police when something is wrong – they must trust us before things will get better,” he said.

Over the past eight months, elements of 3rd Battalion have deployed to numerous locations both in and outside the capital to augment local security forces. They operate out of a base in southwest Baghdad but often find it difficult to patrol the surrounding

neighborhoods, either because of constant deployments or because of conflicting battlespace with adjacent units. The people respect and occasionally fear the deep rumbling of their armored vehicles’ diesel engines, but that does not always translate into trust.

Helping the unit work through these concerns is an American transition team, a ten-man coalition unit that is assigned to work directly with the battalion. Designed to mentor and assist Iraqi units as they take control of the fight, these teams reflect the full spectrum of modern military specialties:

Maj. Daniel Erker and Capt. Kelly Skrdland focus on military police procedures, and Maj. Bernard Brady and Sgt. 1st Class David Johnson teach standard infantry operations and techniques. Staff Sgts. Will Aho and Tracy Goodloe train the battalion on vehicle and weapon maintenance, construc-

tion of strong points and daily operations. Capt. Guy Malatino works on logistics, Sgt. 1st Class Billy Teague on communications, Sgt. Raymond Borrego on medicine and first aid, and Capt. Jared Levant on military intelligence.

The job is rarely as straightforward as patrolling the neighborhood. Because of its heavily-armored vehicles and non-traditional police role, the battalion must rely on traditional relationships and positive community feedback to spread word of its good reputation. Changes in mission can occur quickly and without notice.

“One day we’re patrolling a neighborhood and the next we’re told to hand over responsibility to a different Iraqi unit,” said Aho, responsible for weapons training and maintenance. “The following week our unit might have to focus on a different part of the city to help with stability operations. We know it’s all part of the game, but it makes it difficult to focus on certain types of training.”

Progress is slow, but visible.

“Traditional measures of unit progress and readiness are difficult to use here,” Levant said. “The ‘soft’ factors are so much more important than most people realize. If the Soldiers and policemen feel that their units can take care of them, they will fight. If they have a sense of direction and purpose, they will fight. If they take pride in their work, they will fight.”

Levant said very little can be taken for granted when it comes to daily operations. Even the shortest trips can be fraught with hazards, including roadside bombs, gunfire, and other dangers, reinforcing the need for a police force well integrated and responsive to community concerns.

“We’re here to help the police get on their feet, to give them the tools they need to fight,” said Johnson, the transition team’s top noncommissioned officer.

## First Class Graduates from New Iraqi Police Training Academy

**By Maj. Raul Marquez  
3rd BCT, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs**

BAQUBAH, Iraq — Approximately 125 Iraqi police officers assigned to various units in the Baqubah area, graduated from the first Iraqi Police Training Academy in Baqubah, conducted under the guidance of coalition forces from Task Force Blue and the International Police Liaison Officers, Dec 24.

“Officers from the Emergency Ready Forces, the Quick Reaction Forces, and Baqubah Iraqi Police participated in this two-week long training academy,” said Maj. John J. Herrman, Task Force Blue operations officer and a native of La Crosse, Kan. “Those officers are now ready to assume their duties as the rule of law enforcers here in Baqubah.”

The training for the officers was provided by their own Iraqi instructors and Special Weapons and Tactics team, otherwise known as SWAT, members, said Herrman.

“Instructors from the Tactical Iraqi Police Academy provided the classroom portion of the training; the range cadre taught weapons handling and maintenance, and SWAT members assisted with the hands-on portion of the training,” said Herrman. “We provided oversight through the IPLOs and our Military Police.”

Even though the training was only two weeks, this train-



(Photo by Maj. John Herrman, Task Force Blue Operations Officer)

**During a two week training camp at the new Iraqi Police Training Academy in Baqubah, an Iraqi SWAT instructor provides a block of instruction on how to acquire a target.**

ing included classes on democratic policing, the Iraqi Constitution, rule of law, weapons safety, proper firing techniques for both AK-47 and pistols, shoot and maneuver, hands-on defensive techniques, dismounted patrolling as a member of a team, mounted patrols, react to improvised

explosive devices, first aid, and entering and clearing a building, said Herrman.

He also stated that during this training, the police officers received their new uniforms and equipment officially marking their move into civil service.

“The training academy will continue providing classes every day through the end of January, and quarterly after that,” Herrman said. “They expect to have at least 25 percent of the Baqubah police force trained by the end of the third training cycle.”

“For most police officers here, this was their first formal training,” he continued. “They have been out on the streets mixing it up for years, never fully understanding the proper way to use a weapon, the rule of law, the constitution they are to support, or how to conduct themselves as a policeman.”

“We hope that the course turns out a more ethically and tactically proficient policeman, able to better enforce the laws of Diyala, and to serve and protect all Iraqis,” Herrman added.

Maj. Gen. Ghassan Adnan Awad Al-Bawi, the Diyala Chief of Police, attended the ceremony, and provided the graduates a motivational speech on the importance of training, regardless of their years of service as police officers.

The ceremony concluded with each trained Iraqi Police Officer receiving their uniform patch.

# Yusufiyah Animals Benefit from Vet Visit

By Spc. Chris McCann  
2nd BCT, (LI) 10th Mtn. Div. Public Affairs

FORWARD OPERATING BASE YUSUFYAH, Iraq — In the rural areas south of Baghdad, homes are often made of mud and roofed with sheet metal or mats made of beaten reeds. A cow or two and a flock of sheep in the yard complete the scene. But animals can get sick, and due to terrorism — whether sect-against-sect or against coalition forces — travel is dangerous for veterinarians, too.

To begin addressing this issue, the Multi-National Division — Baghdad veterinarian, Lt. Col. Neil Ahle, and several Soldiers of the 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry) conducted a veterinary operation in a schoolyard in Al-Taraq, Iraq Dec. 22.

“One problem of the country at large is the infrastructure,” Ahle said, noting that while schools are opening and water treatment plants are coming back on line, medical and veterinary care in rural areas is still floundering.

“With the lack of refrigeration, vaccines go bad,” Ahle explained. “And with the violence between tribes and sects, veterinarians don’t go out. The animals have suffered, as well as the crops. Meat, milk and wool are very big businesses here.”

Everyone pays the price for the loss, Ahle added.

“With a lack of veterinary care, the crops go down, the death toll rises (and) farmers lose money,” he said. “Maybe they can support their own family, but there’s no cash crop.”

When Ahle appeared at the Al-Taraq school with his medical kits and Soldiers of Company C, 4-31 announcing that free medical care would be given to animals, it wasn’t long before people arrived with their livestock in tow.

With no chute to funnel the animals through, separating those that had been vaccinated from those that hadn’t, the Soldiers went to work with steel pickets and engineer tape to create makeshift fences to guide the animals along.

One man brought a cow, rack-thin and blind in one eye. He asked if Ahle had medication for the eye, but Ahle had to explain through an interpreter that the eye was too far gone. He gave the cow a dose of wormer and a vaccination against some of the endemic diseases in the area.

Two shepherds brought a flock of sheep and goats next —



(Photos by Spc. Chris McCann, 2nd BCT, 10th Mtn. Div. (LI) Public Affairs)

**Lt. Col. Neil Ahle (left), Multi-National Division-Baghdad veterinary officer, gives a lamb a dose of wormer at a veterinary operation in Al-Taraq, Iraq, as an Iraqi shepherd holds the lamb still. Ahle led a veterinary operation with help from Soldiers of Company C, 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (LI) Dec. 22. Together, they treated roughly 100 animals for worms and provided vaccinations and vitamin injections.**

about 60 animals, from a full-curl ram to a tiny brown kid goat born only days before.

Ahle and the shepherds seemed to have a moment of consternation. How to get all of these sheep through the process and not get them mixed up? A moment later, Navy Cmdr. Mike Sanchez, a civil affairs officer with MND-B, had chalk to mark the sheep’s heads when they’d been treated, and the shepherd was holding up his first candidate for a dose

of wormer, vitamins and vaccine. He gamely continued, holding up each of the sheep and then the goats.

Ahle told him he had the best-behaved animals he’d ever seen, but the next batch of sheep required the assistance of some Soldiers from Co. C to keep them out of the classrooms or hold still while receiving vaccine their shots.

A cow came in that was mostly healthy except for the horn that had curled around, poised to penetrate its skull. The woman who brought it in said she did not know how to help the animal. With six Soldiers holding the animal against a concrete pillar, Ahle borrowed a pocketknife with a saw and cut off part of the offending horn. He explained that if uncut, the horn would first pinch the skin, then slowly penetrate the animal’s sinus cavity, causing pain and infection.

By noon, Ahle and his de facto assistants had treated 95 sheep and five cattle. They had trimmed hooves and horns, wrestled goats, and been dragged through the mud.

Encouraging Iraqi veterinarians was Ahle’s main goal, he said.

“Maybe by doing this veterinary care, we’ll get a vet in the area to step up,” he said. “We put a lot of effort into many areas, but pushing the Iraqi people to step up and do it — well, this is one way to do that.”

Sgt. Joseph Strauch, a radio operator with Co. C and a native of Buffalo, N.Y., helped wrestle sheep. He said he enjoyed the chance to do something different.

“It was something new,” Strauch said. “It’s not every day you herd sheep. It’s the most interesting thing I’ve done in Iraq.”

Staff Sgt. Frank Hutchinson, a squad leader with the company and a Tampa, Fla., native, said he’d never worked with sheep in his life.

“I just adapt very well,” Hutchinson said. “I just showed ‘em who’s boss!”

For the next veterinary operation, Ahle especially wants a head-chute to hold cattle still.

“When you’re dealing with a 1200 or 1500-pound cow, you’re going to go for a ride,” he said. “But I think we all had a good time. I heard more laughing than complaining.”



**A lamb receives a dose of wormer from Lt. Col. Neil Ahle, Multi-National Division-Baghdad veterinary officer, during a veterinary operation in Al-Taraq, Iraq Dec. 22. The operation, conducted by Ahle and Soldiers of Company C, 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (LI), treated approximately 100 animals for worms and provided vaccinations and vitamin injections.**

# Stryker Troops Assist Iraqis Secure Baghdad Neighborhood

By Spc. Shea Butler  
7th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

BAGHDAD, Iraq – The ramp drops, the sun rises and the troops emerge. The missions vary and everyone has a different, but equally important job. The troops on the ground in Baghdad work every job from quick reaction force to humanitarian missions.

The mission for Soldiers with Company B, 1st Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, changes daily. Everyone has a different job in the company – from driver to gunner to dismounted infantry.

Even when they are not on an official mission they wait next to their Stryker vehicles for the call to duty out on the streets securing neighborhoods and assisting the Iraqi security forces at need.

The mission for the company Jan. 4 was to provide an outer cordon in a Baghdad neighborhood for the Iraqi Army. The joint operation joining the two entities would be a search for anti-Iraqi forces and weapons.

Prior to leaving the confines of their base camp, the troops of Company B prepared their equipment and briefed each other to make sure they could successfully assist the Iraqi forces on the ground, said Cpl.

Joseph Casiano, a San Antonio native with the company.

Fourth platoon was doing oversight security on roof tops, while other platoons were assisting the Iraqi troops search houses, said 1st Sgt. Brad Kelley, a native of Grants Pass, Ore.

They didn't come away empty-handed.

"A cache of 12 rocket-propelled grenade launchers, six grenades and many small arms were found," said 2nd Lt. Jacob Czekanski, a

Silver Creek, N.Y., native. "The mission was accomplished."

After much preparation and a long day Company B and the Iraqi troops completed their mission, making a Baghdad neighborhood a little safer in the process.

"We empowered the IA and built their confidence," Czekanski said. "No one got hurt, so it was a successful day."

With the mission complete, Co. B and the Iraqi troops parted ways and headed back

to their respective base camps to plan and prepare for their next mission together.



(Photos by Spc. Shea Butler, 7th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

**Spc. David Tunstall, a native of Alexandria, Va., with Company B, 1st Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team searches the top of a vehicle in Baghdad during a joint mission with Iraqi troops Jan. 4.**



**Cpl. Joseph Casiano, a native of San Antonio, and Spc. David Tunstall, a native of Alexandria, Va., both with Company B, 1st Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, search through a bag they removed from the top of a vehicle in Baghdad Jan. 4.**



(Photo by Spc. Shea Butler, 7th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

## Trudging for a Safer Baghdad

Soldiers from Company A, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Infantry Regiment, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division trudge through the mud to find a hidden AK-47 that they watched someone drop in a field in Baghdad Dec. 22.



(Photo by Sgt. Richard Kolberg, Battery C, 1st Battalion, 7th Field Artillery Regiment)

## Steady Service... Sun, Sleet or Mud

Sgt. James Paska, from Florham Park, N.J., and Pvt. Thomas Allen, from Portland, Ore., both from Battery C, 1st Battalion, 7th Field Artillery Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, distribute food supplies to residents in a western Baghdad neighborhood Jan. 6.

# Iraqi Army leads search of Bakriya Village

By 1st Lt. Ryan Osterman  
2nd Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment

BAGHDAD – A ‘cordon and knock’ operation in Bakriya Village put Iraqi Army troops in the lead, gaining them tactical expertise as they assume greater control of a western portion of the Iraqi capital.

Members of the 1st Battalion, 3rd Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division spearheaded mission planning and execution Dec. 12, while receiving guidance from leaders and Soldiers from Company C, 2nd Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment, attached to the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division.

“(The) Iraqi Army demonstrates a genuine desire to learn from U.S. Soldiers. They are eager to conduct operations in sector and seem to be committed to making Iraq a safer place,” said 1st Lt. Erik Klapmeier, a platoon leader with Company C.

Prior to the mission, U.S. Soldiers instructed Iraqi Army troops on techniques used to enter and search a building. With new recruits arriving daily, the experience level for troops in the Iraqi Army varies. The vast majority were knowledgeable and proficient in the tasks trained, although some were



(U.S. Army photos)

**Soldiers of 1st Battalion, 3rd Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division look for contraband items while searching a home in Bakriya Village in Baghdad Dec. 12.**

being exposed to these concepts for the first time.

The training allowed the Iraqi Army to see U.S. Soldiers perform tasks and then to mimic their actions. While Soldiers were rehearsing, Iraqi Army platoon leaders were planning the upcoming mission with advice from their U.S. counterparts.

During the search, Iraqi Army leaders

were in command. They maintained control of their troops providing perimeter security while searching houses within the village.

U.S. troops were attached to each Iraqi Army element to boost their confidence and ensure mission completion.

“Watching the Iraqi Army conduct operations gives our Soldiers confidence that soon they will be able to take a step back and



**Soldiers of 1st Battalion, 3rd Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division look for contraband items while searching a home in Bakriya Village in Baghdad Dec. 12.**

let the Iraqis take control of their country,” said Sgt. Chris Schmidt, a gunner in Company C.



(Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Kap Kim, 2nd BCT, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)

Staff Sgt. Buakai Tamu, of a military transition team speaks to Iraqi Army Capt. Maafak Atiya of the 3rd Battalion, 5th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army as they patrol Haifa Street. The Iraqi Army, police and U.S. troops came together to make the street a safer home for its residents.



The 4th Squadron, 9th Cavalry Regiment's Military Transition Team has been overseeing operations performed by the 3rd Battalion, 5th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division for more than two months now.

## Iraqi Army, Police, Transition Team Work Toward Peace on Haifa Street

By Spc. Alexis Harrison  
2nd BCT, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs

BAGHDAD – Baghdad's Haifa Street used to be a very peaceful area. Children would play soccer in surrounding fields, and families would feel safe enough walk around at night.

Today, it is considered a terrorist hotbed, and there are only a few old reminders of a peaceful time long ago that sit beside the bullet-ridden buildings.

The responsibility of restoring the street back to its original peace has fallen on the shoulders of three groups.

The 4th Squadron, 9th Cavalry Regiment's Military Transition Team has been overseeing operations performed by the 3rd Battalion, 5th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division for more than two months now.

The mission of cleaning up the area is one that takes the Iraqi troops from house-to-house and from person-to-person. The soldiers spend almost everyday in the area searching for the people suspected of causing the terror.

To effectively beef up law enforcement and security in the area, another group of Iraqis stepped up to join into the fight to make Haifa Street a safer place.

On Dec. 28, the Iraqi Army battalion teamed up with police from the Al-Jeafer Police Station in a joint operation to seize high-value targets and show the locals they had a police force they could count on, said Maj. Chris Norrie, the commander of the transition team. U.S. and Iraqi troops and the police targeted an area where intelligence resources reported the wanted men were staying.

The police and Iraqi soldiers stormed the building and went floor-by-floor looking for their targets.

Unfortunately, none were found that day, but Norrie said finding high-value targets wasn't necessarily what it was all about.

The Barton, Vt. native said that the operation between the Iraqi police and army was the first step in building a relationship that would hopefully lead to future joint operations.

According to Norrie, this was the first time in more than 16 months that the Iraqi police and army have worked together in this area.

"The (Iraqi Army) and (police) are much stronger together than they ever would be if they were apart," Norrie said. "It's been a long time since IP's have done a search, a raid or

any kind of joint operation here, and they were clearly excited to be out there."

Norrie remarked about the strengths and tenacity the police seemed to carry with them.

"The IPs didn't have armored vehicles like the army had, but they were not afraid in the least," he said. "The Iraqis will take the fight to the insurgents. They're out on the streets every day despite some equipment and personnel issues, but they're out there ... going after the bad guys."

"The mission was capturing the terrorist because they are harming the Iraqi people, and we will not allow them to do it ... if God is willing," said one Iraqi police officer.

Norrie said locals in this area hadn't seen a policeman in almost two years. He said the return of the police force to one of the deadliest places in the capital could bring a renewed hope to a city torn by sectarian violence.

"We hope to build momentum from this and get the guys they're after and other guys that are doing harm in the area," Norrie said. "It's all anybody wants is to protect the local populace. That's the key."

Norrie said his team's mission is of the utmost importance.

The team works with the Iraqi army every day to ensure coalition help is readily available to aid the Iraqis in the fight against insurgents.

According to Norrie, each of the Iraqi troops take their job seriously because they just want to take the "bad guys" off the streets and restore Haifa back to the peaceful and business busy neighborhood it once was.

1st Sgt. Joseph MacFarlane, from Traverse City, Mich., said that although the roles of the army and police differ, they find a common ground in wanting to see the streets become safer.

"For the people on the street, they see the American forces, the Iraqi Army and the police working together," MacFarlane said. "It's great for them, for a sense of security. Hopefully, they will open their arms to the police force as well as the Iraqi Army."

MacFarlane said as joint operations become more commonplace, the confidence among the Iraqi security forces will also continue to grow, as the Iraqi Army, police and coalition military transition teams work together.

(Editor note: This story contains contributions from Sgt. 1st Class Kap Kim, 2nd BCT, 1st Cav. Div.)



An Iraqi Army sergeant major, of the 3rd Battalion, 5th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army, police and U.S. troops came together to make the street a safer home for its residents.



(Photo by Spc. Alexis Harrison, 2nd BCT, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)

adron, 9th Cavalry Regiment's Military Transition Team commander, Maj. Chris Norrie, speaks to an captain during a joint operation in central Baghdad. The operation marked the first time the Iraqi Army with Iraqi police to conduct a joint operation on Haifa Street in more than 16 months.



(Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Kap Kim, 2nd BCT, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)

A 3rd Battalion, 5th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army sergeant major has a 1st Cav. Div. patch on during operations on Haifa Street.



(Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Kap Kim, 2nd BCT, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)

Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army, points out where their target's house is to Sgt. Kenneth Swartwood. The Iraqi street a safer home for its residents.

(Background photo by Sgt. 1st Class Kap Kim, 2nd BCT, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)



## Progress in Eastern Baghdad

# 1-8 Cavalry Training Iraqi National Police

By Spc. Courtney Marulli  
2nd BCT, 2nd Inf. Div. Public Affairs

FORWARD OPERATING BASE RUSTAMIYAH, BAGHDAD, Iraq — Soldiers in Company A, 1st Squadron, 8th Cavalry Regiment, attached to the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, are doing their part to help the Iraqi national police eventually take over security operations

in eastern Baghdad.

Sgt. Jack G. Schnackenberg, a 1-8 Cavalry team leader, said his platoon's mission is to patrol with the Iraqi NPs and conduct searches.

"We're more like advisors to them," he said. "We offer general and fire support for their mission."

Schnackenberg, of Arkansas City, Kan., said it's been a challenge working with the national police. During the train-

ing, Schnackenberg said, interpreters are used in order to help ease the language barrier.

"When searching houses we don't have enough interpreters to go around so we point and do a lot ourselves," he said. The difference in culture has also proved to be a challenge, Schnackenberg said, as the Iraqis don't like being corrected. Still, he said he's seen improvements.

"I don't know if it was us or they just didn't want to go out (at first)," he said of the national police's hesitance to leave the wire. "They're more willing to go out now."

New Soldiers have adapted well to working with the Iraqi policemen, Schnackenberg said, as they overcome constant obstacles stemming from a language barrier and cultural differences.

Staff Sgt. Phillip B. Kendzior, the company's master gunner, said he was in charge of running the ranges where the national police zeroed their weapons. Kendzior, of Rochester, N.Y., said the first day of the zeroing range didn't go very well. But they came back the next day and stayed until they were all zeroed.

One of the positive aspects of training the national police, Kendzior said, is that it gives his troops a chance to get familiarized with the weapons Iraqis are using.

"It's really good because a lot of times if you go on patrols and find guys with AK-47s. You have to be able to clear them," he said. "It's a safety issue."

Kendzior said most of the Iraqi national police are fun to be with as they laugh and enjoy themselves. He said communication, over time, has become less of a problem. He said interpreters are used and both the Americans and Iraqis know a few words of the other's language.

Pfc. Jeromy Markin, a rifleman with the company's 3rd Platoon, said this is his first deployment and working with the Iraqi national police has been interesting.

"They were really curious," said the Phillipsburg, Kan., native. Markin added that the Iraqi National Police are pretty friendly and about 95 percent come up and talk to Soldiers.

Pfc. Philip L. McMillan, an infantryman with 1st Platoon, said he hasn't gotten a chance to work with the NPs outside the wire yet, but he has ridden around with them. "The language barrier is not bad because enough of them speak English," he said. McMillan is on his first deployment and said the cultural differences aren't hard to overcome.

"You just have to remember the small key points," he said. "That's all that matters."



(Photo by Staff Sgt. Bronco Suzuki, 982nd Combat Camera Company)

Staff Sgt. Keith A. McDonald, a squad leader for Company A, 1st Squadron, 8th Cavalry Regiment, shows an Iraqi national policeman how to properly fire a weapon.

## Pride in their New Home: Soldiers Spruce up Observation Point

By Spc. Courtney Marulli  
2nd BCT, 2nd Inf. Div. Public Affairs

OBSERVATION POINT TROTTER, Iraq - While some Soldiers in Iraq are swimming for exercise and enjoying a large dining facility, others are in more primitive areas where portable toilets are a luxury and two long tables provide the only dining area.

Soldiers in Company C, 1st Battalion, 9th Infantry Regiment have taken up residence at Observation Point Trotter and have starting giving the rundown facility a much-needed facelift.

1st Sgt. Kenneth D. Bosier, the top non-commissioned officer of the company, said the rest of the observation point has been redone to improve hygiene and make life more comfortable for the Soldiers.

Upon arriving at Trotter, the Goliad,

Texas native said there were 10-foot reeds growing out of about two feet of standing water. Besides being an inconvenience, this damp environment was a mosquito breeding ground. The water feeding the pond was leaking from the only shower trailer that was semi-operable.

Knowing that the water had to go, Bosier said his Soldiers swung into action draining the area and removing the tall reeds. Without the swamp present, the mosquitoes left and the area dried.

However, a shower was still a necessity. After looking around Bosier, found a water trailer that had been abandoned for two years.

Everything in the trailer was new - a gold mine covered in dust and mud.

"We cleaned it up and it's very nice," he said. "It even has working urinals."

Mud is always a risk - not just in trailers.

Fine dust covers Trotter and when it rains, the dust turns to a thick mud. Bosier said the previous unit had to prepare to leave on missions an hour early because they would get stuck trying to leave.

His company is working of resolving this problem too. In preparation for the rainy season, Bosier and his Soldiers constructed a wooden boardwalk that connects two buildings and the shower trailers.

The next phase is to get rocks to cover the rest of the dusty ground.

"We prepare for the rainy season so we can conduct operations in an efficient manner," he said.

That isn't the only reason for making improvements though.

"We are learning this is our home and if we don't take care of it, no one will," he said.

Many of his Soldiers are just starting to

realize that this will be their home for the next 10 months, and are beginning to take ownership, he said. Part of taking care of Trotter is daily chores such as raking and removing debris so the ground can be leveled. They are even planning on putting in a horseshoe pit.

Throughout the process, Bosier said he has learned that if things need to get done he and his Soldiers have to rely on themselves.

Bosier said the company has plenty of resources within its own ranks. Many of his Soldiers have backgrounds as certified electricians, contractors and other occupations.

When the day is done though, they do take a little time for themselves too.

For entertainment, Bosier said his Soldiers have started boxing nights, watch movies and sometimes play cards. There is also has a gym and there are plans for a volleyball court to be built.

# Mechanics Keep Troopers Rolling

By Sgt. Marcus Butler  
4th BCT (Airborne) 25th Inf. Div. Public Affairs

KALSU, Iraq – A vehicle breakdown on a major U.S. highway is an inconvenience. A breakdown on a highway or by-way in Iraq can be life-threatening. For paratroopers with Company F, 725th Brigade Support Battalion, 4th Brigade Combat Team (Airborne), 25th Infantry Division, being the oil for the gears and wheels is a way of life.

Company F is the maintenance section for the 3rd Battalion, 509th Parachute Infantry Regiment and is tasked with keeping the vehicles for the battalion mission capable.

“Our mission here is to train, deploy and employ a physically and mentally fit airborne forward support company, an FSC capable of providing maintenance, recovery and field feeding in direct support of the 3-509th PIR while maintaining combat power in an Army at war,” said Staff Sgt. Tim J. Shutters, the motor sergeant for Company F.

The structure of Company F, encompasses five major missions performed by the unit -- the shop office, recovery, maintenance, missile and communication.

The shop office is the first stop that any maintenance problem or question goes through.

“The shop office is like the ring leaders of the entire

FSC,” said Shutters. “It is the help desk counter. When a maintenance problem comes in, the shop office directs the traffic to the appropriate area.”

Depending on the particular circumstances of the maintenance issue, that particular trouble ticket could go to any of the four remaining sections.

Along with the duties inside of the maintenance section within the walls of Forward Operating Base Kalsu, the company also has duties that exceed the boundaries of the FOB and onto the streets of Iraq.

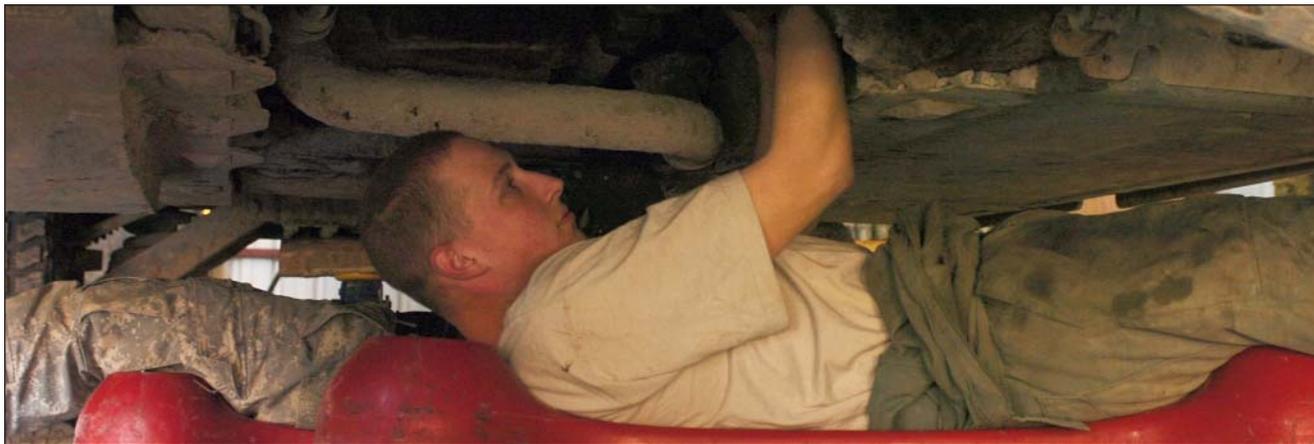
“Our recovery section goes out to retrieve vehicles that cannot be recovered by the original element. Whether the vehicle was hit with an improvised explosive device or just stuck in the mud, we go and get it”, said Shutters.

Even though vehicle maintenance is the mission for the mechanics, it starts with every single Paratrooper who starts an engine.

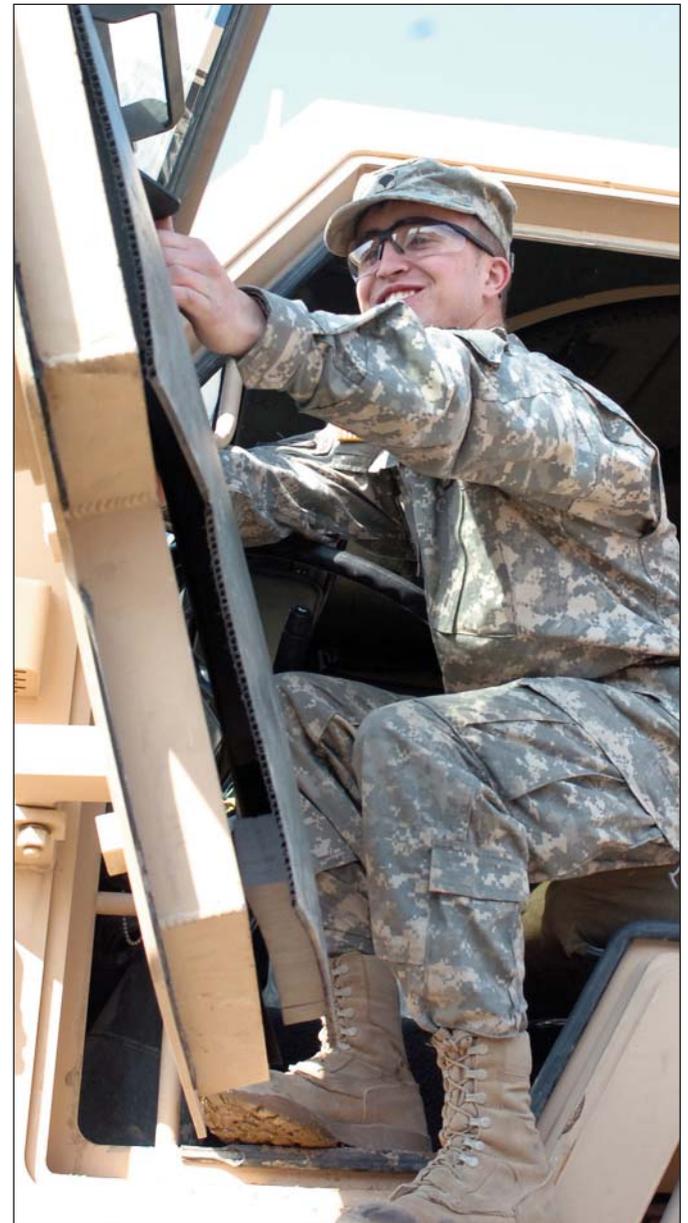
Nine times out of ten, there won't be a problem.

When there is a problem, the one-stop maintenance shop delivers.

“Keeping the vehicles on the road is our main priority,” said Shutters. “As long as we keep the vehicles moving the mission can continue. From bumper to bumper no matter the problem, we can fix it.”



Spc. Andrew Brough, from Pope Valley, Calif., works on the propeller shaft and transfer which controls four-wheel drive for the vehicle. Brough is assigned to Company F, 725th Brigade Support Battalion, 4th Brigade Combat Team (ABN), 25th Infantry Division, operating at Forward Operating Base Kalsu, Iraq.



(Photos by Sgt. Marcus Butler, 4th BCT (ABN), 25th Inf. Div. Public Affairs)

Spc. Mikeal Dupnik inspects the door of a vehicle as part of a technical inspection. Dupnik is assigned to Company F, 725th Brigade Support Battalion, 4th Brigade Combat Team (ABN), 25th Infantry Division, at Forward Operating Base Kalsu, Iraq.



(Photo by Sgt. Marcus Butler, 4-25ID Public Affairs)

Spc. Terry Foster, 4th BCT (Airborne) 25th Inf. Div. Public Affairs, stands in front of his gun truck prior to leaving the wire on a convoy re-supply mission.

## Cav Soldier Joins U.S. Army Ranks for Family

By Sgt. Marcus Butler  
4th BCT (ABN), 25th Inf. Div. Public Affairs

KALSU, Iraq - Living in a community lacking job opportunities creates challenges for the average family. Eventually, the choice has to be made to stay or to venture out of the area to improve the situation.

Spc. Terry Foster had to make that life-changing decision and chose to join the United States Army.

For the Chilliwack, British Columbia native, the military was not a completely foreign idea.

Foster previously served as an infantryman with Canadian Special Forces for three years before giving it up to pursue other avenues of employment.

“I have quite a few jobs since leaving the Canadian military,” he said. “Unfortunately, my wife, Jenny did not like living in the area we were in so we moved to another city.”

Foster, Jenny and their son Nicholas packed up and moved to another area where he took on a job with the Corps of Commissioners of Canada where he dealt with immigration, detaining individuals to turn them over to the proper authorities. It

didn't last long though.

After seven months of different jobs, Foster decided that it was time for a change.

“I started the application (process) to join the Royal Canadian Mountain Police, which is the main governing police presence in Canada,” said Foster. “It was really hard on my family, having to drive so far to see loved ones, so I decided not to join.”

That is when Foster decided to leave Canada and join the United States Army.

Originally, he wanted to join the Army as a military policeman, but was not able to receive a security clearance.

So instead, Foster became a fuel supply specialist, and after completing basic training and airborne school he reported to Ft. Richardson, Alaska. He considered himself lucky to get Alaska for a first duty station.

“It was a great thing for my family, that I was stationed at Ft. Richardson,” Foster said. “My wife's brother lives in Wasilla, Alaska, so that is less than 45 minutes away. We have a lot of good friends throughout the company and post and that makes our lives so much easier.”

But it also came with a down side.

Foster was going to be deployed to Iraq

as part of the 4th Brigade Combat Team (Airborne), 25th Infantry Division.

He took it in stride though and is now promotable.

“Spc. Foster has always been a hard worker with a good sense of humor,” said Sgt. David Tolson, fuel supply specialist and Foster's squad leader. “Now that he is able to be promoted to sergeant, I am confident in handing Foster more duties and responsibilities.”

However, Foster knows his biggest responsibility is waiting for him at home.

“My wife is obviously concerned about me being here in Iraq, but the support back home from the family support group and close family and friends are a big help,” he said.

The Spartans have been in Iraq for three months so far and Foster, like many Soldiers is looking forward to the journey home. He has a good reason.

Approximately one month ago, Jenny gave birth to a baby girl, Sabrina.

“My time over here has been bitter sweet,” Foster said. “I know I have my families support, and I can not wait to go home to them.”

# EOD Troops Work With, Train Iraqi Army Counterparts

By Sgt. 1st Class Brian Sipp  
4th BCT, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs

FORWARD OPERATING BASE MAREZ, Iraq – Soldiers from the 18th Explosive Ordnance Disposal Company, based out of Fort Bragg, N.C., assumed the role of mentor and observer to 15 troops from the 2nd Iraqi Army Division who demonstrated their abilities by conducting an



**An explosive ordnance disposal specialist with the 2nd Iraqi Army Division works side-by-side with a Soldier from the 18th Explosive Ordnance Disposal Company, to identify and remove unexploded ordnance from FOB Marez Jan. 7.**

operation to destroy unexploded ordnance Jan. 7

“We are responsible for training and certifying all of the Iraqi EOD soldiers in both 2IA and 3IA,” said Capt. Jim Hartman, commander of the 18th EOD Co. “This particular validation mission for the IA involves the removal of [unexploded ordnance] from an ammunition supply point that had suffered from an explosion and fire here some time ago.”

The 2IA soldiers began by identifying the rounds that were scattered within the debris of the ASP. Once they were identified, they were loaded onto a trailer and taken to the actual demolition site on the far side of FOB Marez for reduction.

“These troops will be conducting this disposal completely on their own, from start to finish,” said Hartman. “My guys will be observing and standing by only in case they have any questions or need any assistance. It is an Iraqi-run operation, through and through.”

“The 2IA soldiers here today are all Level 3 certified,” explained Capt. John Engroos, a member of the 2IA Military Transition Team living with the soldiers at their base in Al – Kindi. “During instruction in Levels 1-3, the Iraqis are taught everything from basic explosive characteristics and capabilities, to the proper identification of rounds. It fully qualifies them, after successful validation, to execute UXO reduction independently and handle all matters pertaining to proper handling of explosives. Level 4 instruction is the final phase of training and is conducted at a school in Basra. It involves the procedures of traveling on-site and han-



(Photos by Sgt. 1st Class Brian Sipp, 4th BCT, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)

**Two Iraqi explosive ordnance disposal specialists with the 2nd Iraqi Army Division work on preparing the reduction of unexploded ordnance Forward Operating Base Marez Jan. 7.**

dling discovered IEDs in the field,” added Engroos.

The 2IA currently has five troops attending Level 4 training and several more scheduled for the next class. The end state, according to Hartman, is a fully-qualified team within the Iraqi Army that can independently operate and eliminate the IED threat posed to Iraqi Security Forces, Iraqi civilians, and Coalition troops.

“The 15 IA soldiers we have here are all very well trained at executing the tasks; they are very professional,” said 1st Sgt. Eugene Salet, 18th EOD Co. After the old mortar

and artillery rounds were unloaded at the detonation site, the 2IA soldiers stacked them into two piles and placed C-4 charges on them to complete the reduction. The two stacks were necessary because of safety limitations in place regarding the size of controlled detonations, said Hartman. Once they were rigged, the IA troops and their Coalition counterparts moved a safe distance away on the other side of a hill and activated the explosives, eliminating the old munitions. An immediate post-blast analysis of the area was conducted to visually determine if everything had been reduced successfully.

## Cav Teaches Iraqi Security Forces Advanced First Aid

By Sgt. Paula Taylor  
4th BCT, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs

COP NIMUR, Iraq—Troops from 3rd Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, attached to the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, spent four days training Iraqi security forces in first aid, and provided them with some advanced medical techniques at Combat Outpost Nimur, beginning Dec. 26.

One of the instructors of the course was Sgt. Richard Kyle, combat medic, Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 3-4 Cav, a unit based out of Schofield Barracks, Hawaii. “We were teaching them the Combat Lifesaver course,” he explained. “This was an initial introduction to first aid for them. Most of them have never experienced any of this, so they were pretty excited to learn.”

Kyle said they organized the course so that basic instruction would be given in the morning and that they would break into smaller groups for hands-on, practical exercises in the afternoons.

“After each block of instruction, I had my group pair up, then they were given scenarios and tasks they had to practice on each other. I walked them through exercises, like splinting a fracture, and let them try it on each other. When they did it correctly, they would switch roles and do it again. If they didn’t do it correctly, I would make sure they understood what they did wrong, then they would get to do it again.”

Some of the classes taught were treating abdominal, head and chest injuries, splinting fractures, applying pressure dressings and tourniquets, how to stop a patient’s bleeding, treating for shock, and airway management, he said.

For the airway management class, Kyle said, they first



(Photo by Sgt. Paula Taylor, 4th BCT, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)

**A Headquarters and Headquarters Troop combat medic, Sgt. Richard Kyle, 3rd Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, helps Iraqi Army soldiers properly insert J-Tubes, a device to help keep an injured person’s air way open, during combat life-saver training at Combat Outpost Nimur Dec. 29.**

taught the group how to check for a pulse. “Some of the students had never (learned) how to check for a pulse,” said Kyle. “They were all anxious to learn.”

Once they learned about checking for a pulse and were taught the head-tilt, chin-lift method of opening an airway to restore breathing, Kyle said the students were shown how to insert a J-tube into an unconscious patient.

The J-tube can be inserted into a trauma victim and left temporarily unattended so care can be given to a more critical patient, Kyle said, which is one of the reasons why it is

important to learn.

“American Soldiers normally don’t want to practice with the J-tube because it is inserted into the throat to keep the airway open which causes a gag reflex,” said Kyle. “Some of the Iraqi students wanted to try it. It’s not dangerous, just uncomfortable, so we let them practice on each other.”

At the end of the course, each student was issued a certificate of completion, written in both English and Arabic, and signed by the squadron commander.

Kyle said teaching this course was something the B Troop commander, Capt. Samuel Benson, wanted to do for the Iraqi security forces.

The 3-4 Cavalry medics will next be in the process of training the ISF medics to teach this course. Kyle said his unit plans to teach this course again around Jan. 22 with the Iraqis in the lead. “We will help them teach the course, but mostly it will be them. The goal is for them to one day be able to teach CLS on their own.”

Another Soldier, who assisted in the class, said he knows the training the Iraqi security forces received was invaluable.

“The Iraqi Forces were eager and willing to learn,” said Spc. Lucas Oppelt, combat medic and South Bend, Indiana, native. “With the integration of combat life-saving skills into their training, they will be confident in each other’s abilities to save lives on the front line.”

Kyle agreed with Oppelt and said he enjoyed spending time with the Iraqis. “I had a really good time teaching them. They asked a lot of questions, were attentive and excited to be learning something new. With these new life-saving skills that the Iraqi Army soldiers are starting to acquire, they will be better suited to help save their fellow soldiers in combat. I’m glad to have been a part of that.”

## ***\$1 million and counting***

# Air Cav Troops Tally \$1 Million in Bonuses

By Sgt. Robert Strain  
1st ACB, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – Nearly three months into its Iraq deployment, the 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, is looking like a million bucks.

At least the Soldiers are.

With just about three months of the year-long deployment complete, the Warrior Brigade has reenlisted more than 120 Soldiers and given away more than \$1 million in reenlistment bonuses since the start of the deployment in October, according to Sgt. 1st Class Melissa McNorton, the brigade's senior career counselor.

Although there is a limit for the individual Soldier, the brigade has no limit as to how much it can give away in bonuses, McNorton said.

"[For] each Soldier, the max bonus is going to be up to \$15,000," McNorton said. "But, not everybody gets \$15,000."

McNorton, a Charleston, S.C., native, explained that the amount the Soldier receives is based on a number of factors, such as the amount of time remaining on the Soldier's current contract at the time of reenlistment, the Soldier's rank, and the additional amount of time he reenlists for.

Not every Soldier is in it for the money however, they have other options as well. The can reenlist to stay at their current duty station, choose another duty station, either in the U.S. or overseas, or to change their job, said McNorton.

"A lot of them like where they are, so a lot of them reenlist to stay at Fort Hood,

[Texas]" or to stay in the 1st Cavalry Division, McNorton said.

According to McNorton, the unit in the brigade with the most reenlistments so far is the 2nd Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, which has had 33 Soldiers, or 34 percent of their goal, reenlist thus far.

The 2-227th's senior noncommissioned officer Command Sgt. Maj. Francisco Melo said many of his Soldiers reenlist because they like the leadership of their chain of command as well as the hard work of the battalion's retention noncommissioned officer.

Some Soldier's reenlist for other reasons entirely, such as Sgt. Jose Ramirez, a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter crew chief with Company A, 3rd Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, who reenlisted last month to give something back to the country.

Ramirez was born in Mexico, but he grew up in Paramount, Calif.

"I chose to reenlist because being from another country and coming to the United States, I realize how much this country has done for me and my family," he said. "It's given us a better lifestyle, a better way of being, and I just felt indebted to the United States of America."

Ramirez's family also felt good about his decision to stay in the Army.

"My wife enjoys the military lifestyle," said Ramirez. "She wants me to make it a career and go ahead and retire."

Ramirez said he plans to do just that.

With \$1,154,215 given out in reenlistment bonuses as of Dec. 21 and nearly 30 percent of the fiscal year's mission met, the brigade is well on its way to meet this year's



(Photo by Sgt. Seanta Herndon, 3rd Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment)

**Sgt. Jose Ramirez, a Paramount, Calif., native and UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter crew chief with Company A, 3rd Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, takes the oath of enlistment, administered by Capt. Lee Evans, the commander of Company A and native of San Antonio, during his reenlistment ceremony here at Camp Taji, Iraq, Nov. 17.**

retention goal, McNorton said. She doesn't expect it to be too difficult to meet this fiscal year's mission, because new assignment options will open up in January.

"We've had a lot of Soldiers tell us that they're waiting to get movement options, meaning [permanent change of station] either overseas or to another stateside assignment," McNorton said.

There are three different types of Soldiers who are eligible to reenlist. The initial-term Soldier is on their first enlistment, while the mid-careerist has reenlisted before, and the careerist is a Soldier who will have more than 10 years of service at their end of

term of service date, or ETS date.

The 1st ACB has had more initial-term Soldiers reenlist to date and is looking for more mid-careerist Soldiers to reenlist, McNorton said.

That doesn't mean, however, that every Soldier is eligible to reenlist.

McNorton explained that the Soldier's commander must determine, based upon regulations, whether or not the Soldier is eligible. If a Soldier is pending an adverse action or has a bar to reenlistment for example, they are ineligible. Once the commander has evaluated the Soldier, the retention office is there to facilitate the reenlistment.

## Aviation CSM is Coach, Role Model for Soldiers

By Sgt. 1st Class Rick Emert  
1st ACB, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – Following in the footsteps of a past brigade command sergeant major is difficult enough.

But the top noncommissioned officer of the 1st Cavalry Division's 1st Air Cavalry Brigade took that position Nov. 15 – the day the brigade assumed authority of the Multinational Division-Baghdad aviation mission in Iraq from the 4th Infantry Division's Combat Aviation Brigade.

Command Sgt. Maj. Scott Spiva, a native of Sutter Creek, Calif., replaced Command Sgt. Maj. Donald R. Sanders.

"[Sanders] built a good team," Spiva said. "He put a lot of Soldiers in the right places and built a fine team. I plan to continue fine tuning that as the mission here requires."

Spiva is no stranger to the 1st ACB; he was the top NCO of the 1st Air Cavalry Brigade's 4th Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment – previously the 1st Battalion, 501st Aviation Regiment, 1st Armored Division, based in Hanau, Germany.

Those who know him and those who have worked for him say the enlisted Soldiers from the brigade have, in Spiva, a role model who lives and breathes the Army values.

"He is the epitome of what a Soldier is," said 1st Sgt. J. D. Sellers, a native of Ballston Spa, N.Y., and the acting command sergeant major for 4-227th. "He lives the Army Values and instills pride in the Soldiers working for him, the Soldiers



(Photo by Spc. Nathan Hoskins, 1st ABC, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)

**Command Sgt. Maj. Scott Spiva, the top enlisted Soldier for the 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, addresses Soldiers at the brigade's newcomer's briefing, Dec. 20 at Camp Taji, Iraq.**

he mentors and even Soldiers that he comes in contact with. He is definitely a lead-from-the-front NCO."

"His standards are the Army standards; he has always been a firm believer in the Army standards," said 1st Sgt. Mark Wouters, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 4-227th.

Sellers said Spiva expects no more – or no less – than

what he himself gives to the Army and the 1st ACB.

"He expects the Soldiers of the 1st ACB to live the Army Values, abide by the Soldiers' Creed and Warrior Ethos, take pride in the Warrior Brigade and always do what is right," Sellers said.

Although he has stepped up to brigade level, his expectations of Soldiers are the same.

"He is a fair and honest guy – as a command sergeant major should be," Wouters said. Wouters, who hails from Martinstown, Mo., knew Spiva when he was a first sergeant in Germany. "I knew that he would bring outstanding leadership and guidance as our [battalion] command sergeant major, and he was everything that I expected. He treated everybody equally."

"The [4-227th] Soldiers all liked him, because he was a fair individual. If we didn't meet his standards he would let us know. He corrects you if you do something wrong, but when Soldiers do something good, he is the first one there to praise them."

With a month as the brigade's top NCO behind him, Spiva said he likes what he sees in Soldiers from the Warrior Brigade.

"We have great Soldiers with great training and motivation," Spiva said. "They are [working hard] to get the mission done. The great leaders and Soldiers of the Warrior Brigade are all pulling their share of the load to make our mission here successful."

## Yuletide Yam Cram

# Soldier Chokes Down Pounds of Sweet Potatoes

By Spc. Nathan Hoskins  
1st ACB, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – “I would like some yams with a side of yams and some yams with that, as well. If you could just give me a huge can of yams, I’ll be set.”

Not too many people will make this request. Aside from it not being very healthy, it really does not offer a wide variety for the palate. But what if it was for a higher cause? What if someone said you would make some children’s lives a little better by consuming some yams – a lot of yams.

That happened to Island Lake, Ill., native Sgt. Thomas Noga, an early warning system operator for Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division.

“We were having a gift exchanging party in the tactical operations center. When I went up to claim my prize, I had a captain approach me before I got to open it,” he said.

That gift turned out to be a large – 42 ounces large – can of yams. Then the challenge was announced.

The challenger, a captain from HHC, 1st ACB, told the Soldiers in attendance that Baker Victory Services, or BVS, a nonprofit special education school for students with severe emotional and behavioral disabilities, had sent out 10 care packages full of goodies, and he had received one.

The challenge from the captain was if whoever received the can of yams could eat the entire seven servings contained inside within two minutes, then the captain would add another \$200 to the amount he was already donating to BVS, said Fort Washington, Md., native Sgt. Teri Parker, an intelligence analyst for HHC, 1st ACB.

The captain wishes to remain anonymous due to his charitable donation, but he said his gift at the exchange was giving someone else the opportunity for an act of generosity.

“It was based off whoever picked up the gift so it could’ve been anybody. It just happened to be me,” said Noga.

“We were hoping for Sgt. Noga to actually get it and he pulled it! That’s the funny part of it. We know he loves those eating games,” Parker said, while laughing.

As luck would have it, Noga was one of the very few that could have accomplished this task within two minutes, said the captain.

“I thought [the challenge] was just hilarious because

everyone knows in the TOC that there’s only one person that can do something like that, and that’s me. No one can match my eating ability – so that was fate,” said Noga.

What made the challenge all the more interesting was that Noga had never eaten yams in his entire life, he said.

“I had never had yams [prior to this]. I pretty much knew kind of what they were ... I’ll say this, I’ll never have them again,” Noga said.

The day came for the challenge and Noga was ready.

He donned his fancy trash bag bib, stood on a floor mat and took the stance of a fighter willing to risk losing his lunch for charity.

Then he was signaled to start and the time began to count down.

“After the first bite I knew I was going to have a hard time with it. They were nasty. They were lukewarm. They were horrible,” said Noga.

With time dwindling down, Noga faced the temptation to give up.

“I got to about a minute and thirty seconds and they were counting off the time and I still had a bit left. I was like ‘I don’t know if I can do this,’” Noga recalled.

Like a good Soldier, Noga drove on despite the adversity, said the captain.

“The American Soldier will never cease to amaze you. I guess it was a show of selfless service ... or maybe it was personal courage, too,” the captain joked. “He was just slopping it and shoveling it in there.”

“I had already gagged about seven times and everyone saw it and they were starting to gag [as well]. Finally, with thirty seconds left, I’m like, ‘I’ve gotten this far! I’m going to finish this!’” Noga said.

And he did finish. With only three seconds remaining, Noga consumed the full seven servings of yams.

Even though this meant that the captain had to give up more money, it did not faze him whatsoever.

“It felt good to watch him do it. I was rooting for him. I was that much poorer because of it, but I was still richer for the experience. I attribute it to the American Soldier,” said the captain.

In this situation everybody wins. The Soldiers are receiving support and in return, they are supporting others, he said.

This challenge brought on two great aspects: it boosted the morale of the Soldiers and it raised money for a good



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

**Although he had never eaten them before, Sgt. Thomas Noga, an early warning system operator for Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, eats a seven-serving size can of yams in two minutes to help raise money for Baker Victory Services.**

cause in the states, said Parker.

Other Soldiers gave to the cause as well, submitting donations to the BVS through the captain who sent one lump-sum check.

## ‘Warrior’ Commander Recognizes Excellence in the Ranks

By Spc. Nathan Hoskins  
1st ACB, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – Although Christmas has come and gone, Soldiers of the 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, are still receiving gifts, but these “gifts” were in recognition for superior service.

Traverse City, Mich., native Col. Daniel Shanahan, commander of the 1st ACB “Warriors,” 1st Cav. Div., awarded 25 Soldiers with his brigade-commander coins during a recognition ceremony at the Command Sgt. Maj. Cooke Dining Facility, Dec 26.

Every battalion was represented at the ceremony, with each Soldier hand-picked for standing out in their work ethic.

“You can tell your mom and dad that your commander is proud of what you are accomplishing over here in Iraq,” said Shanahan to those in attendance.

Shanahan, a graduate of the United



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

**Soldiers of the 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, eat lunch while their commander, Col. Daniel Shanahan, speaks to them about duty, honor and country in a coining ceremony.**

States Military Academy, talked about the motto “Duty, Honor, Country,” and how it pertained to those Soldiers sitting in the room

at the time. Although many Soldiers have been coined before – and those times may be special to them – for some, this was the first

ceremony where they were presented coins in front of their peers.

“I’ve gotten a coin before, but never in a ceremony,” said Fuquay-Barina, N.C., native Pfc. Erica Avent, a paralegal specialist for Headquarters and Headquarters Company.

Avent was recognized for creating legal assistance brochures that were so good that division requested use of them in their own offices and throughout the rest of division, she said.

“I feel like I work hard ..., but I’ve never really received an actual physical token of someone’s appreciation,” said Avent. “By getting the coin, it lets me know that someone does recognize that I do work hard and that I take my job seriously.”

The ceremony was held because there are great things being done every day by Soldiers in all of the units, said Shanahan. The ceremony will be held monthly to recognize Warrior Brigade troops who go beyond the call of duty, said Shanahan.

# Soldiers Celebrate 3 Kings Day in Iraq

By Pfc. William Hatton  
7th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – Imagine just two weeks after Christmas getting together with friends and family, singing songs, exchanging gifts and eating wonderful dishes. These traditions are common on Three King's Day every year in Puerto Rico.

This year, Soldiers from the 130th Engineer Battalion, a National Guard unit from Puerto Rico, celebrated their festive holiday while deployed to Iraq Jan. 5.

Three King's Day is a holiday that pays respect to the kings who visited Jesus Christ when he was born, said 1st Sgt. Juan Alicia, the top noncommissioned officer for Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 130th Eng. Bn. One of the traditions of the holiday, Alicia said, is to place fresh cut grass and water underneath children's bed.

When children wake up in the morning the three kings leave gifts under the bed, like the way Santa delivers presents, said Edwin Rancel, a native of Arecibo, Puerto Rico, with HHC, 130th Eng. Bn.

The grass and water is for the king's camels, and the gifts given from the kings, to show their gratitude, he added.

"One thing to know about Puerto Ricans, is that from Thanksgiving Day to mid-January is one gigantic party," Alicia said, a native of Caguas, Puerto Rico.

A fun custom that Puerto Ricans often observe is going door-to-door very early in the morning singing songs and playing instruments, said Spc. Jeremias Sanchez, HHC, 130th Eng. Bn.

"Being woken up by your friends isn't always great, but the fun part is waking them up the same way the next morning," he added.

"When you get visited by someone singing early in the morning, once they're done you go with them to the next house," said Alicia. "Sometimes a group will start with just a few people, but by the end of the singing and visiting with friends there will be like a hundred people with you."

Food also plays a central part in the festivities, Alicia



(Photo by Pfc. William Hatton, 7th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

**Soldiers from the 130th Engineer Battalion, from Puerto Rico, dish out traditional food in celebration of Three Kings Day at Camp Liberty, in Baghdad, Jan. 5. The traditional Puerto Rican holiday is filled with singing, dancing and eating.**

said.

"One of the biggest parts of the holiday is cooking great meals," Alicia said. "We ordered 10 pigs from Germany so we could celebrate the holiday right." Roasting pigs is a must during the festivities, he added.

As these Puerto Rican troops spend Three King's

Day away from home, efforts to make the holiday meaningful and fun are very important, said Sanchez, a native of San Sebastian, Puerto Rico.

With the festivities and traditional Puerto Rican food served, the Soldiers were able to take a break from the hardships of deployment and feel a little at home.

# FRG Leader's Idea Brings Coffee From Home

By Sgt. Staff Sgt. Angela McKinzie  
2nd BCT, 10th Mtn. Div. (LI) Public Affairs

CAMP STRIKER, Iraq — Soldiers from the 1st Squadron, 89th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (LI) gathered for the grand opening of "Cuppa Joes" at Camp Striker, Iraq on Dec. 24.

Cuppa Joes first started off as an idea for a simple coffee shop, but turned into much more, incorporating the strength of Soldiers with the love from home.

"Cuppa Joes was an idea that was born to me when my husband and I were thinking about what we could have done (for the Soldiers) during his last deployment,"

said Andrea Aitken, the 1-89 senior family readiness advisor, and native of Tulsa, Okla.

Aitken's idea allowed families to focus on something other than the deployment — a project that would boost the morale of the Soldiers and provide them with a comfort of home in a foreign land.

"One of my friends, Anna, was committed to helping on the home-front," Aitken said.

Just a couple of months before the



(Photo by Staff Sgt. Angela McKinzie, 2nd BCT, 10th Mtn. Div. (LI) Public Affairs)

**Pfc. Victor Calhoun (left), a truck driver with the 1st Squadron, 89th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (LI) and a native of Macon, Ga., and Pvt. Jonathan Ballenger, a mechanic with 1-89 and native of Prattville, Ala., sing Christmas carols at the grand opening of "Cuppa Joes" as Sgt. Richard Relyea (right), a 1-89 missile repairman looks on.**

squadron deployed, a new chaplain joined the team and took the idea of Cuppa Joes to Iraq.

He immediately began getting supplies such as wood, hammers and nails to make the coffee shop a reality for the Soldiers. He

also recruited 1-89 Soldiers to help build the shop.

"I helped to gather the supplies for the shop, but the Soldiers built it," said Chaplain (Capt.) Danny Wilson, the 1-89 chaplain and native of St. Joseph, Miss. "But it was the

FRG that gave us the idea."

Although "Cuppa Joes" was intended to just be a coffee shop, Command Sgt. Maj. Fred Morris, the 1-89 command sergeant major and native of Port Charlotte, Fla., envisioned something more, which led to the addition of a television screen, games and snacks at the shop.

Having free food and coffee will give Soldiers who are on missions during dining facility hours a place where they cannot only eat, but relax.

"It is kind of like we have a morale, welfare and recreational center right here," Morris said.

After the shop was officially opened, Soldiers poured in to taste the coffee and took time to sit and relax with one another.

"It is nice to have this coffee shop right here ... we do not have to walk across the camp to get a cup of coffee," said Pfc. Jonathan Crump, a personal security detachment gunner with 1-89 and native of Joliet, Ill., as he sipped on a cup of coffee.

Although the Soldiers actually built the coffee shop, the support from home allowed the Soldiers to enjoy the coffee for free. All of the coffee and condiments were donated by the friends and families of 1-89.

## 'Braves' Signal With More Than Smoke

**Sgt. 1st Class Nick Conner,  
15th SB, 13th Sus. Command Public Affairs**

CAMP TAJI, Iraq— In the beginning, there was dust. There wasn't much else; just an officer, a first sergeant and a piece of paper.

Out of those humble, if not hectic beginnings, a company was born. As with all births, there was yelling, pleading and somewhere down the line, a smack and a cry.

Bravo Company, 15th Brigade Troops Battalion, 15th Sustainment Brigade, 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) began as most new Army units do: as a briefing slide. Army modularity restructuring created the need for a main communications hub at the brigade level.

Captain Jason Nunnery, a former division telecommunications officer, found himself in command of something unique.

Given less than a year from creation to deployment, it

was an opportunity to build something from the ground up. "I was excited. [This command opportunity] doesn't happen every day."

The "Braves" also carried to war the new Joint Network Transport Capability system. The first of two units to receive the JNTC, Nunnery worked to prepare his fledgling command to fill the gap left by the Army's departure from signal battalion assets.

Planners created the system with a "moving-forward" Army in mind. The concept integrates mobility and technology. Satellite communication trailers and commercially proven digital routers provide speed and better security features. The captain pointed out that everything now is digital; nothing is analog.

The new unit, new equipment and new mission missed the last element; new Soldiers. From January to March 2006, B Co. Soldiers spent well over 2000 man-hours learning network security, KU satellites and Joint Network Node sys-

tems. "We had equipment, but didn't know how to use it," laughed the commander.

First Sergeant Robert Knight, the company's telecommunications operations chief, sent every arriving Soldier to training; regardless of their job. With 17 years of signal experience, he realized the benefits cross training affords.

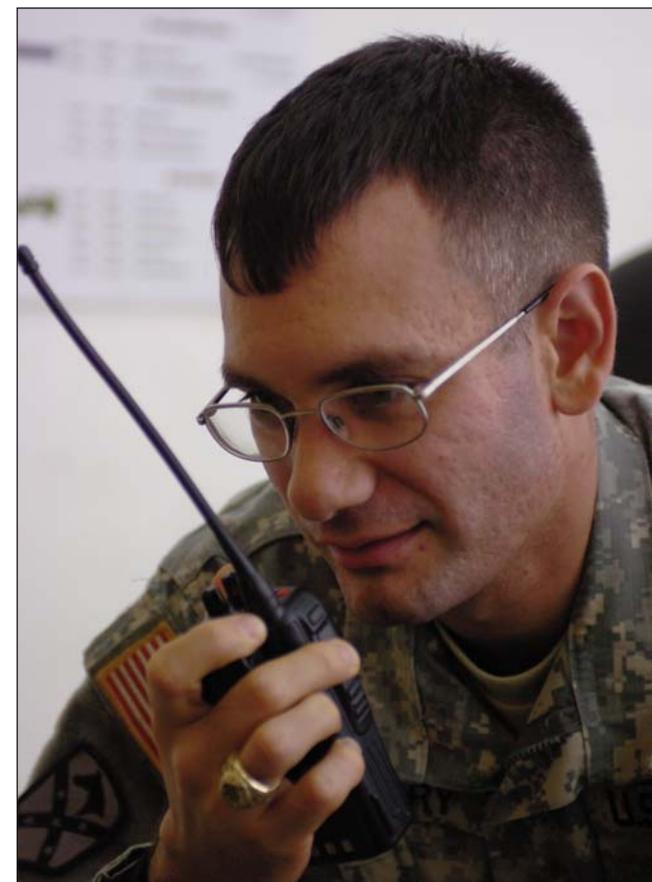
"You've got to cross train", he said. "It gives you piece of mind knowing you have someone to fill in if you need it."

Soldiers of the unit make history every day. Under the 13th SC(E), Nunnery's unit is the first to field and deploy the new JNTC system. A fact neither he nor his first sergeant can mention without a smile.



(Photos by Spc. Karly Cooper, 15th SB, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)

Sgt. Nicanor Amezcquita (left), a radio operator from Harlington, Texas and Pfc. Robert Floyd (right), a signal support systems specialist from Willows, OR, check to see if their phone communications equipment is performing properly Jan 4. Both Soldiers belong to Co. B, 15th BTB, 15th SB, 13th SC(E).



Capt. Jason Nunnery, Commander, B Co., 15th Brigade Troops Battalion, 15th Sustainment Brigade, 13th Sustainment Command (E), checks on his Soldiers progress by radio. The Manning, SC native built the unit from the ground up in less than 12 months for it's deployment to Iraq.

**FIRST TEAM  
POWER THOUGHT**

**I CAN SAVE MY OWN LIFE**

<p><b>WHAT DOES IT MEAN ?</b></p> <p><b>Risk Management</b> I am responsible for my own safety both on and off duty, on and off post.</p>	<p><b>WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT ?</b></p> <p>Because I AM important My family and friends love me My unit needs me My nation is depending on me</p>
<p><b>Risk Factors</b> Fatigue Trying to drive too far without rest</p>	<p><b>Risk Factors</b> Aggressive Driving Speeding and driving too fast for the conditions</p>
<p>Seat Belts - ITS THE LAW Soldier and Leader Indiscipline - Not enforcing published laws/regulations/procedures/standards</p>	<p>Drugs and Alcohol - State law and UCMJ</p>

Poster by 1CO P

**YOUR EAGLE CASH CARD**

**DON'T LEAVE YOUR TRAILER WITHOUT IT!**



(Photo by Pfc. Jeffrey Ledesma, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)

Denver native Pvt. Brad Thornburg and Pvt. Michael Ferreira, a native of Springfield, N.J., enlisted in the Army last year as fire support specialists. They've been together since airborne school. Both are now serve in Baghdad in the Multi-National Division – Baghdad headquarters at Camp Liberty, Iraq.

## In New Army, Traditional Values Still Cherished

By Pfc. Jeffrey Ledesma  
1st Cavalry Division Public Affairs

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – Despite the many dangers that lurk behind abrupt corners, wait idly underneath the fine sands and come falling from the gray sky, two forward observers with Headquarters Company, Division Special Troops Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division, know why they have their boots on the ground in Iraq: the Soldiers right beside them.

Although it has been said numerous times before by Soldiers throughout history, Pvt. Michael Ferreira agreed that when the rubber meets the road, he doesn't fight for politicians. He fights for his battle buddies in the dirt right next to him. The native of Springfield, N.J., said that although it's somewhat cliché, it's true.

His battle buddy sees things the same way.

"There's a certain honor that comes with combat; doing everything you possibly can to protect the guy next to you," said Pvt. Brad Thornburg, a 20-year-old from Denver.

The relative safety of working at the division's headquarters building sometimes leaves these two young Soldiers wanting something more. When Thornburg enlisted in August 2005 he wanted to be a combat Soldier. About a month later, Ferreira raised his right hand and swore in straight out of high school.

They both signed up to become fire support specialists despite their recruiters throwing other options onto the table. Before they found themselves in cavalry country, they were at Fort Sill, Okla., where the boom of artillery rounds is commonplace.

Ferreira admitted that, being in a combat arms specialty, he has a certain inner desire to be a part of the fight. The pair now finds themselves working side-by-side in the headquarters of Multi-National Division-Baghdad.

Ferreira said that as someone who wears the Army uniform he worries about the troops that are out of the wire facing the possibility of death each day. Thornburg confessed that although he thinks that it's terrible that so many Soldiers have made the ultimate sacrifice in this war, he would jump at the first opportunity to go outside the wire.

Ferreira, 19, added that if he could do something that would help his fellow Soldiers get back to base safe and alive that's what he'd like to be doing.

"It doesn't matter if it's an earth-moving mission to deliver world peace or to just transport air conditioners to another (forward operating base)," said the youngest Soldier of the division's fire support cell. "I just want to be out there."

"I'd probably take a bullet for this guy," Ferreira said about Thornburg, a battle buddy since airborne school. "[For] most of the guys in my section there wouldn't even be a thought of whether or not I'd put myself in harms way in order to save their lives."

Thornburg said that there is something that pulls combat arms Soldiers toward the heat of battle. The camaraderie is evident.

"It's the reason we signed up for this," Ferreira said.

## Radioman Providing Security in Iraq

By Spc. Shea Butler  
7th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

BAGHDAD – He is used to spending the holiday season tailgating around a bonfire with friends and family, where every breath is seen in the Oklahoma winter sky. However, this year he spent the days leading up to the holiday season with thick glue-like mud caked on his boots and a heavy radio strapped to his back as he searched homes in Baghdad.

Spc. Tyler Knight with Company A, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Infantry Regiment, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, along with the rest of his company spent the few days prior to Christmas looking through Baghdad homes for anti-Iraqi forces and weapons.

Knight wasn't forced to be here. He chose it. He signed a four-year contract to join the Army in August 2004, during a time of war.

"It sounds cheesy, but I joined because I knew either we were going to bring the fight to them or they were going to bring it to us," Knight said. "I want to protect my family from having to see war. That's just the truth."

Though he missed his family during the holidays he was happy they made it back to Camp Striker before Christmas Day so he could call and e-mail his family, Knight said.

"I know I can't be with my family right now, but these guys are close enough," the 21-year-old explained. "There are so many different personalities, but when it comes down to it, I know they have my back."

Knight's role during missions is to stay vigilant and aware of the battlefield so he can report all activity to higher command. He is the platoon's radio transmission operator.

"We report everything that happens in our area from caches to enemy fire," said Knight, a native of Ponca City, Okla.

"The best part of my job is when we come across large caches and stuff like that," Knight said. "It makes me feel successful when we find weapons. I feel like we are accomplishing something."

Not every mission ends in a large cache find, but intelligence is always being gathered.

"The worst part of the job is waiting," Knight said. "We are trained for action. We are at our best when disaster hits. When we don't find anything, anxiety sets in



Spc. Tyler Knight, a native of Ponca City, Okla., with Company A, 2nd battalion, 3rd Infantry Regiment, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, carries extra weight of the radio on his back while pulling security for his buddies as they search a home in Baghdad for insurgents.

and we are waiting for the worst."

When Knight isn't deployed or actively engaged in Army duties you can usually find him fishing. The youngest of three brothers, Knight said he is looking forward to going on mid-tour leave soon to get back to what he enjoys the most, the three 'f's' – family, friends and fishing.

When he heads back to Oklahoma for leave he will also get to meet the newest addition to his family for the first time, a new nephew, Knight said.

Knight wasn't the first in his family to live the military life. His grandfather is a Korean War veteran. Knight said he hopes to make his grandfather proud with his own military career.

Though the war now has much more media coverage than the Korean War, Knight doesn't want his family to know every detail. He said it is more important for America to know that the war is being taken care of by professional people, like him, who want to be here.



(Photos by Spc. Shea Butler, 7th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

Spc. Tyler Knight (left), a native of Ponca City, Okla., with Company A, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Infantry Regiment, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, holds the radio and pulls security outside a house in Baghdad as 1st Lt. Ryan Harbick, a native of Fresno, Calif., with Company A, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Infantry Regiment, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, calls up information to the command on the radio Dec. 22. Soldiers spent the days leading up to Christmas searching houses in Baghdad for any anti-Iraqi forces and weapons.

# Videoconference Unites Soldier With Family

By Amanda Kim Stairrett  
Killeen Daily Herald

FORT HOOD – As Sgt. Troy Lewis Sr.'s family walked down a hall in 1st Cavalry Division headquarters Dec. 29, a wooden door at the end swung open.

"There he is!" said Laura Clark, Lewis' fiancée, as she gasped and covered her mouth.

At the front of the room, the sergeant's smiling face filled a large video screen.

Troy Jr., Lewis' 6-year-old son, spotted his dad and the excitement began. For the next 15 minutes, the room was filled with ecstatic chatter from Laura; Troy Jr.; Elizabeth Long, Troy Jr.'s mother; Erin Clark, Laura's 4-year-old daughter; Jonathan Reed, Laura's 6-year-old grandson; and Thomas Long, Elizabeth's husband, a retired Army major.

Lewis deployed in October to Iraq with the 2nd Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division; this was the first time he was able to see his family, although they have communicated by phone.

"This is the best thing I could get," Lewis said, with a wide grin.

Troy Jr., Elizabeth and Thomas traveled to Fort Hood from their home in Houma, La., to participate in the videoteleconference. Laura, Erin and Jonathan live in the area.

Troy Jr. thought that his dad was waiting for him at Fort Hood and Elizabeth had to explain the videoteleconference to him.

Topics during the video meeting ranged from gummy eyeballs to Christmas to bowling. It was a flurry of noise and action while the three children shouted into a microphone and Lewis, who appeared just as excited, answered their questions.

The videoteleconference was special for the sergeant, who only found out about it the



(Photo by Steve Traynor, Killeen Daily Herald)

**Tears mixed with joy as the family of Sgt. Troy Lewis said their goodbyes during a video Teleconference with the 1st Cavalry Division soldier at Fort Hood, Dec. 29. Lewis is currently deployed in Iraq, and the teleconference allowed his ex-wife, Elizabeth Long of Houma, La, left, his son, Troy Jr., bottom right and his fiancée Laura Clark and her grandson, Jonathan Reed to see him for the first time since he deployed.**

night before.

"I'm so glad that you guys did this," he said later. "This is a surprise." Lewis let the kids know that he has just received two packages from the family. One of those contained a Web camera so they wouldn't have to go to First Team headquarters every time they wanted to see Lewis.

Fort Hood families have corresponded with their soldiers by videoteleconferences for several years, and several families were at the headquarters building.

The process involves setting up a cam-

era and audio line at a site in Iraq and Fort Hood. Those are then linked to provide instantaneous communication, though the sites are thousands of miles apart.

The technology is advanced, but sometimes, like Friday afternoon, isn't fast enough to keep up with excited, chattering children who bombard a soldier with questions. For Christmas, Troy Jr. sent his dad a stocking full of interesting candy: gummy worms, eyeballs and bugs.

"Aw, that was good," Lewis said, laughing, when Elizabeth and the kids asked if he

received them.

Elizabeth said before the videoteleconference that Lewis had a dry sense of humor and had offered some of the gummy eyeballs to a few reluctant Iraqis.

When time began to run out, it fueled another round of quick-fire questions and last shouts of "I love you" and "I miss you."

At nearly the last minute, Troy Jr. remembered what he was wearing.

"Daddy, I'm in my uniform!" he shouted.

"Oh, let me see," his father asked. The camouflaged boy got shy and didn't want to stand up, so Thomas shouted, "He looks just like you, Troy!"

When it was time to end the conversation, the sergeant reluctantly left the microphone, but came back several times for more words for his family.

"God bless you. Thank you so much, everybody," he said.

"I'll call you," he promised his fiancée, whom he will marry during mid-tour leave in March.

Tears streamed down Laura's face as she walked back down the hallway leading away from the giant video screen.

"This meant a lot to him," she said.

The two women discussed the sergeant as they stood in the lobby of the headquarters building, chatting about how healthy he looked.

This was the first time everyone – former wife, future wife, children and stepchildren – were together. That made his day, Elizabeth said, and when it makes his day, it makes other soldiers' days.

Knowing that the family gets along and provides support to each other makes it easier for Lewis during this deployment, Laura said. She has received most of her information about Lewis from him and Elizabeth. Laura hopes to get on the Family Readiness Group's notification list soon, but until then, relies on Elizabeth for information and support.

## Cav Officials from Fort Hood Visit Wounded Soldiers

By Amanda Kim Stairrett  
Killeen Daily Herald

SAN ANTONIO – Popeyes fried chicken might not be a big deal to most people, but the comfort food was a welcome treat Jan. 8 for several wounded soldiers at Brooke Army Medical Center.

Making it more special still was the delivery team – Col. Larry Phelps, 1st Cavalry Division rear commander and Wendy Fil, wife of Maj. Gen. Joseph F. Fil, commander of the 1st Cavalry and Multinational Division-Baghdad.

The two and others from the Fort Hood community, including Col. Duane Brewer, rear chaplain; retired Brig. Gen. Art Juno and the wives of the First Team's other two generals, traveled to Brooke to meet with the wounded Soldiers.

The trip to Brooke was part of a regular visit Phelps tries to make weekly.

Saturday's special delivery was a follow up on a previous request.

"They really don't want you to do anything," he said of the usual responses he gets from the soldiers. So, on a previous trip Phelps changed his question, "What can I bring you?"

The answer? "Popeyes chicken, sir." Phelps was glad to oblige.

He said the trips to Brooke are important because they



(Photo by Travis Bartoshek, Killeen Daily Herald)

**Col. Larry Phelps, right, talks with Wendy Fil, wife of 1st Cavalry Division commander Maj. Gen. Joseph F. Fil Jr., before visiting wounded soldiers at Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio.**

show the injured soldiers that somebody cares and that their leaders are still monitoring the progress of 1st Cavalry soldiers. The soldiers they visited this trip had received wounds ranging from lower extremity injuries to burns. The visits are a morale boost for soldiers, Phelps said, because when they find out a general's wife has come to check on them, they understand that the division still feels they're important.

Wendy Fil looks at each of the soldiers like they are her kids, Phelps said, and one of those visited Saturday told her

to tell the general, "Hi."

Not every soldier Phelps and his team meets are 1st Cavalry soldiers, but all fall under Multinational Division - Baghdad, which the 1st Cavalry leads in Iraq. Of the seven on Saturday, three were from 1st Cavalry units.

Phelps said a majority of the 1st Cavalry soldiers injured in Iraq are sent to Brooke. But he also plans to visit wounded soldiers at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C., next week when he travels there.

The visits also provide a means for the soldiers to keep connected – asking questions about the continuing mission and their comrades. Phelps said that asking what's on soldiers' minds usually brings a common response.

"The first thing they always ask is how their buddies are, and what their units are doing," he said.

The bond between "those kids," the soldiers, is stronger than the injury that takes one out of the fight, Phelps said. "They need to know what is going on and how their fellow soldiers are doing without them."

The wounded soldiers are fighting just as hard, if not harder, than the soldiers downrange, he said.

Phelps said checking in on the wounded soldiers and seeing their determination is the "single most morale-boosting thing" for him.

"It's just hard to walk out of there thinking about yourself."

# Care Package Strikes a Chord with Cav Troops

By Spc. Nathan Hoskins  
1st ACB, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – Soldiers of 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division have received care packages from all over the United States. Some contained candy, some contained cards and letters of support and some even had movies and electronics inside. There is one organization, however,

that sends the gift of music.

Operation Happy Notes does not send music albums or stereos; they send musical instruments – most notably acoustic guitars – to Soldiers serving their country overseas, said Killeen, Texas, native Chief Warrant Officer 3 Kimo Hansen, an AH-64D Apache maintenance test pilot and armament platoon leader for Company B, 1st ACB.

Hansen said he received two brand new

acoustic guitars through the request of Killeen, Texas, native Sgt. 1st Class Thomas Kingery, the brigade aviation maintenance noncommissioned officer for Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st ACB, after he heard about the nonprofit organization by word-of-mouth.

Kingery, a self-proclaimed novice guitar player, believes that music and the ability to create and play music lifts the morale of

Soldiers while deployed. Thus, he requested 12 guitars as soon as he heard of Operation Happy Note.

“For anyone who is even a novice, music builds morale greatly, even if it is for a few minutes. Music is personal to people ... just by sending instruments [the organization helps Soldiers] express themselves,” said Kingery.

Because Kingery and Hansen shared a common bond as musicians, they have talked often throughout the deployment. Hansen mentioned a band he had during Operation Iraqi Freedom II that was getting together again for this deployment.

“At first I didn’t have a plan on who would get them,” said Kingery. “When I heard that the band was starting up, I decided that they could do more good in their hands than in the hands of an individual Soldier.”

The band, Last Ditch Effort – or soon-to-be Last Ditch Effort Revival, is becoming an entity once more because of the interest expressed by Soldiers who deployed to Camp Taji during the division’s last rotation to Iraq, Hansen said.

Though he is the drummer for the band, Hansen originally borrowed one of Kingery’s donated guitars. Now he has two.

“They’re brand new guitars and I’m just totally amazed and overwhelmed by the contribution of free, new guitars like this. It’s awesome,” said Hansen.

Putting the guitars in the hands of band members benefits those who play them and those who are entertained by them at shows, Kingery said.

Although still looking for guitarists, Hansen said his band should be entertaining troops by spring.

Kingery is still on the waiting list for the 10 other guitars he requested, but is not disheartened at all. He said he’s grateful for the two already shipped.

“I want to thank Operation Happy Note for their time, energy and effort,” he said. “Words can’t express the gratitude I have for their kindness.”



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

Chief Warrant Officer 3 Kimo Hansen, an AH-64D Apache maintenance test pilot and armament platoon leader for Company B, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, tunes one of the new guitars donated to his band in Camp Taji, Iraq. The instruments were donated by Operation Happy Note, an organization dedicated to giving instruments to Soldiers deployed overseas. Hansen is from Killeen, Texas.

## ‘Sideways’ is Backwards from Normal Temperaments

Let me start by saying... alcohol is a depressant. In American culture we tend to think, “Man, what a (enter explicit here) bad day, I need a drink.”

But having that drink can actually make your outlook on life worse. If you didn’t believe that before, you will after watching *Sideways*, a wayward movie about a struggling writer/English teacher trying to get through a mid-life crisis..

There. Now do you feel better about only being able to drink near beer?

OK, back to the movie review. Our lead character, Miles, played by Paul Giamatti, is a wine connoisseur of sorts. He can tell you every little thing about the grape, the vineyard and the aging process with just a sniff. He loves the stuff.

However, he is in a serious rut. He is trying to get a book published but mostly, Miles is just depressed. He is gloomy and dull and is not interested in the opposite sex since his, oh so, heartbreaking divorce.

His pal, Jack, played by Thomas Haden, is quite the

### Random Reviews

Sgt. Nicole Kojetin



opposite. Jack is about to get married, and wants one last romp of freedom. Seriously, it doesn’t matter what the women look like.

Let me put in a side bar here and step up onto my soap box. I, a married woman of four years, do not understand how cheating on your significant other right before you get married is a going

to resolve any wildness.

Maybe, just maybe, if you have to urge to sleep with every woman with two legs you should, I don’t know... NOT get married.

Stepping down now....

Back to the story, Jack and Miles go on a road trip through wine country stopping and tasting a little more than just wine on the way. Well, Jack does at least.

They team up with two other wine lovers of the female persuasion and things start to get a little crazy.

Until the females got added into the mix I kept asking

myself, “Why am I watching this movie?”

But the outrageousness has begun; I will just share the highlights. Jack’s play thing of the moment, played by Sandra Oh, has a bit of a temper. The best part of the entire movie, was when Jack was getting beat with a bike helmet by her.

I also enjoyed watching Miles trying to get drunk at a winery and the waiter only giving him a taste, or a mini shot, of wine at a time. When he didn’t get his way he dumped an entire planter of wine over his head while trying to drink the massive flood.

It was knee slapping hilariously outrageous, and I would watch the entire movie again just to see that one part again.

I have had moments where I have hit breaking points where it would have been great to just freak out and do something of those sorts. You know... you have bad service at a restaurant so tackle the waiter pro football-style. Can you imagine the release?? Fun.

But don’t add alcohol. It is dangerous.

Honestly, this movie starts off a little slow but the craziness toward the end makes up for it. (3 out of 5 stars!)

# Former Football Star Leads Celebrity Visit

By Maj. Sean J. Ryan  
2nd BCT, 2nd Infantry Division PAO

FORWARD OPERATING BASE LOYALTY, Iraq – While many people back home are preparing for the New Year going to parties or getting ready to watch the ball drop in New York's Times Square on television, deployed Soldiers here were looking at another "Groundhog Day" of missions. Fortunately, two former football stars, one weatherman and one television actress had another mission in mind – visiting Soldiers over the holiday season.

FOB Loyalty, a small base camp in eastern Baghdad, was the last stop on the two-day Morale, Welfare and Recreation-sponsored tour, but easily the most anticipated. Soldiers from the 2nd "Strike Force" Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division eagerly welcomed their first distinguished visitors from the civilian world.

The welcomed guests included former football stars Jim McMahon and Kevin Butler, actress Karri Turner of "JAG" fame and CBS "The Early Show" weatherman Dave Price. Accompanying them were CBS cameraman Robert Laforty and tour coordinator Judy Seale.

Soldiers not on missions came in droves to see two members of what many experts call the best Super Bowl team in history, the 1985 Chicago Bears. Jim McMahon, the brash and cocky former Brigham Young star, was the free-spirit quarterback who gave new



(Photo by Maj. Sean J. Ryan, 2nd BCT, 2nd Infantry Division PAO)

**Former football stars Jim McMahon and Kevin Butler share a photo with Spc. Aaron Holker, a Vikings fan from Minneapolis serving with the 2nd "Strike Force" Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, during the "Ring in the New Year" celebrity tour at Forward Operating Base Loyalty in east Baghdad Dec. 31. Both players were part of the 1985 Super Bowl Champion Chicago Bears.**

meaning to wearing sweatbands, as he put them on his neck, elbows and forehead.

While greeting Soldiers, McMahon was still wearing his trademark sunglasses that many felt added to his cocky reputation as a player.

McMahon signed pictures, footballs and ensured all Soldiers who wanted pictures with him received them. The former Comeback Player of the Year and two-time

Super Bowl champion said he was grateful for the opportunity to see all the Soldiers and looked forward to returning.

Spc. Aaron Holker, a native of Minneapolis, and an admitted Vikings fan, was excited despite the fact the two teams are division rivals. Holker, a forward observer for Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, said it was great they are taking their time to sup-

port the troops, and that it was a huge morale boost for everyone on the FOB.

The other member of "Da Bears" was former kicker Kevin Butler. Butler, who starred at the University of Georgia, was a rookie on the 1985 team and the first and only kicker ever to be inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame.

Butler said he was honored to get a chance to meet Soldiers and see first hand their sacrifices. Butler's son is one of the top place kickers and punters in the nation at the high school level and said he was amazed at the competence level of our young Soldiers only a year or two older than his own son.

Butler, who played 13 seasons in the NFL, said he was amazed at the progress the military has made in Iraq and felt proud of every Soldier here. Both Butler and McMahon ensured everyone who took a picture with them wore Butler's Super Bowl ring which was a huge hit with the crowd.

The vivacious Turner, who played Lieutenant Harriet Sims Roberts for nine seasons on the hit series "JAG," is on her sixth tour overseas to visit with troops. Turner broke into Hollywood after attending the American Academy of Dramatic Arts and first signed on for the sitcom "Wild Oats." She later gained fame in her role in "JAG" and most recently appeared in two episodes of the new series "Heroes." Turner said she is honored to spend time with troops and even gives some proceeds from her on-line store to help families affected by the war.

## Failure From Forecasting, Final Four Futures Foretold

Today's sports column is brought to you by the letter F.

After chowing down over the holidays, my festive season ended with the Bowl Championship Series national championship game, where the Ohio State Buckeyes were chomped by the Gators from Florida, 41-14.

My last holiday meal ended up being crow, as I wrongly predicted Big Ten dominance in the big game. Having spent several column inches of valuable newspaper page recounting the many virtues of the Buckeyes' players and their level of excellence while totally disregarding the eventual national champions, I must now admit the error of my ways.

I had some humble pie for dessert. I was wrong.

It didn't help that my boss is a Gator alumni who came up behind me as I edited yet another article following the game, slapped me on the back and said, "How 'bout them Gators?!"

"I told you so," he implied.

I could only shrug my shoulders, sigh a defeated sigh, and cast a glance at the next big sporting event that I hadn't yet predicted an outcome. Having already picked the Colts over the Seahawks in the Super Bowl, which doesn't look like a safe bet for either to get to the big game (at the time of this writing), let alone win it, I now cast my gaze and amazing prognostication ability upon March Madness and the college basketball scene.

I like four teams so far. Call them my 'Final Four' picks, for now. They are: Florida, North Carolina, Duke and Wisconsin.

With six losses, the Florida Gators finished last year with an 11-0 run to take the national title. All five starters are back

### Trigger Pull

### Master Sgt. Dave Larsen



from that championship team. They remain the team to beat. Can Florida repeat? With potential NBA lottery picks Joakim Noah, Al Horford and Corey Brewer back in the fold and head coach Billy Donovan calling the shots, many would say, "Sure, why not?"

Not so fast.

Though none of their star players exited early to NBA millions, winning the NCAA tournament twice in a row hasn't been done since Duke did it more than a decade ago, in 1991-92. Despite two early losses already this season, the Gators have moved up to a number two ranking in the USA Today Coaches' Poll, behind the 14-1 North Carolina Tar Heels, though they never fell far from their pre-season number one ranking.

None of the Top 25 NCAA Division I men's basketball teams are undefeated at the midway point this season. The Tar Heels, sitting at number one at press time, have lost only once – Nov. 22 to Gonzaga, a team which has fallen out of the rankings altogether, but will easily win the West Coast Basketball Conference title and end up back in big dance in March.

The Tar Heels look good, and they have an All-American candidate in 6-9 sophomore forward Tyler Hansbrough, but they are relying on youth to carry them this season. They may not be the biggest winners on Tobacco Road, let alone the NCAA tournament.

The Blue Demons from Duke always seem to find a way to win, and win big in crunch time. A recent loss to Georgia Tech on a neutral court knocked the Dukies down to a number 11 ranking nationally, but a 13-2 record speaks volumes for Mike Krzyzewski's coaching prowess in what would be a

down year for anyone else. Like the Tar Heels, Duke is led by a sophomore big man, Josh McRoberts.

Don't count them out.

My final favorite to go all the way come tournament time are none other than my 'Homies,' the Wisconsin Badgers.

Who?

Bo Ryan is the finest coach in NCAA basketball who no one has heard of, unless you follow the Big Ten and watch as his inferior, non-blue chip, prodding players out-hustle, out-wit and out-last their opponents.

The Badgers usually don't win pretty. They play a half court game and beat up their opponents on the glass while playing a stifling man-to-man defense. They are mostly slow and methodical in their approach, but they are led by senior forward Alando Tucker, who led the Big Ten in scoring last year.

Tucker came back because nobody heard of him, either, especially in the NBA, so he's back to prove he's ready for the big time and the big bucks.

The NCAA tournament, unlike the NBA play-offs, is filled with upsets, Cinderella stories (remember George Mason last year?) and David-Goliath story lines begging to be told. The biggest difference between the college game and the pros is the variety in offensive and defensive philosophies employed by its coaches. Not every team can run-and-gun, not every team can rebound effectively, not every team can nail a clutch three-pointer, yet nearly any team can win on a given night.

Sixty-five teams will make the NCAA tournament field again this year. Some giants will fall and Cinderella will make it to the ball, and sooner or later the wheels fall off as her coach turns into a pumpkin.

I can't wait.