



The Long Knife

A MAGAZINE BY AND FOR THE 4TH BCT, 1ST CAVALRY DIVISION



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Inside this issue



Army Pvt. Garnett Wooten, D Company, 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, from Fort Bliss, Texas, provides security for his platoon in Mosul, Iraq, while they search for bomb-making materials used against Coalition Forces. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Vanessa Valentine)

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COVER PHOTO: Military police platoon leader, 1st Lt. R.J. Henderson, Special Troops Battalion, uses his portable radio to contact other members of his team at the Iraqi-Syrian border March 21. Henderson is one of several MPs stationed at Combat Outpost Heider helping the Point of Entry Transition Team train Iraqi border security officers. (U. S. Army photo by Sgt. Paula Taylor)

BACK COVER PHOTO: U.S. Army Spc. Patrick Read, D Company, 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, from Fort Bliss, Texas, provides security for his platoon while they patrol a neighborhood looking for information about a suspected terrorist, Mosul, Iraq. (U.S. Air Force Photo By Staff Sgt. Vanessa Valentine)

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A message from Long Knife 6



I know that everyone is aware of the recent news of the tour extension from 12 to 15 months. While the increase of time away from family and loved ones is always difficult; the decision will ultimately prove beneficial to both the Soldiers on the ground, as well as to those who will follow us.

The extension will help sustain the units in theater. This is especially relevant to those units currently



supporting the “surge” that is quietly and steadily improving security in Baghdad. It will allow the Army to support the 20 brigade goal of the surge as long as it’s needed.

The Army’s immediate goal is a one-year “dwell time” at home for redeploying Soldiers to reintegrate with their families. This one year will provide unit commanders with a predictable window of time where they can restore their units – train, maintain, and reset equipment – to required levels of readiness, as well as restoring quality of life for Soldiers and families. Every unit will know, plus or minus a day or two, when they are redeploying.

It is important to understand that the decision was not made lightly by Secretary of Defense Gates, and is necessary for us to accomplish our mission here. We are engaged in improving security for the Iraqi people, allowing time for the Iraqi leaders to pursue political solutions to some very tough issues as well as craft the framework for the next step forward for this country.

For our Long Knife Soldiers, know that Command Sgt. Maj. Frennier and I are extremely proud of your professionalism and motivation; you are the reason for the brigade’s success here and the difference we are making for the Iraqi people.

For all of our loved ones back in Fort Bliss and El Paso, and in hometowns across the U.S., we cannot do what we do without your tremendous support and understanding. Your strength inspires us and makes our job here easier.

A message from Long Knife 9



On the heels of the recent announcement of our extension, I would like to take the time to thank everyone for their continued support and understanding. When we deployed, we came here to accomplish a mission, and the Army has made the decision that we need to stay a little longer than 12 months to accomplish that mission. Thankfully, the announcement came early-on in our deployment as opposed to waiting until the end. I applaud our troops for sustaining their high level of moral and understanding. More importantly, I appreciate the support of our Long Knife family members who are waiting for us back home.



I encourage everyone to remain vigilant in your jobs and to maintain the safety standards of this brigade throughout our deployment.

This includes using the personal protective gear issued to each of you, such as neck protectors, gloves, eye protection and hearing protection.

In addition to your PPE, leaders must emphasize the importance of combat locking the doors of our humvees when we roll outside the gate, and each person riding in the vehicle must continuously scan their sectors to avoid improvised explosive devices, the number one killer in Iraq.

Seat belts are mandatory on any military installation, in any type of vehicle, in garrison and while deployed. Personnel not in compliance with the policies and rules are violating an important safety standard.

Finally, I would like to emphasize the importance of muzzle awareness and weapons safety. Negligent discharges can lead to the death of Soldiers and damage to equipment. Soldiers should be continuously checking the safety switch on their weapons. When your weapon is on red status, it is each individual's personal responsibility to ensure their fingers are not on the trigger unless they are engaging the enemy.

It is imperative that all weapon systems are properly cleared after returning from missions outside the Forward Operating Base—as the majority of negligent discharges occur because of improper clearing procedures.

Please stay safe and continue your hard work, dedication and commitment to excellence. I am very proud to serve with you.

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK



As an Army journalist, every day is an opportunity to meet some pretty extraordinary people. Sometimes, oftentimes, I think I have the greatest job in the military. I get to travel around and talk to Soldiers of all ranks, throughout the Ninewa Province. I get to learn about any military occupational specialty I want. People ask me, 'What's it like being a journalist?' and 'Do you like your job?'

Truth is, I get to do things and go places other's don't. Most Soldiers are experts in their field, but that narrow scope is all they know. I get to experience a little bit of everything. I've traveled with the infantry, seen cavalry scouts in action, walked the beat with military police officers, and have spent time at the range with the tankers while they fire their cannons. I've ridden in Bradley fighting vehicles and Strykers, and flown in Blackhawks and C-130s. I've sat down with a mortuary affairs specialist who shined a light on the darker side of the Army few people want to hear about. I've trained with combat medics and have gotten to know quite a few mechanics.

Each of my experiences have taught me more about the Army and how it all works. Each MOS is just one small piece of the puzzle. I've got a long way to go to being able to see the whole picture, but the journey along the way is going to be well worth it.

I just want to say, to everyone I have met, thank you for letting me share a piece of who you are; thank you for making my job the greatest job in the Army. It is an honor to tell your stories.

2-12 Cavalry holds free health clinic in Baghdad

STORY BY 1ST LT. NICHOLAS P. PAOLINI

2nd Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment

BAGHDAD, Iraq—Iraqi Army and Multi-National Division-Baghdad Soldiers put smiles on kid's faces during a health clinic operation. The clinic treated over 200 Iraqis from all over southern Ghazaliya, a neighborhood in northwestern Baghdad.

While the Iraqi Army provided security, the 2nd Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment medics screened the Iraqis to determine their health needs. If care was required, the battalion's physician's assistant, 1st Lt. Luis Lozada, examined the patients. The brigade dentist, Capt. Matthew Phillips, was also present and serviced any dental requirements.

Since the make-shift clinic was at a school, the Soldiers took the opportunity to help the school kids out by donating school supplies. Teamed up with the Iraqi Army, the Soldiers gave out pens, pencils, paper, backpacks, soccer balls, newspapers, and various other items.

Company D, 2-12 Cav. came well-stocked with boxes of medical supplies to provide care for the Iraqi people. The boxes consisted of ibuprofen, bandages and other medical supplies. The company also treated Iraqis with a variety of health problems, varying from eye and skin issues to ear infections. The Soldiers even gave out prescription medications for Iraqis with diabetes and hypertension.



(U.S. Army photo by Spc. Christopher Lopez)

Dental Capt. Matthew Phillips inspects an Iraqi boy for cavities during the health clinic operation held in southern Ghazaliya that treated over 200 local people.

Soldiers train, keep aircraft safe

STORY AND PHOTO BY SPC. DANIEL BEARL

25th Combat Aviation Brigade Public Affairs

TAL 'AFAR, Iraq—As aircraft move from base to base throughout Iraq, a certain group of Soldiers are constantly at work to ensure the safety of their pilots, crews and passengers.

Perched in towers and mobile tactical traffic control stations, they track aircraft and weather over Coalition air strips.

At war, but ever safety minded, air traffic controllers from F Company, 3rd Battalion, 25th Aviation Regiment, and D Company, 1st Battalion, 14th Aviation Regiment, perform the vital task of keeping the runway at Forward Operating Base Sykes running smoothly.

“The biggest thing for us is keeping aircraft separated and making sure they land safely,” said Sgt. 1st Class Robert Walter, the noncommissioned officer-in-charge of the air traffic control tower at FOB Sykes.

From the vantage point of a metal and glass tactical control tower situated on top of a Saddam-era bunker, the Soldiers scan the surrounding airspace for aircraft, monitor radios, and frequently check and update the weather conditions around the base.

“We’re responsible for all aircraft in a five-mile air zone,” Walter said.

The long stretch of runway that extends left and right of the tower handles traffic from all types of aircraft.

“We see everything from C-130s, UH-60s [Blackhawks], and OH-58D [Kiowas]. Basically we have a combination of fixed wing and rotary wing type traffic,” Walter said.

The tower also employs a mix of Soldiers from different units. The 3-25 Aviation Regiment is an active duty unit that falls under the 25th Combat Aviation Brigade and based out of Wheeler Army Airfield in Hawaii. The 1-14 Aviation Regiment comes from the Arkansas National Guard.

Mixed in are troops from other National Guard units who volunteered for the deployment.

“I was supposed to go to college,” said Spc. Jonathan D. Braden, an air traffic controller from the Tennessee National Guard. “But I decided to volunteer to deploy

with these guys instead.”

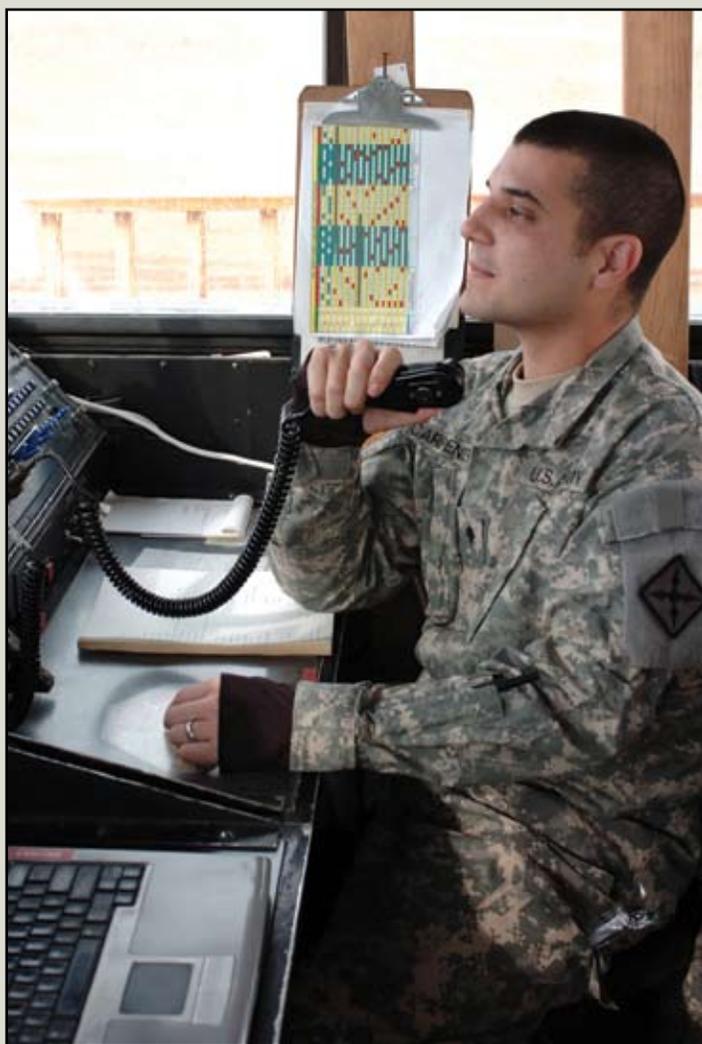
Because it is in a combat situation, the control tower at FOB Sykes operates tactically. The difference between a normal, fixed-base tower operation and a tactical operation lies in mobility.

“Fixed base is like some place like San Antonio International,” Walter said. “It’s a set facility.”

A tactical control tower, however, can be operated from something as mobile as the back of a humvee, provided the operators have the right radio equipment.

“You can roll out and it’s very mobile. You can literally talk to aircraft while you’re driving down the road,” said Walter, describing one

(SEE ATC, next page)



Specialist Chad E. Carpenter, an air traffic controller at Forward Operating Base Sykes, Iraq, watches an aircraft as it moves down the runway. Carpenter and his coworkers are training to become FAA certified air traffic controllers while on deployment in Iraq.

(ATC, continued from previous page)

of the Army's tactical air traffic control platforms.

"I wouldn't want to do that, but I mean you could," he added with a laugh.

Whether fixed or mobile, though, the job is essentially the same.

"Air traffic control is air traffic control no matter where you go," Walter said. "The reporting points may change, the control zone may change its shape a little bit, but your rules and regulations on how you talk to aircraft are the same everywhere you go. Once you're a controller, you're always a controller."

And though they operate as a tactical control tower, the airfield sees civilian air traffic, too, which means the tower must meet Federal Aviation Authority guidelines, Walter said.

That does pose a training problem, though, Walter said. In order to operate an FAA tower, a controller must have a control tower operator rating, commonly just called a CTO, which requires six months of training, he said. To meet this requirement, the Soldiers have been training on the job while performing their duties.

"That's the hardest thing," said Walter, who is himself CTO rated. "It takes six months before these guys can actually work by themselves. You have to have at least one CTO rated person on every shift."

The great benefit of the training is that the rating can help the Soldiers gain employment in the civilian world, Walter said.

"The most important thing to me is getting a rating while out here," said Spc. Chad E. Carpenter, an air traffic controller with the Arkansas National Guard. "I'm new to this [military occupational specialty], and I've done more already this year than most people do their first year."

Carpenter says when he earns his CTO rating in the near future it will be the third air traffic control rating he will have earned while on deployment. "Most people don't do that in just one year in air traffic control. That alone will make me eligible for jobs back home with the FAA."

For Walter, seeing his Soldiers succeed is what his job is all about.

"My whole thing is Soldiers," Walter said. "I work for them, they don't work for me. Their job is to make sure the facilities run, but my job as NCOIC is making sure my Soldiers have what they need."

Iraqi leadership improves fuel distribution

TIKRIT, Iraq—Iraqi provincial, security and oil officials organized an unprecedented one-day delivery of nearly 5 million liters of petroleum products to Ninewa Province.



(U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Paula Taylor)

Iraqi soldiers from the 2nd and 4th Iraqi Army Divisions provide security escorts for 135 fuel tankers as part of the fuel push from Bayji, Iraq, to Mosul, Iraq.

After months of unsuccessful or inadequate fuel deliveries from the Bayji Oil Refinery, 135 fuel tankers carrying approximately 36,000 liters of benzene, diesel or kerosene products each were convoyed, under Iraqi Army escort, from the refinery to multiple fuel distribution centers in Mosul, Iraq.

As the Iraqi government begins to weed out corruption and secure the population, provincial leaders of Ninewa Province have taken the lead and ensured Iraqi citizens are adequately supplied with petroleum products.

Not only does petroleum create diesel for fuel and kerosene to heat homes, petroleum also creates benzene, which is necessary to make certain plastics, nylon, some types of rubber, lubricants and pesticides.

"The governor of Ninewa has made concerted efforts to ensure his people's allocation of fuel is safely delivered to the Mosul distribution plant," said Maj. Dale Snider, deputy for the 25th Infantry Division Engineers. "This is a much-needed surge of fuel products to the Ninewa Province after months of shortages."

The Iraqi Army chief of staff and division commanders were involved in the coordination and execution of the endeavor and plan to implement this procedure for other northern provinces in weeks ahead to ensure adequate fuel distribution.

POETTs walk their beat, help secure Iraqi-Syrian border

STORY BY SGT. PAULA TAYLOR

4th BCT, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs

COMBAT OUTPOST HEIDER, Iraq—With weapons loaded and at the ready, they walk their beat in full battle-rattle, carefully making their way through the crowd.

All eyes are on them—heads turn and people nudge one another for a better look. This isn't just a routine patrol and they aren't your average cops. They are members of the Point-of-Entry Transition Team, or POETT, and their "beat" is to help secure the border between Iraq and Syria. Their home stations range from Fort Bragg, N.C. to Fort Huachuca, Ariz., and their jobs range from military intelligence to military police officers. The team works around the clock in shifts and hand-in-hand with the Iraqi security forces to ensure everyone entering the country has a legitimate reason, passport and goods.

"Our job is to assist the Iraqis the best we can to create a functional, safe and organized point of entry between Syria and Iraq," said Staff Sgt. A. J. Lyons, a military intelligence representative on the POETT from Fort Huachuca. "We try to help them interdict any contraband, [improvised explosive devices] or foreign fighters trying to cross the border."

Since the team arrived one year ago, Lyons said the point of entry has significantly improved.

"It's gotten a lot better. The security measures that have been put into place, such as the addition

of T-barriers and a computerized passport system that checks and maintains records of travelers, has resulted in several arrests. We've also done a lot of training with the Iraqis, as far as weapons training, developing a security plan and how to respond to a catastrophic event such as a car bomb. We've also given them medical training, gotten a lot of the POE soldiers qualified in [combat lifesaver] and equipped the medical staff better than they were before."

To help the POETT get the Iraqi border and customs police officers trained, and to augment their team, several military police officers from the Special Troops Battalion, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division were brought up to the border from Forward Operating Base Marez, just outside Mosul, Iraq.

"The M. P. s brought a lot of police expertise and a police mentality to the team," said Lyons. "They've taught a lot of classes on vehicle searches, personnel searches and customs laws. They are teaching the Iraqis better policing techniques. They've been a huge help and a welcomed addition to the POETT."

"On a day-to-day basis, we interact with the Iraqi security forces a lot," said Spc. Charles Holt, military police officer, STB. "Mostly, we deal directly with the customs police. We're making sure the people entering the country are being properly taxed and that they're not bringing in any weapons or illegal contraband. Everyone has to get searched, have their passports checked and stamped, and their vehicle inspected," the Slaton,



(U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Paula Taylor)

An Iraqi boy, Adwan, walks with Point-of-Entry Transition Team member, Staff Sgt. Todd Walker, communications noncommissioned officer in charge, outside Rabiyaah, Iraq. Walker, along with several other POETT Soldiers, is stationed at Combat Outpost Heider to help train Iraqi border security forces.

Texas, native added.

The Iraqi border and customs personnel are grateful for what the POETT has done to help them.

"The team supports our troops on the point of entry," said Gen. Wahled, point-of-entry director. "Without them, we would have insurgent's actions here. They keep the [Iraqi border staff] motivated to do their jobs and do their jobs better. The Coalition Forces have also helped supply us with food, weapons and uniforms. They have provided the Customs Security Battalion training, as well as the



(U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Paula Taylor)

Military police officer, Spc. Charles Holt, Special Troops Battalion, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, stands guard at the Iraqi-Syrian border. Holt, a Slaton, Texas, native, is part of the Point-of-Entry Transition Team, which is responsible for training Iraqi border personnel.

customs police and inspectors.”

Lyons, who is scheduled to leave within the next week to return to his job as an instructor at the Military Intelligence Center and School in Fort Huachuca, said he has enjoyed his tour and feels confident his team has made a positive impact on border security. “We’re lucky to have such

a good group [of Soldiers] that were willing to come together and work together,” said Lyons. “It’s definitely been a team effort. I think we’ve done a really good job.”

A new POETT has arrived to COP Heider and is scheduled to begin training to take over the mission.



(U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Paula Taylor)

A Special Troops Battalion military police officer, Staff Sgt. Johnny Nelson, unlocks the border gate that separates Iraq and Syria outside Rabiyaah, Iraq. Nelson has been working at the border since February, helping train Iraqi border security officers.



(U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Paula Taylor)

Point-of-Entry Transition Team chief, Lt. Col. Michael Landers, inspects the load and passport of a citizen at the drive-thru checkpoint on the Iraqi-Syrian border. Landers and his team are responsible for training the Iraqi border and customs police officers and assisting with security at the border outside the city of Rabiyaah.



(U.S. Army photo by Sgt. John Keenan)

Iraqi border police practice casualty evacuation procedures, under the direction of Coalition Forces of the Point-of-Entry Transition Team, to enhance the border security forces’ ability to react to catastrophic emergencies.

Father surprises son with unexpected visit

STORY AND PHOTO BY PFC. BRADLEY CLARK

4th BCT, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs

FORWARD OPERATING BASE MAREZ, Iraq—A father and son, both currently serving in Iraq, were reunited here during the early-morning hours.

Unlike a normal reunion, Pfc. Jeremy Conner, an infantryman assigned to the Special Troops Battalion, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, and his father, Master Sgt. John Conner, an infantryman with the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, were reunited while deployed.

John had spent six months in Iskandaria, Iraq, just south of Baghdad, and was preparing to return to the states to attend the United States Army Sergeants Major Academy, Fort Bliss, Texas, when he decided to come see his son in Mosul, Iraq.

“He was banging on my door at 4:30 a.m.,” said Jeremy. “I answered it and it took me a minute, but then I was like, ‘What are you doing here?’”

The father and son were on separate paths but both ended up in Iraq at the same time.

Jeremy said he joined the Army in January 2006 and went to basic combat training at Fort Benning, Ga. “I joined because it was the only thing I could think of doing,” said Jeremy. “I was born into the Army. I became an infantryman because I thought all Soldiers were the same.”

At the time Jeremy joined the Army, his father, John, was a first sergeant for a basic combat training company.

“My dad talked to my first sergeant and drill sergeants,” said Jeremy. “My drill sergeants made it a little bit harder on me, but it was because they had certain expectations for me.”

John had plans to attend Jeremy’s graduation and then follow his son’s progress in airborne school, culminating with Jeremy’s final jump, which John would do with him.

“My dad had plans, but then he came down on orders



The father-son duo of Master Sgt. John Conner, an infantryman with 4th Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, and Pfc. Jeremy Conner, an infantryman with 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division eat dinner together in the dining facility on Forward Operating Base Marez. Conner came to Mosul to visit his son before he heads back to the states to attend the United States Army Sergeants Major Academy, Fort Bliss, Texas.

and had to leave for Alaska two weeks after I started basic,” said Jeremy.

Although the father-son team was unable to be together for airborne school, fate and the Army soon would find another way for them to spend time together.

“After I graduated basic my dad knew he was coming to Iraq,” said Jeremy. “By the time I was [at my first duty assignment in El Paso] there were rumors that we were going to Iraq, but he knew exactly where he was going to be.”

As time got closer, the Conner’s thought they were going to be able to see each other.

“At first, we thought we were going to be in Baghdad or Ramadi,” said Jeremy. “That meant we would have been only 30 miles away from each other. As soon as I found out we were going to be in Mosul, I didn’t think we were going to see each other because of how far apart we were.”

Although the father-son duo doesn’t have much time together here in Iraq, they will be able to spend a few months together when Jeremy gets back to Fort Bliss.

“My dad will be at the Sergeants Major Academy until May, so whenever we get back, I will be able to see him,” said Jeremy. “I live only three miles from the academy, so it won’t be hard for us to get together.”

403rd CA cases colors, prepares for journey home

STORY BY PFC. BRADLEY CLARK

4th BCT, 1st Cav. Div.

Public Affairs

F O R W A R D
OPERATING BASE
MAREZ, Iraq—The
403rd Civil Affairs
Battalion held a color-
casing ceremony at the
VIP Palms.

The ceremony began with an invocation by Senior Chief Wrayman Harris. After the invocation, the master of ceremonies, Capt. Phillip Henry, read the units lineage and honors.

After the unit's history was read, Col. Michael Mishoe, the 403rd's battalion commander, and Command Sgt. Maj. Carolyn Odojewski, the 403rd's senior enlisted member, cased the unit's colors.

Once the colors were cased, guest speaker Brig. Gen. Francis Wiercinski, deputy commanding general of support, 25th Infantry Division, spoke about the work that the 403rd has accomplished in the past year.

"This is the most unique civil affairs mission I have been associated with," said Wiercinski. "Ten years ago you would not have seen this. I have watched



(U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Paula Taylor)

The commander of the 403rd Civil Affairs Battalion, Col. Michael Mishoe, and his senior enlisted Soldier, Command Sgt. Maj. Carolyn Odojewski, case the battalion's colors during a ceremony held at the VIP Palms on Forward Operating Base Marez, Mosul, Iraq.

the 403rd the last eight months do magnificent things for this country. This is a good news story. This is what you came here to do. You have accomplished your mission, and you have made a significant impact. I want you to know that you did a magnificent job."

After Wiercinski gave his remarks, Mishoe spoke about the various accomplishments the unit has made here in Iraq.

"Across the battalion, tremendous progress was made in our zone," said Mishoe. "We have

had over \$92 million in Command Emergency Response Program projects that impacted four provinces and over five million Iraqis. There were 376 projects executed, including 42 school projects, 55 road projects, 75 water projects, 27 sewer projects, 17 trash projects, 35 electrical projects, 32 health-related projects, and five very large telecommunication projects. Not quantifiable are the direct engagements with local leaders developing the ability for the Iraqi people to govern

themselves."

Immediately after the ceremony came to an end, everyone who attended was invited to have coffee and cake with the members of the unit.

The 431st Civil Affairs Battalion is currently scheduled to replace the 403rd Civil Affairs Battalion.





An Iraqi Army soldier with the 1st Battalion, 1st Brigade, 3rd Iraqi Army Division provides over-watch security from his vehicle while another IA guards from the hilltop in the distance during a mission conducted in Muhallabiyah.

IA tests new equipment, scours village for buried cache

STORY AND PHOTOS BY SGT. PAULA TAYLOR
4th BCT, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs

MUHALLABIYAH, Iraq—Several soldiers assigned to the 1st Battalion, 1st Brigade, 3rd Iraqi Army Division, took the lead once again and conducted their own mission.

The purpose of the mission was to search the village for anything suspicious, like caches or explosives, because barrels of home-made explosives had been found there before by previous patrols.

During the mission, the Iraqi Army got a chance to test and practice with new equipment.

“We know the bad guys use [different locations] to hide their bombs and their weapons, but with the new

equipment, they can’t do that anymore,” said Capt. Ra’ad, intelligence officer, 1/1, 3 IA Division. “Now we can discover their caches anywhere.”

Although no significant caches were found in the village, Ra’ad considered the mission a success and was proud of his men’s ability to adapt to the challenges they face daily.

“I’ll tell you, our soldiers are good soldiers; they are great soldiers. With just a little more practice using their new equipment, they will be perfect at using it. We are winning the war against the bad guys. We will continue doing that,” he said.

Coalition Forces agreed with Ra’ad and praised the IA for their bravery and tenacity.

“I’ve seen them in action,” said Pfc. Cary Hawkins, C Troop, 3rd Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment and Deerfield, Mass. native. “They are self-reliant. There’s



Several Iraqi Army soldiers, assigned to the 1st Battalion, 1st Brigade, 3rd Iraqi Army Division, walk through a field in the town of Muhallabiyah. The purpose of their visit to the area was to search the fields and orchards for buried weapons caches.

been a couple of times I've been out on a street corner pulling security and I looked to my left and saw my squad leader, then looked to my

right and saw one of those guys. It's a good feeling. I enjoy having them around. They're good at their job and they're competent."

really great guys. I treat them like they're my buddies and they treat me the same. I don't think they get nearly enough credit."



An Iraqi Army soldier conducts outer cordon security during a mission in Muhallabiyah. The soldier, along with the rest of his unit, the 1st Battalion, 1st Brigade, 3rd Iraqi Army Division, was there to conduct a search of the area for hidden caches and explosives, which had been found there during past visits.

Hawkins, who said he has been in country with his unit for about eight months, said he has had several opportunities to work with the IA soldiers and has enjoyed his experiences.

"They've got good camaraderie with each other. They're willing to die for each other, just like American Soldiers. Every time I walk up to a group of them, we joke around and have a good time together. They're

While the town was being searched, Coalition Forces waited just outside the city limits.

"Our element was there in case anything got out of control for them," explained Sgt. William Schmidt, infantryman, C Troop, 3-4 Cav. and a Clara City, Minn. native. "If they came under fire or there was anything they couldn't handle, we could have come in and assisted. They're pretty competent. You can see them progressing—pretty well, too. They, as much as anyone, want a free country and they know the price they'll have to pay for it."

Tal 'Afar victims are treated by CF in Mosul

STORY BY SGT. PAULA TAYLOR
4th BCT, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs
AND MAJ. JUANITA CHANG
5th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

FORWARD OPERATING BASE MAREZ, Iraq—Two U.S. Army Chinooks hovered over the Diamondback Airfield in the dark of night. The wind from their rotors kicked up dust and slung debris across the ground as medical personnel waited on the landing pad to receive their patients.

“Our hearts sank when we saw the children,” said Maj. Lillian Cardona, nurse manager, 28th Combat Support Hospital on Forward Operating Base Marez in Mosul, Iraq.

The children, along with several Iraqi adults, were flown to the CSH after being caught in a devastating blast that ripped through a market in the Al Moalameen neighborhood of Tal 'Afar.

There were approximately 83 Iraqis killed in the vehicle-borne improvised explosive device explosion and 191 were injured. As a result, 17 victims were evacuated via U.S. military helicopters to the Coalition hospital located in Mosul.

“I was most impressed by the number of responders who showed up quickly and were immediately integrated into the team,” said Lt. Col. Andrew Lankowicz, deputy commander for administration, 28th Combat Support Hospital. “Everyone pitched in and did their part,” he said, referring to the medics, firemen, doctors, chaplains, and prospective blood donors. “We had translators coming out of the woodwork, making it a lot easier to communicate in a hurry,” he added.

Teamwork was the echoing theme among everyone involved.

“Everyone plays their positions, like on a successful

sports team. There is no room for a superstar. We all work like a team,” said Lt. Col. Ron Martin, chief of surgery. “Although I think everyone was extraordinary that night, nobody felt they did something extraordinary; they all saw it as just doing their job,” he said.

An Iraqi man who was walking his son around the intermediate care ward said he was forever grateful to Coalition Forces for caring for his son.

The man, who preferred not to give his name, said he knew that Coalition Forces would take good care of him and his family. While at the hospital with his son, he called his wife and was told his other two children caught in the bombing were still missing.

“I don't know why the terrorists do this,” the Shia man said. “Look at my son and that old woman over there. They are innocent victims of this. I do not understand,” he said.

Physician's assistant, Capt. Keary Johnston, 27th Brigade Support Battalion, agreed with the distraught man. “I just remember thinking to myself, ‘Do the people who set off these bombs realize the destruction they cause?’ If they could see the burns on these children's faces and the tubes down their throats, would it make a difference to them? This may not be personal for the bomber, but it's personal to us; it's personal to these children who will grow up with only one leg because of incidents like this.”

Captain Dina Parekh, 27th BSB surgeon and pediatrician, shared Johnston's frustration. “We cannot fathom the scope of problems that will exist after the medical issues have been addressed. For the victims, it's

just the beginning. When they leave here, they will have to go home and find their families and some may have to have their houses rebuilt. It's very sad. We do what we can, when we can. We're just glad we could be there to help.”



(U.S. Army photo by Maj. Juanita Chang)

A U.S. Soldier feeds a victim of the Tal 'Afar truck bombing at the 28th Combat Support Hospital on Forward Operating Base Marez. The boy was flown to the CSH for treatment.

'TF Ready' honors their own, awards Soldiers for heroism, valor

STORY AND PHOTO BY 1ST LT. BRIDGETTE BELL

Special Troops Battalion

FORWARD OPERATING BASE MAREZ, Iraq—Several Soldiers from A Company “Silent Warriors”, and B Company “Wolfpack”, Special Troops Battalion, were presented with awards for outstanding service.

During one of the awards ceremonies, Capt. John Green, commander, B Company, lauded a retransmission team for their hard work and ability to react to the situation and do what was needed to get the job done.

Immediately following a lightning strike at Marqloub Retrans, Sgt. Levander Oliver, retrans team leader, quickly assessed the damage to the Combat Net Radios systems and the radio room. After ensuring there were no injuries to personnel, he facilitated the movement of all the equipment to an adjacent building where power was first restored.

Working outside of their primary military occupational specialties, Spc. Aaron Palmer and Spc. Jason Vincent, had the equipment up and running within 45 minutes of the outage.

Platoon sergeant, Sgt. 1st Class Roderick Jack, said their ability to effectively manage limited resources enabled them to restore power, rewire the radio room, check each radio system for damage, and re-run cabling for the 15 radio systems and 15 antennas. “Not only did they return the system to normal operations, but they used the time to improve the overall effectiveness of the retrans site,” explained Jack.

In addition to the Wolfpack Company’s outstanding achievers, Ground Collection platoon leader, Sgt. 1st Class Barak Taylor, A Company, recommended two of his Soldiers, Spc. Marc Deluca and Spc. Cameron Martin, for Army Commendation Medals with Valor for their actions during combat.

Deluca and Martin compose one of the Close Tactical Reconnaissance teams under operational control of 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment. On the morning of Jan. 22, they quickly acted as first responders to injured Soldiers in a humvee that was hit by an improvised explosive device. Deluca and Martin removed fellow Soldiers from the vehicle and assisted the medic in performing first aid. Maneuvering in full battle uniforms, Deluca used both a tourniquet and an Israeli bandage, and Martin transported a victim for evacuation



Sergeant Levander Oliver, Spc. Aaron Palmer, and Spc. Jason Vincent stand in front of B Company, Special Troops Battalion, after being awarded the Army Achievement Medal. The medal was awarded for military achievement.

while stabilizing his foot and ankle.

“Deluca and Martin remained calm throughout the ordeal,” said Taylor. “By putting the quick-reaction force in place and executing while under subsequent small arms fire, they assisted the platoon sergeant and medical personnel in maintaining command and control. Their efforts contributed greatly to force protection thus, minimizing further U. S. casualties.”

“As a leader,” said Taylor, “I am extremely proud of these Soldiers. Not only have they contributed to the capture of brigade-level targets, they have done so under a high operational tempo and a myriad of attacks.”

The common denominator in all of these Soldiers is the feeling that they are just doing their jobs, which is a testament to ‘living the Army Values.’

ISF, Coalition troops seize weapons, suspects during t

STORY BY SGT. 1ST CLASS BRIAN SIPP

4th BCT, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs



Photos (Clockwise from above): Soldiers from D Company, 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment, from Fort Bliss, Texas, patrol the Ninewa ancient ruins in Mosul, Iraq. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Vanessa Valentine)

Private First Class Christopher Sager, D Company, 2-7 Cav., provides security for his platoon outside a cell phone store suspected of housing bomb-making materials used against Coalition Forces. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Vanessa Valentine)

Two Soldiers, Pfc. Jeffery Meganhardt and Pfc. Mark Seelye, D Co., 2-7 Cav., provide security, while other members of their platoon are upstairs looking for bomb-making materials in an auto market district in Mosul, Iraq. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Vanessa Valentine)

U.S. Army tankers from D Co., 2-7 Cav. provide security during a foot patrol in an auto market district. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Vanessa Valentine)

A Soldier with C Co., 2-7 Cav., scans a courtyard while pulling security during a nighttime raid in Mosul, Iraq. (U.S. Army photo by Pfc. Bradley Clark)

MOSUL, Iraq—Iraqi security forces, b locations throughout the Ninewa Province bomb-making equipment, and detaining

The security operations began in the c showing of Iraqi Army and Iraqi Police p

Ninewa Provincial Governor, Duraid I through Ninewa TV shortly after the sec clarifying the senior leadership’s roles d

“Today we have a Mosul-wide sec Enforcement Plan, and aims at preventin in Mosul. We realized that we have to p that the IA soldiers and IP officers are w each based on its area of operation,” said

IA soldiers from the 2nd and 3rd Iraq raiding suspected improvised explosive d and known insurgent hideouts, both insid

Coalition troops from the 4th Brigade patrols with vehicle and logistical suppo

“Our roles; myself and the IP comma making tours to all the troops to look clos the people,” Kashmoula added.

A total of 179 individuals were detaini killed, and the ISF seized the following i

- Over 30 AK-47 assault rifles
- Over 30 AK-47 magazines
- 15 mortar rounds, to include 60 a
- Three mortars with base plates, to
- Two complete IEDs, to include o
- 12 hand grenades
- One RPK machine gun
- 40 cell phones with multiple SIM
- Several cell phone IED initiators
- Over 200 propane cylinders
- 20 Hydrogen Peroxide and Hydr
- One 155 mm artillery round
- Several Baghdad license plates

Iraqi police also seized hundreds of lit Iraqi security forces in their generators a to provide security for the province’s citi

“The terrorist actions aim at creating God willing, we are going to uproot the t

Two-day security sweep

backed up by Coalition troops, struck multiple target sites, seizing black market fuel, illegal munitions and suspected anti-Iraqi forces.

Early-morning hours and consisted of an increased presence throughout several cities in the province.

Kashmoula, addressed the Iraqi people from Mosul. Security operations began, explaining the reasons and during the crackdown.

Security operation that parallels the Baghdad Law, preventing any saboteur or terrorist from gaining a foothold. Participants (ISF) in the operation. We have noticed well deployed and are cooperative with each other, and Kashmoula.

Iraqi Army Divisions supported Iraqi police officers in raiding device factories, suspected illegal munitions caches, inside and outside the various city limits.

Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division aided the Iraqi effort, to include air support.

Commander, along with the 2IA Division commander, are heavily into their performance and style of dealing with

During the two-day sweep, eight terrorists were killed and items and munitions:

- 100 and 82 mm
- 100 and 82 mm
- 100 mm anti-tank capable

• 100 cards

• 100 Chloric Acid containers

• 100 liters of black market fuel that will be utilized by the ISF and to fuel vehicles, allowing for increased patrols and operations, according to Iraqi police officials.

• 100 disorder and destabilizing the situation in the city. "We will prevent terrorists from this city," concluded Kashmoula.



CF, IA help rid city of insurgent activities, munitions

STORY AND PHOTOS BY PFC. BRADLEY CLARK

4th BCT, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs

MOSUL, Iraq—Soldiers from the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, augmenting their counterparts in the Iraqi security forces, executed a series of targeted raids to seek out insurgents and illegal materials.

The security operation was a joint effort designed to parallel the Baghdad Law Enforcement Plan, according to Ninewa Provincial Governor, Duraid Kashmoula. It involved Iraqi units from the 2nd and 3rd Iraqi Army Divisions and the Iraqi police and border Police, with Coalition Forces in a support and logistical role.

Focusing on the Mosul area, Soldiers from the 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment assisted Iraqi units in conducting raids on houses that contained suspected improvised

explosive device makers and products, along with raids on anti-Iraqi forces, their sponsors and supporters.

Kicking off the weeklong series of security operations was a nighttime raid on the residence of a suspected IED maker, supported by C Company, 2-7 Cavalry.

“It was a very successful raid,” said Spc. Nicholas Johnson, a tanker who was the platoon sergeant’s Humvee gunner with 3rd Platoon,



Soldiers from A Company, 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, load 194 propane tanks onto two Palletized Loading System Vehicles in Mosul, Iraq. The propane tanks, which can be used to make improvised explosive devices, were found in a warehouse during a series of security operations in Mosul, Iraq.

C Co., 2-7 Cavalry. “We had good [intelligence] and good rehearsals.”

“When we entered the target house,” recalled Pfc. Brad Whitsett, a forward observer and dismounted

patrolman with 3rd Platoon, C Co., 2-7 Cav., “the target was the one who actually opened the door.”

While many of the targets yielded illegal munitions and detainees, an equal amount proved to be

devoid of any illegal activity. When operations don’t go exactly as planned and intelligence proves to be inaccurate, the Ghost Battalion Soldiers are often able to turn a disappointment into an opportunity.

While concluding one mission that turned out to be a “dry hole” (a target devoid of any insurgents or munitions), troops from A Co. followed a motorized scooter that had a propane cylinder strapped to the back. The rider inadvertently led the Soldiers to a warehouse that contained over 300 propane cylinders. This was something that A Co. had not encountered before, according to the majority of the platoon.

“This was the first time I have seen this many in one place,” said Pfc. Brian Quintana, infantryman and vehicle gunner from 1st Platoon. “Usually we just see one or two in people’s houses because they use them to weld stuff for their own personal use. In the long run, it’s beneficial [to remove them] because this means there are less-effective car bombs and IEDs out there.”

Quintana wasn’t the only

(SEE RAID, Page 24)

“In the long run, it’s beneficial [to remove them] because this means there are less-effective car bombs and IEDs out there.”

—Pfc. Brian Quintana—

Long Knife Edge band strikes a chord with audience

STORY AND PHOTOS BY SGT. PAULA TAYLOR

4th BCT, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs

FORWARD OPERATING BASE MAREZ, Iraq—Five members of the newly-formed Long Knife Edge band took to the stage for the first time to entertain their fellow troopers assigned to the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, at the Transformation Chapel.

The band, whose concept was originally formed while the unit was still at Fort Bliss, Texas, awaiting deployment orders, had been practicing once-a-week for the past month in order to prepare for the concert.

The band leader, Maj. Marianne Madrid, an automation management officer for the 4th BCT, said the Long Knife Edge was the idea of the brigade commander, Col. Stephen Twitty.

“Colonel Twitty asked, ‘What do you think about getting a brigade band together?’ He knew I had an



Guitarist Pfc. Jamie Holder, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division performs in front of a live audience of fellow troopers, while Spc. Amy McCafferty, 27th Brigade Support Battalion, plays the drums. Holder and McCafferty are two members of the newly-formed band, The Long Knife Edge, performing at the Transformation Chapel on Forward Operating Base Marez, Iraq.

interest in music and that I played an instrument. I think it was because we were going to be here without our own division band,” she said.

During the hour-long concert, the group played several rock and a few

country songs to the cheers of the crowd.

“The songs came from all the band members,” explained Madrid. “Whatever they bring to the table, we all try to learn. We’re going to be working on more country, rock and R & B for the next concert,” she added.

“Every single one of them is very dedicated,” she said. “They all have a great passion for all types of music. It’s stress prevention. It lets them have fun, relax, and it gives them confidence.”

One of those band members is Pfc. Jamie Holder, guitarist and vocalist from Hemphill, Texas, who said his interest in music began when he was a senior in high school.

“My grandfather showed me three chords. From there on, I just progressed,” he said. “When I finally got my first guitar in Germany, my first duty station, I really started playing a lot more. I used to practice every weekend, four or five hours a day. I found people to play with and had a good time with it.”

(SEE BAND, page 22)



Members of The Long Knife Edge band perform live during their debut concert at the Transformation Chapel on Forward Operating Base Marez, Iraq

NOTES FROM HOME

The staff of the public affairs office, 4th BCT, 1st Cav. Div., have been posting a Web log (blog) on the El Paso Times newspaper's online Web site since our arrival in Kuwait. So far, we have been averaging more than 3,000 'hits' on the counter per week. As with all blogs, anyone can post a response. We have received comments from family members and friends of the brigade and will use this page to post their messages to our troops. To visit the blog site: <http://elpasotimes.typepad.com/longknife>

I think what you are doing is awesome. I recently asked my husband SSG. Jerome A Prejean who is also deployed in Mosul, that if maybe sending seed packets would be effective? You know like vegetable seeds to plant gardens? Also, i would love to help collect funds for your blankets. Let me know what I can do?

Posted by: Sylvia A Prejean

Thank YOU!! Stay Safe and God Bless you ALL!

Hello to the 1/9 and to my son, Matthew, we love you and miss you!

Posted by: Terry (Burlson) Walls

Great Job on video 2 mom of Spc.Brandon Jones 1/9 cav be safe see ya soon love mom and dad

Posted by: paula fitzpatrick

Great Job on the video! Keeps the familes in touch with what is going on.

Posted by: Linda Smith

Thanks for the great video, I miss my son so much and any news from wherever he is, is a blessing. God Speed to all of You, you are forever in my Heart. Lori Stach mother of PFC Stach, Nicholas 1-9cav 1stcav-div, 4th BCT charlie troop from Ft. Bliss now in Iraq somewhere

Posted by: Lori Stach

HAPPY EASTER 1/9 CAV 4TH BRIG FROM TX SPC JONES MOM BE SAFE SEE YA'LL SOON

Posted by: paula fitzpatrick

Well, I have to say that it is nice to have the stories straight from the mouths of our men and women in the unit. I have learned that I absolutely hate the news they portray so many negative things about the war and I hardly ever hear anything positive about what our men and women are doing. So Thank you so much for taking the time to share so many positive things with us back home. I look forward to hearing more soon.

And Jason take care over there Love. I know it doesn't mean much to you but it does to your family HAPPY BIRTHDAY!!! Wish we could be spending it with you we'll blow out a candle for ya. I love you so much take care and keep your head down.

Posted by: Mrs. Bambi Hanneken

FOR ENTERTAINMENT PURPOSES ONLY

GRAB YOUR CAMERA



Tired of seeing the city through the windshield of your humvee? Then sign up for an adventure of a lifetime and take a ride in a state-of-the-art hot air weather balloon. Beautiful, breath-taking views await you. Enjoy the picturesque countryside and rolling green pastures, or spin around and take in the bustling cityscape. Day or night flights are available. Contact your local Mosul travel office for more information.

FOR ENTERTAINMENT PURPOSES ONLY



Bass player Sgt. Chris Mills, 27th Brigade Support Battalion, keyboard player Capt. Matt Miller, 1st Squadron, 9th Cavalry Regiment, and Spc. Amy McCafferty, drummer, 27th BSB, perform in the band, The Long Knife Edge, before a live audience at the Transformation Chapel on Forward Operating Base Marez.

(BAND, continued from page 19)

Aside from being a stress-reliever, Holder said the opportunity has served to break up the every-day routine of his job.

“I’ve always wanted to perform live. Besides doing like a groundhog day-type thing, where everything is the same every day—work eight hours-a-day, go home, watch movies; this keeps me busy. It keeps me entertained.”

Audience member and Abilene, Texas, native, Pvt. Samantha Limones, 18, said she was glad she came to see them play.

“My battle buddy, Holder, is in the band and he told me about the concert, so I wanted to go and see it. It

was a great experience to hear music that we listen to. It was a relaxing time that kept our minds off everything that’s happening over here. They were awesome—really hot!”

The group is currently planning their next concert for summer, 2007. They said they intend on performing at least once every quarter for the Soldiers stationed at FOB Marez and would like to arrange to visit other FOBs through the Ninewa Province.

Other members of the band included Spc. Amy McCafferty, drummer, 27th Brigade Support Battalion from New Canery, Texas, Capt. Matt Miller, keyboard player, 1st Squadron, 9th Cavalry Regiment from Dresher, Penn., and Sgt. Chris Mills, bass player and vocalist, 27th BSB from Theodore, Ala.



(U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Vanessa Valentine)

U.S. Army Pvt. Garnett Wooten, Cpl. John Donovan and Spc. Phillip Brown, D Company, 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, from Fort Bliss, Texas, relax after a long day out on patrol in Mosul, Iraq.





(U.S. Army photo by Spc. Kyndal Hernandez)

Sergeant Luis Arevalo, fire support specialist, 5th Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, makes his way through a cobweb and prepares to search a building during a mission in Heschel, Iraq.

(RAID, continued from page 18)

member of A Co. that felt this way.

“It’s good to get them off the streets,” said Pfc. Andrew Beesley, driver, 1st Platoon, A Co., 2-7 Cavalry. “If they are not there, then AIF can’t use them. It’s less items for IEDs or vehicle-borne IEDs.”

The raids netted a total of 32 detainees, along with a laundry list of anti-Iraqi forces materials: over 11 million Iraqi Dinar, more than 1000 rounds of ammunition, nearly 20 firearms, and over 180 illegal forms of identification.

Also found were IED and VBIED-making materials such as, three cars with Baghdad license plates, over 250 propane cylinders, 10 hydraulic acid containers, nine hydrogen peroxide containers, nearly four dozen cell phones, two bundles of command detonation wire, and one pipe bomb with almost 30 pounds of explosives.

Iraqi media that was confiscated consisted of two personnel computers, one video camera, over a dozen compact discs, 10 digital video discs, six 8mm video tapes, and two digital video tapes.



A Soldier with C Company, 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, scans a roof top before entering a courtyard during a night time raid in Mosul, Iraq.

HORSEMEN NEWS



(U.S. Army photo by Spc. Ashley Martinez)

Unit intelligence analyst Sgt. Stephen Snowden, Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 1st Squadron, 17th Cavalry Regiment, 25th Combat Aviation Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division, analyzes intelligence data in the Squadron Tactical Action Center on Forward Operating Base Marez, Mosul, Iraq. Snowden uses this intelligence data to brief OH-58D, Kiowa helicopter flight crews as they prepare to conduct missions over the city of Mosul.

GHOST BATTALION NEWS



(U.S. Army photo courtesy of 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment.)

Soldiers of the 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment Scout Platoon conduct a dismounted patrol through a small village in Mosul, Iraq. The scouts are responsible for assisting the Iraqi security forces in capturing insurgents and helping to cease enemy activity.

STORY BY 1ST LT. ALLEN TRUJILLO
2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment

MOSUL, Iraq—In general military terms, cavalry scouts are known for their stealth, resilience and ability to get the job done. In that sense, the Scout Platoon in the 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment is just like any other Scout Platoon. But what makes them stand out above the rest is their ability to capitalize on these skills in order to capture insurgents...lots of them.

In what has been a long string of targeted raids and chance contacts, the scouts have very quietly brought in a substantial number of confirmed enemy insurgents. In fact, they single-handedly account for a disproportionately large percentage

of the battalion's overall detainee count.

"We've been to the detention facility so many times, we could probably run the place for a day," said 1st Lt. Robert Fix, Scout Platoon leader.

A few key principles have enabled the scouts to produce such results. "We all know some Arabic," said Sgt. Robert Lowe, section leader. "It empowers us and allows us to have total control when we conduct raids. We don't have to rely on the interpreter to do all of our talking."

While knowing some Arabic has helped the scouts immensely, it is only one part of the equation.

"We're persistent," said Staff Sgt. Robert Burkhammer, section leader. "We don't let a few dry holes stop us from finding the enemy. Persistence

is important. We can't give the enemy any breathing room," he continued.

The scouts attribute their persistence to keeping the enemy on its toes since the 2-7 Cav. arrived in Mosul, November 2006, and by ensuring every member of their platoon can execute any job, at any time.

"Everybody knows everybody else's job," said Spc. Stephen Barthold. "I could be a gunner one mission and be on the ground for the next."

Fix agreed and added that their success has bonded them as a unit. "We're close. We're to the point now where we know exactly what our buddy next to us is thinking at any moment. It's awesome."

THUNDER HORSE NEWS



STORY BY 1ST LT. NICHOLAS PAOLINI

2nd Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment

BAGHDAD, Iraq—The Thunderhorse Battalion was extremely busy over the last month conducting numerous missions in support of the Baghdad Security Plan. The battalion successfully conducted dozens of joint patrols and cordon and searches with three partnered Iraqi Army Battalions, resulting in several large cache discoveries of improvised explosive device-making materials and insurgent detentions.

The most notable operation was Thunder Keep. During this mission, the 2nd Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment, established a second Joint Security Station, JSS Thrasher, in honor of Sgt. Robert Thrasher who died of combat wounds Feb. 11.

All of the companies provided support:

- A Company provided escort for the trucks bringing construction supplies,
- C Company conducted security patrols, and
- E Company conducted route clearance and assisted in emplacing the walls of the JSS.

In addition to Thunderhorse's organic companies, several other units also assisted, such as the 299th Forward Support Battalion who provided the haul assets, while the 20th Engineer Battalion was the main effort of the JSS.

Unfortunately, Thunderhorse suffered four devastating losses during the time of the construction: Sgt. John Allen, Sgt. Ed Santini, Pfc. John Landry and Pfc. William Davis. All four Soldiers were members of C Company. They were responding to small arms fire when their humvee was struck by a buried IED. All Thunderhorse Soldiers dearly miss these fallen comrades who made such a lasting impression on all that knew them.

Thunderhorse is currently in the process of welcoming back B Co., who was detached from the Battalion. They will be rejoining the Battalion after spending five months attached to 4th Brigade, 25th Infantry Division.



(U.S. Army photo courtesy of 2nd Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment)

Soldiers assigned to D Company, 2nd Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment hold discussions inside the Joint Security Station Thrasher, named after fallen trooper, Sgt. Robert Thrasher, who died of combat wounds.



(U.S. Army photo courtesy of 2nd Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment)

Battalion commander, Lt. Col. James Nickolas, 2nd Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment, congratulates newly-promoted Sgt. Maj. William Lindsey, battalion task force engineer.

NIGHT RAIDER NEWS



STORY BY 2ND LT. SEAN BOWEN

3rd Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment



(U.S. Army photo courtesy of 3rd Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment)

After completing several pre-launch checks, Spc. Manuel Solis, mortarman, 3rd Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, assists with firing an illumination round during a mission.

RABIYAH, Iraq—The mortar section of A Troop, 3rd Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment participated in a weeklong border security operation, which took place along the Iraqi-Syrian border.

The purpose of the operation was to interdict insurgents and smugglers who were attempting to cross the border at night.

The mortarmen's mission was two-fold, said Spc. Manuel Solis of La Joya, Texas.

“Our main mission that night was illumination,” he said. “We also provided fire support in the form of high-explosive rounds.”

Solis, 19, is a gunner on the mortar tube and explained that illumination is vital to the success of the border security missions, especially during periods of low lunar illumination because it's the mortarmen that fire the rounds over an area to help the Iraqi border police see illegal border crossings.

Assistant gunner, Spc. Rick Cooley Jr., 23, of Carson City, Nev., agreed with Solis' belief in their importance during these types of operations and attributes their success to their ability to remain mobile during combat operations, unlike aerial assets that are limited by fuel consumption issues.

BLACK DRAGON NEWS



STORY AND PHOTOS BY SPC. KYNDAL HERNANDEZ

45th Combat Sustainment Brigade Public Affairs

HESCHEL, Iraq—Soldiers with the 5th Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery Regiment, executed an operation aimed at seeking out insurgent targets in the suburb of Al Sharqot.

“We had three main target houses,” said Sgt. James Burns, a gunner with the 5-82 FA. “We had one guy who was in charge of finances, one person who had all the weapons, and the main person who was in charge of all the planning.”

Although the intended targets were not present during the raid, one person was detained in a follow-up mission the next day.

“We caught three people who were in the process of emplacing an improvised explosive device as we were leaving the village,” he added.

Burns said he was satisfied with the outcome of the mission, and that it gave his platoon an opportunity to enhance their operating techniques.

“We went out with three different elements, from three different companies in our battalion,” Burns said. “Anytime you are working with an element that big, the coordination is naturally difficult, but everything went smooth and everyone did what they were supposed to,



A Soldier, assigned to the 5th Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery Regiment, kicks in the door to a suspected insurgent target during an operation in Heschel, Iraq.

which was a major success.”

Prior to six months ago, the village hadn’t seen Coalition Forces in their area in two years.

“There have been a lot of kidnappings and tribal conflicts going on in this village, but hopefully our presence there for the past six months and for the rest of our tour will help alleviate some of the crime that is going on there,” said 1st Lt. Alex Moen, a platoon leader assigned to the 5-82 FA.

Aside from alleviating the crime and terrorist activity in the village, Soldiers with the 5-82 FA plan on spending more time in Heschel to get to know the citizens and build a stronger bond with the Coalition Forces.

“In the end, the leader of the village and I need to walk down the streets of Heschel together,” said Moen. “We can lessen the apprehension they feel about us and build the community by bringing projects into the area and just being there on a regular basis and getting to know the people and the community. If we can do that, a lot of the kidnappings and crimes will stop,” he continued. “I think by the end of our tour, we can get Heschel to operate like most Iraqi villages.”



Soldiers of 5th Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery Regiment prepare to cut the lock off a building of a suspected target in Heschel, Iraq.

TASK FORCE READY NEWS



STORY BY 1ST LT. BRIDGETTE BELL

Special Troops Battalion

FORWARD OPERATING BASE MAREZ, Iraq—Soldiers with E Company, 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment, who are currently attached to the Special Troops ‘Task Force Ready’ Battalion, received medals for excellence in combat operations.

One of these recipients, Naples, Fla., native, Sgt. Adam N. Engelhart, was given the Purple Heart for wounds received as a result of enemy hostile actions on Dec. 22. While his route clearance team was enroute to detonate an improvised explosive device, the convoy was struck by an IED. “I saw the command wire out of the [vehicle] I was driving,” Engelhart remembered. “We began to trace it back and moved forward to find the source. Only about ten seconds went by before the IED went off.” Engelhart sustained neck and head injuries from the incident and the team went on to discover three more IEDs within the vicinity.

Other Soldiers’ hard work and dedication enhanced the survivability of their fellow Soldiers who were conducting dangerous route clearance operations. Maintenance team chief, Spc. Michael T. Cohoon, a native of Rockville, Md., said he was surprised when he was told he would be receiving an Army Commendation Medal (ARCOM). “I really appreciate that my leadership noticed my hard work. We go out about twice a day and conduct maintenance after missions. To me, I’m just doing my job.” Other ARCOM recipients included Pfc. William V. Ferguson

of Cape Med, N.J., and Pfc. Jonathan Walker of Birmingham, Ala., who received the ARCOM for meritorious achievement while serving as drivers over a three-month period.

E Co. also presented the first Combat Medical Badges for the battalion. Trenton, N.J., native, Spc. Aion Hearn, and Spc. Tyler Potter of Tulsa, Okla., received CMBs for performing medical duties while being engaged in active ground combat. Hearn was on a route clearance mission, Dec. 31, when an IED struck in front of the lead vehicle in his convoy. Hearn rendered medical aid to a Soldier, ensuring his stability until he was evacuated to the Combat Support Hospital.

Potter, a combat medic with 1st Platoon, received the CMB for treating Engelhart during the blast on Dec. 22. Potter also previously received an ARCOM with Valor for his actions on Jan. 19, when he dismounted under fire to render aid to a fellow Soldier and coalition interpreter, putting their safety above his own. Potter’s actions saved the Soldier’s life and stabilized the interpreter who had lost both of his legs. Both medics noted that without the help of their fellow Soldiers who provide security during missions, they would not be able to accomplish their jobs as medics.

Task Force Ready has awarded two Purple Hearts, two ARCOMs with Valor, nine ARCOMs, 11 Army Achievement Medals, two CMBs, and 60 Combat Action Badges. E Co. continues to support the destruction of IEDs and route clearance missions to provide assured mobility for the 4th Brigade Combat Team and Coalition Forces in the Ninewa Province.



(U.S. Army photo by Command Sgt. Maj. Ronald Cook)

Sergeant Adam N. Engelhart of Naples, Fla. stands in formation after receiving the Purple Heart and Combat Action Badge, while Pfc. William V. Ferguson of Cape Med, N.J., renders the hand salute after being given an Army Commendation Medal.

ROUGH RIDER NEWS



STORY BY 1ST LT. KENDRA EVERS

27th Brigade Support Battalion

CAMP ZAYTUN, Iraq—Eight troops assigned to the 27th Brigade Support Battalion just returned from a month-long training mission outside the city of Irbil, which is located just to the east of Mosul.

Their mission was to train two battalions of Iraqi soldiers in vehicle-related tasks.

“The Iraqi Soldiers have a general knowledge in maintenance now that we’ve trained them, but when we arrived, they didn’t know much,” said Sgt. Blake Carlson, a mechanic in B Company who was among the Soldiers chosen to go.

Private Mark Maguregui, a fellow mechanic from B Company, 27th BSB, agreed with Carlson and added that because a humvee starts very differently from typical civilian vehicles, many of the IA were unfamiliar with how to start the engine.

The primary focus was for the Soldiers from the 27th to train the Iraqis on roll-over drills, combat lifesaver training, driver’s training, basic preventative maintenance checks and services, and convoy procedures.

Even though the Soldiers chosen to go were designated experts in their field—either mechanics, medics, or infantrymen—they worked together to teach the Iraqis the basic skills they would need to operate as an effective army.

All the Soldiers that went said



(U.S. Army courtesy photo from the 27th Brigade Support Battalion)

Soldiers assigned to the 27th Brigade Support Battalion, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, assist the Iraqi Army troops with emergency medical evacuation techniques at Camp Zaytun, near Irbil, Iraq. The Coalition Forces are training the IA, who are scheduled to relocate to Baghdad as part of the new security plan.

they enjoyed their time there, and saw it as a great experience to be able to teach Iraqis and see the results of their training.

“The littlest stuff meant so much to them,” said Spc. Devon Binyard, a Soldier from B Company’s gun truck platoon. “We don’t realize how much we take for granted, until we see things from their perspective.”

The BSB troops said they also learned a lot about the Iraqi culture, religion and lifestyle, and of the Iraqi’s gratitude toward American Soldiers.

“It was very rewarding to watch an Iraqi that you just taught how to do something turn around and show

his buddy what he just learned,” said Binyard. “I told them we are here to help them.”

Overall, the group said they enjoyed the trip away from their daily routine back at Forward Operating Base Marez and would enjoy getting an opportunity to train the Iraqi troops again.



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