

THE

Grey Wolf

HOWL



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Commander's Column

By Col. David W. Sutherland
3BCT, 1CD Commander



Grey Wolf!

Over the past month, we have all experienced a number of events which changed us at some level. One of these events was learning, through the public media, of the extension for no less than 12 and no more than 15 months of all Army active duty units deployed in support of the war on terror. This extension allows the MNF-I commander to maintain sufficient troops on the ground necessary to quell the increase in violence enveloping Baghdad and other provinces. This violence is eroding the peoples' faith in the Iraqi government and the Iraqi Security Forces. The extension also allows units 12 months at home before deploying back to Iraq. While the news of the extension was expected, I understand it was still difficult for many of you and your families; however, we are blessed to know about it

months in advance rather than a few weeks before redeployment. We have clarity.

Aside from the extension, we have seen an increase in violence throughout Diyala as we continue to bring the fight to the enemy and conduct aggressive and persistent attacks against their perceived safe havens. They are safe no where, and our team – a team that has formed a great bond during this deployment – has proved that time and time again.

These events have changed the way we see our fellow Soldiers. They also make us appreciate and treasure the time we spend with them. These events have also changed the way we see our families and friends – we seem to value them even more now.

Regardless of those changes, the one thing that has not changed is our commitment to see this mission through – see the peaceful people of Iraq achieve the freedom they yearn for; to see their children grow without fear; and to see them become great contributors to their society. Finally, our resolve to make meaningful the sacrifices of those no longer with us has grown even

stronger.

These are not easy times in which we live. Our days are filled with uncertainties. Know that the leadership of this Brigade Combat Team will do everything we can to bring clarity to your days, to your mission, and to your life while in Iraq. Also, know that our Rear Detachments and Family Readiness Groups will continue to care for your loved ones while you are here.

To our families, I thank you for your unconditional support to our Soldiers and our units. We understand the difficulties brought on by separation from your loved ones for such an extended period of time. But, we also know we can count on you to take care of the home front to minimize distractions for your Soldiers here. As I said on numerous occasions, your strength keeps us strong and focused. May God continue blessing our families, our Soldiers, and our Nation.

I will see you on the high ground.

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'Hooah' Corner

By Command Sgt. Maj. Donald Felt
3BCT, 1CD CSM



Hey Grey Wolves.....

If you haven't figured it out yet, it's hot!

In fact it's probably going to be over Heat Cat 5 from now until October. The good

news is you'll be here to see it get cooler. Oh, maybe that's the bad news.

Anyway, extension or not, most of you would have been here to see it get cooler anyway. All that fancy wet-bulb reading and stuff aside, it's going to be "off the charts" from now until... well, a long time.

Heat injuries are the greatest, preventable injury to our Soldiers. It possesses a real and significant threat. But it is preventable. It is preventable by taking the appropriate measures both individually and as a leader.

There have been over 100 Soldiers evacuated for treatment for heat injuries since Operation Iraqi Freedom began. That's 100 too many. That's three infantry platoons of "hooahs" not in the fight. That's 100 Soldiers doing 200 Soldiers work.

Elevated temperatures, high humidity and low wind all contribute to heat injuries.

Add to that the high intensity of work that comes with combat operations and you have a heat injury waiting to happen.

Risk factors that contribute to injury include: lack of acclimation, salt depletion, poor hydration, poor physical conditioning, over weight, illness, diet, supplements and long hair. Okay, not long hair. Well, maybe if it is preventing adequate cooling of your neck.

Heat injuries come in different forms: sunburn, heat edema, heat cramps, heat exhaustion and heat stroke. We must take the appropriate measures to prevent heat injuries.

We each have an individual responsibility to ensure that we are doing everything possible to prevent becoming a heat injury. If you are a leader, you have additional responsibilities to ensure your subordinates do not become heat casualties.

The use of the buddy system is a valuable tool to assist us in preventing heat injuries. Adequate rest, hydration, and proper diet are also key factors. Alternating work and rest periods will help ensure soldiers are rested.

However, a good night's sleep is a big

part of the rest plan also. If "Joe" is up half the night playing Game Boy, then he is not taking responsibility for his heat injury avoidance program.

Diet is also important, but so is eating balanced meals. Skipping breakfast and running on empty half the day is not conducive to preventing heat injury.

Taking dietary supplements is not a substitute for proper food intake. In fact, many supplements are dangerous. Some are diuretics and deplete the body of adequate water. They might make your "six pack" look good, but that won't impress the terrorists.

Worry about impressing the opposite sex later. Impress the enemy by staying in the fight and taking it to him - in the heat, during the middle of the day when he's under nourished, chai-cafeine filled, nicotine induced, overweight, out of condition, and when his dirty self is resting, hiding from the heat.

Then you can break down his door and haul him off to the BIF.

You'll be sweating, but not as bad as him.

**Live the legend,
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'Blue Platoon' forms Band of Brothers

By Spc. Ryan Stroud
3rd BCT Public Affairs

With the sun rising in the background, Soldiers gather around each other, get down on a knee and begin their prayer. A tradition for the Soldiers, the prayer is said by someone new before the group heads out on a convoy mission into Baqubah, Iraq.

They ask for safety and security so they can properly conduct their mission, and bring the U.S. Army one step closer to its goal -- provide a safe and secure nation for the people of Iraq.

As these Soldiers get ready to "roll out," they can't help but crack one last joke at their fellow Soldiers, breaking the tension from the possibility of dangers they might experience outside of the forward operating base. This is also nothing new; it is just as much tradition as the prayer.

The group loads into their humvees and drives out the gate of FOB Warhorse into the brightly gleaming sky, ready for whatever awaits them.

The Soldiers are close, and not as close as friends, rather as close as family. Mission after mission, these Soldiers have experienced everything from successful patrols to heartbreaking tragedies. But all this brought them closer together, solidifying them as a real band of brothers.

"Blue Platoon," a fierce group of Soldiers from Com-

pany D, 1-12 Combined Arms Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, are no strangers to action, violence and improvised explosive devices; but they say none of those things will break their spirits. They get up, dust themselves off and get ready for the next show-down.

"We've been through a lot and seen a lot," said Spc. Mark Henry, a member of Blue Platoon and a native of Cleveland. "But anything you can think of, we're willing and able to take that mission on."

It's this attitude which helped mold this unit into the brutal machine they are outside the wire. But back inside, these Soldiers have nothing but love and amity for each other and their leaders.

"I think we have become closer here [in Iraq] as a platoon... after loosing some of our best friends out here, that brought us closer," said Sgt. Justin Mayes, a soft spoken but efficient leader for Blue Platoon.

"As each day and mission goes by, I think our love and respect as a family gets bigger," said the Lumberton, NC native. "We each know the guy beside us will always back us when it's needed."

While in Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom 06-08, these Soldiers work hand-in-hand with the Iraqi army to help

provide a sustained government and security force to serve the citizens of Iraq.

"We are trying to help the Iraqi army sustain their country right now, so we can go home and sustain our own country," said Pfc. Charles Brooks, a member of the Blue Platoon and a native of Chicago. "This is their country so this is their job, but they need our help and guidance right now and we're doing our best to help out."

"We hope that us being here keeps [the people of Iraq] in a peaceful state of mind," said Henry. "We provide security for the Iraqi people while their army is being trained. The overall goal is for [the Iraqi army] to completely take over responsibility to where they don't need our help anymore and we can go home."

"Of course, I want to go home, but I fully understand why we're here," he continued. "The IA and the people of Iraq need our help. When we roll through cities and people come out [of their homes] and are clapping because our presence is there, that means something."

This positive response is what these Soldiers are hoping for every time they leave the wire, though they know it's not always likely. Either way, these Soldiers, each knowing the other's job, are ready and prepared for whatever challenges face them while patrolling the streets in Baqubah.

"What we do everyday is go outside the wire," said

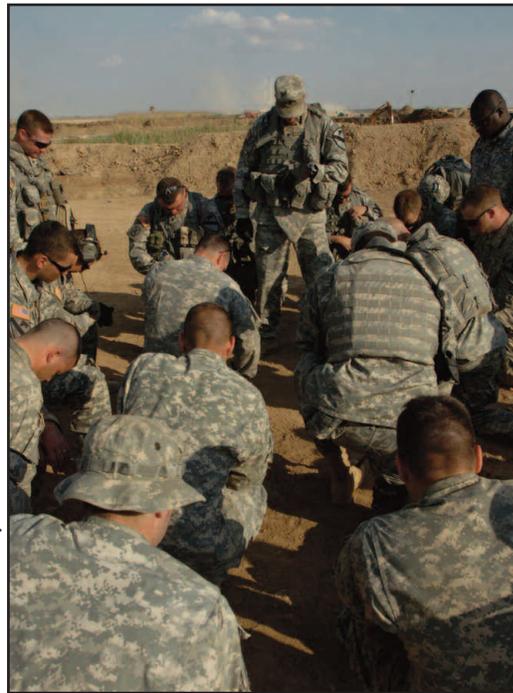


Photo by Spc. Ryan Stroud, 3BCT Public Affairs

Soldiers of "Blue Platoon," Co. D, 1-12 CAB, 3rd BCT, 1st Cav. Div., take a knee in prayer before they head out on a mission into Khalis, Iraq.

Mayes. "You can be a driver one day, run the gun the next. We switch it up and learn the other guy's jobs. That's what makes us a good team."

"We do it all. Everybody has to know everyone's job ... we're all able to step-up and take charge," he continued.

From conducting patrols to raiding houses or providing security, the team has been through it all and they do it together.

Not every mission has gone the way the Soldiers had planned, but things like IEDs have yet to stop these Soldiers from finishing their mission at hand.

"We've had some bad days out there, but we're hanging in there and trying to stay strong and finish this deployment out," Mayes said.

After going through combat experiences together, Brooks said they have formed a special bond.

"It definitely makes you

See PLATOON, Pg. 9



Photo by Spc. Ryan Stroud, 3BCT Public Affairs

Sgt. Justin Mayes, "Blue Platoon," pulls guard around a street corner in Khalis, Iraq.

IA, CF provide residents with medical care

By Sgt. Armando Monroig
5th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

The girl seemed scared as she entered the examination room. With trepidation, she sat down in front of the doctor with two family members by her side.

"Let's see what we have here," said Maj. Brad Rather, physician's assistant for the 5th Squadron, 73rd Cavalry Regiment, as he examined the stitches on the Iraqi girl's brow.

Rather and his unit, along with members of the 2nd Brigade, 5th Iraqi Army Division, were at a clinic in As Sadah, on the outskirts of Baqubah, providing residents medical care March 18 that was long overdue.

The clinic had been closed for several weeks due to insurgent attacks in the neighborhood.

"Insurgents pretty much kept everybody held hostage here. People couldn't even leave their houses and go shopping for food," said

Rather.

While the 82nd Airborne Division Soldiers, attached to the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, secured the area, visiting medics treated patients with ailments ranging from colds to shrapnel wounds.

More than 70 patients were seen in about six hours. They filled a waiting room before lining up outside.

Capt. Farhan Nesrallah, the brigade surgeon for the 2nd Brigade, 5th Iraqi Army Division, prescribed medications. If they needed additional attention, such as the removal of stitches, Nesrallah sent them to Rather.

He said that missions like this one allow the residents of As Sadah to see the Iraqi Security Forces and coalition forces working together to help them.

"We wanted to show the residents that we and the Iraqi Army are there to support them," said 1st Lt. Braden Hestermann, medical platoon leader, 5-73rd Cav. Regt.

"We wanted to go out, see what sick and injured people they have and try to alleviate some of the pain or symptoms they're feeling," he said.

But Rather said a secure environment is necessary to providing continuous medical care for the residents of As Sadah. He said the doctor that normally works at the clinic lives in Baqubah, but is afraid to work at the clinic.

"If we and the IA can keep this area secure, then the chances of keeping (the clinic) open are pretty good. They definitely need the healthcare here," he said, after stitching up two men with severe cuts.

"If we weren't here to do this, he



Photo by Sgt. Armando Monroig, 5th MPAD

A combat medic assigned to 5-73 Cav. Regt., monitors the IV fluid of an Iraqi patient in Baqubah, Iraq,

would get an infection and could possibly die from it."

While the men providing medical care were wearing military uniforms, the joint effort to provide healthcare gave local residents the opportunity to obtain a service that many people from countries like the United States have come to expect from the civilian sector.

As the two family members comforted the Iraqi girl, she stared cautiously at the physician's assistant as he applied shiny metal forceps to her brow and gently removed several stitches.

"There you go," Rather said with a smile as he removed the last stitch. "See? All better."



Photo by Sgt. Armando Monroig, 5th MPAD

Capt. Farhan Nesrallah, brigade surgeon for 2nd Bde., 5th IA, treats a patient at a clinic in As Sadah, Iraq.

Useful Iraqi Phrases

Where are you from?
min-wayn-in-ta?

On the cover ...



A Soldier with "Blue Platoon," Co. D, 1-12 CAB, 3rd BCT, 1st Cav. Div., vigilantly stands guard, protecting his platoon leader while he talks with the local Iraqi army and police about attacks in Khalis, Iraq.

Photo by Spc. Ryan Stroud, 3BCT Public Affairs

3rd BCT Commander
Col. David Sutherland

3rd BCT PAO

Maj. Raul Marquez
raul.marquezhernandez@us.army.mil

3rd BCT PAO NCOIC/Editor

Sgt. Serena Hayden
serena.hayden@us.army.mil

3rd BCT PAO Staff Writers

Spc. Ryan Stroud, Pfc. Ben Fox

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Chaplain's Corner

A few weeks ago we heard news that we are extended. The news brought us so many things to think about. Our current deployment has been difficult for all of us. On top of that, the extension news flamed the fire once again.

Certainly this sun-scorched land (it is getting there) has been a testing ground for our faith. As a Chaplain, I'd like to share the language of faith with you as we deal with many issues; fear of death, anxiety, worry for family matters, spouse or children's illness, spouse' infidelity, death of family members, and failure of family care plan due to illness, lack of support....

I know that the language of faith is not for everybody, especially if you don't believe in God. But I'd like to invite you all who are interested in listening to the language of faith as we deal with many issues in the midst of our deployment.

We're not always aware of His presence, or His blessing. That's because it's so hard to break the habits that come so naturally to us:
of worry and anxiety,
of fretting and stewing,
of taking matters into our own hands,
as if we were in charge of our destiny and future.

Psalm 121

It's the song sung by all the Psalmists
God is our refuge and strength...
An ever present help in trouble. Ps 46:1,2
I lift my eyes to the hills — where does my help come from?
My help comes from the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth.

Psalm 23

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not be in want.
He makes me lie down in green pastures.

These are the languages our God wants us to learn to speak. It's the posture in life our God invites us to take when, as we live our lives, we encounter things we're not sure of, crises that threaten to overwhelm us, or pain so deep that we feel it will destroy us. It's the posture, not of cocky self-confidence, or of indifference to the hard stuff of life, but the humble trust and submission to the will of an Almighty God who we know loves us, and will care for us.

God has spoken, He will provide, He is in Control!

Chaplain (Capt.) InSoon G. Hoagland
215th BSB Chaplain

Soldier on the FOB

“What is your good-luck charm that you carry with you everywhere?”

Pfc. Jeff Rowe

1-14 Cav., 5-20 Inf. Regt.

“I carry a my Basic Training graduation ring simply because it's been with me from the start. When it breaks, I guess that's when I'll be in trouble.”



Spc. Tina Bressant-Parker
HHT, 3rd BCT

“In 2004, I deployed with my husbands ring and made it back safely. I'm here again and I'm still making it. It's a part of my husband that's always with me.”



Spc. Nick Tompkins
A Co. , 1-12 Cav.

“I carry a small cross that my wife gave me, with me everywhere. It's God watching over me and protecting me from harm.”



Spc. Andrew Smith
72nd Engineers

“I wear two charms that my wife and my dad gave me before I deployed. It's a reminder of the blessings I have and that there are people out there thinking of me.”



Spc. Toni Moses
571st MP Co.

“I wear a jade gemstone that my mom gave me, which is a symbol of safety, around my neck at all times.”



By Spc. Ryan Stroud, 3BCT Public Affairs

GREY WOLF



Photo by Sgt. Serena Hayden, 3BCT Public Affairs

Above, Staff Sgt. Mario Whitaker, a member of 3-1 Cav. commander's personal security detachment, arm wrestles with local children during a meeting in Baqouba, Iraq, April 30.

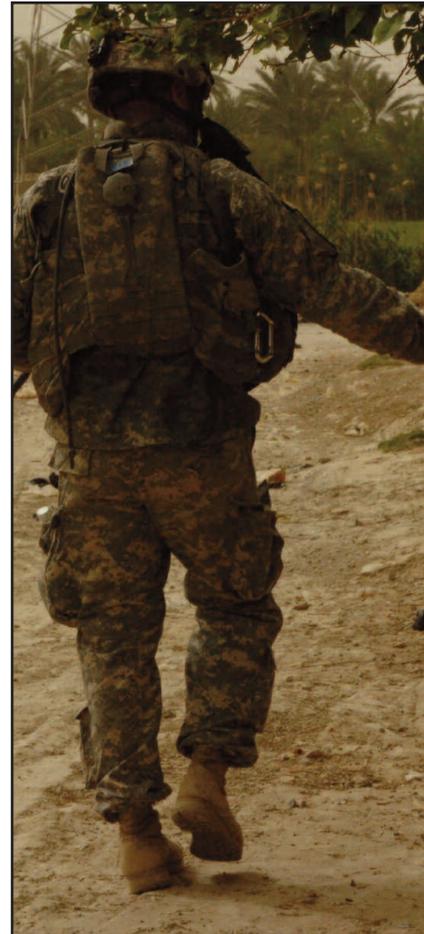


Photo by S...

At right, a Soldier from Co. B, 5-20 Inf. Regt., shakes hands with a boy in Baqouba, Iraq, April 24. Soldiers of 5-20 Inf. Regt., 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, from Fort Lewis, Wash., began the clearing operation with Iraqi Army soldiers to rid the Tahrir neighborhood of insurgents.



Photo by Spc. Ryan Stroud, 3BCT Public Affairs

Above, "Blue Platoon," Co.D, 1-12 CAB's attitude of "all business, no play" is in effect while they patrol a major street in a local market of Khalis, Iraq.



Photo by

At right, Col. David Sutherland, commander of 3-1 Cav, and Gen. Dave Petraeus, MNF-I commander exit their Stryker vehicles to attend a meeting about Diyala province at FOB Warhorse in Baqubah, Iraq.

F IN ACTION



Staff Sgt. Antonietta Rico, 5th MPAD



Pfc. Ben Fox, 3BCT Public Affairs



Photo by Staff Sgt. Antonietta Rico, 5th MPAD

Spc. Edwin Kane of Co. B, 5-20 Inf. Regt., and a soldier from 2-5 IA Division, move through a gate in Baqouba, Iraq. Soldiers of 5-20 Inf. Regt. began the clearing operation with Iraqi Army soldiers April 23 to rid the Tahrir neighborhood of insurgents.

Stryker battalion restores security in Baqubah market

By Staff Sgt. Antonietta Rico
5th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Coalition forces launched an operation April 2 to clear and secure the market area in Baqubah, Iraq, in order to reestablish the city's economic center.

Soldiers of 5th Battalion, 20th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Stryker Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division, from Fort Lewis, Wash., maintained a continuous 24-hour presence in the area, called Old Baqubah, during the first four days of the operation while they searched for terrorists and weapon caches.

They plan to remain in the neighborhood to assist Iraqi Security Forces as they establish and man permanent checkpoints to provide security for vendors and shoppers at the marketplace.

"It is important we open up the market place because in order to win the fight against insurgents here we have to establish a good economy," said 1st Lt. Thomas Gaines, 1st Platoon leader, Company A, 5-20th Inf. Regt.

Iraqi Police and Iraqi Army soldiers plan on controlling the checkpoints and searching vehicles coming in and out of the neighborhood, while the Stryker Soldiers continue to operate in the area.

"We are flooding the area with a presence and making it permanent," Gaines said. "That permanent presence should break up or at least disrupt (insurgent) operations."

The Stryker battalion reported that the operation to secure the market was launched on the advice of the Baqubah city council, which considered it an important step in the progression of the city. Coalition forces hope more vendors will eventually open their shops in the marketplace and that more

civilians will feel safe shopping at the market.

"The market place that we are working out of is one of the main commerce points of the city of Baqubah," said Staff Sgt. Jay M. Thompson, a squad leader with 1st Platoon, Co. A.

Thompson believes disrupting insurgent operations in Old Baqubah will have an economic influence on the entire city and give hope to all the people who visit the market.

"If everyone comes to this area and sees an immediate improvement, they know it is only a matter of time before it will touch their neighborhood," Thompson said.

People in the area reported a decrease in terrorist activities during the first days of the operation. On the second day of clearing, there were more civilians out on the streets.

"It's very good," said an Iraqi man, whose name has been withheld to protect his identity. "There are less shootings and more security."

Staff Sgt. Jon Matthews, another squad leader with 1st Platoon, said the coalition presence in the area helped encourage people to spend more time outside their houses.

"I believe it makes them feel safer and it gives them more courage to come outside," Matthews said.

Soldiers of Co. A faced little resistance from insurgents during the clearing operation. Staff Sgt. Christopher Lumadue, also a squad leader with 1st Platoon, said he believed the constant presence of the Stryker battalion pushed insurgents out of the area.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Antonietta Rico, 5th MPAD
American and Iraqi Soldiers patrol the marketplace in Old Baqubah. The mission was part of an ongoing effort by Soldiers to clear the neighborhood of insurgents and secure the local marketplace.

"When they see a big force of Americans coming in, they are not going to fight," Lumadue said.

On the fifth day of the operation, engineers with 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, emplaced cement barriers throughout the neighborhood to augment security for ISF check points and to prevent the movement of car bombs by insurgents.

Soldiers of the battalion discovered terrorist propaganda and U.S. currency along with several small weapon caches, which included ammunition and bomb-making materials. Coalition forces also detained several suspected insurgents.



'Grey Wolf' Retention Team

3 BCT Senior Counselor
3rd BSTB
1st-12th CAV

215th BSB

3rd-8th CAV
6th-9th CAV

2nd-82nd FA

Sgt. 1st Class Jeffrey Helmes
Staff Sgt. Luis Carter
Staff Sgt. Jason Folmar
Staff Sgt. Alegray Hamer
Staff Sgt. Annamaria Conklin
Staff Sgt. Margaret Smothers
Staff Sgt. Don Jewell
Staff Sgt. Richard Erickson
Staff Sgt. Keston Dyer
Staff Sgt. Daniel Beltran

From PLATOON, Pg. 1

closer as a team; you put your trust in the people around you to do their jobs," he said.

While these Soldiers might have an "all business, no play" attitude outside the wire, the concept changes once children are involved.

With the team's convoy moving down a busy street in Khalis, Iraq, the gunners of the humvees throw candy to the children and wave to everyone on the street.

"The children are friendly; most of them are really nice," said Brooks. "They like us. We hand out everything from candy to soccer balls."

And the families of the Soldiers back home are getting involved with reaching out to the children, too. They pack-up and mail off everything from toys to school supplies for the Soldiers to hand out.

"Family members do send us things to hand out to the children," said Henry. "My girl back at home just sent me some school supplies to give out."

"Most of the supplies we hand out on missions come from home," said Mayes. "That really is a big help."

After a long day of patrols or fighting, the Soldiers, who work long hours in sup-

port of their missions, return back to the FOB, prepare for the next mission and take time for some much needed rest and relaxation.

"When we get back from a mission, we are just so tired and beat," said Mayes. "But we have to be ready for the next mission. We have to do maintenance [on our vehicles and weapons] whenever we can find the time. But if we get time, we'll relax, watch movies and get on the internet."

"I try to jump into the showers as quickly as possible," Brooks said. "I also try to relax and watch movies. You have to clear your head and get ready for the next day and the next mission. That's really important."

As these Soldiers prepare for the next day, looks of relief, exhaustion and contentment fill their eyes. They have made it through another day and are ready for the next.

And there is not a complaint from the group about having to go out again the next day for another mission. They will be heading out together, with their platoon, with their brothers.

"I trust the guys that I work with," said Brooks. "I can trust that they know what their doing, so we're going to be ok."

"I love working with these guys," he said. "After the stuff we've gone through out here, you become closer as a family. Being here has been a bonding experience."

"It's great because we're so close now; it's more of a family than a platoon," said Henry. "Everybody knows everyone's wife's names, their kid's names – this really is a family."

And tomorrow, as the sun rises, the band of brothers will gather again, take a knee and pray. They pray for the day ahead, remembering their fallen comrades. They do this not because they have to, but because they choose to.

"It's been hard at times," said a very solemn Henry. "Everybody in the platoon thinks about them every single day. We talk about them constantly."

"We pray every day before we go out, every mission," said Mayes. "It's something that helps us and brings us even closer together. It's a good thing."

"We try to keep going, move on... these guys would want us to," Brooks said in solace. "Those guys were vital members of our team and they are going to be terribly missed."

In Memory Of....



SGT Jason Shaffer
HHC, 1-12 CAB
3BCT, 1CD

CPT Johnathan Grassbaugh
HHT, 5-73 RSTA
3BCT, 1CD

SPC Ebe Emolo
D Trp., 5-73 RSTA
3BCT, 1CD



SPC Levi Hoover
D Trp., 5-73 RSTA
3BCT, 1CD

PFC Rodney McCandless
D Co., 5-73 RSTA
3BCT, 1CD

SSG Jesse Williams
B Co., 5-20 Inf. Regt.
3BCT, 1CD

1LT Phillip Neel
A Co., 3-8 CAB
3BCT, 1CD

PFC Jeffrey Avery
571st MP Co.
3BCT, 1CD

1LT Kevin Gaspers
B Trp., 5-73 RSTA
3BCT, 1CD

SSG William Moore
B Trp., 5-73 RSTA
3BCT, 1CD

SSG Kenneth Locker Jr.
B Trp., 5-73 RSTA
3BCT, 1CD

SGT Brice Pearson
B Trp., 5-73 RSTA
3BCT, 1CD

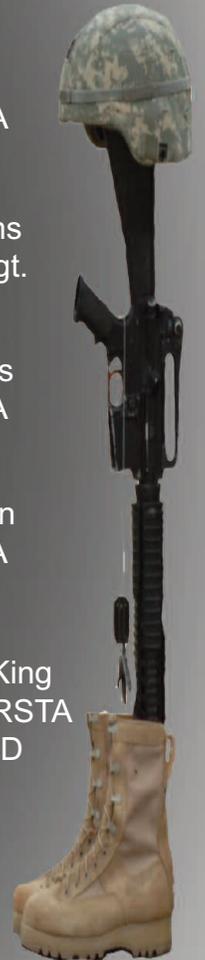
SGT Randall Marshall
HHT, 5-73 RSTA
3BCT, 1CD

SGT Michael Vaughn
B Trp., 5-73 RSTA
3BCT, 1CD

SPC Jerry King
B Trp., 5-73 RSTA
3BCT, 1CD

SPC Michael Rodriguez
B Trp., 5-73 RSTA
3BCT, 1CD

PFC Garrett Knoll
HHT, 5-73 RSTA
3BCT, 1CD



Tedious 'CLPP' in place to save Soldiers' lives

By Spc. Ryan Stroud
3rd BCT Public Affairs

Before the sun rises on Forward Operating Base Warhorse in Baqubah, Iraq, a small group of Soldiers are up and working. These Soldiers get more accomplished in their day of work before most wake-up.

Performing maintenance checks on vehicles, looking for the slightest detail that could put a mission in jeopardy, and inventorying Soldiers' personal equipment are all a part of a days work for these Soldiers from Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 215th Brigade Support Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, at the Combat Logistics Patrol Point.

Vehicles staged at the CLPP are for supply runs, usually for distributing fuel and other items to surrounding FOBs. The CLPP is used for Soldiers in the convoy who head out to pick up materials to bring back to the FOB as well.

These Soldiers take pride in their work. They know they are the last line of safety checks before the convoys they are en-

trusted to inspect roll outside the wire. And they have yet to fail at their mission.

"[Our job] is important because it gives a chance to take a look at all the vehicles and all the personnel and make sure everything is ready to leave the FOB," said Master Sgt. Anthony Adams, the leader of the CLPP.

"We don't want anybody to go out with maintenance issues or any minor problems that we could have fixed before they leave," he continued. "Stuff always is found and needs to be fixed."

Adams, who is jokingly known as the "CLPP Master," said it's his goal to make sure the Soldiers heading out of a convoy from his lanes are fully prepared for anything they might encounter or see.

"We make sure these guys leaving out get a well-rehearsed briefing instead of a short one," Adams said. "We go over everything from battle drills to roll-over drills. We want these guys to be prepared for anything they might see out there."

This system of checks after checks is a new idea, according to Adams. Though, extremely tedious, it has yet to fail them.

"I think this is something new that we only do," he said. "I'm sure other units do something like this, but not to the extent or extreme that we do this. We are over protective, but for good reasons. We haven't had any problems with our guys going out yet."

The day prior to a mission is where the system begins. Adams' unit presents the departure time while the manifest begins to be filled.

"Our unit gives a time for movement and the companies figure out the manifest for the CLPP," said Adams. "The platoon sergeants

[for the Soldiers traveling] will do the initial [checks] on their Soldiers and their vehicles, making sure everyone has what they need and their vehicles are ready to roll."

"The day prior [to movement], the vehicles that are moving out get delivered here to be spot-checked of all the equipment," he said.

At that time, Staff Sgt. John Mast, also known as the "Load Master," begins the routine maintenance checks to confirm if the vehicles present are fit for travel or if they need extra repairs to be made.

"My job is to conduct a [Quality Assurance, Quality Control] check on the maintenance guys," said Mast, a native of New London, Wis.

"I go behind to check to make sure the trucks are being properly maintained before they roll out," he said. "The vehicles come up here [to the CLPP] and I check them for any extra maintenance issues."

"I do a few things that can be fixed right away, like tighten up battery clamps or refill tires," Mast added. "After I'm finished looking at the vehicle, the drivers will stage them and get ready for the next day's movement."

"In the morning, I look over the vehicles again to make sure nothing else has changed overnight," he said. "We've had no issues outside the wire yet. With our efforts, it cuts down on recovery and recovery missions that have to go out because of maintenance issues. This helps save lives; it really helps out a lot."

While Mast is conducting his morning checks on the vehicles to find any extra problems, the Soldiers moving out from the CLPP are straightening their personal equipment on stands, ready to be inspected. They then move to a tent to receive a briefing on the day's mission, what they might encounter and any other possible issues the Soldiers might need to know about the roads they are traveling.

"The Soldiers will move into a tent to conduct rehearsals while the Load Master comes down to check to make sure

everything is loaded correctly and tied down properly," said Adams.

Radio and weapons checks also take place to make sure every Soldier can communicate and their weapons are ready to be fired if needed, he continued.

"After the brief, the Soldiers will load into their vehicles and stage up in proper vehicle order, ready to go," Adams said.

The vehicles and Soldiers have been through test after test, making sure everything is right.

Though the CLPP can be a draining and tedious experience, Adams said he is proud of the system's flawless record.

"This is definitely a good system we have set up here. We haven't had any problems or any serious maintenance issues since we've been doing this," Adams proudly admits, but quietly knocks his fist on a wooden desk.

"We have caught things on the line before," he continued. "All vehicles are supposed to go through a maintenance check, so we mostly do a QAQC check on those [initial checks]."

"We are more like a second pair of eyes on everything," he said. "With these checks, we're not finding as many problems as we did before."

"It's very important that we go through all these checks," Mast agreed. "I've found trucks on the line that if we'd hadn't caught them, they would have broken down out on the mission. I think it's really important, a real high priority for the success of the mission."

Mast believes if other units took note of the efforts the Soldiers at the CLPP were making, many problems they might be facing could be resolved before the vehicles ever left the FOB.

"I think our procedures would help out a lot of units," said Mast. "A lot of units might not have the man power to do this quite the way we are, but I think a mirror image of us would be good for a lot of units. If everybody did a lot of the stuff that we're doing, it would cut down on a lot of lost time from recovery missions and other missions that could cost lives."



Photo by Spc. Ryan Stroud, 3BCT Public Affairs

While running the CLPP, Staff Sgt. John Mast, HHT, 215th BSB, inspects a vehicle's parts to ensure it is ready for the road it's about to travel.

New Soldier Sees Reality of War

By Staff Sgt. Antonietta Rico
5th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Sweat mixed with dirt on the face of Pvt. Eric Rundquist. Slowly, it made glistening streaks down his face as he rode within the dusty confines of a Bradley fighting vehicle.

A muffled thud briefly shook the 40-ton personnel carrier, and those inside checked on each other. The Bradley had just hit a roadside bomb—another combat experience for Rundquist, as he rode away from the scene of his first firefight in Iraq.

His experience may have been similar to the media's portrayal of a Soldier's life in Iraq, but not identical. With little more than two weeks spent in Baqubah, Rundquist said he has learned that there's more to his job than combat.

"As a little kid, watching war movies, I was like, 'I want to be a Soldier,'" Rundquist said, "My uncle was a Soldier. He pretty much glorified it all for me."

The 22-year-old Rundquist has been in the Army for nine months. He acknowledged the rush of adrenaline he felt during the firefight, but he can't ignore the satisfaction he'd experienced when performing other duties, such as handing out food to the residents of Baqubah.

"It's not always action," he said of his duties to this point.

Rundquist now realizes he had a false impression about the Army and its presence in Iraq, which was shared by family and friends in his hometown of Streamwood, Ill. Their perceptions, he said, were influenced by what they'd seen on the news.

"You only hear about the bad stuff. You never hear about the good things,"

Rundquist said. "I mean, we are doing good things out here."

Rundquist, a member of Company B, 1-12 Combined Arms Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, said he didn't know about the humanitarian aspect of being a Soldier until he arrived in Iraq.

"You think every time you go out there, its going to be a firefight," he said.

But his first mission in Baqubah was handing out shoes and food to civilians. He said his interaction with the Iraqi people helped him let go of misconceptions about the country's people, as well.

"There are good people out here," said Rundquist, "They are just trying to live their life. They just happen to be caught in the middle of a war."

In his first few weeks in Baqubah, Rundquist has faced the intensity of war. Minutes before the Bradley hit the roadside bomb, Rundquist and his fellow Soldiers had finished a sporadic engagement with insurgent snipers that lasted about two hours.

But Rundquist has also talked with Iraqi children. A feeling of compassion for the Iraqi people now dominates his attitude.

"People actually have to live around that stuff 24 hours a day, and people will and are getting killed," he said. "I would somehow like to help. They deserve it—a normal life away from all this war."

Before he joined the Army, Rundquist worked and spent time with his friends like most people his age. He said his experiences in Baqubah make him feel like he is living a small part of history.

Sometimes he thinks, "Look what you were, now look what you are...look where you have gone. Now, you are in Iraq, halfway around the world, in a street in Baqubah, in a firefight."

He will remember when he returns home that war is not like what it's portrayed as on the news, he said.

Until then, he is determined to keep his mind here in Iraq, and as the new kid in his squad, he's determined to be an asset to his team.

"I'm going to keep my morale high, because I do not want to let anybody down," he said.



Photo by Staff Sgt. Antonietta Rico, 5th MPAD
Pvt. Eric Rundquist, left, and Pvt. Jason Taylor, both with 1st Plt., Co. B, 1-12 CAB, hold on to a strap inside a Bradley fighting vehicle after the Bradley hit a roadside bomb.

Neighborhood Watch Program Shows Signs of Success

Multi-National Division-North

The neighborhood watch program in Muqdadiya, Iraq, has begun to show signs of success throughout the area, said Dr. Abdulla al Jubouri, the former governor of Diyala and founder of the program.

The program, which includes 15 villages throughout the Muqdadiya district, hires local villagers to protect their village and encourages the population to contact the security forces with regards to criminal or terrorist activity.

"The idea is ... to protect the village and to clear it from the armed people and insurgents," said Abdulla, who knows a secure environment is not possible without the help of the people.

Since the program began, Abdulla said there have been several signs of success to include roads free from improvised explosive devices, fighting stopped between what used to be rival villages, schools are reopened, and electric and water services have been repaired.

"The neighborhood watch program has put positive energy into the security of Muqdadiya," said Lt. Col. Keith Gogas, 6-9 Armored Reconnaissance Squadron commander responsible for Coalition Forces in the Muqdadiya area.

"People from all around Muqdadiya have been emboldened by the hard work and sacrifice of Dr. Abdulla, Mayor Najim and many local leaders working to secure this area of Diyala," Gogas said. "This

area is beautiful—full of hard-working, patriotic people who deserve the freedom this security plan gives them."

Aside from providing security, the neighborhood watch program is important because it provides jobs for local citizens who are often poor and persuaded to turn to the terrorists to support their families, said Mayor Najim, Muqdadiya mayor.

"The people recognize the fact that their place in a free and democratic society is their future and ultimately lies in their hands, and cannot be achieved unless there is stable security and government, which enable progress," said Col. David Sutherland, 3-1 Cav. commander.

The neighborhood watch pro-

gram has also encouraged many citizens to join the Iraqi police, and approximately 1,000 citizens want to join the Iraqi army, Abdulla said.

Abdulla said he also hopes others will follow in Muqdadiya's footsteps.

"It is our goal to help for the security plan," Abdulla said. "If we can start from the villages ... it encourages the districts to do the same thing."

And while attacks on Abdulla himself have shown that the terrorists dislike the neighborhood watch program, he and the people refuse to accept defeat.

"[Terrorist attacks] are not going to stop us," he said. "[We will keep going] until we make sure Diyala is secured."

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Photos From the FOB...



A gospel choir sings praise and worship during the Good Friday Prayer Breakfast at Forward Operating Base Warhorse in Baqubah, Iraq, April 6.

Got Photos?

If you'd like to see your photo in *The Grey Wolf Howl*, e-mail Sgt. Serena Hayden at serena.hayden@us.army.mil.

Photo by Pfc. Ben Fox, 3BCT Public Affairs