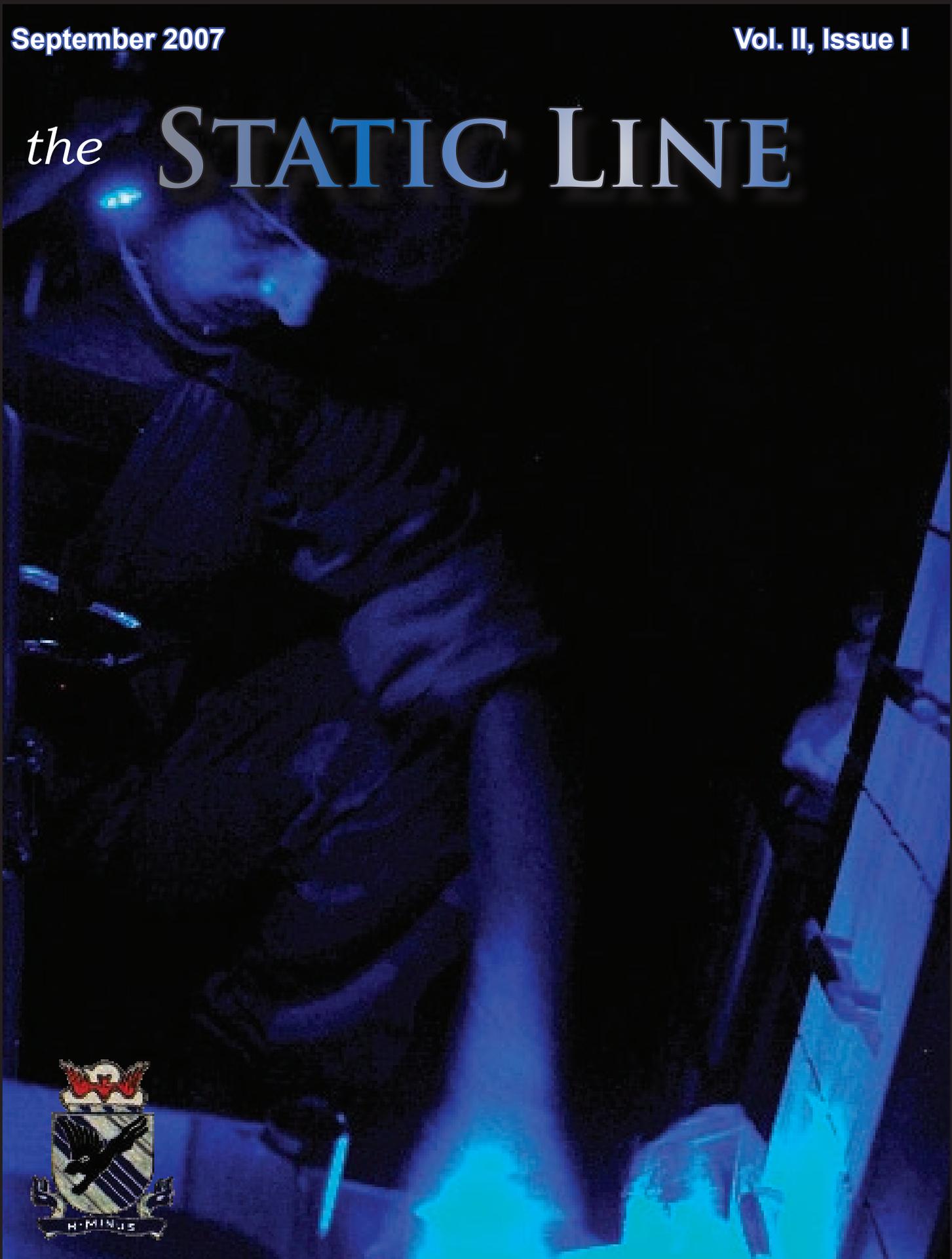


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the **STATIC LINE**





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On The Cover:

A National policeman with the 2nd Brigade, 6th National Police Division, searches an Iraqi man's home during a cordon and knock mission Aug. 12 in Samarra, Iraq.

U.S. Army Photo by Sgt. Joshua R. Ford

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Maliki rallies support for Shiite-Kurd Coalition in Iraq



Photo by Capt. Aydin Mohtashamian/3BCT, 82nd Abn Div PAO

Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki (center), the Governor of Salah Ad Din Province Hamed Shekti al-Qaisi (right) and the Iraqi Minister of Defense Abd al-Qadir al-Mufriji met to discuss provincial issues Aug. 17 at an Iraqi military base in Tikrit, Iraq.

Spc. Amanda Jackson
3BCT, 82nd Abn Div PAO

TIKRIT, Iraq - Prime Minister of Iraq Nouri al-Maliki traveled to Saddam Hussein's hometown of Tikrit to meet with Sunni tribal leaders as he worked to rally support for a new alliance. Governor of the Salah Ad Din Province Hamed Shekti al-Qaisi and the Iraqi Minister of Defense Abed al-Qadir were among the Sunni leaders al-Maliki met with.

The Shiite leader has actively opposed Shiite jurisdiction within the government for years. In 1980, Saddam Hussein sentenced al-Maliki to death for his active role in a party which had opposed his regime. Al-Maliki was exiled, and had lived in Syria and Iran until Saddam's fall, when he returned to Iraq and became the deputy leader of the de-Baathification Commission of the Iraqi Interim Government, which was formed to purge former Baath Party officials from the military and government.

Al-Maliki's new Shiite-Kurdish coalition, which was formed a day prior to the Tikrit visit, is an attempt to abolish the corruption of the former Shiite-dominated government which first took

power in May 2006. The prime minister has said the new partnership between Sunnis and Shiites, Kurds and Iraqis, will be a unifying force against al Qaeda.

Al-Maliki, referring to the sectarian violence which has plagued the nation, said, "There is more uniting us than dividing us. We do not want to allow al Qaeda and the militias to exist for our coming generations."

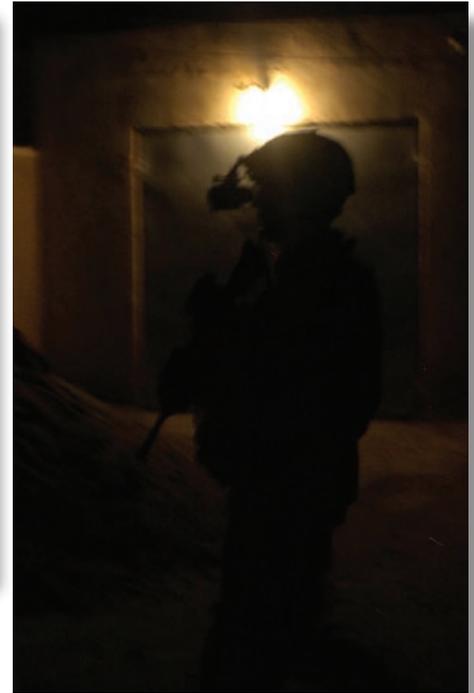
The prime minister also said, "Fighting terrorism gives us (Iraqis) a way to unite."

The Shiite leader has warned the Sunni leaders, who have not agreed with his efforts in the past, he will seek the support of Sunni officials who have joined forces against al Qaeda. The new coalition is a final effort to unite leaders of all tribes and affiliations against the insurgency in Iraq.

The new Shiite-Kurdish coalition will hold a majority in parliament – 181 of the 275 seats. With this partnership, al-Maliki intends to pass legislation demanded by the Bush administration, including a law to share and distribute oil wealth throughout Iraq, and a law which will return government officials who held office during Saddam's regime to office.



Above: A Paratrooper with Company C, 2nd Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division, patrols an alley Aug. 14 during a patrol in Samarra, Iraq.
Right: A Paratrooper with Company C, 2nd Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division, patrols an alley Aug. 14 during a patrol in Samarra, Iraq.



Clearing operations in Samarra strike hard at insurgency

Sgt. Joshua R. Ford
3BCT, 82nd Abn Div PAO

SAMARRA, Iraq
- Paratroopers from Company C, 2nd Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, have been

patrolling and operating in Samarra, Iraq, for more than one year and recently supported the Iraqi security forces in a clearing operation to rid the city of the al Qaeda presence terrorizing Samarra.

The operation was dubbed “Operation Jalil” in honor of Col. Jalil Nahi Hasoun, Samarra’s former police chief, who was killed May 6 during a suicide car bomb attack.

The operation led Maj. Gen. Rashid al-Helfy, commander of Iraqi security forces in Samarra, his men, and Paratroopers of Company C to the discovery of weapons caches, bomb making materials and the detainment of more than 80 suspected terrorists, including suspects responsible for the June 13 bombing of the Askirya Mosque.

The Askirya Mosque, also known as the Golden Dome Shrine, was first bombed Feb. 22, 2006, and sparked a wave of sectarian violence throughout the country. The explosion

collapsed the dome.

The June 13 bombing destroyed the two remaining minarets flanking the golden dome of the mosque.

Since then, more than 2,500 Iraqi soldiers from the 4th Iraqi army, and policemen from the 6th National Police Division, have been deployed to the city to create a stable security situation. Including Operation Jalil, Company C has also detained more than 200 insurgents since the second mosque attack.

When the Iraqi national police first arrived in Samarra, they received anything but a warm welcome. The people of Samarra were very hesitant to receive the policemen, said Capt. Buddy Ferris, commander, Company C, 2nd Battalion, 505th

— see **SAMARRA**, page 4



Photos by Sgt. Joshua R. Ford/3BCT, 82nd Abn Div PAO

Paratroopers with Company C, 2nd Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division, secure a courtyard during a cordon and search mission Aug. 11 in Samarra, Iraq.

Paratroopers use a softer approach to fight insurgency in Samarra

Sgt. Joshua R. Ford
3BCT, 82nd Abn Div PAO

SAMARRA, Iraq - For Paratroopers in Samarra missions don't always include knocking down gates and kicking in doors. Sometimes all the troops have to do is ring the doorbell.

Since the beginning of Operation Iraqi Freedom, Samarra has been a hot spot for insurgent activity. Multiple bombings of the Askirya Mosque – also known as the Golden Dome Shrine and one of Shia Islam's holiest sites – and the slaying of Col. Jalil Nahi Hasoun, Samarra's former police chief, as well as numerous other attacks throughout the city have transformed Samarra from one of Iraq's most well-known tourist cities to one of the most violent.

Paratroopers from Company C, 2nd Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division, have been fighting the insurgency in Samarra for more than a year now and said troops don't always have to use lethal force to get the job done. Sometimes all it takes is a knock on the front door and a friendly conversation to catch the bad guys.

Soldiers around the Army call the missions cordon and knocks, and sometimes they are more important than kicking in the front door, said Sgt. Tim Curry, team leader, Company C.

Cordon and knock missions start off just like a cordon and search. The difference occurs when the Paratroopers actually arrive at each house. Rather than opening the door with force, they knock on it and most of the time the inhabitants of the house let the troops in, said 2nd Lt. Steven Smith, 1st Platoon leader, Company C.

“(Initially) everyone is always scared. You have 10 Paratroopers coming in with guns, and they're moving in



2nd Lt. Steven Smith, 1st Platoon leader, Company C, 2nd Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division, hands out flyers with information on how to contact coalition forces to two Iraqi men during a cordon and knock mission Aug. 12 in Samarra, Iraq.

quickly. Its always going to be an intimidating experience, but once we sit them down and start talking to them the situation calms down very quickly, and the people are happy to have us there,” said Smith.

“(Cordon and knocks) are very important, because (the Iraqi people) don't need to think that every time we come around that it's just to bust them up or to do bad things,” said Curry. “We are trying to help them. We are here trying to make things safe. We are here to make sure the insurgents aren't taking all of the good things that (Iraqi people) have away.”

Paratroopers need information from the Samarra community to make sure the people are safe from the looming insurgency infesting the city. Cordon and knock missions help provide that information by conversing and questioning the city's citizens, said Curry.

“We can't win this fight on our own, and we depend very heavily on intelligence and any information the city can give us,” said Smith.

Questioning isn't the only thing that brings Smith's platoon to the neighborhoods of Samarra, though. Sometimes the troops just stop by to inform the citizens what U.S. and Iraqi forces are doing in the city. Whether it is school or soccer field building projects, or to tell the people of possible security threats the troops are aware of in the Samarra citizen's neighborhoods, said Smith.

“We try to convey as much trust as we are able to,” added Smith.

“We want them to know that we are here for them, we are not here to run around and arrest everybody and to kill everybody. We are here to help them. We are here to make it safe in Samarra. We are here to catch insurgents, that way these people can go on with their normal lives,” said Curry.



Photos by Sgt. Joshua R. Ford/3BCT, 82nd Abn Div PAO

2nd Lt. Steven Smith, 1st Platoon leader, Company C, 2nd Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division, has a conversation with an Iraqi man during a cordon and knock mission Aug. 12 in Samarra, Iraq.

Paratroopers clear Diyala river valley

Pfc. Ben Fox
3BCT, 1st Cav Div PAO

DIYALA RIVER VALLEY, Iraq - Iraqi army and coalition forces in the Had Maksar area of Diyala province targeted al Qaeda operatives and other terrorist forces during a three-day operation beginning

Aug. 4 in a continued effort to deny the enemy the use of any perceived safe havens in the Diyala River Valley.

Taking advantage of the increased forces in Diyala, the 1st Battalion, 2nd Brigade, 5th Iraqi Army, partnered with Soldiers from the 5th Squadron, 73rd

Cavalry Regiment, attached to 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, conducted Operation Hoplite in the Had Maksar area, resulting in five enemy killed and ten suspected terrorists detained.

“This operation is imperative as it not only

denies alQaeda’s freedom of maneuver, but provides a safe and secure environment for the people living in the lower portion of the Diyala River Valley,” said Col. David W. Sutherland, commander of coalition forces in Diyala.

— see **DIYALA**, page 5

SAMARRA

Parachute Infantry Regiment.

Now the citizens of Samarra are very receptive to the national police, and the Paratroopers from Company C have seen this through the vast amount of information they receive everyday from the people in Samarra about terrorists operating in their neighborhoods, Ferris added.

“(The Paratroopers) like to see that the Iraqis are taking the lead,” said Ferris. “We will continue to push forward the Iraqi security forces so they can provide a stable enough environment so we can start developing a legitimate government that functions and is tied in with the (Salah ad Din) province.”

The 150-Paratrooper force are responsible for securing a city of more than 150,000. Two years ago the U.S. Army needed a whole brigade of more than 3,000 Soldiers to secure the city.

Since the Paratroopers of Company C have been in Samarra, they have killed more than 50 terrorists and detained more than 300.

The Paratroopers of Company C have done an outstanding job in Samarra since they arrived in August 2006. They always have a good attitude in wanting to help the citizens in the city, said Sgt. Tim Curry, team leader, Company C.

“(The Paratroopers) have been holding the lid on the city of Samarra for a year. This company has been able to hold Samarra in one piece, so to say, and has actually been able to make progress and it speaks volumes,” said Ferris. “(The Paratroopers) are tired; we are at month 13, but we know we’re making a difference.”



Photo by Sgt. Joshua R. Ford/3BCT, 82nd Abn Div PAO

A Paratrooper with Company C, 2nd Parachute Infantry Battalion, 82nd Airborne Division, exits a house after clearing it Aug. 12 in Samarra, Iraq.

Paratrooper re-enlists from ICU

Capt. Aydin Mohtashamian
3BCT, 82nd Abn Div PAO

COB SPEICHER, Iraq - An 82nd Airborne Division Paratrooper re-enlisted for six additional years of service from his hospital bed Aug 28 at Contingency Operations Base Speicher, Iraq, one day after a rocket-propelled grenade blast left him with two broken legs and shrapnel wounds to his back.

Spc. Clayton Allison, a fire support specialist, Company C, 2nd Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, and native of Wisconsin Rapids, Wisc., was injured when an RPG hit a bongo truck several meters from his patrol in Samarra.

Col. Bryan R. Owens, commander for the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, re-enlisted Allison and presented him with the Purple Heart hours before he was transported to Landstuhl Army Regional Medical Center in Germany for further recovery treatment.



Photo by Capt. Aydin Mohtashamian/3BCT, 82nd Abn Div PAO

Col. Bryan R. Owens (left), commander of 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, re-enlists Spc. Clayton Allison (right), fire support specialist, Company C, 2nd Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, Aug. 29 at Contingency Operating Base Speicher, Iraq.

DIYALA

“Citizens of Had Maksar were extremely pleased with the presence of the Iraqi army, clearly showing the security forces are having a significant positive impact on the population as they continue to fight for their country.”

During the operation, two house-borne improvised explosive devices were discovered and destroyed; two weapons caches were discovered; four IEDs were discovered and reduced; and one al Qaeda vehicle was destroyed.

Attack helicopters from the 25th Combat Aviation Brigade began the operation, with an air assault of Soldiers from 5-73 Cav. into the main objective areas. The Iraqi army and coalition forces conducted a thorough search of the objective areas, to include a detailed cordon and search of each village and clearance of the palm groves.

“We developed a detailed plan in conjunction with some of the local leadership, which provided the ability to isolate, kill and capture the al Qaeda elements who began to seek shelter and safe haven in the village,” said Lt. Col. Andrew Poppas, 5-73 Cav. commander. “As the enemy continues to seek shelter, we will find them, target them, and ultimately bring them to justice.”

After observing armed men trying to escape the objective area, attack helicopters from 25th Combat Aviation Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, engaged and killed five terrorists. Ten suspected terrorists detained during the operation were transferred to a facility for further questioning.

The weapon caches consisted of rocket-propelled grenades, artillery munitions, mortar tubes, IED-making material and assorted small-arms munitions.



Photo by Pfc. Ben Fox/3BCT, 1st Cav Div PAO

A combined force of Iraqi and U.S. Army Soldiers move from house to house Aug. 4 during Operation Hoplite, clearing the town of Had Maksar, Iraq.

“Our forces will remain aggressive and persistent in targeting the enemy forces throughout Diyala,” Sutherland continued. “The people continue to recognize the hatred and destruction al Qaeda offers, which is another indicator that the terrorists have no safe haven in Diyala.”

Following the clearance of the Had Maksar area, the Iraqi army constructed a patrol base to maintain a permanent presence, further denying the enemy’s abilities to target the citizens of Diyala.

Paratroopers Push Through the Plain



Photos by Pfc. Ben Fox/ 3BCT, 1st Cav Div PAO

Carrying an M249 squad automatic weapon, Spc. Mario Mendoza, Company A, 5th Squadron, 73rd Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, clears palm groves near Had Maksar, Iraq, Aug. 4 during Operation Hoplite.

Pfc. Ben Fox
3BCT, 1st Cav Div PAO

HAD MAKSAR, Iraq - A CH-47 Chinook helicopter touched down in a small clearing outside Had Maksar, a village in the Diyala River Valley, Iraq.

Immediately, the ramp lowered and a group of Iraqi and U.S. Soldiers streamed out of the chopper to prepare for their mission.

The Soldiers were about to endure two days of Operation Hoplite, where they would clear houses and palm groves in and around Had Maksar – all while fighting temperatures in the 120s.

“There is a lot that goes through your mind,” said Staff Sgt. Adam Jeter, Company A, 5th Squadron, 73rd Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, attached to the 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom 06-08. “You’re not sure what you’re getting into.

“As soon as the wheels hit the ground, your immediate thought is if you are going to make contact or not when you hit the (landing zone),” said Jeter.

“You don’t really know what to expect,” said Spc. Mario Mendoza, also with Co. A, 5-73 Cav.

“When you hit the LZ you could take contact

immediately, but that’s why you pull security,” said Mendoza.

After the Chinook took off, the Soldiers left the field and began clearing houses. Each of the men knew the harsh conditions of fatigue – referred to by many Soldiers as “the suck,” – they were going to face in the near future.

“The suck starts to hit after about two or three hours of clearing, even though we started at roughly two o’clock in the morning,” said Jeter. “It doesn’t take long because you’re wearing (individual body armor), in other words, 40 to 50 pounds.

“Since we did an air assault mission, all the gear that you’re taking with you is on your back,” he said. “So you’re looking at carrying 110 or 120 pounds on your back.

“It doesn’t take long for that to set in,” said Jeter. “It gets rough.

“I mean it’s only a couple of hours until your body is wanting to give out on you,” he said.

“For this particular mission it just started to suck when it started getting hotter,” said Mendoza. “Your gear starts to weigh down and your water is all hot.”

“You just want to get done with it,” he said.

With the harsh conditions, the Soldiers have to find ways to

_____ see **HOPLITE**, page 7

HOPLITE

continue on and keep focus.

"It's up in the head," said Mendoza. "You just have to keep going.

"Sometimes I think of worse situations we've been in," he said. "Some of the time you just don't think about it and just continue on with what you are doing."

"The way that I have always gotten through and... maintain my focus is, first of all, my immediate situation – me and my men," said Jeter.

"My goal from day one was to make sure myself and my men made it home alive," he said. "I can pretty much deal with anything as long as I make sure that my guys get home alive.

"Secondly, my family," continued Jeter. "I have a wife and three kids, and I want to make it home to them.

"Dealing with that short bit of pain is worth it to make sure I have my focus and stamina to make it through," he said.

After all of their assigned houses had been cleared, the Soldiers found a house to stay in that night. The



Photos by Pfc. Ben Fox/3BCT, 1st Cav Div PAO

As the Iraqi Army clears the house, Spc. Mario Mendoza, Company A, 5th Squadron, 73rd Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, labels the gate to a compound Aug. 4 during Operation Hoplite in Had Maksar, Iraq.

next morning, they had to complete the last stage of the mission, which was to clear the palm groves.

"We call the palm groves Vietnam," said Mendoza.

"The humidity is just

(ridiculous) there."

Getting up in the morning and knowing that they are going to go through possibly worse conditions than the day before did not faze Jeter.

"It almost becomes kind of comedic," said Jeter.

"You get up and you know it's going to suck," he said. "You know you are getting ready to go through hell, and you know your backs going to hurt... you're going to get dehydrated and feel light headed.

"The palm groves are going to be humid, and you're going to be bent over trying to walk down under the (vineyards)," said Jeter.

"You get to the point where you know it's going to happen one way or the other, so you may as well laugh about it," he said.

Mendoza said it could have been worse.

"We did it when it was still relatively cool out, so it wasn't that bad," he said.

"When it gets hotter in the day, it's not dry anymore -- it's humid," said Mendoza, "which makes it that much worse.

"The vineyards are the worst because they are so low," he said. "It sucks to be bent over walking around in the (body armor)."

"The only thing that was going through my head was 'Last day of this (stuff),'"

said Mendoza. Jeter said that each mission gives him something to reflect on for future operations.

"It does get easier each time, because each time you can fine tune what you didn't do perfect the last time," he said. "With each mission comes that additional refinement that makes you that much better for the next one."



Sgt. Dustin Slack, Company A, 5th Squadron, 73rd Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, marks a military-aged man in Had Maksar, Iraq, during Operation Hoplite, Aug. 4. The Soldiers place markings on the citizens so they know who has been searched.

National Police meet Balad citizens

Sgt. Joshua R. Ford

3BCT, 82nd Abn Div PAO

BALAD, Iraq - Balad's citizens stood outside of their homes and watched curiously as policemen in unfamiliar uniforms patrolled their street.

The policemen's mission was to go into Balad and the surrounding area to meet the people, get to know them and let the citizens know that the Iraqi National Police will be providing security for the city for an undetermined amount of time.

"We talk to the people to let them know that we are here and we are going to be here for a while to provide additional security to the people," said 2nd Lt. Nassad Jasim, an Iraqi policeman with the 2nd Brigade, 6th National Police Division.

At first the people seemed weary about talking to the police but after introductions are made the people seem willing to help coalition forces, said Jasim.

"We talk to the people to get information so we can catch the insurgents," said Jasim.

Policemen from the 2nd Brigade, 6th National Police Division, who are from Baghdad, arrived to Balad in June but just recently started patrolling Balad because the policemen had to first go through a series of training courses.

The National Police Transition Team, 3rd Combined Arms Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division, based at Forward Operating Base Paliwoda put the men through what the team calls a "re-bling process", which puts the police back through a basic training-type of course.

The team worked on issues with the police concerning different channels they can go through to attain their logistical needs and different advanced combat tactics one can use while out on patrols, said Capt. Lanelle Pickett, the logistics officer for the transition team, 3rd Combined Arms Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division.

"We train them to be effective as possible with the equipment they have," said Capt. Nicholas Williams, assistant



Photo by Sgt. Joshua R. Ford/3BCT, 82nd Abn Div PAO

2nd Lt. Nassad Jasim, a police officer from the 2nd Brigade, 6th National Police Division, meets with a family Aug. 25 outside of Balad, Iraq. U.S.

trainer, National Police Transition Team.

"Some days are better than others but overall the (National Police) are doing a good job," said Pickett.

"The Americans have given us good training," said Jasim.

Most of Balad's citizens have accepted the new police force in town and are

willing to work with them, said Jasim.

"It is good to have more security here. This means my family and my neighbors will be safer," said a Balad citizen who did not want to give out his name in fear of insurgent reprisal.

"My men are doing a good job," said Jasim. "We will continue to do our job here so Balad can be safe."

**IN MEMORY OF THOSE WHO
MADE THE ULTIMATE SACRIFICE ...**



**SSG JOSHUA P. MATTERO
KIA, EOD
DIYALA, IRAQ
DEC 6, 1977 - JULY 29, 2007**



**SGT JOSHUA L. MORLEY
KIA, 2 PANTHER
SAMARRA, IRAQ
APRIL 5, 1985 - AUG 26, 2007**



**SFC DAVID A. HERINGES
KIA, 1 PANTHER
BAYJI, IRAQ
FEB 9, 1971 - AUG 24, 2007**



**SSG JOAN J. DURAN
KIA, 5-73 CAV (ABN)
DIYALA, IRAQ
MAY 16, 1983 - AUG 10, 2007**



**SPC TRACEY C. WILLIS
KIA, 2 PANTHER
SAMARRA, IRAQ
MARCH 8, 1986 - AUG 26, 2007**

505th Parachute Infantry Regiment 82nd Airborne Division



**All the Way!!
H-Minus!!**

