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Volume I, Issue 21

Telling the MND-Baghdad Story

Monday, Sept. 17, 2007



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

Spreading Cheer to the Children

Sgt. 1st Class Andre Bundick, with 4th Squadron 9th Cav. Regt., 2nd BCT, 1st Cav. Div., hands out candy to eager kids in Baghdad's Karkh District Aug. 23. (See story pg. 8)

Suicide Prevention is Everyone's Mission

By Spc. Jeffrey Ledesma
1st Cavalry Division Public Affairs

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq - Despite being deployed to a combat zone halfway around the world, Multi-National Division - Baghdad Soldiers have a support system in place to assist in them deal with stress that can lead to suicidal thoughts.

Commitment for the safety and well being of Soldiers continues to be a priority as the Army proactively takes on suicide prevention through the numerous resources available in deployed areas.

According to the 2006 Army Suicide Event Report, last year 99 deaths were a result of suicide and almost 30% of them occurred while serving in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"Our current situation is one of the most stressful,

yet meaningful, situations a Soldier will ever be in. It is only natural that we are all experiencing a broad array of problems," said the division surgeon for MND-B, Lt. Col. Jason Wieman with Headquarters Company, Division Special Troops Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division.

"All of us have stressors in our life; some of them we're able to deal with and some of them we are not able to deal with," said the division's deputy chaplain, Chaplain (Maj.) Robert Wichman with HHC, DSTB, 1st Cav. Div. "Normally, what happens at the place where a person feels completely helpless is they fail to identify those things that they are able to deal with."

Failed personal relationships, legal and financial difficulties and the stress of their occupation were factors causing Soldiers to commit suicide, according to the

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Reconciliation Efforts Mark Cav's Baghdad Birthday

Sept. 13 marked the 1st Cavalry Division's 86th birthday. Last year, we were cutting cake at Fort Hood even as several of our units had already departed on this deployment.

We came with a purpose - to improve the security situation here in the Iraqi capital and set the stage for the Iraqi government and the

Iraqi people to take charge of their future.

We've had some tough days, battling al Qaeda operatives and criminal militia. But here in the Multi-National Division - Baghdad, we keep pounding away at our enemy, pushing him daily. And we've seen positive results from our persistent pressure.

Operation Fardh Al Qanoon, the

Baghdad Security Plan, kicked off in February bringing 'surge' troops to support the security operation in and around the Iraqi capital. We put more troops on the streets and stationed them in joint security stations and Coalition outposts, creating a full-time presence in Baghdad communities with our partners in the Iraqi Security Forces. Now we're seeing a grass roots surge among the Iraqi people.

The people of Baghdad have grown tired of the violence brought on by terrorist groups and criminal militiamen. They have started banding together in neighborhoods on both sides of the Euphrates River to reconcile themselves with the duly-elected Iraqi government to put an end to the senseless violence and lawlessness. They are volunteering to work with the government, instead of against it, for the betterment of all.

In Adhamiyah and Taji these patriots are formed in Critical Infrastructure Security units. In Ameriyah, one of the first areas to embrace the volunteer effort here in the Iraqi capital, they call themselves the Farsan Al Rafidayn, or FAR, which in Arabic means "knights between the rivers."

Across the Iraqi capital, reconciliation efforts led by our Soldiers and leaders at the grass roots level are starting to bear fruit. Attacks are down in the city. The temporary barriers we've emplaced around markets and other densely populated areas have made terrorist attacks less lethal over the past months and allowed life to grow.

I believe the Coalition has gained a measure of trust with the people - through

Pegasus 6 Sends

Maj. Gen. Joseph F. Fil, Jr.



our presence and our professionalism - and the service members within Multi-National Division - Baghdad should all take great pride in their successes thus far.

Baghdad is still a dangerous place, but it is safer now than it has ever been since we took over the mantle of securing the city from our brothers and sisters in the 4th Infantry Division in November last year.

The 1st Cavalry Division was in Baghdad when democracy was born in January of 2005 with the first free national elections held here. Our tradition of excellence runs deep, from the sun-baked soil of Baghdad to the hills of Bosnia-Herzegovina to the jungles of Viet Nam and the sweltering heat in the Philippines.

Our division dates back to Sept. 13, 1921 - born under the hot Texas sun at Fort Bliss - and we toil today under the glare of the Iraqi sun and the world's spotlight.

We have done a magnificent job of it, throughout the years and still today. To our troopers, our family members and the friends of the First Team, I thank you all for your selfless service and sacrifice. And I wish you all a very Happy Birthday!

First Team!



(Photo by Lt. Col. Scott Bleichwehl, MND-B Public Affairs Officer)

Maj. Gen Joseph F. Fil, Jr., commanding general of the Multi-National Division-Baghdad and the 1st Cavalry Division, is greeted by an Iraqi resident during a visit to a market in Baghdad Aug. 28.

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(Photo by Lt. Col. Scott Bleichwehl, MND-B Public Affairs Officer)

On the Road with MND-B Commander

Maj. Gen Joseph F. Fil, Jr., commanding general of the Multi-National Division-Baghdad and the 1st Cavalry Division, meets with local citizens at a market in Baghdad Aug. 28.

Baghdad News Briefs



(Photo by Sgt. Mark C. Miller, 1st Battalion, 325th AIR)

Looking from a gunner's turret, a U.S. Soldier provides security at the scene of a car bomb blast in the western Baghdad Kadamiyah neighborhood Sept. 2. The attack, believed to be of al-Qaeda origin, and took the lives of five Iraqi citizens and injured 15 others. This is the second such attack on the predominantly Shia neighborhood in the last eight days.

Kadamiyah Car Bomb Kills 5 Civilians, Injures 15

By Capt. Steve Taylor
1st Battalion, 325 Airborne Infantry Regiment

BAGHDAD - The second car bomb attack in eight days in the western Kadamiyah neighborhood killed five civilians and injured 15 more Sept. 2.

Iraqi Forces immediately responded to the attack which occurred just south of a busy market known as Adnan Square.

Local emergency services responded to the bomb, evacuating the wounded to the nearby Kadamiyah hospital and extinguishing the burning restaurant and vehicles.

Paratroopers from Company B, 1st Battalion, 325th Airborne Infantry Regiment, arrived at the scene shortly after the blast to secure the area and provide aid for the men, women and children wounded in the attack.

It is unclear whether Adnan Square was the intended target or whether the car bomb was just another attempt to disrupt the areas near the Imam Khaddam Shrine, a Shia holy site located about a kilometer north of the square.

The origin of the attack is unknown, but the task force intelligence officer, Capt. Chris Mugg, believes the attacks are al-Qaeda driven.

"Since the location of the car bomb occurred in a Shia dominated neighborhood and they are rarely associated with car bombs, today's attack is likely an Al-Qaeda attack with the purpose of disrupting security in the Shia populace," Mugg said.

This is the second car bomb to strike the area in the last eight days, causing more civilian deaths and demolishing a local restaurant.

On Aug. 25 a car bomb detonated in the same district, killing 5 residents and injuring 27.

Ramadan Begins with the New Moon

By Sgt. Nicole Kojetin
1st Cavalry Division Public Affairs

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq - The summer heat has not cooled off and another challenge has occurred for Multi-National Division - Baghdad troops who work closely with Iraqi Security Forces and the Muslim community.

Ramadan, a month-long fast commemorating the prophet Muhammad receiving the Koran, the sacred text of Islam, from the angel Gabriel, started around this month affecting the capabilities of their Iraqi counterparts.

The date depends on the first sighting on the new crescent moon.

"Here in the Middle East, they don't go by the astronomical calculations of when the crescent moon will appear but have to go outside and see it," said Brian Voohees, a cultural and political advisor for MND-B. "Therefore, the beginning of Ramadan is unpredictable, as well. The end of Ramadan will be around Oct. 13 or 14 with the sighting of the crescent moon again."

Ramadan is a spiritual cleansing where Muslims are renewing their relationship with God. It's not uncommon for Muslims who do not practice for the rest of the year to get religious during the month of Ramadan to renew their faith, Voohees said.

Soldiers need to be aware of the Ramadan traditions, so they understand what their comrades are doing and avoid offending them, said Voohees, who originally hails from Niles, Mich.

"Fasting is from sun-up to sundown. As the Koran says, 'When you can distinguish the white thread from the light,' that's when the fasting begins," he said.

This means refraining from drinking water, eating, smoking and engaging in sexual relations. These rules can significantly impact missions.

"Part of the fasting includes not drinking water and the weather here is still hot. They are going to be dehydrated," Voohees said. "For the smokers, there are going to be having nicotine withdrawals. Those addicted to caffeine are going to have caffeine headaches and withdrawals."

There is also more activity as night which means less rest. Every night a portion of the Koran will be

read. By the end of the month the whole Koran will have been recited in the mosque.

"The Koran is about as long as the bible so 1-30th is quite extensive. With that in mind, they say the taraweeh prayer at about 9 p.m. and they will continue reading the 1-30th of the Koran until it is complete," he said.

Traffic to the local shops is also heavier.

About an hour and a half before sunset, traffic is heavy because people are going to be flooding the markets to buy the things they need to break the fast, Voohees said. "Traditionally, Muslims will break the fast with water and dates. They choose dates because they are high energy, high carb, and easier to digest. So they will flood the markets to buy these things. Right at sunset, traffic stops for a while. Then as night fall comes, they start moving again as it is very common for them to visit each other. About an hour and half before sunrise, traffic is heavy again as people are getting out eating a large morning meal (called suhoor) before the fast starts again."

"So (Muslims) are going to be a little bit more fatigued because of the lack of food, the lack of water, lack of addictive drugs as well as staying up later at night," Voohees said. "So, for the month of Ramadan production is going to go down."

During operations while dealing with local nationals out on patrol Soldiers should also refrain from smoking, eating or drinking in front of the local nationals, because it can be seen as provocative and disrespectful.

"It is not uncommon for a Muslim to approach a non-Muslim during the fasting month and to admonish them for not fasting during the day," Voohees said. "It is not because they are superior, but they are more concerned with your soul during this time."

The month of fasting is followed by a celebration called Eid-ul-Fir.

"It is a big celebration, and they will go out and congratulate each other for meeting the obligation of the fast," Voohees said. "It is kind of like Easter. They will buy new clothes for the celebration. A lot of money is spent in the last 10 days of Ramadan for this big Eid-ul-Fir celebration."

The holy month will be busy for the Iraqi community, but with little knowledge, Soldiers can be respectful to the Muslims around them.

WHY WE WEAR PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT





(Photo by Spc. Jeffrey Ledesma, 1st Cavalry Division Public Affairs)

The 2006 Army Suicide Event Report stated there were 99 active-duty Soldiers committed suicide compared to 87 in 2005, which is the highest number since 102 suicides were reported in 1991. The Multi-National Division - Baghdad has many programs available to help Soldiers who need help.

Suicide Reports Convey Sad Reality, Army Resources Ready to Respond

Suicide From Page 1

report.

Wichman said many resources are available to help Soldiers resolve the "temporary problems" that Soldiers find difficult to deal with while deployed. One resource Soldiers can utilize is Wichman's section. An advantage to seeing a chaplain is that Soldiers can maintain confidentiality, up to the point when they say they are going to hurt themselves or someone else.

Another valuable branch of the support system is a Soldier's chain of command, which is trained and knowledgeable about the programs available.

"They are a link to the resources," Wichman said. "It internally has mechanisms such as command finance specialists, who are able to provide resources internally."

Medical resources are also readily accessible. Located across the street from the Camp Liberty Mayor's Cell, the Witmer Wellness Center is another place Soldiers can go to for help. The Witmer Troop Medical Center recently opened the new center for a variety of topics to include anger management, smoking cessation, stress management, marital problems and many more.

Even though all these resources are available everyone plays a role in the prevention of suicide. Wichman said that a Soldier's friends and colleagues are critical to the whole process. He added that supporting the person who is experiencing the extra stress, making sure the person gets professional help, when needed, and making

sure the person's feelings don't remain a bottled-up secret is one of the most important roles a person can play.

People who are in daily contact with Soldiers on the path toward suicide are the best preventative tools because they have the ability to notice the changes of the individual's demeanor, Wichman said.

"They can distinguish what is a normal behavior pattern or an indicator the person is under extreme stress," the Cincinnati native added.

Unfortunately, the reality for deployed Soldiers is that they are away from everything they know and put into an unfamiliar atmosphere.

"Most Soldiers have a support system, family or friends that they've relied on at home, and I think part of the problem is that they haven't been able to reestablish those systems in a combat environment, so when life becomes overwhelming they find it more difficult," Wichman said.

Some indicators to be on the lookout for include, but are not limited to, depression, excessive need for sleep and sudden changes in a person's interaction with others. These could be signals that a Soldier is potentially going down a path toward suicide.

Wichman said that some Soldiers will try to deal with the problems themselves and one thing the Army is trying to do is to eliminate the stigma of seeking mental health care, by getting leaders at every level involved.

MND-B is working to train 154 people in the Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training, a two-day, highly interactive, practical, practice-oriented workshop designed for people who want to feel more comfortable,

confident and competent in helping to prevent the immediate risk of suicide, Wichman said.

He said with education and training they will be able to effectively monitor, evaluate and safeguard the Army's most valuable asset - it's Soldiers.

Honoring Our Fallen Heroes

Pfc. Dane Balcon, 3-8 Cav., 3rd BCT, 1st Cav. Div.
Staff Sgt. Jason Butkus, 1-28 IN, 4th BCT, 1st Inf. Div.
Pfc. Edgar Cardenas, 2-5 Cav., 1st BCT, 1st Cav. Div.
Sgt. Eric Cotreell, 5-82 FA, 4th BCT, 1st Cav. Div.
1st Lt. Jonathan Edds, 2-69 AR, 3rd BCT, 3rd Inf. Div.
Pfc. Alun Howells, 1-64 AR, 2nd BCT, 3rd Inf. Div.
Pfc. Rodney Johnson, 1-4 Cav., 4th BCT, 1st Inf. Div.
Pfc. David Lane, 2-16 IN, 4th BCT, 1st Inf. Div.
Pfc. Juan Lopez Jr., 5-82 FA, 4th BCT, 1st Cav. Div.
Sgt. Joel Murray, 2-16 IN, 4th BCT, 1st Inf. Div.
Spc. Keith Nurnberg, 2-69 AR, 3rd BCT, 3rd Inf. Div.
Pfc. Paulmarko Pacificador, 5-82 FA, 4th BCT, 1st Cav. Div.
Spc. Javier Paredes, 2-69 AR, 3rd BCT, 3rd Inf. Div.
Sgt. Princess Samuels, HHC, 1 BCT, 1st Cav. Div.
Pvt. (2) Randol Shelton, 2-16 IN, 4th BCT, 1st Inf. Div.
Pfc. Omar Torres, 2-5 CAV, 1st BCT, 1st Cav. Div.
Spc. Zandra Walker, 615 ASB, 1st ACB, 1st Cav. Div.
Spc. William Warford III, 15 BSB, 3rd BCT, 1st Cav. Div.

Taji "Awakens" to Celebrate Reconciliation

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

TAJI, Iraq - A crowd of nearly 1,500 people made up of local area tribal sheiks, leaders, residents and Critical Infrastructure Security members, gathered at the Al Somer Primary and Secondary School here Aug. 27 to celebrate improved security thanks to reconciliation efforts in the Taji area. Along with celebrating, the community leaders and local people met to discuss the coordination of the on-going reconciliation process as well as future plans for the "awakening" of Taji.

A special guest during the event included Abu Ahmed, a representative from Iraq's Ministry of National Security. Senior leaders from the 1st "Ironhorse" Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division joined in the celebration and aided in facilitating the meeting.

"This is a historical event, you are making history today," said Ahmed in a speech during the event. "The government supports you and greets you with open arms. The government has no issues with anyone as long as you do not have blood on your hands."

Ahmed told the crowd that the government will support Taji reconciliation efforts with weapons and services.

"Some of you fought the government and Coalition Forces in the past, because you thought, in the beginning, that you were fighting for your country," Ahmed said. "I think you now realize that it wasn't really for your country that you were fighting, and on behalf of the government, you are welcomed back."

In his opening remarks to the gathered crowd, Sheikh Abid al Katab al Enezy, the Shia imam for the Beni Tamimi Mosque, said that "terrorists use the name of Islam and Islam has nothing to do with them."

Once Nadim finished his speech, he was joined by Sunni Sheikh Najji al Duleymi of Falahat, who explained that the tribes should continue their united front against terrorists.

Soon after Duleymi, Col. Paul E. Funk II, commander of the Ironhorse Brigade, took center stage, standing alongside



(Photo courtesy Stephanie Gaskell)

Local area tribal sheiks, both Sunni and Shia, gather at a meeting in Taji, Iraq Aug. 27 to celebrate recent successes and show their support for reconciliation efforts throughout the area.

the sheiks.

"Greetings to my brothers," he said to the assembled leaders and residents of Taji. "I have left my brothers at home, but I have made new ones here."

At the closing of his speech, Funk explained that his brigade will continue in its partnership, working together with the Iraqis to create a safe, secure and stable environment for their people.

A host of other sheiks and government officials also spoke at the event with the final speaker, Wa'aday al Tamimi, a Shia, who closed the event with the thought that "Mohammad said not to kill the unbeliever."

"How do these people kill Muslims? How do these people kill our brothers?" al Tamimi asked as he addressed the crowd.

"No, no to sectarianism. No, no to terrorism."

After the speeches, attendees at the gathering ate a large meal prepared by area residents.

"This 'awakening' will represent a significant set back for insurgents," said Lt. Col. Peter Andrysiak, deputy commander of the Ironhorse Brigade. "It shows that the people have formed a united front against Al Qaeda and insurgents operating in the area. They will not support or stand for Al Qaeda or insurgent attacks against their people, they are saying 'No to Al Qaeda and no to violence.'"

"This meeting shows that both Shia and Sunni can work together to end the violence and work together for the future of Iraq," Funk said. "This was truly a monumental moment for the Iraqi people."

Government of Iraq Takes First Steps Toward Reconciliation

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

CAMP TAJI, Iraq - The national and provincial levels of government continued their efforts toward reconciliation in Abu Ghraib with two major events Aug. 21.

The 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division has a volunteer movement

of more than 5,400 Iraqis, more than 2,000 of those are in the Abu Ghraib area fighting Al Qaeda in Iraq. In the government of Iraq's initial offer towards reconciliation, they have agreed to hire 1,738 qualified volunteers as Iraqi Police.

Coalition Forces from the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, coordi-

nated the transportation of 750 new Iraqi Police candidates from their villages in Abu Ghraib to the Baghdad Police College. The police candidates are the first group out of the 1,738 candidates who will complete their training over the next five weeks.

The candidates were selected from a group of 2,445 applicants who attended a Ministry of Interior-led Iraqi Police recruitment drive in the Abu Ghraib area in July. The majority of those recruited are from Sunni tribes that have recently stepped forward to reconcile with the Iraqi government and to assist in ridding Iraq of Al Qaeda influence.

"The Iraqi government's agreement to hire, train and equip these reconciling tribesmen is a step in the right direction with regard to reconciling their differences with the Sunni tribes in the Abu Ghraib area," said Lt. Col. Peter Andrysiak, deputy commanding officer of the 1st BCT, 1st Cav. Div., who hails from Austin, Texas.

"This first step will go a long way in bringing these tribes into the political process, showing the Iraqi people that the Iraqi government is willing to reconcile their past differences and move the government forward," he said.

Baghdad's governor, Hussein al-Tahan, visited the area Aug. 21, his second visit in little more than a week. The governor's first

visit to the area was Aug. 13.

Despite two assassinations of provincial governors in little more than a week in the Muthanna and Qadasiya provinces, Al-Tahan followed through on his promises and brought technical experts from the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education, the Director of Municipalities and the Director of the Baghdad Police, Mohammad Kathim, to meet with constituents and local government officials in the Abu Ghraib area. This is his second meeting with leaders in Abu Ghraib in just over a week.

Senior leadership from the 1st BCT helped to facilitate the Qada's meeting with the governor and the national ministries.

"I have a lot of respect for governor Al-Tahan. Despite the recent murders of the two provincial governors, he followed through on recent promises to the people and government of Abu Ghraib by bringing technical experts within the national ministries to discuss public service issues with the Qada and the people," said Andrysiak, who hails from Austin. "He is the first Iraqi politician in ten months to visit the rural Qadas. To date, his concern appears genuine and he is willing to reconcile."

After his visit with Qada leaders, the governor met with members of Abu Ghraib's Zobia tribe to address issues brought up during his previous meeting with the tribe.



(Photo by Senior Airman Steven Czyz, 982nd Combat Camera)

Baghdad's provincial governor, Hussein al-Tahan, speaks to tribal sheiks and local leaders from the Abu Ghraib Qada in the Abu Ghraib district of Baghdad Aug. 21.

Iraqi Air Force on Taji Makes Strides Toward Transition

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

CAMP TAJI, Iraq - An Iraqi Air Force officer cadet class will soon be walking across the stage here, picking up their diplomas and their commissions as second lieutenants.

In preparation for their graduation, the soon-to-be officers took time out of their busy class room schedule to pick up a special issue of uniforms at one of the central issuing facilities here Aug. 28.

"You can see the pride in their eyes," said Air Force Capt. Alisa Thomas, an instructor for the Coalition Air Force Transition Team (CAFTT), 370th Expeditionary Training Squadron (ETS), who hails from Lancaster, Ohio. "They're getting a nice new set of uniforms with their new officer rank sewn on them-they're definitely excited and they're going to be looking sharp on graduation day."

Out of this first class to ever graduate from Camp Taji's Iraqi Air Force Academy, four of them will be going on to Iraqi pilot school in Kirkuk while others will pursue engineering and maintenance officer positions within the new Iraqi Air Force.

Yet one thing is certain, said Air Force Capt. Kyle Grygo, flight commander and an instructor for CAFTT, 370th ETS, once these cadets graduate Sept. 12, all of them will play a pivotal role in aiding in the transition of the Iraqi Air Force.

"We see them taking the lessons we've taught them and using their skills to where we can eventually transition to handing over air sovereignty to them again," said Grygo, who hails from Dover, Ohio.

"This will be an incredible opportunity for them, having a direct hand in building their country by rebuilding their Air Force," he said.

"They've all been doing very well in their courses and are very capable," he added.

Six U.S. Air Force captains have been training the primary instruction for the cadets with classes such as fundamentals of flight and basic officer indoctrination courses.

U.S. Air Force enlisted personnel taught the cadets about drill and ceremony, security training, weapons familiarization, field training, self aid and other basic military training skills.

The course which lasts for six months is broken up into two iterations with the first three-month block concentrating on basic officer candidate courses while the other three months are dedicated to fundamentals of flight.

In addition to assisting in the building of a future officer corps for the Iraqi Air Force, the CAFTT, 370th ETS is also training 55 enlisted Iraqi Airmen-all new basic trainee graduates-- in Air Force-specific courses many of which include maintenance and security training.

Unlike problems that many military transition training teams run into with language barriers, that has not been much of a problem in the case of the Iraqi Air Force cadets.

"We have very few problems. They've all had six months of English language training," said Grygo, who trains fundamentals of flight.

"The international pilot language is English and they've been increasing their language ability so that when they fly, they can do it all in English," he said.

"All of their homework is in English," added Grygo. "Occasionally we'll pull an interpreter in if some of the words become too technical or don't translate well. They're very smart and very well-rounded so they haven't had too many problems catching on."

For Air Force Tech Sgt. Kevan Dent, also an



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

Having picked up new pairs of socks, Iraqi Air Force cadets stand in line for uniform pants and tops at a central issuing facility on Camp Taji, Iraq Aug. 28. The new cadets will soon be graduating from the Iraqi Air Force Academy on Taji and receiving commissions as second lieutenants.

instructor with the CAFTT, 370th ETS, the experience of training the cadets has been worthwhile.

"There have definitely been a lot of challenges but they have come a long way," said Dent, a Bremerton, Wash. native.

"They're doing a great job," he said.

Over the course of nearly six months, Dent has been training the cadets in basic marksmanship, how to break down their weapons, perform maintenance and field training such as how to pull security and first aid.

"In order to break up the monotony of training in the classroom, we've been doing a lot more hands on training," Dent said. "They pick it up very quickly."

As the classes continue to rotate through the academy, Grygo said he believes each rotation of new students will leave a lasting impression on his fellow Air Force co-workers and subordinates.

"I think that the officers and enlisted Airmen will see, through the example of the cadets, that there are plenty of good Iraqis out there," said Grygo. "Even though it's dangerous for these cadets to be a part of this, they want to take a role in the building of a free Iraq."

"It's really motivating for us to see that, and this is something we can take back home with us to show our comrades that there are good people---good Iraqis-out here doing good things."

Once cadets have received their uniform issue with officer insignia, it's one of the last things they have to do prior to graduation.

"This is just one more step toward their goal of getting their commission," said Grygo.

As the last uniforms and boots were handed out to the cadets, they walked out of the central issuing facility-their arms full.

One of the future officers looked proudly at the sec-

ond lieutenant star on the new uniform blouse, patting his hand over it, moving his fingers into the blue of the epaulet, grinning.



After receiving a special issue of uniforms, Iraqi Air Force cadets from the Iraqi Air Force Academy on Camp Taji, Iraq joke with each other at the base camp's central issuing facility Aug. 28. The new uniforms are the first ones the cadets will wear with officer insignia sewn on them. The cadets will graduate Sept. 12.

Local Sab Al Bor Government Holds First Public Works Committee Meeting

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

SAB AL BOR, Iraq - Government officials continue making strides toward establishing a fully functional local government within the village here.

Signs toward progress could be seen as the newly appointed city manager of Sab Al Bor and members of the village's technical branch came together for their first-ever public works committee meeting here Aug. 12.

The local government meeting was facilitated by Capt. Nathan Whitten, executive officer, Troop B, 1st Squadron, 7th "Garryowen" Cavalry Regiment who hails from Biddeford, Maine and Capt. Brooks Yarborough, deputy fire support officer for 1st Sqdrn., 7th Cav. Regt., and a native of Swansea, S.C.

"This is the first place within our area of operations that's beginning to function like a real government," said Yarborough.

"In the past, Coalition Forces had a majority of the roles in doing everything, from contracts to getting work done on projects, and this meeting is the first step that will eventually allow us to transfer that responsibility to the city," he said.

"Once the 1st Cavalry Division leaves, the hopes are that Sab Al Bor's city government will be able to fully function on its own," added Yarborough, explaining that the goal is to help foster Sab Al Bor's self reliance.

During this first meeting, the committee tackled several public works issues currently affecting local residents to include electricity issues, the need for generators and oxygen for the local medical clinic, the establishment of a fire department and the refurbishment of the city's post office among many other issues.

Also in the works are 10 Sab Al Bor water projects that have been approved at the federal level by the Ministry of Municipalities and Public Works in Baghdad.

According to Yarborough, the local government will be responsible for reporting to higher levels of government such as the Ministry of Municipalities and Public Works and the Ministry of Interior to receive funds for projects in Sab Al Bor.

They will also explain to the ministries what solutions they have come up with to solve issues in the village.

The role that each Sab Al Bor city official plays are very significant to running an effective local government, said Yarborough.

The city manager for Sab Al Bor who was recently appointed by the federal



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

Public works committee members, who make up the technical branch of the local Sab Al Bor city government and the village's city manager, hold their first-ever public works committee meeting in Sab Al Bor, Iraq Aug. 12 with the assistance of officers from the 1st Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment who facilitated the meeting.

government thanks to his expertise in law, added Yarborough, oversees the technical branch which is made up of experts in fields of healthcare, law enforcement (Iraqi Police), electricity, water and other infrastructure areas.

The technical branch comes up with solutions to identified problems within the city.

A city council which has yet to be established in Sab Al Bor will govern the people and create new laws and oversee enforcement within the community.

The city manager will report directly to the city council on solutions recommended by the technical branch.

"The city council will be an elected body chosen by the people," said Yarborough.

"They will give a balance of power to regulate the city manager and his overseeing of the technical branch of government," he said.

According to Yarborough, based upon a timeline, the city manager and technical branch hope to see a fully formed and functioning city council by Oct. 21.

"Then, eventually, by Nov. 15, they should be presenting the people of Sab Al Bor with their way ahead," Yarborough

added, explaining that the working local government will be giving the local residents a report of future projects and solutions to issues affecting them.

"If they stick to the timeline then the local Sab Al Bor government will have stood up within just two to three months time," he said.

For the past few months, leaders within Garryowen have been working closely with the Ironhorse Brigade's Embedded Provincial Reconstruction Team to assist tribal leaders and local government officials in Sab Al Bor with understanding the processes of governance and how local governments operate.

Their purpose is not to tell the local governments how to run their government but rather to give suggestions and guidance on how a democratic form of government works and let them figure out what works best for them, according to Yarborough.

"Their number one concern needs to be the will of the Iraqi people and what they want," Yarborough said.

He was also explaining that Sab Al Bor's local government is incorporating both Shia and Sunnis into the political process with equal represen-

tation.

Eventually, the local government leaders will be attending the EPRT local governance program's mentorship courses that include seminars and courses on such topics as legal authorities and responsibilities as well as how to work with contracts among other subjects.

Improved security in the city thanks to Iraqi Security Forces working with Garryowen troops, Estonian soldiers and neighborhood watch volunteers has helped to accelerate the formation of the new local government and the new public works committee.

"Things have gotten so much better over the past four months and that's why they were able to do this," said Yarborough.

The first public works meeting went extremely well, according to Yarborough.

"They set the agenda and they planned their own meeting and we were pleasantly surprised at how well things went," he said.

"Although there wasn't enough time to discuss everything, overall it was a great first meeting in which the people are stepping forward to take charge," he said.

Apache Troop Keep the Peace, Spreads Some Happiness

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

BAGHDAD - Keeping the balance between being a force to be reckoned with and being a symbol of peace and prosperity can be a difficult task.

For many of today's Soldiers in Iraq, it's not part of the game, it is the game.

Soldiers from Troop A, 4th Squadron, 9th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, have been walking the proverbial tightrope while patrolling the streets of the Iraqi capital's Karkh District.

Not only are they charged with being keepers of the peace, they also know they must be a part of the everyday lives of those living where they patrol.

The platoon of infantrymen permanently embedded into the structure of "Apache" Troop admit they know how important it is to dismount their vehicles for a walk around one of the many central Baghdad neighborhoods they keep secure and get face to face with the people who count on them for so much.

Recently, the troop commander, Capt. Joseph Guzowski, returned after suffering an injury that took him away from the fight for almost three months.

He immediately went back to work after thanking his leaders for performing so well under such averse conditions.

While on the ground with his troops, he and members of the Neighborhood Advisory Council took time to visit a couple schools in the area to see the progress being made.

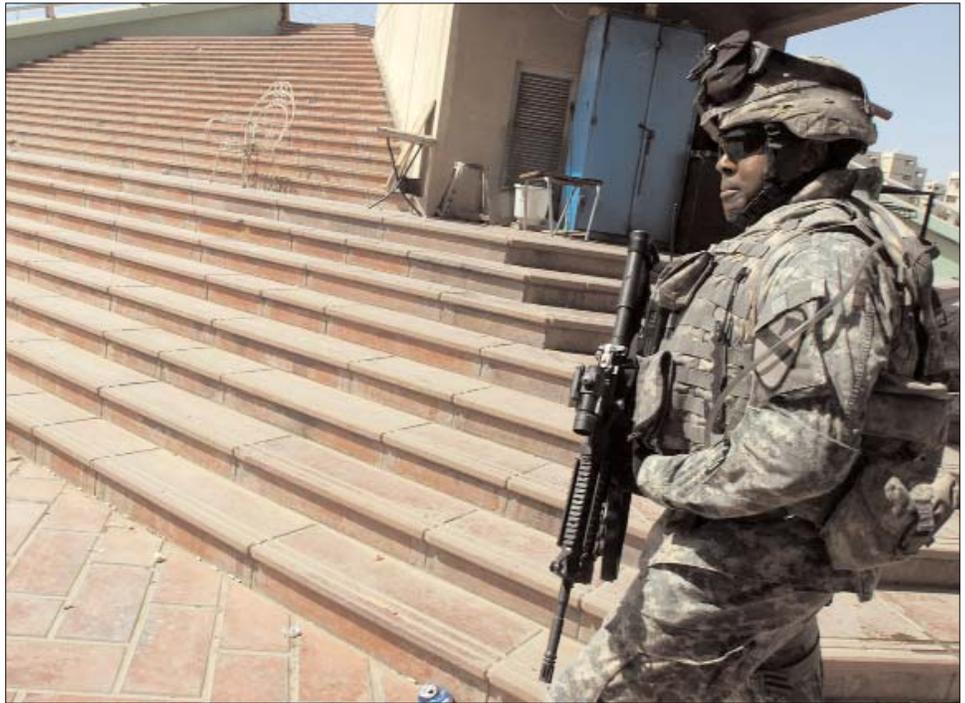
The renovations were complete in one and just beginning in the other, and according to Guzowski, it's a sign of the times.

"We have one of the safest sectors in all of Baghdad. There are several National Police checkpoints in the area; the Iraqi Army has an entire battalion working here and we also have a constant presence in the area," he said. "The [Neighborhood Advisory Council] has really stepped it up since the security has improved."

Guzowski said that security is everything to the NAC council members. They freely travel to sites of reconstruction



Spc. Sean Brockie, provides security while Soldiers from Troop A, 4th Squadron, 9th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, check out progress on a school renovation project in Baghdad's Karkh District Aug. 23.



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

Sgt. 1st Class Andre Bundick, the top noncommissioned officer with the Mortar Platoon, Troop A, 4th Squadron, 9th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, walks around a shopping mall in the Karkh District in central Baghdad during a patrol Aug. 23.

and help provide vital insight into what's happening in their community.

Two main examples of the council's efforts can be seen in the school renovation projects that will allow the children in the area to go back to school.

One project is complete and the school will reopen in a matter of days. The other has just begun construction to totally renovate the school inside and out.

"We're all kids at heart," said Sgt. 1st Class Andre Bundick, the Mortar Platoon's top noncommissioned officer. "We're here to help these people and also show them what the future may bring."

These were soft words spoken from a hardened infantryman, who, last time he was in Iraq, found himself raining steel down on the enemy.

Bundick and Guzowski admit that they have the ability to change gears from lethal force to humanitarian at a moment's notice.

While sustaining security in the area is a top priority, treating the kids to a little sweet stuff is always their pleasure.

Almost every mission they go on, they bring with them boxes of toys and candy to hand out to kids. Their supply of sweets seems to never run out, thanks to one Soldier and his wife.

Spc. Greg Russell was talking with his wife, Melissa, one day and she asked if there was something she could do to help the people in her husband's area out.

She got together with some of the people she worked with and set up donation boxes to gather candy and toys to ship to Russell and the troop to hand out on their patrols.

Russell was rather surprised when he started to get boxes filled with gum, taffy and candy weighing more than 40 pounds.

Russell said that the kids they give it to have mixed reactions about getting all the sweet stuff.

"They really don't know how to react sometimes," he

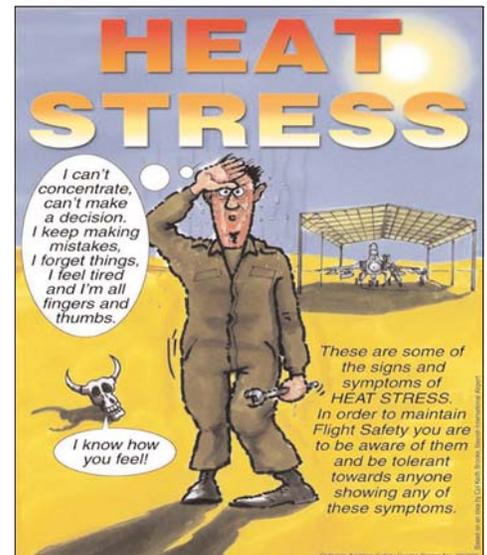
said.

"The girls are really shy and we have to get through the crowd to give them something. All the kids seem very thankful to be getting something," he said.

According to Guzowski, the kids are thankful for not only candy, but for the schools opening up, too. He said that many kids he talks to are excited about going to school. For the kids, it's something they've never had a true opportunity to do.

Guzowski chuckles when he thinks of American kids reading school, but Iraqi kids are so curious and willing.

"There are approximately 25,000 people living in this small, concentrated area," he said. "Hopefully, this all makes a difference."



Stryker Squadron Arrives in Support of Black Jack Brigade in Baghdad

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

FORWARD OPERATING BASE PROSPERITY, Iraq - For many of the Soldiers in the "Saber" Squadron, this isn't their first tour in Iraq.

Many remember the days they spent in Mosul and Tel Afar under much harsher conditions than what they found inside the walls of FOBs Prosperity and Union III where the squadron will be headquartered.

Now they have begun another rotation into Iraq. The 4th Squadron, 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment has assumed responsibility from the 1st Squadron, 14th Cavalry Regiment, currently attached to the 2nd "Black Jack" Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, of the Karkh District area in Baghdad's center, where heavy fighting against anti-Iraqi forces took place earlier this year.

Now themselves attached to the Black Jack Brigade, the Saber Squadron look to the achievements made by their predecessors to gain valuable knowledge and insight into how to conduct operations in the now peaceful area.

Command Sgt. Maj. Mark Morris, the

squadron's top noncommissioned officer, said that success in transitioning into a lead role in the day-to-day operations in Karkh can be made by leaders at all levels.

"We have to ensure that Soldiers get acclimated and accustomed to their area of operations by going on patrols with the current unit, whose positive attitude has been instrumental in helping all Soldiers - squadron level down to individual," Morris said.

"We could not have asked for a better unit to work with," he said.

Humanitarian aid, reconstruction and sustaining security are all vital parts to the success of 4-2's mission in central Baghdad, Morris said.

Along with keeping the people of Karkh safe and improving their lives one day at a time, the troops are also concerned with keeping each other focused as they approach this new mission.

"Right now, we're still upgrading equipment, doing reconnaissance and working with 1-14," said Maj. Matt Mock, 4-2's executive officer. He said that all this will lead up to the Saber Squadron taking over the mission from the cavalry troops from Fort Lewis, Wash.

Spc. Matt Wellington said he is



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

The 4th Squadron, 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment, based in Vilsek, Germany, made its mark on Forward Operating Base Prosperity in central Baghdad with a new sign outside of its new headquarters.

happy that the long trip is finally over and he and his friends can get to work.

"It's like the end of anticipation," said the Medford, Ore., native.

"It's a big relief to get here and settle in," he said.

Wellington noted that the amenities

found on the base were much like the ones he was used to back in Vilsek, Germany.

Morris added that families back in Vilsek and in the United States should be proud of the mission taken on by their Soldiers.

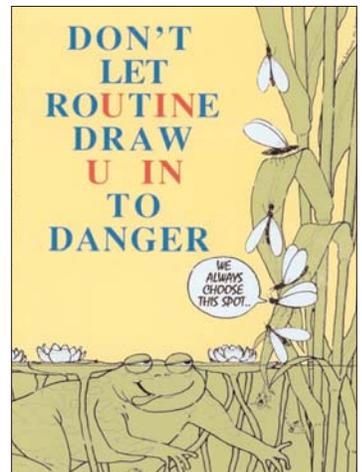
He said that the troops from the Saber Squadron are helping to provide a more stable and secure environment for the people of Iraq.

After receiving the Presidential Unit Citation for actions during their last rotation through Iraq, the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment was reassigned to Fort Polk, La., then again to Ft. Lewis, Wash., where they were designated as the 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division (Light) before finally finding their home in Vilsek, Germany as the 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment.



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

The commander of the incoming 4th "Saber" Squadron, 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment, Lt. Col. Antonio Aguto, and the commander of the outgoing 1st Squadron, 14th Cavalry Regiment, Lt. Col. Jeff Peterson, talk to each other while on a tour of Baghdad's Karkh District, where troops from 4-2 Cavalry will be taking over security operations from 1-14 Cavalry.





(Photo by Spc. Ryan Stroud, 3rd BCT, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)

A 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division Soldier crosses the finish line at the Women's Equality 5K run, celebrating the passing of the 19th amendment over 80 years ago. The run was held at Forward Operating Base Warhorse, outside Baqouba, Iraq, Aug. 26.

Troops Celebrates Womens Equality with 5K Run

By Spc. Ryan Stroud
3rd BCT, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs

BAQOUBA, Iraq -- Over eighty years have passed since Congress passed the 19th Amendment giving women the right to vote, and many Soldiers at Forward Operating Base Warhorse, outside of Baqouba, Iraq, celebrated the anniversary of this amendment with a group run, Aug. 26.

"Today, we all gathered to run the Women's Equality 5K," said Staff Sgt. Kristen Vulich, Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, and a native of Esterville, Iowa.

"This was a good opportunity to show our support for the things that we believe in," she said.

Before the sun had risen at FOB Warhorse, the Soldiers participating in the run were up and stretching as Staff Sgt. Maj. Caterina Veronesi, 3-58 Civil Affairs Brigade, attached to 3rd BCT, began to speak to the Soldiers about the importance of the 19th amendment and the run.

"We are here to celebrate the auspicious occasion of commemorating womens' right to vote and the 19th Amendment, which gave them that right," said Veronesi. "This means to me that I actually count, my voice counts in the decisions that are made that affect us as citizens of the United States."

Veronesi said she really wanted to shed extra light on the subject so the Soldiers could see how important this event really is.

"We continue to be a minority, not that being a minority is a bad thing, but it's so we enjoy that achievement that much more," she said. "Serving in the military, it's one more thing in our back pocket that we need to be proud of and need

to be mindful of with our status as women, especially as women in the military."

Also for Veronesi, speaking to the Soldiers in Iraq held an importance to her.

"I feel very honored to speak with the Soldiers," she said. "It really is an honor to speak to my fellow Soldiers here, especially in a combat environment like FOB Warhorse.

"I was delighted to speak on such an important topic," Veronesi said. "There is an importance to keep educating Soldiers on these special events and holidays.

"I could see in the faces of the Soldiers today that they were enlightened and learned something today," she said. "I think they learned another since of value and personal pride."

"It was a good event," said Vulich. "Everyone tried to help each other through the run and push each other to go further and give it their all and I think we all learned something new and important here."

But for Veronesi, she was also pleased to see the high turnout of male Soldiers in a female-celebrated event.

"I was delighted to see the turnout in the male Soldiers today because it does show their support and standing beside their female counterparts, which is the military today," said Veronesi.

"Back when I came [into the Army], we were segregated, the training was segregated," she continued. "Today, male Soldiers are the battle buddies to their female counterparts - in fighting positions, out there in the battle field, running and [physical training].

"These males look to these women, not just as women, but to what they are, and that's a warrior and a Soldier - that's what this run is really all about," she concluded.

Leaders of Diyala River Valley Recommit to Reconciliation

Multi-National Division - North PAO

BAQOUBA, Iraq - In an effort to build upon the recent success of the Aug. 19 reconciliation agreement between more than 80 leaders from the Diyala River Valley, approximately 40 tribal leaders gathered at the Baqouba Government Center, Sept. 1, to continue their discussions about the importance of reconciliation.

The leaders, both Sunni and Shia, represented multiple tribes throughout the Diyala River Valley, with emphasis placed on tribes from Abu Sayda and Mukiesha - two villages that have not worked together in over a year due to tribal fighting.

The meeting, hosted by Ra'ad Hameed Al-Mula Jowad Al-Tamimi, Diyala's governor, allowed the tribes an opportunity to voice their grievances and discuss solutions for the way ahead.

"We must forget about the past and remain focused on the future," said Ra'ad as he addressed the group of tribal leaders. "We have a long way to go; but today, you have taken the first step."

Circled around the Quran with their right hands raised, Ra'ad led the leaders as they swore over the Islamic holy book to uphold a provincial-wide reconciliation agreement. While a few leaders stated their commitment for the first time, the majority



(Photo by Sgt. Serena Hayden, 3rd BCT, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)

A tribal leader from the Diyala River Valley expresses his tribe's grievances to approximately 40 other sheiks from the region during a reconciliation meeting at the Baqouba Government Center, Sept. 1.

of the tribes attended the previous meeting and swore on the Quran as a sign of continued commitment.

The sheiks agreed and restated their commitment to eight conditions to include ending violent acts between tribes; providing intelligence to the Iraqi Security Forces; fighting al-Qaida and other enemy organiza-

tions; helping the security forces discover improvised explosive devices; upholding the law; solving issues between tribes in a civil manner and returning the displaced families to their homes.

Staff Maj. Gen. Nouri, deputy commanding officer of Iraqi Security Forces in Diyala province; Staff Maj. Gen. Ghanem

Abass Ibrahim al-Qureshy, the Provincial Director of Police; and Col. David W. Sutherland, commander of Coalition Forces in Diyala, were also in attendance to witness the event and discuss any security concerns throughout the region.

"The future of Diyala is in your hands," Ghanem said. "We need to stand together and start building for the people.

"Whatever is done is done," he continued. "We are not going to return to that. The only choice you have is to look to the future of Iraq."

"Your province is at a tipping point right now," Sutherland said during his comments.

"The people have faith in the leaders in this room; and those who choose not to participate will be left behind," he said.

"We are brothers," said Sheik Sa'ad, a paramount sheik in the Abu Sayda area. "We need to stop the bloodshed because innocent people and the future will die.

"I ask you, from your hearts, to work together to stop the fighting," Sa'ad said.

"These reconciliation agreements are not just words on paper - they represent the future for your people," Sutherland continued. "As you continue to unite, your strength as a unified tribe will show the terrorists that they hold no place or position in Diyala."

Leadership of Diyala River Valley Finds Strength Through Unity

Multinational Division-North PAO

DIYALA RIVER VALLEY, Iraq - Operation Lightning Hammer concluded today with a milestone oath as Diyala's most powerful sheiks swore on the Qu'ran to uphold a number of security provisions during a meeting fostering reconciliation efforts among muqtars, local political leaders, security officials and influential tribal members in Sheik Mazen Village, Iraq, Aug. 19.

The meeting, led by Ra'ad Hameed Al-Mula Jowad Al-Tamimi, governor of Diyala, was attended by village representatives throughout the Diyala River Valley whose villages have been impacted by al-Qaida or other militia groups until the ongoing operations began in the area Aug. 13.

"Let this day be the start of unity," said Ra'ad during the meeting's opening comments.

"Let's look into our future because it has to be better than our past," he said.

"Let's forget about the names of the tribes - we are all one," Ra'ad continued.

After the discussion, the tribes signed a reconciliation agreement and swore on the Quran as a promise to uphold the provisions.

As stated in the Quran, "And hold fast, all together, by the rope which God (stretches out for you), and be not divided among yourselves." The sheiks agreed to eight conditions which include ending violent acts between tribes; providing intelligence to the Iraqi Security Forces; fighting al-Qaida and other enemy organizations; helping the security forces discover improvised explosive devices; activating the law; solving issues between tribes in a civil manner and returning the displaced families to their homes.

Staff Maj. Gen. Nouri, deputy commanding officer of Iraqi Security Forces in Diyala



(Photos by Sgt. Serena Hayden, 3rd BCT, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)

Tribal leaders and representatives from the Diyala River Valley, Iraq, along with provincial leadership pose for a picture after signing a reconciliation agreement to unite in the fight against al-Qaida, Aug. 19.

province; Staff Maj. Gen. Ghanem Abass Ibrahim al-Qureshy, the Provincial Director of Police; and Col. David W. Sutherland, commander of Coalition Forces in Diyala, were also in attendance, as well as Paramount sheiks from the region who attended as witnesses.

Following opening comments by the leadership, the people in attendance spoke of

their thoughts on reconciliation as well as issues affecting their people such as lack of job opportunities, essential services, returning displaced services and recruiting for the security forces.

"You are all capable of influencing your tribes," Ra'ad said. "We are responsible for our men."

The tribal representatives, who agreed there are terrorists, said they must solve their problems through dialogue versus violence.

"Who is killing our people?" asked a sheik from Kharnabat. "Is it al-Qaida, or is it us?"

Because many of the villages such as Abu Sayda, Mukeisha, Kharnabat and Muqqadiya have been fighting for years, the sheik said,

"We are helping destroy our province, and we have to be united," he said.

"Either you are a man or you are not a man," said the al-Bawi sheik from Abu Sabab Village as he asked the others in attendance to do away with harboring terrorists.

"My heart and my power are with you, and I will stand by your side," he continued. "Please take my hand and we will help you."

"Unlike the former sheiks, we do not have to watch the terrorists. We have to do something about it," said another Kharnabat representative of the al-Hashawi tribe.

"If we believe terrorists and al-Qaida are like a thorn in our eye, then we will have to remove that thorn," he said. "We have to protect our tribes."

"The sheiks have to deny the terrorists because those people only bring hate to Iraq," said a sheik from Abu Sayda representing the al-Tamimi tribe.

"As I've said before, there are not 25 major tribes and more than 100 sub-tribes in Diyala," said Sutherland in his closing com-

ments. "There is one tribe - the tribe of Diyala.

"You are not Sunni, Shia or Kurd," he continued. "You are Iraqis.

"You lay the foundation for the future of Diyala," Sutherland explained. "You lay the foundation for the future of the children."

"When I talk about reconciliation, I am not talking about a letter or a signature - I am talking about a promise.

"This is a celebration of peace in our province," said Ra'ad.



Diyala's governor, Ra'ad Hameed Al-Mula Jowad Al-Tamimi, speaks about the importance of reconciliation and the influence of tribal leaders during a reconciliation meeting for Iraq's Diyala River Valley tribal leaders, Aug. 19. The meeting took place during Operation Lightning Hammer after Iraqi and Coalition Forces disrupted al-Qaida's presence in the area.



A tribal sheik from Iraq's Diyala River Valley speaks during a reconciliation meeting at Sheik Mazen Village, Aug. 19.

Iraqi Air Force Conducts First Mission Without U.S. Help

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

CAMP TAJI, Iraq - The Iraqi Air Force recently flew its first mission without the assistance of its American partners.

Iraqi pilots flew a mission to survey and monitor the power lines in Iraq in a mission appropriately called "Operation Power Line," Aug. 25, said Brig. Gen. Sati, the commander of the IAF, Taji Wing, who asked to be identified by only his last name.

"We did our duties today for the very first time and it was a 100-percent Iraqi mission," he said.

Sati announced the mission at a partnership event Aug. 25 between the IAF and 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, in which the American and Iraqi service members enjoyed dinner.

The mission came about because insurgents have been causing unrest throughout Iraq by cutting power lines, thus cutting off electrical power to the Iraqi people, said Washington Court House, Ohio, native U.S. Air Force Lt. Col. Bryan Bartlett, commander of the 770th Air Expeditionary Advisory Squadron and the Coalition Air Force Transition Team.

"There's (a proposed) Iraqi law about people keeping their distance from power lines since there are so many dropped," said Bartlett.

The IAF are taking action on this problem by surveying for downed lines and also watching for anyone violating the stand off distance, he said.

"The mission is to go outside and patrol the Iraqi power lines and to get the word out that the Iraqi Air Force is flying," said Bartlett.

Sati feels that there are two reasons why the IAF have had this recent success.

"As I informed my close, dear friend (Col. Dan Shanahan, commander of the 1st ACB, 1st Cav. Div.), there are two



Traverse City, Mich., native Col. Dan Shanahan, commander of the 1st Air Cavalry "Warrior" Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, sits down for dinner with Brig. Gen. Sati, commander of the Iraqi Air Force, Taji Wing, Aug. 25 at Camp Taji, Iraq. Shanahan said he was excited and very proud of the extensive progress the IAF has made.

reasons behind that," said Sati.

"Number one, is because (of) the ability of our Iraqi pilots to understand and digest the information and because of their (aviation background)," the Iraqi general said proudly.

"The second reason is because the continuous day and night help from our American brothers who did everything we asked them for. They didn't deny us any efforts to accomplish what we wanted," he said.

Sati described the moment they completed their first completely Iraqi mission.

"The whole base is very happy today - extremely happy. We feel like a graduate who just graduated and got his diploma," he

said.

The progress is obvious when one looks at the numbers, said Bartlett.

"To put it in context, last year this wing flew a total of 300 hours. Most of those hours were on a couple of these (Bell 206) Jet Rangers," he said.

"Last month, they flew 200 hours just in the (Bell UH-1H) Huey II alone. So far they've got about 700 hours on the aircraft and they've only really been flying them since the end of February, first of March," said Bartlett.

Along with keeping a watchful eye over the power lines, the IAF have also moved Soldiers and dignitaries and visitors across Iraq.

"They are also moving passengers.

They've moved about 500 passengers so far this year," said Bartlett.

Sati and other officers of his command commemorated their victory with their American partners with a static display of their aircraft and then a dinner later that night.

The IAF pilots and crewmembers set up three helicopters in a hangar and answered any questions the Americans had about them.

U.S. pilots crawled in and out of the IAF helicopters with an Iraqi aviator close by to answer any questions as well as talk about their common bond of flying.

Afterwards, the mix of Iraqi and U.S. aviators went to the U.S. side of the forward operating base and had a time of fellowship while dining and then smoked a few cigars.



(Photos by Spc. Nathan Hoskins, 1st ACB, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)

Aviators from the 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, and the Coalition Air Force Transition Team joined members of the Iraqi Air Force in one of their hangars to get an up close look at the Iraqi helicopters during a static display Aug. 25 at Camp Taji, Iraq. Earlier that same day, the IAF completed its first aerial mission with no assistance from their U.S. partners.

Event Highlights Women's Equality at Camp Taji

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

CAMP TAJI, Iraq - Soldiers from the 1st Air Cavalry Brigade and 15th Sustainment Brigade gathered at the Taji Ministry Center to observe Women's Equality Day here Aug. 26.

The observance included remarks from guest speaker Command Sgt. Maj. Barbara Pettit, the top noncommissioned officer with the 15th Finance Battalion, based at Camp Liberty, Iraq; a reading of the presidential proclamation on Women's Equality Day; and a video presentation.

The theme of the observance was "One Vote," and a short video shown at the observance focused on the fact that 22 million single women did not vote in the last presidential election.

"If I had to choose one thing that we hoped to get across with this it is that single women - all women - should exercise their right to vote," said Sgt. 1st Class Robert Sanchez, the Equal Opportunity representative for 1st Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, 1st ACB, 1st Cavalry Division. The 1-227th Attack Reconnaissance Battalion sponsored and planned the event.

"The biggest thing I learned is that so many single women don't vote," said Sanchez, who calls Dallas home.

"It took a lot of effort from many women to get women the right to vote (87 years ago), and this theme is designed to encourage every woman to practice her

right to vote in any election," she said.

Pettit, a native of Appomattox, Va., spoke briefly about some of the key women who fought for women's equality throughout time and then focused on equality for women in the military.

She recounted how in her early years in the Army, enlisted women could not achieve "hard stripes," being promoted instead to one of several specialist ranks.

Although the military has come a long way during her 26 years of service, she said there are still doors that are locked, chained and dead bolted to women.

Pettit spoke of how women are still restricted from enlisting in most combat arms positions, because, she said, "America is not ready to see women come home in body bags. The truth is that women do die in service (in Iraq) just like their male counterparts."

The advancements made by women in aviation are something that Pettit said she finds encouraging.

"I see so many women doing things in the Army that we weren't supposed to do - especially pilots," Pettit said.

"Women were always considered too temperamentally to be pilots. Here, you have (several female) pilots in the brigade," she said.

"That makes me see how far we have come since I joined the Army," she said.

"I'm no 'women's libber,' but I feel that everyone is equal and should have the opportunity to do what they want to do. The sky's the limit."



(Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Rick Emert, 1st ACB, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)

Command Sgt. Maj. Barbara Pettit, the top noncommissioned officer with the 15th Finance Battalion, speaks at a Women's Equality Day observance Aug. 26 at Camp Taji, Iraq. During her keynote speech at the event, sponsored by the 1st ACB, 1st Cavalry Division, Pettit spoke about the advancements of women in the military and about some barriers that still exist today.

Commanding General Praises 'Spearhead Battalion'

By Spc. Courtney Breton
3rd Bn., 227th Avn. Regt.

CAMP TAJI, Iraq - The commanding general for Multi-National Division-Baghdad and the 1st Cavalry Division, met with members of the 1st Air Cavalry "Warrior" Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division and presented awards Aug. 25.

Maj. Gen. Joseph F. Fil Jr., a Portola Valley, Calif., native, began his trip to Taji with a ride in a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter to meet with Soldiers of the 3rd "Spearhead" Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment.

The Warrior Brigade commander, Traverse City, Mich., native Col. Dan Shanahan, and the Spearhead commander, Lt. Col. Michael L. Shenk from Carlisle, Pa., met and welcomed Fil upon his arrival to the base camp north of Baghdad.

A conference to discuss current and future operations with the battalion leadership was the first order of business for the commanding general. During the discussion, Maj. Gail Atkins of West Chester, Pa., the Spearhead operations officer, made note of some important points.

"We've flown almost 17,000 hours since being in country," Atkins said. Fil acknowledged the accomplishments of the Spearhead Soldiers.

"I appreciate the 3rd Battalion. We're



(Photo by Spc. Courtney Breton, 3rd Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment)

Spc. Roman Anderson, of Murphy, N.C., (right), from 3rd Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, receives the Combat Action Badge from his commanding general, Maj. Gen. Joseph F. Fil Jr., who commands the Multi-National Division-Baghdad and the 1st Cav. Div.

doing great. We're flying; we're moving Soldiers around, busting up Al Qaeda," he said. "You guys out there flying around, that keeps me up at night...there are guys shooting at you, I recognize that as well. Be confident in the work that you're doing, maintain

the team."

Next the commanding general and the Spearhead Soldiers participated in an awards ceremony in an aircraft maintenance hangar. One of the awards bestowed by Fil was the Army Commendation

Medal with "V" device for valor to Sgt. Yolanda Torres-Adams for providing life-saving aid to a critically wounded Soldier wounded in the aftermath of a roadside bomb blast.

The Air Medal with Valor was awarded to two Black Hawk pilots and two crew chiefs. The four crew members and their sister aircraft came under heavy fire during a routine flight mission April 5.

The second helicopter was hit, caught fire, and forced to land. The four crew members then made the quick decision to turn around and rescue their fellow Soldiers. They were engaged by fire twice more before landing and loading the downed aircrew and two wounded passengers to safety.

Fil also presented the Combat Action Badge to 10 Spearhead Soldiers for personally engaging, or being engaged by the enemy forces.

He ended his visit with the 3-227th Soldiers by having them circle in close around him for a few personal words of praise and encouragement.

"It's the fine action of Soldiers like these, like you, that's turned this thing around over here," Fil said. "This thing will be pushed over the top while we're here, over the top, and you're going to do it. Stay strong, stay Army, fight hard, finish well. I'm proud of you. First Team!"

"Bad Bet" a Winner in Western Baghdad

By Spc. Benjamin Gable
7th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

BAGHDAD - Ghazaliya, a neighborhood in the western portion of the Iraqi capital, has seen its share of insurgent activity, security concerns and a lack of essential services.

Enter the Soldiers from Company B., 2nd Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division from Fort Bliss, Texas. Co. B, known by the moniker "Bad Bet," is proving to improve the odds for Ghazaliya residents' lasting success.

Just three months in the area, the Bad Bet troops started by building Joint Security Station (JSS) Maverick from the ground up. This would allow them, along with members of the Iraqi National Police who they are teamed with, to live and work in the neighborhood, providing security on an around-the-clock basis. This was the first step in bringing security and prosperity to the area.

"First and foremost, we are living out in the populace to provide the locals with security," said Capt. Courtland McLeod, commander of JSS Maverick and Co. B. "We can then help establish essential services to improve the quality of life."

The Soldiers have taken this idea to the next level. NPs went deeper into the community and set up safe houses, allowing them to keep a constant eye on the streets. Living in these safe houses and becoming more visible has helped them neutralize insurgent activities.

"The NPs have conducted many search and clear operations here and it's made a huge difference in violent acts by not allowing insurgents the freedoms to plant improvised explosive devices, among other things," said Sgt. 1st Class Fernando Fernandez, a tank platoon sergeant with Bad



(Photos by Spc. Benjamin Gable, 7th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

An Iraqi boy watches as his father fills the vehicle with gasoline at the Al Shurta gas station in the western Baghdad Ghazaliya neighborhood Aug. 23. Coalition Forces provide security at the gas station to prevent insurgents from stealing fuel for the black market.

Bet. Violence in the area has been suppressed significantly since the arrival of Coalition Forces. McLeod said the difference is "night and day." With these improvements, he said citizens of Ghazaliya can now live their lives in a more normal manner.

With violence in the area down dramatically, Coalition Forces then turned their

efforts to helping the local population with humanitarian aid. With the NPs in the lead, and the guidance and support of Soldiers in Co. B, they helped locals by handing out thousands of bottles of water at open markets and recently provided an open "sick call." The sick call was a combined medical operation in which residents received medications for minor illnesses. Children were given vitamins.

The Soldiers are also helping residents by providing job opportunities. According to McLeod, building projects and trash removal projects are providing employment to local residents.

"We are giving them alternate means of making money," he said. "When the men have jobs, it's harder for them to be recruited by insurgents."

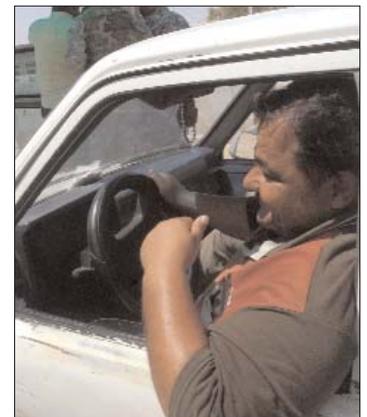
Keeping jobs and money circulating within the community has given residents a chance to take care of themselves financially. NPs, taking the lead in humanitarian aid efforts and security operations, have gained the trust of Ghazaliya citizens.

In the months since the arrival of Co. B and the National Police in this western Baghdad neighborhood, residents have been able to return to a more normal way of life. The markets are open, kids are again playing in the streets and work is available.

According to McLeod, it could not have happened without the efforts of his Soldiers and the NPs, who are in the streets every day, ensuring the safety of the citizens.

After gaining the trust and loyalty of the

residents, Co. B has seen marked improvements in the community and a decrease in insurgent activities. Eventually, a new company of Soldiers will take over JSS Maverick, but, for the citizens of Ghazaliya, their future is not longer a "crap shoot," thanks to welcoming a Bad Bet.



An Iraqi waits in line to fill his truck at the Al Shurta gas station in the western Baghdad Ghazaliya neighborhood Aug. 23. Even though the gas station has only two pumps, locals lined up in vehicles, and on foot, waiting in the summer heat to fill their vehicles and gas containers. Coalition Forces established Joint Security Station Maverick and several other "safe houses" to quell the violence that once plagued this community.



Al Shurta gas station owner and operator, Abdul Wahid Hummad, counts his earnings at the end of the business day in the western Baghdad Ghazaliya neighborhood Aug. 23. Hummad said improved security provided by Coalition Forces and Iraqi National Police in the area has helped his business "greatly." He added he is very grateful for the coalition presence and hopes the security can lead to more economical development in his neighborhood.

Volunteers Help Rid Community of Al-Qaeda

By Sgt. John Androski
1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment

BAGHDAD - The 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, based out of Fort Hood, Texas, has been working side-by-side with a local civil defense force that have united together to defend the western neighborhood of Ameriya for nearly two months.

A community initiative grew from a dozen concerned citizens to almost 200 dedicated men who have partnered with Coalition Forces to eliminate the al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQIZ) threat from their neighborhood.

Ameriya was, until recently, the unofficial headquarters of AQIZ, but with the determination of the civilian volunteer

force, commonly referred to as the Farsan Al Rafidayn ("knights between the rivers"), or FAR, working together with Coalition Forces, the insurgent force of al-Qaeda has been almost eradicated.

"Having them as partners have been crucial in this fight," said Capt. Michael Ernst, a military liaison between Coalition Forces and the FAR.

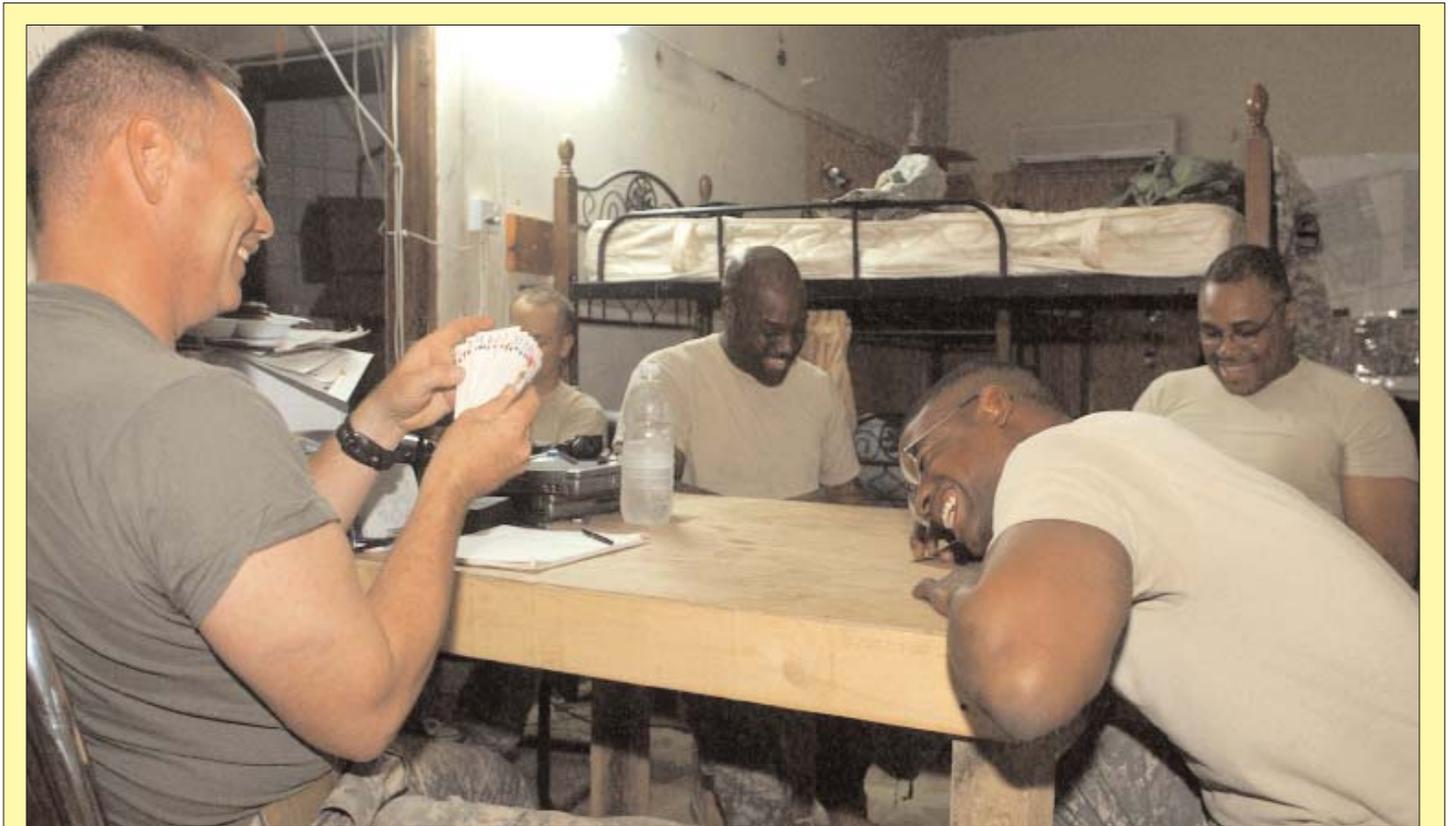
"Having the FAR with us conducting joint raids, patrols and other intelligence operations have lead us to detain the majority of AQIZ's top leadership in Ameriya, which has disrupted al-Qaeda's major operations," he said.

The FAR has enabled the security situation in Ameriyah to reach levels once unimaginable a few short months ago, Ernst added.



(Photo by Sgt. Jack Androski, 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment)

Pfc. Joshua Fenton, Company A, 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, looks outside a security perimeter with a volunteer from the western Baghdad Ameriya neighborhood for possible insurgent activity in the distance.



(Photo by Spc. Benjamin Gable, 7th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

A Moment of Laughter

Sgt. Thomas Weaver, (right), a native of Buford, S.C., and cavalry scout with Headquarters and Headquarters Co., 2nd Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, assigned to the 352nd National Police Transition Team, who works with the 3rd Battalion, 5th Brigade, 2nd Division National Police, and Sgt. 1st Class Richard Gregory, (left), a cavalry scout with the team and native of Atkinson, N.C., share a laugh during a game of "Spades" between missions at the Joint Security Station Maverick, in Ghazaliya, just west of Baghdad, Aug. 25. The team members regularly play "Spades" in their downtime. The games typically get out of hand once the "trash talking" begins, according to Sgt. 1st Class Roy Lewis, (second from right), a logistics specialist and Charlotte, N.C., native. He added they use it as a way to decompress and to break up the monotony of the day to day grind. The three are joined by Charlotte, N.C. native, Master Sgt. Dwayne Heyward (second from left), a medic with the team.

Adhamiyah Residents Force to Improve Ne

By Sgt. Mike Pryor
2nd BCT, 82nd Abn. Div. Public Affairs

BAGHDAD - It's just after 10 a.m., and a large crowd has gathered outside the Adhamiyah District Advisory Council building. Dozens of men mob the entrance.

Normally, the DAC Hall is where citizens come to complain about potholes and power outages, and where wailing mothers come to plead for the release of their detained sons. But the men gathered here this morning didn't come to complain about problems, they came to be part of a solution.

The men are all here to apply for jobs with Adhamiyah's new Critical Infrastructure Guard Force, a security force made up of local men that will protect area schools, hospitals, fuel stations, and government buildings.

In Adhamiyah, a Sunni enclave in east Baghdad that has long been a haven for insurgents, U.S. and Iraqi forces have struggled to make residents more active partners in security. But the surprising embrace of the guard force is just one of a growing number of signs that Adhamiyah residents are starting to take a more aggressive role in protecting their community, say U.S. Soldiers based in the area.

"They're standing up, and I think it shows they're ready to take their neighborhood back into their own hands," said Columbia, Md., native Capt. Albert Marckwardt, commander of Troop B, 3rd Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Infantry Division.

The first 30 CIGF guards completed training Aug. 20, and will receive assignments within the next week. More than 400 applications for guard force jobs have been received so far, and the total force is expected to number over 750, said Homewood, Ill., native 2nd Lt. Brian C. Smith, the Squadron's Iraqi Security Forces liaison officer.

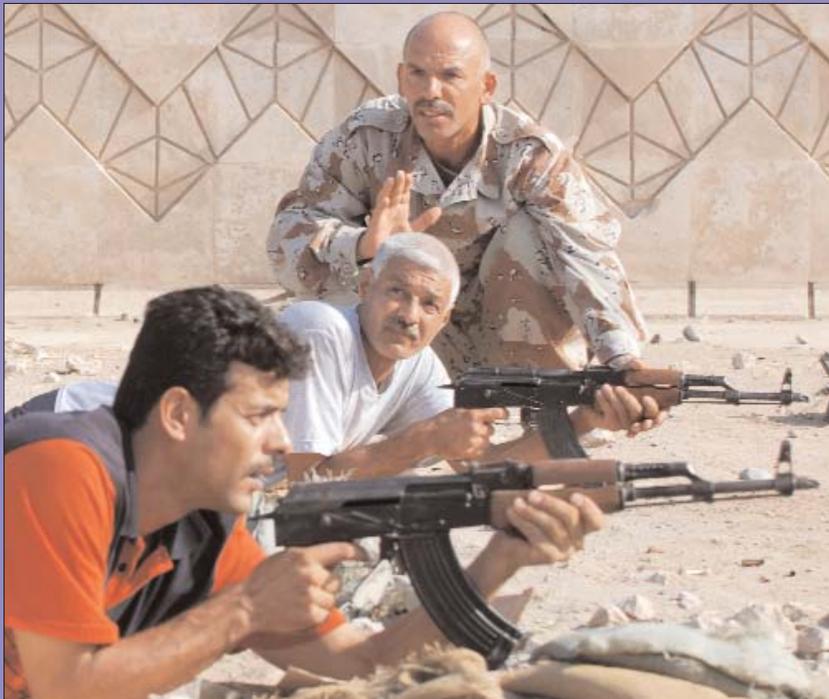
The CIGF has been met with enthusiasm by the people of Adhamiyah - as evidenced by the turn out of job-seekers at the DAC Aug. 18. More than 50 hopefuls turned up, some waiting for several hours to fill out the paperwork and put in their applications.

"The first time we did this, we had maybe 15 people show up. But the word got around and they're starting to really show up now. They just keep coming," said Modesto, Calif., native Sgt. 1st Class Chhay Mao, a platoon sergeant with B Troop who was helping screen applicants.

The vetting took place upstairs, in a stuffy room filled with long tables. The applicants were brought in small groups, some of the men shy, others cocky and laughing, to file by and give their information to the Soldiers at the tables. One Soldier asked Mohammed Said Ahmad, a muscular 25-year-old with a baseball cap on backwards, why he wanted to join the CIGF.

"We are here because we want to secure Adhamiyah for our kids and our families," Ahmad said passionately.

When the Soldier asked the next man in line, 49 year-old Talib Hussein, Hussein's



(Photos by Sgt. Mike Pryor, 2nd BCT, 82nd Abn. Div. Public Affairs)

Cpl. Ganem Najim of the Iraqi Army's 1st Battalion, 1st Brigade, 11th Infantry Division, coaches trainees on proper firing techniques during a marksmanship training exercise for the first 30 members of Adhamiyah's Critical Infrastructure Guard Force at Coalition Outpost Apache in eastern Baghdad Aug. 17.



Ludowici, Ga., native Spc. Dustin Brewster (second from right), and Modesto, Calif., native Sgt. 1st Class Chhay Mao of Troop B, 3rd Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment, help keep order as Adhamiyah residents line up outside the District Council building Aug. 18 to apply for jobs with the new Critical Infrastructure Guard Force. The security force, with members drawn from the local area, will protect school, hospitals, fuel stations, and other government buildings.



Roanoke, Va., native Staff Sgt. William Schilling of Troop B, 3rd Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment, helps a man applying for a job with Adhamiyah's new Critical Infrastructure Guard Force.

ts Join Local Guard ighborhood Security

reply was a little more matter-of-fact.
"I have two wives," Hussein said wearily. "I need money."
Both motivations are valid as far as Coalition Forces are concerned. Smith said that the CIGF program is as much about providing jobs as it is about providing security.

"Honestly, it's about 50-50," said Smith.
"For security in Adhamiyah, you need these guys to work," said 1st Sgt. Muhammed Hassan Ali, the Iraqi NCO in charge of training new CIGF recruits. Ali said residents with good paying jobs would be less tempted to take insurgent money for planting bombs or throwing grenades at patrols.

As for the potential problems created by having another armed paramilitary group in the area, the Squadron has taken measures to mitigate the risk, Smith said. All applicants must be fingerprinted and undergo an iris scan, with the information cross-referenced against names in an extensive criminal data base.

Candidates who pass the background check then take part in a five-day training program to teach them basic marksmanship, weapons maintenance, vehicle and personnel search techniques, codes of conduct and rules of engagement, said Smith.

The training takes place at Coalition Outpost Apache, built on the ruins of one of Saddam Hussein's opulent palaces on the banks of the Tigris. Noncommissioned officers from the Iraqi Army are the instructors, with U.S. Soldiers in an advisory role.

The first 30 recruits attended the training Aug. 16 -20. On Aug. 17, the group was out on the firing range. A few had previous military experience, and handled their AK-47s like old pros. Others, especially the younger men, needed some coaching, but Ali and his small staff helped them along. The recruits who finished first went over to sit on the steps in the shade. As they smoked cigarettes and wondered what was for lunch, some of the men noted how strange it was that they were training on the grounds of Saddam's palace, a place where - in previous times - Adhamiyah residents "disappeared."

One new recruit, Ahmed Raja Al Assan, said the CIGF should have been developed years ago. Assan said having a security force made up of local people would make it easier to catch terrorists who try to infiltrate Adhamiyah.

"We know who is good and who is bad," he said.
After the marksmanship training was over, white-haired Thabit Numan, one of the oldest of the new recruits, came up to Smith and Ali to shake their hands.

Before coming to the training, many in the group had been scared, Numan explained. Some had expected to be mistreated by the Iraqi Soldiers. But instead they had been shown respect and treated like brothers, the old man said.

In a few days, training would be over, and the men would get their first mission.
"We are ready," Numan said, before turning and walking off towards the palace.



Roanoke, Va., native Staff Sgt. William Schilling of B Troop, 3rd Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment, takes an iris scan of a man applying for a job with Adhamiyah's new Critical Infrastructure Guard Force during screening at the Adhamiyah District Council Aug. 18. The security force, with members drawn from the local area, will protect school, hospitals, fuel stations, and other government buildings. All the applicants undergo a thorough screening process, including fingerprint and iris scans, in order to make sure their backgrounds are clean.



Parma, Ohio native Cpl. Eric Chenevare of Troop B, 3rd Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment, takes an iris scan of a man applying for a job with Adhamiyah's new Critical Infrastructure Guard Force Aug. 18. The security force, with members drawn from the local area, will protect school, hospitals, fuel stations, and other government buildings. All the applicants undergo a thorough screening process, including fingerprint and iris scans, in order to make sure their backgrounds are clean.



1 Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment, takes a fingerprint scan of a ture Guard Force Aug. 18.



(Photo by Maj. Kirk Luedeke, 4th IBCT, 1st Inf. Div. Public Affairs Officer)

Dust in the Wind

A UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter kicks up sand while landing at Coalition Outpost Banshee in southern Baghdad's Rashid District Aug. 27. COP Banshee is occupied by Soldiers of 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division out of Fort Riley, Kan.

Soldiers, Iraqi Contractors Making Plans for Furat

By Pfc. Nathaniel Smith
4th IBCT, 1st Inf. Div. Public Affairs

BAGHDAD - At the Baghdad International Airport Business Center, representatives of the 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, and Iraqi contractors met to discuss the economic future of Furat, a southern region of the Iraqi capital, Aug. 25.

Lt. Col. Patrick Frank, commander of the 1st Battalion, 28th Infantry Regiment, 4th IBCT, said the neighborhood can look toward a bright future because of the leaders of Furat and their eagerness to get past ethnic differences.

"We were very fortunate to find a very talented group of Iraqis on the Furat Council," the Cuba, N.Y., native said. "They are looking beyond sectarian problems of Sunni versus Shia, and they want to embrace the community as a whole."

The commander of 1-28 Inf. Reg., the unit responsible for the northwestern Rashid District in southern Baghdad, said the location, level of security, and concentration of skilled individuals has created a unique recipe for success.

"We felt it was a unique opportunity due



(Photo by Pfc. Nathaniel Smith, 4th IBCT, 1st Inf. Div. Public Affairs)

Lt. Col. Patrick Frank, commander of the 1st Battalion, 28th Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, presides over a meeting discussing the future of the Furat region in southern Baghdad, Aug. 25.

to the way they approach Sunni-Shia relations and the security that comes from the U.S. installations to achieve success here," he said.

"This is the cornerstone for success in all of Northwest Rashid," he said.

"It starts in Furat, and the success will migrate from the achievements that we

obtain there."

Capt. Bill Johnson, a member of the 4th IBCT's embedded Provincial Reconstruction Team, said the plan benefited people from all backgrounds.

"The Black Lions have set forward a very good plan here to work with the locals, both the Sunni and the Shia, to have a solu-

tion that can assist both sides and all the people in areas of reconciliation," the Minnetonka, Minn., native said.

Due to improving security, Johnson said U.S. forces can now aid the citizens in areas of 'non-lethal assistance' such as economics, employment and new business opportunities.

A couple of those opportunities discussed were the construction of the Mall of Baghdad and the University of Rashid.

"This is a good step and a good discussion that will hopefully lead to further positive steps," Johnson said.

Capt. Brian Ducote, commander of Company B, 1-28 Inf. "Black Lions," which is responsible for Furat, said the progress being made in the region is the next piece to revitalizing the Rashid District.

"We knew from day one that the U.S. Army, especially the Black Lions, were going to fix the security, and we've made huge progress with that," the Dunwoody, Ga., native said. "This part is another step that can guarantee our long-term success, to where we won't have to have Soldiers here. It's going to kick-start their economy."

"We have the security, the conditions are set, and down the road it's going to create an irreversible momentum of success."

National Police Welcomes Newest NCOs

By Pfc. Nathaniel Smith
4th IBCT, 1st Inf. Div. Public Affairs

BAGHDAD - In the U.S. Army, the non-commissioned officer corps is known as the "Backbone of the Army." While the Iraqi Security Forces are forging their way ahead, the National Police strengthened their own noncommissioned officer corps by welcoming a group of new NCOs to their ranks Aug. 22.

A class from the 7th Brigade, 2nd Iraqi National Police Division graduated from the newly developed Warrior Leader's Course in a ceremony at Joint Security Station Doura in southern Baghdad.

Of 19 'shurta,' the Arabic term for policeman, that started the course, 17 completed it successfully. Those that met the requirements were promoted to the rank of corporal at the end of the graduation ceremony.

Brig. Gen. Karim Abud, the commander of 7-2th NP, told his new NCOs they work for one thing: the citizens of Iraq.

"We are the police of lawful people," he said. "We have to work by the law. We are not sectarian or party-affiliated."

Kareem continued by making it clear that generals like himself accomplish nothing

without their troops on the ground.

"I cannot do my job without the soldiers," he said. "I am nothing without the soldiers. Any commander with no soldiers can do nothing."

Lt. Col. Edward Rowe, the deputy commander of the 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division from Gaithersburg, Md., advised the police to relish their success but to remember what they work for.

"Enjoy this day; enjoy this recognition," he said, "but remember: you must do your duty to Iraq, to your unit and to your commanders."

Lt. Col. Michael Lonigro, the commander of the 7-2 NP Training Team from San Antonio, had more advice for the graduates.

"Your job is to do the right thing all the time, whether your (police) agree or not," he said. "The right thing is to support the government of Iraq."

Cpl. Wamir Jubr, one of the graduates of the course, felt the instruction he had received could help him do his job on the streets of Iraq.

"The challenge is to help on a day-to-day basis," he said, "but I overcame this by getting more training here."

Some of the training Jubr and his fellow



(Photo by Pfc. Nathaniel Smith, 4th IBCT, 1st Inf. Div. Public Affairs)

One of the newest noncommissioned officers in the 7th Brigade, 2nd Iraqi National Police Division pins corporal rank on his shoulder after successfully completing the Warrior Leaders' Course in southern Baghdad Aug. 22.

NCOs received consisted of first-aid, weapons and maintenance, basic NCO development, and tactics, techniques and procedures.

Jubr felt he can do more to help his fellow policemen by instructing them on every-

thing from first-aid to proper weapons maintenance.

"Going through all the training, I'm beginning to learn more and more," he said. "I can pass that onto them."

Iraqi Provincial Volunteers Help Secure Radwaniyah

By Spc. Ben Washburn
4th IBCT, 1st Inf. Div., Public Affairs

BAGHDAD - The goal has always been to return control back to the Iraqis.

In recent months, an increasing number of Iraqis have stood up to the challenge of reclaiming their country from terrorists and insurgents by joining the Iraqi Provincial Volunteers.

A trip with the 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade, 1st Inf. Div., attached to 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Inf. Div., into Radwaniyah provides a glimpse of what is happening not just there, but in other parts of the country.

There, IPV's are manning checkpoints along the roads to stop Al-Qaeda and insurgents from operating in their area.

Their checkpoints are often simple. A few sandbags piled up into a makeshift bunker. Some rubble or scrap metal pulled across the street to force cars to slow down.

Whatever supplies they can scrounge up, with a bit of assistance from the Coalition Forces, is all it takes for them to secure their roads. The IPV's work throughout the day, through the heat and the sun, to secure their own neighborhoods.

"It's a big step towards giving control back to the people. I feel a lot safer," said Spearfish, S.D., native Spc. Russell Harmon, a team leader with Company C, 1st Battalion, 28th Infantry Regiment, attached to Company E, 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry Regiment.

"There's a lot more of them. They're a lot more organized," said Pfc. Anthony Mondelli, a gunner with Company C, 1-28 Inf. The IPV's are making progress, despite their limited resources. As the time passes, they will be more able to protect their roads and neighborhoods. They've done a great job so far, forcing the insurgents to stay away.

"We drive around now and don't even get shot at. I think it's because of them," the gunner and native from

Copague, N.Y., said.

Because the IPV's are from the area they guard, they know who is and who is not from the area. That's a big advantage that the Coalition Forces don't have, and is one reason the IPV's are better able to control the checkpoints than anyone brought in from outside the area, one non-commissioned officer said.

It's that knowledge which has forced the insurgents to stay away. Sgt. 1st Class John McGlothlin, of Company C, 1-28 Inf., said that's why they are effective.

"The reason it works so well with them is they know the people who live in their area. So if we get someone that's not from the area around, they're going to be the first to know it," said the platoon sergeant from Bradford, Ohio.

The IPV's do more than just secure the roads to keep insurgents out.

They have proven reliable in preventing improvised explosive devices.

"We don't have to concentrate on route clearance as much," Harmon said. By allowing Coalition Forces to concentrate more on finding insurgents and weapons caches, the IPV's have proven themselves to be a combat multiplier for Coalition Forces.

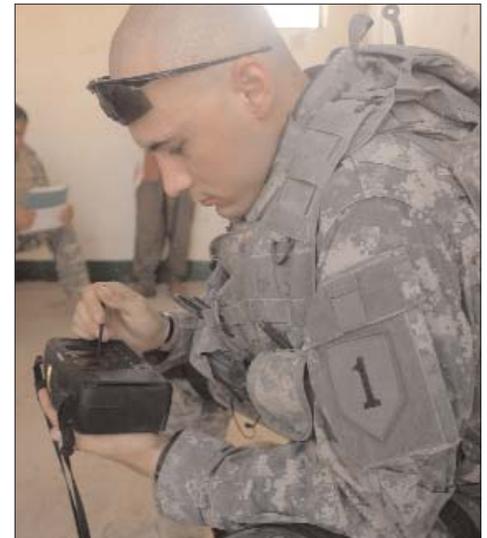
The residents of Radwaniyah also see the increased security, feeling more comfortable out of their homes and on the roads.

"A big difference is we see people out on the roads. When we first got here we saw a lot less people," Mondelli said. The people realize that violence doesn't have to be a way of life.

"I think they finally realize there could be hope for the country, and they're just trying to do their part," said Pfc. Christopher Novak, a gunner from Stewart, Fl., assigned the 1-28 Inf.

The IPV's have done a great job since they began manning checkpoints.

"So far they've been really successful, very few incidents since we stood them up. Things seem to be getting



(Photo by Spc. Ben Washburn, 4th IBCT, 1st Inf. Div. Public Affairs)

Spc. Christopher Najdowski, a medic with Company E, 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade, 1st Inf. Div., attached to 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Inf. Div., enters information into a database on August 24.

quieter," McGlothlin said.

Despite the success, the most important aspect is that it's the Iraqis taking charge of security and allowing Coalition Forces to step back and assist where necessary. Radwaniyah is just one area, but is a sign of hope for all of Iraq.

Mondelli summed it up with one sentence.

"It's been a dramatic change since they've been here."

Restaurants Opening on Abu Nuwas Street; Revitalization Efforts Extend to Surrounding Areas

By Maj. Sean Ryan
2nd IBCT, 2nd Inf. Div. Public Affairs Officer

FORWARD OPERATING BASE LOYALTY, Iraq - The rebuilding of the famous Abu Nuwas marketplace in eastern Baghdad is nearly complete. After five months of clean up, revitalization, and barrier emplacement, the marketplace is looking to flourish with businesses and customers.

The market, historically known for its mazgouf fish, a Baghdad delicacy cooked over wood fires, has been closed for four years until this month, when one restaurant opened and more planning to do so. The once-dilapidated restaurants, where customers could pick out their own live fish to cook, have been completely rebuilt with seven new structures already in place.

"Part of the success you see is due to using local labor and supplies. In the past, we did not always do that and non-local workers became targets of intimidation," said Brig. Gen. Vincent K. Brooks, deputy commanding general for support with the Multi-National Division-Baghdad and 1st Cavalry Division, paid a recent visit to the market. "Part of the historic street's revival is boosting their economy. If you set the proper condi-



(Photos by Maj. Sean Ryan 2nd IBCT, 2nd Inf. Div. Public Affairs Officer)

Local workers continue their construction on Abu Nuwas Street throughout a five-month process to revitalize the once historic street in eastern Baghdad. The effort to revitalize the area economically was a major effort by the 2nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, with the 1st Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment, re-establishing the security measures.

tions and rebuild areas, the people will come back."

For one owner of a fish restaurant, handed down from his father, a tradition

in Iraq, who said the timing couldn't be better as money was already scarce. Electricity is still a problem, as it is everywhere in Iraq, and the owner said he has had to raise his prices to meet the rising costs to run the restaurant, but sees the economic development of the street as a very positive sign of times to come.

The rebuilding has been no easy task as absent owners had to be located. Leaders from the Rusafa District, the civil affairs team from the 2nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team and the Abu Nuwas District Advisory Council chairman teamed up to start the process.

While not all owners have been contacted yet, a great number have and they have started rebuilding their lives after seeing the efforts on the street.

The effort with the markets is just a fraction of the work being accomplished overall by local workers and the cluttered streets are now beautifully transformed with two-way driving lanes again, curbs have been painted, and medians restored.

The park renovations include new playgrounds for the kids and the cleanup of years of trash to the site that is magnificently located right off the Tigris River and surrounded by eucalyptus trees.

The economic section and surrounding areas that once provided a variety of shops, restaurants, and hotels, and was world-renowned, realized early that the revitalization could get the community back on track by reducing unemployment and resuming some type of normalcy by launching

an economic and security meeting on June 9 where 45 local business owners attended.

"It's in everyone's best interest to make the area successful with different businesses and not cut anyone one off with barriers being emplaced," explained the Abu Nuwas chairman, Qays Foraj, to the business owners.

The area is starting to see the fruits of their labor, he said.

Financial assistance has already been provided to many business owners on Abu Nuwas by different organizations and have now trickled into surrounding areas such as Meridian Street, where most of the business consist of antique shops, art and rug dealers.

The micro grants offered are just a start as many businesses need sometimes up to \$100,000 to restart their shops since they have suffered severe damage and lack inventory since 2003.

One such business is the art gallery located where the proprietor, back after a four-year absence.

While the gallery is not in exhibit shape yet, the proprietor said he will continue to make changes like he did in the past when he originally changed the format of the building from an illegal bar, to the three-story gallery that it is today.

While great numbers of customers have not starting streaming back yet as word is still getting out, three Iraqi television stations have done features on the Abu Nuwas revitalization projects.



Local workers are still finishing up restaurant construction efforts on Abu Nuwas Street in eastern Baghdad. The five-month process revitalizing the once historic street is energizing the area economically and has been a major effort by the 2nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team based out of Fort Carson, Colo., with the 1st Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment from Fort Bragg, N.C., attached to the brigade, re-establishing the security measures.

Medical Aid Delivered to East Baghdad Clinics

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

FORWARD OPERATING BASE RUSTAMIYAH, Iraq - Part of getting Iraq back on its feet involves ensuring hospitals and clinics can provide services to the people.

Soldiers in Company C, 2nd Battalion, 16th Infantry Regiment, attached to 2nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, are helping by giving out medical supplies and medicines to private and public clinics in the Al Amin area of eastern Baghdad.

1st Lt. Matthew J. Cardellino, the platoon leader for 2nd Platoon, Company C, 2-16th Inf., said he and his Soldiers went through the area on Aug. 16 and tried to hand out supplies, but most of the clinics were closed. So, on Aug. 21, they tried again and were successful.

Cardellino, a native of Jenkintown, Pa., said he and his Soldiers received a positive response from the people when they dropped supplies off at the clinics.

"They want to get most supplies from the Ministry of Health, but some are not averse to getting supplies from us," he said.

Taking supplies to the clinics is an ongoing project, but also part of ensuring the clinics are up to par, which includes making sure there is electricity to run the clinic during its operating hours.

Giving out supplies, Cardellino said, is also a way to put a human face on things.

The main goal is to let the people know that Coalition Forces are here to help and many people

seem to appreciate that help, Cardellino said.

The Soldiers received help from the 1st Battalion, 4th Brigade, 1st Iraqi National Police Division, who went out on a joint patrol and helped unload and deliver the supplies, he said.

"The great thing about it is that we're working in conjunction with the local government," he said.

Patrolling together and presenting a united presence shows the populace that the government is trying to work in the best interest of the people, Cardellino said.

"It's a great confidence booster for the people to see the local government actually trying to help out," he said. "We're just a facilitator."

When they stop at a clinic, both Coalition Forces and Iraqi National Police members walk inside and talk to the owners of the clinic and the doctors to see what the clinic is in need of.

The facilities are family clinics and one was crowded with numerous women, children and even newborns.

The women just sit quietly holding either quiet or crying children and the children just watch the Soldiers with curious eyes.

Unloading the supplies didn't take long. The Iraqi National Police members opened the ambulance they were driving and helped Coalition Forces download boxes and carry them to the clinics.

Working together is always a challenge due to the language barrier, but the relationship has always been good and has gotten even better, Cardellino said.

"They are taking their jobs more seriously now," he said of the National Police. "Giving them tasks shows them this is your responsibility to take charge



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

Staff Sgt. Asila Ume with, Co. C, 2nd Bn., 16th Inf. Regt., attached to 2nd IBCT, helps a soldier with the 1st Bn., 4th Bde., 1st Iraqi National Police Div. deliver boxes of supplies to an eastern Baghdad clinic.

of your neighborhoods."

Cardellino said residents respond well to the National Police presence, and some even wave as they drive past. "They interact with the people just like us," he said.



(Photo by Maj. Sean Ryan, 2nd IBCT, 2nd Inf. Div. PAO)

CBS Anchor Visits Eastern Baghdad

Katie Couric, anchor and managing editor of the CBS Evening News, speaks with a local Rusafa resident in eastern Baghdad Sept. 2 through an interpreter. Couric an operational brief and toured the Mutanabbi Book Market alongside Lt. Gen. Raymond Odierno, commanding general, Multi-National Corps-Iraq and Col. Jeffrey L. Bannister, commander of the 2nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, based out of Fort Carson, Col. Mutanabbi is considered the most famous in Baghdad and was devastated by a March 5 car bomb and is now recovering after receiving aid.

Soldier Remembers Area Well From Previous Deployment

By Sgt. Mike Pryor
2nd BCT, 82nd Abn. Div. Public Affairs

BAGHDAD - Do you ever get that déjà vu feeling? Staff Sgt. Christopher Grimm does, all the time. Except in his case, it's not déjà vu. His life really is repeating itself.

Grimm, 35, is spending his third deployment to Iraq patrolling the exact same Baghdad streets that he did on his first deployment.

The Adhamiyah neighborhood in the Iraqi capital has been Grimm's area of operations for two out of three deploy-

ments. Meaning that in a country the size of California, the Cabot, Ark., native has spent the majority of his time in a neighborhood only two and a half square miles in size. He was based in the same northern section of the city from 2004-2005 with the Arkansas National Guard, and just recently returned with the 3rd Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Infantry Division.

"Being back here again, it is a lot like déjà vu," Grimm said. "Just rolling up and down these streets, it brings back a lot of memories."

Grimm said not much has changed in Adhamiyah since

his previous deployment. Even Coalition Outpost Apache, his old base, is the same, except for a slight name change.

"We called it Fort Apache back then," he said.

For Grimm, there's hardly a corner of the neighborhood that doesn't come with a memory. Some places call to mind incidents he'd rather not be reminded of, like the firefight with insurgents in 2004 that earned him a Purple Heart. Others are more pleasant, like when he rediscovered a chicken shack he ate at on his first tour. It was still in business.

"That guy still knows how to cook chicken," he said.

As one of only a handful of Soldiers in his unit who know the area, Grimm has tried to use his experience as an asset.

"When I first heard we might be headed to Adhamiyah, I went up to the commander and said, 'Sir, what do you want to know?'" Grimm said.

As a member of his troop commander's personal security detail, Grimm's knowledge of the area has come in handy during regular movements throughout the area. He knows all the shortcuts and backstreets, he said.

While Grimm's knowledge of the area has been valuable for his unit, it has come at a price for his family. Thanks to multiple deployments, he calculates that he has spent only a month and a half with his family in the past four years. But rather than get frustrated, Grimm tries to keep a positive outlook, he said.

"As much as I love my wife and kids, I love my job, and I hope that's something my three girls will eventually understand," he said.

Even being back in Adhamiyah again hasn't dampened his spirits. Just because the streets are not completely peaceful, that doesn't mean the mission is hopeless, Grimm said. It just means taking a long-term view of success.

"It's going to take time. We're going to be here a long while," Grimm said.

Which is why Grimm looks to the little, incremental signs of progress he sees everyday to keep him motivated.

"Getting out in the streets to see the changes we're making is the biggest thing that keeps me going," he said. "People will come up and thank us for helping their community. That really gives you a sense of pride."



(Photo by Sgt. Mike Pryor, 2nd BCT, 82nd Airborne Division Public Affairs)

Cabot, Ark., native, Staff Sgt. Christopher Grimm, of Troop B, 3rd Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Infantry Division, out of Fort Stewart, Ga., pulls security during a visit to a new fuel station in Baghdad's Adhamiyah neighborhood Aug. 16. Grimm is currently on his second tour of duty in this northern area of the city.



(Photo by Sgt. Mike Pryor, 2nd BCT, 82nd Abn. Div. Public Affairs)

"Iraqi Rocky"

1st Sgt. Steven Farr, the top noncommissioned officer of Troop B, 3rd Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment, out of Fort Stewart, Ga., gets into a friendly shadowboxing competition with an Iraqi man who said he was a boxer while on patrol in Baghdad's Adhamiyah District Aug. 22.



(Photo by Sgt. Mike Pryor, 2nd BCT, 82nd Abn. Div. Public Affairs)

Urban Obstacle Course

Escalon, Calif., native Sgt. 1st Class Joshua Harrison, a platoon sergeant with Troop C, 3rd Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Infantry Division out of Fort Stewart, Ga., climbs over a gate while searching a building in Baghdad's Adhamiyah District Aug. 22.

Soldiers Come Bearing Food, Supplies for Adhamiyah Residents

By Sgt. Mike Pryor
2nd BCT, 82nd Abn. Div. Public Affairs

BAGHDAD - Other than the fact that he is heavily armed, dressed in body armor, and flanked by several Soldiers, 1st Lt. John Gassmann shows up at Ahmad Ali's doorstep just like any friendly new neighbor. He even brought a gift.

"We're just going through the neighborhood introducing ourselves, seeing if there are any problems, and seeing if there's anything we can do to help," Gassmann tells Ali conversationally, as his Soldiers carry bags of rice, flour, and beans into the house.

Gassmann's unit, Troop A, 3rd Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment, is responsible for security in a poor section of Baghdad's Adhamiyah District.

For the Soldiers in Gassmann's platoon, that means earning the trust and confidence of the local people through daily engagement patrols.

"The bottom line is, we can drive through this neighborhood three times a day for a year, but if we don't stop to talk to anyone, we'll never know anything about it," Gassmann said.

So, instead of cruising the streets in an armored humvee, the Riley, Kan., native spends most of his time inside residents' living rooms, sipping tea and

talking.

Lately, Gassmann's platoon has also been handing out humanitarian aid bags containing rice, salt, cooking oil, and other common foodstuffs at each house they visit.

The bags are a lifeline for some of the poorer families in the area, but they're also a gesture of goodwill on the part of the Soldiers.

Having armed men show up on your doorstep unannounced - regardless of the reason - can be a little stressful, Gassmann said, so the aid bags are one way the Soldiers can show they mean no harm.

"It puts them a little more at ease and lets them know we're here to help," he said.

The platoon handed out around 50 of the bags during a joint patrol Aug. 21.

At house after house, the routine was the same.

The Soldiers conducted a quick search, then brought the food in as Gassmann sat down with the owners to discuss any concerns they might have. T

he conversations always ended with Gassmann offering them a card with his contact information.

"If you ever need anything just give me a call," Gassmann told one



(Photo by Sgt. Mike Pryor, 2nd BCT, 82nd Abn. Div. Public Affairs)

Norfolk, Va., native Spc. Shannon Guinn (left), and Hickory, N.C., native Sgt. Shawn Hatley, of Troop A, 3rd Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment, carry bags of humanitarian assistance foodstuffs into a house in a poor neighborhood in Baghdad's Adhamiyah District during a patrol Aug. 21.

family. "We'll help you in any way that we can."

The point, he said, wasn't necessarily to leave each house with specific information about insurgents. It was to

lay the groundwork for a relationship that might pay off in the future.

"What we're really trying to do is build a trust between us and the people in the area," Gassmann said.

Soldiers Help Adhamiyah Residents Set Their Neighborhood on the Road to Recovery

By Sgt. Mike Pryor
2nd BCT, 82nd Abn. Div. Public Affairs

BAGHDAD - "How's business?" is the question on the tip of Capt. Albert Marckwardt's tongue as he strolls through the main market of the Iraqi capital's Adhamiyah District.

The answer, though, is evident all around him. Business in Adhamiyah is booming. The formerly run-down market is bustling. Merchandise spills out of the kiosks and stands, and the street is clogged with shoppers. For Marckwardt, who commands a Troop of Soldiers from the 3rd Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment responsible for security in the area, it's an encouraging scene.

"It's like in the U.S. when we started to come out of the depression and everyone's spirits were lifted. We're starting to hit that kind of recovery period here," the Columbia, Md., native said. "It's a night and day difference from when we got here."

New Beginnings

Sgt. Bryan Lundquist, an Explosive Ordnance Disposal team sergeant who has been based in Adhamiyah since February, compared Adhamiyah at its lowest point to the brutal, civil war-era New York City portrayed in the movie "Gangs of New York."

"There was no real authority. It was just the law of the jungle," Lundquist said.

Today, while major stumbling blocks remain, recent improvements in the political and economic situation have given U.S. Soldiers like Marckwardt reason to be hopeful about Adhamiyah's future. The new sense of optimism can be traced back to two major events. The first was the arrival in July of about 500 Soldiers from the 3rd Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment, out of Fort Stewart, Ga., as part of the "surge" of U.S. forces into Baghdad. The 3-7's arrival instantly quadrupled the number of Soldiers operating in Adhamiyah.

The additional combat power has enabled Soldiers to maintain a constant presence on the streets, capitalize quickly on information, and mount precision strikes against key leaders of the insurgency, Marckwardt said. In effect, they can now treat the disease, instead of the symptoms.

"The enemy can't be comfortable like they have been. They can't sleep in the same bed every night. They're on the run," he said.

The other major event was an uprising by Adhamiyah residents against terrorists. On Aug. 5, a group of citizens, fed-up with terrorist activity in their community, stormed the Abu Hanifa Mosque - a well known terrorist sanctuary - and expelled the insurgents, beginning a chain of events that led coalition forces to detain more than 50 suspected terrorists and seize five large weapons caches over the next two days.

"To me, it feels like the community is starting to stand up for itself. They're fed up," said Staff Sgt. Christopher Grimm, of Cabot,



(Photo by Sgt. Mike Pryor, 2nd BCT, 82nd Abn. Div. Public Affairs)

Columbia, Md., native, Capt. Albert Marckwardt, commander of Troop B, 3rd Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment, talks with a shop owner in the main market of Baghdad's Adhamiyah neighborhood during an engagement patrol Aug. 22.

Ark., a squad leader with Troop B.

Marckwardt said all the progress that U.S. forces have been able to achieve in Adhamiyah over the past few months has been due to the new-found resolve of the people.

"Our success here would not be possible if the community didn't want it," Marckwardt said.

The Domino Effect

The idea that Adhamiyah is in a resurgent period is not just wishful thinking. There are a number of concrete indicators of progress. In the past month, entrepreneurs opened a new fuel station, providing residents a steady supply of affordable gasoline; Several banks which had been closed reopened; and a factory making uniforms and other clothes opened and is employing 50 workers, said Kissimmee, Fla., native, Maj. Ike Sallee, the 3-7's operations officer.

"The gas station on its own may not mean much, but then you have the bank that just opened, and then you have the factory, and all these other things, and that momentum starts rolling. It's the domino effect," Sallee said.

On the security side, the numbers also show dramatic improvement. Total attacks - which include small arms, mortars, rocket propelled grenades, and improvised explosive devices - are down by 70 percent since July 20, said squadron intelligence analyst Sgt. Timothy Luna, of North Olmstead, Ohio. Soldiers from the 3-7 have captured 34 suspected terrorists in addition to the 50 detained after the Abu Hanifa raids.

More importantly, the people of Adhamiyah have joined in the effort. More than 700 residents have applied to join the

Critical Infrastructure Guard Force, a security force of local people with the support of the 3-7 protect schools, hospitals, Mosques, and government buildings. More than 60 have completed the guard force training and will soon receive assignments.

The unit has also been trying to build on the sense of communal pride by renovating some of the more blighted areas of the city. The unit has funded projects to remove trash and sewage from the streets, beautify a public square, renovate schools, and more. Such projects "rejuvenate" cities, Marckwardt said.

"You look at cities in the U.S. that are run down, the smallest things can be tipping points in turning them around," he said. "It's about bringing pride back into the city."

Despite all these successes, Marckwardt said, the insurgents aren't beaten yet.

"We've got to stay vigilant. If I was the enemy, I'd be thinking, 'How would I react? What would I do to counter this?'" he said.

The dangers that still lurk in the area were clear during a patrol with Troop A to distribute humanitarian aid rations in a poor part of the city Aug. 22. As the Soldiers were distributing bags of rice and flour, a huge explosion erupted somewhere close by, shaking in the ground. Moments later, the report came in over the radio: IED.

"Mount up," said platoon leader 1st Lt. John Gassmann.

The Soldiers raced off in their humvees, leaving a few lonely bags of rice lying in the street. A few blocks away, another platoon had come within 100 feet of a deadly "deep buried" IED. The bomb had exploded prematurely, leaving a phone booth-sized crater in the road. Gassmann's Soldiers reacted quick-

ly to set up an outer security cordon around the area and began questioning people. The smiles and laughter that had been evident as the Soldiers handed out food bags were gone, replaced by cool professionalism. Gassmann said being able to adapt to changing circumstances was the key to success in Adhamiyah.

"We have to always be ready to switch gears," he said.

Irreversible Momentum

The end goal of all the 3-7's efforts in Adhamiyah is to bring progress up to a level where it can't be undone. Marckwardt calls this point of no return "irreversible momentum," and said it depends on Iraqis taking the lead.

"If we do it all for them, the problems will come right back as soon as we leave," said Roanoke, Va.-native Staff Sgt. William Schilling, of Troop B.

Adhamiyah has gone through a boom-and-bust cycle before, said Cabot, Ark.-native Staff Sgt. Christopher Grimm. Grimm, who was based in the area two years ago and saw months of progress vanish when his unit turned over security to an Iraqi Army unit that wasn't ready for the responsibility. He said he worries about the cycle recurring.

"My biggest fear is history repeating itself," Grimm said.

Leaders from the 3-7 are determined to make sure that doesn't happen. One way is by working with the Iraqi Army to improve their tactical skills and professionalism. The squadron conducts joint patrols with the Iraqi soldiers daily and has begun using embedded Iraqi platoons in some U.S. units. When the Soldiers conduct humanitarian missions for Adhamiyah residents, they make sure the Iraqi soldiers are involved.

The other way is through the Critical Infrastructure Guard Force. In a process not unlike the reconciliation effort that turned around Anbar province, the 3-7 has capitalized on a groundswell of resentment against terrorists by essentially deputizing community members to fight back.

"We've been telling them to stand up, and they've done just that," Marckwardt said.

For the new members of the CIGF, it was an opportunity to take a stand.

"All of the people of Adhamiyah want to join. The terrorists are trying to kill us, kill our families. We want to fight back," said Ahmed Raja Al Assan, one of the first guards to graduate from the CIGF training course. "We have to work together with the U.S. and the IA to bring safety to Adhamiyah."

For Marckwardt, it is that attitude that has him feeling more hopeful than anything else for Adhamiyah's future. Back at the market, he stopped to talk to the owners of a small appliance store. They thanked him for the improvements in security that had turned the market around.

"No, no, thank you," Marckwardt replied. "It's you guys that are doing all this."

15th BTB Support to Al-Anbar Fuel Lifeline

Sgt. 1st Class Nicholas Conner
15th SB, PAO

CAMP TAJI, Iraq -In the darkness, they snake through concrete barriers; U.S. Marines, 7th Division Iraqi Army troops and over a hundred Iraqi civilian fuel trucks bound for western Iraq.

Twice a month, the 15th Brigade Troops Battalion, 15th Sustainment Brigade, provides safe shelter and life support to the Marines and men running a precious commodity to Iraqi civilians in the Multi-National Division-West area of operations.

"This is strictly a volunteer truck stop that we run here," said Maj. David Dinkelman, operations officer for the 15th BTB, 15th SB. "We just have the willingness and the contacts to support."

Taji falls as the halfway point between the large oil refinery in Baiji, to the north, and the Marines from the 7th IA division military training teams in Al-Anbar province. On both legs of the six day round trip, Soldiers from the 15th BTB provide the convoy a secure area for a full day stop; to rest, refit and relax.

"You gotta stop for your drivers and your gunners...they got to have their rest," said Marine Staff Sgt. Robbie Locy, a security vehicle commander with 4th Air/Naval Gunfire Liaison Company.

"Once they start losing their situational awareness, things go down and that's when things start happening," he said.

In addition to providing life support and lodging for the Marines, Dinkelman and his Soldiers coordinate with the Iraqi army 6th Motorized Transportation



(Photos by Sgt. 1st Class Nicholas Conner, 15th SB, PAO)

Marine and 7th IA division security vehicles wait for the sun to set before heading out from Camp Taji. The fuel trucks they escort provide the citizens of Al-Anbar province with over one million liters of fuel a month. The goal of the mission is to restore faith in the Iraqi government and to deny insurgents control of the fuel black market.

Regiment to provide fuel, food, billeting and maintenance for 7th IA division troops.

'Wrangler' mechanics have stepped in to repair convoy vehicles, both military and civilian, in order to keep the fuel lifeline running.

Maj. Dinkelman estimated that

maintenance support on Taji saves three to four fuel trucks per convoy.

For the citizens of Al-Anbar, that equates to an additional 80 thousand liters of diesel and gasoline a month.

"(The fuel run) is designed to reduce the dependency of the civilian population on black market fuel," said Marine Lt. Col. John Bolt, commander of the 7th IA Division MITT.

"The sooner we can get the people to believe that their government is actually supporting them, the sooner the insurgency doesn't have a place to exist in Al-Anbar," he said.

The civilian Iraqi drivers are just as glad to be tucked inside Taji as well.

Through an interpreter, one driver said that at another location on a previous convoy, he and other drivers waited two days without any additional food or water.

With the convoy stretching almost a mile, waiting for the sun to set before heading out again, 15th BTB Soldiers made numerous trips up and down, providing water, ice and food to the Iraqi drivers.

Maj. Dinkelman said he and his troops would continue to support the Marines' mission to supply Al-Anbar province with fuel until his return home.

Camp Taji and the 15th BTB's sustainment mission, he said, mean his Soldiers are equipped and large enough to make it work.

"If we weren't able to stop here, I

believe it's about 18 to 20 hours straight through," said Marine Gunnery Sgt. Monty Clark, 7th IA division MITT.

"It's definitely a nice break to have when you've been driving all that way," he said.



Spc. Jorge Roano, an intelligence analyst with the 15th BTB, 15th SB, hands out an MRE to an Iraqi driver. 'Wrangler' troops provide food, water and ice several times a day to drivers during their stay on Camp Taji. The stop-over affords the convoy an opportunity for rest and refit during the six-day round trip from Al-Anbar to the Baiji oil refinery.



Pfc. Henry Milord, 15th BTB, 15th SB, gets a 'Thank-you' from an Iraqi driver while delivering food and ice. 'Wrangler' troops coordinate food, water and ice deliveries throughout the day to the civilian fuel trucks. The volunteer support allows a break for the convoy to rest and relax during their fuel run from western Iraq to the Baiji oil refinery in the north.

15th PSB Teams Assist Future E-8's

Sgt. 1st Class Nicholas Conner
15th SB, PAO

CAMP TAJI, Iraq - As senior non commissioned officers prepare for the next Department of the Army promotion board, a group of experts stand ready to help navigate the maze of paperwork.

Forward assistance support teams from the 15th Personnel Services Battalion, 15th Sustainment Brigade, allow eligible sergeants first class greater access to human resource professionals prior to this October's master sergeant board.

"We function as a mini PSB for a brigade," said Sgt. Ruel Pacba, a human resources NCO attached to the 15th SB. "We provide support a brigade normally would not have."

Brigade FAS teams' serve as a testing period before a personnel services delivery redesign occurs in early 2008; migrating the core of human resource support from the division level down to the brigade.

"FAS Team Soldiers are very special to (the brigade's personnel section)," said



(Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Nicholas Conner, 15th SB, PAO)

Sgt. Danny Edwards (left), a company armorer with the 15th Brigade Troops Battalion, 15th Sustainment Brigade, goes over his ERB with Sgt. Keidy Crumpton (right), a human resources NCO with the 15th SB personnel office.

WO2 Francisco Alonzo, 15th SB human resources technician. "They already have training and can specialize in specific per-

sonnel areas. They're a great asset to the organization."

Attached to the 'Wagonmasters',

Pacba and his team mates update enlisted record briefs, upload documents and data to official military personnel files and ensure NCOs put their promotion packets together properly.

Key ERB areas for Soldiers to focus on include deployment time, education and awards, said Pacba.

Troops need to ensure that information contained on ERB's, OMPF's and official military photos matches.

If there are discrepancies, FAS Team's correct data and upload documentation on the spot. Even in an austere environment, copies of awards and evaluation reports can show up on a service member's electronic record within 48 to 72 hours.

However, Pacba recommends that NCOs' do not wait until the last minute to update their records. According to MILPER message 07-155, Human Resources Command-Indianapolis must receive OMPF updates by Sep. 14.

All eligible, active duty NCOs have until Oct. 1 to review and validate their ERB online at WWW.HRC.ARMY.MIL.



(Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Nicholas Conner, 15th SB, PAO)

'Wagonmasters' Host Top Army Logisticians

(From left to right) Gen. Benjamin Griffin, commander, U.S. Army Material Command, Maj. Gen. Robert Radin, commanding general, Sustainment Command, Brig. Gen. Robert Brown, Soldier System Center commander, and Col. Aundre Piggee, 15th Sustainment Brigade commander, walk toward a combat logistic patrol rehearsal briefing during an Aug. 22 visit to Camp Taji. The generals met with Soldiers and leaders to discuss support issues and address concerns from a logistical standpoint.

Bond of Breedens

Brothers Meet After Six Years of Separation

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

CAMP TAJI, Iraq - Two deployed brothers -- Staff Sgt. Eric Breeden, a weapons squad leader from Company A, 1st Battalion, 38th Infantry Regiment, 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division and Sgt. Charlie Breeden, a medic for the 1st Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment, 1st "Ironhorse" Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, have two very busy military careers that have taken them all over the world.

But thanks to various deployments and overseas assignments, the siblings have been unable to see each other face to face for more than six years. That is--until now.

Ironically enough, they said, it would take a deployment to Iraq and Charlie's promotion ceremony from corporal to sergeant here Sept. 1 to bring them back together.

"It's kind of hard that it has to be during a time of war, but this is really great and it's good just to have his ugly mug down here," said Charlie, a Portland, Ore. native, with a laugh.

"You know, it's not happening under the best of circumstances, but we're happy to be here together," Eric, who claims Salem, Ore. as home, chimed in. "It wasn't too hard being apart though, over the years we stayed in touch with phone calls and emails."

It was a reunion that Charlie said he wasn't sure would actually take place.

Charlie knew his brother was in Iraq and knew what Eric's unit was, but was unable to find him because Eric's working email address had recently changed.

But Charlie was driven to find his brother.

"Like the big brother that he is, he kept pushing me to get promoted, so it was really important for him to be here, and I thought it would be the perfect opportunity for us to see each other," said Charlie. "I had to find him."

Charlie and his wife, Colleen, sent emails to the 1st BCT, 1st Cav. Div. which contacted the 4th SBCT, 2nd ID Public Affairs Office on Taji to help arrange the reunion. The 4th SBCT PAO located Eric, communicating with his chain of command and scheduled a flight for him.

Eric who is based out of Camp Warhorse, which is not far from Camp Taji, had just gotten off a long patrol when he received a special message just a few days prior to his brother's promotion ceremony.

"I was asleep and there was a knock on my door," Eric said. "My first sergeant told me you're going down to Taji to promote your brother. Although I was really tired, it felt really good to get the news."

"I knew he was supposed to be getting promoted sometime, but I didn't know exactly when," he added.

Landing on Camp Taji the night prior to Charlie's promotion, Eric met Charlie at the camp's passenger terminal. The two hugged and then, Charlie had a surprise for his brother.

"My roommate was at one of our out-



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

Salem, Ore. native Staff Sgt. Eric Breeden (left), a weapons squad leader for Company A, 1st Battalion, 38th Infantry Regiment, 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, and Portland native Cpl. Charlie Breeden, a medic for the 1st Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, share a laugh during Charlie's promotion ceremony to sergeant at Camp Taji, Iraq Sept. 1. The brothers were reunited at the base camp north of Baghdad at the promotion ceremony after not seeing each other for more than six years.

posts, so I let Eric stay in my trailer," said Charlie. "We haven't shared a room in nearly 20 years."

"I thought I was going to be staying in a tent," said Eric. "So this was much better than where I thought I would be staying."

Charlie said they were both in for a long night.

"We may not get much sleep," said Charlie laughing and reminiscing about all the times as children when they kept each other up at night hitting each other with tennis balls or throwing toys at each other.

"You better not try anything funny," said Eric feigning a warning.

During Charlie's promotion ceremony, Eric enplaced Charlie's new rank on his uniform.

"It's about time," said Eric, who is four years older than Charlie, with a grin.

"He was always the one asking me promotion board questions online, coaching me," said the 34-year-old Charlie, explaining that his brother was always like his protector and guardian in a way. "He would yell at me if I was short on promotion points, so I had to earn more to eventually get promoted."

Both of the brothers who are married and have children took the time together as an opportunity to catch up on news about

their families.

"He has his bunch and I have mine," said Charlie, who has two sons. "He hasn't seen my boys much, so it's a chance for us to reconnect and give updates on the families."

"It's a good time to see how we're doing and how things are going at home," Eric injected, adding that he has three sons of his own.

Although they said they were ecstatic about seeing each other, their families back in the states were also excited about the reunion.

"My wife is really stoked about this," said Charlie.

"If our families couldn't be here for this, they're at least happy for us that we could be here and share in this moment together," Eric said.

The brothers said their family has the same wish that many families have for their loved ones who are deployed to Iraq.

"Our family supports us while we're here and they support the troops in Iraq, but they would much rather have us and all the other Soldiers come back home," said Eric.

The families back home are already busy making plans for when the brothers do get back.

"I talked to my wife and grandma and

they'll be hooking me up with a big family reunion when I get home," said Charlie, who returns to Fort Hood sometime in early 2008.

"Don't worry, I'll rope you into one, too," he said to Eric, who returns in mid-summer 2008. "I know how much you like big crowds."

Although, their reunion on Taji was short the two brothers said they wouldn't have traded the time they spent together for anything in the world.

"It was awesome," said Eric.

"I'm glad that 4-2 let me come down here, it makes me feel good to know that they would go to all the trouble to do this for me. It was also a great honor to come down here and see how the guys in Charlie's unit and the 1st Cavalry Division are working," he said.

"It was a pleasure to have him down here, at least for a day, and we took the little time we had here and made the best out of it," Charlie added.

Next year, the brothers and their families will have many more opportunities to see each other as Charlie will be taking an assignment to Fort Lewis, Wash. where Eric is currently stationed.

First Team Honors Wounded Troopers

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

FORT HOOD, Texas -- The 1st Cavalry Division honored more than 20 wounded Soldiers and nearly 30 volunteers during the division's monthly Purple Heart and Volunteer of the Month recognition ceremony at the Catering



Col. Curtis Potts pins the Purple Heart medal on Sgt. 1st Class Michael White during the 1st Cavalry Division's monthly Purple Heart and Volunteer of the Month recognition ceremony Aug. 28 at Fort Hood's Catering and Conference Center.

and Conference Center here Aug. 28.

"Today we recognize the selfless sacrifice of our brave troopers," said Col. Larry Phelps, the commander of the 1st Cavalry Division's rear detachment.

The ceremony also honored three Soldiers from the 1st Infantry Division and the 2nd Infantry Division. Elements of both units are a part of Multi-National Division - Baghdad.

"Our country is always dependent upon the bravest among us to answer the call of duty," said Col. Curtis Potts, who presented the Purple Heart medal to each of the wounded troopers.

Potts said that the Purple Heart, which is the nation's oldest award, is a special award, because the recipient does not need to be recommended for it.

"This award that these gentlemen wear does not have to be recommended by me, their commanding officer, by anybody, it is individually earned," Potts said.

He also explained that even though the Purple Heart medal is earned, it is the one award that no Soldier tries to earn.

"You've taken your place among the men and women that have suffered the most to protect our nation," Potts said to the recipients during his speech.

Spc. Brian Bickerton, one of the Purple Heart recipients from 1st Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, said that the Soldiers who really deserve it are the ones who are not coming home alive.

"I really don't consider myself a hero, the ones who are actually heroes are the ones who aren't here with us today," Bickerton said. "Those are the real heroes."

Bickerton, a 27-year-old Iowa native, was wounded in early June during a patrol. He explained that some Iraqi Army soldiers and police in the area had come under fire and members of his unit had gone to their aid.

During the firefight, Bickerton was shot in his left hip. He was transported back to Forward Operating Base Warhorse, then to Germany, and eventually brought back to Fort Hood.

Bickerton, who has two children and four stepchildren,



(Photos by Sgt. Robert Strain, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)

Sgt. 1st Class William Amundson, with the 1st Cavalry Division's 1st Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, receives his Purple Heart medal from Col. Curtis Potts, the commander of the Operational Test Command, at the Fort Hood Catering and Conference Center Aug. 28.

said that when he got home the kids didn't understand right away that things weren't the same.

He said he walked in the front door and the kids said, "Oh, Daddy's home - let's play!"

Unfortunately, his cane has made it difficult to play with the kids, he said. Bickerton said that adjusting to the cane was very difficult, since he is right-handed, and must also use the cane with his right hand.

According to the doctors, Bickerton should be fully recovered between nine months and a year from now, but he said he feels he is healing faster than expected.

1st Cavalry Teens Enjoy Trip to SeaWorld

By Sgt. Robert Strain
1st Cavalry Division Public Affairs

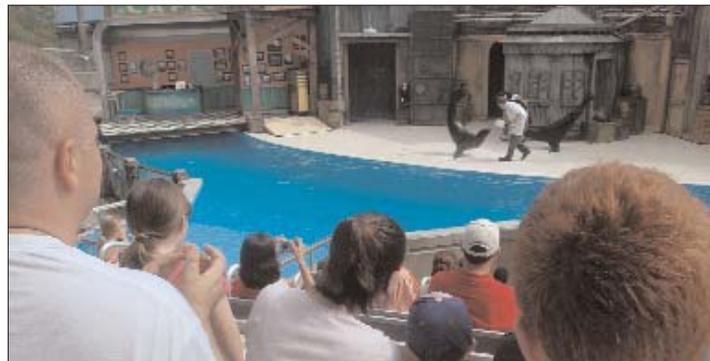
SAN ANTONIO - About 100 teens from the 1st Cavalry Division's Teen Family Readiness Group enjoyed one of the last days before school starts at SeaWorld Adventure Park here Aug. 23.

The trip was a part of the division's expanding FRG, which aims to include more than just spouses, with programs for teens, tweens, and younger kids.

For the teens, it was an opportunity to experience all that the park had to offer - the rides, the shows and the chance to be with others their own age.

"Holding FRG events for our younger Family members allows them a chance to interact with someone close to their age and circumstance," said Carol Livengood, the division's family readiness support assistant. "This is one way that our rear command can help relieve stress and give the kids a method to interact with others who understand what they are going through."

This is the fourth Teen FRG event, Livengood said. The others included a baseball game, a rodeo and a skating



(Photo by Sgt. Robert Strain, 1st Cav. Div. Public Affairs)

Maj. Shane Curtis (left), a chaperone for the 1st Cavalry Division's Teen Family Readiness Group trip to SeaWorld Adventure Park in San Antonio, and 12-year-old Hunter O'Rourke watch a comedy show involving two sea lions, an otter and a walrus Aug. 23 at the park's Sea Lion Theater.

party. For some of the teens, this trip was their first FRG event, but many others had been to at least one of the other events before.

Thirteen-year-old Taylor Strickland had only been to one other teen event, the baseball game in Round Rock, but said he was

day, it'd be The Great White," Strickland said.

But not everyone was there for the rides, 12-year-old Hunter O'Rourke said although he enjoyed the rides, his favorite part of the day was the Viva! show because there was a lot of different things going on at the same time.

The Viva! show featured high divers and synchronized swimmers swimming along side dolphins and whales.

The weather didn't appear to be cooperating, as rain sprinkled down as the buses pulled into the SeaWorld parking lot. The skies cleared up quickly, but not before scaring a lot of the crowds away and leaving the park mostly free of lines.

"It was awesome, we got to go straight to the rides," Strickland said.

Beside the opportunities at the park, several military family life consultants came along to be available for the teens to talk to about any issues or stress they may be having in their lives, Livengood said.

The division's next event for younger family members is the baseball game for tweens, those kids who are between 9 and 12 years old, Sept. 2 in Round Rock.

excited about coming on this trip.

For him, the highlight of the trip was riding The Great White, a roller coaster on which the rider's feet hang free and the track is overhead, because it went upside down several times.

"If I could choose to ride one ride all

Unwanted Accolades

Investigator Earns Two "Worst" Awards

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

CAMP TAJI, Iraq - He was discussing how the Purple Heart and the Combat Action Badge were the worst awards to ever receive when, in the blink of an eye, he earned them himself.

Niceville, Fla., native, Warrant Officer Thomas Fogger, a special agent for the 86th Military Police Detachment (Criminal Investigation Command), 22nd MP Battalion (CID), was recently awarded the Purple Heart and the Combat Action Badge in a ceremony Aug 20.

"Ironically, about 15 minutes before this incident happened, we were just talking about ... the two awards you didn't want to earn in theater and these were the two of them," Fogger said to those in attendance at the ceremony.

Fogger was returning to the scene of an investigation with his security detachment from Company D, 2nd Battalion, 12th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, to finish up some last-minute details when two anti-tank grenades were thrown at his vehicle, he said.

The blast, which was recorded on the front passenger's digital camera, rocked the up-armored humvee and slammed Fogger's head against his door, said the special agent.

"I was out for about three to five seconds and when I woke up, I was asking if that was us who got hit," said Fogger.

Indeed it was his vehicle that got hit. One grenade landed to the front of his vehicle while the other landed to the rear.

After the initial concussion, the gunners from the rooftop of a nearby building and started firing at him, said Fogger.

The quick reaction of those in the attack was not an accident or a coincidence, said Washington Court House, Ohio, native Col. Rhonda Howard, the commander of the 22nd MP Battalion (CID).

"That's what the training's all about, to have it more muscle memory so that you do it out of habit," she said. Howard, who was visiting Camp Taji to present Fogger his awards, was extremely satisfied with how all Soldiers involved in the incident reacted.

"The unit that (the special agents) were going with provided outstanding protection," she said.

Still, what was unusual about the events that followed was the fact that while Fogger had to stay behind with the convoy of vehicles due to his injury, Sgt. Durwin Worley of McCreary County, Ky., another special agent in a humvee ahead of him, got out and participated in the search for the insurgent, said Howard.

Special agents will normally work in two-man teams and blend in with the unit that is providing security for their particu-



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

Niceville, Fla., native Warrant Officer Thomas Fogger, a special agent for the 86th Military Police Detachment (Criminal Investigation Command), 22nd MP Battalion (CID), talks to those in attendance for his awards ceremony, Aug. 20, at Camp Taji, Iraq. Fogger received his awards for injuries he sustained while in combat when his vehicle was attacked with anti-tank grenades.

lar job. That way they don't stand out any more than the Soldier next to them, Fogger said.

Worley, who normally is dependent on the ground unit to provide security for him, was now going building to building initiating clearing procedures, said Howard.

"It's always Soldier first. It really doesn't matter what your (military occupational specialty) is, you're always a Soldier first," she said.

"Even as a CID Soldier, (Worley) has to be able to shoot, move and communicate," she said.

After searching two buildings, Worley and 2-12th found 36 Molotov cocktails, a makeshift grenade using flammable liquid in a glass bottle with a cloth as fuse, and two bags of explosive powder, said Fogger.

Once the search was complete and no insurgent found, the Soldiers quickly regrouped and headed back to their original destination to finish the investigation, Fogger said.

The special agents and infantry Soldiers completed the mission regardless of the prior attack, which in turn kept other Soldiers from putting their

lives on the line to complete the unfinished investigation another day, he said.

Howard was proud to be pinning the Purple Heart and the CAB on the living, recuperated Fogger, she said.

"It's a privilege for me to be here with (Fogger) and the mighty Taji CID office. It's not every day that you can present a Purple Heart and a Combat Action Badge - so it's great to do that," said Howard.

The ever careful Fogger, a husband and father of six children, has a slightly different outlook on life here in Iraq after that experience, he said.

"It really changes one's perspective of life and how easily one could lose it. It's important not to forget that," he said.

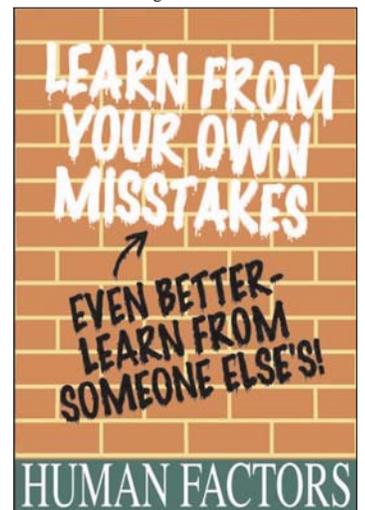
Fogger is back at work now and carrying on despite the near miss, but he'll always have the video and his memories to remind him of the day he nearly laid down his life for his country.

Luckily, he came out of the attack with two awards he never wanted to earn and, more importantly, his life as well.

"Out here, y'all are my family and I was glad I was able to come back and see you," he said to his Soldiers shortly

after donning the Purple Heart and CAB.

Fogger is the only current active duty CID agent with a Purple Heart, according to the United States Army Criminal Investigation Command.



Women Soldiers Speak Up for Equality

By Sgt. Nicole Kojetin
1st Cavalry Division Public Affairs

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq - Being an educator, housekeeper, wife and mother are all typical roles for a woman, in addition to her career. Taking on these responsibilities to take care of their families is automatic, making them the caretaker for their families. Still, they were once called the "weaker sex" and were restricted from fundamental rights.

"American women are shaping the nation and the world by serving in every walk of life," said Lt. Col. Vivian Reed, a training officer with Multi-National Division - Baghdad who served as the keynote speaker at a program here celebrating Women's Equality Day Aug. 25. "Women are in positions of responsibility and authority in almost every level of the government. It is hard to imagine for almost a century and a half women were barred from exercising the most fundamental right of ours - democracy."

Until 1920, women were not allowed to vote. Gaining that right was a great step on the road to equality, and MND-B's equal opportunity representatives honored this achievement at the Camp Liberty Chapel in western Baghdad with an hour-long program.

The event opened with role-playing suffragettes marching down the aisle with picket signs demanding the right to vote. These mock protesters, wearing bright purple sashes, held a tea party talking about the sacrifices they had to make in order for changes to be made. The tea party was followed by a skit of congressmen refuting the amendment.

The actors may have cracked jokes about how women dress these days or how women need to stay in the kitchen, but the goal was to educate the audience of the dis-



(Photos by Sgt. Nicole Kojetin, 1st Cavalry Division Public Affairs)

Lt. Col. Vivian Reed (right) cuts a ceremonial cake with the help of Warrant Officer Stacey McNish, during a Women's Equality Day celebration at the Camp Liberty Chapel in western Baghdad Aug. 25. Reed, from Fayetteville, N.C., was the keynote speaker at the event and works as an operations officer at the Multi-National Division - Baghdad headquarters. McNish, from Trelawny, Jamaica, is the first of two women ever to serve in her military occupation specialty as a metal worker and is currently serving with the 115th Brigade Support Battalion at Camp Taji, Iraq.

crimination that women faced.

Reed, who hails from Fayetteville, N.C., said she is no stranger to that sort of sexism. As a second lieutenant, she was one of the first 100 women in the 82nd Airborne Division.

"There were only five officers and

there were 95 enlisted women," she remembered. Instead of being welcomed into the ranks, being the "fairer sex" made things more than difficult.

"We got cat calls walking through the building where we worked," she said. "At (physical training), they would try to challenge us. They would run, run, run to try to make us fall out. They just didn't want us there. They said, 'Women go home,' and down there with all the infantry... we stayed there. It was challenging, but we stayed there and set the standard. Now there are women all over the 82nd."

All that running prepared her for her second career as a track coach and an assistant principle in the Cumberland County School System. It probably helped her in chasing after her children. Jonathan, 23, is a senior in college, and Alana, 10, is a fifth grader.

But she didn't run from the military. After 13 years of active duty she joined the Army Reserve and is currently the only female in her detachment of 22 Soldiers from the 642nd Regional Support Command.

Reed said that there will always be hardships on the road to equality, but she encouraged young female Soldiers to never give up.

"They are going to reach stumbling blocks, but they have to work through that," she said. "There are always things put in our paths but you have to work through

those, learn from those and keep getting stronger."

Those tactics have worked for generations and have paved the way for those who came after.

"Women are in every activity and profession inside and outside the home - as astronauts, as professional athletes, as teachers, administrators, university presidents, bombers, fire fighters, care givers, cabinet members and Supreme Court justices," Reed said. "Women have made lasting contributions to the quality of our lives and our democracy."

One such trailblazer is Warrant Officer Stacey McNish, from Trelawny, Jamaica. McNish is the first of two women ever to serve in her military occupation specialty as a metal worker and is currently working with the 115th Brigade Support Battalion at Camp Taji, north of the Iraqi capital.

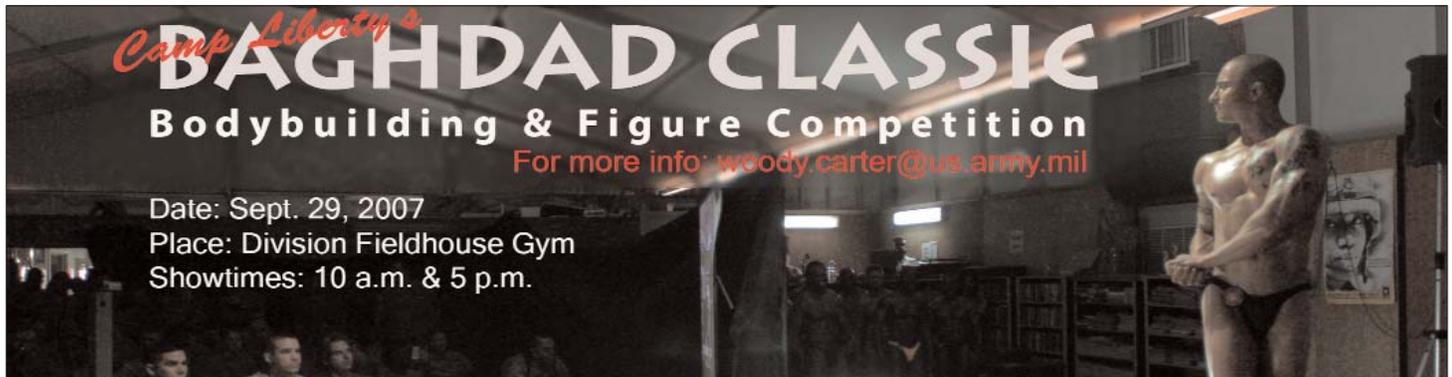
McNish helped Reed cut the ceremonial cake at the end of the event.

Reed thought the event was a success and hoped that the audience understood the significance of women's equality.

"If we can reach just one person, it makes a difference," she said. "As for the men, it reminds them where we are today...that we do have a vote, we do have a say and we are going to go after the jobs that they are in. Not because we want to take their jobs, but we want equal rights to those jobs."



Staff Sgt. Susan Ness, listens to Sgt. Tamika Vaughn, talk about a man grabbing her arm telling her that she doesn't deserve the same rights as him during a skit as part of Women's Equality Day celebration in the Camp Liberty Chapel in western Baghdad Aug. 25. Ness, the senior paralegal from the Military Justice and Camp Liberty Legal Center, and Vaughn, an automated logistical specialist with Headquarters Support Company, Division Special Troops Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division, were in a tea party skit depicting several historical figures in women's suffrage.



Baghdad to Buff up with Body Building

By Spc. Jeffrey Ledesma
1st Cavalry Division Public Affairs

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq - The soaring temperature of the Iraqi capital isn't the only factor causing Soldiers to pour buckets of sweat. Inside gyms troops are pushing their muscles to the max in anticipation of an upcoming bodybuilding and figure championship, the Baghdad Classic, scheduled for Sept. 29 here at the field house gym.

The number of competitors already signed up to partake in the event is about 30 percent higher than the previous championship, said the event organizer, 1st Sgt. Woody Carter of the 57th Signal Company, currently attached to the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division. He added that he expects even more Soldiers to sign up as the competition draws near.

Carter said this event helps Soldiers take their minds off of the daily business at hand and provides them with something enjoyable they will remember. The Pensacola, Fla., native added

that if the Soldiers decide to take up an interest in natural bodybuilding that would be a plus for him.

"The overall goal of bodybuilding is to build self-confidence and maintain a healthy lifestyle," said Carter, a competitive bodybuilder for the past five years. "For individuals who have never tried competitive bodybuilding, it takes a lot of commitment and an overwhelming amount of courage to get up on the stage."

"(But) when you step out on to that stage, and you hear the crowd cheering you on, when you hit every pose or when you are just standing there, that is when you know it was worth all the time, effort, sweat, and energy," Carter said. "They reward themselves by overcoming their fears and gain an enormous amount of self-confidence and after the show they realize that it was not so difficult."

In addition to the rewards they receive, Carter added that after the show competitors are flooded with compliments which solidify their self-confidence.

However, that sense of accomplishment on center stage

doesn't come without the endless hours of hard work at the gym.

For those with little or no experience, Carter holds weekly training sessions designed to give beginners tips and advice for training and preparing for a show every Tuesday from 5 to 6 p.m. at the division gym.

"I train them on everything that you would expect from doing a show in the states," Carter said. "No other show will take the time to train up competitors."

"I teach, coach, and mentor anyone who is interested in doing the show."

And for Soldiers teetering on the fence on whether to take on this physical task, Carter challenged that they should just do it; but do it for themselves and no one else.

"You have to set a timeline and a goal to show some accomplishment for what you work so hard for. Going to the gym and working out all the time is like going to football practice," he said. "It's all training and you never really know how good you are until you get in the game."

Predictable Thriller Aimed at Teenage Audience

Since the days of Shakespeare ruling the art of storytelling, and even centuries before him, there have been great original stories told.

Then years later, the same stories have been told again.

Whether it's a new character in a different situation, the stories have generally been the same.

I think one of the greatest examples of a story being told and retold over again is the tragedy of "Romeo and Juliet."

How many times has this story been revised and slapped with a new title? Does "West Side Story" ring a bell?

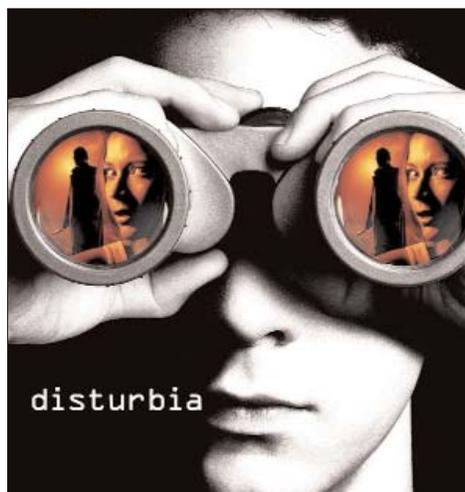
Every year it seems that new movies come out that have similarities to ones made 10 years before. Sometimes they just remake a movie simply to remake it. You'll have the same story and title, just a new face.

I watched a movie recently that, from beginning to end, shared similarity to probably about 10 other movies I've seen throughout my life.

Although the movie lacked in being genuine, it made up by being considerably entertaining. The movie was "Disturbia" starring Shia LaBeouf and Carrie Ann-Moss.

This thriller flick is about Kale (LaBeouf), a troubled teen who is punished with house arrest after attacking his teacher. As school ends and Kale is stuck at home for the summer, he finds entertaining himself to be difficult as he is restricted to his half-acre lot.

After his mother (Moss), cuts off his video game intake and cable television, Kale begins to find enjoyment while watching what his crazy neighbors do throughout the day. The windows of his home become



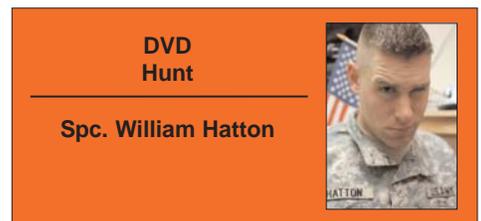
(Courtesy Photo)

Shia LaBeouf in the "Disturbia" movie poster

his own reality television show.

As the voyeuristic adventure of peeping on his neighbors grows, Kale starts to suspect his neighbor is a killer wanted by the police. Kale starts to become obsessed with proving to his friends and mother that the neighbor is the killer. As his quest to prove the neighbor is not who he seems to be, danger ensues and the thrill begins.

I'll admit that one of the reasons I watched this



movie to begin with was because LaBeouf was in it. I have to admit that I've been a fan of his, even when he was kicking it on The Disney Channel.

He has grown to be a very entertaining performer, and he did a fine job in this role from beginning to end.

Although I liked the main actor in this film, like I said at the beginning, this movie was nothing new. Sure, there were elements of something different here and there.

For the most part, this movie shared a basic thriller cookie-cutter outline as so many others. That's not to say it wasn't entertaining, in fact, it was quite entertaining.

I really feel that this movie was made for the high school generation. I'm sure people were saying the same thing about "Scream" when it was made. Movie studios have been making thriller flicks aimed at teenagers for years.

If you're bored and looking to get your blood flowing with a decent thriller, then I recommend this movie. All and all, it was a pretty enjoyable flick. I give it 3-and-a-half out of 5 Golden Spurs.



(Photo by Spc. Ryan Stroud, 3rd BCT, 1st Cav. Divi. Public Affairs)

Make it Count!

A Soldier screams as he attempts to lift over 400 lbs. during the squat competition at Salie Gym, Forward Operating Base Warhorse, outside of Baqouba, Iraq, Aug. 18.

Talent a Must to Win in the NFL; a Little Luck Helps, Too

Just 11 seconds into the 2007 National Football League's opening night, a collective gasp could be heard from fans of the reigning champion Indianapolis Colts (and selected fantasy football owners) worldwide as their starting running back, Joseph Addai, left the field with an injury after hauling in an outlet pass from Peyton Manning and getting smacked to the turf at Indy's RCA Dome.

The Colts went three and out in their first series, but though the visiting New Orleans Saints picked up some first downs and drove into Colt territory, the drive ended with their new kicker, Dolphin cast-off Olindo Mare, missing a 52-yard field goal attempt - wide left.

Addai was only shaken up and returned to the huddle for the next Colt series, a short field thanks to the missed field goal. The pre-game show touted this contest as an offensive onslaught by both teams, but only Indianapolis could find the end zone in the first quarter, with Manning hitting Marvin Harrison with a 27-yard score with a little less than two minutes to go in the quarter.

The NFL season is underway, sports fans. Nearly every publication has made their predictions for the coming season, and we've been remiss not to weigh in on this trend sooner. So, here goes:

AFC East

A come-from-behind victory by the Colts denied the New England Patriots an AFC title last year. Last year's leading receiver, Reche Caldwell, got cut (mercifully) and the new receiving triumvirate of Randy Moss, Donte Stallworth and Wes

Trigger Pull

Master Sgt. Dave Larsen



Welker is a decided upgrade for Tom Brady. The Pats are the cream of the crop in this division. The New York Jets are a distant second, followed by the Buffalo Bills and the Miami Dolphins.

AFC North

The Baltimore Ravens can still play defense. Steve McNair proved last season he still has something left in the tank. They won the division last year. But they'll come in second to the resurgent Pittsburgh Steelers this season. Cincinnati led the league in arrests last year and finished 8-8 with a great offense and an erratic defense. They're still a third place team. The Cleveland Browns (again) bring up the rear, with Romeo Crennel getting a pink slip by season's end.

AFC South

The Colts won it all last year. They'll take the division again this year, too. The Jacksonville Jaguars canned quarterback Byron Leftwich, but David Garrard isn't much better. They are good enough to be a wildcard team, though, thanks to the running game and defense. The Tennessee Titans will play some exciting football, thanks to Vince Young, but they are an 8-8

team, at best. The Houston Texas will, again, bring up the rear here.

AFC West

Always competitive, this division has turned into the have's and have not's. The San Diego Chargers have Ladainian Tomlinson. The rest of the division doesn't, and the Oakland Raiders still don't have their first round draft pick signed (at the time of this writing). The Chargers run away with this division; the Denver Broncos come in a distant second; the Kansas City Chiefs take third; and the Raiders? Well, better luck next year in the draft when they draft first again.

NFC East

Dallas is the cream of the crop in this division. The Philadelphia Eagles will regret cutting the heart and soul of their defense, Jeremiah Trotter, who signed with Tampa Bay. The Eagles will still take second. The Washington Redskins will improve, but not enough, and the New York Giants will free-fall to the cellar of the division ending the Tom Coughlin era.

NFC North

'Da Bears' are still 'da best' in 'dis division. (Oh, how can a Cheesehead put those words on the page!?) I hate Chicago. But they will still win the division, despite "Wrecks" Grossman. Brett Favre and the Green Bay Packers will knock on the post season door, and they may make it in. The Detroit Lions and the Minnesota Vikings will battle it out for cellar dweller status here.

NFC South

The New Orleans Saints could be head-

ed to the Super Bowl this year. They are way ahead of everyone in this once proud division.

The Carolina Panthers are probably an 8-8 team, but the only thing keeping the Tampa Bay Buccaneers out of the cellar is the fact that the Atlanta Falcons will probably end up with the worst record in the conference. Every dog has his day, Mike.

NFC West

The Seattle Seahawks are getting old. Last year, they got banged up. This year they give up the division title to - drum roll, please - the San Francisco 49ers!

Frank Gore is a premiere running back, the defense is tough and Alex Smith is serviceable at quarterback. The St. Louis Rams will take second and vie for a wildcard berth, while the Seahawks finish out of the money along with perennial last place finisher, the Arizona Cardinals.

That's it, sports fans! Every division winner picked. We'll see how it plays out. The best thing about the NFL is that by season's end there are always surprise teams to make the so-called 'experts' look silly.

It takes talent to win (by the way, the Colts ran away with the season opener, 41-10), but it also takes luck. Most of the great teams are one injury away from falling from the playoff picture. If they can keep their stars on the field, your team has a shot, unless your team is the Oakland Raiders, of course.

Are you ready for some football? I am. Go Packers!