

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE 1ST BRIGADE COMBAT TEAM

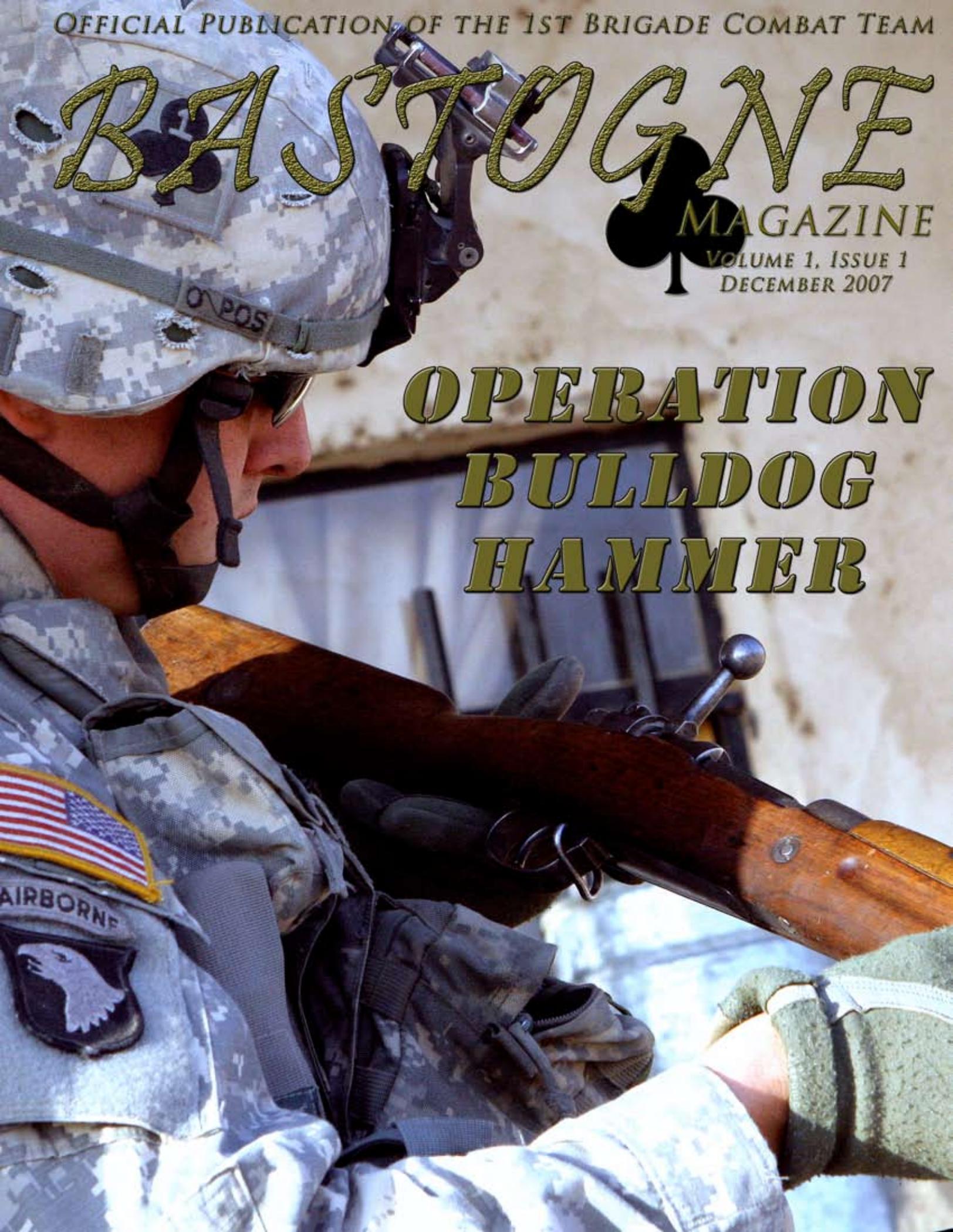
BASTOGNE

MAGAZINE

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OPERATION BULLDOG HAMMER



Bastogne and Iraqi Soldiers wait for exfiltration from Al Muslakah while an OH-58D Kiowa Warrior provides security near the Hamrin Mountains.

**--HAMMER DOWN--
PAGE 8**



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MAGAZINE

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BULLDOG SOLDIERS HAMMER DOWN ON INSURGENT ACTIVITY IN THE BAYJI AREA DURING TWO-WEEK OPERATION.



New Bastogne vets don 'Old Abe' patch



*By Maj. Johnpaul Arnold
Bastogne PAO*

Veteran's Day in Iraq 2007 ushered in right-shoulder combat patches for the Bastogne Soldiers of the 426th Brigade Support Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault). November 11, the "Task Master" Battalion held a combat patch ceremony to honor its Soldiers' sacrifice and duty to their country.

The 426th BSB Commander Lt. Col. Greg Anderson, spoke to the newly inducted combat soldiers saying, "All of you have joined the Army or re-enlisted to stay in the Army knowing full well you would deploy and serve in combat. You are part of less than one-tenth of one percent of Americans who have made that commitment, and for that I thank you."

After completing his Veteran's Day comments, Lt. Col. Anderson and Command Sgt. Major Lester Stephens, placed a combat patch on the battalion colors bearer, battalion staff, company

commanders, and first sergeants.

Commanders and first sergeants then placed the Screaming Eagle patch on their Soldiers' right shoulders.

Private 1st Class Victoria Young, a 19-year old signal support systems specialist from Naples, Fla., serves with Company

B and shares a new connection with her grandfather: "I am very proud because I am with the 101st which is really great, and my grandpa was with the 82nd." Young said she felt extremely special because not many people get to experience such service to their country.

Another new veteran, Pfc. Jamie Chestnut of Company C, sees this

morning's ceremony as a significant milestone. Chestnut, a Health Care Specialist and native of Austin, Texas, said of her service to the nation: "It feels like a giant step for me, like I have accomplished something that a lot of people will never be able to say that they have done," she said. "It feels really good and it's an honor."



Private 1st Class Victoria Young receives her 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) combat patch during the 426th Brigade Support Battalion's Combat Patch Ceremony Veteran's Day, November 11, 2007 at Contingency Operating Base Speicher, Iraq. (Photo by Maj. JP Arnold/Bastogne PAO)





TAMING SINIYAH

Story and photos by Spc. Rick Rzepka
Bastogne PAO

During a routine dismounted patrol to deliver school supplies, Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), along with Iraqi Police men come under fire from insurgents in the restive city of Siniyah in the Salah ad Din Province, Iraq. The Bastogne Soldiers provided overwatch security while the Iraqi Police rounded up nine suspects and confiscated one AK-47 Assault Rifle and several counterfeit Iraqi Army uniforms.

It's a scene reminiscent of an old Spaghetti Western. The good guys, donning their white, 10-gallon hats, mosey down a dusty street, promising justice to the weak and punishment to the wicked, but instead of cowboy hats, the good wear helmets made of Kevlar and the bad, well, they still wear black.

Set against the backdrop of a mountain range in northern Iraq lies the restive town of Siniyah, a predominately Sunni community in the Salah Ad-Din province, which historically has been a trouble spot for both Iraqis and Coalition Forces. Near the middle of town lies the Alamo, or as the Iraqi Policemen call it, the qul'a or fortress. Out of this fortress laden with wire and concrete barriers, two groups of gunslingers work side by side to rid the town of bandits and rustlers, thieves and killers.

The Alamo is called the Joint Security Station here, and it is manned by Soldiers from Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division and Iraqi Policemen. Together they train, conduct joint-patrols and interact with the local citizenry in an effort to purge Siniyah of its villains.

The storied "Above the Rest" battalion of the "Screaming Eagles" recently took over operations in the diverse area north of Tikrit, replacing a battalion from the 82nd Airborne Division. "It's a big area of operations with a lot of differences," said 1st Lt. Mark Herlick, Bravo Company executive officer. Herlick's "Bushmaster" company is assigned to the security station in Siniyah and recently had a chance to meet with some of the town's leaders in a city council meeting.

Along with the town's police-chief, several of Siniyah's sheiks met with "Above the Rest" commander Lt. Col. Peter Wilhelm and Bravo Company leaders, to ease the transition between units and to address some of the town's issues.

"Trouble comes to the city out of nowhere, but the IPs are very good," said a local Sheik. "They have established a relationship with the citizens here and are doing a great job," said the Sheik who acknowledged that only a small percentage of locals cause problems.

"The Iraqi people want what we want," said Herlick. "To live in a safe environment where their kids can go to school and they feel safe, without having to worry about getting shot or hitting a random improvised explosive device."

In the past, Siniyah's police were ineffective and hesitant to take on the insurgents here because of their ties to the local community. Insurgents would often threaten violence against policemen's families and use extortion to assure their safety.

"The problem was having IPs who are from Siniyah," said Herlick. "Even though they want to do good things, the terrorists would threaten them and their family so they were stuck between a rock and a hard place."

So with the backing of Siniyah's leaders, a new group of IPs were brought in from a different region of Iraq to restore order to the feral town and have been making a name for themselves as peacemakers ever since.

"It's a hundred times better than it used to be here," said Staff Sgt. Jeremy Phelps, 303rd Military Police Company. "The last three months have been a big improvement because the IPs aren't afraid to kick in doors and arrest somebody."

Herlick says that the end-state of these combined patrols would be handing off the reins to the Iraqis while coalition forces ride shotgun. "We are trying to work ourselves out of a job and let the IPs do everything," said Herlick. "We're trying to get to a point where we can provide more of a tactical overwatch and advise as they



need it,” he said. “The people need to see that the system does work.”

On Oct. 21, the collaboration between the IPs of Suniyah and the “Bushmaster” company of the 101st, was put to the test on what seemed like an ordinary mission.

“Our mission was to escort the IPs and some school supplies to the boy’s school, and to try and identify some of the school’s needs,” said 2nd Lt. Eric Spurling, “Bushmaster” platoon leader. A few hundred meters up the street, the IPs took small arms fire from a building and proceeded to engage the enemy, while Spurling’s men took up an overwatch

position nearby.

The policemen worked their way through the gunfight and managed to detain nine suspects, an illegal AK-47 assault rifle and several counterfeit Iraqi Army uniforms.

“Every mission is a combat mission, even if you’re going out to deliver school supplies,” said Spurling who considers the mission a success even though the supplies never made it to their destination. “It’s about what they need to do,” he said. “We’re just here to support them.”

Spurling points to other areas in Iraq, like Tal Afar and the Al Anbar province, where the JSS concept has proven successful. “Living amongst the people and securing them where they sleep is working,” he said.

As the sun sets slowly on the town of Siniyah, the citizens here can thank an aggressive IP force and their patient partners for the gradual but evident shift from lawlessness to peacefulness.



Capt. Aaron Billingsly, Bushmaster commander, takes aim as Iraqi Policemen battle it out with insurgents in the town of Siniyah.



“The last three months have been a big improvement because the IPs aren’t afraid to kick in doors and arrest somebody.”

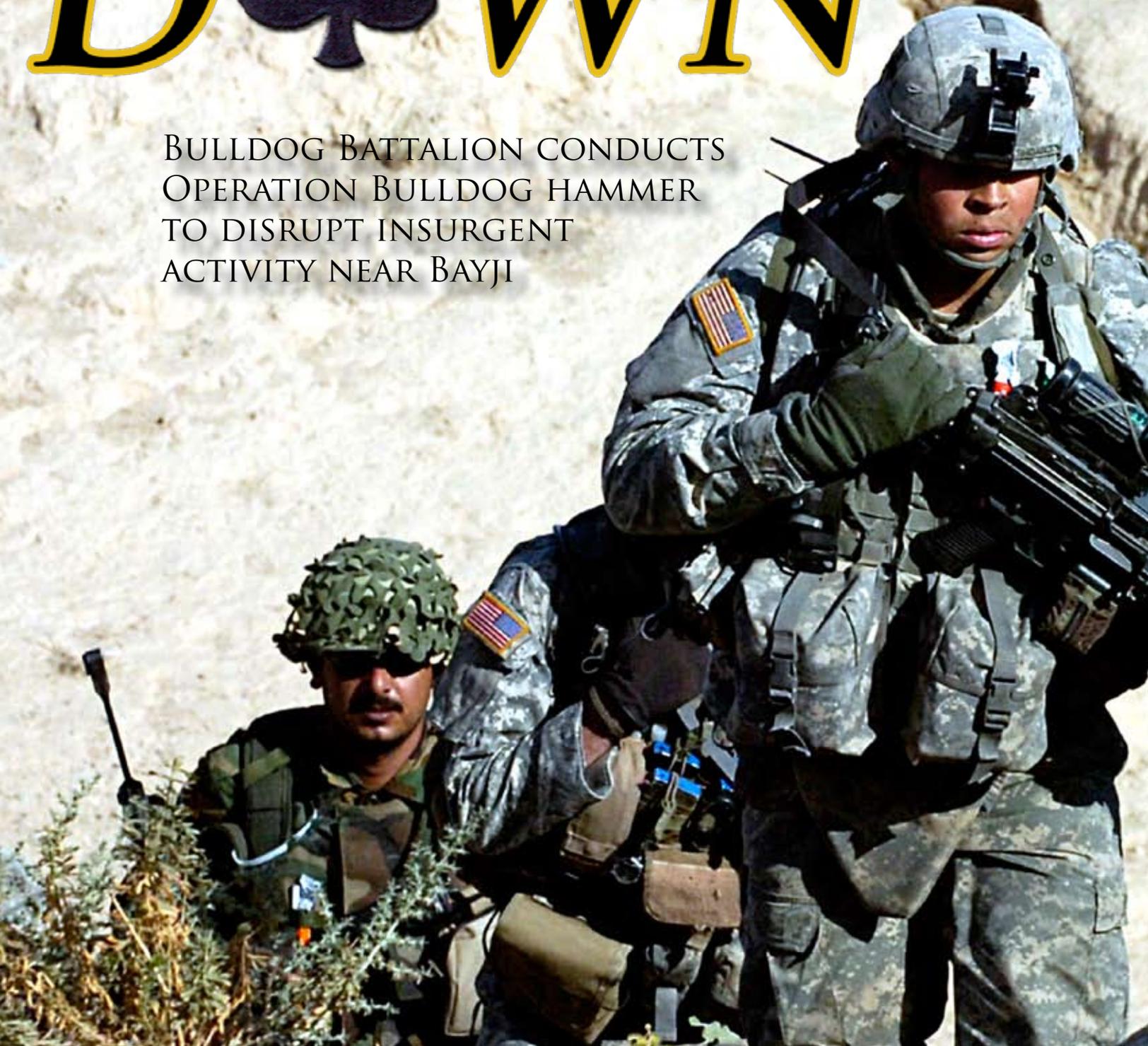
--Staff Sgt. Jeremy Phelps
303rd Military Police Company
attached to 1-327--

Spc. Roger Yazzie, Bushmaster Company, pulls security as his platoon provides overwatch for an Iraqi Police patrol under fire in the city of Siniyah.

HAMMER

D ♣ 1 DOWN

BULLDOG BATTALION CONDUCTS
OPERATION BULLDOG HAMMER
TO DISRUPT INSURGENT
ACTIVITY NEAR BAYJI



“Above the Rest”, 1st Brigade Combat Team Soldiers, along with Iraqi Soldiers, search the town of Al Muslakah, during Operation Bulldog Hammer, Nov. 5, 2007. This particular mission saw more Iraqi Soldiers on the ground than U.S. Soldiers, said Capt. Michael Sykes. (Photo by Spc. Rick Rzepka)



Story by Spc. Rick Rzepka
BASTOGNE PAO

November 5 marked the first major offensive operation by 1st Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division troops in the Salah Ad-Din province, since their arrival in theater in early October. Operation Bulldog Hammer, part of the larger Operation Iron Hammer, was designed to stifle al-Qaida insurgents in cities like Bayji and Suniyah and to promote the continuing reconciliation effort.

Various elements of the storied “Bastogne” Brigade along with their counterparts from the 4th Iraqi Army Division and Iraqi police, conducted a series of simultaneous, combined operations, to disrupt terrorist activities in the largely Sunni area just north of Tikrit. Operations included raids on suspected insurgent safe-houses, as well as exhaustive searches for weapons caches and bomb-making materials.

“The operation went well,” said Cpt. Michael Sykes, 1st Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment, who attributed the success to the effectiveness of Iraqi security forces working along side coalition forces.

“We worked well together and they took the ball and ran with it,” he said. “Every time we go out and we work together, it boosts their confidence, they learn from us and gain experience,” said Infantryman Spc. Wesley Dobbs, an Infantryman with Abu Company, 1/327th. “It’s a lot of help to have them out here, because they can interact with the locals better than we can,” he said.

“We appreciate your help,” said Iraqi army Col. Hamid, 4th Iraqi Army Division. “This is our country and we will rebuild it again.” An array of weapons were confiscated during the offensive phase of Iron Bulldog, which was kicked off with a Screaming Eagle style air-assault that saw Iraqi security forces actually outnumber their U.S. partners.

The Iraqi security forces now have

the capability to reach out and touch the bad-guys in remote locations, said Maj. Brad Mock, operations officer, 1st Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment.

“During the length of the operation ISF along side Bulldog Soldiers have conducted multiple operations targeting specific threats to the security of this area,” said Mock. “With the ISF in the lead and our Soldiers there supporting them, we have made an impact on securing Bayji and its surrounding communities.”

Three caches were discovered, which included 21 mortar rounds, three landmines, eight hand-grenades and materials used to make improvised explosive devices.

Bulldog Soldiers along with their Iraqi counterparts also snatched nearly 50 AK-47 assault rifles off the streets during raids conducted on individual homes. “Anytime we find that stuff, we save lives,” said Sykes, “American and Iraqi.”

ISF and 1st BCT troops also detained 43 suspected insurgents and discovered 23 IEDs during the 10-day operation. “There all long term success of the operation comes from the Iraqi people stepping up to the plate,” said Sykes. “Currently there are more than 600 concerned local citizens’ in 1st Brigade’s area of operations who serve in a sort of neighborhood watch capacity, keeping cities like Bayji and Suniyah safe for the local citizenry.”

During the operation, more than 230 local Iraqi citizens volunteered for the CLC program which has been an effective deterrent against terrorist violence in the area. “Strengthening local ties is important to fighting the terrorists here,” said Sykes. “They (Iraqi citizens) are finally starting to realize that they outnumber the handful of badguys in their town, and they’re starting to do something about it,” he said.

Hamid agrees. “The citizens of Bayji are honorable people. There are two ways that men can go here. They can either be good guys, or they can be killed. We must wait and see.”



Sergeant 1st Class Peter E. Bjorklund and Cpt. Robert Pratt, Bravo Battery, 2nd Battalion, 320th Artillery Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, prepare to establish an outer-cordon at dawn, during Operation Bulldog Hammer, Nov. 5, 2007. (Photo by Spc. Rick Rzepka, Bastogne PAO)



A Soldier from 1st Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat team, tests a suspected insurgent for traces of gunpowder residue. (Rzepka/Bastogne PAO)



Bulldog Soldiers inspect a document found in a home during a cordon and search mission near the Bayji train station. (SFC Kevin Doheny/Bastogne PAO)



Bulldog and Iraqi Army Soldiers prepare to exfil on a CH-47 Chinook helicopter during an air assault mission near the Hamrin Mountains during Operation Bulldog Hammer. (Rzepka/Bastogne PAO)



A 1st Battalion Soldier records the day's events in a log book, during a cordon and search mission in the hamlet of Al Muslakah. (Rzepka, Bastogne PAO) [Below]: A Soldier with Bushmaster Company takes a knee while Iraqi Army Soldiers and other members of his unit search a house near the Bayji train station in the early morning hours of Nov. 8. (Doheny, Bastogne PAO)



eye of the eagle

the world as Bastogne Soldiers see it

Photos by Spc. Rick Rzepka, Bastogne PAO



Bastogne and Iraqi Army Soldiers dig for weapons caches in the dusty desert near Suniyah.



The calm before the storm.



2-320th Soldiers go over the details of a mission during Operation Bulldog Hammer Nov. 5, 2007.



1st Special Troops Battalion Soldiers, Bastogne, practice combatives every chance they get.

Bulldog Soldiers confer with their Iraqi Army counterpart during a mission near Al Muslakah.





HEADQUARTERS 101ST AIRBORNE DIVISION
Office of the Division Commander

24 December 1944

What's Merry about all this, you ask? We're fighting - it's cold we aren't home. All true but what has the proud Eagle Division accomplished with its worthy comrades the 10th Armored Division, the 705th Tank Destroyer Battalion and all the rest? Just this: We have stopped cold everything that has been thrown at us from the North, East, South and West. We have identifications from four German Panzer Divisions, two German Infantry Divisions and one German Parachute Division. These units, spearheading the last desperate German lunge, were headed straight west for key points when the Eagle Division was hurriedly ordered to stem the advance. How effectively this was done will be written in history, not alone in our Division's glorious history but in World history. The Germans actually did surround us, their radios blared our doom. Their Commander demanded our surrender in the following impudent arrogance:

December 22nd 1944

"To the U. S. A. Commander of the encircled town of Bastogne.

The fortune of war is changing. This time the U. S. A. forces in and near Bastogne have been encircled by strong German armored units. More German armored units have crossed the river Ourthe near Ortheville, have taken Marche and reached St. Hubert by passing through Honores-Sibret-Tillet. Libramont is in German hands.

There is only one possibility to save the encircled U. S. A. Troops from total annihilation: that is the honorable surrender of the encircled town. In order to think it over a term of two hours will be granted beginning with the presentation of this note.

If this proposal should be rejected the German Artillery Corps and six heavy A. A. Battalions are ready to annihilate the U. S. A. Troops in and near Bastogne. The order for firing will be given immediately after this two hour's term.

All the serious civilian losses caused by this Artillery fire would not correspond with the well known American humanity.

The GERMAN COMMANDER"

The German Commander received the following reply:

22 December 1944

"To the GERMAN COMMANDER:

NUTS!

The American Commander"

Allied Troops are counter-attacking in force. We continue to hold Bastogne. By holding Bastogne we assure the success of the Allied Armies.