



The Heart Beat

2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault)
Volume III, Issue 2

Dec. 2007



Strike brigade uncases colors, takes control of northwest Baghdad, pg. 4

Strike 6



Col. William B. Hickman

Strike Soldiers and families, I would like to wish everyone the best this holiday season. Our thoughts and prayers are with our loved ones always and especially during this time of year. Although we would have

rather spent Thanksgiving at home with family and friends, we enjoyed our Thanksgiving here in Baghdad. It was a time to reflect and give thanks for the wonderful support we have received from friends and families back home.

Since assuming responsibility on the 17th of November we have been busy learning about the area, assessing the security situation and meeting with many Iraqis here in west Baghdad. The Soldiers of this brigade have done an excellent job and I appreciate the effort shown by all. In typical Strike fashion we have hit the ground running and I am certain we will continue to excel during our deployment here. I believe the Iraqi people just want peace and normalcy for their families. We will partner with the people here and do what we can to support them in achieving a better future.

I would like to bid farewell to the Soldiers of 2-12 Cavalry, they served honorably and have set 1-75 Cavalry up for success. Their effort with the Iraqi Security Forces and Ghazaliyah Guard-

ian volunteers as well as many other areas has made a significant impact and dramatically reduced the violence from previous levels. The landscape here in west Baghdad has markedly improved and I anticipate more visible change in the future.

Visible progress has been made in many areas. We all anticipate the strengthening of local councils and eventual elections to bridge to a new and better environment for Iraqis to raise their families and prosper. We will continue to work closely with the leadership here to support them in achieving normalcy.

You should all be proud of your Soldiers here, they are performing wonderfully in this environment. We appreciate all the support from families and friends at home. The support you provide truly does make a difference in the mission here.

Happy Holidays!

Strike!

Strike 7



Command Sgt. Maj. Scott Schroeder

Everything is going great. I am proud of what the 2nd Brigade Combat Team and its

attached units are doing.

At all levels, people seem to be comfortable with how events are unfolding in Baghdad. I, for one, am extremely pleased with the current situation. We all need to understand this is like "Driving on Ice."

It doesn't take long for things to go bad under any conditions. There are a couple things we can do for ourselves to insure we make continued progress.

First every Soldier needs to understand escalation of force procedures. It is absolutely necessary that every Soldier understands how to determine if they are being threatened.

Across the Division there are between six and twelve EOF incidents weekly that result in Iraqi civilians being killed or seriously injured. One of the leading causes of an EOF are patrols driving like it's 2003.

We increase the probability of having an EOF incident by driving against traffic. We also create traffic problems in both direc-

tions possibly affecting other patrols. The decision to drive against traffic should be deliberate and calculated (the exception not the rule).

We also pull out in front of on-coming traffic. There are many times it would be prudent to wait for traffic to pass your patrol before moving into another lane. When we pull into traffic we have to know the on-coming vehicles see us. The best way to do this is to look into the drivers eyes, or look at the tires to ensure they have stopped rotating. This will limit the possibility of traffic accidents as well as limit the need for your gunners to cycle through the EOF procedures.

I am thankful for all of the great Soldiers in this task force. Showing the population respect is not a sign of weakness. This is our strength. When the occasion comes to confront our enemies, I expect you to confront, and pursue them relentlessly.

Strike and Kill.

Strike brigade delivers payments to Iraqis for claims

Story by
Sgt. James P. Hunter
2nd BCT PAO

FORWARD OPERATING BASE HAWK, Iraq— When an Iraqi local national is injured, or his home or property is damaged by American forces operating in sector, they can fill out an Iraqi Claims Card to receive compensation for their damages.

Traveling from as far as 250 kilometers, local nationals come to the Civil Military Operations Center on Forward Operating Base Hawk to receive money for their compensation.

On Nov. 28, the legal office of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), paid out \$18,000 in compensation claims to Iraqis at the CMOC on FOB Hawk.

Capt. Garrett Hooper, trial counselor and foreign claims commissioner, with the 2nd BCT, said any Iraqi who receives damage to their home, family or property can come to the CMOC and make a claim.

"Ideally what happens is if an Iraqi gets into a situation where there property is destroyed, their home is damaged, their car is destroyed, (the unit causing the damage) give them a claims card," Hooper, a native of Montgomery, Ala., said.

When a person comes in with this card, the legal office begins by investigating the claim and contacting the unit who issued the card for verification, said Staff Sgt. Christopher Hess, noncommissioned officer-in-charge and pay agent. Once the claim is verified, the Iraqi can be paid for any negligence the troops engaged in to cause this damage.

Thus far, the Strike Brigade has paid early \$50,000 in compensation claims. The unit the brigade replaced, 2nd BCT, 1st Infantry Division,

paid nearly \$1.2 million during its rotation.

Working beside the U.S. troops are five local nationals, who work out of the CMOC, and deal directly with the Iraqi making compensation claims.

The Iraqi workers are the first to meet with the claimants, said Hooper. They are the facilitators, the intake officers, who provide all the information to the forward claims commissioner. These workers are in contact with each claimant, making arrangements with them for when they can come in to pick up their compensation.

They have been working within this system for quite some time, and know all the right information needed for a claim, and even know which claims are going to get approved or denied.

Laiyla, an Iraqi worker at the CMOC who works compensation claims, said nearly 40-50 Iraqis come in weekly for compensation claims.

Laiyla, who is originally from Ameriyah, feels like she is giving back to her country.

"I feel like I am doing something for the people; for my country," she said strongly.

Most of the local nationals who come through are very emotional, said Laiyla, with tears in their eyes.

But are these tears of truth? Not in every case.

One woman comes in weekly, trying to seek compensation. But the problem is does not have a claim on file, nor has she filled one out. She is very aggressive in her manner, trying to receive money, most likely to help feed her family.

In some cases, however, the emotions are real.

Hess remembers a lady from his last tour to Iraq. She lost both her see CLAIMS, pg. 16



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Eagle STRIKE!!!

In this issue of the Heart Beat

Commander's Voice	Pg. 2
Sergeant Major's Call	Pg. 3
Brigade pays legal claims	Pg. 3
TOA ceremony	Pg. 4
Officer reflects on deployment	Pg. 6
1-75 Cav. continues security	Pg. 7
Pvt. Johnny Bishop	Pg. 10
Purfect Angelz visit troops	Pg. 14
Mechanics hard at work	Pg. 15
Three insurgents put out of work	Pg. 17
Thanksgiving photos	Pg. 24

2nd Brigade Combat Team - "Strike"



Pfc. Cezar Cocu, right, infantryman and native from Whiteplains, N.Y., and Staff Sgt. Danny Chappell, team leader from Timmonsville, S.C., both with 1st Platoon, Company C, 1st Squadron, 75th Cavalry Regiment, pull security while patrolling in northwest Baghdad, Nov. 20. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. James P. Hunter, 2nd BCT, 101st Abn. Div. Public Affairs)

Strike brigade takes control of northwest Baghdad

Story, photo by
Sgt. James P. Hunter
2nd BCT PAO

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq— The 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, out of Swchinfert, Germany, handed over responsibility of northwest Baghdad to the Soldiers of 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), from Fort Campbell, Ky., during a Transfer of Authority Ceremony Nov. 17, at the Camp Liberty Field House.

“... It is with great humility, but with great confidence in the abilities of the Strike Brigade Combat Team, that I relinquish responsibility for Coalition Force efforts in northwest Baghdad,” said Col. J.B. Burton, commander, 2nd BCT, 1st Inf. Div. “We have achieved the tasks that you put before us, but we leave knowing that there is still much to do.”

The Dagger Brigade helped transition a hostile northwest Baghdad from a heavy, kinetic and costly fight to a secured population, rid of extremists, criminals and terrorists, he said. Throughout their 15-month deployment, they played a vital role of all Iraqis into the political process and the formal reconstruction of northwest Baghdad and Iraq.

Burton continued by saying all Iraqis, regardless of sect or religion, received equal municipal services, education, opportunity and a total improved quality of life.

The Dagger Brigade capitalized “on the opportunities provided by the noble efforts and sacrifices of Coalition Forces, Iraqi

Security Forces and brave Iraqi citizens who have delivered an opening for enduring victory and a future where Iraqis are not measured by religious sect or special group affiliation,” Burton said. “Our combined efforts have set the conditions necessary for re-integration, reconciliation and reconstruction here.”

Though the day was a great one for the Dagger Soldiers, for they will be returning home to their families in Germany, Col. William B. Hickman, commander, 2nd BCT, 101st Abn. Div. (AASLT) said, “It is truly a great day to be a Strike Soldier and now apart of the First Team serving in Multi-National Division Baghdad.”

The brigade re-deployed from south Baghdad in September 2006 and spent the last 12 months preparing themselves for this deployment where they look to, through combined efforts, set the conditions for a strong, prosperous Iraqi future.

As the Strike Brigade assumes responsibility of operations in northwest Baghdad, they will have four combat tested battalions, who have spent the last several months conducting operations throughout northwest Baghdad, fighting by their side.

Joining the 2nd BCT, 101st Abn. Div., will be the 2nd Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment; 1st Squadron, 64th Armor Regiment; 1st Squadron, 5th Cavalry Regiment; and the 2nd Battalion, 32nd Field Artillery Regiment.

“Your efforts in this area partnered with local Iraqi leaders and citizens has made tremendous impact and is receiving a great deal of attention throughout the world,” Hickman said.

These battalions, alongside 1st Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment; 1st Squadron, 75th Cavalry Regiment; 526th Brigade Support Battalion; and 2nd Brigade Special Troops Battalion are ready for the mission, he continued.

“Finally, to the Soldiers of the Strike Brigade Combat Team—the next chapter in our distinguished history will be written in the next 15 months,” Hickman said. “That history will start with the commitment to serve honorably with the Iraqi Security Forces for the Iraqi people. Maintain high standards and discipline, and never stop learning. These things will make us successful. In time we will look back and see the results of our partnered efforts.”



Col. William B. Hickman, commander, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), speaks to a crowd of distinguished guests and both Dagger and Strike Soldiers, during the Transfer of Authority ceremony, Nov. 17, at the Camp Liberty Field House. 2nd BCT, 1st Infantry Division, handed over responsibility of northwest Baghdad to the 2nd BCT, 101st Abn. Div. (AASLT).

“We know this mission comes at a pivotal time and that our actions will make a lasting impact,” Hickman continued. “I know our Soldiers and units are ready for the upcoming challenges and opportunities to serve with the Iraqi Security Forces.”

ably with the Iraqi Security Forces for the Iraqi people. Maintain high standards and discipline, and never stop learning. These things will make us successful. In time we will look back and see the results of our partnered efforts.”

Strike personal security detachment: Trained, Ready and Proficient



Sgt. Andrew Decola, medic with the personal security detachment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), trains on the clearing, loading and unloading procedures of the M240-B at Camp Liberty, Iraq.



photos by Sgt. James P. Hunter, 2nd BCT PAO

Spcc. Christopher Valdez, a native of Gallep, New Mexico, and a Browning .50-caliber machine gunner, with personal security detachment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), mans his weapon while enroute to Joint Security Station Torch, Nov. 15.

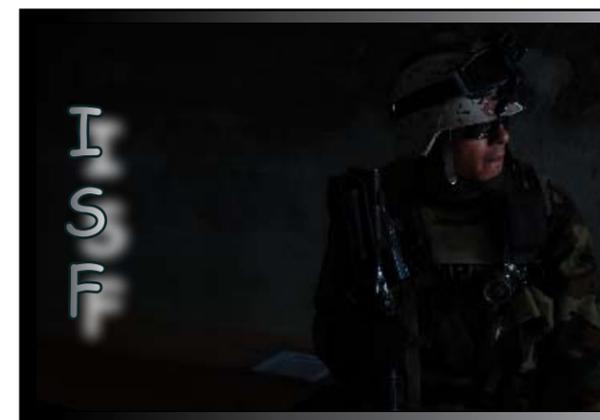


(Left) Spcc. Mike Woodall, driver and native of Austin, Texas, with the personal security detachment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), conducts preventive maintenance checks and services on his Humvee, Nov. 15, prior to a movement to Joint Security Station Torch in Yarmouk.



(Right) Spcc. Christopher Knutti, M240-B gunner and native of Fredericksburg, Va., with the personal security detachment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), prepares his M-240B machine gun prior to a movement to Joint Security Station Torch, Nov. 15.

PSD



An Iraqi army soldier sits in a hall way at the Bushmaster Joint Combat Outpost in Ameriyah, Nov. 30. Since May 7, there have only been 31 murders in Ameriyah. With violence down, the economy has grown with more than 200 stores now open throughout Ameriyah. Volunteers have played a huge role in security, with 418 members. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. James P. Hunter, 2nd BCT, 101st Abn. Div. Public Affairs)

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Checkpoints keeping Ameriyah, its citizens safe

Story, photo by
Spc. Angel Martinez
113th MPAD

Checkpoints are a vital tool in maintaining security in an area, and thanks to the joint efforts of U.S. and Iraqi forces another checkpoint was opened to maintain the security in a western neighborhood in the Iraqi capital.

Soldiers from Company D, 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment out of Fort Hood, Texas, are in charge of the security of Ameriyah. The newest checkpoint established in Ameriyah is an exit-only checkpoint for vehicular traffic.

Vehicles entering this area of Ameriyah have to go through the other checkpoint with the proper paperwork.

Even though it is an exit-only checkpoint, vehicles leaving the neighborhood get searched for contraband.

The checkpoint is also open to pedestrians, giving another option to local citizens to get to their destinations.

“They (pedestrians) still have to be searched, but it basically provides another way for people to get in and out of Ameriyah,” said Jefferson City native 1st Lt. Tyler Stegeman, the platoon leader of 2nd Platoon, Co. D, whose battalion operates in western Baghdad attached to the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault). “For people living in one side of

Ameriyah it was kind of a hassle to go from one side to the other, so this conveniences them a little bit.”

At first, there was only one entry/exit checkpoint, and this caused a problem for the security in Ameriyah.

“You have people in this checkpoint, but if you don’t have people in the other one, then you have a lot of things that slip through the cracks,” said Stegeman.

Another feature of the newest checkpoint is the women’s search team. All the women in the team are part of the local volunteer group, Forsan Al Rafideen (which, in Arabic means “knights of the river”), who are area residents united for a better Ameriyah.

“The people of Ameriyah are enjoying this freedom, this peace,”

**said 1st Lt. Tyler Stegeman
platoon leader, 2nd platoon, Company D**

“That’s one way the Iraqis have stepped up,” said Stegeman. “In other checkpoints, we have one U.S. Army female searcher and a couple of Iraqi female searchers.”

For merchants who want to pass merchandise in through the exit

checkpoint, for what ever the reason, they can do it by hand trucks, and after the merchandise gets inspected, they can put it in a vehicle within Ameriyah and drive it to their respective shops.

“The people of Ameriyah are enjoying this freedom, this peace,” said Stegeman. “Right now, they’re content. Obviously there’re some people who aren’t happy with it, however, even those people understand, after talking to them, this is providing them a peace they haven’t seen in months or even years.”

2-32 FA officer reflects on deployment, the future

Story by
Capt. Jayson Morgan
2nd Bn., 32nd FA

BAGHDAD—As we end our tenth month of deployment to Iraq, many of us have taken the time to look back. Back to the days of the National Training Center, back to the frozen prairie of Fort Riley. The countless hours spent packing, planning, and training in the snow. How many adjectives can be used to describe the vast emotions that we have experienced over the past months?

We have experienced highs and lows, tough times, and even moments of joy. From the freezing winds of Kansas to the stifling heat of Iraq our Soldiers have demonstrated poise and resolve that is unparalleled. These young men and women are a testament to the dedication of a modern generation of heroes.

This battlefield is dynamic and complex beyond the wildest imagination. It is unlike any war fought in the history of our great nation. On a daily basis Soldiers are asked to be warriors, teachers, and mentors.

When I began writing this article I planned to list the many accomplishments of our unit. I planned to discuss how we have taken a once dangerous and overlooked area and transformed it into a bustling hub of activity and progress in western Baghdad. The countless terrorists and criminals taken off of the streets, the new businesses opened, and the reconciliation of former insurgents. But if my experience in Iraq has done anything it has taught me that these metrics are fleeting at best. One car bomb or improvised explosive device can undo months’ worth of work, at least from the tangible perspective. That’s why I will not list the abundant accomplishments of the proud American task force.

Instead, I want to focus on something that cannot be seen. You cannot put a measurement on human emotion. No metric or measure of effectiveness can tell you how a per see REFLECTIONS, Pg. 22



photo courtesy of 2-32 FA

Sgt. 1st Class Efrain Fuentes of Battery B, 2nd Battalion, 32nd Field Artillery Regiment, and a native of McAllen, Texas, patrols the streets of Yarmouk daily to ensure the safety of the local residents.



Pfc. Cezar Cocu, infantryman and native from Whiteplains, N.Y., with 1st Platoon, Company C, 1st Squadron, 75th Cavalry Regiment, pull security while at a concrete facility in northwest Baghdad, Nov. 20. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. James P. Hunter, 2nd BCT PAO)

Infantry troops continuing to secure northwest Baghdad

Story, photos by
Sgt. James P. Hunter
2nd BCT PAO

In a lot of western Baghdad markets, Iraqi homes sit behind the shops, with the shop in a garage-like setting. The markets are very open visually, with Iraqi citizens spilling onto the streets at all hours of the night. Shops are open to the public, selling cakes, candies and goodies of all sorts. Cell phones, jewelry and dress apparel can all be found in shops cluttered through these streets. But amongst these men and women, shopping or walking to or from school, is your everyday bomb maker mixing in with the crowd.

Though things have calmed down immensely in the past few months, with reports of violence and Coalition casualties at a low, the need to find these criminals is still a priority for troops operating in and around Baghdad.

The better the security, well, then the bet-

ter the ability for essential services to improve and move forward.

Troops from Company C, 1st Squadron, 75th Cavalry Regiment, run operations out of Joint Security Station Maverick, in northwest Baghdad, daily to ensure security is upheld, to interact with the local citizens, and gather information to detain, such as a detective would, known insurgents responsible for attacks plotted against Coalition and Iraqi Security Forces.

According to Spc. Michael Mullins, medic and native of Jacksonville, Fla., with 3rd platoon, Co. C, 1-75th Cav., they patrol their entire sector, trying to cut down on insurgency within, and conduct population engagements to continue to build the populations trust in Coalition forces.

“Basically our intent is to get to know the area, know the populace, and continue to track intelligence on (known insurgents),” said Mullins. “We’ve picked up nearly three sources within sector who have passed on a fair bit of intelligence.”

Mullins said the people within are fairly friendly, but constant communication and trust opens them up even more.

“The more you isolate yourself from the local people the more they are going to be inclined to believe the lies,” said Pfc. Cezar Cocu, infantryman and native of Whiteplains, N.Y., 1st platoon, Co. C, 1-75th Cav.

“I think the people who have been here long enough to see what’s happened their entire lives, they want change, but the younger folks pretty much have their ways set,” Mullins said. “Education for the children is going to be the biggest step. It all starts with the kids, interacting with them, shaking their hands, showing we care is a really big step forward.”

But here is the thing, being able to gather the information and earn the peoples trust can be a difficult game, said Staff Sgt. Rodney Nelson, platoon sergeant and native of St. Louis, Mo., 3rd Platoon, Co. C, 1-75th Cav. The locals are going to follow whoever

see CAVALRY, pg. 12



Faces of the Heart



photos by Sgt. James P. Hunter, 2nd BCT PAO

Sgt. Matthew Mistler, infantryman and native of Cincinnati, Ohio, with 1st platoon, Company C, 1st Squadron, 75th Cavalry Regiment, pulls security at a electrical power plant in Katib in northwest Baghdad, Nov. 20. The troops of Company C continue to engage the local populace to track and target known insurgents responsible for attacks against Coalition and Iraqi Security Forces.



Pfc. Travis Fisher, mortarman and native of Grand Saline, Texas, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, looks out from his observation tower at the Kadamiyah Outpost, Nov. 19, in northwest Baghdad. The mortar platoon within K COP provide stability to the local populace with patrols throughout the area.



(Left) Sgt. 1st Class Michael Shoe, platoon sergeant and native of Corpus Christe, Texas, 1st Platoon, Company C, 1st Squadron, 75th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), serves Soldiers at Joint Security Station Maverick, Nov. 22. They ate ham, turkey, macaroni and corn on the cob. The Soldiers live within northwest Baghdad, deep in the city, gathering information on known insurgents for future capture.



Staff Sgt. Christopher Hess, pay agent and native of Lancaster, Ohio, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), counts out money to Iraqi man for a compensation claim at the Civil Military Operations Center at FOB Hawk, Nov. 28.



(left) Sgt. William A. Grzeszak, infantryman and native of Grand Rapids, Mich., and Sgt. Howell Horan, mortarman and native of Orlando, Fla., both with Company C, 1st Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), plan for their return to Camp Liberty while at the Bushmaster Joint Combat Outpost in Ameriyah, Nov. 30.



Sgt. Howell Horan, mortarman and native of Orlando, Fla., with Company C, 1st Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, stands ready prior to moving out from the Bushmaster Joint Combat Outpost, Nov. 30.

Soldier came from a small town in Washington to the big city of Baghdad

Story, photo by
Sgt. James P. Hunter
2nd BCT PAO

“Every Soldier’s got a story to tell,” Master P once rapped.

These very lyrics describe every Soldier who dons the digitally camouflaged Army Combat Uniform.

Whether he’s an infantryman patrolling the streets of Baghdad, or a personnel clerk, he’s got a story to tell.

Everyone starts somewhere in life, the only difference is probably the path that led them into the arguably one of the toughest jobs in America.

For Pvt. Johnny Bishop, M-249 machine gunner, 1st platoon, Troop C, 1st Squadron, 75th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, his story began in Charlotte, N.C., Aug. 14, 1988.

Though he was born in the Carolina’s, Bishop spent the largest part of his life in Ferndale, Wash., a town of about 10,000 people. It has a small-town feel to it. The town was quiet, not too much violence to report. The people within his community were fairly close, with the local high school football team the talk of the town. The year he left high school, they won the Triple A state championship.

Bishop, or “Chicken Little” as his team members call him, spent a majority of his time in his grandfathers body shop, doing body sanding and metal work, he said. Bishop had dreams of being a mechanic one day; even, in Dale Earnhardt’s pit crew, fixing the vehicle “The Intimidator.”

“It was a great experience; a lot of blisters on my hand,” he said jokingly. “It was fun.”

Within the body shop, he grew to bond fairly close to his father. He and his father began refurbishing a 1979 Chevy C-10. Together, they were able to drop a 350 Hp engine into the truck. He never got to see the completion of the truck, but had dreams of showing it off as a Hot Rod. The truck just needed a bit too much work for his pleasing.

Bishop remembered one moment from high school when he took his Chevy C-10 out for a joy ride with some of his closest friends. Though they were supposed to be in school and Bishop only had a temporary license. But nothing could stop him from enjoying every precious moment of the life—which saw him and his buddies trying to locate gas throughout the day and dodge policemen as they raced down the road.



Pvt. Johnny Bishop, M249 machine gunner and native of Ferndale, Wash., pulls security from outside his Humvee while others in his platoon talk with Iraqi Security Forces at a concrete plant in Baghdad.

He misses those friends of his, the ones he spent countless hours with at the Bellingham Mall, in Bellingham, Wash. The ones he spent time with July 4th of every year at Beirch Bay, where they used store-bought fireworks to light up the bay.

Bishop also had a great relationship with his brother. The two of them did everything together, especially when they were young. Throw the ball around in the backyard, or race the go-kart outside, their time together was inseparable.

But like all stories, they must continue, evolving into the next chapter, or in Bishop’s case, his beginning.

It was until he really thought about his next steps in life and realized the Army was the next best thing for him. Bishop wanted to be a fighter jet pilot, but because of his poor eyesight, he couldn’t get into the program.

“So I started looking at the Army,” he said, “and realized this is what I wanted to do.”

The infantry? Well not at first. See, Bishop wanted to be a tank operator, but the slots for the school were full.

“Let’s go infantry,” he simply stated. “More respect anyways.”

And he made the right choice. “What I’ve learned is that we are all one big family, taking care of each other and watching each others back.”

Bishop feels like joining the infantry really was the beginning to his new life.

“It feels like I am doing something with my life before it even starts,” said the 19-year old Bishop.

When he signed the “dotted line,” he said, “Wow, I’m in the see **BISHOP**, pg. 20

526th BSB troops become firefighters

Story by
Staff Sgt. Jeri Pihlaja
526th BSB, 2nd BCT

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – When Company B, “Mad Bulls”, 526th Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) arrived in theater, the recovery section and gun truck platoon gained a new piece of equipment, a combat fire truck, and a firefighting mission to go with it. Bravo Company has been tasked to provide quick response, area support combat fire fighting and recovery to all battle damaged vehicles within the 2nd BCT area of operation to minimize time on ground for coalition security forces and bolster force protection.

The Soldiers of Bravo Company had to adapt quickly to get trained and properly certified to conduct fire fighting operations. Although not previously trained on fire fighting, the Soldiers conducted fire training on their Load Handling System fire truck with the help of Company B, 299th Forward Support Battalion’s recovery section, led by Sgt. 1st Class Dale Ford and Staff Sgt. Robert Hamilton, both of 299th FSB, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division.

Although a typical LHS is used to haul flat racks and supplies, the flat rack on the fire fighting LHS has been modified with a rail system for safe maneuver of Soldiers. A 1,600 gallon tank was built as the main tank and another 400 gallon tank is used for mixing the water and the Foam Liquid Fire Extinguisher solution. There are two pumps, one is used for filling the mixing tank from the 1,600 gallon main tank, and the other pump is used to send water pressure through the hose. Combat fire fighting is comprised of two, two person teams. Two Soldiers hold the hose on the ground, control the flow of the water and the amount of foam being dispensed on the fire. They are the primary firefighters. They utilize approved tactics, techniques and procedures

that were developed through training, experience and after action reviews. No two fires ever react the same way.

The other two Soldiers stay on the LHS fire truck and control the pumps, the mixing of the solution and provide over watch security for personnel on the ground. It is also their responsibility to watch the fire



(Left) Soldiers from Company B, 526th Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) conduct fire fighting training during a live burn exercise.

from a distance and alert the on ground personnel of any unseen danger. Each Soldier is an Eagle First Responder, which is important for the safe return of the team.

A typical humvee can burn for up to 6 hours and a Stryker vehicle can burn up to 16 hours. While a vehicle burns, there is also the risk of ammunition left in the vehicle exploding.

“Although combat firefighting is new to the maintenance world, it is necessary to efficiently recover damaged vehicles in the quickest amount of time, reducing the number of Soldiers on ground pulling security,” said Chief Warrant Officer 2 Byryn Wheatley, Allied Trades Technician and Officer in Charge of the Recovery Section, Co. B, 526th Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd BCT.

Training was conducted by Staff Sgt. Hamilton, his fire team from 299th FSB and the East LSA Fire Department. Fire fighting training was comprised of several different tasks. Each Soldier needed to know how to react when ex-

tinguishing operations began and that fire creates its own weather condition and can change the situation in the blink of an eye.

An operator must have situational awareness. This skill is extremely important to the safety of the team. Advanced recovery operations skills are essential due to the fact it is not outlined in any technical manual on how to recover a destroyed vehicle.

The Bravo Company Soldiers were eager to take on the challenge. “It was great cross training outside our MOS,” said Pvt. Tyler Piper, Co. B, 526th BSB.

Pvt. 1st Class Derrick Horton, also of Co. B said, “[The training] helped to fulfill a childhood dream.”

The Combat Fire Fighter/Recovery Specialist is a very difficult and demanding job. Soldiers must learn and perfect multiple tasks and procedures in a short amount of time and must be willing to adapt to any situation. In order to perform their duties, Soldiers must be willing to create a cohesive team that operates as one. Convoy experience is important, the more road time a Soldier has creates situational awareness and a better understanding of how to handle a vehicle outside the wire.

With the completion of the training, live burn, and certification, the Bravo Compa-



photos by Spc. Benjamin Donahue, 526th BSB

ny Soldiers are ready to support the Strike Brigade whenever mission dictates, thus continuing 526th Brigade Support Battalion’s history of upholding the standard “Best By Performance.”

CAVALRY

is going to keep them secure, help their families, providing them services. Some people are afraid of these men. It's a struggle to win public opinion; whoever's got it has got the power.

On Nov. 20, 1st platoon engaged the local populace, talking with Iraqi workers at an electrical power plant and concrete facility in Ka-teib. Their purpose was to continue to build rapport with the local Iraqi army battalion in the area and gain intelligence from the Iraqis to continue to build their cases against known insurgents operating in the area.

"I got a good vibe from the people," said 1st Lt. Kristopher Zavalva, platoon leader and native of Moraga, Cali., 1st Platoon, Co. C, 1-75th Cav. "They like us; they want us here. The unit we replaced did a good job helping these people out and maintaining that good relation with IA and IP. We want to continue to build on that relationship and work hand and hand with them."

They work mainly on stability operations, with the help of Iraqi army and police forces, to capture known insurgents, he said. The more help they have coming from all directions, the more likely they are going to be able to stop those responsible for these attacks.



(left to right) Pfc. Daniel Dension, medic and native of Arlington, Texas, and Pfc. Thomas Grimm, infantryman and native of Riverside Cali., both with 1st Platoon, Company C, 1st Squadron, 75th Cavalry Regiment, check out a roof top nearby while pulling security at a electrical power plant in Katib in northwest Baghdad, Nov. 20. The troops of Company C continue to engage the local populace to track and target known insurgents responsible for attacks against Coalition and Iraqi Security Forces.

Later that night, 3rd platoon conducted a foot patrol on Market St. in northwest Baghdad to talk with the local citizens. While dismounted they received small arms fire, and immediately started pushing toward the home of where the fire came from. They were unable to find out any information regarding the shooting.

"The objective today was to go down to Market Street today and find some information that would lead to where some of these (high value targets) are bedding down," said 1st Lt. Adrian Monzingo, platoon leader and native of Sour Lake, Texas, with 3rd platoon, Co. C, 1-75th Cav.

They too look toward the Iraqi army and local population for help in locating insurgents who continue to wreak havoc.

On this particular night they were unable to find any information, but they were able to reach out to the local sheik, who plays an important role in the community—a head figure, said Monzingo. They wanted to get face-to-face with him and introduce themselves.

"We want to continue to develop these connections so we can pinpoint the location of the HTVs, so we can go pick them all up," said Nelson.

The Chaos troops of 1-75 Cav. will continue to work with the local population and gather intelligence to further better security for northwest Baghdad, so in time essential services, governance and the economy can continue their positive growth.



Staff Sgt. Rodney Nelson, platoon sergeant and native of St. Louis, Mo., and 1st Lt. Adrian Monzingo, platoon leader and native of Sour Lake, Texas, both with 3rd Platoon, Company C, 1st Squadron, 75th Cavalry Regiment, pull security during a dismounted patrol through northwest Baghdad. The Company C troops are speaking, or engaging, local citizens of Baghdad in hopes to lead to the apprehension of known insurgents operating in the area.



Top Guns

Soldiers with Battery B, 1st Battalion, 320th Field Artillery Regiment pose for a photo with Iraqi soldiers with the 3rd Battalion, 3rd Brigade, 6th Division of the Iraqi army, Nov. 13th, following a successful foot patrol just south of Abu Gharib market. (U.S. Army photo by Capt. Gary Wade, 1-320th)

Second largest weapons cache discovered this year in Ameriyah

Story, photo by
Sgt. John Androski
1st Bn., 5th Cav. Reg.

Acting on a tip from the Forsan Al Rafidain volunteers, Coalition Forces uncovered the second largest weapons cache discovered this year in the Baghdad neighborhood of Ameriyah.

The weapons cache held several different types of anti-tank mines, grenades, and an abundance of improvised explosive device-making material. The cache is significant because of the different types of munitions found. The weapons cache discovery held over 96 different types of anti-tank landmines, as well as an assortment of different grenades and rocket propelled grenades. The last time a cache of this magnitude was found in Ameriyah was in late summer, during the most intense fighting between Al Qaeda and Coalition Forces.

It is undetermined at this time whether the munitions found were recently brought into Ameriyah or were left behind by Al Qaeda after their defeat in Ameriyah in August. After the cache was found, a Forsan Al Rafidain member received a phone call stating there was an IED in the area. Upon searching the area, one pressure-plate IED was found on the front porch of the house where the weapon cache was discovered.



Coalition forces, with intelligence provided by the Forsan Al Rafidain volunteers, were able to uncover another large weapons cache in the Baghdad neighborhood of Ameriyah. The cache yielded over 96 different types of land-mines as well as numerous grenades, rocket propelled grenades and improvised explosive device-making material.

Strike Force



photos courtesy of 2-502nd Inf. Reg.

Lt. Col. Michael Getchell, commander, 2nd Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, places the "Screaming Eagle" combat patch on a Soldier with Company B, 2-502nd Inf. Reg. during a combat patch ceremony at Patrol Base Copper, Thanksgiving Day.



Lt. Col. Michael Getchell, commander, and Soldiers of the 2nd Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, sit with the security council from the Iskandariyah Nahia and the Musayyib Mayor and Police Chief to discuss significant actions in the area as well as security during the Hajj.



Pfc. Christopher Kittrell, 2nd Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, pulls security.

Purrfect Angelz visit Camp Liberty

Story, photos by
Sgt. James P. Hunter
2nd BCT PAO

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines howled through the night as seven dancers from the “Purrfect Angelz” put on a show to remember for troops deployed here in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, Nov. 23, at the Camp Liberty Main PX.

The group ended their tour here after traveling for the last nine days and performing at 21 different locations throughout theater, to include Camp Taji, Camp Slayer and Forward Operating Base Prosperity.

The girls, Dani, Tanea, Laurie, Lisa, Lindsay and Amber, danced the night away to such songs as “Sweet Home Alabama,” “American Woman,” and “Proud to be an American.”

“It was awesome. It was extremely awesome,” said Pvt. Mike Shell, 526th Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault). “For the girls to come out here and gives us support was great.”

The Purrfect Angelz have been together for the last six years and have toured Iraq for the past five.

With their smiles lighting up the stage, it was difficult for



Dani Armstrong, native of Highland, Mich., performs for troops at the Camp Liberty Main PX, Nov. 23. The Purrfect Angelz performed for troops throughout Iraq visiting 21 different locations in just nine days.

troops to not enjoy the night and let their stressors fade away.

“The show here was fantastic. The girls were fantastic; a lot of great dancing,” said Sgt. 1st Class Steve Pickerin, senior paralegal noncommissioned officer, Regimental Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 2nd Cavalry Stryker Regiment. “A lot of people loved it here, especially the last song. It’s great for the troops. It’s a great morale booster. It gives the troops here a break.”



Lisa Ligon, native of Richmond, Va., salutes the troops during their final performance.

“The days can be stressful being a Soldier. For me it’s not too stressful. With it being my second deployment, I have learned to deal with it, but it relieves a lot of tension for Soldiers on their first deployment. It relaxes you,” he said.

But relaxed really isn’t the word to describe the crowd. “The crowd out here today was nuts!” Shell said ecstatically. “It was absolutely nuts. Everyone went absolutely crazy.”

When the dancing ended, troops were given the opportunity to get an autograph and their picture taken with the Purrfect Angelz.

When Shell finally got his opportunity, he thanked the girls for their performance.

“I told them I appreciate everything they do for us,” he said. “It’s great to see them out here; it’s an opportunity to get away from the stressors of the day-to-day operations.”

And they too appreciate everything the troops deployed around the world do everyday.

“To all the men and women in the armed forces, we want to thank ya’ll for everything that you do,” said Lisa Ligon, a native of Richmond, Va. “The Purrfect Angelz love you and wish you happy holidays.”



With the sun beginning to set, a tactical vehicle moves through the streets of Camp Liberty, Nov. 24. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Paul Monroe, 2nd BCT, 101st Abn. Div. Public Affairs)

Spc. Vanessa Keck of Fort Knox, Kentucky, displays her enthusiasm while assisting with an inventory. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Ardys Favaro, Company C, 526th Brigade Support Battalion)



Mechanics working hard to support the mission

Story, photos by
Sgt. James P. Hunter
2nd BCT PAO

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – Music from the Armed Forces Network plays in the background— such songs as Johnny Cash’s “A Boy named Sue”— as mechanics from the 2nd Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), turn their wrenches as they work through tight, cramped spaces while “greased-up and getting dirty” under the hood of a Humvee.

With nearly 150 pieces of equipment needing repair at anytime, nine mechanics from the BSTB motor pool work daily to ensure the Strike Brigade is constantly combat ready and efficient.

Not every day is normal for these troops. They can be found working on a Humvee, conducting technical inspections or verifying an operator’s preventive maintenance checks and services. But one thing is for sure, these troops take their job very seriously.

“Our job is actually very important,” said Sgt. Joshua Summers, senior squad leader and native of Knoxville, Tenn., with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd BSTB. “It is minimized by others who don’t respect our job. Without these vehicles, without the armor, without the route clearance, without our jobs, the mission doesn’t happen.”

It’s important, but being a mechanic can

also be very exciting.

“When you find out a truck doesn’t work, then find out why it doesn’t work and repairing it or replacing the faulty part to get the truck back into operation is intriguing,” Summers said.

For Spc. Kenneth McDonald, mechanic and native of Loganton, Pa., with HHC, 2 BSTB, he has been working on motors, small engines and mini-bikes since he was just a child.

McDonald remembers jacking up his mother’s car and working on it, so his love and excitement for mechanical issues comes at no surprise, but, again, what he does he feels is important.

“As you can see, trucks break down all the time,” he said. “Operators don’t really have the resources to fix them. We know how to take it apart and fix it and get you back on the road.”

The mechanics of 2 BSTB work on “anything with wheels,” said McDonald. From tactical vehicles to the Gator’s running around post, these troops stay constantly busy.

“When we deploy, the workload does increase,” said Summers. “In the rear, we have a lot of vehicles, but not all are

in constant use. Here vehicles are always constantly in use. There is more wear on the vehicles, so our mechanics workload is severely increased.”

At anytime during the day, the troops can be called in to work on a vehicle that is needed immediately for an operation in northwest Baghdad.

“If the vehicle has to come up, we will

come in as early as it takes to start, and stay as late as it takes to finish,” said Summers. “Last deployment, we would start at four or five the morning and end at twelve o’clock

at night. It’s not over until the job is done.”

These mechanics see every imaginable fault within the vehicle—from a bad power steering due to sand clogging up the seals, to ball joints popping because of the heavy weight of the vehicle.

With these faults and long days comes stressors, said both Summers and McDonald.

First off, there are too many vehicles for the number of personnel they operate

with, said Summers. “One comes in then three more follow. You finish one and then go onto the next one.”

Because of the cramped spaces under the hood, to fix one part, they may have to take “half the truck apart” to repair it, said Summers.

“You have to know how the vehicles work to fix them,” he said.

But not all lies on the hands of the mechanics, Summers said. Operators play an important role in the upkeep of their vehicles too.

“Do a thorough PMCS. Not just a check the block with a pencil. Actually get under the vehicle—take a look,” he continued. “Look at the half-shaft bolts. If they’re loose bring them to us, and we’ll tighten them.”

Whatever the case may be, the 2 BSTB mechanics stand ready to ensure operators are on the road in no time, with an efficient, well-operating vehicle.



Spc. Kenneth McDonald, mechanic and native of Loganton, Pa., with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) fills a Humvee up with transmission fluid during a technical inspection at the 2nd BSTB motor pool, Nov. 26.



Pvt. Kenneth Richardson, mechanic and native of Dallas, Texas, with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) pours oil into a Humvee during a technical inspection at the 2nd BSTB motor pool, Nov. 26.

CLAIMS

husband and two children.

Her husband was driving a vehicle and the children were in the car. An escalation of force incident resulted in her husband and two children being killed.

“The unfortunate thing there, truly unfortunate, we were unable to pay that claim,” said Hess, a native of Lancaster, Ohio. “In order for us to pay that there has to be negligence on the part of the U.S. Once we did the research, it turned out to be a proper escalation of force. This vehicle was approaching the convoy was waved off repeatedly, flashlights, hand signals, warning shot and finally they (shot into) the vehicle. We weren’t able to pay her anything.

“When something like that happens, when we know it happened, and we weren’t negligent and we did what we were supposed to do it tears you up a little bit,” Hess continued. “Now here is this lady who doesn’t have a husband or two kids. And even if we could pay the claims, we couldn’t replace the husband or the two kids. Money won’t make her happy.”

The woman was in absolute tears. “I cried with her,” Hess stated.

He, who was limiting himself to \$50 a month, even reached into his own pockets to give her just a bit of cash.

“At least she could feed her other two kids,” he said.

These emotions range



photos by Sgt. James P. Hunter, 2nd BCT PAO

An Iraqi man counts out his money he received for a compensation claim, Nov. 28, at the Civil Military Operations Center at Forward Operating Base Hawk.

among the Iraqis, with many frustrated at the situation. But it comes down to one thing—the truth.

“The burden of proof is always on the claimant,” Hess stated. “There comes a time when you either have to confirm or deny. If you don’t have enough information about their claim, you have to cut it loose.”

For any negligence from the U.S. troops, the Iraqis will be paid, said Hooper. This is important, especially as Coalition Forces continue to move forward with security, economics and essential service.

“If we ultimately end up defeating the insurgency, but in doing so destroy the livelihood, the property and the homes of the Iraqis, there’s no win there,” Hooper stated. “But if we make sure we keep them (safe and satisfied), while we defeat the insurgency as a whole, that’s victory.”



Capt. Garrett Hooper, trial counselor and foreign claims commissioner, talks with an Iraqi man regarding his claim, Nov. 28, at the Civil Military Operations Center at Forward Operating Base Hawk.

Into the night...



photos by Sgt. James P. Hunter, 2nd BCT PAO

A Soldier with 3rd Platoon, Company C, 1st Squadron, 75th cavalry Regiment, pulls security during a dismounted patrol through northwest Baghdad, Nov. 20. The Company C troops are speaking, or engaging, local citizens of Baghdad in hopes to lead to the apprehension of known insurgents operating in the area.



Spc. Michael Mullins, medic and native of Jacksonville, Fla., with 3rd Platoon, Company C, 1st Squadron, 75th cavalry Regiment, pulls security during a dismounted patrol through northwest Baghdad, Nov. 21. The Company C troops, living out of Joint Security Station Maverick, are speaking, or engaging, local citizens of Baghdad in hopes to lead to the apprehension of known insurgents operating in the area.

Three Insurgents put out of business

Small cache find is a big win for Khadra neighborhood

Story by
2nd Lt. Tabitha L. Fullam
1st Bn., 64th Armor Reg.

BAGHDAD – The 1st Battalion, 6th Brigade, 2nd Iraqi army Division National Police; and Company C, 1st Battalion, 64th Armor Regiment, attached to the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) discovered a cache Wednesday afternoon.

Responding to a tip from a local informant, the National Police raided the western Baghdad home and found a small cache. The cache consisted of four rocket propelled grenades, seven grenade boosters, eight cell phones, two mortar quadrants, and four Motorola radios. The cache also included various small arms ammunition, fuses and detonators, as

well as, 115,000 Iraqi dinar. The small cache was most likely going to be utilized by a local insurgent group to attack coalition force’s vehicles and personnel.

This cache was relatively small in size and supported an Al Qaeda cell of three members. The task force continues to achieve success at finding caches through local resident tips as the residents respond to the increased security levels.

“Within the last few months the 1/6/2 National Police and Charlie Company, 1-64 Armor, have been able to build up our human intelligence pool to a good strength,” said Capt. Dan Cannon, commander, Co. C, 1-64 AR.

Explosive Ordinance Disposal teams were called in from Forward Operating Base Liberty and the cache was destroyed.

Charlie Company and the National Police’s actions are part of an ongoing effort to establish security in the Khadra neighborhood.



photo by 2nd Lt. James Gallagher, 1-64 AR

As the result of a resident’s tip, a small cache of munitions was found on Wednesday afternoon in Khadra, a western Baghdad neighborhood.



photo by Sgt. James P. Hunter, 2nd BCT PAO

Sgt. 1st Class John Nagy, psychological operations, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), pulls security while at an electrical power plant in Katib in northwest Baghdad, Nov. 20. Strike troops continue to engage the local populace to track and target known insurgents.

Oh, splendid. I guess we can just say whatever we want about sensitive information at any given time.



For bloody sake, SHUT YOUR TRAP AND START PRACTICING OPERATIONS SECURITY!!!

On Patrol with 1-75 Cav.



1st Lt. Adrian Monzingo, platoon leader and native of Sour Lake, Texas, with 3rd Platoon, Company C, 1st Squadron, 75th cavalry Regiment, walks through a pool hall during a dismounted patrol through northwest Baghdad, Nov. 20. The Company C troops are speaking, or engaging, local citizens of Baghdad in hopes to lead to the apprehension of known insurgents operating in the area. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. James P. Hunter, 2nd BCT PAO)

BISHOP

Army.” Bishop was officially a Soldier as of Aug. 18, 2006. Four days into basic, with no sleep to his name, Bishop thought, “What did I get myself into.”

But as time went on throughout his basic combat training and infantrymen courses, he realized the mind-boggling experience he was going through brought out the best in him and his fellow Soldiers.

“The camaraderie was there,” he said. “I was doing things I never I thought I could before.”

In January of 2007, he joined the 1-75th Cav., to begin yet another chapter in his life.

That’s when Staff Sgt. Danny Chappell, team leader and native of Timmonsville, S.C, with Troop C, 1-75 Cav. met him, of which he has been his team leader since.

“Initially he had issues; difficulty paying attention to detail,” said Chappell. “But he began paying better attention to detail and conducting himself better as a Soldier.”

Chappell best describes Bishop as a steady, always motivated individual, ready and willing to take any task and perform it to the best of his ability.

As Bishop continued to grow as a Soldier, so did his training schedule, in preparation for their tour to Iraq.

“We all knew we were deploying. I mean we are at war,” he said. “The 2nd Brigade has a lot of traditions. We have to uphold those traditions.”

When he first landed in Iraq, he thought, “Okay, I’m in an actual combat zone. I wasn’t scared, but I would say I was nervous.”

But for Bishop and his fellow comrades while on patrol throughout their area of responsibility, it has been quiet, he said, which is easier to cope with while deployed, especially when separated from loved ones. He also knows that when times get tough, his platoon will manage and defeat any known threat.

Over the next 14 months, one can find Bishop continuing his efforts in Baghdad with the rest of his platoon from Troop C, 1-75 Cav.. They will patrol daily in northwest Baghdad to ensure the security is upheld, interact with the local citizens, and gather information to detain known insurgents responsible for attacks plotted against Coalition and Iraqi Security Forces.

One can only wonder what chapters will be written into his life story next.



TOPS GUNS

Soldiers with 1st Battalion, 320th Field Artillery Regiment pull security. (U.S. Army photo courtesy of 1-320th FA)



photo by Sgt. James P. Hunter, 2nd BCT PAO
An Iraqi army soldier plays fetch with his dog at the Bushmaster Joint Combat Outpost in Ameriyah, Nov. 30.

A Day at the Beach



photo by Sgt. James P. Hunter, 2nd BCT PAO

Vehicles from the personal security detachment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), sit parked, aligned inside the Kadamiyah Combat Outpost, in northwest, Baghdad, Nov. 19.

BSTB packs school supplies for kids in Ghazaliyah

Story by
1st Lt. Lindsey Travis
2nd BSTB, 2nd BCT

FOB JUSTICE, Iraq – The 2nd Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), assisted the 4th Battalion, 1st Brigade, 6th Iraqi army division Military Transition Team, Nov. 15 at Forward Operating Base Justice, to pack school supplies up for school children in Ghazaliyah.

The MiTT battalion has collected school supplies over the past year they have been here and wanted to deliver them, with their Iraqi counterparts, to the schools in Ghazaliyah to continue improved relations.

Capt. John Bradley, of the 4/1/6 IA MiTT Bn., has gotten the support from his community back home and other towns to send him supplies for the schools in Ghazaliyah. Over the last year the MiTT battalion has been at FOB Justice, they have been collecting these supplies. The MiTT received generous support from the Sons of the American Revolution, Daughters of the American Revolution, as well as a few schools and churches.

Bradley from Plano, TX said, “I received all these supplies from people in my hometown who just wanted to help out.”

This was the second school supply drop they have done for these children. The school drop was planned by the Iraqis of the MiTT battalion, led by Iraqi army 1st Lt. Fasil Aisam, the battalion S-5. Aisam was in charge of the mission to hand out the supplies to the children. There were two schools that would

be receiving the supplies. They consisted of approximately 1,000 children, grades one thru six.

In order for the activity to go as planned, they had to first pack the school supplies. The supplies were placed in the conference room at FOB Justice. The supplies consisted of book bags, folders, notebooks, paper, erasers, pencils, pens, crayons, coloring books, markers, and soccer jerseys.



photo by 1st Lt. Lindsey Travis, 2 BSTB

Sgt. Stephen Coppick, of Ontario, Calif., with the 2nd Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) grins, enjoying himself, while packing crayons for the Ghazaliyah children.

Once sorted, people walking by the room noticed the team needed help in order to get everything together in time to distribute the next day. Different teams from around the FOB, interpreters, and the 2 BSTB, all came in to help get everything ready. Everyone wanted to come in to help support the community.

Iraqis and Americans alike were filling the bags with smiles on their faces. Sgt. Onei Pandy, S-1 noncommissioned officer and native of Los Angeles, Calif., stated, “This was fun. It felt good to know we are doing something to help the communities around here. It was also good to get away from the normal things we do everyday.”

The effort was an excellent chance for the Soldiers of FOB Justice to come together and to get to participate and feel a part in the improvement of communities in Baghdad.

Iraqi Security Forces



photo by Sgt. James P. Hunter, 2nd BCT PAO

Iraqi Security Forces move out on patrol from in Kateib, Nov. 20. Iraqi Security Forces are playing an important role ensuring security in upheld throughout northwest Baghdad.

“RE-UP”



photo by Sgt. Paul Monroe, 2nd BCT PAO

Sgt. Kevin Keene, Retrans noncommissioned officer, Company C, 2nd Brigade Special Troops Battalion, receives the Oath of Enlistment from Brig. Gen. Joseph Anderson, III Corps Chief of Staff and former Strike commander. Keene re-enlisted for six years to continue service to his country and the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 502nd Infantry Regiment, of the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault).

Local citizens stepping up in Mansour district

Story by
1st Lt. Michael A. Dytrych
1st Bn., 64th Armor Reg.

BAGHDAD- Upon their arrival in June as part of the Coalition troop surge into Iraq, Task Force 1st Battalion, 64th Armor Regiment from Ft. Stewart, Ga., worked to make an immediate impact to improve the security situation in the Mansour District.

By employing aggressive tactics, working hand-in-hand with the Iraqi Army, and just plain working hard 24-hours-a-day, seven-days-a-week, the Desert Rogues were able to drive Al Qaeda operatives out of the area.

Along with the increase in security, the Desert Rogues were able to implement a new security initiative that empowers area volunteers to work with the Iraqi Police and Iraqi Army to provide security for their local neighborhoods.

“This new security initiative is another large step to improving the security and the quality of life for all Iraqi citizens,”

said Lt. Col. Edward Chesney, battalion commander, 1-64 AR.

In September, Operation Rogue Volunteer began with a recruiting drive to assess and screen all volunteers to ensure that they met the Iraqi Police standards before being gainfully employed by Coalition Forces.



Candidates conduct drill and ceremony training. Currently there are 1,147 volunteers of the Mansour district undergoing intense training.

photo by Spc. Sharhonda McCoy, Combat Camera, MCN-I

Army physicians and police officers.

After the recruiting drive ended, local Neighborhood Advisory Councils, tribal sheiks, and religious leaders came together to vouch for each local volunteer. The candidates' applications were then taken to Iraqi Police Headquarters for final vetting and for hiring orders to be produced.

While waiting for their police academy dates to begin, the local volunteers have been contracted by Coalition Forces to provide security for their local neighborhoods. The volunteers will be trained and validated by the ISF working in their neighborhood and provide increased security alongside their ISF counterparts.

A total of 1, 147 volunteers are currently undergoing intensive training, learning proper weapons handling and safety

All applicants were given a literacy and physical fitness test, as well as being medically screened and interviewed by Iraqi

procedures, search techniques, escalation of force procedures, and general military discipline.

REFLECTIONS

son feels. There is only one way to ascertain this intangible; you must talk to the people. Our Soldiers have spent tireless hours developing personal relationships with the residents of Yarmouk and Hateen. They have listened to their problems and worked diligently to bring back essential services and security, with great success.

But this is not their most important accomplishment. What has been brought back to this war torn area is hope. People in Yarmouk and Hateen now believe that a positive outcome is possible. You can see it in the eyes of the old men and the smiling faces of the young children.

They truly believe that life can be better. They have a new found confidence in the professionalism of the Iraqi Security Forces and an entrepreneurial spirit that is amazing to watch.

The men and women of this task force have worked tirelessly to improve the neighborhoods across all facets of life. And they have

done so with honor and respect. More importantly, they demonstrated to the Iraqi Security Forces why we are the best Army in the world. Not because we have the most money or the best firepower, but because of our Soldiers. Today's American Soldiers are some one of the most adaptive and intelligent men and women to ever wear the uniform.

Like the local residents of Yarmouk and Hateen, I too have found hope. Hope that my sons and daughter will not have to return to this

“Like the local residents of Yarmouk and Hateen, I too have found hope,”
said Capt. Jayson Morgan
2nd Battalion, 32nd Field Artillery Regiment

country. Hope that we will be allowed to finish the mission and bring stability to a country with enormous potential. As I look forward to seeing the snow swept plains of Kansas again, I also look forward to seeing how much more progress this task force

will make in the upcoming months. No matter what the future brings for this area, the Soldiers of Task Force Patriot can rest assured that they have made an impact that will last for generations to come. Hold your head up high men and women of 2nd Battalion, 32nd Field Artillery Regiment; you have every right to be called proud Americans!

Improving living conditions



photos by Sgt. James P. Hunter, 2nd BCT PAO

Sgt. Josh Fixx, team leader and native of Inwood, W.V., with Company C., 1st Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, marks a piece of wood for measurements, Nov. 19, at Forward Operating Base Independence.



Pvt. Curtis Shovan, infantryman and native of Port Huron, Mich., with Company C., 1st Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, makes measurements on a board prior to cutting, Nov. 19.



Spc. Gered Vinyard, team leader and native of Dillon, Montana, with Co. C. 1-502 Inf. Reg. hammers a nail into the corner of a frame.



Spc. Gered Vinyard, team leader and native of Dillon, Montana, with Company C, 1st Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) puts together the beginnings of what is supposed to be a loft, Nov. 19, at Forward Operating Base Independence for Soldiers within his platoon.

Coalition Forces assess children's hospital

By 2nd Lt. Adam Buchanan
1st Bn., 64th AR

BAGHDAD – Members of the civil affairs team supporting Task Force 1-64 Armor in western Baghdad, completed an assessment of the Iskan Children's Hospital yesterday afternoon.

The hospital specializes in pediatrics, doing a lot of specialized work in pediatric oncology (leukemia) and Thalassemic diseases. The hospital has 366 beds, but due to a shortage of doctors and nurses, only 186 are being used. The hospital and its adjoining clinic provides for nearly 1,000 local residents everyday.

The team, led by Lt. Rob Behrman, met with Dr. Nuha Nori, administrator for the hospital, and two senior assistants. The Civil Affairs Team will take the hospital's concerns and needs to the Iraqi National Ministry of Health, as well as, the Iskan Medical Warehouse, to better facilitate the backfilling of doctors and nurses to work at the hospital.

Strike troops aid Iraqi girl, Doodah

Story, photo provided
by 1-502nd Inf. Reg.
2nd BCT

TAJI- On Nov. 12, 2007, a patrol from 1st Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment was ending a long patrol at Camp Taji, Iraq. As they approached the entrance to the camp they encountered an Iraqi police unit. The police waved them down to show the patrol a four year old girl with 3rd degree burns over 30% of her body who was in dire condition. The platoon medic was called forward and rendered immediate first aid while the platoon escorted the girl, her father and Iraqi police

to the Medical Clinic on Camp Taji.

Upon arriving, the Americans learned the girl had been the victim of a horrendous attack by Al Qaeda terrorists targeting her family because her father was an employee of American forces. The medical team at the 115th Medical Support Company on Camp Taji rendered lifesaving aid and then evacuated the girl and her father to the 28th Combat Support Hospital in Baghdad where she underwent surgery to begin her long road to recovery.

The following day the American patrol that originally encountered Doodah visited her and her father at the



“Doodah”, her father and SPC Hesselton of HHC/1-502nd IN, the medic who initially treated her at Camp Taji, IZ.

hospital to see how she was recovering and bring along some treats for her.



Happy Thanksgiving



1st Battalion, 75th Cavalry Regiment Soldiers at Joint Security Station Maverick enjoyed their Thanksgiving meal.



Much hard work was put into the Thanksgiving day meal at the Strike DFAC on Camp Liberty.

On Nov. 22, troops throughout the Strike Brigade Combat Team celebrated Thanksgiving. Whether on a forward operating base or at a joint security station, troops got the chance to enjoy some of the holidays finest food.

From Turkey, ham, mashed potatoes, corn, macarroni and chesse to stuffing, rolls and deserts of all sorts, troops enjoyed the holiday feast.

It's hard being away from family, but they made the best of it with their Strike family.



1st Lt. Kristopher Zavala, platoon leader and native of Moraga, Cali., with 1st Platoon, Company C, 1st Squadron, 75th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), serves turkey to troops at Joint Security Station Maverick.



Much hard work was put into the Thanksgiving day meal at Camp Liberty. As shown here, a Soldier puts the finishing touches on a gingerbread house.