

The Daily Roar

VOL. 1, NO. 11

MULTI-NATIONAL DIVISION -- BAGHDAD

DECEMBER 29, 2007

Lancers bridge cultural gaps as security improves

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

ABU OBAED, Iraq – Soldiers in Company A, 2nd ‘Lancer’ Battalion, 5th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division are continuing their work by patrolling in the communities near here building relationships and trust while operating out of a Coalition outpost (COP) west of Baghdad.

On one such patrol on Dec. 18, the Co. A troops examined a bridge in the area that was blocked by Coalition Forces earlier in 2007 to prevent insurgents using the bridge to transport weapons for the purpose of launching attacks against civilian targets and U.S. troops. Thanks to security improvements in their area of operations, the Co. A troops are hoping to reopen the bridge with the help of a local area sheik and other local leaders.

“The bridge was originally blocked because it was a path of movement for Al Qaeda,” said Walnut Creek, Calif. native 1st Sgt. Erik Marquez, top non-commissioned officer for Co. A. “Now that we have better control of the area and the help of the Iraqi security volunteers, we will be able to unblock the bridge so the local populace can make use of it, allowing them more freedom of movement throughout their own tribal areas.”

Co. A routinely works with Soldiers from the 2nd ‘Stallion’ Battalion, 8th



by Staff Sgt. Jon Cupp, 1st BCT, 1st Cav. Div. PAO

After talking to a local tribal sheik about reopening a bridge, Co. A infantrymen, Irving, Texas native Cpl. Allen Doggett (center) and Spc. Juan Ramirez (right) of Shafter, Calif. walk past a bridge during a Dec. 18 patrol.

Cavalry Regiment operate, so for this particular patrol in which the Soldiers met a local tribal sheik to assess the bridge, the 2nd Bn. 5th Cav. Regt. troops were joined by a few Stallion Soldiers.

“We have an information sharing, working partnership (with the ‘Stallions’),” said Marquez. “So we did a joint patrol on the bridge to give their commander an understanding and awareness of some of the things we’re doing.”

Work will begin on the bridge in the coming weeks, however, the Co. A

troops are not just building bridges but are working on other projects as well that will help the Iraqi people help themselves rebuild their nation, according to Marquez.

“They’re (our troops are) doing an excellent job going from a purely security role to doing both that along with working alongside the local Iraqi people in helping them rebuild many of the things that Al Qaeda in Iraq has destroyed,” added Marquez. “It’s not ex-

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courtesy photo

Lights

BAGHDAD - The lights of Airplane Road in southern Baghdad's Doura region shine through the night, Dec. 25. In recent months, the area, which the 1st Infantry Division operates in, has become a model neighborhood for the rest of the Rashid District. Months ago, the area was a scene of house-to-house fighting, but has seen economic and social resurgence in recent weeks. "To really feel it, you have to walk it," said Brig. Gen. James Yarbrough, the Iraqi Assistance Group commander, during a recent trip to the area.

Baghdad Three Day Weather Forecast

Saturday
Partly cloudy
HI: 59F/15C
LO: 35F/2C



Sunday
Partly Cloudy
HI: 59F/15C
LO: 37F/3C



Monday
Sunny
HI: 59F/15C
LO: 37F/3C




The Daily Roar

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Joint patrols find three IEDs, weapons cache during operations

4th IBCT Public Affairs

BAGHDAD – Multinational Division-Baghdad troops found three improvised explosive devices and a weapons cache during clearing operation in Saydiyah, Dec. 27.

During house-to-house clearing, a joint patrol of 4th Battalion, 64th

Armored Regiment ‘Tuskers,’ 3rd Infantry Division, attached to Task Force Dragon, and Iraqi Army soldiers found an IED hidden behind a door.

Another IED was found a short time later hidden between two homes.

A deep buried IED was found when

another joint patrol noticed a crushed wire leading to a manhole.

Ten 120mm mortars were also found in courtyard by a joint patrol as well.

Explosive Ordnance Disposal personnel safely detonated the munitions.

Physician’s assistant arrives at Patriot Brigade

By Spc. Grant T. Okubo

4th IBCT, 10th MTN DIV PAO

FORWARD OPERATING BASE LOYALTY, Iraq – Starting a job in a new place is not always easy, especially if that job is at an aid station on a Forward Operating Base (FOB) in Baghdad.

Capt. Dale Sharp, a physician’s assistant (PA) with 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, seemed right at home Dec. 18 as he conducted his duties seeing and treating 4th BCT, 10th Mtn. Div. Soldiers at the FOB Loyalty aid station. The truth is, he hasn’t been with the Patriot Brigade or known its Soldiers very long.

Sharp joined the brigade about two weeks ago in Kuwait. Before becoming a part of the Patriot Brigade, Sharp worked as a PA for 3rd Infantry Division stationed at Fort Stewart, Ga. “We focus on the strains, the sprains and medication refills,” said Sharp. The work the PAs do includes assisting doctors so they can deal with more severe cases and can attend to their administrative duties, he said.

Sharp, a Voorhees, N.J. native, has been a PA since 1998; however, Sharp said this is his first deployment with the Army. Previously, Sharp has served and deployed multiple times with the Navy as a Hospital Corpsman, and deployed once with the Air Force National Guard. This deployment to Iraq has been quite different from previous deployments for Sharp.

In the Navy, a Corpsman is stationed on either a ship or in

a hospital; whereas in the Army, a PA treats patients on post. Also, Sharp pointed out differences in deployment periods and living conditions. The typical things Sharp has seen Soldiers come in for at the beginning of this deployment are cold and flu-like symptoms.

“That’s the majority of what we’re seeing, but then, we get... a couple of injuries, a couple of skin rashes and things like that,” said Sharp.

The aid station where Sharp works is a level-one care facility, which is responsible for stabilizing incoming trauma patients, explained Sharp. Once stabilized, if necessary, a patient is sent to a level-three care facility, which is equipped with surgical facilities, he said.

Just as Sharp did, other Patriot Brigade Soldiers - PAs, medics and doctors - have taken control of duties at the aid station on FOB Loyalty. Sharp is confident about the performance of this incoming group.

“We’ve all been trained to the 10th degree (at home station),” related Sharp. “We feel confident we can handle trauma, but anytime all hell breaks loose, it’s always confusing. So it will take a few times for us to get everyone up to speed.”

Sharp is very happy with the Patriot Brigade personnel he is working with. “I’m very impressed with the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Brigade Special Troops Battalion medics,” said Sharp.

“They’re an outstanding group of young medics. They’re really on top of their game. So are the 2nd IBCT, 2nd Inf. Div. medics.”



by Spc. Grant T. Okubo

Capt. Dale Sharp, a physician assistant raises Pvt. Phillip Royce Viau’s shoulder during Viau’s visit to the aid station, Dec. 19. Viau, is a native of Fallbrook, Calif.

Iraqi security volunteers have saved the lives of Soldiers

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actly what we were trained for, but our guys have taken to it pretty well.”

Several months ago, working alongside members of the 1st BCT's Embedded Provincial Reconstruction Team, ePRT Baghdad-5, and Civil Affairs specialists from the 492nd Civil Affairs Battalion, the troops in Co. A assisted villagers in rebuilding a local area school. As time past, the Co. A troops have noticed a marked difference in their area of operations, according to Cpl. Allen Doggett, an infantryman with Co. A.

“It was rough and tough when we first got here, but as soon as Al Qaeda moved out of the area, shops began opening and you could see children playing soccer,” said Doggett, who hails from Irving, Texas. “At first people were afraid to come out of their houses, they might tell you where something was but they didn't want to show you because they were afraid if someone saw them with an American that they would be killed.”

After moving into their COP more than seven months ago, the Co. A troops received mortar attacks everyday and fire-fights were not uncommon, however for the past four months things have been relatively quiet, according to Souza who credits the change in the security situation to local reconciliation efforts.

The Co. A troops have built strong relationships with both the local tribal sheiks as well as the local Iraqi security volunteers, who are risking their lives daily to protect their hometown neighborhoods, according to Souza. “They (the sheiks) know our first names and they also know who belongs in the area and who doesn't,” said Souza. “The Iraqi security volunteers have saved a lot of Soldiers lives,

keep the area secure and protect the civilian populace. On this road alone, they've found 18 improvised explosive devices.”

“It's really been worth it keeping that (the ISV) program working,” he added.

In one recent incident, the volunteers received a tip from a local resident which led to the volunteers finding a weapons cache consisting of 175 mortars of various sizes which were then turned over to Co. A troops. The Co. A troops said their experiences have been indelibly etched into their minds.

“I can definitely see the bigger picture from our contributions to help the Iraqi people,” said Ramirez. “It's been a learning experience and an eye-opening experience. You can't really explain it to people back home, you have to be here in the moment. As one of the youngest Soldiers in the platoon, I feel like I've learned a lot and this place has changed everyone, whether they like to admit it or not.”

“After seeing how the people here once had to live in fear, I've learned to appreciate many of the simple things that you have at home a lot more, like the freedom of getting to go to a ballgame,” said Doggett. “I've also learned to appreciate life a lot more.”

“Most of my Soldiers tell me the same thing—that they're glad to see that we've made some progress in the community and although they're tired and ready to go home, they will definitely be able to say that they accomplished something positive while they were in Iraq,” said Souza.

Some future projects that Co. A has been teaming with tribal sheiks and local leaders in the area to bring to local residents include renovation projects on two schools and work to repair a water treatment plant. These projects will also include the participation of ePRT and Civil Affairs teams.



by Staff Sgt. Jon Cupp, 1st BCT, 1st Cav. Div. PAO

After returning from buying goods at a nearby market, villagers on their way home pass by patrolling U.S. troops from Company A, on a bridge near Abu Obaed Dec. 18.