

The Daily Roar

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Top Gun troops patrol Radwaniyah

By Sgt. James P. Hunter

2nd BCT, 101st Abn. Div. PAO

RAWANDIYAH, Iraq—Baghdad is like any big city. Throughout the day the streets are lit up, vendors sell their products to passing Iraqis and traffic can be a nightmare. It seems homes are one on top of the other, with what seems to be little privacy to the neighboring person.

Things are different on the outskirts of Baghdad in Radwaniyah—a very rural area. There is no overhead light—with exception to the gazing moon—traffic doesn't seem to be a problem, and the nearest neighbor could be quite some distance away across many fields and canals.

In areas of Radwaniyah, Iraqi citizens live in mud hut like homes, with minimal electricity. Out back some women prepare meals for their families in a darkened kettle over an open flame. Clothing hangs from a line behind their homes, where cows and chickens can also be seen. Surrounding these Iraqis home, sit fields of produce—their harvest.

Though relatively safe, the Iraqis are still plagued with a few problems.

The biggest problems they face are lack of electricity, lack of and quality of drinking water, and medical care, said Middleville, Mich. native, 1st. Lt. Benjamin Sevald, Spartans platoon leader.

Through home assessments and constant patrols, the troops of 3rd 'Spartans' Platoon, Battery B, 1st Battalion,

320th Field Artillery Regiment, are able to establish positive relationships with the local Iraqis and focus on improving their quality of life.

"My first goal is to keep my (Soldiers) as safe as possible, and to keep the Iraqis in the area as safe as possible, and then to do whatever we can to improve their quality of life,

which I think we are making big steps in that regard right now," Sevald said.

Perris, Calif. native, Sgt. Ziggy Buenroostro, chief truck commander, with the 'Spartans' platoon, said

They are providing good welfare to the local nationals by keeping them informed, tracking their well-being, ensuring they have the necessary water and providing school



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An Iraqi man sits upon his knees while talking with troops of 3rd "Spartans" Platoon in his home in Radwaniyah.

supplies when needed.

"We are doing a great job," he said.

Currently, the 'Spartans' platoon is working to put a water pump and filtration system into the area, said Sevald. Some Iraqis take their water from the canals, which can be very hazardous to their health.

During a patrol, Dec. 3, Sevald sat down with a local man who was new to the area.

Arabic writing covered the walls. The man sat on his knees, with an ashtray to his forefront. Rugs and pillows were scattered across the floor, suggested this was where his

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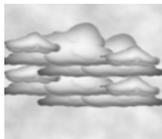
U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. William Greer

Making sure all is well

ABU FAHAD, Iraq – Fort Wayne, Ind. native 1st Lt. Amy Hawkins, a physician's assistant from Company C, 225th Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, Warrior, 25th Infantry Division, Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, checks an Iraqi boy's lymph nodes during a Combined Medical Effort at the Al-Kadesia Primary School in Abu Fahad, Iraq neighborhood north of Baghdad Jan. 5.

Baghdad Three Day Weather Forecast

Thursday
Overcast
HI: 50F/10C
LO: 32F/0C



Friday
Chance of rain
HI: 44F/7C
LO: 33F/1C



Saturday
Clear
HI: 48F/9C
LO: 30F/-1C




The Daily Roar

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Spartan troops patrol daily, addressing needs of Iraqis

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family lays their heads at night.

The man was very open to discussion. Troops in the room



by Sgt. James P. Hunter, 2nd BCT, 101st Abn. Div. PAO

RAWANDIYAH, Iraq-- Pfc. Benjamin Ulery, medic and native of Jay, Maine, with 3rd "Spartans" Platoon, Battery B, 1st Battalion, 320th Field Artillery Regiment, places a bandage on a Iraqi girl in Radwaniyah.

sipped on Chai Tea while listening to the gentlemen's concerns.

They talked to him about his crop situation, given the fact he was new to the area, said Sevald. He wasn't really sure about some of the irrigation aspects. He expressed his concerns about the electricity and the basic necessities he lacks in his area.

After exchanging their goodbyes, the Iraqi man said, "My house is your house."

Further on in the patrol, they came upon two children with warts upon their faces. The medic, Pfc. Benjamin Ulery a native of Jay, Maine, treated the two children and continued on with their mission.

"...you feel the difference when you are wanted," said Buenrostro who feels when they first started patrolling they got what he called a "stink eye," but the people warmed up to them, and showed they respected them and their presence.

In most areas he believes the Iraqis, especially the children, are waiting to greet them. "People treat us with respect."

Earning these Iraqis respect is pertinent, especially to the security aspect, said Sevald. These men and women are the ones who live here, spending their entire days upon

this land. They know who does and does not belong within, and can point out strangers to the platoon.

"It's a pretty rural area, so there aren't a whole lot of

people coming in and out," said Sevald. It's mostly the people who live there and their relatives coming through to visit them.

"They're a huge help to us just in that respect," he added.

"We have good communications with the people there," said Buenrostro. "We try our best to help them out."

With that and constant presence from the troops, the security in the area is very good, said Sevald.

"They always talk about how a few years ago it was dangerous in the area," he added. "They couldn't go the market because it was too dangerous there. People didn't feel safe in their homes—there were bombs going off."

Now they feel safe, and "we are trying to keep it that way," he said.



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Staff Sgt. Chris Murray, a native of Gresham, Ore., with 3rd 'Spartans' Platoon, Battery B, 1st Battalion, 320th Field Artillery Regiment, pulls security during a patrol in Radwaniyah in December. Spartan platoon troops patrol daily, ensuring the needs of the Iraqis are addressed, ensuring their daily well-being.