

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE 1ST BRIGADE COMBAT TEAM

BASTOGNE

MAGAZINE

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 2
JANUARY 2008



NO RESPIRE
FOR THE WICKED
IN SAMARRA





(LEFT)-A Soldier from Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 2nd Battalion, 320th Field Artillery Regiment looks through a set of binoculars during a search for weapons at house which was identified as a location for a possible weapons cache Dec. 17. (BOTTOM RIGHT)-Specialist Alfred Burton, Alpha Battery, 2-320th FAR, pulls security at a Iraqi Police Station in Al Dujayl Dec. 15. He was in the city for meeting between local leaders and U.S. Soldiers.



Brightens Bastogne Holidays

U.S. Army photo by Spc. Eric Rutherford, 115th MPAD

Story by Maj. JP Arnold
Bastogne Public Affairs

COB SPEICHER, Iraq - The USO made its way to COB Speicher for the holidays, bringing with it a star studded troupe including wrestling stars, comedians and Clarksville, Tennessee's own Rachel Smith, Miss USA.

Miss USA 2007, Rachel Smith, visited 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne (Air Assault) Soldiers at Contingency Operating Base Speicher, near Tikrit during a United Service Tour event.

The Clarksville native met Soldiers and admiration was equally divided between the two. "This trip has been so surreal for me because I get to see what is going on over here in the with our troops firsthand, and I get to personally thank them," said Smith.

"It made my deployment (to see Miss USA). It was outstanding and I am glad that the USO has these type functions because it gives Soldiers the opportunity to see celebrities and mingle with them," said 1st BCT Assistant Operations Sergeant, Sgt. 1st Class Deontrez Albury.

Another unique dimension is that Smith's parents have a current Screaming Eagle connection. "My father actually retired from the Army at Fort Campbell. After he retired, I grew up in Clarksville, and my mom continues to work at Blanchfield Army Community Hospital as a family nurse practitioner," she said.

Miss USA went on to comment about notifying her parents about her Iraq travels. "I definitely told my parents that I was going to the Middle East. They were excited and had no reservations about me traveling over here because they knew it was something I was not going to back down from."

Smith was accompanied by a few world-wide notables such as: Robin Williams, Lance Armstrong, Lewis Black, and Kid Rock. Smith said, "I am traveling with some of the biggest celebrities that are out there right now and just to see them giving their time back to the troops, people who make it possible for us to entertain back home, is great." As an ambassador for the United States, Smith's close ties to the Army and Fort Campbell came to a unique focal point in Tikrit. "I never thought in a million years I would be here in this moment, but I will definitely cherish this experience that I have had here in the Middle East with the our men and women in combat," said Smith.

To symbolically recognize the combat visit by Smith, Albury chose to make it a little more official for Miss USA. Albury said, "I got the opportunity on behalf of 1st Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) to present her with our right-shoulder sleeve insignia."



Sgt. 1st Class Deontrez Albury and Miss USA, Rachel Smith, proudly display the "Old Abe" patch of the 101st Airborne Division. (U.S. Army photo by Maj. JP Arnold)



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BM IS PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY THE TASK FORCE BASTOGNE PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE, HHC, 1BCT, 101 ABN, FSC/PAO, COB SPEICHER, IRAQ, APO AE 09393, DSN 849-2501.

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NO SLACK
204 BN **TAKES ON** **327th INF**
SAMMARA

Story by Spc. Rick L. Rzepka
Bastogne Public Affairs

An Appointment in Samarra

SAMARRA, Iraq - There was a merchant in Baghdad who sent his servant to market to buy provisions and in a little while the servant came back, white and trembling, and said, "Master, just now when I was in the marketplace I was jostled by a woman in the crowd and when I turned I saw it was Death that jostled me." "She looked at me and made a threatening gesture, now, lend me your horse, and I will ride away from this city and avoid my fate. I will go to Samarra and there Death will not find me." The merchant lent him his horse, and the servant mounted it, and he dug his spurs in its flanks and as fast as the horse could gallop he went. Then the merchant went down to the marketplace and he saw me standing in the crowd and he came to me and said, "Why did you make a threatening gesture to my servant when you saw him this morning?" "That was not a threatening gesture," I said. "It was only a start of surprise. I was astonished to see him in Baghdad, for I had an appointment with him tonight in Samarra."

"A Joy to Behold"

Much like the servant in this short tale told by British author W. Somerset Maugham in 1933, Al-Qaeda in Iraq has fled Baghdad and other major Iraqi cities in an attempt to escape its fate, and much like the tale's narrator, troopers from the 101st Airborne Division intend to meet them in Samarra.

"No Slack" Soldiers from the 2nd Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, assumed responsibility of the tumultuous city in Oct. 2007. These "Screaming Eagle" Soldiers are concentrating their efforts, to provide Samarra's people with the security they need, to reestablish the city as one of Iraq's most treasured destinations and to encourage the city's dwindling economy.

Samarra, which means "a joy to behold" in Arabic, is one of the four holy Islamic cities of Iraq, and is generally considered to be the largest ancient city in the known world, with architecture dating back to 836 A.D.

In a treacherous effort to turn Iraqis against each other in Feb. 2006, Al-Qaeda in Iraq laced the sacred Al-Askareyya Shrine with explosives, devastating the holy site and fomenting sectarian strife, which claimed the lives of thousands.

In an effort to curb the sectarian violence and restore calm to the nation's capital, Gen. David Petraeus called for the troop surge, which decimated the terrorist organization's ability to operate in Baghdad. "Less than half the al Qaeda leaders who were in Baghdad when this campaign began are still in the city," said Petraeus. "They have fled or are being killed or captured. We are attriting them at a fearsome rate," he said.

As a result, many Al-Qaeda fighters fled north in an attempt to escape the certainty of death in cities like Baghdad and Ramadi, said 1st Sgt. Richard Tucker, whose Cougar Company, 2nd Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment is in charge of providing security to Samarra's citizens.

On November 17th, Coalition Forces kept the appointment with senior Al-Qaeda terrorist Abu Maysara, long with five other AQI terrorists who were killed in Samarra. Abu Maysara, served as a senior adviser to Abu Ayyub al Masri, the Egyptian-born leader of al-Qaeda in Iraq.

"We've taken a fair amount of key players out of the picture here," said Tucker, whose Cougar Company lives in the city among the people.

"We're Not Always Looking For a Fight."

Al Qaeda fighters and other insurgent groups have paralyzed the city with fear and intimidation, which has hurt the local economy and constricted the local government's ability to act. "The general population of Samarra is tired of living in fear," said Tucker. "The biggest threat right now is AQI and common thugs who don't want to make an honest living."

Since arriving in Samarra in October, Tucker says that there have been many positive changes in the embattled city.

"It's a lot different since we took over for the 82nd," said Tucker, who credits the "No Slack" Battalion's philosophy of speak softly but carry a big stick for their success. "Today you can't just be a kick in the

door shoot ‘em up type of leader. Today you almost have to be a politician and a good judge of character as a senior leader,” said Tucker. “We’re not always looking for a fight.” As Tucker’s Cougar Company prowls the winding streets of the city, they often stop to converse with the locals, which Tucker says, “has made a huge difference.” Cougar Company Soldiers operate a 24-hour tip line, which has proven to be instrumental in helping keep the city’s streets safe.

“We hand out cards with our number on it, and it says if you have any knowledge of insurgency activity call this number. When the previous unit tried that, in 6 months they got only four to five calls. We get three or more calls per day on possible IEDs and AQI,” said Tucker. “To win this fight you have to be in the city and living within the city, you can’t be on these super forward operating bases, you have to live amongst the people.”

The Berm

In order to deny the insurgency a safe-haven in Samarra, the fabled “No Slack” Battalion of the 101st Airborne Division, recently launched Operation Fillmore, an extensive effort to canalize the flow of traffic through three major traffic points coming in and out of the city. The city of Samarra is surrounded by a large man-made berm, which is designed to force residents to enter one of two checkpoints leading into the city. Since the berm was first built three years ago, insurgents have breached it, allowing them the freedom to enter and exit the city when they please. Recently, as a part of Operation Fillmore, the berm has been repaired, making illicit entry into the city impossible. “It makes it harder to smuggle weapons into the city and it gives the Iraqi Security Forces command and control of their area of operations,” said Capt. Don Ross, “No Slack” Battle Captain. One of the primary goals of the operation is to open up the flow of goods in and out of the city, said Ross. Cougar Company Soldiers have already seen results from the berm’s refortification. In the last few days, since the berm has been rebuilt, there has been a huge increase in the movement of people in Samarra and the reopening of markets and shops, said Ross.

“They feel more open to come out and carry on without fear,” said Staff Sgt. Rodney Sutton, “No Slack” battle Non Commissioned Officer. “The greatest challenge to the area is to spur economic growth in and around the city,” he said. “If we can solve the economic issues people will be less likely to support the insurgency.”

“Samarra has been our most challenging place to work, in the governance and economics realm, primarily because the local government has been unstable since the ground war,” said Capt. Laura Peters, Provincial Reconstruction Team liaison.

In the past ten months, Samarra has seen four different local mayors, which makes governance of the city difficult. However, Peters and her team are hopeful about the once prosperous city.

“We have made more progress in the past couple of months than we have in the past couple of years, primarily because the 1st Brigade Combat Team commander is visionary in the sense that he understands that we need to open up the economic lines of communication,” said Peters. By allowing the people of Samarra the freedom of movement necessary to sell their goods and services, the PRT said that economic growth and eventual stability is inevitable.

To further foster Samarra’s economic growth, the PRT here is currently trying to open a bank to provide micro-loans to small businesses. According to Peters, stimulating the economy with capital will get business to reopen by invigorating the trade and exchange that once made Samarra great.

“The greatest thing about Samarra is that it used to be a booming market economy with a lot of industry, so it really has a ton of potential,” said Peters. “If we can clean Samarra up security wise, that will allow people to get back to work,” she said.

For Samarra’s citizens, the sight of the markets reopening and traffic beginning to flow is a joy to behold. As they turn their back on Al-Qaeda, their patience and determination to make the city thrive again is evident by the sight of the hundreds of people shopping and selling, bartering and trading, downtown. As Al-Qaeda’s grip slips on the city, and as they scramble to reorganize, Cougar Company and “No Slack” Soldiers will be waiting for them, making good on their appointment in Samarra.

NO SLACK TROOPERS DON “OLD ABE” COMBAT PATCH

Story and photos by
Spc. Rick Rzepka

SAMARRA, Iraq - “It doesn’t matter what patch you have worn on your right shoulder before, when you wear the patch of the 101st, you’re wearing the patch of the fighting outfit that has served this county with honor since WWII,” said Lt. Col. J.P. McGee, “No Slack” battalion commander.

Sixty-three years to the day after the 101st Airborne Division took on the German hoards at the Battle of Bastogne, 101st Soldiers from 2nd Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment carried on the proud tradition of wearing the “Old Abe” patch on their right shoulders once again.



“To all of you who are putting on this patch for the first time, it may not mean much to you now, but someday, you’re going to be sitting in your backyard with your kids and you’re going to be able to say, I wore that patch,” said Col. Michael McBride, 1st Brigade Combat Team Commander.

“I’ve been wearing this patch for 16 years, and I’ll wear it proudly for the rest of my life,” he said.

McBride acknowledged that the “No Slack” Battalion has a tough mission in providing security to the people of Samarra and that they are making a tangible difference in the people’s lives. “You can feel the difference,” said McBride. “I am hopeful for this place.”



Capt. Josh Kurtzman, Cougar Company Commander slaps “Old Abe” on the shoulder of a platoon leader at Patrol Base Olsen in Samarra, Iraq Dec. 20, 2007.

FALLEN SOLDIER'S FAMILY GIVES GIFT OF KNOWLEDGE



Capt. Tony Keller, 1/32 Cavalry Regiment, holds a photo of Spc. Michael Rodriguez, whose family donated school supplies to Iraqi children. Spc. Rodriguez was killed in action in As-Sadah, Iraq in April, 2007.

**Story and photo by
1st Lt. Scott Marler
1st Squadron
32nd Cavalry Regiment**

Balad-Ruz, Iraq – The note read, “The school supplies that we are giving you today are from the family of a Soldier who died in Iraq, who loved the children of Iraq. His name is Spc. Michael Rodriguez.”

On Nov. 8, Capt. James Goethals, a Civil-Military Affairs Officer stationed in Eastern Diyala Province of Iraq and a crowd of almost 100 young girls at the Dur-Mandali Primary School for Girls in the city of Balad-Ruz, Iraq gathered to remember a Soldier with a big heart.

Spc. Rodriguez was assigned to 5th Squadron, 73rd Cavalry Regiment, 3rd

Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, and was killed in action in April 2007, when multiple suicide bombers driving explosives-laden vehicles attacked his unit's base in As-Sadah, Iraq.

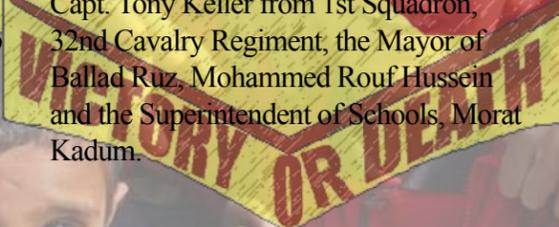
He had written home telling his family about how much affection he had for the children he saw on patrol, and so his family turned their grief to a positive end, by collecting school supplies for Iraqi children.

Capt. Goethals took over the mission of delivering the school supplies when Spc. Rodriguez's unit rotated home this past October. He was accompanied by Capt. Tony Keller from 1st Squadron, 32nd Cavalry Regiment, the Mayor of Ballad Ruz, Mohammed Rouf Hussein and the Superintendent of Schools, Morat Kadum.

Following the presentation of the school supplies, Capt. Keller, Mayor Hussein and Superintendent Kadum spoke to the school teachers, thanking them for their service to the community and emphasizing the importance of an education, both for these children and the nation of Iraq.

Once the presentation was over, the children transitioned from an orderly formation to a sight similar to an American elementary school running, laughing and staring at the American Soldiers who accompanied the delivery.

“I want to thank all of you young ladies here today for going to school. You guys are the future of Iraq. Don't let anyone stop you from getting an education. Always remember Specialist Rodriguez.”



AN ALPHA COMPANY CHRISTMAS!

**Story and photos by Shelby Monroe
Freelance Journalist**

COB SPEICHER, Iraq- In the days leading up to Christmas here at COB Speicher, the Halliburton elves had done their best to introduce the holiday spirit to the base. At the DFAC (dining facility), cutouts of Santa decorated the walls. Plastic turkeys left over from a Thanksgiving display were coated with fake snow and added to a winter scene. On the bus, the radio played Christmas music between country hits. But it was easy to forget Christmas was approaching, easy to look at it as just another day.

The Soldiers of Alpha Company, 1st Special Troops Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team, didn't want to let Christmas pass unnoticed, so they took to spreading holiday cheer outside the wire and transformed humvees into sleys and used the holiday as an excuse to give out candy, toys and a variety of other gifts to Iraqi families in the area.

At 8:30 a.m. Christmas morning, the Soldiers gathered near their humvees, where 2nd Lt. Tom Ryder, wearing a Santa cap, delivered the briefing. Reading down a list of activity from the last twenty-four hours, it seemed as though Ryder was letting us know who had been naughty and who had been nice. In a sense, he was. His list focused more on the naughty, though-- the insurgents and their most recent bad behavior.

We loaded into the trucks. In my truck were three sergeants: Bill Ferguson, Adam Johnson, and Matthew Schultz; and Spc. Anthony Jerbasi. The higher ranking enlisted men had turned out in greater numbers for this mission so lower ranking Soldiers could have the day off. Also along for the ride was the company commander, Capt. John Cunningham.

Before we could dispense any Christmas cheer, our convoy was redirected to an area where an IED had been discovered. Together with another convoy, the Alpha Company Soldiers monitored the area until

the IED was detonated in a controlled blast, and it was safe to move on.

The convoy pulled up between two modest, mud and straw homes, and we waited for curious faces to appear. Slowly, cautiously, the occupants emerged, until it became clear our visit was friendly, and the children hurried to see what the Soldiers had for them. They were given beanie babies and soccer balls, candy and other snacks, and it was fun to witness their happy confusion.

At our next series of stops, the kids seemed more prepared for our arrival, and wasted no time getting to the Santas in camouflage. Somehow the same kids managed to appear at more than one house and made off with more than their share of the goods. Some seemed impossible to satisfy.

An Iraqi interpreter, Billy, had accompanied us on our rounds, but he spent most of his time assisting Capt. Cunningham, who wanted to take the opportunity to speak with the senior family members. That meant the rest of the Soldiers had to try their best to interact with the rest of the men,

women and children with only a handful of Arabic words and some makeshift sign language. Sometimes an Iraqi would volunteer a word in English, and everyone would nod with relief.

The last stop was more like the first. The kids were friendly but shy, and delighted to be the recipients of this unexpected windfall. A female dog and her puppy also benefitted from the visit, receiving beef jerky and crackers, and a great deal of attention from Soldiers who obviously missed their pets at home.

They had completed their mission and perhaps been caught up, however briefly, in the holiday spirit.

It will take more than soccer balls and bags of candy to gain the support and trust of the Iraqi people,

but maybe they will remember these small acts of kindness and they will think about working with us, or at least choose not to help those working against us. Watching the Iraqi mothers and fathers watch the Soldiers kicking the soccer ball around with their kids, it seemed like this might be possible.



An Iraqi girl plays with her new soccer ball given to her by Soldiers from 1st Special Troops Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division.

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BASTOGNE ARTILLERYMEN

IN IRAQ AN ARTILLERYMAN IS EXPECTED TO DO MANY DIFFERENT JOBS. NOBODY KNOWS THIS BETTER THAN THE 2ND BATTALION 320TH FIELD ARTILLERY REGIMENT...BALLS!

Story and photos by Sgt. 1st Class Kevin Doheny
Bastogne Public Affairs

The long and storied history of the United States Field Artillery dates back to 1775, when Henry Knox was appointed Chief of Artillery of the Continental Army. During the War of Independence, the Field Artillery evolved into a formidable entity on the battlefield, prompting Gen. Marquis de Lafayette to remark at the Battle of Yorktown, "Upon my honor I speak the truth. American Artillery is one of the wonders of the Revolution."

Throughout the early years of the country, artillerymen were considered the Army's elite. Their pay was above the rate for infantrymen and even the cavalry. In 1784, when all of the Army was abolished except for a single detachment of 80 men to guard government stores, those men were artillerymen. Thus the artillery is the only part of the Army which has been in continuous service since the revolution.

Today's artillerymen still find themselves acquiring targets and firing rounds, but in today's fight, they are doing more than just pulling the lanyards on the big guns. The Bastogne Brigade's "King of Battle", 2nd Battalion, 320th Field Artillery Regiment still operates their howitzers and utilize their skills by putting "steel on target", but with the vast area of operations the brigade covers, these Soldiers are also conducting operations which are usually associated with infantrymen.

Two-fold mission

The mission for Headquarters and Headquarters Battery is two-fold. The battery consists of personnel supporting the battalion Soldiers conducting the daily operations outside the wire, while also owning its own battle space, AO Hammer, acting as an infantry company.

For the Soldiers whose "foxhole" keeps them within the boundaries of LSAA, their fight is as important as those Soldiers who are out in their Humvees or conducting dismounted patrols. "Sometimes it is easy for the Soldiers who aren't out in the battle space everyday to think that their job isn't important, but to the contrary," said Lt. Col. John Dunleavy, commander of 2nd Bn., 320th FAR. "Ask any of those guys on the ground and they would tell you the same thing. Everyone supports a mission in their own way. This battery gets to do both, as a maneuver force and the headquarters of the battalion".



The central hub for all operations within AO Balls is the tactical operations center. This hub coordinates all movement within the battalion's borders. They relay messages, coordinate with other moving pieces such as air support, explosive ordnance disposal, route clearance, just to name a few. They are the eyes and ears for the ground forces.

"We track everything that goes in and out of LSAA," said Pfc. Damien Stafford, radio operator in the battalion TOC. "We must know the exact location of everyone in case we need to conduct a counter-fire mission or coordinate air medical evacuation and explosive ordnance response. This is extremely important because lives could be at stake." According to Stafford, his "portion of the fight" is very important because the information being passed is imperative to mission success.

"I get the information from the troops on the ground; I pass that information back to the battle captain who passes that information off to the command. Once the command makes their decision, which comes back to us, we must relay it to the troops on the ground so they can act on it," Stafford said.

Supporting the fight

With long, tiring days of no visible recognition, the motivated troops of Golf, 426th Brigade Support Battalion, Forward Support Company, haven't let the repetition and tireless work get them down.

"The Soldiers in the FSC are the lifeline for the troops at Forward Operating Base O'Ryan and here at LSAA," said Dunleavy. "Imagine our artillerymen out there having to conduct dismounted instead of mounted patrols to distant locations without their vehicles. This would be the case without the tireless effort from the hard-working Soldiers in the FSC maintenance shop maintaining their vehicles."

Making sure their artillerymen brethren have the ability to be mobile, the Soldiers in the maintenance shop work countless hours working to keep the heavily-armored Humvees on the roads. They perform above-operator level maintenance while assisting those Soldiers who routinely visit the shop with daily checks and services. According to the senior mechanic, Staff Sgt. Bryan Lovelace, the added weight of the armor to the Humvees has provided a bit of a challenge to keep the vehicles running.

"We are doing much of the same maintenance as we would do back in the rear," said Lovelace, who is also the shop foreman, "but we have noticed ourselves doing more and more shock and spring maintenance, because of the extreme weight of the vehicles. We are changing at least two to three a day." Lovelace added, because the Soldiers within the battalion are conducting so many missions, the pace at which they must "turn around" a vehicle, is at an intense rate.

"The toughest thing is, they don't have the time to bring their vehicles here to perform the routine maintenance," said Lovelace. "Eventually that stuff adds up, and routine maintenance becomes much more." Even with the pace at which his troops are turning wrenches, Lovelace said they are performing above and beyond.

"With the amount of people that we actually have turning wrenches, we are doing twice the work. Seven people are doing the work of 20; my guys are giving all they have. I try to give them motivation by letting them know that they are doing the same work of a unit with twice as many people."

Expanded role

Most of the Soldiers in the battalion live at the large logistical area known as Anaconda, but a battery of Soldiers call another place home.

FOB O'Ryan is located just over five miles south from the massive logistical hub.

The "Automatic" Soldiers of Alpha Battery are out at the outpost, where it is inviting to the local populace in the area to come to the gate and interact with them. This provides the battery with the ability to actively engage with citizens who are truly concerned for what is going on in the area.

"Strategically it is not a big base, but it makes the Iraqis feel more comfortable in coming to us for assistance and intelligence," said Staff Sgt. Chris DeMarsico. "That isn't something they probably would do if this was a large FOB. A lot of citizens come to the gate and share information and give us good intelligence, and they don't get the scared impression of going to LSAA."

The "Automatic" Soldiers have an expanded role in their battle space. While providing fire-support capabilities with their howitzers located at the FOB, the Soldiers are also actively engaged with providing assistance to the citizens and training

the local Iraqi army and police.

"I would say our main effort is providing security to the town of Al Dujayl and other small communities around here, but we also train the IA and IPs and assist with their operations," said DeMarsico.

According to DeMarsico, being at O'Ryan is a bit less stressful than dealing with all the things that come with living on a large FOB. Using this less-stressful lifestyle, he and his Soldiers can have autonomy and focus on the tasks at hand. He attributes his Soldiers professionalism and dedication to being able to focus, sometimes without direct supervision.

"My guys have a discipline that is way above most standards, DeMarsico said. "They don't veer left or right, and they have the intelligence to teach the IP and IA what their discipline level should be."

He also added the unit's autonomy has developed a sense of togetherness, which may have not been attainable at LSAA.

"The camaraderie here is amazing. Since we are all here in this small place, we have learned to adapt to one another and share in each other's beliefs."

The awakening

When most of the units in the Bastogne Brigade made their way to their respective "foxholes" in the Salah ad Din province during the early days of the movement into Iraq, the "Balls of the Eagle" Soldiers were spread to different locations. The "Bold Steel" Soldiers of Bravo Battery were affected by this more than anyone in the battalion.

Originally sent to FOB Summerall in the 1st Battalion, 327th Infantry's AO to assist with Operation Bulldog Hammer in November, these Soldiers have adapted to all situations presented to them.

"It's tough not to have a place to call home," said Estep. "Even if the location you are at doesn't have the best of conditions, it is at the very least a place you can hang your hat at the end of the day. Soldiers can always improve their foxholes; sort of speak, but the Bold Steel Soldiers were the "nomads" of the battalion. They did exceptional work working with 1-327, and I was glad to see them finally get settled in here at LSAA."

The development of the Concerned Local Citizens program within the area has been a focal point to the battery. The battery routinely conducts patrols meeting with them, trying to find what they can provide in order to keep the citizens in the communities as safe as possible.

"We take time to stop at the CLC checkpoints and ask them what it is they need on a routine basis," said Pfc. Aaron Hall. "When we do this, it helps us develop a relationship with them, and hopefully they will learn to work with us more effectively."

"It is essential that we support the CLC movement," said Dunleavy. "The awakening in this area has given us a unique opportunity to facilitate the security of the people in the area. We must develop a strong partnership with them as well as the ISF in our battle space."

"I think we are making a difference in the area, I might only be in the turret manning the gun, but I can see it everyday." According to Estep, it shows the commitment to the mission that the "Bold Steel" Soldiers are out working long, hard days providing support to these checkpoints.

"These guys are risking their lives each and everyday for the Iraqis," said Estep. "Delivering barriers to a check point just isn't as simple as just driving them out to a location and dropping them off. There are risks in everything we do, and dropping the barriers off to a checkpoint turns into a military operation. 'Bold Steel' Soldiers have to check route status, check the latest significant activities, coordinate logistics, perform pre-combat checks, convoy out to a location and provide security while out. Sounds easy, but it is very complex; they are a professional bunch."

Kings of Battle

"I am amazed at what every Soldier in this battalion does everyday," said Dunleavy. "Whether you are manning a gun, patrolling a street or turning a wrench, each Soldier has a piece in the security and peace of this area. We are only in the beginning stages of our deployment and we have a long way to go, but I know with the leadership of our officers and non-commissioned officers, we will continue to make strides everyday."

Dunleavy also said his artillerymen interacting with the populace have made significant progress to the fight.

"My brigade commander once told me that the most powerful weapon we have in this fight is not a gun, but when a Soldier gets out of a vehicle and talks to the people. He was absolutely correct. Our tone, stance and the way we treat the people can be more powerful than a 105 mm round."

eye of the eagle

the world as Bastogne Soldiers see it

Photos by Bastogne PAO



A "No Slack" Soldier keeps his eye on his sector, as Soldiers catalogue Iraqi homes just outside of Samarra, Iraq.



Sgt. 1st Class Dennis Howard, "Balls of the Eagle," greets Iraqi children.



"No Slack" Soldiers search for weapons caches near Samarra, Iraq.



Private 1st Class Binh Nguyen, 2nd Battalion, 320th Field Artillery Regiment, keeps the force rolling.



Alpha company "Gators" from 2nd Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment, cross a field in search of enemy weapons caches just outside of Samarra, Iraq.



Sgt. 1st Class Ronald Wilson, senior medic for 2nd Battalion, 320th Field Artillery Regiment, looks into the mouth of a Concerned Local Citizen who complained of recent mouth pain.



Capt. Josh Kurtzman, Cougar Company Commander, "No Slack", speaks with Adm. William Fallon, Central Command Chief in Sammara, Iraq.



A Soldier marks a doorway after searching a home for contraband.



A Soldier with 2nd Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment, waits to fire a Barrett .50-caliber rifle in Samarra, Iraq.



A Guided Multiple Launch Rocket System puts steel on a target in Bayji, Iraq. The rockets were confirmed to have destroyed their intended target, disrupting insurgent activities in the area.



TODAY, TOMORROW, FOREVER...

A SNAPSHOT OF THE HISTORY OF THE 101ST AIRBORNE DIVISION (AA)

“Chargin’” Charlie Beckwith, founder of America’s elite counter-terrorism unit “Delta Force,” commanded the 2nd Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment in Vietnam in 1968. Beckwith, who took a .50-caliber round through the stomach and survived, was once quoted as saying, “My men and I have decided that our boss, the President of the United States, is as tough as woodpecker lips.”

The 1st Squadron, 32nd Cavalry Regiment traces its lineage directly to the 32nd Armored Regiment, which gained notoriety during WWII. The most famous Soldier in the 32nd Armor Regiment during the 1950s was Elvis Presley, assigned to Company A, 1st Medium Tank Battalion, 32nd Armor Regiment, Combat Command C at Ray Barracks in Friedberg.

March 24, 1966 marked the beginning of Operation Fillmore for the 1st Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment in Vietnam. More than 350 enemy were killed during the operation, which was conducted in the Phu Yen Province.

During Operation Desert Storm the 327th conducted the largest air assault operation in history. By seizing territory deep within Iraq, the Brigade’s actions helped assure a quick and decisive victory.

The 320th Glider Field Artillery Battalion arrived into battle by glider and parachutes on 6 June 1944. Poor visibility and low ceiling made air navigation extremely difficult. As a result, gliders were badly scattered for miles along the drop zone. By 0930 the following day, only two howitzers were in action - one firing north and one firing south.

