

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE 1ST BRIGADE COMBAT TEAM

BASTOGNE

MAGAZINE

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BALLS!

2ND BATTALION, 320TH
FIELD ARTILLERY REGIMENT
PUTS STEEL ON ALI BABA





Bandit Soldiers from 1st Squadron, 32nd Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, (Air Assault), push a motorcycle from a weapons cache site near the Bichigan area, northeast of Balad, Iraq Jan. 16. These cavalry Soldiers recently conducted Operation Hood Harvest, in which Bandit Soldiers cleared the area of enemy extremists. The motorcycle was destroyed along with other munitions and weapons, denying insurgents a safehaven in the Al Duluyiah area.

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MAGAZINE

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BALLS OF THE EAGLE

SCREAMING EAGLE ARTILLERY FIRES MOST ROUNDS SINCE 2003

Story and photos by 1st Lt. Jonathan J. Springer

2nd Battalion, 320th Field Artillery Regiment

1st Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (AA)

Al Jazeera Desert, Iraq – “Screaming Eagle” Soldiers from the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, (Air Assault), took part in a combined arms counter-insurgency mission, dubbed “Operation Fulton Harvest,” Jan. 11 through Jan. 13 to pacify the restive area outside of Samarra, Iraq.

Soldiers from Alpha Battery, 2nd Battalion, 320th Field Artillery, acting in direct support of 2nd Battalion, 327th Infantrymen, fired over 1,100 high-explosive rounds from M-119A2 Howitzers, which resulted in the destruction of enemy weapons caches, training camps, underground tunnel systems, and IED manufacturing cells.

“This is the largest amount of rounds fired in direct support of a maneuver operation this battalion has done since liberating the city of Al Najaf in 2003,” said Lt. Col. John Dunleavy, commander of 2nd Battalion, 320th Field Artillery Regiment. Dunleavy said the operations that have occurred across Iraq over the past week, Operation Phantom Phoenix and Operation Iron Harvest in northern Iraq, have been significant in disrupting the insurgency here. Dunleavy acknowledges that al Qaeda in Iraq has waned since the troop surge and is now on the run, seeking respite in places like Samarra and Bayji. “This operation is also significant in the fact that, during our time here, Soldiers are not just thinking we will make things better, Soldiers are convinced we are going to win,” said Dunleavy.

Operation Fulton Harvest was planned by the famed “No Slack” infantry battalion, also part of the 1st BCT, with the intention of disrupting enemy activity near Samarra.

“This operation was significant in that many of the organic capabilities of the 1st BCT, were brought together to bear on a significant enemy training camp in northern Iraq. This operation will go a long way in showing these insurgents that the 1st BCT can bring significant pressure on the enemy very quickly,” said Maj. Elton Crawford, executive officer for 2-320th FAR.

Crawford said that Operation Fulton Harvest marks the second time since the battalion’s transfer of authority that the 1st BCT responded with ‘critical enablers’ such as attack aviation, artillery, and close air support, in response to changes in battlefield conditions.

“This latest operation clearly validates our mindset and one of our unspoken mottos of ‘there are many units within the 1st BCT who can perform maneuver missions, but only one that can provide the lethal and devastating effects of the artillery, and that is the 2-320th FAR, ‘Balls of the Eagle,’” said Crawford.

One of the things that has been critical to the 2-320th FAR’s success while deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, has been the pre-deployment training.

“Incorporating lessons learned from previous OIF rotations, 2-320th FAR leaders set into motion an aggressive plan last year to train Soldiers for both maneuver and traditional field artillery missions during our 12-month refit at Fort Campbell, KY. In hindsight, our training plan was right on the money for what we have encountered in Iraq this go-around,” Crawford said.

1st Sgt. Frank Alonso, Alpha Battery first sergeant, agrees.

“I feel so proud to see these Soldiers do their job and also perform to the best of their ability. I feel like we made a huge impact during this operation. We shot artillery at our objectives, destroyed or neutralized our targets, and we treated the civilians around the firing point with dignity and respect in the process,” said 1st Sgt. Frank Alonso, Alpha Battery.

Alonso also said it was great to be able to work with his infantry brothers during this combined arms fight, and that the battery looks forward to shooting more artillery in support of operations in Iraq. The Army’s field Artillerymen continue to be one of the most versatile and effective tools in our fight to defeat terrorism, he said.



Soldiers from Alpha Battery, 2nd Battalion, 320th Field Artillery Regiment, fire rounds from their M119A2 Howitzer during Operation Ful-ton Harvest in the Al Jazeera desert Jan. 13, 2008. Alpha Battery fired more than 1,100 rounds in less than 48 hours, which neutralized an al Qaeda training camp.



ELECTRICITY



CRITICAL TO CALMING IRAQ

A Soldier with the 1st Squadron, 32nd Cavalry Regiment, ensures that an electrical substation near Balad, Iraq is secure. The squadron is committed to helping Iraqis re-energize the electrical situation there.

Story and photos by Spc. Rick Rzepka 1st BCT PAO

For many Americans life without electricity would be a shock, but for the millions of Iraqis who live with the sporadic and ever-changing electric circus here, electricity, or the lack of, is a part of everyday life.

The 1st Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), along with the Iraq Transition Assistance Office, recently stepped up efforts to help shed light on Salah ad-Din province's power problems by evaluating local substations to determine the best way forward.

Currently, Iraq generates 5,000 megawatts of power which is less than half of the actual demand of 11,000 megawatts, said Kevin Thomas, electric transmission advisor to the ITAO.

"It's a \$28 billion dollar problem and up to a 12-year solution," said Thomas, who recently toured Salah ad-Din's electrical distribution center in Tikrit as well as substations in the cities of Samarra, Bayji and Balad.

Thomas, who blames poor maintenance and poor planning by Saddam Hussein's government, estimates that Iraq's electrical grid would have collapsed within three years after 2003. "They would have had maybe 1,500 megawatts for a 6,500 megawatt demand."

Iraqis are also consuming more power than ever before due to an increased demand for electronic consumer goods such as air-conditioners and microwave ovens.

Thomas credits Iraqi ingenuity with helping stave off the collapse of the grid during the economic embargo that followed the first Gulf War. "The Iraqis are very cagy people and to coin an American phrase they are the best Okies that I have ever seen. They can fix anything with bailing wire and bubblegum and that's what they did," said Thomas.

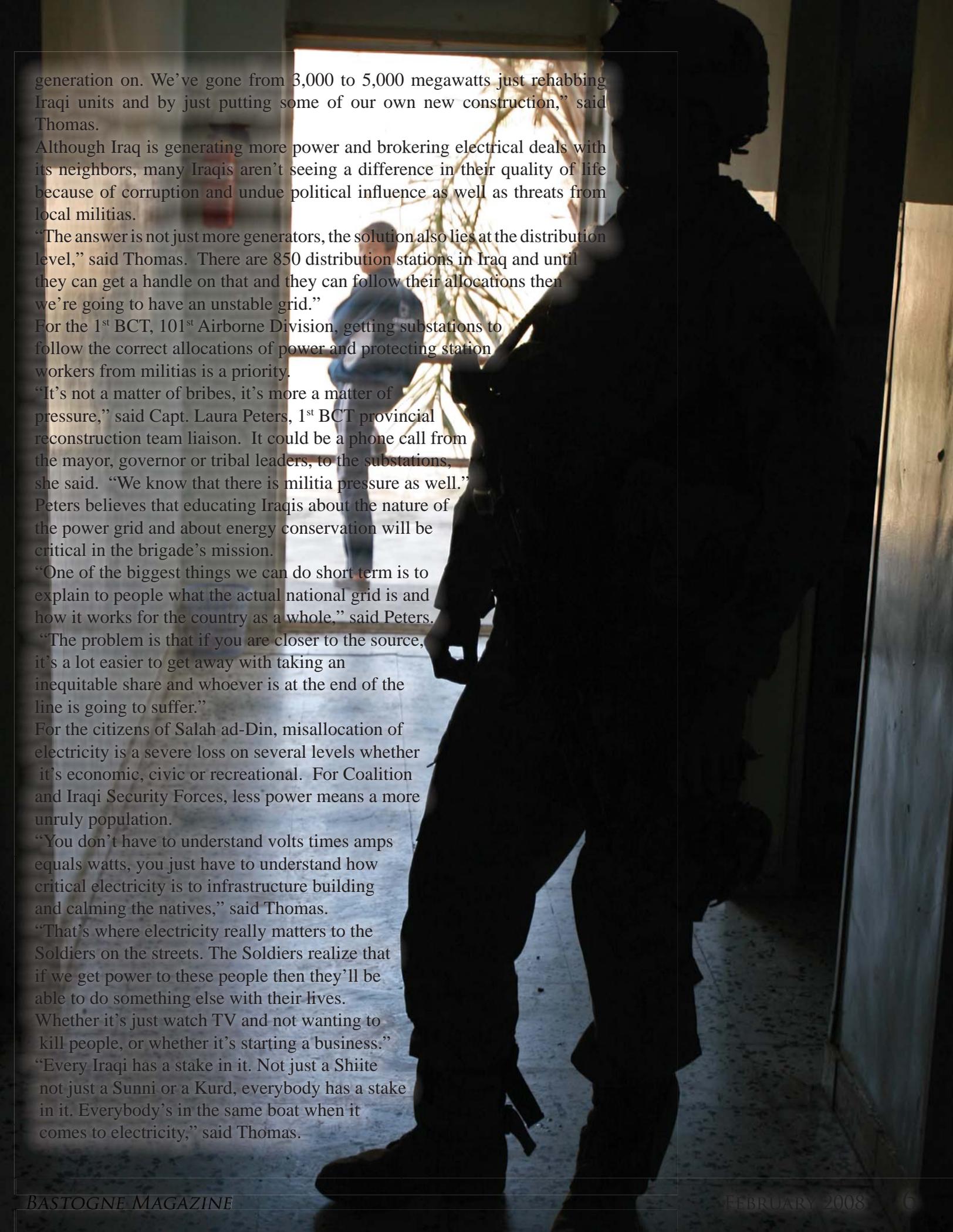
Since 2003, the Provincial Reconstruction Team in Baghdad has allocated more than \$4.3 billion dollars towards Iraq's electrical sector, but according to Thomas, simply throwing money at the problem isn't enough.

"We came in with quite a bit of arrogance and said, no you sit in a corner we'll do this and hand you a turn key and that's really hurt us because we could have been helping them with maintenance," Thomas said.

Now, however, Thomas and the ITAO are approaching things with a more coordinated effort, which involves The Ministry of Electricity, the ITAO and Brigade Combat Teams across Iraq. "We're continually bringing



Capt. Laura Peters, Provincial Reconstruction Team Liaison and Kevin Thomas, an electric advisor, discuss the electricity situation in the Salah ad-Din province.



generation on. We've gone from 3,000 to 5,000 megawatts just rehabbing Iraqi units and by just putting some of our own new construction," said Thomas.

Although Iraq is generating more power and brokering electrical deals with its neighbors, many Iraqis aren't seeing a difference in their quality of life because of corruption and undue political influence as well as threats from local militias.

"The answer is not just more generators, the solution also lies at the distribution level," said Thomas. There are 850 distribution stations in Iraq and until they can get a handle on that and they can follow their allocations then we're going to have an unstable grid."

For the 1st BCT, 101st Airborne Division, getting substations to follow the correct allocations of power and protecting station workers from militias is a priority.

"It's not a matter of bribes, it's more a matter of pressure," said Capt. Laura Peters, 1st BCT provincial reconstruction team liaison. It could be a phone call from the mayor, governor or tribal leaders, to the substations, she said. "We know that there is militia pressure as well." Peters believes that educating Iraqis about the nature of the power grid and about energy conservation will be critical in the brigade's mission.

"One of the biggest things we can do short term is to explain to people what the actual national grid is and how it works for the country as a whole," said Peters.

"The problem is that if you are closer to the source, it's a lot easier to get away with taking an inequitable share and whoever is at the end of the line is going to suffer."

For the citizens of Salah ad-Din, misallocation of electricity is a severe loss on several levels whether it's economic, civic or recreational. For Coalition and Iraqi Security Forces, less power means a more unruly population.

"You don't have to understand volts times amps equals watts, you just have to understand how critical electricity is to infrastructure building and calming the natives," said Thomas.

"That's where electricity really matters to the Soldiers on the streets. The Soldiers realize that if we get power to these people then they'll be able to do something else with their lives.

Whether it's just watch TV and not wanting to kill people, or whether it's starting a business."

"Every Iraqi has a stake in it. Not just a Shiite not just a Sunni or a Kurd, everybody has a stake in it. Everybody's in the same boat when it comes to electricity," said Thomas.



*Story and photo by
Spc. Rick Rzepka
1st BCT PAO*



Webster's Dictionary defines "invertebrate" as lacking in strength or vitality or as an animal without a backbone. The Army defines the Noncommissioned Officer Corps as the backbone of the Army and without it, the organization would resemble a jellyfish.

Twenty-nine Soldiers crossed the professional threshold into the corps of Non Commissioned Officers, Jan. 12.

The 426th Brigade Support Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, held an induction ceremony at the Contingency Operating Base Speicher theatre here, to mark a Soldier's right of passage from the enlisted into the NCO ranks.

"NCOs have a tough, demanding, but very rewarding job," said Command Sgt. Maj. Lester Stephens, 426th BSB. "You are in the best position to secure the trust and confidence of Soldiers by leading by example," he said to the newly inducted sergeants. The NCO corps is the strength and heart of our great organization and is the stabilizer and force of our army, said Stephens.

The tradition of commemorating the passing of a Soldier to a noncommissioned officer is traced to the Army of Fredrick the Great. Before a Soldier could be recognized in the full status of a NCO, he was required to stand four watches, one every four days. At the first watch the private Soldiers appeared and claimed a gift of bread and brandy. The company NCOs came to the second watch for beer and tobacco, and the First Sergeant reserved his visit for the third watch, when he was presented with a glass of wine and a piece of tobacco on a tin plate. Today, NCO induction ceremonies are typically without the libations, but they still hold the same symbolic importance as those which preceded them.

During the ceremony three candles are lit, which represent the three parts of the NCO Creed. The red, white and blue candles are symbolic of the nation's flag as well as the sacrifice of the NCOs who have given their lives in defense of democracy. It's like a right of passage, said Sgt. Matthew Slater, security platoon team leader, who was an inductee in the ceremony. "It was a very prestigious event and I was honored to be able to go through that," he said.

Over time, the role of the NCO has evolved from primarily a disciplinary position to a more rounded function that is considered the backbone of today's modern Army.

An NCO means making sure Soldiers are trained to standard and are capable of meeting the demands of war, said Sgt. Jessica Miller, 1st BCT paralegal who was also recently inducted into the NCO corps. The NCO, especially in the war we are in now, is the keeper of Army standards, she said.

"A pat on the back applied at the proper moment can have a dramatic influence in a developing leader," said former Sgt. Maj. of the Army William

ON THE ROAD WITH 426TH

Story and photos by 1st Lt. Drew Hanson
426th Brigade Support Battalion

For the Soldiers of the Security Platoon of Alpha Company, 426th Brigade Support Battalion, their task is conveyed as very clear and concise, to secure.

In reality, however, the roles and responsibilities of the security platoon are much more complex and multifaceted.

According to the Soldiers of the security element responsible for protecting the combat logistics patrols, the enemy that threatens them is an ever-adapting opponent, and consequently the operations of their forces protecting each and every convoy must be equally as agile and unpredictable.

Although the Soldiers are a mixture of Soldiers from throughout the battalion's companies, they fall under the control of A Company. They were assembled in order to fill a much needed mission set for the battalion. These Soldiers were put through extensive training on a wide array of convoy security operations. Each Soldier was trained on how to recognize threats on the roads and how to proficiently use their assigned personal and crew served weapons.

"As the platoon sergeant for the security platoon it is an honor to work with Soldiers from different mission oriented skills. I was able to train them on how to secure convoys and what it means to have so many lives in your hands each time we go outside the wire," said Sgt. 1st Class Shad McCrary, security platoon, A Company, 426th BSB.

The primary responsibility for the security platoon is to provide full, 360-degree coverage of all convoy elements in order to ensure the safe and timely transport of critical

supplies to brigade assets operating in the Salah ad Din Province, known as AO Bastogne.

Security elements are the first line of defense against any and all threats approaching the convoy, and are equipped with the necessary equipment and technology to handle a wide array of situations.

In addition to providing security in the form of over watch, security elements are also the eyes of the convoy, meaning that designated vehicles travel ahead of the main body convoy as an advanced guard. The operators of these vehicles are experts at discovering abnormalities that may appear along the roadside, and are trained to make quick and accurate threat analyses of every discovery.

A lot is asked of these lead vehicle crews, however their job is vital to the prevention of enemy attacks. The security elements and the transportation elements, consisting of Soldiers from Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Companies, have a close working relationship, and together they have earned their name, "Workhorse".

Since these Soldiers are on the roads almost daily, they have gained a working relationship that, according to them, has set them apart from others in their



Spc. Nicholas Polizzo, Alpha Company, 426th Brigade Support Battalion's Security Platoon, test fires a .50 caliber machine gun.

company.

"In the gun platoon we have a closer working relationship than pretty much anybody else in the company, which makes our job of keeping the convoy safe easier, because we already know what to do," said Spc. Benjamin Higgs, convoy security platoon, 426th BSB.

McCrary added, "I always tell my Soldiers, 'Hard times don't last, hard people do', and that is our motto in security platoon."



EAGLE 6 DESCENDS ON BASTOGNE AO

Story and photos by

Maj. J.P. Arnold

1st BCT PAO

TIKRIT, Iraq - The 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) leadership, Maj. Gen. Jeffery Schloesser and Command Sgt. Major Vincent Camacho, visited 1st Brigade Combat Team "Bastogne" in Salah ad Din Province Jan. 28.

The Screaming Eagle leaders first visited Soldiers of 1st Battalion, 327th Infantry Soldiers at Forward Operating Base Summerall, near Bayji. Schloesser visited a Bulldog company aid station and motor pool, while Camacho attended a non-commissioned officer professional development

meeting. Both leaders were able to get a first-hand look at the Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicles.

Eagle 6 then visited 426th Brigade Support Battalion, awarding a Combat Medical Badge to Pfc. Jamie Chestnut for performing medical treatment during a roadside bomb and grenade attack against a combat logistics patrol. Combat Action Badges were awarded to Spc. Benjamin Higgs and Pfc. Carlos Robinson for being actively engaged by enemy forces.

Chestnut, a native of Detroit, Mich. said, "To receive a

Combat Action Badge, from the 101st Commander, was truly an honor. It made me feel proud of the job that we perform everyday."

Both Schloesser and Comacho then ate with and spoke to over 100 Screaming Eagle Soldiers stationed at COB Speicher. Schloesser said, "Everybody here deserves to be known as a member of an elite unit serving in a tough time for America, doing the very best America can

expect from any of its Soldiers."

Camacho said, "We have to finish the job and you are doing that. We are very proud of you."

1st Brigade Combat Team Signal Officer Maj. Kurt Hammond and three-tour 101st Veteran was at the evening dinner.

He said, "It was inspiring for the CG to come and see us, especially since he is in the

middle of preparing to take the division headquarters and other units to Afghanistan."

Towards the end of his comments, Schloesser said this in relation to the significance of Bastogne's resolve, "There is no one in this room that does not have some equity in our success. What we do as America, what we do as a coalition in Iraq does make a difference to not only you, but to your children and those who you love."



Maj. Gen. Jeffrey Schloesser, 101st Airborne Division Commanding General, pins the Combat Action Badge, on Pvt. 1st Class Jamie Chestnut for her actions during an improvised explosive attack by enemy forces in Tikrit.

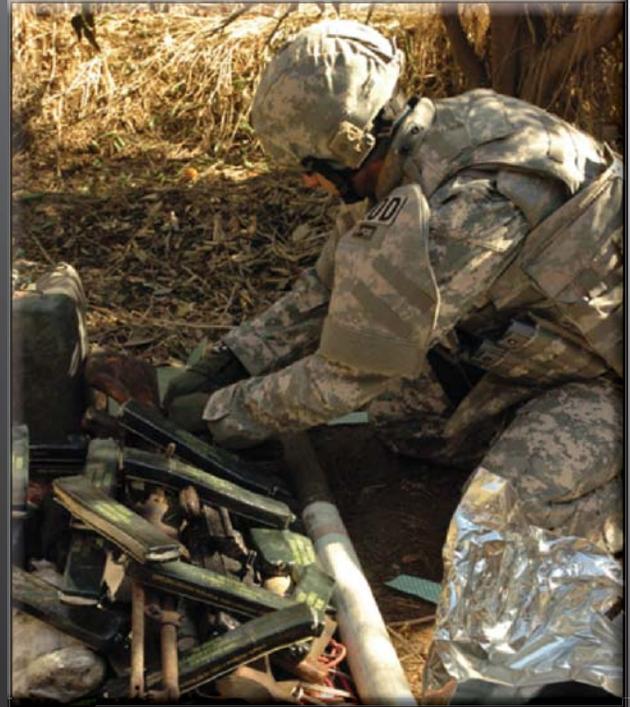
eye of the eagle

the world as Bastogne Soldiers see it

Photos by Bastogne PAO



Specialist Christopher Pope, Bravo Troop, 1st Squadron, 32nd Cavalry Regiment, takes a defensive kneeling position during Operation Hood Harvest Jan. 16.



An Air Force explosive ordnance disposal technician prepares a weapons cache to be destroyed Jan. 16.



Third Platoon, Bravo Troop, 1st Squadron, 32nd Cavalry Regiment leaders discuss an array of topics with a home owner in the Bichigan area during Operation Hood Harvest Jan.17.



Soldiers from 2nd Battalion, 320th Field Artillery Regiment, unearth an enemy weapons cache near Samarra.



"Eagle 6," Maj. Gen. Jeffrey Schloesser, swoops in on Bastogne troops Jan. 25.



A Soldier from 2nd Battalion, 320th Field Artillery Regiment sweeps for unexploded ordnance Jan. 18.



A weapons cache being destroyed by Explosive Ordnance Disposal near Samarra.



A sheik points to show a Soldier from B Troop, 1st Squadron, 32nd Cavalry Regiment where a house is Jan. 17.



A whole lot of rank enjoy their stogies at Forward Operating Base Brassfield-Mora near Samarra, Iraq.



A rifleman with 2nd Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment takes aim on the outskirts of Samarra, Iraq.

Women making a difference in Balad

Story by Lt. Scott Marler

1st Squadron, 32nd Cavalry Regiment

1st BCT, 101st Airborne Division (AA)

BALAD, Iraq – Bastogne Soldiers from 1st Squadron, 32nd Cavalry Regiment made the morning of Dec. 22 unlike any other at the Balad Women's Center.

The Bandit Soldiers arrived with a truckload full of computers, sewing machines and furniture, which were donated to the Manar Organization.

This distribution was made possible because of the work put forth by Manar Abdu Mutalab Hashim, founder of the Manar Organization, who has been actively supporting the greater-Balad community for years.

The Manar Organization has distributed resources and gained a reputation with Coalition Forces that want to provide help to the area.

In May of 2006, while serving as an elected member of the Balad City Council, Hashim started the woman's center to provide assistance to community members in need. The center serves as a safe haven for both Shia and Sunni, where women can receive tutoring in math and computers, learn job skills such as sewing, and receive free medical care when supplies are available. She also helps distribute clothing to the needy.

Hashim caters to anyone who needs her help, though she primarily provides aid to divorced and widowed women in her area.

"Women who have lost their male family-members to violence are often left without support," said Hashim. "There is no local university for women to pursue higher education, and even those with an education are unable to find work."

The sectarian violence of 2005 and 2006 resulted in economic hardship for the

area, though the improving security situation has made recovery possible, as people are willing once again to participate in the basic economic activity that makes the community recovery possible.

According to many local residents, the tactics used by terrorists have scared off several middle-class professionals, such as teachers, physicians and shop-owners. They feel education, infrastructure and entrepreneurialism are necessary for the local economy to recover, which is why Hashim has focused her efforts on solutions with few resources.

"We give resources to the Manar Organization because we know they will be put to good use," said a local security representative, who has asked to remain nameless.

He also pointed out that activity by Al Qaida is down by 75 percent, but some of the local leaders expressed concern that terrorist organizations would use charitable organizations as fronts in order to gain resources.

The Balad City Council Chief, Malik Lefta Ahmed, was on hand to witness the unloading of supplies, and took the opportunity to praise Manar for her hard work. There were several members of the local government present, including a representative from the local Security Committee. They all praised Manar for her dedication, and expressed thanks to Coalition Forces for providing support in this area.

A city council member expressed hope that the Manar Organization would spread throughout the province.

The kids helping unload the supplies are evidence of the good Hashim has done for her area. They are unafraid of coalition Soldiers, and openly smile and speak in broken English with the Americans. Their future looks bright as the area continues to rebuild.



Boe knows stress!



Story and photo by
Spc. Rick L. Rzepka
1st BCT PAO

COB SPEICHER, Iraq – Ever had a Sgt. 1st Class lick your face? For many Soldiers here, this is not freakish events, but regular occurrences.

Sgt. 1st Class Boe is the newest member of the 85th Medical Detachment Combat Stress Control unit here in Iraq, and is one of two K-9 therapists being used by the Army to help prevent and control the stresses of living in a combat zone.

Along with Staff Sgt. Mike Calaway, an Occupational Therapy Assistant with the 85th Combat Stress Control unit here, Sgt. Boe is part of a new Army program, which encourages Soldiers to interact with dogs in order to help relieve the psychological stresses of war.

The dogs, two Black Labrador Retrievers, were donated and trained by America's VetDogs and are the first dogs to be used in a combat zone for therapeutic purposes. The organization is part of the larger non-profit group, Guide Dog Foundation for the Blind, which has been helping provide guide dogs for the blind since the 1940s. Recognizing a growing need for specialized service dogs for America's fighting forces, VetDogs recently initiated the therapy dog concept.

The dogs are intended to provide comfort and relaxation through physical interaction, whether it's a game of fetch or just a peaceful few minutes of petting.

Calaway spent two weeks training with Boe in New York City to develop a bond, before the pair were sent to Iraq to take on the challenge of helping Soldiers cope with a deployment to Iraq.

"She's a very well trained and very intelligent animal," said Calaway who recently introduced Boe to Soldiers from the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division at COB Speicher. "So far we've had an outstanding response

from Soldiers," he said. "Whether they need help or not."

Deployments can create several different kinds of stressors, said Calaway, and Sgt. Boe helps to break the ice, allowing Soldiers to open up about ongoing issues in Soldiers lives.

The major types of stress deployed Soldiers must deal with include operational stress, homefront stress and sleeping issues, said Calaway.

"The Soldiers absolutely love her," said Maj. Charles Kuhlman, Army Chaplain, 1st BCT, 101st Airborne Division.

Often Soldiers on outlying bases will befriend stray dogs for companionship and to get a feel for home, said Kuhlman. "Dogs make a huge difference in morale."



Staff Sgt. Bryan Anderson, 1st Brigade Combat Team, and Sgt. 1st Class Boe conduct some NCO business.

TODAY, TOMORROW, FOREVER...

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

The 1st Special Troops Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, (Air Assault), is the first STB Battalion to assume battlespace control in Iraq.

Bastogne Troops discovered more than 80 Improvised Explosive Devices before detonation in the month of January saving countless Soldier and civilian lives.

Bastogne Soldiers discovered more than 20 Vehicle Borne Improvised Explosive devices throughout the Salah ad-Din province during the month of January which, no doubt, saved the lives of countless Iraqis.

Bastogne Artillerymen fired the most artillery rounds in Iraq since 2003, in support of Operation Fulton Harvest near Sammarra.

