



The Heart Beat

2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault)
Volume III, Issue 6 April 2008



**Hard Rock troops patrol
Hurriyah, pg. 6-7**

**Cavalry troops, ISF patrol
western Baghdad daily, pg. 5**

Strike 6



Col. William B. Hickman

Soldiers and Families of the Strike Brigade, I just want to tell you right from the start how wonderful you all are doing to support the mission

here in Iraq.

The Soldiers of the Strike Brigade continue to fight tirelessly against enemy combatants as they strive to build a secure and unified Iraq. Strike Soldiers should stand tall, knowing they continue to bring a better way of life to the Iraqi people in northwest Baghdad.

Our soldiers are on the streets daily, interacting with the local populace and gaining their trust, just as a Strike Soldier should. No soldier has an easy job. From the cooks and the administrative personnel, to the infantrymen and cavalry scouts, our Soldiers are doing an outstanding job. They are true professionals, and representatives of the greatest nation on Earth – the United States of America. Soldiers, continue to do great things and trust in your battle buddy, your Family and the Strike Brigade Combat Team.

I can't say enough of how proud I am of the continued support from the

Families within this Brigade. It is no easy task dealing with daily stresses as we continue our mission. But, each day these Strike Soldiers awake from their beds, no matter where they may be sleeping, knowing their loved ones back home support them in every possible way.

No matter how tough or physically fit and committed these Soldiers may be, without the love and compassion from their friends and families it would be hard to carry on. We, as a Brigade, do not have to worry about that, because we know our Families are there every step we take in this foreign land.

Families, I ask you to continue the wonderful things you are doing to support our soldiers. I know you will.

Strike Soldiers, I ask you to continue the great work you are doing to help secure and unify Iraq.

Strike 6
Air Assault

The months are moving fast and units and Soldiers continue to do a great job. I had the privilege to spend some time down south with 2nd Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment at Forward Operating Base Kalsu. They are representing the Strike Brigade Combat Team and the 101st Airborne Division in Multi-National Division – Central very professionally. They are interested in what is going on in the Strike OE and concerned for their Strike brothers. They are living out on four separate Joint Security Stations. These positions have come a long way since the last time I was there. They have improved force protection, operations, and are taking care of Soldiers in many ways. Each JSS has the ability to cook on site.

The Army has implemented the Battle Field Promotion pilot program effective April 1, 2008. This program allocates pro-

motions for Soldiers from the grade of private second class through staff sergeant.

Strike 7



Command Sgt. Maj. Scott Schroeder

Allocations will be given to Division units on a quarterly basis. The guidance has just come from Corps, so Division will produce

their policy for this system of recognizing outstanding performers during combat. Allocations will be on a quarterly basis. The first quarter is April-June. We will make sure first sergeants receive the most accurate information as it comes out.

I would like to remind Soldiers and leaders of the opportunity for Soldiers who are not U.S. citizens to obtain their citizenship while in Iraq. While deployed, this process can be expedited. Leaders please make sure our Soldiers who wish to take advantage of this opportunity get started. Information for the process is on the Strike web-page under the S-1 section. There will be a naturalization ceremony April 12. These ceremonies are truly inspirational.

Ok, keep it up. Everybody is important! Make sure you find your 30 seconds; it is out there someplace.

Strike 7



Col. William B. Hickman
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STRIKE!!!

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2nd Brigade Combat Team – "Strike"

On The Cover:

Sgt. Brandon Griffis, a native of Pendleton, Ind., kicks down a door while inspecting a suspicious site in Kadhamiyah March 21. Griffis serves with 1st Platoon, Company A, 1st Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), Multi-National Division – Baghdad. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. James Hunter, 2nd BCT PAO, 101st Abn. Div., MND-B)



Around Strike AO

(Top Left) An Iraqi father takes time out from repairing his vehicle to play with his daughter in Ameriyah March 9. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Sharhonda R. McCoy, 55th Combat Camera)

(Bottom Left) An Iraqi Army Soldier talks into his radio to communicate to his Soldiers on the ground while pulling security at a checkpoint in Kadhamiyah April 1. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. James P. Hunter, 2nd BCT, 101st Abn. Div. Public Affairs)

(Top Right) Staff Sgt. Chris Yslas, a native of Tuscon, Ariz., the section sergeant for 2nd Platoon, Troop A, 4th Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment, talks with an Iraqi child while on patrol south of Bakariyah in western Baghdad March 7. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. James P. Hunter, 2nd BCT, 101st Abn. Div. Public Affairs)

Cavalry troops, ISF patrol western Baghdad daily

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

BAGHDAD – Prior to leaving on mission, jokes are passed around – almost daring the opposition to make a move. The troops joke about improvised-explosive devices striking their vehicles as if they aren't scared of the possibility of an explosion ripping through the door and possibly taking their life. It's a realistic fact however, the troops carry on without worry because there is a mission to conduct.

When it's game time— with full gear donned and weapon status at red— the jokes nearly cease and they begin scanning their sector – willing and ready to face any threat the enemy poses.

Soldiers with the 4th Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment, attached to the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), Multi-National Division – Baghdad, patrol through the western Baghdad neighborhoods of Ameriyah and Bakariyah daily with Iraqi Army Soldiers from the 2nd Battalion, 1st Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division, in an attempt to deter enemy actions and interact with local citizens within the communities.

Their combined effort in securing these communities is just one of the many tools utilized to allow reconciliation efforts to succeed.

During a recent mission March 7, Soldiers from 2nd Platoon of Troop A patrolled alongside their Iraqi Army counterparts in an attempt to quell the making and distribution of homemade explosives south of Bakariyah.

There had been reports of HME being used and stored in the area, said Sgt. Joshua Carter, a native of Jonesboro, Ark. The explosives have been used in recent attacks in Ameriyah, and the Soldiers wanted to identify possible locations where the materials could be stored.

Dismounted, they moved through the area side-by-side with the IA troops rummaging through small huts, stationary vehicles, piles of

trash, junk on the roadways, and talked with many of the local citizens in the area.

The area is very rural, with approximately 12 homes in the farmland community. Palm groves surround the very rough terrain as children stand outside their homes waiting for the Soldiers to approach.

"Mista, mista, chocolate," the children said with excitement.

They shake hands with the children, pat them on the head, and some even kneel down on one knee to speak with the children. The

Iraqi children seem to get a kick out of talking with the MND-B troops. Yes, there is the language barrier; however, given the fact American forces have patrolled the area for nearly five years, they seem to understand each other quite easily.

Their interaction with the Iraqi citizens is key, said Sgt. Donghee Kim, a native of Orange County, Calif. "It's really important to get the communication right with the locals."

The troops often ask if anyone outside the area has recently entered, which can be a sign of explosives trafficking through the area.

"Do you ever see anyone from the outside the village enter this village," asked 1st Lt. Jared Graham, a native of Escondido, Calif., while speaking with an elderly Iraqi woman as they passed through a palm grove.

She said the area is very quiet and not too often does she run into outsiders.

The patrol was a success, with no indication of HME-related material being used or stored in the area, said Carter, a squad leader with 2nd Platoon. However, the Soldiers were able to log many individuals within the area into the Handheld Interagency Identity Detection Equipment system, otherwise known as HIIDE.

It is a biometric identification database where Soldiers can quickly input and access certain information pertaining to the Iraqis within the community. It stores such information as the name, age, address, fingerprints and retinal of the individual.

see CAVALRY, pg. 14



An Iraqi Army Soldier with the 2nd Battalion, 1st Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division, pulls security while on patrol with Soldiers from the 2nd Platoon, Troop A, 4th Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment, attached to the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), Multi-National Division – Baghdad, south of Bakariyah in western Baghdad March 7. The Soldiers patrolled the area looking for possible locations of homemade explosives.



Sgt. Donghee Kim, a native of Orange County, Calif., pulls security south of Bakariyah in western Baghdad March 7. The Soldiers patrolled the area looking for possible locations of homemade explosives. Kim serves with 2nd Platoon, Troop A, 4th Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment, attached to the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), Multi-National Division – Baghdad.



Capt. David Tier kisses an Iraqi baby girl outside a local market March 8 while conducting a dismounted patrol in Bakariyah, Iraq. Tier is assigned to Troop A, 4th Battalion, 10th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Brigade combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, which is based in Fort Carson, Colo., and attached to Multi-National Division – Baghdad's 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Sharhonda McCoy, 55th Combat Camera)

Iraqi Army Soldiers graduate from CLS course

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

BAGHDAD – With the threat of roadside bombs and small-arms fire still evident on the streets of Baghdad, combat lifesavers play a vital role in providing immediate aid to injured troops.

However, within the Iraqi Army, medicine seems to take a back seat to other issues with their medicinal knowledge at the Soldier and the unit level behind that of the American forces encounter, said Spc. Jonathon Sprader, a native of Grafton, Wisc.

Sprader serves with Company C, 526th Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), Multi-National Division – Baghdad.

To combat the threat, two Soldiers from the 526th Brigade Support Battalion, taught a three-day combat lifesaver's course that kicked off March 2 to 25 Iraqi Army Soldiers from the 6th Iraqi Army Division at Muthana Airfield, which is located in western Baghdad. The students graduated from the course March 5.

The students' hunger to learn and gain knowledge with regards to medicine was evident during the course. It will enable them to, one day, be effective at saving lives on the battlefield, said Staff Sgt. Scott Greene, a native of Lake City, Fla., with Co. C.

"They were very knowledgeable and very intelligent students that were very hungry for knowledge," Greene said. "The more we taught, the more they wanted to know about medicine."

Within the course, Greene and Sprader, the course instructors, taught various aspects of combat medicine, dealing with

controlled bleeding, treatment for burns and fractures, and how to deal with closed airway breathing.

They focused on the importance of working together and reinforced the fact that the overall importance is saving a life, said Greene.

"It basically teaches the Iraqis the importance of medicine – the first-line medical support and medical care," said Greene. If the combat lifesaver can treat a casualty and get him to a doctor, the injured Soldier has a 75 percent greater chance of survival.

With qualified combat lifesavers in a platoon, it greatly strengthens the Iraqi Army life support system, added Greene, who said there is usually only one medic per platoon.

"Obviously, medics can't be everywhere, so that is why it's important to have a combat lifesaver," Greene said.

see CLS, pg. 16

Hard Rock troops patrol Hurriyah, ensuring safety and security of Iraqi local nationals

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

BAGHDAD – Hurriyah is a very busy town in western Baghdad, littered with trash, shopping markets filled with “designer clothing,” and men, women and children alike who move through the streets and try to carry on their life with what little normalcy it may contain.

A man in a wheel chair maneuvers down an alley with his young child clinging to the armrest of his father’s chair. The man struggles to move himself down the bumpy surfaced road; however, though paralyzed to a wheel-chair, he still manages to nudge a smile as an American convoy passes.

He waves, as does his child, as the Soldiers, mounted in their Humvees, wave back in acknowledgement.

One child on a bike approaches the convoy on the evening of March 18 with a BMW hubcap wrapped around the frame.

“Mista, Mista, give me money,” he said to the truck com-

mander in the vehicle.

“No,” he fires back jokingly, “you give me money.”

Maybe the boy wanted money, maybe not. Really what he wanted was a conversation with the men he sees daily patrolling through his streets, who continue to bring peace and prosperity to his worn-torn community.

The Soldiers of Company A “Hard Rock,” 1st Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), patrol the streets of Hurriyah daily in an attempt to quell insurgent and criminal

activity, and to improve the economy, government, infrastructure and civil services.

They often visit local leaders in the community, and maintain a presence in what some would consider a very dangerous area. Often,

they speak with local nationals to gain an assessment on their current living conditions, the enemy activity in the area and any tips that would help Coalition Forces take the bad guys off the streets.

Partnered with the Iraqi Security Forces in the area, they move through the streets of Hurriyah in an attempt to better the area and the ISF, said Sgt. Brandon Griffis, a native of Pendleton, Ind., and weapons squad leader for 1st “Black Sheep” Platoon, Co. A, 1-502nd Inf. Regt. Because, overall, their mission is ensuring the Iraqi Army is capable of standing on their own two feet and get the job done.

Often, according to Griffis, they train the IA at their compound in Hurriyah. They teach them basic first aid procedures dealing with applying a tourniquet, stopping bleeding and resuscitation. They also teach them about land navigation and how to maneuver in an urban environment.

Though they patrol with them often, they continue to train them on patrolling techniques, because just as Coalition Forces do, it’s a technique they must always practice, said Griffis.

However, Griffis feels the biggest problem when it comes to the growth of the IA is the Iraqi citizens reliance on Coalition Forces, especially with the many assets available to them in

“When we’re out at night [Iraqis] go to sleep because they know the Americans are there,”

said Sgt. Brandon Griffis
1st Platoon, Company A, 1-502nd Inf. Regt.



Pfc. William Simcoe, a native of Port Townsend, Wash., pulls security while on patrol in Hurriyah March 19. Simcoe and his fellow Soldiers conduct joint patrols with the Iraqi Army often, in an attempt to quell insurgent activity to help improve the economy, governance, infrastructure and civil services of Hurriyah. Simcoe serves with 1st Platoon, Company A “Hard Rock,” 1st Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), Multi-National Division – Baghdad.

the Iraqi Security Forces.

“We’ve got to instill as much confidence in the people for the Iraqi Army, because that is who they are going to have when we leave,” he said.

When they see the Iraqi Army on patrol they can begin to earn their trust, especially when they see them doing good things, said Griffis. “They are their military, and they are here to help them.”

“When they see them patrolling I think it let’s the community know that the Iraqi Government is trying to help them,” said Griffis. “It lets them know that Iraq is starting to stand on its own two feet. Because that’s the bottom line; basically, one day, we won’t be here. It’s up to the Iraqi Army to do the job we are doing.”

The IA is coming along real well and Griffis is very impressed with their abilities and their potential. However, in the meantime, there are still issues that sit at their forefront.

One of the biggest problems is getting the people of Hurriyah to talk, said Spc. Jake Grossschmidt, a native of Canton, Ohio, who is currently attached to the company.

While on a joint patrol with the Iraqi Army, he went into a small building where four Iraqi men were playing Dominoes. He began asking questions, knowing they had some information, but got nothing in response.

“I just wanted to tell them that if they wanted a better Hurriyah they need to start talking if they want to make it better for themselves. We do a lot for them but sometimes it’s up to the citizens to push the insurgents out themselves. We need their help, it’s not just us. They’re just afraid.”

And that is exactly what it is – the people of Hurriyah are scared of the militia’s operating in their area.

“The groups we are fighting are in it for the money. Since the people are so innocent and scared they will do anything for their own safety,” Grossschmidt said. “If it’s paying those guys money then they’ll do it. The money they pay them goes toward weapons.”

These militia’s have a fear instilled in the people of Hurriyah, Griffis said. “So, sometimes it’s difficult for people to tell us information we need to know. They are scared.”

With that, it just makes Griffis and his men want to push out into Hurriyah even more to let the people know they will not stand for militia’s trying to disrupt their way of life.

“When we go out there the message we try to spread is you don’t

have to pay for security. You have the right to live in a secure, free environment,” Griffis said. “It just means we have to get out there and get after it more.”

They talk to the people, the local nationals of Hurriyah, to listen and try to understand their problems and come up with solutions to those problems. Most importantly, they are trying to catch those men who these citizens are afraid of, said Grossschmidt. “The more information we find on them then the better we can help out the people.”

“Every time you catch someone that is a step in the right direction,” added Griffis. “If you take one of those guys off the streets that does something in the community or neighborhood you did it in, because they are all scared. These guys do horrible things to them and they are frightened.”

These Soldiers work at a high level knowing, “When we’re out at night they’ll go to sleep because they know the Americans are there,” said Griffis.

And that is where the credit lies – with the Soldiers of Hard Rock who patrol these streets daily.

“From the very beginning it’s been a tight-knit group of guys. You can’t separate these guys for nothing,” said Griffis. “They give a lot. There is not one person out there in our platoon that won’t give 110% when asked.”

“They know that their leadership is going to take care of them,” he continued. “And on the other hand you know that they will do anything you ask them to.”

That is one of the reasons Griffis joined the Army in the first place – to watch his Soldiers grow.

“It’s amazing to watch them from the time they first come in until now,” he said. “They are seasoned Soldiers. They are combat proven. It’s amazing to sit back and watch something like that. I wouldn’t rather be anywhere else then where I am right now.”



Soldiers with 1st Platoon, Company A, 1st Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), Multi-National Division – Baghdad, pull security while on a joint patrol with Iraqi Army Soldiers in the western Baghdad neighborhood of Hurriyah March 20.



Faces of the Heart



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

Staff Sgt. Murk, a squad leader with 1st Platoon, Company D, 1st Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), talks with a group of kids while patrolling the streets of Kadhamiyah April 1.



courtesy photo

Staff Sgt. Lawrence Brew is congratulated by the Strike Brigade S-6, Maj. Joe Kloiber, following his re-enlistment. Brew, a native of Warwick, R.I., has served in the Army for six years and plans on retiring from the U.S Army.

(Above) Pfc. Shawn Holt, a native of Nashville, pulls security in the now quiet western Baghdad neighborhood of Kadhamiyah April 2. Holt serves with 2nd Platoon, Company D, 1st Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), Multi-National Division – Baghdad. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. James P. Hunter, 2nd BCT PAO, 101st Abn. Div., MND-B)



(Right) Sgt. Alexander Foust, a native of Bellefontaine, Ohio, prepares to jump from a building while inspecting a site in Kadhamiyah March 21. Foust serves with 1st Platoon, Company A, "Hard Rock," 1st Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), Multi-National Division – Baghdad. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. James P. Hunter, 2nd BCT PAO, 101st Abn. Div., MND-B)



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

Command Sgt. Maj. Anthony Waller, command sergeant major, 1st Squadron, 75th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), talks with the 4th Battalion, 1st Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division's sergeant major and company first sergeants, 1-75 Cav. company first sergeants, and Ghazaliyah Guardian leaders, during a meeting at Joint Security Station Ghazaliyah II where they discussed possible improvements to checkpoints and guard towers among many other issues.



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

Pfc. Joseph Waszmer, a native of Patchogue, N.Y., pulls security during a dismounted patrol in the western Baghdad neighborhood of Hurriyah March 19. Waszmer serves with 1st Platoon, Company A, "Hard Rock," 1st Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault).



Total 'Chaos'

Staff Sgt. Clay Craig, a native of Mesquite, Texas, with Company C, 1st Squadron, 75th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), pulls security inside an Iraqi families home while operating in northern Ghazaliyah March 29.

Coalition, ISF team together to combat threat

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

BAGHDAD – As violence heightened in northwest Baghdad, Coalition and Iraqi Security Forces teamed to combat the threat of any criminal activity.

The recent detention of four criminals in Ramaniyah, Jouadine, and Katieb, may have contributed to the violence, said Sgt. Joseph Lorenzana, a New York City native, with Company C, 1st Squadron, 75th Squadron, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), however, their arrest may have curbed the attacks against coalition forces in the area.

“There was an increase in attacks,” said Capt. Terrence Higgins, a native of Point Pleasant, N.J., and commander of Company C. “The checkpoints came under fire, so we were sent to reinforce the checkpoints. Ultimately, we returned fire when the enemy fired upon us.”

The enemy fired rocket-propelled grenades, indirect fire, small arms fire, and placed improvised explosive devices on main avenues in and out of the area, said Higgins.

It was as if the war had begun anew. Hellfire missiles

soared through the air, engaging and killing three enemy combatants March 27.

That same night, there were reports that 15-20 armed enemy combatants were moving through the Jouadine Market in northern Ghazaliyah carrying AK-47's and rocket propelled grenades.

Soldiers with 3rd Platoon, Company C, 1st Squadron, 75th Cavalry Regiment, were sent in to either capture or kill these men bringing havoc to the once quiet area.

While moving through the market, a terrorist with an AK-47 stood atop a roof top and engaged the passing Coalition Force convoy. After seeing the muzzle flashes coming from his rifle, they fired .50 caliber rounds into his position.

It was late in the night, and everyone's night vision goggles lit up like the Fourth of July.

The night grew long, well into the following morning. Criminals were wheeling lit tires into the street in hopes to white-out the Soldiers night vision goggles, possibly for a rocket-propelled grenade attack on the Coalition and Iraqi Security Forces operating the checkpoint.

It was a different environment, especially since Ghazaliyah had been quiet – free of much enemy contact. With the increased violence in certain areas of Baghdad, the Government of Iraq imposed a three-day curfew, restricting unauthorized vehicles, motorcycles or

see **CHAOS**, pg. 23



Strike NCO & Soldier of the Quarter

Following the fighting in Kadhamiyah, Coalition and ISF continue to secure the area

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

BAGHDAD – Prior to fighting breaking out in Kadhamiyah, there were no signs of the possibility of Special Groups targeting Coalition and Iraqi Security Forces. The biggest threat to them was improvised explosive devices.

However, once the violence began in Basra and east Baghdad, the local citizens in the area began acting differently themselves. Apparently, insurgent criminals began spreading the word to the local Iraqis to go into their homes and not come out.

These criminals even marched in Kadhamiyah chanting, “Death to Maliki; Death to Maliki.”

Coalition Forces even received a tip, March 28, that ISF checkpoints would come under attack, said 1st Lt. Sam Rosenberg, a native of Fort Myers, Fla., platoon leader for 2nd Platoon, Company D, 1st Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment. So, three platoons pushed out into sector and took their positions to help reinforce the checkpoints – where they sat for a few hours until it was determined there was not going to be an attack.

“The streets were empty, but it was quiet

and the [Iraqi Army] was doing what they were supposed to be doing,” Capt. Brad Henry, a native of Andover Township, N.J., commander, Co. D, 1-502nd Inf. Regt. “It was weird, but nothing was out of the ordinary.”

Once Henry got back to the base, he received another tip that 20 – 25 men were massing in Kadhamiyah. He told the companies 4th Platoon to investigate the tip. As soon as they came to the intersection they were ambushed by Special Group criminals.

“The entire area basically blew up,” Rosenberg said. “They called out, ‘We are in contact; we are in contact.’”

Fighting broke out throughout the area. They were engaged with rocket propelled grenades and PKCs, and immediately started laying down fire on positively identified enemy combatants,

said 1st Lt. Paul Brown, a native of Canfield, Ohio, and platoon leader for 4th Platoon, Co. D. “As soon as my gunner was able to PID a guy he just started engaging him. They did an awesome job.”

“We weren't running from the fight,” said Henry. “We were going to secure the intersection and engage targets of opportunity.”

With Browns platoon under contact, however, decisively laying down the enemy, Rosenberg sent his platoon forward to support them in their engagements.

“So, we sent our trucks right in behind them,” Rosenberg said. They had interlocking fire on the enemy. “There was a lot of fire, mostly RPGs.”

As they moved toward the site they too were fired upon at an intersection. With the amount of RPGs and smalls arms fire being fired, and the numerous caches hidden by the criminals in the area, the right side of the road caught fire.

Rosenberg's platoon then saw an opportunity to push forward in to a market to get a better angle of fire on the enemy.

see **KADHAMIYAH**, pg. 21



Sgt. Vicente Herrera, a native of Chicago, with 4th Platoon, Company D, 1st Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, pulls security along the Tigris River in Kadhamiyah April 3.

Soldiers train IA mechanics

Story by
2nd Lt. Nathaniel Beckett
Co. B., 526th BSB

BAGHDAD— Armed with replacement parts, Arabic technical manuals, and years of experience, Staff Sgt. Dwayne Simpkins, a native of Detroit, and Spc. Alvaro Aleman, a native of Fresno, Calif., step out of their vehicles March 8 at Joint Security Station Kadhamiyah in northern Baghdad with the intent on training and ensuring the Iraqi Army mechanics with the 1st Battalion, 1st Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division keep their fleet of trucks on the road.

Weekly, Soldiers from Company B, 526th Brigade Support Battalion, teach vehicle maintenance classes to Iraqi Army mechanics. The topic of this week is ballistic window replacement.

“It is all about not wasting time. We have between a few hours and half day to teach these guys about things that they could not otherwise learn without us,” said Simpkins as he briefs the translator for the class.

This is not the first time that Simpkins has taught this group of mechanics. This is class number five for him.

Without missing a beat, the class starts.

Gathering in a semi-circle around Aleman, the Iraqi mechanics listen intently to his instruction on the role the manual plays in window replacement. It is slow going as every word is translated, discussed, and clarified.

“This is a step-by-step process. Don’t take any short cuts and risk busting the window or even worse installing it wrong,” said Aleman as he drives his point home. After a while, all that can be said about procedure and safety has been said. It is now time to move onto the installation phase.

Simpkins watches closely as the students start to disassemble the armor and window frames. “These mechanics are pretty good; they have been working on cars for years,” he said.

With two students working in front taking off the bolts and armor, and two inside working on the air-conditioning brackets, the window is out in a matter of minutes.

Then following the steps in reverse order, they re-install the new window, bringing the exercise to a successful conclusion.

This week it was windows, and next week it might be the transmission or fuel injectors. Whatever it is, Simpkins and Aleman will be ready to teach and help the Iraqi Army sustain itself.



photo by Spc. Alvaro Aleman, Co. B., 526th BSB

Iraqi Army Soldiers prepare to replace a broken window during ballistic window replacement training March 8 at Joint Security Station Kadhamiyah in northern Baghdad.

Train to Save

Story by
Maj. Kevin Horde
1st Bn., 64th AR

Friday afternoons are times for the Task Force Rogue medics, of the 1st Battalion, 64th Armor Regiment, to congregate at the Darren P. Hubbell Battalion Aid Station for medical training that keeps life-saving skills sharp and develops the abilities of the medics to recognize and treat a wide array of ailments.

Medics use an approach to training that develops their presentation skills as well as medical knowledge. Soldiers scheduled to present a class to their peers are given about a week to hone their knowledge and practice their presentations in a “Powerpoint” format. This type of training develops the skills they will need as future leaders and simultaneously reinforces their tactical medical confidence.

This medical training not only provides necessary re-iteration of medical knowledge to create “muscle memory,” but also satisfies the requirement of continuing education in order for all of the medics to re-certify their National Registry of Emergency Medical Technicians Certification, and ultimately adding to the knowledge base of the Medics that train the Combat Lifesavers in the battalion.

Recent topics that have been trained include Airway Management, intravenous insertion, hemorrhage control, patient assessment, communications, and basic pharmacology, just to name a few.

In addition to these sessions, both the “Rogue PA” and “Rogue Doc” make regular contributions to the training. Recent news reports have touted the increased incidence of Methicillin Resistant Staph Aureus (MRSA) infections in the US. The Rogue Doc presented an informative lecture to the medics to help them properly recognize and treat suspected cases before they have the ability to progress. With the 2007-2008 flu season in full swing, the medics trained on what signs and symptoms to watch for in their Soldiers as well as the way to properly administer both the “Flu-mist” and the influenza vaccine as the annual rite of passage to the new year.

see TRAINING, pg. 14

Soldiers present CLS trauma kits to IA troops

Story by
1st Lt. Tabitha Hernandez
1st Bn., 64th AR

BAGHDAD – Iraqi Army Soldiers with 1st Company, 3rd Battalion, 5th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division, currently headquartered in western Baghdad, were presented six combat lifesaver trauma kits March 8.

The trauma kits were made possible by a Multi-National Division – Baghdad Military Transition Team assigned to the 1st Battalion, 64th Armor Regiment, which is based out of Fort Stewart, Ga.

“These kits will allow the Iraqi Army to perform potentially lifesaving medical treatment at the point of injury,” said 1st Sgt. Joseph Onove, 3rd Bn. IA Military Transition Team.

The kits are designed to assist the Iraqi Army Soldiers in treating wounded troops while they are transported to the nearest medical facility, he said. The kits contain badges, dressings and other trauma treating supplies.

Along with the trauma kits, the Iraqi Soldiers are also un-

dergoing lifesaving medical training. The training, combined with the proper equipment, can make the difference in treating and saving wounded IA Soldiers.

The IA medics are trained on using tourniquets, Israeli dressings and pressure dressings to control a hemorrhage, said Maj. Timothy Hayden, executive officer, 1-64 AR.

“We gave a quick briefing on the dressing and how to use it,” he added.

Combat Life Saving skills are one of the key training objectives for Col. Raheem’s, the commander, for the IA’s 3rd Bn.

“We are simply ensuring that our IA counterparts enjoy the same chance of survival we do should they take casualties,” said Hayden. “They have trained medics and Soldiers who are knowledgeable on first-aid; they just don’t have all the resources they need. Immediate medical attention at the point of injury is essential.

“Now, IA Soldiers can provide buddy-aid and combat lifesaver equivalent aid at the point of injury to potentially save lives prior to evacuating the wounded to a hospital or higher level of care.”

They will continue to work with and through Rasheem’s battalion medics and medical providers to sustain their CLS and medic capabilities, said Hayden.

Forward support company keeps combat arms troops fed

Story, photo by
Capt. Brandon Williams
Co. F, 526th BSB

ISKANDARIYAH, Iraq- Today’s field feeding support systems have to provide for the needs of the war fighter in all types of scenarios and conditions. In Iskandari-

yah, Iraq, field feeding Soldiers with Company F, 526th Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), have been providing field feeding support to Soldiers of 2nd Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, since arriving to the Iskandariyah area.

Field feeding Soldiers with the Company F, Forward Support Company are currently supporting troops in four different locations in and around Forward Operating Base Kalsu.

The Soldiers were initially positioned at Patrol Base Copper supporting Soldiers from Company B, 2-502 Inf. Reg. At this site, the field feeding Soldiers quickly set up the site initially supporting two platoons with a mobile kitchen trailer, but

within a month, three Soldiers were supporting a company plus size element with a containerized kitchen.

The containerized kitchen is an expandable container. The major features of the kitchen includes electric power, refrigerated space, and the capability to perform roasting, grilling, boiling, frying, baking, running water, a protected serving line,



Spc. Jason Croom, a native of Philadelphia, and Pfc. Charles Zander, a native of Denver, Colo., prepare the evening dinner at Patrol Base Copper.

and a ventilated exhaust system.

Rations were initially pushed every three days by the Distribution Platoon,

but as headcounts stabilized and ration inventories increased, ration pushes were required only once every seven days.

“We love working with the Soldiers; feeding them, keeping them happy and enjoying the camaraderie we get around the kitchen,” said Pfc. Charles Zander, a cook, and native of Denver, Colo.

The Soldiers received minimal training on the kitchen before deployment due to receiving it with enough time to load it and ship it to Iraq, but they have since performed above the standard.

“The cooks have been an instant morale booster for my Soldiers. My Soldiers patrol all night and it’s great when they can come back and get a good hot meal,” said Detroit, Mich., native, Capt. Kaiwan Walker, Commander of Co. D, 2-502 Inf. Reg. “I’m not sure how they do it, but the food is always great.”

The Soldiers’ typical day begins around 4:30 a.m. waking up to prepare the breakfast meal. The field feeding Soldiers put the meal out, serves it and prepares for lunch.

For lunch, the Soldiers prepare short order see FOOD, pg. 17

CAVALRY

“This is my first time getting hands on with the machine,” said Kim, who scanned their retinas and obtained fingerprints and background information. He said he believes it is a very good system, which will allow Soldiers to store information in accordance with the area they patrol.

“It’s a big factor in helping us succeed,” added Carter.

Another factor in their mission success is the improving abilities of the Iraqi Security Forces.

The Soldiers also often patrol throughout Ameriyah and Bakariyah, visiting IA and Iraqi Police checkpoints to assess how well they are performing their job.

The IP and IA are manning their own checkpoints and entry control points throughout the area. Carter said.

“For the most part, they are doing a lot better since I was here two years ago,” he said. “(They are) still a bit rough around the edges, but they are really coming along. I see potential in them.”

During a two-day mission earlier in the month, MND-B Soldiers and Iraqi Security Forces, working side-by-side with the Son’s of Iraq (Abna al-Iraq), conducted a detailed search of homes in Ameriyah.

Taking the lead in the operation were the Iraqi Army troops from 2/1/6 IA. The combined operation was coordinated during an ISF meeting between Col. Hassan, the 2/1/6 IA commander; Abu Abed, the leader of the Sons of Iraq in Ameriyah; and Hafath, the local Iraqi Police chief.

They were targeting certain individuals who were wanted for previous criminal activities; however, they were unable to capture the individuals. They did, however, locate a small weapons cache and a terrorist training video.

“Further proof that the Iraqis can and are standing up to take the lead,” said Lt. Col. Monty Willoughby, commander, 4-10 Cav. Regt.

Side-by-side with their Iraqi counterparts, the Soldiers will continue to patrol throughout Ameriyah and Bakariyah in an attempt to deter enemy activity, thus helping to pave the way for reconciliation.

TRAINING

Future topics scheduled include: prevention and treatment of kidney stones, the common cold, heat and cold injuries, and finally with the culmination of all the training into a one-stop patient treatment practical exercise.

Rogue medical training was recently tested in a mass

casualty exercise attended by the battalion commander, Lt. Col. Edward Chesney, and Command Sgt. Maj. Martin, who had the opportunity to witness junior leaders in action. It is safe to say that they undoubtedly left with a renewed confidence that our medics and our Soldiers are ready to meet the continuing challenge of providing care and life saving practices to the Soldiers of the Desert Rogue Battalion in order to support our mission of ensuring freedom to a more secure Iraq.



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

Sgt. Joshua Carter, a native of Jonesboro, Ark., uses the HIDES system to capture the identity of an Iraqi man while on patrol south of Bakariyah in western Baghdad March 7. The Soldiers patrolled the area looking for possible locations of homemade explosives. Carter is a squad leader with 2nd Platoon, Troop A, 4th Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment, attached to the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), Multi-National Division – Baghdad.



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

An Iraqi Army Soldier with the 2nd Battalion, 1st Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division, pulls security while on patrol with Soldiers from the 2nd Platoon, Troop A, 4th Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment, attached to the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), Multi-National Division – Baghdad, south of Bakariyah in western Baghdad March 7. The Soldiers patrolled the area looking for possible locations of homemade explosives.

Iraqi Children are the future of a better Iraq

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

BAGHDAD—As I come upon the half-way point of my second deployment to Iraq, the one thing clearly sticks out in my mind is the children of Iraq.

As we continue to build the justice system, the government, key infrastructure, and the Iraqi Security Forces throughout this country, there is no guarantee for immediate change, which almost seems unreasonable to expect a country to completely do a 180 degree turnaround from former tyranny and oppression of more than 30 years.

It takes time; time I believe we are spending well as we interact with Iraq’s future leaders—the children.

As I patrol on foot throughout Baghdad, quite often I run into children of all ages and sizes. They are full of smiles, laughs and an undeniable affection toward U.S. forces. They love us; they truly do. Some even have said, “Mista, I love you,” though they may not truly understand what they are saying.

We bring a different aspect of life to their somewhat mundane lifestyle. Granted, they are kids, and children can make fun of any situation, but with curfews and the fear of violence within their communities it puts a sour flavor to their mouths.

They see us, the bluish-gray uniforms approaching, and they come running sometimes as fast as an Olympic sprinter.

Sometimes Soldiers get annoyed with the never ending “Mista, Mista.” If they don’t want chocolate, then they want pencils. If it’s not your pencil, then it’s your watch. But it’s all in fun. They just want to talk to us.

I can’t even imagine how many handshakes I have created with the children on the streets of Baghdad, or how many kids I have given a high-five.

Recently, while on patrol in Bakariyah a neighborhood in western Bagh-

dad, I approached nearly 10 children, most of whom were girls and young, infant boys, while the platoon sergeant spoke with the man of the household.

They were a bit standoffish at first. Then, to what some would think was idiotic, I pulled out a pack of gum; fruit flavored at that. So I passed out a piece to each one of them. Then for what seemed like the next 10 minutes I gave them funny looks – to receive a great deal of laughter in turn – played a couple games of thumb war, and gave out an uncountable amount of handshakes.

As 10 minutes passed we were ready to move onto the next home. This time, however, we were mounting our vehicles and moving toward another location. I told them all goodbye.

As we moved on foot toward our vehicles I turned back to see three of them sprinting my way. All they wanted was to say goodbye back, it seemed. I waved, and in turn, they waved back and headed home.

What I am getting at is these children we see everyday watch us, respect us and expect certain things from us. Things like a safe and secure neighborhood. What we as American Forces

do for the people of Iraq is amazing. That is why I believe, and have always believed, the impression we leave them with will be a lasting impression. Their attitude toward life and toward the U.S. in general will play a huge role in their future for the day we see these very children taking control of this country.

In January, when I was doing a story on a toy drop to an Iraqi school, I remember a Soldier telling me a story of when he was 18 years old and toured Europe.

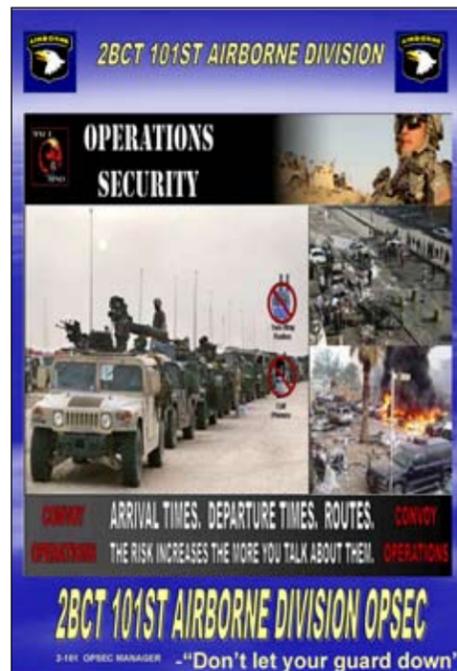
He told me he was approached by an elderly Frenchman who recognized him as an American. The elderly Frenchman had very vivid memories of the kindness that Americans had shown to the children during World War II.

He told me, “My grandfather had fought in Europe during the Second World War, and [the Frenchman] still wanted to express his appreciation and his gratitude for what America had done for his country when he was a child.”

Our impact on these children is and will forever leave a lasting, positive impression for many years to come. They are the future and we are having a positive impact on them and the country of Iraq.



An Iraqi boy holds his younger sister outside their home in a western Baghdad neighborhood south of Bakariyah March 7. Iraqi children remain the future to this battle-worn country.



Schools officially open doors in Ameriyah

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

BAGHDAD – Following months of renovations, two schools in the western Baghdad neighborhood of Ameriyah officially opened their doors March 16.

With the Deputy Minister of Education, Dr. Nehad, present, the Firdous and Al Rawadan Schools held ceremonies to commemorate their openings.

Laughter and excitement filled the air as children danced and sang to the beat of musical instruments. The boys – some dressed in soccer jerseys and dress shirt and tie – chanted in celebration and waved the Iraqi flag. The girls, who wore their best spring dresses, read poetry and danced throughout the day.

Though the schools were open during the renovation process, this was an opportunity to celebrate the successes within the community and to give back to those in the area who sacrificed so much especially during periods of serious enemy engagements.

Ameriyah was entrenched in constant fighting a year ago, said Maj. Joel Stephenson, a native of Duluth, Minn.,

executive officer, 4th Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment. The schools in the area received some of the impact caused by the enemy activity.

However, the Sons of Iraq, in coordination with the Iraqi Army and Coalition Forces, assisted in securing Ameriyah, bringing justice to the once war-torn area of western Baghdad, said Stephenson.

Attacks against the populace, and Coalition and Iraqi Security Forces have dropped tremendously since securing the area, he said.

“We maybe have two or three attacks in a week long period,” Stephenson said. “Then it may have been 10 to 15 attacks weekly.”

With security set, it was time to begin rebuilding the area.

According to Stephenson, there are 17 schools in Ameriyah, and these two schools were the first of a few they plan to renovate.

Windows were blown out, the electricity was bad and there was no emphasis on technology, he said. This was a Coalition Forces project; however, the contractor who worked on the school and the workers he hired came from within Ameriyah. Coalition Forces simply ensured the

see **SCHOOLS**, pg. 19



Iraqi girls dance during a performance in celebration of the official opening of the newly renovated Firdous School in the western Baghdad neighborhood of Ameriyah March 16.

CLS

With two to three qualified combat lifesavers per squad, he added, it cuts the ratio down and strengthens the medical program.

Greene and Sprader both said combat lifesaver's play a vital role in combat. The two served on Military Transition Teams during their last deployment, treating both Iraqi Security and Coalition Forces.

“If it wasn't for the combat lifesavers, 95 percent of them would be dead right now . . .” Greene said.

The first few minutes, from the time a Soldier is injured, are the most critical, said Sprader. “It's really important to get everyone trained up to act instantly so there's no dead time when a Soldier is wounded.”

Though the course was only three days long, Sprader said he hopes what his team taught within the course will prove to be beneficial.

“I hope that what I taught them is going to be helpful if it needs to be applied,” he added.

Of the 25 graduates, four were women from the Headquarters and Service Battery, 6th IA Division. Six of the students will move onto Camp Taji to become qualified Iraqi Army medics.

Mental Health clinic helps Soldiers cope with combat

There is no room for stereotypes in today's Army

Story by Sgt. Stephanie Brewster
& Staff Sgt. Jason Wendell
Co. C, 526th BSB

CAMP LIBERTY, Iraq – What is the first thing that you think of when you hear the words “Mental Health?” Some would say crazy or stressed; however, others have stated “it's just a place to vent.”

Historically, individuals that develop health issues either physical or mental are labeled as weak by their peers and comrades, especially within the military community.

In this day and time, those outdated stereotypes must be eliminated. Mental Health care has come a far way from the way it used to be, but it unfortunately still carries that same stigma.

In wars past, upwards of 80% of mental health casualties came from the front line troops. In this current conflict, 60% of those needing care by a mental health provider have been assigned to support and combat service support organizations. This change has necessitated the creation of more programs in the Army to help individuals deal with this different type of front line, where the stresses of combat are not restricted to those who would normally be considered on the cusp of the battle.

The type of conflict that Soldiers have found themselves in is much different than a typical engagement, where there is not a

set front line, where support and combat arms Soldiers can both find themselves in harms way in the blink of an eye.

The United States military as a whole has decided to take a more aggressive stance towards treating and identifying mental health issues as soon as possible, and ensuring that there are adequate providers to address the issues that arise.

There now exists routine screening, both during and after deployments, to assist in identifying problems before they interfere with the lives of the Soldiers that have experienced the stresses of deployment.

Combat stress teams have been brought into the theater to address Soldier's issues close to where they work. There are now mental health assets assigned directly to each brigade support battalion and are prepared to support those soldiers assigned to the brigade combat team. The 2nd Brigade Mental Health section, assigned to Company C, 526th Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, is comprised of the Behavioral Health Officer, Capt. Patricia Curry from Pana, Ill., the Mental Health noncommissioned officer-in-charge, Sgt. Stephanie Brewster hailing from Southside, Ala., and Mental Health Technician, Pfc. Joshua Matienzo of Levittown, Puerto Rico.

The Mental Health team's capabilities have grown to meet the demand of their patients. Some of the programs that are available at the Riva Ridge Troop Medi-

cal Clinic Mental Health clinic are anger management, sleep hygiene, and smoking cessation. Other capabilities include intake interviews, mental status exams for DoD mandated schools and chapters, as well as individual counseling dealing with mental health disorders, combat stress, relationship issues, family issues, work related issues, and sleep problems.

The mental health team is responsible for the mental well being of over 4,000 Soldiers and DoD civilians directly assigned to and attached to the Strike Brigade.

During this deployment alone, they have seen more than 500 soldiers in just over four months.

Although the stigma will probably always be there, it is their responsibility as Soldiers, NCOs and leaders to make that change, to make sure that Soldiers will be willing to seek help if they need it, free of any bias or fallback if they choose to seek help.

If you know someone that needs assistance in their life, be a friend or a confidant instead of a heel. If you feel that you can not help them, show them the way. The mental health professionals assigned to the brigade and working on the forward operating bases within Combat Stress Teams are ready and willing to help both you and your Soldiers overcome whichever obstacle you have found in your path. Not asking for help is the only mistake you can make.

FOOD

meals and lunch meat for their combat arms comrades to enjoy.

The longest part of the day occurs between lunch and the time the dinner meal is served. This part of the day includes filling burners and a generator, ensuring the conex is at the right temperature, counting rations, and conducting equipment maintenance.

A midnight meal consisting of soup and other small items are also occasionally prepared for the Soldiers.

The Soldiers feed between 90-120 Soldiers a day at each site.

“This deployment is more hands on than the last,” said Spc. Nicholas Opielski, from Trenton, N.J. “I love having the freedom to do meals that you want and changing it up and tailoring the meal to your own. I love the steak meal, and also

the shrimp scampi and chicken alfredo. We like to enhance the meals with vegetables, onions, and garlic, or corn on the cob.”

The Soldiers have also received accolades from Maj. Gen. Rick Lynch, commanding general of the 3rd Infantry Division, and the battalion commander, Lt. Col. Michael Getchell, and Command Sgt. Maj. Kevin Benson are regulars for their meals.

“The toughest part of the job is falling in on a new site as Soldiers rotate between the four sites of Joint Security Site Haswah, JSS Iskandariyah, JSS 18 and PB Copper,” said Staff Sgt. Prentice Harris, a native of Fort Valley, Ga., and food service noncommissioned officer-in-charge. Soldiers rotate between the four sites as well as back to work in the dining facility during refit periods, and personnel are often an issue.

Supporting several patrol bases in Iraq appeared to be a daunting task at first. It was only through the creativity of each Soldier and NCO and careful planning that the field feeding section has been able to succeed in its mission.

Strike Soldiers tremendous work ethic helps accomplish the mission

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

The life of Pfc. Christopher Stephenson began two decades ago and has developed over time while growing up in Fort Wayne, Ind.

Stephenson, 20, a gunner with 1st Platoon, Company A, "Hard Rock," 1st Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), grew up playing baseball, football and skateboarding. His true love, however, was baseball where he played for his church as a catcher.

If he wasn't playing baseball, he was going to school and working to earn his certification as a computer technician. "I was always good with computers," he said.

He worked at a computer store, until he received his certification and became a senior technician mentoring future techs.

Life wasn't always fun or easy for Stephenson while growing up. Just like many people in life, he had obstacles he had to maneuver around prior to getting to where he is today. Just like any kid he got in trouble.

However, there to pick him back up whenever he was down was his father who is an inspiration in his life.

"I really think without my dad I would have got in a lot of trouble," Stephenson said. "I had a lot of friends who got in a lot of trouble who are in jail right now."

"Without my dad's influence on me I would have probably been a lot worse off," he continued.

His father, who was once an alcoholic, taught Stephenson you can't find happiness at the bottom of a bottle. He also taught him maybe the most important lesson in life. If he worked hard, his hard work would pay off and he would succeed, Stephenson said.



Pfc. Christopher Stephenson, a native of Fort Wayne, Ind., patrols through the streets of Hurriyah March 19. Stephenson serves as a gunner with 1st Platoon, Company A, 1st Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), Multi-National Division - Baghdad.

His father, who had worked as a mechanic at the same job since he was 18, never gave up at the chance of moving up the ranks within the company.

Stephenson, who will turn 21 in June, didn't have a lot growing up in his life until his dad finally landed the managers job. It showed Stephenson that giving up was never an option.

"I just decided that I wanted to do something in my life,"

**said Pfc. Christopher Stephenson
1st Platoon, Company A, 1-502nd Inf. Regt.**

Even when he gained nearly 80 pounds when he hurt his knee during winter training for his baseball team, he never quit.

"I hurt myself during winter training and after that I stopped playing baseball and football, I just didn't do anything and that is when I first started getting fat," Stephenson said. "I got myself up to 250 pounds."

There were bumps along this path;

however, he was going to change himself and his appearance.

Upon graduating from North Side High School in 2006, he had to make a decision on what to do next. He knew he didn't want to go to school for another four years.

"I wanted to do something," he said. "I just decided that I wanted to do something in my life. I was like 'well I have always been active my whole life.'"

Stephenson saw how his brother, who served as a Marine and was another big influence in his life, had did well with his life during his service.

He thought, "The Army is going to give me a lot of

benefits and I can still serve my country. I will be able to get myself back active and that's one of the reasons I joined the infantry instead of doing computers or anything with what I was already trained for. That gave me the motivation to loose all the weight."

And that is exactly what he did. From the time he joined the Army till the end of see **STEPHENSON**, pg. 21

Iraqi Police make positive impact in Adil

Story by
1st Lt. John Morgan
1st Bn., 64th AR

ADIL, Iraq— Earlier this month, members of the new Adil Police force distributed school supplies to the Al-Adil Primary school in an effort to display their commitment to not only the security of Adil but also the welfare of its citizens.

This school supply mission allowed the Adil Police Force to interact with members of the Adil community outside of their normal police duties as well as to develop an amicable bond between the Adil Police Force and the citizens of the community they serve.

The goal of this mission was to demonstrate to the local populace that their police officers share a commitment to Adil and its future. This partnership will in turn create a trust between the citizens and the police force which will allow the police to more effectively perform their duties.

Maj. Thumar, the IP station chief in Adil, said, "When the citizens of Adil understand that we have a vested interest in the success and future of Adil they will be more willing to come to us with information and trust that we will act on that



Iraqi Police are very warmly welcomed by school children as they distribute school supplies at the Al-Adil Primary School

information in a judicious manor."

The school supply distribution was considered a great success by everyone involved. The children received backpacks, notebooks, pencils, rulers and other supplies which will make their school year more productive. The children of the Al-Adil school enjoyed spending the morning with the Iraqi Police Officers and welcomed the officers back anytime.

Two weapons caches found in Shaka 3 area

Story by
4th BCT PAO, 3rd Inf. Div.

FOB KALSU, Iraq - Sons of Iraq members and an informant provided information to Coalition force Soldiers that led to two weapons caches March 24 and 25 in the Shaka 3 region of Iraq.

SOI members led Soldiers with Com-

pany C, 2nd Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, to the first cache March 24. The cache consisted of 38 rifle grenades, 64 OG-15P grenades, 27 OG-9 rockets, 21 PG-9 rockets, two OG-7 rockets and one anti-tank mine.

The second cache was discovered the following day based on a tip from an informant. The cache contained 400

DSHKA rounds.

"This is a testament to their willingness to come forward with information because they want to live a better life," said Capt. Raub Nash, commander of Company C.

This is the fifth cache the unit has found in the area in the past 10 days, said Nash.

SCHOOLS

project went through and was done correctly.

"I think it's mostly transparent to the Iraqis" Stephenson said. "They are obviously appreciative to what we do, but they also recognize the Ministry of Education and the Government of Iraq was involved in this and that's a good thing. It builds legitimacy when they see the Iraqi government, and they see some of their local governments doing things for their community."

The schools both have generators running power and electricity into the buildings, new desks, bathrooms, and new lights and fixtures. The foundation and the walls in one school were beginning to crack so the contractor was able to fix that as well.

Also, new computers with internet access were put

into the school.

"There were no computers; no emphasis on any type of technology," Stephenson said. "They are trying to get the most advanced equipment in these schools so their kids can have the best available education."

The schools in Ameriyah, which are historically known for having successful education systems, are not only for the children to have a place to learn, but is also a source of pride for the Iraqi citizens within the community, said Stephenson. Even when things were bad last summer with enemy activity the Headmaster at the Al Rawadan School made it a point to ensure the kids came to school to experience some sort of normalcy and better themselves as Iraqi citizens through education.

The schools Headmaster's told Stephenson through recent discussions they are really proud of their students and how intelligent they are.



On Patrol with Hard Rock & The Children of Iraq

Sgt. Alexander Foust, a native of Bellefontaine, Ohio, walks alongside a group of Iraqi children during a dismounted patrol in Hurriyah March 21. Foust serves with 1st Platoon, Company A "Hard Rock," 1st Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), Multi-National Division -- Baghdad. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. James Hunter, 2nd BCT PAO, 101st Abn. Div., MND-B)

BSTB chemical Soldiers put their skills to work

Story by
Staff Sgt. K.M. Yocom-Delgado
HHC, 2 BSTB

Soldiers from the 2nd Brigade Special Troops Battalion RECCE Platoon set aside their Explosive Ordnance Detachment escort gun trucks and picked up their M40 Protective masks. Their mission was to link up with a platoon from 4/181 Chemical Company and conduct a clean up and decontamination mission in a portion of a basement at Joint Security Station Ameriyah.

The mission at hand was to clean up approximately 400lbs of chlorine hydroxide. It was a business as usual task for the members of 4/181 Chemical Company, but was a unique opportunity for the 2nd BSTB Soldiers. Normally tasked to escort 731st EOD, the chemi-

cal Soldiers of the platoon got a chance to use their skills as "Dragon Soldiers." They were a part of an important clean up in a building that housed Soldiers from 4th Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment on JSS Ameriyah.

After a short meet and greet with 4/181 Chem., the two units combined and moved out to JSS Ameriyah with the morning chow run for 4-10 Cav. Upon arrival, and after a quick mission brief, teams split up to either set up a decontamination line, suit up into protective gear or prepare overpack containers for use. The cleaning up of the solid chemical proved to be a test of endurance, organization and teamwork as the different teams worked hand-in-hand to fill, secure, and label all containers of chemicals as safely as possible.

As clean up of the chemicals ended, the decontamination process began. To

neutralize a base, an acid is needed. For the mission at hand, Sprite soda pop was used as the acidic liquid. Approximately 15 cases of Sprite were obtained to decontaminate the areas that had been affected. After careful cleanup and testing of the area, the Soldiers proved that the threat no longer existed. The team then proceeded through a final self-decontamination and equipment tear down.

"This was a great opportunity, you learn this stuff and hope you don't have to use it, but you get to see how important it is with a mission like this" said Spc. Joshua Breen, Utica, NY native. The platoon sergeant, Staff Sgt. Keptrick Ruffin, a Butler, Ala., native, grinning with pride, said, "We had been to a lot of training to do a mission like this; they all did an outstanding job. I am really proud of them."

KADHAMIYAH

Fourth platoon shifted fire as Rosenberg's platoon pushed up into what they know call "Death Valley."

"On the right side there was a huge fire and to my left were alleyways," Rosenberg said. They pulled security down alleyways and were receiving fire from there also.

"It was a shooting gallery; guys were popping out of everywhere," he said. Insurgents were popping out from corners and firing rounds, while others stood atop balconies and rooftops and snuck in pop shots; however, it had no effect on the Soldiers.

"The gunners did an awesome job," said Rosenberg. Initially the platoon sergeants truck was in the lead.

One RPG hit right in front of his truck, then as the criminal came back from behind his corner to fire, he was hit with .50 cal rounds. The gunner, Pfc. Hunter Bruns, saved his fellow comrades from being hit with an RPG.

According to Rosenberg, the platoon sergeants exact words were, "He saved my truck."

"Pfc. [Hunter] Bruns was absolutely incredible," said Rosenberg. "He was unloading on guys 150 meters away from him and shooting controlled pairs at their head."

Really, he can't say enough about how his platoon and the rest of the company performed that night and over the next couple of days.

"My guys did awesome. With the exception of four guys, it was every ones first time in contact," said Rosenberg. "So, you expect everyone to be nervous but their training kicked in. Everyone was calm, controlled and did their job perfectly. You've got 18 and 19 year old Soldiers dealing with getting shot at for the first time and they did as well as anybody could have ever asked."

For Pfc. Eric Weekly, a native of Urbana, Iowa, and gunner for 1st Platoon, Co. D, it was his first time coming into contact with the enemy and he made the most of it.

"We were sitting on Route Vernon facing northeast, and an RPG flew over the truck from the west," he said. "We swung around to PID the guy and he shot another one. We got positive identification and engaged him with about ten rounds of .50 cal. and shot the guy as he went to shoot the third one. That was my first confirmed kill."

Altogether, Rosenberg believes the company killed an estimated 12 insurgents.

However, the U.S. troops weren't the only ones who stayed in the fight, doing what they could to eliminate any enemy activity.

According to Henry, he believes the Special Groups criminals expected the Iraqi Army Soldiers from the 5th Battalion, 22nd Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division to lay down their arms; however, that was not the case. Once the insurgents saw that the IA were staying, they had to change their game plan.

"They proved they were there to stay and fight," Henry said. "The first night out, all there guys were manning their [tactical checkpoints]; they were securing the intersections they needed to secure."

The Iraqi Army battalion is responsible for manning checkpoints in the out muhallahs around Kadhamiyah, said Henry, and did a good job not letting anyone within.

They secured alleyways, which insurgents were using to maneuver and fire upon Coalition and ISF, Henry said. "They are reliable."

Maybe it was a true testament of how far the Iraqi Army has come. Nearly a year ago when Co. D, 325th Airborne Infantry Regiment of the 82nd Airborne Division controlled the area they came under a similar attack from Special Groups forces, said Henry.

The Soldiers in the unit went to arrest a group of criminals at a building in Kadhamiyah and were ambushed as well, he said. However, the IA did not help with the fight at all.

"The IA was seen giving weapons to the enemy and pointing out American positions," Henry continued. "We didn't see any of that happen this time. They were here to fight."

The IA Soldiers played vital role securing a key checkpoint during the engagements, he said. Along the Tigris River, on one of the main routes in Kadhamiyah, the IA secured the TCP and allowed freedom of movement for Coalition and ISF to push a good amount of combat

power into the fight at any given time.

"I think the IA did very well during the incidents," Brown said. "They manned their checkpoints and didn't run and leave. They did what they thought was right."

The Iraqi Army withstood enemy contact and helped secure key terrain during the conflict.

The attacks set by the enemy combatants were very complex to say the least.

Henry believes the Special Groups set themselves up around the Kadhamiyah Shrine, setting boundaries around them as their defensive



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

An Iraqi Army Soldier looks through his binoculars while pulling security from his Humvee at a checkpoint in Kadhamiyah April 1.

perimeter. They used explosively formed projectiles as a protective barrier on the outside perimeter, hoping Coalition and ISF would cross their outer boundary, come under attack from EFPs and other explosives, and finally finish them off with RPGs and small arms fire.

However, that was not the case. "We smacked them pretty good," said Henry. "We were very careful not to push into their perimeter."

Now, Henry believes, especially with the damage the caused to the insurgent forces, they have either left town or went into hiding, which is allowing life to get back to normal in Kadhamiyah.

The local citizens are moving about the area again, and the shops are open. The markets are not as busy as usually, which is understandable because the people are still a bit apprehensive.

The Iraqi Army Soldiers will continue to man checkpoints in Kadhamiyah to deter any enemy combatants from entering the area as the daily lives of the people return to normal, said Brown.



Sergeant Audie Murphy Award

Sgt. Kyle Busby
1-64 AR

Sgt. Kyle Busby, a native of Clinton, Ill., with 1st Battalion, 64th Armor Regiment, attached to the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), competed and was accepted into the Sergeant Audie Murphy Club for his excellence as a noncommissioned officer.

STEPHENSON

Basic Combat Training, Stephenson went from 250 pounds, down to 170 pounds, where he weighs in at today.

Stephenson arrived at Fort Campbell, Ky., in October of 2007 just as the Brigade was coming back from its deployment. The first person he met was Sgt. Brandon Griffis, his current squad leader.

“When I first met him he was like any other new guy: scared and timid,” said Griffis, a native of Pendleton, Ind.

The first thing Griffis mentioned to Stephenson was that the guys in his platoon were going to become brothers as they prepared and conducted their next mission in Iraq.

“We did a lot of training, a lot of dismounted stuff,” Stephenson said about his training at Fort Campbell as they prepared for their deployment. “We trained so much back at Fort Campbell. Honestly a lot of the training we did back there was harder than what we do here.”

Now, Stephenson serves with Hard Rock’s 1st Platoon where he works as a gunner, running day and night missions in the western Baghdad neighborhood of Hurriyah patrolling the streets in an attempt to defeat criminal and insurgent activity, while simultaneously improving the economy, government and infrastructure within the community.

When asked to describe Iraq, Stephenson said, “Another world.”

“It’s way different than anything I ever expected. I expected it to be a lot worse,” he said. “Everybody speaks a different language. Surprisingly, though, when you

talk to people they really do understand you with what broken Arabic you know and the broken English they know, and with the hand gestures.

“I thought it was going to be a lot different,” Stephenson continued. “I didn’t expect people to be waving at us and coming up to us.

Right now it just seems a lot more peaceful than I could have ever imagined. It’s a different world.”

Though a different world, many miles away from his homeland in Fort Wayne, Stephenson is adapting to the situation and helping accomplish the mission of the securing and improving the area.

“He’s got a tremendous work ethic,” Griffis said. “If you give him something to do he will get it done. If he can’t figure it out he’ll go ask somebody else. He’s a go-getter. I think with some more professional development down the road he’ll be a good leader.”

With the potential Stephenson has, Griffis said, it will be hard for the Army to lose someone like him. However, “I am sure whatever he does after the Army he’ll be good at it.”

After his enlistment is up, Stephenson plans to work as a police officer, maybe doing computer forensics, he said.

In the meantime, he will continue to plan for his wedding in the Summer of 2009 to his fiancé, and continue to bond with his brothers just as Griffis told him he would.

“Sometimes we have disputes, but when it comes to going out on missions we are all really in synch because we have been doing the same training and mission together,” Stephenson said. “One of the reasons I like Alpha Company so much is because they are all my boys.”



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

Pfc. Christopher Stephenson, a native of Fort Wayne, Ind., pulls security from his gunner position while others step from the Humvee over a wall to inspect a suspicious site in Kadhamiyah March 21. Stephenson serves as a gunner with 1st Platoon, Company A, 1st Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), Multi-National Division – Baghdad.

CHAOS

pedestrian traffic movement.

While sitting a Joint Security Station Ghazaliyah III, a Son of Iraq [Abna’ a al Iraq] member, said the people of Baghdad are scared of these criminal – they absolutely fear them. They have good weapons, because, to his belief, they have the money to purchase these weapons, which come from selling drugs, ransom from kidnappings or money from outside supporters.

To ensure no further criminal activity or supplies pushed through the area, Iraqi Security Forces and Soldiers from Co. C, 1-75 Cav., continue to man a critical checkpoint in the area.

The checkpoint sits at one of the main routes going into the Jouadine and Ramaniyah area, and is key in blocking all criminal influence from the east in Hurriyah, said Higgins.

“Right now we have reinforced the Iraqi Army checkpoints,” said Higgins. “Basically to prevent IA from getting killed or captured; we are reinforcing our partnership with the IA and fighting along side them to help bring security to their country.”

Currently, the ISF are manning checkpoints, searching vehicles, and enforcing the curfew on the vehicle ban to reduce any criminal activity in and around the area, he said. However, this is nothing new to the Iraqi troops who operate in the area. Even prior to the violence, they were conducting joint patrols and joint checkpoint operations.

“They are partnered with us, helping us strongpoint the checkpoint,” Higgins said. The Iraqi Army is sticking by their “guns,” letting the people of Iraq know they are on the side of the Iraqi government and won’t be influenced by any insurgent or criminal groups.

MND-B Soldiers seize key target, cache

Story by
2nd BCT PAO

BAGHDAD – Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers capture key criminal suspects also led to the seizure of a weapons cache in the Mansour District in northwestern Baghdad March 19.

Soldiers from 2nd Battalion, 32nd Field Artillery Regiment, attached to the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), captured the individual during a mission to capture him.

While the Soldiers detained the individual, Iraqi Security Forces provided a ring of security.

The suspect is allegedly a mid-level leader of al Qaeda in Iraq who is believed to be responsible for conducting several vehicle-borne improvised explosive device attacks throughout Baghdad and southern Iraq.

“His capture will likely provide us with the information we need to capture other AQI members” said Capt. H. Eric Perez-Rivera, assistant military intelligence officer for 2nd BCT.

After Soldiers detained him, they searched his house and discovered a cache of weapons behind a hidden wall.

The cache consisted of 14 AK-47 rifles, three rocket propelled grenade launchers, six 9 mm handguns, various hand grenades and other munitions. The cache also contained seven landmines, detonation cord and other improvised explosive device making materials.

The cache was turned over to an Explosive Ordnance Detachment for disposal.

“This is another example of what the partnership of Iraqi Security and Coalition forces can produce”, said Maj. David Hollis, 2nd BCT spokesman. “This arrest, coupled with the cache find, is another step toward a safer and more unified Iraq.”



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

Soldiers with Company C, 1st Squadron, 75th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), take cover behind a Humvee after receiving small arms fire in northern Ghazaliyah March 27. Violence erupted in the area following the detention of four criminals; however, Coalition and Iraqi Security Forces teamed together to maintain security in the area.



“Strike” Brigade Combat Team
101st Airborne Division (Air Assault)
Operation Iraqi Freedom





In Memoriam

We Shall Never Forget...

“The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; he leadeth me beside still waters. He restoreth my soul; he leadeth me in paths of righteousness for his name sake. Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil for Thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table for me in the presence of mine enemies; thou annointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life and I will dwell in the house of the Lord, forever,”

Psalm 23



**SFC SHAWN SUZCH
COMPANY D
1-64 ARMOR REGIMENT**



**CPL SCOTT MCINTOSH
COMPANY D
1-64 ARMOR REGIMENT**



**SSG ERNESTO
CIMARRUSTI
COMPANY D
1-64 ARMOR REGIMENT**



**CPL ROBERT MCDAVID
COMPANY D
1-64 ARMOR REGIMENT**



**SSG DAVID JULIAN
COMPANY D
1-64 ARMOR REGIMENT**

COMPANY D, 1-64 AR