

R THE MOUNTED **RIFLEMAN**

3d ARMORED CAVALRY REGIMENT

April 2008



***Taking charge
of the AO***

THE MOUNTED RIFLEMAN



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Cavalry Regiment**

72ND REGIMENTAL COMMANDER
Col. Michael A. Bills

**XVII REGIMENTAL COMMAND
SERGEANT MAJOR**
Command Sgt. Maj. William J. Burns

PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER
Maj. Gary Dangerfield

PUBLIC AFFAIRS NCOIC/EDITOR
Master Sgt. Tim Volkert

GRAPHIC ILLUSTRATOR/DESIGN
Spc. Matthew Boyd

The Mounted Rifleman is the official publication for the Troopers, Noncommissioned Officers, Officers, family members and friends of the 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment. Views expressed herein are those of the authors.

The Mounted Rifleman is the primary Command Information tool of the Regimental command leadership. Its mission is to foster esprit de corps, enhance morale and keep troopers informed throughout the Regiment.

ABOUT THIS

ISSUE

As the second edition of the Mounted Rifleman was created and put together, several decisions had to be made about the content of the magazine.

One decision made was to include more photographs of Soldiers. While stories about the great job our Soldiers do is important, families and Soldiers also like to see a lot of images of what our fellow Brave Rifles are doing.

To that end, each issue will now have a photo spread that will highlight many of events that take place throughout the regiment.

My goal is to continue to develop the magazine and ensure that it provides a wide variety of information about the 3d ACR.

The 3d ACR also welcomed the new safety and occupational specialist to the team in March. Peter Higgins is now helping ensure the regiment is in compliance with all Army safety standards and that the Soldiers continue to receive the latest safety information to prevent accidents. He also has a column in this edition of the Mounted Rifleman and will be one of the regular contributors.

The 3d ACR also welcomed the 94th Engineer Battalion, stationed at Fort Leonard wood, Mo., to FOB Marez and the team.

As we move forward in the deployment, I will continue to look at the content of the Mounted Rifleman and make changes as needed to provide as much information as I can about the great job the Brave Rifles and our fellow Soldiers are doing to help the people of Iraq and protect our country from terrorists.

If you have any suggestions or would like to submit articles or photographs to the Mounted Rifleman, e-mail timothy.volkert@us.army.mil or call the Regimental Public Affairs Office at VOIP 573-2097 or DSN 849-5270.

- The Editor



3d Armored Cavalry Regiment



Cover photo by Patrick Baz

Left/Cover: Pfc. Robert Lange from Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 2nd Squadron, 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment, stands atop his humvee during a joint patrol with Fox Troop, in Diyala Province. Units from the Regiment of Mounted Rifleman have been steadily applying pressure on the insurgents in their areas of operation and improving the security situation for the residents.

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Spc. Matthew Boyd

Col. Michael Bills, 72nd Colonel of the Regiment, presents a coin to Staff Sgt. Angel Perez from Headquarters Troop, 3rd Squadron, 3d ACR, at Combat Outpost Heider March 14.

Greetings from Mosul, Iraq. It is hard to believe that five months have passed since the Regiment deployed to Iraq. The extraordinary efforts of every Mounted Rifleman have enabled the Coalition and Iraqi Security Forces to make huge strides in combat, stability, and support operations.

Our units are stretched from the Iranian border and Diyala Province to Baghdad, the Syrian border and Ninewah Province, which shows the continued flexibility and adaptability of this great Regiment. I could not be more proud of our Troopers as they continue to exhibit tremendous courage, professionalism and dedication to duty.

I would like to acknowledge our support Troopers, the air and ground mechanics, supply personnel, medics, cooks and communications specialists who are working very hard to sustain combat readiness.

Muleskinner Squadron continues to support the Regiment across Ninewah Province, an area the size of Connecticut. They have conducted 270 Combat Logistic Patrols, provided more than 240,000 gallons of fuel, 10,000 gallons of water, provided food service to four remote sites, conducted 2,100 maintenance jobs, treated more than 2,500 personnel at sick call, and visited nine villages where they treated 1,600 women and children. This is an

incredible performance by our support Troopers.

In Taji, Longknife Squadron recently supported the Coalition Forces' ground efforts over Baghdad through air and ground integration and interdiction of IED emplacements in a recent surge of activity. They fired 88 hellfire missiles and killed 152 insurgents.

They have also logged 3,035 AH-64 Apache flight hours and 823 UH-60 Black Hawk flight hours in a month. These are new records for flight hours over Baghdad. With high number of hours, Longknife's crew chiefs, mechanics and maintenance test pilots continue to work hard at sustaining our fleet, despite the incredible number of hours our pilots are flying.

In Diyala Province, Sabre Squadron and King Battery continue to fight with 4/2 SBCT, holding their ground and keeping the enemy on the run in some of the heaviest fighting in Iraq. Their area of operations is the largest for a battalion-sized unit in country.

During the last two months, Sabre Squadron conducted offensive operations into the "Bread Basket," breaking the grip of the Shia extremists who have freely operated in the area. King Battery fired more than 5,000 rounds in support of the brigade, killing or causing the insurgents to surrender to Coalition and Iraqi Forces.

In Ninewah Province, Thunder Squadron and

1-8 Infantry continue to pursue the enemy with cordon and search operations and patrols that have resulted in the killing or capturing of more than 400 insurgents. Successful reconnaissance has resulted in well over 100 cache finds and route clearance by our engineers has cleared more than 4,030 miles of IED-laden roads throughout Mosul.

The effort by the 94th Engineers has been Herculean. The engineers have built or repaired 20 combat outposts built and positioned 40 checkpoints throughout the city of Mosul that provide security and movement for the Iraqi citizens.

Thunder Squadron continues to provide security from Mosul out west to the Syrian border. Maddog Company is maintaining a presence at FOB Sykes and Tal Afar and Eagle Troop is present at COP Heider providing the security in and around the Rabyia Point of Entry, which controls traffic from Iraq into Syria.

Our aviation support in Ninewah, provided by the 4th Squadron, 6th Cavalry, has been incredible. The squadron has been supporting the fight not just in Mosul, but also down south and west with Tiger and Thunder Squadrons.

During the last nine months they have supported both 4/1 CAV and the Regiment, flying more than 38,000 hours in their OH-58D Kiowas and more than 10,000 hours in their UH-60 Black Hawks. The Redcatcher crews have taken the fight to the enemy in support of both the Coalition and Iraqi Security Forces. It has been a tremendous performance by a great team.

In south Ninewah Province, Tiger Squadron has successfully killed or captured a number of insurgents, financiers, and weapons runners and found several cache sites, all of which had been supporting the fight in Mosul.

Tiger Squadron's efforts to establish the "Sons of Iraq," which are armed civilians under military control, have been a huge success in maintaining the peace and keeping the number of attacks on Iraqi civilians at a minimum.

Tiger successfully conducted its first economic summit with the local Sheiks and government officials, looking at the way ahead to improve conditions for the Iraqi people in the Ninewah and Sulidan provinces.

A lot of the Regimental success here in Iraq comes from the sacrifice our families make in the rear. The wives, husbands, families, and friends of our Troopers are actively involved in their FRGs, communities, raising their families and providing great support for their deployed loved one. This

allows the Troopers of the Regiment to focus forward on the mission at hand. I would like to offer our heartfelt thanks for all you are doing.

I would also like to give special thanks to our rear detachment for the tremendous work they are doing for the Regiment. The long hours you spend taking care of our family members, preparing the new Soldiers for their deployment, the memorial ceremonies for our fallen Soldiers and those who have been wounded in combat has been phenomenal.

You are the Army standard in what is expected of a rear detachment. Thanks for what you are doing on a daily basis. Your work allows the Regiment to focus on the fight forward.

All the accomplishments of the Regiment have not been without sacrifice. In the last two months the Regiment has lost Sgt. Spates, Staff Sgt. Mackey, Capt. Mallard, Sgt. Anderson, Spc. Burkett, Sgt. Unruh, Spc. Morris, and Capt. Burgos-Cruz. We will not forget our fallen comrades and we will honor them through our actions. Their families will remain in our thoughts and prayers.

The Regiment has become a strong family – a strong family that is committed to each other. We will continue to draw strength from each other and look after each other.

Congratulations to the Regimental team for winning the Deployment Excellence Award for the Army. It was a tremendous effort by all, especially the movement teams from each Squadron.

Brave Rifles!

Michael A. Bills

72nd Colonel of the Regiment



Spc. Matthew Boyd

From left, Capt. William Bowers, Lightning Troop commander, 3rd Squadron, 3d ACR, speaks with Col. Michael Bills, 72nd Colonel of the Regiment, during battlefield circulation at Combat Outpost Hotel in Mosul, April 9.

A message from the XVII CSM of the Regiment

We have moved past the first 100 days of the deployment.

This was the time period most dangerous and critical to Soldiers during a deployment.

It is also during this time that Soldiers develop the habits they will use for the remainder of the deployment. Leaders must remain focused on providing purpose, direction, and motivation to our Troopers to ensure that complacency and bad habits do not become a part of their daily routines.

This discipline is paying dividends as Soldiers continue to perform their missions and combat tasks successfully.

The Troopers of this Regiment and its attached units have been taking the fight to the enemy daily and we dominate every engagement. As our Troopers and their brothers in the Iraqi Security Forces continue to capture or kill the enemy and find their weapons caches, we improve the security of the areas we operate in and in time, we will drive the terrorists out of these areas completely.

While we watch our successes and the improvements in Ninewah, it is important that we continue to maintain our edge. That means that leaders keep an eye out for the signs of complacency. Continue to keep your Soldiers sharp by conducting training when you have the opportunity and always ensure the Soldiers are properly prepared for their missions. Equipment checks and maintenance are a daily task that involves everyone.

Soldiers must continue to look out for one another. If you notice Troopers taking shortcuts, stop them. Shortcuts and poor attention to detail could lead to death or serious injury.

As we move forward into the spring and summer, the weather will become a major factor in our mission planning. It is critical that leaders ensure every Trooper is getting enough food and water. Underestimating the heat can be just as deadly as the enemy.

Iraq is a dangerous place and our Soldiers are

performing as true professionals. As I travel throughout the battle space (from Diyala to Saladin), I see Troopers doing great things! The Troopers of the 3d ACR are once again adding to the legacy of the Regiment of the Mounted Rifleman. There is no doubt that Mosul and Ninewah Province are crucial in this fight to the insurgents. They continually try to terrorize the people and drive a wedge between the population and the sovereign government of Iraq. As the ISF



Master Sgt. Tim Volkert

Command Sgt. Maj. William Burns, XVIIth Command Sergeant Major of the Regiment, tours one of the COPS in Mosul during a recent battlefield circulation.

continues to improve, and we continue to separate/remove the enemy from the population, things will continue to get better here.

The enemy, to date, has been effectively disrupted and as long as we remain focused and stay on him, we will continue to be successful. Rule #1: while in contact maintain violence of action and Pile On. Remember, discipline will win the day!

The same holds true for our families back home. Our Family Readiness Groups are strong. Through our various town hall meetings and other correspondence, we stay up to date with any issues that your/our families have and work through any issues that arise.

The 3d ACR team is strong and WILL DEFEAT THIS INSURGENCY.

***Brave Rifles!
The XVIIth***

REMINGTON

Headquarters Troop, 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment



Maj. Justin Jocuns
Remington Troop Commander

In the previous edition of the Mounted Rifleman, it was established that the Regimental Headquarters and Headquarters Troop was uncommon in the realm of headquarters troops because of its additional focus on Warrior Skills training.

The troop continued to build on this reputation through minor construction projects and support to the subordinate squadrons and infantry battalion.

Remington Troop supports the war effort on a daily basis through the constant reception, refinement, and distribution of information and resources to the subordinate units.

While this is and always will be the troop's primary mission, RHHT has worked to support the war fighter by coordinating the construction of a boresight panel, a plumb and sync ramp, and the recovery and delivery of an Abrams main battle tank.

Located just above Marez Range on Forward Operating Base Marez, is the black and white panel, erected in support of the local tankers and scouts.

Boresighting is conducted on a daily basis and the reason it is so important is because the act of boresighting matches the lay of the main gun on to the fire control system and optics of the tank or Bradley.

While boresighting can be done on buildings or other vehicles; the preferred method is to manually lay the main gun of a tank or

Bradley on to a boresight panel, resulting in accurately-delivered direct fire. The ability to hit what you are aiming at has always been important for a tanker or Bradley crew, but it is particularly critical in and urban environment in a counterinsurgency fight where mitigating unnecessary damage is key.

The cherry on the top of this accomplishment is the fact that the boresight panel was recovered from the FOB Marez dump and restored to a serviceable condition by Remington Troopers. The only additional cost to the government was a few gallons of paint and some brushes.

Along the same lines as the boresight panel, a plumb and sync ramp was also constructed near the range. Plumb and sync is another common task for a tank crew where, after boresighting, the crew of a tank will back the tank on to a ramp creating a plane where the point of view of all three sights on a tank are aligned, resulting in still further accuracy and the best performance from the fire control system.

Based on the suggestion of then, RHHT first sergeant, 1st Sgt. Stephen Wright, KBR contractors constructed the ramp while grading land to harvest rocks for other construction.

This level of coordination is common place in a cavalry organization, and in similar fashion to the boresight panel, was completed at no additional cost to the government and without a tedious work order request process.

Lastly, and most notably, our previous first sergeant, 1st Sgt. Wright, Maj. Jonathan Larsen, Maj. Michael Garlington, Sgt 1st Class Elke Drozd, and Staff Sgt. Amy Buck, all from RHHT, with some help from the Maintenance Troop and Chief Warrant Officer Richard Stewart from RSS, collaborated to recover a forgotten-about, non-mission capable tank at COB Speicher.

The group all did more than their share of work to return the tank, nicknamed Frankentank, to a fully mission capable status and deliver it to the 1st Battalion, 8th Infantry Regiment, so it could proudly return to service and the fight against the insurgency in Mosul. Though used, Frankentank arrived as good as new, with the crew served weapons mounted, radios installed, complete BII, topped off fuel tanks, and a full, ready rack.

One of RHHT's mission essential tasks is to provide support. That mission normally takes the form of a digitally connected Tactical Operations Center, properly maintained vehicles, and healthy Soldiers.

Remington Troopers take their mission seriously and are willing to go the extra mile to ensure the regiment has what it needs to be successful.

From mission analysis and operations order production to gunnery and tank maintenance, Remington aims to please no matter the task.

Brave Rifles!
Remington 6

TIGER

1st Squadron, 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment



Lt. Col. Thomas Dorame Tiger Squadron Commander

As Tiger Squadron reaches another milestone, the first 100 days in theatre, our families at home can rest assured that their Soldiers continue to perform admirably across the Ninewah Province.

The theme for spring here in the land of Tiger, is “change.” Dragon has returned to the river valley, shaking the dust from their boots after having exceeded expectations with their performance. Having managed to break the standing regimental record in finding the largest enemy weapons cache to date in Ninewah, Dragon will have time to rest their weary horses before saddling up and joining Bandit Troop on the eastern bank of the Tigris.

While Dragon was roaming the squadron’s “old haunts,” the remainder of Tiger Squadron has been busy passing our message of reconciliation.

As springtime is synonymous with life and rebirth, the people of the Za’ab likewise have been offered a new beginning, a chance to take part in their country’s rebirth.

Through the hard work and determination of our Soldiers, old enemies have come forward to make peace with the coalition and the Iraqi government, to change their ways, and take part in a new Iraq.

Tiger has also instituted change in the ISF community. Leadership in the Iraqi army, Iraqi Police, and the Sons of Iraq have been

gathering throughout the Za’ab and forging a way ahead together. Through cooperation with local leadership, the security situation continues to improve.

King Battery has greatly contributed to the fight in their piece of the Diyala Province. Though King continues to serve detached from our squadron, their performance has been nothing but exemplary.

Our artillerymen have fired more than 4,000 rounds in support of missions in the province, and continue to excel in their embassy, representing Tiger in Diyala.

The heart of spring is almost upon us, and I couldn’t be more pleased with our squadron.

Troopers from every MOS and every rank are upholding Tiger standards, and our leaders are applying their expertise.

Tiger is achieving results, and as with the seasons, change is spreading. From our security initiatives, to economic development; from capturing the division’s number five high value target (HVI) in Ninewah Province; to jump starting the first Civil Service Corps in laying the groundwork on a new road in Tal Abtha, change is helping to spread security and prosperity.

Tiger Squadron – your Troopers, have been the catalyst.

Tiger Strong!
Tiger 6



Spc. Eric A. Rutherford

Lt. Col. Thomas Dorame, commander, 1st Squadron, 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment, and Command Sgt. Maj. Jonathan Hunt, 1st Sqdrn. command sergeant major, exit a ferry on the Tigris River near Al Hichel, Iraq. The Tiger leadership conducted a battlefield circulation to visit Troopers throughout their AO.

SABRE

2nd Squadron, 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment



Lt. Col. Paul Calvert
Sabre Squadron Commander

I write these words on the fifth anniversary of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

As we pause for a moment and reflect on not just where we are but where we've been throughout this conflict, the story of the war in Iraq cannot be told without Sabre Squadron. From the al Anbar Province in OIF I to the streets of Tal Afar in OIF III, Sabre has consistently been in the middle of that fight and can look back with pride at the key role it has played for our regiment and nation.

But that was then. Now we, along with the entire regiment, find ourselves once again in a key place at a key time. As the pundits say the focus of the fight for Iraq has shifted from Baghdad to the city of Mosul and to Diyala Province, the regiment finds itself in both places. As our brothers to the north work heroically to clean AQI out of its last major urban stronghold, Sabre Squadron leads the fight in an Area of Operations that encompasses the vast majority of Diyala Province. In fact, our AO has recently been expanded to encompass even more of the province.

Fox Troop, Grim Troop, and Lion Battery (with invaluable support from HHT) range far and wide each day, bringing a coalition presence to communities that haven't seen American Soldiers for years. From tiny farming villages in the north and south of our AO to the more urban areas of Balad Ruz, our Troopers are providing a daily presence that not only disrupts AQI, it also provides much needed humanitarian relief. In the process, our Troopers are building relationships with Kurds, Sunnis, and Shiites.

In Grim's AO, Grim Troopers have spent weeks at a time in the field working closely with ISF clearing AQI from their former safe havens. Grim's work does not merely involve quick clearing actions, but instead includes a long and patient program of holding and building. Grim has stayed to help ISF construct new patrol bases and has worked hand in hand with IP and IA units that will remain and provide permanent security.

They have done all this against determined opposition, but Grim has not been deterred by its frequent enemy contact and is making a difference in the western and southern portion of AO Sabre.

In Fox's AO, their work to build local relationships paid big dividends as three local citizens (including two newly-enrolled Sons of Iraq) led Fox directly to an AQI meeting house. The fleeing extremists made the mistake of directly engaging Fox's Bradleys. In the ensuing fire fight, Fox Troopers killed six AQI, including one of the primary AQI leaders in the region. They detained another high value target and inflicted a major defeat on AQI in AO Fox. This victory continues to pay dividends as further citizen tips led to the arrests of more than a dozen suspected AQI in the days following the raid.

At the same time our Troopers engage in sustained combat operations, they have also made significant humanitarian contributions. We've seen a new health clinic open, cleaned up villages, opened a new soccer field, and conducted humanitarian and medical engagements. In the coming days and weeks, we expect to further improve the lives of ordinary Iraqis. With every new contract, with every new health clinic, and with every food distribution, we draw a further contrast with a tyrannical enemy that seeks only to steal, kill, and destroy.

That enemy is still out there. Since my last report, we have lost five Troopers and one American civilian interpreter. Capt. Torre Mallard, Sgt. Phillip Anderson, Sgt. Corey Spates, Sgt. Gregory Unruh, Spc. Donald Burkett, and Mr. Albert Haroutounian have made the ultimate sacrifice for the country they loved and voluntarily chose to serve in a time of war. We mourn their loss. They were our brothers in arms and our friends. We grieve for their families and ask that you remember them in your thoughts and prayers. We are inspired by the example they set, and we honor them by facing the enemy each day and by serving the way they served — with courage and integrity.

The command sergeant major and I remain proud of the young Troopers of Sabre Squadron. Each of these men has sacrificed much to serve. Our nation owes them and their families a debt that cannot be repaid. Five years after the launch of Operation Iraqi Freedom, Sabre Squadron serves now as it did then, located at the pivot point of a war upholding the honor of a regiment that has served our nation long and well.

Sabre Ready!
Sabre 6

THUNDER

3rd Squadron, 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment



Lt. Col. Keith Barclay
Thunder Squadron
Commander

Friends, families, and members of the Thunder Team, It is with great pleasure we report that the squadron continues to perform magnificently in the conduct of its mission. Security throughout our Area of Operations is steadily improving every day. This improving security is a direct result of the hard work and diligence of our entire team. The command sergeant major and I could not be prouder.

During the past two months the squadron, with the help of the 94th Engineer Battalion, MiTTs, and the Iraqi army and police, has completed the construction of another round of Combat Outposts (COPs) and Traffic Control Points (TCPs). These COPs and TCPs are essential to improving the squadron's control of AO Thunder and have instantaneously limited the enemy's freedom of maneuver.

It must be noted, however, that these COPs and TCPs do not simply materialize on their own. It takes a lot of hard work from the staff and leaders at all levels to accomplish these Herculean tasks. We would especially like to thank the engineers of the 94th Eng. Bn. for their professionalism and untiring work. We could not have done this without them and look forward to working with them in the months ahead.

March marked the squadron surpassing its 3,500th combat patrol. This is impressive because it demonstrates the incredible

pace our squadron has been able to maintain during these past five months. Our, tankers, scouts, engineers, artillerymen, and mortar men partnered with Iraqi army and Iraqi Police, constantly patrol cities like Mosul, Tal Afar, Rabiyyah and Muhailabiyah in order to bring security to the people of Iraq. It is also impressive because it is reflective of the terrific maintenance being performed by our mechanics and vehicle crewmen.

In an armored cavalry squadron, mechanics are members of the unsung hero club. They usually only receive attention when there are more vehicles broken than mission capable, but this month we want all the mechanics to know that we have been watching their work and are grateful for literally keeping the squadron running at an unprecedented rate; keep up the great work!

Sadly, we had to say goodbye to another member of the squadron.



Capt. Richard Ybarra

Sgt. Amaury Lantigua and Sgt. 1st Class John Guy of Heavy Co., carefully close a popcorn cart's door after discovering four anti-armor IEDs in the al-Rissala Market, Mosul, Iraq, March 9.

Staff Sgt. Bryant Mackey was killed Feb. 20 by an enemy Rocket Propelled Grenade during combat operations along the Tal Afar Highway in Mosul. During his memorial ceremony we celebrated his life and mourned his loss. Staff Sgt. Mackey was an outstanding noncommissioned officer whose performance and sense of duty deserves emulation. Please keep the Mackey family in your prayers.

We also want to extend my deepest appreciation to Capt. Jon Elliot, the Thunder Rear Detachment Commander, Sgt. 1st Class Thomas Proffitt, the Thunder Rear Detachment first sergeant, Ms. Jolie May, the Thunder FRSA, Maura Kilbride, Karen Wicker, Alicia Turner, Roxanne Gast, Wendy Wade, Nancy Norris, Jennifer Alicea, Renee Chitwood, Kelly Stanfield, and to all the FRG leaders and points of contact. It is your selfless work away from the field of battle that truly sustains the squadron's ability to fight. We all rest well at night knowing that you are there to take care of our families, our wounded Troopers, and the families of our fallen comrades. Thank you for what you do every day!

In closing, Command Sgt. Maj. Leandre and I just want to reiterate how proud we are of this team. The progress we make every day is real and measurable. Your efforts are making Iraq a better place. Stay disciplined and stay focused. Keep up the fight!

THUNDER!
Thunder 6

LONGKNIFE

4th Squadron, 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment



Lt. Col. Todd Royar
Longknife Squadron Commander

For the average Trooper in Longknife, the deployment is different than it is for the Troopers in the other squadrons.

As a squadron we do not own ground, we are not directly responsible for helping to restore essential services such as electricity and we do not conduct patrols on the ground where we have the opportunity to interact with the local populace.

All of those tasks are being remarkably done by our sister squadrons. So it raises the question of how do we, as an aviation squadron, define success because we cannot use the same metrics.

In short, we in Longknife measure our success by what we contribute to the success of the units that we support. The six brigade combat teams that we support within Multi-National Division-Baghdad are primarily responsible for achieving and sustaining security in and around Baghdad.

At the end of the day, it is the security that we help to provide that will give the Iraqi people a chance to succeed. The pilots and crew members of the squadron are the ones who assist in providing that security. They do that by: conducting reconnaissance to find IED emplacements, responding to troops that are in contact and transporting Soldiers and VIPs via Black Hawks as a safer means of travel.

As you might imagine, when a team of Apaches arrives on the scene, insurgents generally decide to

try and melt back in to the population as it now is an unfair fight. However, unlike our normal relationship with the regiment's three ground squadrons and the RSS, the squadron supports 30 battalion-sized maneuver units in Baghdad.

Air-ground integration remains the cornerstone of our operations. We want units to know that if they need help, we are there for them. So on a daily basis we receive radio calls from elements on the ground to either ask for help or just to ensure they have communications with us. It is a reciprocal relationship. We want them to succeed and they appreciate the assistance. Just last night one of the BCT commanders went out of his way to stop by and personally say thank you to a team that supported one of his units earlier in the week. And that's where our heroes come in.

The vast majority of Longknife is made up of maintainers and support personnel. It is these Troopers who maintain the helicopters, fuel and arm them, and maintain the ground support equipment that makes it happen. They are the ones that generate the combat power that enables us as a unit to fly and support Soldiers on the ground.

While the vast majority of those Troopers will never leave the FOB, they are the critical piece that enables us to always have aircraft providing security to both the Coalition Forces and Iraqi populace.

By all accounts, Baghdad is safer today than it was several months ago. The markets are open and flourishing, the electricity and sanitation systems are becoming more reliable, and the local populace is starting to trust their police and army. We measure our success not by how many insurgents we engage, but how quiet it is on the streets.

Longknife 6

The Longknife Soldiers provide air support to 30 battalion-sized maneuver units in Baghdad with its Apache and Black Hawk helicopters.



1st Lt. Joseph Johnson

MULESKINNER

Support Squadron, 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment



Lt. Col. Steven Cook
Muleskinner Squadron
Commander

During the past month, our Troopers continued to make a positive impact on the regiment's mission here in Iraq. Since our time here, Packhorse Troop has conducted more than 200 Combat Logistics Patrols, driving more than 3,000 miles throughout Ninewah Province.

We have delivered critical supplies to keep the regiment moving. We also delivered important force protection material, such as concrete barriers (called T-walls) to some of the more volatile parts of the city, providing for the increased security with the establishment Combat Outposts (COPs) and Traffic Control Points (TCPs).

These TCPs and COPs are placed where Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) and Coalition Forces (CF) can operate to rapidly interdict and capture insurgents trying to spread IEDs and commit violent acts against the citizens of Mosul, as well as the ISF and CF. Our Troopers have executed their missions flawlessly in support of the overall regimental operations.

We welcomed Capt. Shanna Summy as the new Medical Troop commander. Scalpel Troop has provided immediate trauma care to wounded Iraqi soldiers that are based next to our FOB.

The Iraqi army has limited medical capability so their only alternative is to go to a local civilian hospital for treatment or to us. They choose us for most of the

nonlife-threatening injuries, which allows them to get faster care, and back into the fight sooner.

Also, it is a great opportunity for our medics to hone their skills. It is a win-win situation for both the Iraqi soldiers and our medics.

In the future we will start focus on training to improve the quality of the Iraqi medics, so they can treat on-site or at their FOBs and not rely on us for medical care.

The main focus of our efforts so far has been with maintenance, not only for our own equipment, but also for the Iraqi army.

Blacksmith Troop continues to lead the way in keeping the squadron's equipment on the road and mission ready, as well as providing immediate repairs to the various units operating through our Area of Operations (AO) that do not have any support. Not only does Blacksmith fix our stuff, they are also out there training the Iraqi mechanics on proper maintenance procedures so the Iraqis can keep their units rolling.

The more capable and self-reliant the Iraqi army is, the less they rely on us, which will lead to the goal of turning all security responsibility back over to the Iraqis.

Our Chemdawgs are another group of quiet heroes in support of our mission here. They have processed more than 100 detainees that have been captured by ISF or CF and have done so while maintaining high standards of conduct, treating all detainees, regardless of how bad of a terrorist they are, with dignity and respect. Chemdawgs continue to set the standard for detainee operations

and help ensure detainees have the correct documentation to ensure they are successfully prosecuted in the Iraqi judicial system.

Bullwhip welcomed a new commander, Capt. Catie Boylston, formerly the S6, and 1st Sgt. Gus Johns, formerly of MMC. They did not have to travel far and will continue to work with the staff to provide the overall command and control for all the squadron does, and that is definitely a full-time job. Additionally, we have cooks out at some of the remote sites providing first class food service support, and that support does not go unnoticed by the units.

As I visit these sites, I am always receiving compliments on what a great job our cooks are doing, as well as how much of a morale boost it is having good meals with which to start and end the day.

The strategic impact our Troopers make will never make the headlines. You can take comfort in the fact knowing that your Troopers are there behind the scenes making daily impacts with the Iraqi Security Forces, improving their ability so we can transition the CF out and turn over the job to the Iraqis. It is still too early to tell how soon that will be, but know that we are getting after it and the Iraqis improve on a daily basis toward that end.

Again, I thank you all for your continued support and dedication to your Troopers. They are truly making a difference and you can be proud of them.

Brave Rifles!
Muleskinner 6

1-8 Infantry Regt.

3rd Brigade, 4th Infantry Division



Lt. Col. Christopher Johnson
1-8 Inf. Regt. Commander

As the temperature begins to increase in Iraq, so is the pressure the Fighting Eagles and Iraqi Security Forces are applying on the insurgents operating in east Mosul.

In order to successfully accomplish the mission, the insurgency must be eradicated. Gaining the support of the population while conducting effective raids and patrols will inevitably lead to the ruin of the insurgency.

With the insurgents removed, stability will follow. With stability, the people of Mosul will be able to practice the freedoms that every human being has the right to enjoy. You have made a huge difference in a remarkably short time, establishing and improving Combat Outposts (COPS) and checkpoints that have significantly hindered enemy freedom of movement.

Through the establishment of COP Rock, COP Knight, and several joint operated checkpoints with the IP and the IA, coupled with joint raids and patrols, you have impacted the network and eroded resources finding multiple weapons/HME caches, roadside IEDs and VBIEDs, and the detainment of key terrorists.

Working closely with MITT and PTT elements and other units in the regiment has also been a crucial to our success as we work together to accomplish our

mission. The ultimate success of these missions has led to the steady loss of the insurgent's freedom of movement as well as severely disrupting their plans and attacks against Iraqi Security Forces and Coalition Forces.

Continue to focus on the basics. TLPs and PCC/PCIs are critical for every mission. Debriefs are also critical to our fight for intelligence.

We have hit the four month mark and have a better understanding of our battles pace.

I ask you to continually assess your foxhole and see how we can improve our efforts. Constantly assess your force protection and stay vigilant. Also, look at ways that we can more effectively target the enemy ... maintain the pressure and momentum you have successfully developed during the



Capt. Richard Ybarra

Sgt. 1st Class Bradley Wilson of Weare, N.H., assigned to Company D, 1st Battalion, 8th Infantry Regiment, scans rooftops while pulling security during a patrol in the al-Kadra neighborhood of Mosul, Iraq, March 15.

past few months. Make sure you are also preparing for the warmer weather; stay hydrated and make sure your equipment is prepared for hot temperatures.

Finally, we work with our weapons and sensitive items every day; make sure you are doing good Green2 checks on every mission so that we maintain accountability. I can't stress enough how noble a cause in which the Soldiers of the Fighting Eagles are involved.

The people of Mosul are living in fear of the brutality brought on by these insurgent groups who are all willing to slay the fathers and sons of Iraq in order to rule them.

The Fighting Eagles have been doing an amazing job in eliminating this threat and continually bringing stability to Mosul. The signs of this accomplishment are already becoming apparent with the decrease in attacks on Coalition Forces and the improved effectiveness of our Iraqi partners.

Your courage and bravery confronting these challenges has been exemplary and I am proud to serve with you.

Family and friends back home are also proud of your efforts as you bring stability to this fledgling democracy while at the same time protecting our nation from extremists. Continue your great interaction with the population (day job) and getting after the enemy (night job).

Keep up the great work and continue to look out for one another.

Fighting Eagles, Strike Fear!

4-6 Air Cav Sqdrn.



4th Squadron, 6th United States Cavalry

Lt. Col. T.J. Jamison
4-6 Air Cav Commander

Recently Task Force Redcatcher welcomed embedded journalist Michael Yon to visit the squadron in Mosul.

He witnessed first-hand the heroic deeds performed daily by the dedicated air crew members of A Troop, call sign: Thug, who continue to make mission every day and save lives.

In his article he talks about the superior flying prowess of Capt. Peter Di Giorgio and his copilot gunner 1st Lt. Robert Sickler on Dec. 30, 2007, which led to them earning the coveted Distinguished Flying Cross award this March. Below is an abridged excerpt from that article:

Guitar Heroes

Michael Yon, Online Magazine – michaelyon-online.com

Predator was still watching when [Capt.] Di Giorgio and [1st Lt.] Sickler got a radio call to kill them. “Roger,” diving in low, firing the .50-caliber, which stopped (possibly because of the bullets hitting the helicopter) and Di Giorgio banked hard left.

Bullets ripped through the cockpit. One bullet punched through the pedals

between the pilot’s feet. Another slammed into a seat. Another bullet popped a rotor. And one bullet tore through the belly of the helicopter, severing a wrist-thick skein of wires. The last thing a lot of pilots hear before they die is the “Caution, Warning, and Advisory System.”

Di Giorgio and Sickler heard it start blaring, reporting system failures. Electrical systems failed. Weapons failed. Engine pressure gauges failed. Radios failed, internal and external.

The Kiowa was descending and there wasn’t much distance between them and the ground.

There is a latch on the seat-harnesses to lock when a crash is imminent. Di Giorgio and Sickler locked for crash. They were going down into extremely hostile territory, and the only immediate backup was another Kiowa.

Unlike the old Pintos, Kiowas have air bags. The men prepared

to crash. But the motor kept going! The fight was far from over. The enemy might have shot Sickler and Di Giorgio’s Kiowa into submission, but there were more Kiowas on the runaway that were gassed-up, armed, and only needed pilots.

Bob Sickler and Pete Di Giorgio’s bullet-riddled Kiowa made it to base, and no sooner did skids touch tarmac, than Sickler popped out of his harness and ran to another Kiowa and got the rotors going while Di Giorgio shut down his broken bird.

Daily fights continued. Bullets snapping by or into helicopters, pilots killing bad guys on average about one per day. The pilots reminded me of the circus where the man throws knives at someone who stands there smiling like everything’s perfectly normal, as if in their spare time, they have the habit of standing around throwing knives by each other’s heads.



Sgt. 1st Class Mark Flores.

Capt. Peter Di Giorgio receives the Distinguished Flying Cross from Col. Jessie O. Farrington and Lt. Col. T.J. Jamison (left) at an awards ceremony March 2.

I am proud of the actions of Capt. Di Giorgio and 1st Lt. Sickler, both of whom represent for me the real danger our Soldiers face against an aggressive enemy every day.

My aviators, crew chiefs, and Soldiers face a determined enemy and continue to bring the fight and win!

**Fighting Sixth!
“Redcatcher!”**

ISF improves conditions in northern Iraq

Spc. John Crosby
115th MPAD

MOSUL, Iraq— U.S. commanders in northern Iraq are praising the work of Iraqi Security Forces, which, they say, has led to improving security conditions in Mosul, Kirkuk and other areas.

“Although there’s still a lot of work to be done, we are confident in the capabilities of the Iraqi Security Forces, and their development, to maintain the lead in establishing security in Ninewah Province,” said Maj. Gary Dangerfield, spokesman for the 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment, whose area of operations include Mosul, as well as the entire Ninewah Province.

Since taking over the battle space Dec. 11, 2007, 3d ACR troops have conducted more than 3,500 joint patrols with the Iraqi Police and Iraqi Army, captured or killed more than 300 insurgents and discovered and disarmed more than 300 improvised explosive devices, Dangerfield said.

Many of the raids and the tips that prompted them have been initiated by the Iraqis.

“They’re doing the heavy lifting. They rarely request that we do the actions on the objective because they’re doing it themselves,” said Maj. Thomas Feltey, executive officer for 3rd Squadron, 3d ACR.

On Feb. 13, the Iraqi Army, acting on a tip from the Iraqi Police, detained 21 insurgents during a raid in Mosul while coalition troops provided security.

Feltey cited a relationship between coalition and Iraqi Security Forces in which the Iraqis develop their own leads, plan their own raids against insurgents, and call on coalition troops for support.

“The more we work with them the more trust and confidence they develop that we’ll be there to help them,” Feltey said.

Troop commanders from 3rd Sqdrn., 3d ACR, agreed with the assessment. They said that much of regiment’s work in Mosul so far has consisted in building combat outposts and police checkpoints at strategic locations and intersections in Mosul to assist the Iraqis in their efforts. The combined effort has led to a lowered number of IED’s in Mosul in recent weeks, as well as the resurgence of pedestrians and businesses in once desolate areas.

“I think what we’re seeing is the start of the local economy coming back,” said Capt. Peter Norris, commander of Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 3rd Sqdrn., 3d ACR.

“We would not be able to

make it without the Iraqi Security Forces,” Feltey said. “These guys are true patriots. They’re coming out and accomplishing these things at great risk to themselves and their families.”

In Kirkuk, the Iraqi Security Forces have made even greater progress. Since September 2007, the Kirkuk Police Academy has graduated nearly 2,500 police officers, bringing their numbers to nearly 8,000 in the area.

“The rate of terrorist activity in 2007 has dropped by 65 percent compared to 2006,” said Gen. Jamal Thaker Baker, Kirkuk provincial director of police, at a recent graduation ceremony. “It’s because of the joint work of the Iraqi Security Forces. The people of Kirkuk are beginning to trust the police. When there is trust, there is communication.”

The 2nd Brigade of the 4th Iraqi Army Division in Kirkuk was also one of the first Iraqi army units to conduct a joint mission with the Iraqi air force, integrating ground troops with Iraqi air force surveillance assets.

“The highly effective Kirkuk police forces have sole responsibility for law and order within Kirkuk city,” said Maj. Sean Wilson, public affairs officer for the 1st brigade, 10th Mountain Division, which oversees Kirkuk. “Only on very rare occasions have coalition forces been asked to lend assistance. This has allowed our partnered Iraqi army forces to concentrate their efforts in the troubled remote areas of the province.”



Spc. John Crosby

Iraqi army soldiers dig for weapons caches as a Soldier from Lightning Troop, 3rd Squadron, 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment, uses a metal detector to search for possible caches in Mosul, Iraq, in February.

Tiger sinks its teeth into Ninewah

Squadron stops insurgents, weapons from getting to Mosul

Spc. Eric A. Rutherford
115th MPAD

AL QAYYARAH, Iraq – Iraq’s second largest city, Mosul, with nearly 2 million people has been called the last terrorist stronghold in Iraq. Combating the insurgents in the city is a constant operation, which is handled by 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment.

When the fighting in the city takes its toll on the insurgents, or they need to rest and re-supply, they run to the outlying rural areas of the Ninewah Province to bed down.

It is in these outlying areas that “Tiger,” 1st Squadron, 3d ACR, takes the fight to the insurgents on the run from the city, and works to keep the influx of fighters and supplies from making it back into Mosul.

“Our mission is to disrupt foreign fighter flow from the south and west areas of Mosul as safe havens and support zones,” said Maj. Matthew Dooley, Tiger Squadron’s executive officer. “They come south and use these areas to bed down and to gather and rest before going back into Mosul to cause trouble.”

Tiger and its roughly 800 Soldiers have been

working in the Vermont sized area of the Ninewah Province for almost four months now, and in that time have seen a lot of progress.

“We have taken our number one high value target, and a couple other guys on our list,” said Dooley “They are senior leaders that have influence on foreign fighters and flow of weapons into Mosul.”

Tiger has also captured almost 50 caches of weapons, ammunition and bombs and bomb making material, said Dooley, which has forced the insurgents to move.

Of the 40 or so suspected insurgents Tiger has captured, less than 10 have been released. This is due to Tiger making sure they have solid intelligence and enough evidence to put the insurgents away for a long time, said Dooley.

While the main focus for Tiger Squadron in this largely rural area is combating the insurgency to help keep the peace in Mosul, they are also putting an emphasis on helping rebuild the villages and towns that have lived under the shadow of terror for years.

To accomplish this, Tiger’s Soldiers perform missions such as presence patrols, logistical convoys, bridge security, kinetic operations and working with locals to meet the needs of the local population.



Photos by Spc. Eric A. Rutherford

Lubbock, Texas native Sgt. Adam Lofton steadies a spotting scope over the shoulder of Pvt. Chris Meyers, as they scan for threats during a reconciliation program event in Al Hichel, Iraq, March 10. Meyers, of Modesto, Calif., and Lofton are cavalry scouts for Bandit Troop, 1st Squadron, 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment.



Walkerton, Ind., native Pfc. Jeffrey Roberts finishes checking a barn for a suspected insurgent, while Sgt. 1st Class Ryan Marrero of Puerto Rico provides security in a village near Al Hichel, Iraq, March 21. Roberts is a cavalry scout, and Marrero is the scout platoon sergeant. Both Soldiers are with Bandit Troop, 1st Sqdrn., 3d ACR.

“We are continuing to put pressure on all fronts, directly attacking insurgents in their safe havens,” said Lt. Col. Thomas Dorame, Tiger’s commander. “We are out providing security for the people with the Iraqi army and Iraqi Police and partnering with the local community and government to help develop essential services and economic progress. All of those things have a multiplying effect on each other, and continue to push this mission in the right direction.”

That progress is working, but it is a slow, hard process, said Dorame, who added that each time Tiger takes down a cache or a high value target, it adds to the progress they are making. And that progress is made by partnering with the IA and IP in the province. Tiger works with one brigade-sized and four battalion-sized IA elements, and around 2,000 IPs.

“I would love to see more IA and IP throughout the area,” said Dorame. “That would be a tremendous success here.”

The IA and IP in the area have the fundamental skills, but they still need continued support to develop, said Dorame. Tiger is working side by side with the IA and IP, including training at the Iraqi non-commissioned officer academy, now in its third class of about 30 IA soldiers. The squadron is making sure to allow the Iraqis to take the lead in their area.

“Truly part of the success is from the IA and IP,” said Dorame. “We have been very clear with them that we are the supporting role and this is their mission that we support.”

The success Tiger is seeing is due to being proactive when it comes to securing their area.

“You have to get off the forward operating base

and get out there,” said Dooley. “We get out there into combat outposts among the population. It puts a constant presence. They see us there every day. The longer you are there, the better it gets, the more you get. The more it builds. You get to a point where there is a continuous information flow, and we are getting to that point now.”

One of the things Tiger has learned being with the Iraqis every day is that the security issues they face are directly connected to the local economies.

“Part of the security issue is the high unemployment rate,” said Dooley “There is a disconnect between local governments and their needs and the time it takes the Iraqi government to respond. If you don’t do something about that, the insurgency finds a way to exploit that by paying people to do things that they might not normally do, but because they need money, they go out and do it.”

Finding an economic answer to their immediate needs is part of the security rather than just kinetic action, said Dooley, who believes the way forward is to help them stand up, improve their economy and their governments.

For the 3d ACR, there are two fights, said Dorame. The fight in Mosul, which is urban street to street fighting, and Tiger’s fight in the areas outside the city where the enemy would prefer to hide out.

“This fight out here is really a true counterinsurgency fight,” said Dorame. “It is our ability to get in there and partner with the local police and army to collect information from the local people to find them and get them out of there. It is working extremely well.”

Tiger has been working hard in the province since December to deny the insurgency from threatening the people and keep the insurgents from moving freely in and out of the city. A diverse mission, said Dorame, which his Soldiers are doing remarkably well at accomplishing.

“The area that Tiger Squadron fights in is different in dynamics because it doesn’t have the sectarian issues or a large population center,” said Dorame.

“This area is an area where the insurgents have tried to fight the U.S. forces in the population centers, and use these areas to control and dominate for use as safe havens. Although it is less intense at times and less dynamic, it is a very complicated problem and it takes the true Soldier-statesmen mentality of partnering with the community to provide for the local people, but at the same time staying vigilant in tracking down the insurgencies. You have to win in both areas simultaneously if you are going to solve the problem in Iraq.”

BEYOND THE CALL OF DUTY

SOLDIER MAKES HELPING IRAQI FAMILY HER PERSONAL MISSION

Master Sgt. Tim Volkert
3d ACR Public Affairs Office

Two mothers, one Iraqi and one American, stood looking at one another at an entrance gate at Forward Operating Base Marez, Iraq. One was crying, looking for help and the other on the verge of tears because she could not provide assistance.

That could have been the end of the encounter, a brief snapshot of the sadness of war, but Staff Sgt. Julie Stoner couldn't get the image of that mother and family out of her thoughts. She knew the family needed help and she was

determined to do something.

"That didn't sit well because I felt like I was doing absolutely nothing for them," said Stoner, a nurse with the 86th Combat Support Hospital. "I had to tell her we didn't have the medicine to make the boy's legs work."

Although she had to turn the family away, she knew there had to be a way to help. Stoner, who also had a son who was seriously injured in an accident, knew how this mother felt and was determined to do something.

The family, which lives nearby FOB Marez, was in the midst of a tragedy. Their 16-month-old son Mohammed was paralyzed after a bullet struck his upper body and exited through his leg. They



Photos by Master Sgt. Tim Volkert

Staff Sgt. Julie Stoner, a nurse with the 86th Combat Support Hospital at Forward Operating Base Marez, Iraq, puts Mohammed, 16 months old, in his new wheelchair while his mother, Nadia (center), sister, Demuh, 14 (center left), and others look on. Stoner, from Bowling Green, Ohio and current resident of Clarksville, Tenn., found a wheelchair for the boy who was paralyzed after being struck by a stray bullet in November, 2007.

do not know how it happened, only that the mother, Nadia, was holding her son by the front door of their home Nov. 4, when the stray bullet changed their lives.

Since then, multiple trips to hospitals in the city and surrounding areas turned up fruitless. Desperate for help, they showed up at the pedestrian gate on the Logistical Support Area Diamondback side of the base Feb. 20 to see if the Coalition Forces could help. The family had been told the Americans had medicine that could help her son walk again.

While the Coalition Forces could not provide the follow-on care needed by the family, Stoner, from Bowling Green, Ohio, and current resident of Clarksville, Tenn., remembered seeing a story on the news about an organization that donates wheelchairs to injured Iraqi children. She decided to send an e-mail.

By the next morning, not only did she get a response from the organization, but she was promised a wheelchair.

Stoner, determined to see this through, began the next chapter in this story and began her search to find this family.

“All I had was the father’s full name and the boy’s full name,” she said.

Finding the family would be a challenge. She said she went back to the pedestrian gate and asked all the interpreters if they knew the family or where they lived.

She also tried to locate them through military channels. Stoner’s motherly determination, like Nadia’s, was not going to let her give up hope. And then, only a few days later, the call came in.

Stoner said the mother had been

to a claims office and, refusing to stop looking for help, showed back up at the gate.

“I termed it, a mother’s persistence to take care of her child,” Stoner said.

After arriving at the gate to see the family, Stoner was upset to hear that the family had left only a few minutes before her arrival. She convinced the gate personnel to run after the family. Again, persistence won out and the guard



Stoner explains to Nadia (right) how to make adjusts to the wheelchair to make it more comfortable for her son.

returned with the family.

Stoner told the mother she felt bad that she couldn’t do anything medically for her son, but that she was able to get a wheelchair if they wanted it.

“She said yes and she kept saying ‘I thank God for you. I kept praying to God that something would happen and I knew you were a mother,’” Stoner said.

Sergeant Marcelo Balboa, a coworker and friend of Stoner who went with her to the gate, said

he knew this story would end up with a happy ending.

“Sometimes you know something’s got to be done,” Balboa said. “Most of us just turn a blind eye. It’s people like Sergeant Stoner who make that small difference in these people’s eyes.”

About a week later, March 1, these two women again stood facing each other. At this meeting however, tears were replaced with smiles and the meeting was joyous – a happy moment that arose out of tragedy.

Mohammed slept in the arms of his sister and his father stood nearby. All knew the wheelchair was more than just assistance for an injured child, it was a sign of hope for one woman and her son – a fitting ending to this chance encounter between an American mother and Soldier and an Iraqi mother.

While the wheelchair won’t help the boy walk again, Stoner knows it will improve their quality of life, and knowing they have hope and are moving forward makes her efforts worthwhile.

“It’s knowing that you can do something. You just have to find the way. There’s always something that you can do,” Stoner said.

For Nadia and her family, the smiles were a sign of their gratitude to Stoner and the others who showed compassion and caring for them in their time of need.

“We don’t know how to express out feelings,” Nadia said through an interpreter after receiving the wheelchair. “We are so thankful. The Americans are so caring. We found out that the Americans are a lot more caring.”

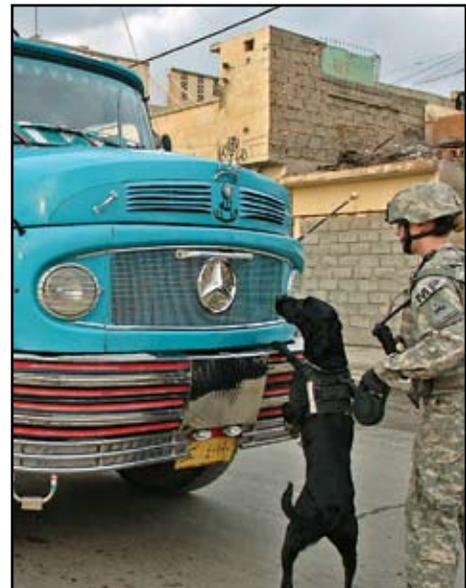
BRAVE RIFLES I



Master Sgt. Tim Volkert

Top, A Soldier from Heavy Company, 3rd Squadron, 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment, keeps a watchful eye out for insurgents while on a mission in February.

Above, Lt. Gen. Lloyd J. Austin III, MNC-I commander, re-enlisted six Soldiers from the 3d ACR during a ceremony at FOB Marez Feb. 28.



Sgt. Patrick Lair

Sgt. Angela Mather and her bomb-sniffing dog Vinny, both of the 501st Military Police Detachment, based out of Fort Lewis, Wash., inspect a cargo truck in downtown Mosul Feb. 14.



Spc. Kieran Cuddihy

N ACTION



Sgt. Brandon Little



Spc. Eric A. Rutherford

Above, Mechanics with Bandit Troop, 1st Sqdrn., 3d ACR, use the crane on an M88 Hercules heavy recovery vehicle to remove the engine from an M1 Abrams tank on Combat Outpost Nepsa, Al Hichel, Iraq, March 19.

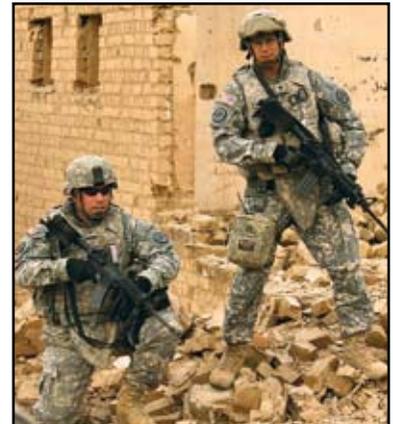
Left, Spc. Christopher Kell, a crew chief in Tomahawk Troop, 4th Sqdrn., 3d ACR, checks the tail rotor on an AH-64 Apache.



SPC Kieran Cuddihy

Soldiers from 1st Bde., 8th Inf. Regt., patrol through a Mosul neighborhood during Operation Eagle Harvest II in February. The Operation was designed to clear a sector of eastern Mosul of insurgents and to initiate a permanent stronghold of the area.

Below, Sgt. Robert Riley and Spc. Mario Villareal from HHT, 2nd Sqdrn., 3d ACR, provide security amidst the rubble of a village in the Diyala Province. Many village buildings were destroyed during Iraq's war with Iran.



Courtesy Photo



Photos by Capt. Richard Ybarra

Sgt. Jawaski Wilson of Villeplatte, La., assigned to Company D, 1st Battalion, 8th Infantry Regiment, crosses a footpath outside of Combat Outpost Knight prior to a patrol into the al-Kadra neighborhood in Mosul, Iraq, March 15.

Capt. Richard Ybarra
115th MPAD

MOSUL, Iraq – Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 8th Infantry Regiment, are working the latest phase of the fight against al-Qaeda in Iraq by living among Iraqi citizens at Combat Outpost Knight in eastern Mosul and gaining their trust by constant patrolling and interaction.

“We conduct atmospherics gathering, talk to the local populace and see what their needs are, what their security level is,” said 1st Lt. Larry Gwinn, of Richmond, W. Va., a platoon leader with Company D, 1st Bn., 8th Inf. Regt. “We are working toward the next phase of operations where we bring projects into the local community and help legitimize the local government.”

Gwinn also said that sanitation workers had already been hired through the local government and were making a difference in the community. In addition, he noted several other contracts were in the bidding process for community improvements.

“It’s about hearts and minds. We check and see how many schools are around, doctors, retired Iraqi army, people that want to help us help them,” said

Spc. Jamel Staton of Brooklyn, New York, also assigned to Co. D, 1st Bn., 8th Inf. Regt.

This requires frequent patrols that originate from COP Knight. The COP is a small fortified base that allows Soldiers to stay close to the surrounding neighborhoods and act as a quick response force for the citizens if needed.

The 1st Bn., 8th Inf. Regt. Soldiers based out of Fort Carson, Colo., rotate into COP Knight every four days. While at the COP, Soldiers complete required duties that vary between those designed to ensure the functioning of the COP to guard duty. Invariably there is a fair amount of downtime for Soldiers on their rotation.

Soldiers fill the downtime by working out, watching movies or playing portable computer games. Card games are a particular favorite of the Soldiers for chewing up excess time on the COP. A game or two of Chinese poker can often be found going on at any time during the day.

“When we are not on a mission we don’t like to talk about a mission. We talk about things that get our minds off of it or play cards ... watch a movie or have a fire and have a little small talk about times at home,” said Staton.

The rhythm of COP life goes on relentlessly for the Soldiers as they move from patrols to the COP and back to patrols. Breaking the cycle only on the end of the fourth day when they return to Forward Operating Base Marez, the main coalition base in Mosul.

A return to the FOB does not mean a break from missions for the Soldier's from 1st Bn., 8th Inf. Regt. It merely changes their location for a different, but still busy schedule. The fight against AQI does not take four-day breaks or any time off for that matter.

"We pull PMCS (Preventive Maintenance Checks and Services) on all our vehicles; tanks, MRAPs and humvees, get those fueled up and greased down, order parts if we need to," said Staton.

"We also run missions from FOB Marez, usually just into a different sector."

A grueling cycle such as this could have an affect on the morale of even the best units. To the contrary, this cycle was just what the unit needed according to Gwinn.

The 1st. Bn., 8th Inf. Regt., conducting operations in Mosul for a little more than two months, is now hitting a stride. Gwinn stated that his Soldiers have adapted well and are in a rhythm.

"At first, before we had the actual cycle, it was



Pvt. 1st Class Andrew Barger of Celina, Ohio, assigned to Co. D, 1st Bn., 8th Inf. Regt., fills his tray with food as his fellow platoon members move through the line at COP Knight after a mission into the al-Kadra neighborhood of Mosul, Iraq, March 14.

pretty rough, as far as the optempo goes. The Soldiers were getting pretty strung-out," said Gwinn. "Now that there is more of a pattern to our schedules, the guys are more in-tune with what is going on. Now that we can give them some predictability, they can make adjustments to their personal schedules."

Staton said he and his fellow platoon members could accomplish whatever was required, regardless of the condition or mission.

"We are always going to make do ... we are Soldiers first and foremost," he said.



Above, 1st Lt. Larry Gwinn of Richmond, West Va., assigned to Co. D, 1st Bn., 8th Inf. Regt., meets with a resident of the al-Kadra neighborhood of Mosul to assess the security situation, March 15.

Left, Spc. Cong Ly of West Covina, Calif., assigned to Co. D, 1st Bn., 8th Inf. Regt., pulls security while his platoon leader meets with local citizens during a mission in the al-Kadra neighborhood of Mosul, Iraq, March 15.

Wheelbarrows to wheelchairs

Community doctors, Iraqi army, and U.S. Army medical professionals team up to provide care for local village

Spc. Eric A. Rutherford
115th MPAD

BULAYJ, Iraq – In Iraq’s rural western Ninewah Province, where the average household income is around \$45 a month and terrorists still operate, health care is not the primary concern of most citizens.

Iraqi health care is certainly a concern of the Soldiers of 4th Squadron, 6th U.S. Air Cavalry.

In an effort to help the Iraqis become more concerned with their own health and to earn the trust of Soldiers and the Iraqi army working in the area, 4th Sqdrn., 6th Air Cav. medics teamed up with the Iraqi army’s 1st Battalion, 3rd Brigade, 3rd Division and the Military Transition Team to conduct Operation Band-Aid 2.

This is the second time the team has worked in the area, providing acute care to local Iraqis and

cross-training with Iraqi medical providers and IA medics in the town of roughly 6,000 residents.

Poor weather conditions didn’t stop the more than 200 people who came to the clinic to receive care, most of whom were women and children.

Several families brought disabled family members to the clinic, literally in wheelbarrows, hoping to receive one of the six wheelchairs that were given out on a first-come, first-served basis.

“Our primary objectives were to work with the local nationals and the IA to further legitimize the role of the IA in security and medical expertise in that village,” said Capt. David Adam of Seattle, the flight surgeon for 4th Sqdrn., 6th Air Cav.

The program, known as the Medical Civil Action Program, was put together by Adam and

Maj. James Montgomery, team leader of the 1-3-3 MiTT.

“Six months ago, if I had approached the MiTT and told them I wanted to do a MedCAP in Bulayj, they would have laughed at me,” said Adam of the planning stages of the program. “This is a good example of the evolution of a town that is changing and starting to trust us and to stand up for themselves.”

One of the objectives during this MedCAP was to put the IA out front in providing security for the town, so the medics and doctors could treat the patients in a secure area.

“There was a huge emphasis on letting the IA do security, and that allowed us to provide medical care,” said Adam. “The IA were the MVPs there. This time, to take it one step further, we did the cross-training piece with the local docs.”

During the event, the air cavalry medics had the opportunity to work not just with local Iraqi doctors, but their IA medic counterparts as well.

“Iraqi doctors aren’t too different from working with American doctors,” said Spc. Kevin Malott of Cincinnati. “They are very knowledgeable and willing to learn. They aren’t where American doctors are because of the inability to go to school, but they are good doctors. They have medical knowledge; they just don’t have the tools.”

Malott, a medic with 4th Sqdrn., 6th Air Cav., also said the MedCAP went quite well.



Spc. Eric A. Rutherford

Cincinnati native Spc. Kevin Malott shows Iraqi doctors a pulse monitoring device during a Medical Civil Action Program in Bulayj, Iraq, Feb. 25. Malott is a medic for 4th Squadron, 6th Air Cavalry Regiment. The MedCAP provided medical care for more than 200 residents.

They even had some of the same patients from the first MedCAP two months ago.

The focus of the event wasn't just to give Iraqis medicine and send them on their way, Malott and the medics focused on health care education with the people they treated.

Malott said he was able to provide a lot of education to the patients, not just to educate the people on how to use the medicine they were receiving, but to give them more of a hands-on approach to their medical care.

There were challenges at the event. The two biggest challenges were the language barrier and cultural differences. Malott said all of his conversations had to go through an interpreter, so some important information may have been lost in translation. Iraqi culture also has strict separation of the sexes, which can provide another barrier to health care.

"Another challenge is the customs here," said Malott. "I am not allowed to talk to women. A woman brought her child in, and I wasn't allowed to look the woman in the eyes when I was talking to her about her child's needs."

To overcome this, they brought a female medic with them to see all the female patients. Spc. Rachel Deck of Carlsbad, Calif., is a medic for Med Troop, Regimental Support Squadron, 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment.

"It went really well, I was really excited to be a part of it," Deck said. "It was a challenge not being able to help everyone. We were there to treat acute problems, but (some), we couldn't help. We could write them referrals, but some things we couldn't help."

One of the common problems in Iraq is malnutrition in children. To help combat this, medics handed out chewable multi-



Seattle native Capt. David Adam looks at a young Iraqi girl's eye during the MedCAP event. Adam is the flight surgeon for 4th Sqdrn., 6th Air Cav.

vitamins to every child they saw.

"There is a lot of malnutrition in children," said Malott. "I saw a five year old that was the size of a one year old back in the states. Their food isn't fortified with vitamins like in the states – they can't drink their own water, so there is a lot of malnutrition in Iraq."

Both Deck and Malott agree that working on a program like this makes them better people.

"I don't know if it makes me a better medic, but it makes me a better person," Malott said. "Every day I see American Soldiers, they are men and women between the ages of 18 and 40. Out there, I saw kids and the elderly. We don't get to see kids and the elderly here. I saw what poverty does to a people. Since going out there the first time, I have seen pride come back into these people, a sense of pride in 'This is my country. ... Now it is like, 'I kicked these guys off my land and got hurt in the process,' and they want to get fixed from that."

This is the last MedCAP the air cavalry Soldiers will provide in Bulayj, setting the stage for the local doctors and IA to work with the people in the area.

"Bulayj is a work in progress,"

said Montgomery, a Philadelphia native. We were able to show the IA how this is done so they can take it from here. MedCAPs."

All of the pediatric medications provided for the MedCAP were donated by people in the U.S. Adam said the items for children, including toys, school supplies and shoes were all donated by people he has never met. The other medications came from the MiTT specifically for MedCAP programs.

"Iraqis are no different than Americans, they want stability," said Adam. "We want the piece of mind that our children can walk the streets without bad guys hurting them. Iraqis want the same thing."

All of the teams involved agree that this was a successful mission. They were able to treat patients and continue to earn the trust of the Iraqi people. A trust, said Montgomery, that pays huge dividends when an Iraqi civilian picks up the phone to call about illegal activity in their area.

"It was a successful MedCAP," said Adam. "We are gaining trust and I think we are doing some pretty good health care. I am proud of my medics, they did a great job."

Soldiers trade humvees for MRAPs

Spc. Eric A. Rutherford
115th MPAD

MOSUL, Iraq – Soldiers ignored the light rain that pattered on them in the motor pool as they carefully and eagerly inspected their new vehicles as an M1114 up-armored humvee sat empty and dirty on the sidelines – already forgotten by the men who used the vehicle just days ago.

Soldiers of 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment received some of their first Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicles on Forward Operating Base Marez, Feb. 15.

“We have been waiting a long time to get these,” said 1st Lt. Jeffrey Boch. “They are brand new and we will be taking care of them. We are looking forward to running in them and seeing what they can do.”

Boch, a platoon leader for Supply and Transport Platoon, Regimental Support Squadron, 3d ACR, said the vehicle will put fewer Soldiers’ lives at risk, by allowing them to take fewer vehicles onto the battlefield because of their larger troop capacity.

The MRAP weighs three times as much as the



Master Sgt. Tim Volkert



Spc. Eric A. Rutherford

Above, An older M1114 up-armored humvee waits to be turned in as it sits in front of the Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicles that replaced it on Forward Operating Base Marez, Iraq, in February. Soldiers of 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment will be receiving about 300 of the new MRAPs by mid-May.

Top, Sgt. 1st Class Rolly Azurin (left) and Spc. Emanuel Walker, look over the engine of their new MRAP. Both Soldiers are from Headquarter and Headquarters Troop, 1st Squadron, 3d ACR.

M1114 humvee, holds more personnel, has more power, can travel farther and has more armor. The MRAP also has a V-shaped hull for blast deflection.

“It is pretty common knowledge that the biggest threat our Soldiers face over here is the improvised explosive device,” said Maj. Parker Frawley, 3d ACR regimental plans officer. “They are the biggest casualty-causers on the battlefield, so there was a push to get the MRAP fielded to all the units across Iraq and Afghanistan.”

The push began in May 2007, when the Secretary of Defense established the MRAP program as the highest priority to DoD acquisition, prompting accelerated development and fielding of the new system. The program was designed to get the MRAP to units with the highest operational tempo.

“As the threat situation in other areas of the country has decreased, it has maintained fairly steady or increased a little in Mosul,” said Frawley. “There has been a renewed thrust to get us the new MRAP a little more quickly.”

After the week-long training course, 3d ACR troops took delivery of 40 MRAPs. Soon, they will get 50 more. By mid-May the final number should be around 300 vehicles, said Frawley.

The basic platform of the new MRAP features upgraded fire suppression systems, basic light packages, and communication equipment. As each unit uses the vehicle for different missions they may need to modify the vehicle as they see fit, much like they did with humvees.

“No one like the American Soldier is quite as adept at putting some innovative thought into how best to use these vehicles, from putting light bars on them to how to route them because of power lines in the city,” said Frawley. “We are talking about potentially using them as ambulances. There is a lot of innovation going on with the vehicle to see what we can do with it to use it.”

Soldiers from S&T Troop, RSS, 3d ACR, have already made some improvements, such as modifying the MRAP with gunner restraint systems. S&T Troop completed their first combat mission with the MRAP Feb. 21.

In situations where the Soldiers would have used the M1114 to provide gun-truck security for a Combat Logistical Patrol, they rolled the MRAP to remote areas of Iraq’s Ninewah Province to deliver food and supplies to small outposts that don’t have a continuous supply chain.

Boch said the MRAP’s ability to handle the adverse conditions of Iraq is going to make it easier for his Soldiers to complete their mission safely.



Spc. Eric A. Rutherford

Soldiers from 2nd Platoon, Supply and Transportation Troop, Regimental Support Squadron, 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment, perform casualty evacuation drills from their new MRAP vehicle on FOB Marez, Iraq, Feb 21.

The mission wasn’t without a few problems, but on this mission, the MRAP was the solution to the problems. During the patrol, a recovery vehicle went down with a broken throttle cable. To remove it from the road where it was susceptible to ambush, S&T Soldiers quickly hooked the recovery vehicle to their MRAP and towed it out of harm’s way.

“There are a few minor adjustments we need to make, but it went pretty well,” said Spc. Trevor Owen, a driver of the new MRAP with S&T Troop. “You can see more. I couldn’t see out the passenger side of the humvee, but now I can see higher through the windshield, all around, visibility is just better. We are making adjustments as we go.”

Owen said he believes the MRAP is going to save lives with its advanced armor system and better visibility.

Another MRAP driver in the troop is Pfc. Daisha McGruter, who said that Soldiers will better be able to perform missions from this vehicle. The added protection will allow the Soldiers to worry less about their personal safety and more about the mission at hand, she said.

For the 3d ACR, the MRAP is proving itself to be the answer to the humvee’s shortcomings and as an asset to Soldiers on Iraqi roads.

Muleskinners help Iraqi army vehicle maintenance shops become self-sustaining

Spc. John Crosby
115th MPAD

MOSUL, Iraq – Coalition Forces and Iraqi army soldiers are working side by side across northern Iraq to increase the productivity of vehicle maintenance shops.

In a war fought almost entirely from forward operating bases and combat outposts, transportation is one of the keys to success. Troop transport, medical evacuation, logistical support and combat operations are dependent on mobility. Without a reliable system in place to fix and maintain the Iraqi army's vehicles, mission failure would be inevitable.

Keeping an entire army's vehicle fleet in good working order requires a smooth system to be in place. Proper channels need to be created for logistical support, individual soldier training and standards of procedure at the soldier level for operating on the variety of IA vehicles in their inventory.

The Iraqi army, the Military Transition Teams (MiTT) and the Regimental Support Squadron (RSS), 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment, headquartered in Mosul, are working together to create these building blocks to ensure a functional, self-reliant transportation corps in the Iraqi army.

"When we started, the Second (Motor Transport Regiment) operational readiness level was at forty two percent," said 2nd MTR MiTT Executive Officer Capt. Michael Kaye. "Within six months we got these guys up to an eighty two percent operational readiness level, using the Iraqi system of doing things

and Iraqi names for parts. Basically figuring out how to work their own system."

Coalition Forces are training the Iraqi army to properly utilize their three levels of maintenance shops, said Chief Warrant Officer James Rathburn, 3d ACR regimental maintenance officer. When a vehicle breaks down or requires maintenance, the unit level, or level one shop, assesses the problem. If needed, the unit can utilize their division's MTR, level two shop, to fix problems the individual units aren't equipped to fix. Finally, if further expertise and parts are needed to make the vehicle serviceable, the level three shop at the corps level is the answer.

Developing the standard operating procedure was easier said than done. It required trust and communication between the Iraqi army units and Coalition Forces. Training and planning was required on all levels, from mechanic and soldier level, up the ranks to the commanders, in order to expedite the process.

"We're starting to get the whole division online with bringing their vehicles in to the Second MTR and we're making this place a heck of a lot better," said Kaye. "I am proud to be a part of this. We're making history."

The progress required Coalition Forces mechanics to work and train side by side with the IA in the level two maintenance shops.

"They don't have (Military Occupational Specialty) schools in the Iraqi army yet so we are trying to train their soldiers to become proficient in their jobs," said RSS Commander Lt. Col. Steven Cook.

Chief Warrant Officer James Rathburn, the regimental maintenance officer, with Regimental Support Squadron, 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment, helps inspect an Iraqi army vehicle at the Regional Support Unit maintenance shop in al-Kisik, Iraq, Feb. 28. The 3d ACR is working with the IA transportation corps to help them become self-sustaining with their maintenance operations. (Photo by Spc. John Crosby).



The idea is that training one Iraqi mechanic, making him proficient in his trade, is a combat multiplier and allows the trained soldier to pass his knowledge to his entire squad.

Since November 2007, two RSS mechanics work with the MiTT and Iraqi mechanics for two weeks each month in al-Kindi, home to the 2nd MTR.

“We give them on-the-job training, working on five-tons, humvees, wreckers, Iraqi vehicles and MiTT vehicles,” said Sgt. Rodney Crom of Maintenance Troop, RSS, 3d ACR. “A lot of them are knowledgeable, but some don’t know that much. We work to develop them.

Our issue right now is getting them to train each other.”

As well as an opportunity for the mechanics to learn their trade from one another, the time they spend together helps them gain a better understanding of their counterpart’s cultures.

“We learn some of their language, their greetings and their manners,” said Spc. Douglas Cranford, Maintenance Troop, RSS, 3d ACR. “These guys are out here on their own. We help them do their job and step in when necessary to train them. These guys work really hard. They care about what they do.”

Still, it can be difficult to accomplish everyone’s goals in a joint culture work environment when there is a language barrier. To combat this, Soldiers are creating ways to identify vehicle parts so there is no confusion between the Iraqis and Americans. Parts are given names and translated using interpreters who work with the mechanics on a daily basis. Keeping these names for parts eliminates confusion created by slang in both languages and different understandings of how an engine works.

“Sometimes we disagree on how to fix certain problems,” said Cranford. “For example, many times the Iraqis will think engine problems require a whole new engine. But we show them that maybe it only needs oil, or a new part. It’s a learning process.”

Both Iraqi and CF mechanics working together at al-Kindi realize that despite disagreements among professionals of different cultures, there is a bigger mission to be accomplished.

“I think stabilizing their motor transport regiment is by far the best thing that could happen to the country,” said Crom. “The technology is already here. Everyone just needs to learn how to use it.”

The Iraqis work to gain the knowledge their counterparts have to offer.

“Whenever we need help, or if there is something we don’t understand, the Americans help us,” Sgt. Kahs al-Mustaf, a mechanic with the 2nd MTR, 2nd IA Div., said through an interpreter. “We learn from each other. We are brothers.”

Working together began to show results.

“We went from being the worst MTR in Iraq to setting the standard for others to follow,” said Kaye.

“Coalition Forces have increased our effectiveness eighty percent to get to this level of maintenance,” said Col. Fareed Ibraheem Fatah, 2nd MTR commander, 2nd IA Div., operating in northeastern Iraq. “Fixing broken vehicles, ordering parts and organizing the warehouse, it all comes back to the Americans. They help us make our jobs easier.”

Still there is always

room for improvement.

“We need more vehicle parts,” said Freed. “Not having needed parts on hand makes the process of fixing our vehicles slower. The Americans help us with this.”

In the last few years of Operation Iraqi Freedom, a slow transition of power has taken place. The IA has control over all levels of supply for itself except spare parts.

“Hopefully in the next couple of months that will change,” said Cook. “The MiTT is on the ground every single day trying to find answers to these problems.”

With the progress made with the 2nd MTR at al-Kindi, 3d ACR is expanding its focus to the 3rd MTR, 3rd IA Div., and the level three corps shop at al-Kisik, in northeastern Iraq.

“We are trying to improve upon our systems,” said Capt. Todd Daniels, MiTT 3rd MTR executive officer and security advisor. “We are doing a lot of training. We’re synchronizing the Iraqi army divisions here in MND-North, getting everyone on the same page of music as far as having a process or a system in place. We need to work together to figure out what processes need to be in place for us to all achieve our goal.”

More improvements are expected as Coalition Forces Soldiers, mechanics, MiTTs and commanders work with the Iraqi army transportation corps.

“The heavy lifters of the whole operation with the MTR are the MiTT team here,” said Cook. “They are identifying the problems and we are trying to provide solutions every day.”

“We learn from each other. We are brothers.”

-- Sgt. Kahs al-Mustaf

Following Family Footsteps

Sgt. Brandon Little
Task Force XII Public Affairs

CAMP TAJI, Iraq – When Christopher J. Forit Jr. decided to follow in the footsteps of his father and grandfather, more than two years ago, he started a voyage that would lead him halfway around the world.

It all began with a trip to the recruiter's office. Forit, a native of Fresno, Calif., chose to continue his family's tradition of military service by becoming one of the

thousands of Soldiers who joined a military deeply entrenched in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"My family really influenced my decision to join the Army," said Forit, a food service specialist in Renegade Troop, 4th Squadron, 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment. "My grandfather was an infantryman in the Korean War, and my dad was the in the Army for a while; he was stationed in Italy for a few years."

In addition to helping this 23-year-old make the decision

to join the military, his father and grandfather also influenced another family member to enlist.

"My brother, Derek, joined the Army the exact same day I did, and we even shipped off to basic training the same day," he said.

Enlisting in the military, during this time of civil unrest throughout the world, Forit knew his first deployment would happen soon, he said.

"When I found out I was coming to Iraq, I was really excited," he said. "My family and my fiancé, Chong Lee, were all very sad I was leaving but they're all proud and supportive of what I'm doing."

Since his deployment to Iraq, Forit has been performing various jobs in the 'Command Sgt. Maj. Cooke' dining facility.

"He's a good Soldier," said Sgt. 1st Class Christopher Williams, the non-commissioned officer in charge of the dining facility. "I really think he has a bright future in the military."

Forit says he plans on staying in the military for a long time to earn a college degree and hopefully retire as a first sergeant.

Many years from now, after he has retired, Forit may one day be able to share his experiences in the military with his children and grandchildren.

"I think when I look back on my service (many years from now) I know I'll be proud of what we accomplished," he said. "Sometimes I wish I could do more, but just being in Iraq makes me feel like at least I'm doing my part."



Sgt. Brandon Little

Pvt. Christopher Forit Jr. (left), a food service specialist with Renegade Troop, 4th Squadron, 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment, is the third generation from his family to serve in the military.

Spring is a time for new beginnings

Chaplain (Maj.) Larry Holland
Regimental Chaplain

Greetings to all of our 3d ACR family and friends, wherever you may be.

We celebrated Holy Week and Easter here in Iraq with several Protestant and Catholic services that began on Palm Sunday and continued with Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Saturday Vigil/Mass, and Easter Sunday Sunrise Services.

All were well supported with record attendance. It is good to know that although we are far from home, family, and friends, our chapel programs here provide us with a community of faith that provides tremendous support and encouragement.

With the addition of new units here at Forward Operating Base Marez and Logistical Support Area Diamondback, we now have a team of nine chaplains and chaplain assistants providing religious support.

We are also blessed with a tremendous number of talented lay leaders in all of our congregations. I ask that you continue to pray for us as we minister to the needs of more than 9,000 Soldiers and civilians.

I pray that all of you who are separated from your loved ones during this deployment have a "Family of Faith" that you can turn to for support as well. I know that as you hold down the home front, there are many things you face daily that can be challenging.

Do not hesitate to turn to the many people around you for

the support and encouragement that they are ready and willing to provide to you. If you do not attend a chapel on post or a local church, our rear detachment and installation chaplains are there for you.

Our Family Readiness Groups are also there to help you with many issues. Even if you are not located at Fort Hood, they want to keep in touch with you. Make sure the FRG has your contact information so they can keep you informed of important news about the Regiment.

Also, make sure you have your FRG's information so you can reach them when needed. Your rear detachment command can provide all the information.

As I reflect on this early Easter season (the earliest Easter in 92 years), I am reminded of all the promises of new beginnings that we celebrate. Spring has arrived and with it, the renewal of faith that fresh starts are possible in every aspect of our lives.

I am not just talking about "New Year's Resolutions" that we might have made a few months ago and that many of us have already forgotten. I am talking about real new starts.

What is there in your life that you would like to renew? Relationships are one of the first things that come to mind. Even during times of separation we can work on keeping our love and commitments new and fresh.

When is the last time you sat down and wrote a real "love letter" to your spouse or significant other? Why not do it today?

I am not just talking about the

ordinary "I am fine, how are you?" type of letter. Share your heart by writing down all your thoughts, hopes and dreams, and fears alike with the ones you love.

Remember how you felt when you first fell in love with them and what type of letter you would have written then?

Reaffirm your love and commitment to one another through such letters, tapes, or even videos.

We can renew other relationships as well. How many family and friends do you have that you have not been in contact with for a long time?

Look up that family member (perhaps an aunt, uncle or cousin) or that old friend with whom you have allowed time and distance to grow between. Letting them know you are thinking about them can open the door to a whole new world of support and encouragement.

As we seek new and fresh starts in any area of our lives, I would like to remind you of God's love for all of us. It is a love that is always there, new and fresh every day.

The Bible speaks of that love in an unexpected place. It is in the Old Testament book of Lamentations, a book of "Laments" or cries of sadness. Lamentations 3:22 says, "Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for His compassions never fail, they are new every morning, great is thy faithfulness."

May you claim that powerful love anew in your life and share it with others today.

God bless you all and keep you always.

FRGs activities keep families busy

Dana Allison
3d ACR FRSA

3d ACR families having been keeping busy back at Fort Hood. The regiment's Family Readiness Groups have been full of activities during the last few months.

Remington Troop

Remington Troop's February meeting had the families making Valentines to send over to their Soldiers. RHHT also had a change of leaders at the end of February. Erikka Simmering and Marina Wright passed the torch to Dominique Buehler and Tiffany Jocuns. On behalf of the Remington FRG, we would like to say thank you Erikka and Marina for all of your dedication and hard work. Dominique and Tiffany are already hard at work and have begun planning great events. They have a T-shirt design contest going on and are planning an April social event at the Austin School of Massage in Killeen to help Remington Family members relax.

Tiger Squadron

The last few months have been very eventful for Tiger Sqdrn. Tiger started holding a monthly consolidated squadron FRG meeting that was a hit. Their squadron FRG meetings are held the first Thursday of the month. In February they had a Tiger Family Social at Chuck E. Cheese. The squadron also offers a Bible study and prayer group twice a month. Roughrider Troop (HHT) had a pizza party and volunteer recognition event. Dragon Co. held a bake sale at the PX to raise money for their company.

This past weekend Tiger Sqdrn. participated in a meeting via video teleconference with their FRG leaders, POCs, and their command teams forward. They are currently working on a plan for a squadron volunteer recognition event in the coming months. Tiger would also like to congratulate Christine Durand for being named the Volunteer of Merit for December 2007.

Sabre Squadron

Things in Sabre Sqdrn. have been action packed. In February Sabre had a squadron bowling event. Many of the troops in Sabre have also been holding their own "Social Nights" once a month. Fox Troop had an arts and crafts day at Apache Arts and Crafts Center on post. Sapper (43 CEC) and Heavy Co. each held bowling nights for their groups in March. The squadron also held a successful Easter party. The

highlight of the party was an appearance from the Easter Bunny graciously played by the Sabre rear detachment first sergeant, Sgt. 1st Class Lowe. Sabre is also holding a monthly consolidated FRG meeting. Their consolidated squadron meetings will be held the first Tuesday of each month. They are currently planning a squadron skating party in April.

Thunder Squadron

Thunder Sqdrn. FRGs have had a lot going on recently. The squadron had a few FRG leader movements as well. Nancy Norris moved from Killer Troop over to Havoc (HHT) passing the Killer Troop FRG reins to Jennifer Harper and Hannah Winczewski. Thunder's Troop FRGs have been busy planning activities for families. Lightning Troop made their monthly meeting more fun adding some pizza at CiCi's Pizza. Ghost rider Company (66 MI) is planning a bake sale at the Clear Creek PX in April to raise money. Ironhawk held an Easter party for their families. Thunder is also trying out a consolidated squadron level FRG meeting. They are holding their first squadron wide FRG meeting April 21.

Longknife Squadron

Longknife Squadron's FRGs have been active with regular meetings and social events ranging from parent and child workshops about dealing with deployment with the MFLCs, to bowling and "get away" days such as March's Massage Day hosted by Tomahawk Troop. At the end of March Longknife held their quarterly squadron level FRG meeting.

During the meeting they recognized all the wonderful volunteers within the squadron and presented a 30 minute video that the Troopers compiled of "Life at Taji" to share with the families and friends of Longknife Sqdrn.

Longknife would also like to extend congratulations to the following volunteers, Norma Hernandez, Renegade Troop FRG leader, who was awarded September's Fort Hood Volunteer of the Month and Volunteer of the Quarter. Megan Goode, Headhunter Troop FRG leader, awarded October's Fort Hood Volunteer of the Month. Katha Crawford, Squadron FRG Fund Custodian, awarded November's Fort Hood Volunteer of Merit. Erin Corrigan, Tomahawk Troop FRG leader, awarded February's Fort Hood Volunteer of Merit. Thank you ladies for all you do.

See "FRG," Page 33.

Start preparing for summer heat now

Peter Higgins
Safety and Occupational
Specialist

I would like to take a moment to introduce myself. I am the regiment's new safety and occupational specialist. My role is to work directly with the commander and staff to work on issues concerning non-combat safety issues such as accident prevention.

The most pressing issue we will all be facing here in Iraq is the danger of heat injuries. Everyone should begin changing their drinking habits to increase water intake now.

We are all familiar with the types of heat injuries and the warning signs, and we all know that eating right and drinking the proper amount of water will greatly reduce this threat. Rip Its, sodas and coffee will



Peter Higgins, 3d ACR Safety and Occupational Specialist

greatly increase your chance of dehydration in the hot summer months. Start developing your water routines now.

Another issue is going to be the increase in critters coming around. This includes spiders, snakes, birds, cats and scorpions.

If you see these animals, leave them alone. Do not try to make them pets, play with them or aggravate them. Many of

the snakes and scorpions have powerful venom.

If you think you were bit by any creature, seek medical aid immediately. Many of these animals also carry a host of diseases to include the bird flu and rabies. Again, leave all animals alone. If you see them around the work and living areas, contact the KBR vector control office to take care of the problem.

One last issue I would like to address is dietary supplements. Be careful using these products. Make sure you read the warning labels. Most of them, such as fat burners, require you to significantly increase your water intake. Many others can have severe toxic reactions when coupled with high heat and low water consumption. The results can be deadly.

I am proud to be here with the Brave Rifles in Iraq, and hope to see you all return home safely.

“FRG,” from Page 32

Muleskinner Squadron

Muleskinner Sqdrn. began a squadron level program called “All A Kid Needs.” They take donations of new and gently used children’s items and redistribute them to other families who are able to use them. In March the squadron also held a consolidated squadron FRG meeting with a telephone conference with the Muleskinner Sqdrn. commander and command sergeant major who both answered questions asked by family members.

The squadron’s families also worked on Valentine banners and blankets that were sent forward to their Soldiers. In March a few helpful male family members held a “How To” class on simple car and lawn mower maintenance for the FRG. The FRGs are currently planning a squadron volunteer recognition event for April.

Lastly, the regiment would like to extend special

congratulations to a few outstanding volunteers. The regiment is pleased to announce that Richenda Burnett from Bullwhip Troop (HHT), Muleskinner Sqdrn. is the 3d ACR Volunteer of the Year. Richenda was chosen as the regiment’s Volunteer of the Year from a pool of numerous nominees.

We would also like to announce the 3d ACR volunteers selected as the regiment’s Volunteers of Merit, they include: Sonia Mejia from Dragon Co., Tiger Sqdrn., Mabelle Crow from Eagle Troop, Sabre Sqdrn., Karen Wicker from Ghost Rider Co. (66 MI), Thunder Sqdrn., Norma Hernandez from Renegade Troop, Longknife Sqdrn., and Monica Bates from Blacksmith Troop (MNT), Muleskinner Sqdrn.

It’s hard work being a military family especially during deployments and these ladies have gone above and beyond. Congratulations to these wonderful women, and a sincere thank to all of our wonderful 3d ACR family members. Thank you for everything you do supporting your Soldiers and each other.

America's best and brightest continue to re-enlist, serve their country during war

Master Sgt. Robert Sluss
NCOIC, 3d ACR Retention Office

Greetings from Mosul. Since my last article in the Mounted Rifleman, more than 211 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment Soldiers have decided to re-enlist and continue their service to the regiment and the Army.

I would like to thank each one of them and their families for choosing to continue to serve during this critical point in time.

Today less than one percent of our population serves their nation, so the decision of each young man and woman to join the Army is imperative to our success. For a Soldier to continue serving is a testament to them being the best and brightest we have to offer as a country.

With the help of Master Sgt. Jones, the regimental EO Adviser, we are now able to offer Soldiers the ability to retake the ASVAB to open more career opportunities, as well as the Defense Language Aptitude Battery and the AFAST test for Soldiers who are thinking about becoming Aviation Warrant Officers.

Thank you again for your decision to re-enlist and continue to serve our great nation.



Master Sgt. Tim Volkert

Pfc. Cory Stargardt, PSD, Regimental Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, 3d ACR, re-enlists at FOB Marez, Iraq, Mar. 14. Capt. Shawn Monien administered the oath.



Master Sgt. Roy Taylor

Pfc. Steve Hill (right), of HHT, Thunder Squadron, 3d ACR, poses with Capt. Thomas Garner, after Hill's re-enlistment ceremony March 23 at FOB Marez, Iraq.



STAY CAV, STAY ARMY!

REMEMBERING THOSE WHO HAVE FALLEN



SGT Corey Spates
Grim Troop, 2/3 ACR
Feb. 10, 2008



SSG Bryant Mackey
Lightning Troop,
3/3 ACR
Feb. 20, 2008



CPT Torre Mallard
Fox Troop, 2/3 ACR
March 10, 2008



SGT Phillip Anderson
Fox Troop, 2/3 ACR
March 10, 2008



SPC Donald Burkett
Fox Troop, 2/3 ACR
March 10, 2008



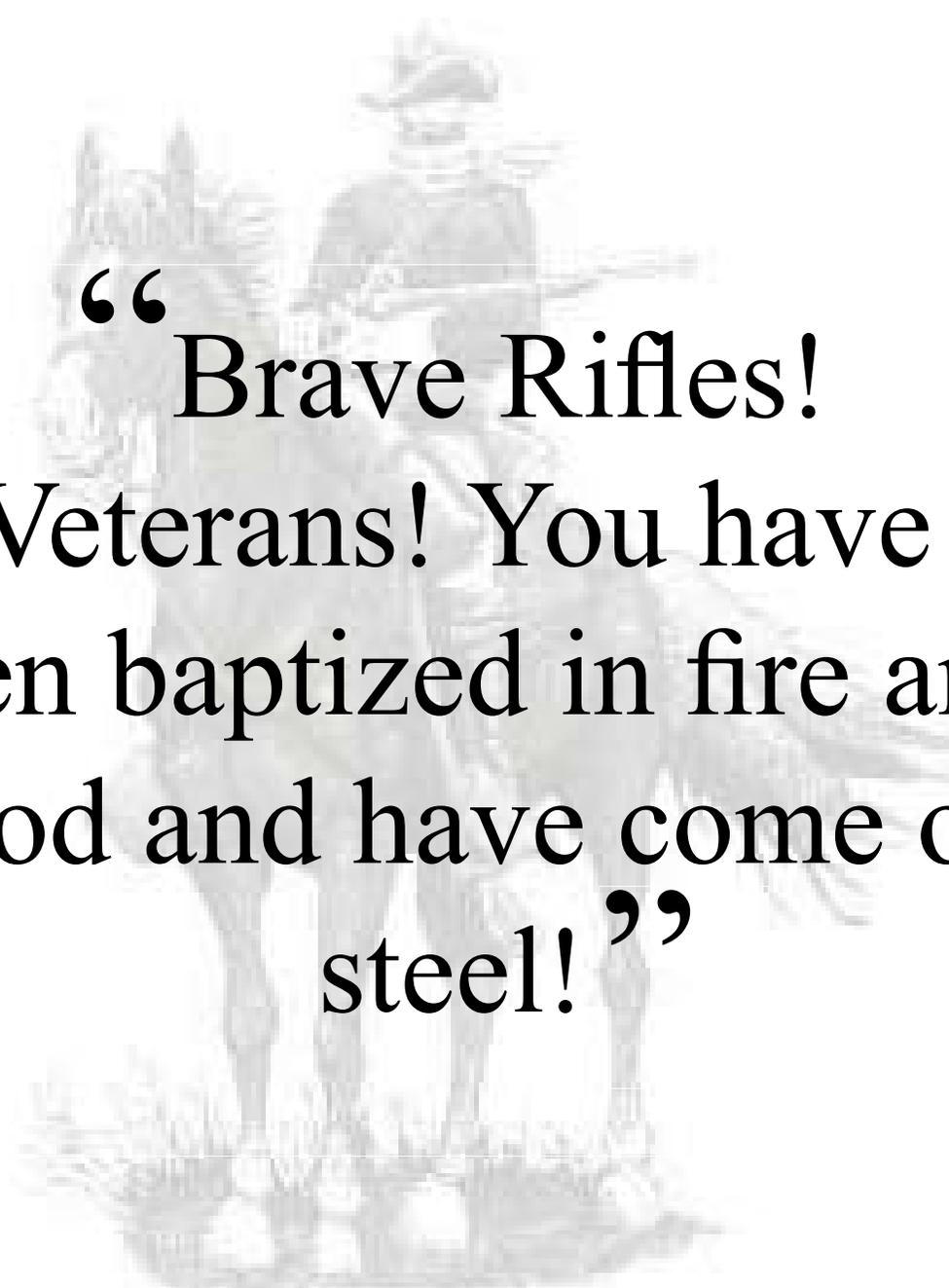
SGT Gregory Unruh
Fox Troop, 2/3 ACR
March 19, 2008



SPC Matthew Morris
Lion Battery, 2/3 ACR,
April 6, 2008



CPT Ulises Burgos-Cruz
MiTT 0511 attached to
2/3 ACR
April 6, 2008



“ Brave Rifles!
Veterans! You have
been baptized in fire and
blood and have come out
steel! ”