



# Spartan Chronicle

pointing out the weekly news from the 2nd BCT

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Photo by Sgt. Kevin Stabinsky

*Sgt. San Juana Arreola, a nuclear, chemical and biological specialist with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, supply room, works at her desk Dec. 8, her Christmas tree nearby. Although being far from home, she said it is important to carry traditions with you to remind you of home and make separation a little bit easier. Turn to page 12.*



**Building a gov't base in Iraq**

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**Kelly Pickler sings to Soldiers**

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## Iraqi doctors help Iraqi families in Al Buaytha

Sgt. Kevin Stabinsky  
2nd BCT PAO

Coalition Forces and Iraqi doctors worked side-by-side during a coordinated medical engagement in Al Buaytha Dec. 3.

Two Iraqi doctors, Dr. Yousif Yousif and Dr. Wisam Daniel, assisted Soldiers from Company D, 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, Fort Stewart, Ga., to provide fellow Iraqis living in Al Buaytha with medical assistance.

“It is important for Iraqis to see other Iraqis doing things,” said Yousif, who has worked with the Task Force 62 Medical Brigade, Baghdad, for the past seven months after seeing an advertisement on television at his home in Detroit, Mich.

Yousif, a graduate of Baghdad University in general medicine, said seeing other Iraqis involved firsthand shows

Iraqis that they can achieve many things on their own.

It also helps foster goodwill between Iraqis and American Soldiers.

“I think what we are doing is important. It will give the Iraqi people more trust if they see other Iraqis working with Coalition Forces, and give them hope that the Coalition Forces are there for them,” Yousif said. “I want to try to help both countries.”

Daniel, a resident of San Diego and a former general director for the San Rafael Nuns Hospital in Baghdad, expressed similar feelings.

“It means a lot to these people. They will start trusting us more, feel more comfortable around us (Coalition Forces),” said Daniel, a general medicine practitioner.

The medical engagement was designed to treat non-serious ailments and distribute over-the-counter medicines. The



Photo by Sgt. Kevin Stabinsky

**Dr. Yousif Yousif, an Iraqi doctor working with Task Force 62 Medical Brigade in Baghdad, exams the eyes of an Al Buaytha resident during a coordinated medical engagement. The mission was hosted by Soldiers from Company D, 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, at the Harah School in Al Buaytha Dec. 3.**

Iraqi doctors received assistance from Coalition medics and doctors.

“Having Iraqi doctors helps tremendously,” said Lt. Col. Hee-Choon S. Lee, 1-30th Inf. Regt. surgeon.

During the last CME, which was conducted without the assistance of any Iraqi doctors, Lee said the process was slowed down because of the need for interpreters.

He said with Iraqi doctors present, the

workload was divided among more people; with a lower patient-to-doctor ratio, patients received more time with doctors.

Of the 307 people treated at the Harah School in Al Buaytha, 195 were seen by the Iraqi doctors. In addition to eliminating wait time, Lee, a native of Lorton, Va., said communication was much better with Iraqi doctors on staff.

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Sgt. Luis Delgadillo  
Sgt. Jason Stadel  
Sgt. Randall Townsend

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“Some things get lost in translation,” Lee said.

All of these tangible benefits were reasons Capt. Joseph Inge, commander, Company D, 1-30th Inf. Regt., chose to invite the Iraqi doctors on the mission.

In addition to the doctors, Inge also invited Iraqi media to capture the event.

“It is better that Iraqi doctors are seen treating Iraqi people,” he said. “I hope they realize Iraqi doctors are just as capable as American doctors.”

After seeing their capabilities and skills, Lee said he hopes more Iraqi doctors step forward and take the lead in these types of operations in the future.

Such assistance will likely be needed in the near future, Inge said. In addition to coordinated medical engagements, Inge, a Richmond, Va., native, said he hopes to help rebuild a clinic in the area.

The clinic, which was damaged by al-Qaeda violence, is currently being refurbished and still requires



Photos by Sgt. Kevin Stabinsky

**Dr. Wisam Daniel, an Iraqi doctor working with Task Force 62 Medical Brigade in Baghdad, holds a nine-month old toddler after examining her and her mother during a coordinated medical engagement hosted by Soldiers from Company D, 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, at the Harah school in Al Buaytha Dec. 3.**

a staff of Iraqi medical personal to run the facility.

In the meantime, both Yousif and Daniel hope their efforts will inspire Iraqis to step up and help their country. As natives, they said they realize the vast resources

present in their country, including the people.

“This is a very rich country,” Daniel said. “I hope it becomes politically stable, rebuilt and even with the rest of the world in education and health.”



**Above: Daniel examines a little girl's ear at the Harah school in Al Buaytha Dec. 3 during a medical clinic.**

**Right: A young boy is comforted by his father after receiving an antibiotic shot.**



# Healing hands for hurting legs

Sgt. Kevin Stabinsky  
2nd BCT PAO

The day after treating 307 local residents at a coordinated medical engagement in Al Buaytha, U.S. Army medics were back on the job again at Patrol Base Murray, treating a 5-year-old girl for burns on her legs Dec. 4.

Dhuha Khalid Abed was playing with her brother near a pot of water being heated on an electric heater when the accident occurred Dec. 1, said Khalid Abed, Dhuha's father. The pot spilled onto Dhuha's legs, causing second- and third-degree burns to her thighs.

Abed said he received aid from local Soldiers on the ground, including creams and dressings for the wounds. Seeing his daughter still in pain days later, he decided to take her to PB Murray for additional help.

Medics from the 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, assessed the injury and cleaned the wounds.

"Right now we are more worried about secondary infections," said Sgt. Eric Ironsmith, from Shreveport, La., 1-30th Inf. Reg. aid station medic.

Because the burns removed the top layer of skin from her thighs, Ironsmith said Dhuha is more susceptible to infections. That crucial skin layer blocks potential disease.

To help reduce the chance of infections, medics scrubbed the skin, removed dead tissue around the wound, and applied an antibiotic cream to the injuries.



Photo by Sgt. Kevin Stabinsky

**Capt. Keri Mullens (left), brigade surgeon, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, begins treatment on 5-year-old Dhuha Khalid Abed's legs. Dhuha was brought to Patrol Base Murray by her father Khalid Abed (pictured on right) Dec. 4 to receive treatment for second- and third-degree burns she suffered while playing with her brother around a pot of boiling water.**

Despite the severity of the burns, Lt. Col. Hee-Choon S. Lee, 1-30th Inf. Reg., battalion surgeon, said there was hope for the girl. Because the burn did not completely wrap around her legs or occur near a joint, Lee, a native of Lorton, Va., said a recovery was possible.

"I've seen many children out there with burns," he said. "There is quite a bit of hope for her."

Although she may receive scarring on the legs and potentially need skin grafts as she grows, Lee said with proper care the injury can be kept at bay. Lee said it was satisfying knowing he was able to do something for the girl.

Dhuha will still need additional visits and follow-up treatments, Ironsmith said. Lee provided Abed with a note allowing him to bring his daughter back to PB Murray over the next few days and instructions on how to care for the

burns at home.

"It is good to know there is someone to take care of me and my family," Abed said upon being released with his daughter, adding he hopes local doctors and the clinic being planned in his home in Arab Jabour are just as helpful and nice as the American doctors.

To help the community, which currently lacks a clinic, American Soldiers are working with U.S. State Department embedded Provincial Reconstruction Teams to refurbish a building for use as a clinic and get the necessary personnel to staff the facility, Lee said.

In the meantime, Lee said he and his fellow medics will continue to help local residents in need of assistance.

"I hope that the community realizes the American presence here is a good thing. We are here to help," Lee said.



Photo by Sgt. Kevin Stabinsky

Col. James Adams, deputy commander, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 2nd BCT bilingual and bicultural advisor Shaho Hussein, John Smith, Baghdad 7 embedded Provincial Reconstruction Team, team leader, Lt. Col. Ken Adgie, commander, 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, 2nd BCT, and Rashid District Council chairman, Yacoob Yousif Bekhaty (left to right) study a map of the area south of Baghdad during a discussion Dec. 2 at Forward Operating Base Falcon. The group met with other Coalition Force leaders to talk about ways each party could help build upon the previous steps taken to integrate local government with the government of Iraq.

## Bottom up government building begun by BCT

**Sgt. Kevin Stabinsky**  
2nd BCT PAO

Talks were held at Forward Operating Base Falcon Dec. 2 to discuss future steps for both Coalition Forces leaders and local Iraqi leaders.

Taking advantage of the lull in violence throughout the Arab Jabour and Hawr Rajab areas, Col. James Adams, deputy commander, 2nd Brigade, 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division, met with newly-elected chairman for the Rashid District Council, Yacoob Yousif Bekhaty.

“The security situation has improved to allow us to make

progress,” Adams told Bekhaty. “The time is right (for progress) with al Qaeda on the run.”

The frequent dialogue between local and national governments is just one aspect of the community the brigade is involved in, helping to bring all the pieces together. The embedded Provincial Reconstruction Team is working as a conduit between the two to get objectives accomplished.

Once the government of Iraq and local governments begin to work together efficiently, additional resources will flow into the area, increasing quality of

life and the people’s faith in their government officials. Adams said projects like opening new schools and creating an Iraqi Police force there are stalled until the GoI gets involved.

“The good news is the schools are open, but we need the ministry of education to support us and we need your help getting that to happen,” he said. “If you can ensure teachers are paid and more teachers are hired, we can fix the school. If the government fixes teachers and pay, we’ll fix the

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structure.”

Bekhaty said he will work toward this end and said some positives have already been made. Although they do not receive a pension, local council members are receiving a paycheck from the central government. Bekhaty also showed signs of interest in explaining what he will need Coalition Forces to provide in order to get the GoI’s ministry of interior to approve the construction of a police headquarters in Arab Jabour and support the upcoming police recruitment drive.

Both Adams and John Smith, Baghdad 7 embedded Provincial Reconstruction Team chief, offered advice to Bekhaty on how to proceed.

Bekhaty offered his

expertise on the Iraqi political spectrum and his area he represents. He said he will help the Coalition Forces meet their goals by having other neighborhood councils elect district council representatives.

Smith said it is important to have Iraqis like Bekhaty working for the people; someone who knows their district and how it works.

“The morale of the people is high now and they are waiting to see what happens next,” Smith said. “If we don’t move quickly on some of these issues, we will miss a valuable opportunity.”

Sensing the urgency, the parties agreed to meet later in the week to begin circulating the area and talking with the local neighborhood councils to prepare them to vote.

***“The morale of the people is high now and they are waiting to see what happens next. If we don’t move quickly on some of these issues, we will miss a valuable opportunity.”***

**-John Smith**  
*Baghdad 7 ePRT, team leader*

“Coalition Forces and reconstruction teams can’t do it alone,” Adams said, adding that it is vital for the people to see their own government taking steps to move forward.

They hope to have one representative per 1,000 citizens on the district councils and at least three representatives per area to ensure citizens have a voice in their communities. Adams stressed the importance of elected representatives maintaining contact with their constituents.

“People need to see there is a representative from their government coming to see them,” he said. “If they do not see representatives from the government and action, the people will lose patience. We need to see progress.”

Bekhaty agreed to meet with brigade leaders again and tour the areas under their control together to see the areas of improvement and potential sites for future projects.

Besides letting the Iraqi people see their local leaders and begin to build confidence in them, the tour would also allow Bekhaty to see what issues need to be resolved and bring them forward to Iraqi officials in the GoI.

Adams said he was pleased with the meeting and looks forward to continued progress. “This was a very good conversation; now we know how to proceed to work with your district.”

Likewise, Bekhaty expressed his gratitude, not only for providing security and standing between the people and terrorists, but also for helping bring back life to areas long oppressed.

“Spiritually we are with the people. We are all Iraqis; we are not working on a sectarian basis,” he said. What you are doing for the Iraqi people is good. We look forward to reaching out to the next generation and creating bonds for the future between the U.S. and Iraq.”



Photo by Sgt. Kevin Stabinsky

**Col. James Adams, deputy commander, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, meets with Rashid District Council chairman, Yacoob Yousif Bekhaty before a discussion Dec. 2 at Forward Operating Base Falcon.**

# Iraqi Army, 3-7 Cav. Reg., work, train, receive accolades together

**Capt. Phillip Dow**  
3-7 Cav. Regiment

On Dec. 3, the 3rd Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment, and the 1st Battalion, 1st Brigade, 11th Iraqi Army Division held a joint awards ceremony at Coalition Outpost Apache in the Adhamiyah neighborhood of Baghdad.

The ceremony was held in the squadron maintenance area of the outpost and featured a joint formation and awards being given to both the IA Soldiers and Garryowen troopers. Following the ceremony, a reception was held featuring American foods such as muffins and honey buns.

Eight Iraqi Soldiers were presented awards for three different reasons: coaching and mentoring, improving city structures and

developing missions.

Five of the Soldiers received awards for their part in training the Iraqi Security Volunteers between August and November. The Soldiers were awarded for the coaching and mentorship they provided the security volunteers and are attributed to the large success of the program.

Two Iraqi Soldiers were awarded for taking the initiative and painting the barriers of their checkpoint in more aesthetically pleasing colors. This was done to mitigate the appearance of a war-torn city.

Finally, the last Iraqi Soldier was awarded for his role in developing a battalion-level civil affairs team that is capable of conducting independent CA

missions.

To date the 1/11 CA Team has conducted 11 humanitarian assistance bag drops and five children's back pack drops at local Iraqi primary schools. These operations have created growing trust between the IA and Adhamiyah residents, leading to great dividends in the form of intelligence.

Five Garryowen troopers were also given awards. They were awarded for their contributions to the planning and execution of the myriad of tasks that make up the daily operations.

Overall the award ceremony was a success in that it was able to build a stronger operational relationship between the IA battalion and cavalry squadron.



**Soldiers of the 3rd Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment, and the 1st Battalion, 1st Brigade, 11th Iraqi Army Division stand in formation before an awards ceremony at Coalition Outpost Apache in the Adhamiyah neighborhood of Baghdad Dec. 3. The IA received certificates and medals (below).**



Photos by Spc. Angel D. Martinez, 113th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

# Tankers treat kids with Thanksgiving toys

2nd Lt. Matthew Stoltz  
1-64 Armor Reg.

Soldiers of Company E, 1st Battalion, 64th Armor Regiment, the battalion's forward support company, crossed cultural boundaries on Thanksgiving by bringing a little bit of America to Iraqi children.

Thanks to the generosity of the Blue Star Moms, a non-profit organization that sends Soldiers care packages, the Renegades' support platoon received a bundle of Beanie Babies and other assorted toys for the holidays.

Once the platoon finished their daily logistical patrols, the Soldiers took time to spread a little happiness to some of the many children living around Camp Liberty in southern Baghdad by distributing the toys.

The children, who usually line up to wave and smile at Coalition Forces, received something extra special that day from the Soldiers. The children's joy was apparent



Photo by Sgt. Kevin Stabinsky

Some Iraqi children smile at the toys they receive from Coalition Forces Sept. 5 in Adwaniyah. Delivering toys and other goods to the children of Iraq is one way Soldiers can feel good about their works in Iraq. The Soldiers of Company E, 1st Battalion, 64th Armor Regiment, distributed toys in the neighborhoods around Camp Liberty in southern Baghdad Thanksgiving Day.

because of the smiles on their faces as the toys were distributed.

Although seemingly trivial, these small moments define the

way Iraqis see the 1-64 Armor Soldiers and also how the Soldiers view their own contributions to Operation Iraqi Freedom.

## Safety Alert - HMMWV Safety

- \* Use proper lifting techniques to raise and lower Rhino.
- \* Use care when opening and closing doors. Do not rest fingers in door openings.
- \* Doors should open and close easily; if not, readjust the hinges.
- \* Avoid touching hot metal surfaces.
- \* Do not jump from hoods of vehicles to prevent trauma to the back, knees, and ankles.
- \* Wear hearing protection, noise levels surpass 85 db.
- \* The use of seat belts and wearing your ACH are required.
- \* Licensed drivers only.
- \* Attach tip caps to exposed antennas and lower antenna masts when traveling through urban areas.
- \* Avoid sharp turns to prevent roll over.
- \* Rehearse fire, roll over, and water egress drills prior to departing the FOB.

- Mr. Daryl Lusk, safety officer



Some danger areas on a military humvee.



Photo by 1st. Lt. Matthew Shoop

Capt. Brain Love, Baghdad 7 embedded Provincial Reconstruction Team, team advisor, reviews his list of microgrant recipients, while Mr. Bruce Bailey, ePRT, United States Agency for International Development liason, (third from right), talks with the locals. The ePRT, attached to the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, handed out microgrants, small monetary grants designed to stimulate economic growth in Iraq, in Hawr Rajab, a city southwest of Baghdad, Dec.6.

## 2-3 BTB guards money that guards Iraqi future

**1st Lt. Matthew Shoop**  
2-3 Brigade Troops Battalion

Walking through a town and handing out envelopes of money isn't a normal mission for most Soldiers. But for the Soldiers of 2nd Brigade, 3rd Troops Battalion, it has become a regular mission.

On Dec. 6, this mission was exactly what they were doing in Hawr Rajab, a city southwest of Baghdad. The Titan Soldiers were providing security for members of the Baghdad 7 embedded Provincial Reconstruction Team, attached to the 2nd BCT, 3rd Inf. Div., as they walked through town to hand out the money.

The envelopes of money were microgrants.

Microgrants are small monetary grants designed to stimulate economic growth for businesses in the city.

Once word of the program reached the people of Hawr Rajab, businesses throughout the whole city came out to fill out an application for a grant and to find out if they would be receiving one.

So far only a few businesses in Hawr Rajab have received microgrants, but the results of those fortunate local shop owners have caused many others to anxiously await their turn to receive aid.

The Hawr Rajab bakery is an example of the success of microgrants. Without the microgrant, the business owners, four young men, would have had a hard time getting enough propane and other supplies to keep their business open.

Since receiving their first microgrant, the owners have been able to buy more supplies. Business has increased; the bread they bake sells out every day.

The success of the program can also be seen in the reduction of violence in the area.

Besides improving businesses, the driving force behind the microgrants is to give people, especially young men, typically targeted by insurgents for recruitment, an opportunity to make a living. If the microgrants are successful in creating jobs,

then this core group and other people won't need to take money from insurgents to lay improvised explosive devices or resort to other terrorist activities in order to support their family.

The Titan security team also provided security when the ePRT delivered micropurchases in the area. Micropurchases are like gifts, said Bruce Bailey, ePRT United States Agency for International Development liason. They are small purchases of business required items supplied to businesses to increase their productivity.

Bailey said thus far the micropurchases have been very successful at generating employment.

Though often small in amount, the average grant being approximately \$1,500, said Capt. Brain Love, ePRT, team advisor, the grants are yielding big returns, not only for the business that receive them, but also in keeping 2nd BCT Soldiers and Iraqi civilians safe.

# Sergeant first class selection board to meet

**Spartan Staff**  
2nd BCT PAO

The 2008 promotion board for sergeant first class is scheduled to convene on Jan. 29.

Soldiers can confirm their eligibility by viewing MILPER Message 07-283, subject: FY08 SFC Promotion Board Announcement.

Log on to <https://www.hrc.army.mil/site/Active/index2.asp> and click on MILPER Messages to view the message. It is important that Soldiers complete the actions outlined in this message as soon as possible.

To review their electronic file, Soldiers must click on the “My Promotion File” icon link at the HRC – Alexandria website <https://www.hrc.army.mil>. Click on “Enlisted” then “Active”.

\* Click the “OMPF” tab to review the Official Military Personnel File. Special emphasis should be made to ensure the commendatory and education areas of the OMPF are updated. Past boards have stated that it detracts from the record when award certificates, academic reports and other school completion documents (including civilian transcripts) are missing. The suspense date to get documents to SRDC for this board is Jan. 11.

\* View and check the date of the official photograph by clicking on the “DA Photo” tab. If a Soldier does not have an official photograph on file in DAPMIS, if it is out of date (taken prior to Jan. 29, 2003), or it is not in the current grade, a new photo is needed.

DAPMIS photographs are valid

for five years and are deleted after that period. Non commissioned officers with a photo taken prior to Jan. 29, 2003 will not have a photograph in their file for this board.

Information on photographs may be found in AR 640-30. Soldiers currently deployed are exempt from the periodic update requirement.

DA photos must be taken in the Class A uniform. Soldiers who need to get an updated photograph but are unable to get one should consider sending a short memo to the board president to explain the situation.

They can also use the ERB validate with comments feature (para 2c below) and enter comments in the “other” area. Photographs must be uploaded into DAPMIS by the photo lab and accepted by midnight eastern standard time Jan. 28 to be seen by this board.

\* To review the Promotion ERB, follow the instructions provided. The ERB is an online version of the hardcopy ERB providing only board-related information. The information on

the ERB is pulled from eMILPO.

If any of the ERB information displayed is incorrect or missing, visit the servicing S-1/PSB/PSC/MPD to have the correct data submitted to update eMILPO.

Updated information should be viewable on the online ERB within 48 hours of submission by the personnel office. The only method of updating the ERB is by visiting the S1/PSB/PSC/MPD. Once the information is correct, click on “ERB Validation” to authenticate your ERB.

If corrections cannot be made for some reason, there is a feature to “Validate with Comments” and explain the discrepancy. If changes are required after validation, Soldiers can use the “unlock ERB” feature to allow new information to update the Promotion ERB.

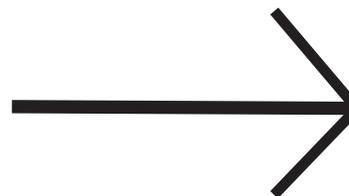
Contact the Board Eligibility Section at [bdspt@conus.army.mil](mailto:bdspt@conus.army.mil) or DSN 699-3641/3642/3691 if problems are encountered. The suspense date to validate Promotion ERBs is midnight eastern standard time Jan. 28.

\* Declination Statements.

See SFC page 11



The 2008 fiscal year sergeant first class promotion board is scheduled to convene on Jan. 29, 2008. Eligible staff sergeants should be squaring themselves away to enhance their chance of selection.



Click on the "Statements" tab to decline promotion consideration. Soldiers who complete a declination statement will not be considered by the board. Declining consideration this year does not affect eligibility for next year's board. Review the board announcement message (MILPER Message 07-283) for complete details.

\* Soldiers who are considering writing a memorandum to the board president should click the "Memo to the Board President" button at <https://www.hrc.army.mil/site/Active/TAGD/MSDSecretariat/EnlistedBoards/EnlistedBoards.htm> for helpful hints.

Remember, only write a memorandum if there is something

significant to present to the board that is not already reflected in the OMPF. The suspense date to submit memos is Jan. 11.

Soldiers who are due an NCO evaluation report should ask their rating chain and S-1 to complete it promptly and process it through the S1/PSB/PSD/MPD for forwarding to HRC - Indianapolis. If the ending month of the last NCOER on file is October 2006 or older, then the Soldier's NCOER is overdue or will be overdue prior to the convening of the board.

Information concerning "Complete the Record, 60 Day Option and Senior Rater Option NCOERs" is contained in AR 623-3 and DA Pam 623-3. The suspense date to submit an NCOER for this board is Jan. 11.

Completion of Basic Non Commissioned Officer Course is a requirement to be considered by this board.

Soldiers who have not completed BNCOC may be granted a waiver by the Army's G-1 office if they have not attended due to operational deployment reasons. See paragraph 2F in MILPER message 07-283 for details.

Because waivers may be granted up to the day the board convenes, Soldiers should complete the actions outlined above to ensure their records are complete if they are given a waiver.

Eligible Soldiers should follow these important steps and complete them early. If they do, their board record will be complete and accurately reflect their career.



Iraqi children wave goodbye to Soldiers visiting their classroom.



Photos by Sgt. Kevin Stabinsky  
Iraqi children at the Harah School in Al Buaytha line up (above) and cheer (lower right) after receiving school supplies from Soldiers from Company D, 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, Dec. 3. School supplies included pencils and notebooks for the school children and chalk for the teachers. At the other end of the school, Soldiers also conducted a medical clinic.

## Christmas greens take away Christmas blues

Sgt. Kevin Stabinsky  
2nd BCT PAO

Even before coming to Iraq, Soldiers of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team knew that it wouldn't be a white Christmas. To keep the Christmas blues away, many Soldiers are turning to Christmas greens.

Christmas trees are sprouting up all over Forward Operating Base Kalsu. While they may only be synthetic, the Christmas cheer they bring is authentic.

"If there wasn't a Christmas tree out it wouldn't feel like Christmas," said Pfc. Christina



Photo by Sgt. Kevin Stabinsky  
Pfc. Christina Cordova, property book clerk, property book office, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, stands in front of the Christmas tree in her office Dec. 8. The tree, sent to the brigade S4 shop by the rear detachment has brought many Soldiers into the office to check out the little piece of Christmas. "If there wasn't a Christmas tree out it wouldn't feel like Christmas," she said.

Cordova, property book clerk, property book office.

The Christmas tree decorating her office brings the feelings of the holidays to more than her fellow S4, property book office workers. The tree, sent to the section by Sgt. 1st Class Karen Bell and Warrant Officer Denyi Johnson, both 2nd BCT rear detachment S4, draws many people into the office, Cordova said.

The six-foot-tall tree dwarfs the more common miniature trees found in most brigade offices.

"We get a lot of comments on the tree," added Cordova, who along with Staff Sgt. Mayreny Matias and Warrant Officer Shirley Goodman, set up and decorated the Christmas tree.

The S4 shop is not the only office putting up holiday decorations. Though normally known for supplying the company with materials needed to perform their jobs, the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd BCT, is trying to supply the unit with Christmas cheer. Decorations such as garland, wreaths, stockings and tinsel all give their otherwise plain office a holiday feeling. A miniature Christmas tree has also taken up residence in the office.

"It's tradition; you bring your life with you," said Sgt. San Juana Arreola, a nuclear,

chemical and biological specialist with HHC supply. "Your traditions don't just disappear because you're somewhere else. You keep your traditions."

In keeping with tradition, many sections in the brigade are also playing secret Santa. Cordova said her section and several others all placed their names in a hat and

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A Christmas tree in Rocky's, the Forward Operating Base Kalsu dining facility, brings a little bit of home to deployed Soldiers.



Photo illustration by  
Sgt. Kevin Stabinsky

picked one name to get a gift for.

While Santa Claus may be best known as the bringer of toys and good cheer, the communities back home play Santa by sending thousands of packages to 2BCT Soldiers.

Chap. (Maj.) Jay Hearn, brigade chaplain, said there will be a variety of religious services offered at the base for Christmas. Video teleconferences with families back at Fort Stewart will also be offered for Soldiers to get in touch with their families.

For those whose families may not be at Stewart and can't attend a

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***“Your traditions don’t just disappear because you’re somewhere else. You keep your traditions.”***

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**-Sgt. San Juana Arreola  
Headquarters and Headquarters Company supply**

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VTC, Hearn said there are other ways to keep them close by. Digital pictures frames, which display a multitude of uploaded pictures, are great gifts that allow Soldiers to keep plenty of photos around their work area.

Soldiers can also take advantage of the free postage on regular-sized letters to send their loved ones Christmas cards. Several vendors in the Hinesville community outside Fort Stewart sent

Hearn several boxes of Christmas cards to give to Soldiers to ensure they were able to keep in touch with loved ones this season.

While all this can help Soldiers from catching the blues around Christmas, Hearn acknowledges that families at home can still feel saddened by having their Soldier away. For these families, Hearn recommended visiting with all the family

members, or be like his family and take a trip to get their mind off of the separation.

Families in the Fort Stewart area can also partake in the many family readiness group and chapel holiday-themed programs offered to families of deployed Soldiers.

Although Hearn said there will always be a little bit of sadness being away from family at the holidays, it doesn't have to bring a Soldier down.

“First you have to get the Christmas blues,” Hearn said, adding that the brigade is doing a lot to keep the blues away and the holiday cheers near.



Photos by Sgt. Kevin Stabinsky

To bring some holiday cheer, the Forward Operating Base Kalsu Morale, Welfare and Recreation Center has been decorated with lights, trees, decorations and holiday ornaments. The place is so full of Christmas, that even Santa Claus decided to drop in and bring some cheer to the deployed Soldiers (left).

# SPORTS

## 2 BCT focused fo flag football tournament

Sgt. Kevin Stabinsky  
2nd BCT PAO

After the initial Thanksgiving flag football games, Soldiers of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team are getting ready to continue games on Forward Operating Base Kalsu.

The five-on-five tournament, which began Dec. 5, will feature ten teams from the different units stationed on Kalsu.

Sgt. Mickey Campbell, starting quarterback, predicted his team will go on to win the entire event. He is the Company B supply sergeant from 2nd Brigade, 3rd Troops Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team.

“2-3 is gonna win it all,” he boasted. “We might even play brigade in the championship.”

From the 2nd Brigade Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Staff Sgt. Demarcus Lewis, supply sergeant, is the starting wide receiver on offense and linebacker on defense.

Although not so confident, he was willing to predict that Soldiers involved will have fun.

The boost in morale was a major reason Lewis choose to get involved in the tournament, even if his team, which lost its first game against the 26th Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd BCT, may not be the

champions.

While the two may not agree on 2-3’s championship prospective (Lewis feels 26 BSB will win it all, having gone 3-0 in the Turkey Bowl), the two did agree on the morale-boosting factor of the event.

“I’m competitive. I like the game, the sport and boosting the morale of my teammates,” Campbell said.

Other Soldiers, even if not participating can come and boost the morale of their fellow Soldiers by coming out and cheering them on. Games take place Wednesday at 8 a.m. at the field adjacent to the Kalsu coffee shop.



Photo by Sgt. Jason Stadel

The Thanksgiving Turkey Bowl didn’t quite satisfy the appetite of 2nd Brigade Combat Team football fanatics. Several brigade Soldiers will be competing in the Forward Operating Base Kalsu flag football tournament in December. The ten-team tournament will pit units against units to determine the best team on the FOB.

## American Idol visits American heroes

Sgt. Kevin Stabinsky  
2nd BCT PAO

Though she may be best known for her red high heels, country artist and former American Idol contestant Kellie Pickler traded her heels for something a little more comfortable in order to visit troops in Iraq.

On Dec. 8, Pickler visited Forward Operating Kalsu to lend her voice and help boost Soldier morale.

Pickler, who's visit was part of a six-day tour throughout Iraq, said she volunteered to perform for smaller bases such as Kalsu that are often overlooked by performers in order to uplift the Soldiers' spirits.

"It is nice to come and bring a little bit of home to the Soldiers," Pickler said.

To bring that piece of America here for the holidays, Pickler sang six

songs, including her top forty hits "I Wonder" and "Red High Heels."

Helping perform the latter were two 703rd Brigade Support Battalion, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division Soldiers: Pvt. Andrea Mixon and Sgt. Tiatiana Rieloff.

Both military police said they were huge fans of Pickler and were glad to get a chance to interact with one of their idols.

"It's the first time I've laughed since I got here," Rieloff said after playing backup.

Though she also played backup, Mixon was glad her role got to put her in the limelight when a film crew focused in on her act. "It got me on TV," she said.

Just as the Soldiers themselves were left with many memories of the event, Pickler said she too



Photos by Sgt. Kevin Stabinsky  
Country music star and former American Idol contestant Kellie Pickler shares a laugh with Soldiers at Rocky's, the Forward Operating Base Kalsu dining facility, Dec. 8. Pickler visited troops as part of a morale-boosting tour.

will bring back plenty of memories from her tour.

Pickler, known for incorporating personal memories into her music, said it is a major reason she writes and sings country music, as it is a genre that allows her to write such songs. It is also a major reason why several Soldiers said they enjoy her music.

Sgt. 1st Class Jennifer Williams, 2nd BCT, S2, intelligence section non-commissioned officer in charge, said she enjoys Pickler's music because it tells stories that everyone

can relate to, and was pleased to have her visit Kalsu if only for a short time.

Hopefully, in a short time, Williams will be able to hear new material from Pickler she can really relate to.

Pickler, who writes many of her own songs from personal experience, included the hit "I Wonder," said she plans to incorporate memories of her Iraq visit, including Kalsu, into future music.

"Gosh it is just amazing what you see over here," she said.



Pickler sings "I Wonder," one of her singles to the crowd. The song was written based on the relationship she wonders she could have had with her biological mother, who left her to be raised by her grandparents. Many of Pickler's songs are written from personal experience.



Photos by Sgt. Kevin Stabinsky

Country music star and former American Idol contestant Kellie Pickler shares the stage with Pvt. Andrea Mixon, 703rd Brigade Support Battalion, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, during Kellie's hit "Red High Heels." Pickler, in addition to sharing the stage, shared some love with Pfc. Timothy Moffitt, Headquarters and Headquarters company, 2 BCT, engineer section (upper left) and Command Sgt. Maj. Harry Jeffries, 703rd BSB command sergeant major (lower left). Pickler visited Forward Operatin Base Kalsu Dec. 8 to help boost Soldier morale by singing six of her songs.

## We Want YOU! Shoutout for DVIDS shoutouts

We are currently looking for Soldiers to participate in the following DVIDS programs:

### WEDNESDAYS

1. **Radio Lia:** Seattle, Wash. at 0400 a.m. - Radio Lia is hosted by Lia Knight and her interviews reach an audience of over 4 million. This is a basic interview where she asks a couple of questions, but really wants to hear the service member speak.

### THURSDAYS

1. **Martha Zoller live news show** from WDUN in Gainesville, GA – e-mail for more info.
2. **Ray Steele live news show** from WBMQ in Savannah, GA – e-mail for more info.
3. **Soldier Stories:** WDBO-AM Orlando, Fla. at 2000 – Open to Orlando residents, but central Florida is also acceptable. This is a weekly interview; a photo is also required.
4. **Fox Game Time React:** Los Angeles, Calif.

pick time from 0500 to 0900 - hosted by JT the Brick, and has a weekly segment on Thursday where he speaks to deployed service members and gives them a chance to talk sports.

**DVIDS Sports Shout Outs** – Say hello to your favorite football teams. Teams can be collegiate or professional.

**Hometown Interviews** – talk to your local media stations – television, newspaper, radio – from back home and tell them about your job here in Iraq.

\*All interviews are taped and can be shared over the Web with your family – and it's free! See [www.dvidshub.net](http://www.dvidshub.net) for more details and to see what the world's finest Soldiers have been up to.

**To participate, e-mail 1LT Kalen Smith at:**  
[kalen.marie.smith@2bct3id.army.mil](mailto:kalen.marie.smith@2bct3id.army.mil)

# Word on the street

“What would you like for Christmas?”



“A home cooked meal.”

**Pfc. James Varnum**  
HHC, 2-3 BTB



“Besides the obvious, a BMW.”

**Sgt. Elda Soriano**  
Company A, 2-3 BTB



“To go home.”

**Pfc. Jay Fristedt**  
HHC, 2-3 BTB



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
2 Halo 2 Oldies music night	3 Ping Pong Chess	4 Monopoly Spades	5 Flag football Salsa music night	6 Pool Dominoes	7 Movie Night Spades	8 <i>Kellie Pickler concert</i>
9 <i>Mayor Cell Meet and Greet</i>	10 Checkers Chess	11 Monopoly Spades	12 <i>Marne Band concert</i>	13 Pool Dominoes	14 <i>Marne Band concert</i>	15 Texas Hold'em R&B music night
16 Halo 2 Oldies music night	17 Ping Pong Chess	18 Checkers Spades	19 Flag football Salsa music night	20 Pool Dominoes	21 Movie Night Spades	22 Texas Hold'em Country music night
23 Halo 2 Oldies music night	24 <i>CHRISTMAS EVE</i>	25 <i>CHRISTMAS Run</i>	26 Pull up competition Salsa music night	27 Pool Dominoes	28 Movie Night Hip hop music night	29 Texas Hold'em R&B music night
30 Halo 2 Oldies music night	31 <i>NEW YEAR'S EVE</i>	1 <i>NEW YEAR'S Talent Show</i>	Unless otherwise stated, all events begin at 1930. Times and events are subject to change. Special events are in <i>red italics</i> .			