



# IRON STRONG DAILY

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OCT. 17, 2008



An "Above the Rest" Soldier of the 1st Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment, 1st BCT, 101st Airborne Division aboard a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter during an Air Assault mission onto the banks of the Tigris River. The Soldiers conducted Operation Deadbluff along with Iraqi Army Soldiers, in an effort to reduce the number of enemy weapons caches in the area.

## Operation Deadbluff Takes Flight in Bayji

**Story and photo by  
Sgt. Rick Rzepka  
1st BCT, 101st Airborne Division**

As security continues to improve across Iraq, insurgent networks are becoming desperate in their attempts at proliferating weapons and ammunition.

Because they have been marginalized within Iraqi society and are under constant pressure from Iraqi Security Forces and Coalition Soldiers, enemy fighters are frantically seeking to hide large quantities of weapons in the hinterlands of Iraq's north.

"Often the insurgency will attempt to utilize rural areas to hide weapons," said

Capt. Michael Sykes, 1st Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment. "What they don't realize, is that we are highly mobile through the use of the Air Assault and are training the Iraqis to do the same," he said.

A recent Air Assault mission, conducted by Iraqi Army Soldiers and Soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment of the 101st Airborne Division, aimed to track down enemy weapons caches being stored along the lush banks of the Tigris River.

"Our intent is to deny them a place to call home," said Capt. Jeffrey Rottenberg, whose 'Mad Dog' Company has been battling extremist fighters for more than a year. "The enemy here goes to sleep at

night wondering if this is the night that the 101st will come to pay them a visit," he said.

The mission, dubbed Operation Deadbluff, was one of many operations carried out by the battalion in order to sever enemy weapons trafficking in the area. "The enemy doesn't just stick to cities," said Rottenberg, "so we don't either."

In utilizing the Air Assault, Rottenberg's 'Mad Dogs' have gained the upper hand. By taking the fight to the enemy, the Soldiers of the 327th go after them from all sides, said Rottenberg. "The major advantage gained through Air Assaults is the ability to move a

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# Spartan Soldiers 'drop in' on small fishing village

**Story and photo by**  
**By Sgt. 1st Class Kevin Doheny**  
**1st Brigade Combat Team, 101st**  
**Airborne Division PAO**

Since the Vietnam War era the air assault has been used to surprise enemy combatants with the primary objective of killing or capturing them. The thumping sound of thousands of helicopters combat-loaded with troops descending from the sky delivers a tremendous shock to the enemy.

For commanders in Iraq today the focus still remains killing or capturing the enemy during air assault operations, however, there is more to consider.

Whether it is the 65-year old woman sleeping on a mattress in the front yard or the 7-year boy silently sleeping in the bed beside her, air assault troops must bring more tact to the fight while closing in on the enemy.

During a recent air assault operation Oct. 6, 2008, Soldiers of Bravo Company, 1st Special Troops Battalion closed in on the enemy during Operation Marathon. During the operation though, it wasn't what these Soldiers did while sweeping the village for Al Qaeda fighters, it was their actions after that made the difference.

"It wasn't too surprising that once we isolated the objective and identified there were no hostiles, the villagers would be very inviting," said Capt. Brian Hayes, Bravo Company commander. In fact, the children were unusually well behaved. The family was very nice and even asked that if Coalition forces return to the village, that they wanted



Soldiers from Bravo Company, 1st Special Troops Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, run to a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter during extraction from Operation Marathon Oct. 6, 2008.

our company to be the ones to come back."

According to the Task Force Spartan commander, Lt. Col. Rick Rhyne, it was imperative that his Soldiers adhere to the people's needs and treat them with dignity and respect. He said that mishandling civilians on the battlefield can create more animosity towards Coalition forces.

"We are going to this objective to search for two terrorists," Rhyne said during a pre-mission briefing to his Soldiers. "Let's not create more by mistreating good people."

The Spartan Soldiers air assaulted to a small fishing village on the eastern shore of Lake Tharthar with the intent of showing a presence in an area several

miles away from their headquarters near Tikrit.

The ability of the air assault allows for Task Force Spartan Soldiers to "drop by" on anyone, anytime, at the location of their choosing; yet the "Stalker" Soldiers of Bravo Company are not your typical air assault force. The company is primarily responsible for handling a vast majority of the Bastogne Brigade's intelligence functions.

In preparation for the operation the company conducted a two-week train up where they trained in close-quarter combat; platoon, squad and team level tasks; and also practiced on proper air assault techniques.

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lot of Soldiers quickly, with little warning to the enemy.”

The element of surprise is one brick on the road to success here. Another is having the actual intelligence on enemy weapons locations from sources on the ground.

“The key to finding caches is the Iraqi people themselves,” said Rottenberg. “Unless you have someone inform you

about them, it becomes somewhat of a guessing game,” he said.

For more than a year, 1st Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment has detained hundreds of suspected insurgents and has taken thousands of weapons out of the hands of the enemy here.

“Our guys have performed at a high level, under austere conditions,” said Sykes. “While there has been some adversity, there has also been a great deal of success,” he said.



A “Above the Rest” Soldier of the 1st Battalion, 327th Infantry Regiment, 1st BCT, 101st Airborne Division takes up a fighting position. The Soldiers conducted Operation Deadbluff along with Iraqi Army Soldiers, in an effort to reduce the number of enemy weapons caches in the area

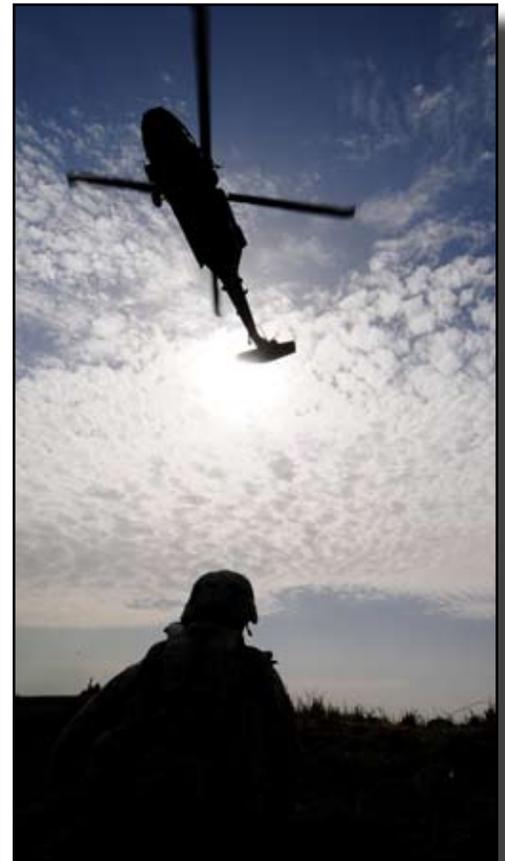


Photo by Sgt. Rick Rzepka

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“We had a vigorous and quick train-up,” said Hayes, “but we are dealing with smart Soldiers that pick up things quick, so we were able to cover a lot of ground in a short amount of time.”

According to Hayes, this operation showed the flexibility of his Soldiers. He said that intelligence Soldiers are often in harm’s way conducting their technical skills, but this operation should further their comprehension of the counter-insurgency fight.

“These Soldiers, from the intelligence analyst to the UAV operator to the supply clerk, now have a detailed understanding of what it takes to plan and execute an operation,” said Hayes.

“The perspective of executing this mission will help intelligence professionals to understand how to provide better support to the war fighter by actually seeing the ground,” said 1st Lt. Dezi King, platoon

leader. “Seeing the ground and planning this mission allows both intelligence leaders and Soldiers know what assistance is needed and what intelligence gaps need to be filled without them being requested.” Hayes said that most of his Soldiers have been out in sector and have had interactions with Iraqi civilians before. This experience in dealing with the Iraqi culture benefited them once the initial assault was conducted.

His first sergeant agreed.

“It will prove valuable that they have seen the other side of the Iraqi people,” said 1st Sgt. Dean Buzbee, Bravo Company. “Most Soldiers of our Soldier have been exposed only to the Iraqis they read about in significant activities [SIGACTS] and intelligence reports. It’s easy to forget that those are such a small percentage of Iraqis.”

Buzbee said the operation was a success because of the level of competency of his Soldiers and the way they treated the

people in the village.

“The people really wanted to cooperate with us because our continued presence has had a positive influence on their village,” said Buzbee. “It’s important for all Soldiers to remember that many Iraqis are just normal people trying to get on with their lives.”



Photo By Sgt. 1st Class Kevin Doheny

## ELECTIONS

(Seattle Times) Gov. Christine Gregoire and challenger Dino Rossi clashed in their final debate Wednesday night over who was best prepared to solve the state's looming budget shortfall and whose camp was to blame for the increasingly nasty tone of campaign ads in their expensive and tightly fought race.

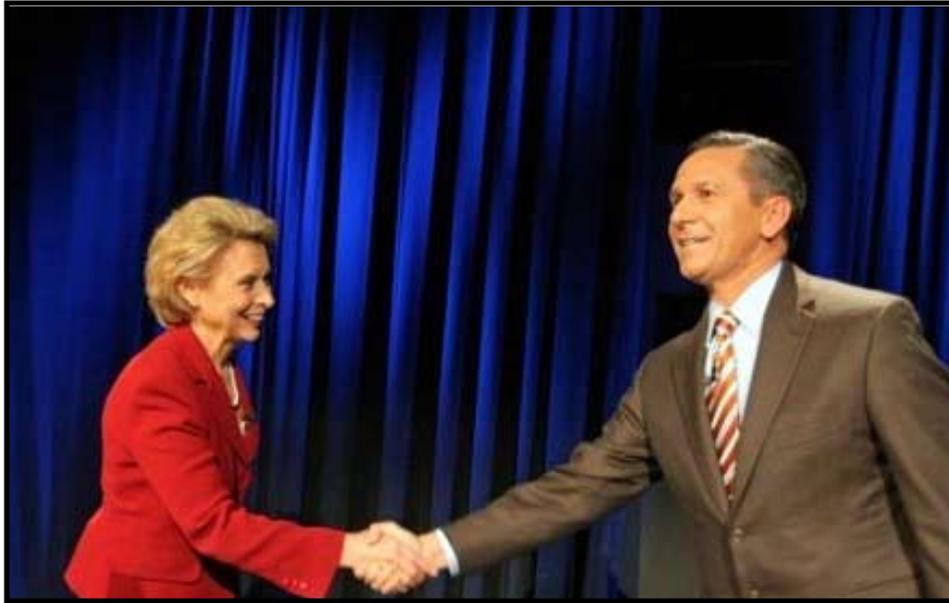
In a debate that saw little new ground broken, Gregoire, the Democrat and Rossi, the Republican, each refused to back away from their own supporters' negative attacks but accused the other side of descending into dishonest mudslinging. The debate at the KING-TV studio was co-sponsored by The Seattle Times.

"The supporters of Mr. Rossi are literally prepared to pay \$13 million in negative ads against me," said Gregoire, who claimed the campaign hit its "low point" last week when ads mailed to thousands of homes included photos of child rapists and

suggested the state had lost track of hundreds of sex offenders.

Rossi, meanwhile, pinpointed the low point as Gregoire's ads which accused him of seeking to lower the minimum wage. Turning to confront her directly, Rossi said, "I really do believe this is demeaning to the office we both seek."

They continued to fight over the state's projected \$3.2 billion deficit for the next budget — with Rossi blaming Gregoire's spending for creating the problem and Gregoire accusing Rossi of failing to level with voters on what services he'd cut to close the gap.



Polling has shown the race to be virtually even, foreshadowing a possible rerun of the 2004 election, which Rossi lost by 133 votes after two recounts and a lawsuit.

The onslaught of attack ads is likely to grow in the coming weeks; both sides have millions left to spend. Already, more than \$39 million has been raised for the race.

Rossi and his supporters could have a decided money edge in the final days — with four times as much cash in the bank as Gregoire and her backers, according to financial disclosures filed this week.

Rossi and independent groups supporting him have about \$8 million left, compared with about \$1.8 million for Gregoire's side.

The bulk of Rossi's money comes from the Republican Governors Association and a political committee called It's Time for A Change, mainly funded by the Building Industry Association of Washington.

Democrats have accused the BIAW of illegal fundraising, and two former state Supreme Court justices have filed a lawsuit to stop the group from spending its money

## Entertainment

(AP) Janet Jackson took the stage to exploding fireworks, clouds of smoke and the sounds of some early hits Wednesday in her first concert since she was sidelined for two weeks by a bout of vertigo.

Sporting a huge mohawk and light-colored body suit, the Grammy-winning performer opened with "Pleasure Principle," followed by "What Have You Done for Me Lately" from her 1986 album "Control." Soon after, she sang her latest single, "Feedback."

"It feels so good to be back after being down just a little bit," Jackson told the crowd at the less-than-full Verizon Center.

The two-hour, high-energy show went smoothly, but Jackson did appear winded at times. At one point, she paused to admire her backup dancers, and the audience roared with approval.

"She was perfect. If she was sick, she's not sick anymore," said Maurice Bell, 28, of Washington. "She can still do it at 42."

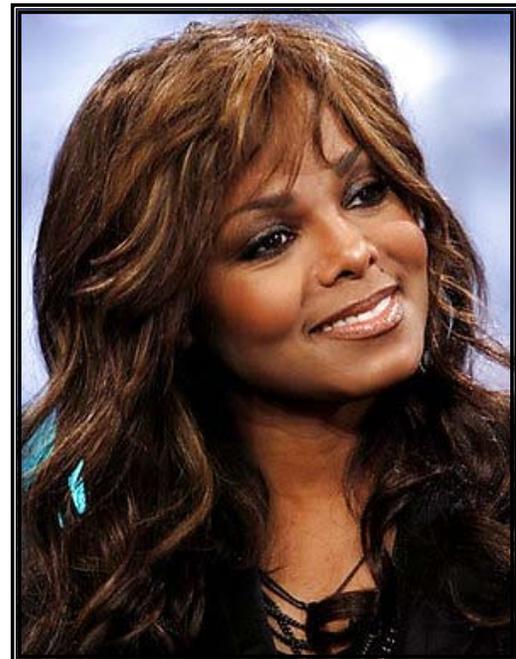
At the end of the show, a teary-eyed Jackson told the crowd: "I love you D.C. so much."

Jackson's publicist said Wednesday she has been suffering from migraine-associated vertigo, which led to her canceling a string of shows. She is being treated for the illness, which is characterized by dizziness, imbalance and other symptoms.

"She's a world-class entertainer and needs to be at the top of her game to give her fans the show they expect," Jackson's manager, Kenneth Crear, said in a release. "She's feeling much better and is ready to hit the road again to finish the tour."

Crear said Jackson is feeling better and ready to continue her first North American tour in seven years. Upcoming stops include Atlanta,

Houston, Dallas, New York and East Rutherford, N.J.



## Soccer

**(Goal.com)** For all the youth, experimentation and innovation displayed by Bob Bradley's XI selection, it took two of Trinidad & Tobago's oldest, most experienced players to take all three points under wet, humid conditions in Port of Spain. Bradley made eight changes from the side that romped 6-1 over Cuba, and the lack of cohesion was a constant struggle all evening long as the Soca Warriors commanded more possession and scoring opportunities throughout the match.

### First Half

The 4-5-1 was on full display from both sides, although with Maurice Edu and Jose Francisco Torres playing out of position in defensive midfield, the US struggled to push forward with any kind of menace. The lack of ball control was a problem all night long, with several promising moves extinguished thanks to errant passing and miscommunication. For the Warriors, the slow, cautious tempo was perfect, and they settled first, with Keon Daniel's early corner forcing a save from Guzan and Dennis Lawrence blazing a shot over the bar from a corner within the first 15 minutes.

From there, it was testy and congested in the midfield, with neither side carving out another clear-cut opportunity until after the break.

### Second Half

In the second half, the US started brightly, but a sharp passing move between Kljestan and Torres released Altidore clean through on goal only for the linesman to judge him narrowly offside. Replays showed that he was level, but the home field advantage often pushes those 50/50 decisions in favor of the hosts.

As the visitors kept pressing, space began opening up on both wings for the hosts, and the shaky center-back pairing of Orozco and Califf was finally exposed on the hour. A mazy run by Carlos Edwards down the



right turned Pearce inside out, and his lobbed cross found 40-year-old Russell Latapy on the penalty spot. His first-time volley hit the post but deflected in off Guzan's back for the opener. It was a well-deserved goal, but the young US crew found a way back 10 minutes later through Altidore's hard work on the edge of the box. Fighting through a couple of tackles, Jozy kept his cool to slide the ball under advancing goalkeeper Clayton Ince, and substitute Charlie Davies, on the field just six minutes, tapped it home under pressure.

With the game hanging in the balance, the US inexperience shone through just four minutes later, as a sharp inswinging corner from the left was intercepted by Altidore's leaping header, bundling Makan Hislop over in his speedy break for the ball. The referee pointed to the penalty spot with little dispute from Jozy and co., and aging striker-turned-defensive midfielder Dwight Yorke wrong-footed Guzan for the go-ahead goal.

Altidore had a chance late from Beasley's probing free kick, but it wasn't meant to be, and T&T celebrate their first victory over the US since 1994.

For the US, it was a difficult test, and one that didn't entirely go to plan. The US were nervous from set pieces all night long, giving far too many half-chances to a team that simply needed the points more (they now have a 3-point lead over Guatemala with 1 qualifying round to play).

The center-back pairing of Califf and Orozco never quite gelled, and the attack-minded selection of Kljestan, Altidore, Adu and Beasley failed to produce or create clear-cut opportunities up front. Adu played a steady game, but with little support from the rest of the midfield. Pearce and Hejduk battled well down the wings in support, but they were ineffective in crossing, and Bradley's substitutions were made so late that Szetela and Rolph had little time to influence the outcome.

Trinidad & Tobago deserved the points, but the night was not in vain for the US, as Bradley got some much-needed rest for his first-choice side and got a good, clear look at the next wave of US internationals. There's promise and potential in the youngsters, but it was veterans' night in Port of Prince.

## Turkey

At least four Turkish soldiers have been killed in clashes with fighters from the Kurdistan Worker's Party (PKK) in the southeast of the country near its borders with Iran and Iraq, the military has said.

The Turkish military said on Thursday that five PKK fighters were also killed in separate fighting.

Clashes on Wednesday in the town of Kavakli in the Hakkari province between a Turkish army unit and PKK fighters left four soldiers dead, the military said in a statement.

Another soldier was killed and 15 others wounded, including a brigade general, when a helicopter bringing reinforcements to the combat zone crashed accidentally, according to the statement.

PKK casualties

Five PKK fighters were also killed in clashes with Turkish security forces in the towns of Semdinli and Sirkak, near the Iraqi border, the military said.

Turkish planes have been regularly

bombing PKK hideouts across the border in northern Iraq since an October 3 attack against a Turkish border outpost that killed 17 soldiers.

The PKK, listed as a terrorist group by Ankara and much of the international community, took up arms for Kurdish self-rule

in the southeast in 1984, sparking a conflict that has claimed at least 44,000 lives.

Turkish officials estimate about 2,000 PKK fighters are residing in the mountains of northern Iraq, where they allegedly enjoy free movement and obtain weapons and explosives for staging attacks in Turkey.



## Georgia



**(AP)** Everybody is putting a brave face on these short-lived talks. The United Nations, European Union and Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, which are mediating, adamantly reject any suggestion of failure.

Johan Verbeke speaks during a press conference after a closed meeting of the Caucasus talks in Geneva, Switzerland, 15 Oct 2008

They prefer to call the walkout by the Georgian and Russian delegations a procedural snag. Special U.N. Representative to Georgia Johan Verbeke says no one should dramatize

what happened today.

"What happened is what we call in French, 'un incident de parcours', a procedural incident, which had to be resolved," he said. "Rather than doing a quick-fix, which may leave us with other problems later in the day or later in the process, we better address them. And that is why we decided to take some breathing space to address those few procedural points which would be handled through consultations."

Verbeke calls this just a temporary suspension of the work and says the talks will resume on November 18.

The talks are aimed at resolving a host of political and humanitarian issues that have resulted from the brief war that erupted between Georgia and Russia in early August. The conflict, which broke out over Georgia's breakaway region of South Ossetia, lasted only five days, but its effects are expected to last a long time.

The major sticking point, which led to the breakdown, appears to have been over Georgia's two breakaway regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. The Georgian and Russian delegations differed over the role they should play in the negotiations.

Russia, which recognizes both territories as independent states, objected to the exclusion of the South Ossetian and Abkhaz representatives from the talks.

Special Envoy of the OSCE, Heikki Talvitie says differences must be put aside because there are important issues that must be discussed in a practical way.

"We would like to enhance the stability in the region and we would like to enhance the humanitarian situation in the region," he said. "For this purpose, it is really important that we will find ways and means that everybody can express their views. These are not negotiations, these are discussions. But, in some way, in the future, there should be a kind of an understanding that we can agree on some measures in the region to help the situation there."

The United States, which is an ally of Georgia, attended the talks. In a brief statement earlier in the day, the U.S. delegation said the talks would address compliance with the ceasefire, security issues, the return of internally displaced persons and human rights.

Those issues are to be deferred until next month.