



The Heart Beat

2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault)
Volume III, Issue 9

August/September 2008



Top Guns patrol Iraqi Family Village in Baghdad, pg. 5

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Strike 6



Col. William B. Hickman

Strike Soldiers, Families and friends we are very successful in our deploy-

ment, but this is no time to begin to relax. We must keep our heads in the game and continue the mission of securing northwest Baghdad.

We have come a long way since leaving for Iraq in October 2007 and our work is evident on the streets of northwest Baghdad.

We have accomplished a great deal during our tenure here. The hard work put into learning and developing our relationships with local Iraqis has certainly paid off.

The economy is continually progressing, reconciliation is in full force and security continues to improve, but there is still more that needs to be done.

We must remain persistent and very aggressive in our pursuit for a free Iraq.

We need to ensure we continue to dig deep and continue our counter-insurgency operations.

When we depart this area of Baghdad, we shall know we left behind a positive mark on the streets and within the minds of the Iraqi people. When they see a heart, they will think of the Strike Brigade Combat Team and all we have done over the course of our deployment.

Our Families back home have played a vital role in our successes here in Iraq. I, again, thank you for all your hard work and dedication to the Strike Brigade Combat Team.

We ask that you too remain vigilant in your efforts to supporting your war-fighting spouses. We are at a point where we will desperately need your continued efforts as we make our transition back home.

Thank you all for your hard work. Continue the fight and stay strong.

Strike 6
Air Assault!!!

Strike 7



Command Sgt. Maj. Scott Schroeder

It is incredible how fast time seems to be moving. The brigade is doing very well. We have had people from across the Army to come see what we are doing here and how the brigade combat team does business. It is not a secret that 2-101 is doing a great job. Our success is not due to any individual Soldier, leader or unit. It is directly related to Soldiers and units focusing on the mission and not being concerned with credit for individual efforts. We owe our early success to the Dagger BCT from Germany; they are the ones who got the momentum going and you and your Soldiers have accelerated and moved progress in our area further than any place in Baghdad.

Now as we begin the final stage of our deployment, it is time to push to finish strong. We owe it to ourselves,

the incoming Dagger BCT, and the Iraqi people. We can not rest on what we have accomplished. There is no such thing as coasting into the finish.

How do we do this? Continue doing what is going well and improve where we are having problems. We do have

some shortcomings and we can do better. We owe it to ourselves not to take shortcuts. We must work to make ourselves better. We must continually assess ourselves. Look at troop leading procedures, individual Soldier training, and leader development. Use the time we have left to train the Soldiers we have and prepare them for our next mission as well as our next deployment. Focus on the basics. Conduct operations by the Iron Horse Big 8 standard. Comply with standards no matter what the situation. Account for property and hold subordinates accountable.

This is a great unit and I am proud to be a part of this unit in this time of our unit history, national history, and the history of the world.

Stay after it and never quit.
STRIKE!!!



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STRIKE!!!

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2nd Brigade Combat Team - "Strike"



On The Cover:

Spc. Joshua Ingram, native of Portales, N.M., secures the second floor of a home in Ghazaliyah Sep. 5. Ingram serves with 2nd Platoon, Troop B, 1st Squadron, 75th Cavalry, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), Multi-National Division -- Baghdad. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Manuel J. Martinez, Combat Camera)



Staff Sgt. William Moulds looks back at the positions of his fellow soldiers during a foot patrol in the streets of Shulla June 7. Moulds serves with Company B, 1st Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Manuel J. Martinez, Combat Camera)

Greetings from Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan, home of the Combined/Joint Task Force-101 (CJTF-101). I am continually impressed with how we as a Division, installation, and community are facing a variety of challenges associated with this current deployment.

In Afghanistan, our Screaming Eagle Soldiers have teamed with United States Sailors, Airmen, Marines, and several coalition nations to form a powerful force leading security and development efforts in our sector as well as supporting U.S. military deployed throughout the country. This arduous task is providing hope for the Afghans in Regional Command East and freedom loving people throughout the world.

In Iraq, the Bastogne, Strike, and Rakaskan Brigade Combat Teams continue making progress in securing and stabilizing the country. Tenacity and hard fought battles are paying off as the level of violence throughout the nation has significantly dropped, due in no small part to the efforts and professionalism of our Fort Campbell Soldiers.

At Fort Campbell, the Families of our warriors continue to live and serve our community. These wives, husbands, daughters, and

NCOs are obligated to teach and mentor Soldiers to accomplish the commander's intent and simultaneously develop the leaders of tomorrow coming up through the ranks. Overall, I have been impressed with the performance of NCOs I have met during my battlefield circulation. I ask that we continue to know, enforce standards, and instill discipline. NCOs are the standard bearers and truly the backbone of the Army.

In my point of view, training Soldiers and taking care of their professional needs is the key to accomplishing the mission; whether deployed or in garrison. NCOs have to take the time and look for opportunities to do individual training.

This means leading Soldiers, enforcing basic standards, knowing and implementing training doctrine such as FM 7-0, and training to the lowest level. It is important to have effective communications to ensure every member understand the tasks they are given and their purpose.

Sounds easy, right? Not so. Most NCOs have a steep learning curve of their own, primarily as a result of the Army's big push to transform to full spectrum operations. In most cases, NCOs have completed tactical assignments at the squad, platoon or company level and must now think operationally



Maj. Gen. Jeffrey J. Schlosser

sons are the stalwarts of the Division, supporting our units in ways many will never know. Bravely facing their 1st, 2nd, 3rd, or 4th deployment, these unsung heroes continue to live in the absence of their Soldier. Kids still play on the High School's champion football team and attend band practice; Spouses continue working

and in some cases strategically. NCOs have to hit the books by applying the crawl-walk-run principals of training.

The eight-step training model should be used after every combat patrol, whether the patrol has been engaged or not. An effective AAR conducted before the mission is complete will identify weak points that need to be improved within your unit and between ANSF and Coalition partners. The eight-step training model provides an NCO answers to the questions of who and what needs to be trained, an understanding of the task's purpose, a review of doctrinal TTPs, a rehearsal of weak points, and an evaluation of training.

Use the eight-step training model and you will increase the combat effectiveness of your unit, regardless of the mission or environment.

Eight Step Training Model:

1. PLAN THE TRAINING
2. TRAIN THE TRAINERS
3. RECON THE SITE
4. ISSUE THE ORDER
5. REHEARSE THE TRAINING
6. EXECUTE THE TRAINING
7. EVALUTE THE TRAINING
8. RETRAIN AS NECESSARY



Command Sgt. Maj. Vincent F. Camacho

and participating in Family Readiness Group meetings; everyone pulling together to make the best of a stressful situation.

We are strong because of the caring community we have in the surrounding areas around Fort Campbell. I'm convinced that no other post in the Army has the same level of sincere support from the people, businesses, and organizations of the local community, both on and off-post. Our Soldiers and Families are able to handle the rigors and stress of deployment because of you. On behalf of the over 30,000 Soldiers and 55,000 dependants at Fort Campbell, I commend you and thank you for all you do.

These significant contributions have come at no small price. Our community has lost hundreds of Soldiers since 2001, while many are still recovering at medical treatment facilities around the country. These are difficult times for our Soldiers and their Families but it is made easier with the support of our fellow citizens of the greater Clarksville, Hopkinsville, Oak Grove communities. Continue to remember the Families of our brave warriors in your prayers.

Air Assault!!

Top Guns patrol Iraqi Family Village, attend weekly council meetings

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

Daily, Soldiers from the Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 1st Battalion, 320th Field Artillery Regiment, patrol the streets of the Iraqi Family Village. The area, near the Victory Base Complex, is relatively safe, and is home to citizens from all throughout Iraq.

Once the war kicked off in 2003, many families fled their homes to come to this once abandoned orphanage on the outskirts of Baghdad.

Their mission is simple – keep the Iraqi people within the village safe and work with their local council to improve the quality of life for these struggling residents.

1st Lt. Andrew Bowling, a native of Medfield, Mass., said he believes a great deal of them were once wealthy, but when the war began they fell on hard times and needed to flee their area because of the fighting, leaving behind their lives and jobs.

The Soldiers of HHB are working tirelessly with the local council to improve their everyday lives in anyway they can.

They are currently conducting a census to gather as much information about the village as possible. This gives them a better understanding of who lives where, how many people live in the household, the occupation of those presiding, which in turn, helps gain a better understanding of the village as a whole.

Once a week, they meet with the panel of council members. These men are important, well respected people within the community.

They talk about many of the issues and concerns of the community, and try



Staff Sgt. Jorge Hernandez, a native of Gregory Portland, Texas, and Staff Sgt. Larry Sutton, a native of Springfield, Mass., annotate the serial number of an AK-47 while conducting a census of the Iraqi Family Village on the outskirts of Baghdad July 7. Sutton and Hernandez serve with the 2nd Platoon "Chaos," Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 1st Battalion, 320th Field Artillery Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), Multi-National Division - Baghdad.

to work out ways to solve their problems. The big problem right now is they are trying to keep the strangers out, said Bowling. A lot of the strangers are drug addicts and dealers, who flee to IFV because they believe it is a good place to hide out.

in and give drugs to the kids. They are a pretty legit threat to their safety."

In the meantime, they plan to lock up the empty homes to keep away those fleeing away from their criminal past.

When they first began patrolling the area just over a month ago, trash lit-

tered the streets, said Pfc. Blake Widner, a native of Bristol, Tenn. However, the Soldiers organized two Iraqi Family Village Earth Day events, aimed at picking up the trash within the community.

Nearly 100 men, women and children gathered to police the littered streets, said Widner.

"If they want us to help, they've got to put in a little effort themselves,"

said Pfc. Blake Widner
HHB, 1-320th Field Artillery Regiment

Many are believed to be criminals escaping from Kadhamiyah, Shulla and Hurriyah, said Bowling. They want to keep these men out, away from the good people of this quiet, stable area.

The council wants these men away from their area for the safety of their people.

"They do cause legit problems," Bowling said. "The drug addicts come

into it as well," said Widner. "If they want it clean, they have to do a little bit of it themselves. It's starting to look better one step at a time; it's getting cleaner and cleaner."

While continuing to work with the local council, they are also moving house to house conducting a census, aimed at providing a better living condition for all the local residents.



Staff Sgt. Josh Berndt, a native of Oshkosh, Wisc., shakes hands with an Iraqi child while an elderly woman looks on during a patrol through northern Ghazaliyah July 11. Berndt serves with 3rd Platoon, Company C, 1st Squadron, 75th Cavalry Regiment. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. James Hunter, 2nd BCT PAO, 101st Abn. Div., MND-B)

Chaos troops continue mission in Ghazaliyah

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

Nine months into their deployment, the Soldiers of Company C “Chaos,” 1st Squadron, 75th Cavalry Regiment, are continuing their fight against insurgent forces in northern Ghazaliyah in their persistent fight to bring security and economic stability to the region.

The streets are continuously crowded with vehicles bumper-to-bumper trying to pass through the seemingly endless stretch of Iraqi Army checkpoints. However, this is not an awful thing. It insists the Iraqi Army is doing their job, with the help and supervision from American troops. They are working to keep weapons and explosive devices from entering, or possibly exiting, the northern Ghazaliyah area and keeping the men, women and children living within safe at all means necessary.

The signs of security are everywhere. Soccer fields are littered with energetic Iraqi children. Even a concession stand, stocked with endless goods of cola, potato chips and numerous chocolate bars, sits at one field where nearly five different games played on into the hot-summer day. One can only imagine how many dream

of playing nationally with their native country, or to what many of them know, Manchester United.

Enemy activity is continually decreasing, especially after the heavy fighting in March when Iraqi Army checkpoints came under enemy fire.

The Chaos troops were sent in to reinforce the Iraqi troops and found themselves in a heavy stand-off with the enemy.

Ultimately, they fired on the enemy as the enemy fired upon them. They, partnered with the Iraqi Security Forces at checkpoints, stood strong and held off any enemy push.

After just a few days, the madness ended and life carried on within the community.

One thing the Chaos troops realized from this situation is the they didn’t have enough man power patrolling the muhallahs of Jouadine, Ramaniyah and Katieb. They needed more support from the Iraqi Army, and that is what they got. Iraqi Army Soldiers from the 4th Company, 2nd Battalion, 22nd Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division, partnered with them and began patrolling on a constant basis throughout the various muhallahs.

It got to the point though where there were too many reports of improvised explosive devices and explosively formed projectiles within the muhallahs.

“It got to the point where [the enemy] pretty much controlled

the battleground for an extended period of time,” said 1st Lt. Tyler Deviese, a native of Charlottesville, Va., platoon leader for 1st Platoon, Co. C, 1-75th Cav.

It was decided that a full-scale operation was needed to clear Shulla – just to the north – and Jouadine, Ramaniyah and Katieb, otherwise known as the JRK, or “jerk.” It was IA lead, as they cleared Shulla for weapons and known criminals.

It all kicked off within the JRK when the Iraqi Army assaulted the Office of Muqtada al-Sadr. Though they met resistance and a few problems during the assault, the Iraqi Army was able to take the OMS building, along with an ice factory and other key objectives, said Deviese.

Simultaneously, American troops cordoned off Shulla and the JRK, and for nearly two days they met enemy resistance.

The fighting would cease though, just as al-Sadr sent out a declaration for his fighters to stop, said Deviese. With that, many top special group leadership within Shulla and the JRK fled the area.

Since then, life in Ghazaliyah has carried on and returned to “normal”

for the most part. However, though things have quieted

down, there is no change in the way the Soldiers operate. There are still special groups criminals throughout the muhallahs, remaining a concern to the troops and the local citizens.

The company of troops continues to engage the population, sweep across fields for possible enemy caches and search vehicles at various checkpoints within the muhallahs.

They continue to gather as much information on the whereabouts of these criminals, where they are stashing their weapons and any information they can learn in regards to their tactics and future plans.

It is key, with the top-tier leadership gone, to go after their weapons caches and build as much information about these men as possible, said Deviese.

“With a lot of the [criminals] gone, a lot of people are becoming more comfortable talking about them,” Deviese said. “Since these dudes have left we have been passing out our phone numbers, handbills. We haven’t done anything much different, but now there are people on the streets past 10 o’clock. They are



Staff Sgt. Robert Jarden, a native of Nashville, Ill., patrols through a field of seemingly endless trash during a cache search in northern Ghazaliyah July 10. Jarden serves with 1st Platoon, Company C, 1st Squadron, 75th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), Multi-National Division – Baghdad.

going to the markets, they aren’t as afraid to take micro-grant applications from us, they aren’t as afraid to talk to us.

“We are finding a lot more people are calling us and saying this guy is responsible for this,” Deviese continued. “That allows us to focus our targeting on them and get enough reporting on them so when they do come back we can grab them.”

The general idea with any counter-insurgency is to win over the populace, said Deviese. Special group criminals promise many things to the people, one being essential services, but there is the criminal side to them that conducts the attacks, threatens the people, and steals their money.

“With these guys gone we have to step up and say ‘hey we’re a better fit than they are,’” Deviese said. “At least on a day-to-day basis I don’t

see them providing essential services. I think that was one of their founding features. That’s what they were supposed to do; provide for the people. Now it’s to the point where they are desperate.”

Like any gang in America, they have a figure head, they have weapons, and believe they can do as they please, but eventually when they get outnumbered and people start standing up for themselves they have no chance, said Deviese.

“We saw that with al-Qaeda,” he added.

So the time is now for these troops who operate daily in northern Ghazaliyah to continue to push projects and micro-grants into the community.

According to Sgt. Victor Faggiano, a native of Manchester, N.H., though they are determined in assisting with the building of the Iraqi Security Forces and in securing the JRK, they are simultaneously helping the local populace with rejuvenating the economy.

They are trying to get a trash clean-up project in Katieb, and put some solar lights along one route and a market area, said Deviese. They are working on building a medical clinic in Katieb, and working on a soccer field for the children to enjoy.

These are things they simply want to accomplish, but the most they can do is propose these projects and hope they get approved.

“I can’t necessarily control how much power Katieb gets. It’s just not my realm of responsibility,” said Deviese. “As many times as I go to the substation and say what... is going on, they’re given a certain amount power that they’re to allot each location.”

see CHAOS, pg. 13



Faces of the Heart



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

A Multi-National Division - Baghdad Soldier with Company A, 1st Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, shakes hands with two young, twin Iraqi girls during a combined patrol through Hurriyah June 29. Strike Soldiers continue to patrol and train Iraqi troops daily, and interact with the local populace.



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

Sgt. Dennis Masterman, a native of Moreno, Calif., pulls security inside an Iraqi families home during a patrol through northern Ghazaliyah, July 13. Masterman serves with 1st Platoon, Company C, 1st Squadron, 75th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), Multi-National Division - Baghdad.



photo by Spc. Charles Gill, Combat Camera

1st Lt. Settles, with the 4th Battalion, 42nd Field Artillery Regiment, operationally attached to the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), Multi-National Division - Baghdad, speaks into his radio while on a dismounted patrol in the Karkh District of northwest Baghdad Aug. 4.



photo by 1s Lt. Lindsey Travis, 2nd BSTB

Democratic presidential nominee, Sen. Barack Obama of Illinois, speaks with and enjoys breakfast with Lt. Col. Miguel Hobbs, a native of Columbia, Ill.; Spc. Anthony Graziani, a native of Chicago Heights, Ill.; and Sgt. Marquita Hollins of Chicago, Ill., at a dining facility in Baghdad's International Zone July 22. The Soldiers serve with the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), Multi-National Division - Baghdad.



U.S. Air Force photo by Staf Sgt. Manuel Martinez, Combat Camera

Saco, Maine, native, 2nd Lt. Ben Dalton, speaks with an Iraqi boy in a classroom at the Alethar Elementary School in Ameriya Aug. 12. Dalton serves with Troop C, 4th Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment, attached to the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), Multi-National Division - Baghdad.

Soldiers interrogate streets of Baghdad

Route clearance team motivated by dangerous job

Story, photo by
Staff Sgt. Brock Jones
MND-B PAO

Every job that Soldiers do in Iraq is essentially one gear in the mammoth machine that is the U.S. Army. Those jobs, often unheralded, sometimes strenuous and possibly perilous, work in unison toward reaching the common goal of establishing and maintaining peace and security across Iraq.

One of those many “gears,” a job that literally keeps the Army rolling safely in the streets, is keeping travel routes and avenues of movement free of improvised explosive devices and explosively-formed projectiles. Engineers from 1st Platoon “Mudcats,” Company A, Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), Multi-National Division – Baghdad, make-up one of the units assigned to that very duty, the dangerous but rewarding job of route clearance.

“There’s nothing more rewarding than going out and finding the deadliest weapon that the terrorists are trying to use and saving Soldier’s lives within our brigade and within our company and our AO (area of operation),” said Staff Sgt. Erik Hoyle, vehicle commander serving with 1st Platoon, reflecting the attitude of his entire unit about the job they have been given to do. Both the leaders and Soldiers of 1st Platoon maintain no doubts about the importance of their job.

“One less bomb out there is one less Soldier or local national who’s not going to get hurt,” said 2nd Lt. Ben Galemo, a native of Hamilton, Ill., who serves as the platoon leader for 1st Platoon. “That’s always important.”

While operating in their area of responsibility, attempting to rid the streets of deadly explosive devices, route clearance teams travel much slower than normal convoys, stopping often to conduct what they call “interrogations,” closer looks at anything suspicious. With every pair of eyes looking through the thick glass of heavily armored vehicles, they search for anything that might tip them off as to the whereabouts of potential dangers.

“You’re looking for anything from just a wire, just one wire, to a block or anything that looks out of place,” said Staff Sgt. Jared Gay, a native of Sacramento, Calif., who serves as a squad leader with 1st

Platoon. “Once you’ve been on the routes long enough, you can see what’s been there, what hasn’t been there. You’re just kind of looking for things that are out of place.”

Looking for something “out of place” in areas where trash and rubble and broken vehicles are often the norm essentially amounts to a never-ending search for explosive “needles” in the “haystack” of Baghdad. In such a dangerously monotonous job, one would expect a lack of motivation and low morale to be a constant problem. But not so with the “Mudcat” Soldiers of 1st Platoon, where motivation and positive attitude seem to be the rule, not the exception.

“As always, ‘A’ game outside the wire; there is no ‘B’ game. Nobody’s handing out towels,” said Sgt. 1st Class Robert Foreman, a native of Allegany, N.Y., who serves as the platoon sergeant for 1st platoon, while briefing his Soldiers before their most recent mission, his first since returning from Environmental Morale Leave.

“I am thoroughly stoked to be back and going on mission. I could not sleep this morning. It’s kind of like when you’re a kid waiting for Christmas morning,” he said, smiling.

True motivation in any job seems to begin with the feeling that one is doing something worthwhile, with knowing that one performs a potentially life-saving service. This type of motivation comes easily to a platoon that understands the life-and-death ramifications of what they do.

see ENGINEERS, pg. 13



A vehicle specific to route clearance, “Husky,” stopped on a Baghdad street during a recent nighttime route clearance mission conducted by Sappers from 1st Platoon, Company A, Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), Multi-National Division – Baghdad. The specialized vehicle gives teams another way to “interrogate” possible improvised explosive devices. Route clearance teams use the term “interrogate” when they employ additional means at their disposal to investigate possible IEDs.

Infantryman rejoins military to lead troops into combat

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

When Sgt. Victor Faggiano, a 23-year old native of Manchester, N.H., was growing up he always knew the military was the choice from him in life.

“I pretty much always wanted to join the Army since I was playing with little green Army men, and I never saw myself doing anything different,” said Faggiano.

He remembers watching films like “To Hell and Back,” and “Hamburger Hill,” and knowing he wanted to be an infantryman fighting off enemy forces.

Faggiano, an assistant team leader with Company C “Chaos,” 1st Squadron, 75th Cavalry Regiment, grew up wrestling for his school, living what he explains was the average American life.

He lived on the outskirts of Manchester with his mother, father and brother Mario.

His family has lived there for generations, since his great grandparents moved there.

Faggiano, whose family is a mix of French-Canadian and Italian, initially joined the Army in July 2003, almost immediately after graduating high school.

Following basic training, javelin school and airborne school, Faggiano was assigned to the 173rd Airborne Brigade in Vicenza, Italy, where he served on a Long Range Surveillance team.

While assigned to the airborne unit, he often trained in Germany observing targets and conducting surveillance and long-range reconnaissance.

In March 2005, Faggiano deployed with the 173rd to the Helman Province of Afghanistan where he traveled in five-man teams, carrying heavy rucksacks into the mountains to observe enemy forces.



Sgt. Victor Faggiano, a native of Manchester, N.H., patrols through Katieb, an area in northern Ghazaliyah, July 14. Faggiano serves with 1st Platoon, Company C, 1st Squadron, 75th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), Multi-National Division – Baghdad.

“It was physically very hard,” he said. He often stayed at small combat outposts with a machine-gun nest and a small team.

More than half-way through his deployment, his unit was re-assigned to the Kandahar Province to augment a few platoons from the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division.

He went from a radio-telephone operator roaming through the mountains of Afghanistan with his five-man team, to an assistant gunner on an M240-B machine gun team as they cleared villages, and conducted various combat operations against the Taliban throughout the Kandahar province.

Afghanistan was a different world for the young Soldier. Afghanistan was very strict with Islamic law.

They often found themselves in open areas within small villages fighting off the Taliban.

“In Afghanistan you always knew where to go to find the enemy,” Faggiano said. “You knew you were going to get in a fight there.”

Faggiano enjoyed his experiences in Afghanistan, however, upon re-deploying to Italy he decided it was time to leave the military and take on another life.

“I was a pretty young dude, 21 years old,” Faggiano said. “I didn’t really think of my future being in the Army. I got de-

ployed, served and did the whole infantry thing and thought that’s it I guess.”

However, Faggiano said he didn’t really have a plan once he left the military. He went to the University of New Hampshire, but following a semester of schooling, found himself not enjoying it.

“[College] didn’t really do it for me as I thought it would,” he said. “It wasn’t exciting.”

He then tried working for a landscaping company for some time, but “that was a dead-end job,” he said. “All the guys who had been there for a while had never really moved up.”

Then he found himself talking with many of his friends from the 173rd who were gearing up to head back into Afghanistan.

“I kind of felt I was missing out,” Faggiano said. “In college everyone seemed so detached from what was really going on in the world and I still had friends doing this. I kind of felt guilty.”

So, Faggiano found himself back at the recruiting station re-enlisting in the military.

Faggiano knew he wanted to stay an infantryman, and chose Fort Campbell, Ky., as his duty station.

“I ended up picking Fort Campbell because I heard a lot of good things about the unit,” Faggiano said. “I knew the 101st

see LEADER, pg. 15

Non-governmental organizations taking the lead in northwest Baghdad

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

Iraqis continue to take more of a lead within their communities, helping improve the economic stability and education levels of their Iraqi communities.

These Iraqis are a part of non-governmental organizations that gain funding through various agencies to fund facilities and training programs within their community.

"[NGOs] are trying to get them education or get them job skills so that when they are done with the training they will be able to get employment," said Staff Sgt. Kristy Van Lanen, a native of West De Pere, Wisc.

One way for them to gain funding is through the Iraqi Assistance Center in Baghdad, where they pitch their proposed project in hopes it's gets approved and funded by Coalition Forces.

Nearly once a week, Van Lanen, meets with the director or assistant director of the various organizations at the IAC to discuss their intentions and what they plan to bring to the community.

Many of these organizations are headed by highly educated individuals with only one hope in mind.

"Many of them are teachers or professors at local schools or universities," Van Lanen said. "They are very intelligent and have a good idea of how to help the people in their community."

Van Lanen, who serves with the 432nd Civil Affairs Battalion, has many proposals come across her desk, however, must decline those she doesn't see to be legit. However, most are legitimate proposals with the focus of

helping their Iraqi brethren.

While meeting at the assistance center, where Soldiers simultaneously work with other Iraqis citizens in an attempt to help families locate their detained loved ones and process claims, they talk about the focus, the cost and the circumstances surrounding the project.

Once she feels the NGOs have all their ducks in a row, and a legitimate chance to make change within northwest Baghdad,



Staff Sgt. Kristy Van Lanen, a native of West De Pere, Wisc., talks to the director of a non-governmental organization at the Iraqi Assistance Center in Baghdad. NGOs are helping improve the economic stability and education levels of their Iraqi communities through education and training.

she sends the project proposal for approval to the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault).

"I took the initiative to contact and

work with local NGOs, because I feel they are a necessary step in improving the current conditions of Iraq," said Van Lanen. "I believe that if we empower the women and young adults, we can make a difference here. However, we have to educate them and give them skills so that they may take a more active role in society. It is in this way that we will make Iraq a better place to live."

There are many projects currently going on within 2nd Brigade's area of operations, much in do part to the endless effort of the NGOs.

According to Maj. Timothy Collier, the brigade's civil affairs officer, the brigade is really trying to push NGOs into the very troubled spots – areas in which they feel problems exist.

"There's a lack of opportunity in the city right now," said Collier. "Through the recovery efforts there are jobs that are starting to filter out, the economy is starting to pick up, but it's moving a little slowly."

However, the area is not at a situation right now where one can get a job anywhere, and where shops are continuously open, said Collier.

"The Government of Iraq is still working through the rebuilding and the urban revitalization process that they def. want to pursue," Collier added. "We are looking at the NGOs to provide some economic employment opportunity and training to some people that right now may not have all the background."

Many of the projects seem to deal with single mothers, giving them the opportunity to provide to their ailing families.

According to Collier, many of these women lost their husbands because of the inevitability of the consequences of war, "so there are a lot of women who are trying to provide for their

see **ORGANIZATIONS**, pg. 16

CHAOS

They will do as much as they can.

They are continuing to push micro-grant applications into the community to help the local businesses.

"Basically we have two focus areas; one being the market in Ramaniyah; that's a cross over point from Shulla. If we can get those markets to increase their business that will be good," said Deviese.

Another market by a critical checkpoint between Katieb and Jouadine is another focus area, said Deviese.

"We are trying to build up internet cafes, restaurants, anything that can really benefit the community," Deviese said. "People are pretty open to it."

One man in northern Ghazaliyah owns a weightlifting gym, with three employees and in dire need of better equipment.

He needs the grant to attract more customers, get better equipment and attract younger Iraqi men in hopes he will keep them away from the criminals recruiting in the streets.

In the meantime, the troops must remain vigilant, and steer away from becoming complacent as they continue their fight for the remainder of the deployment.

"It's almost hard to maintain an aggressive posture when it's quiet, because you don't expect things to happen," said Deviese. "But when you let your guard down they are going to notice that. These guys are smarter than we give them credit for. They still have guys here who are still watching our movements."



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

1st Lt. Tyler Deviese, a native of Charlottesville, Va., talks with a local Iraqi man while on patrol in northern Ghazaliyah July 13. Deviese serves as the platoon leader for 1st Platoon, Company C, 1st Squadron, 75th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), Multi-National Division – Baghdad.

ENGINEERS

"What keeps me motivated doing my job is my infantry buddies out there," said Spc. Adam Curtis, a native of Los Angeles, who serves as driver and gunner with 1st Platoon. "I would rather get hit in one of these vehicles than they get hit in an M1114 (up-armored Humvee). I'd rather go out there and clear the route so they won't have to worry about getting hit."

The members of 1st Platoon are all motivated by the other Soldiers around them, feeding off each other's energy and fighting as individual warriors for the collective safety of the whole platoon and ultimately 2nd Brigade.

"You're only as good as the people you serve beside," said Spc. Travis Wilds, who, like all 1st Platoon Soldiers, serves in various capacities on route clearance missions. "The people here, when I found out all the stuff they did last deployment and this deployment, I realized I was serving with a company of heroes and I find myself very lucky to have served with people such as these."

For 10 months, the tight-knit Sappers of 1st Platoon have been traveling the streets of Baghdad at crawl speed, day and night, searching for the indiscriminate explosives that kill and maim both Soldiers and civilians. Despite the many factors to the contrary, they continue their dangerous missions as highly motivated Air Assault Soldiers, inspired by each other to give their all in the hopes of saving lives one convoy, one mission, one "interrogation" at a time.



photo by Staff Sgt. Brock Jones, MND-B PAO

2nd Lt. Ben Golemo, platoon leader of 1st Platoon, Company A, Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), describes the routes his platoon will travel during a mission briefing before a recent route clearance mission.



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





Staff Sgt. Jason Torres, a native of Miami, cleans an Iraqi woman's burns during a medical operation in Baghdad's Iraqi Family Village July 26. Torres serves with 1st Battalion, 320th Field Artillery Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault). (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. James Hunter, 2nd BCT PAO, 101st Abn. Div., MND-B)

Top Guns, Iraqi doctors provide medical care to residents in Baghdad

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

Many Iraqi families face malnutrition because of the lack of quality foods and water, variety in foods, and medical outlets.

Life is no different in Baghdad's Iraqi Family Village where residents suffer from many illnesses that stem from malnutrition. Many Iraqis suffer from high-blood pressure, anemia and diabetes. However, there are still many basic treatable illnesses these Iraqis are plagued with without the opportunity of curing it with basic medicines.

To help treat some of the illnesses and wounds the men, women and children of the Iraqi Family Village are overwhelmed with, Iraqi Doctors and Soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 320th Field Artillery Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne

Division (Air Assault), held a medical operation July 26.

They were able to treat 423 Iraqi patients during their time in the village.

Currently, the Iraqi Family Village is without a medical clinic to meet the everyday medicinal needs of the Iraqi people; however, small operations such as this afford them the opportunity to better themselves.

One elderly Iraqi woman, seemingly trembling in pain, came in complaining of swelling in her legs. She mentioned she was also diagnosed with diabetes.

Capt. Jerry Braverman, a native of Roseburg, Ore., examined her legs and feet.

"It's very important she elevates her feet," he said to an interpreter. He suggested she elevated her feet nightly, followed by wrapping them in a bandage.

Basically fluid is building in her legs, and to help combat that problem he offered her a diuretic, which will help remove the water

build-up in her leg through urination.

Staff Sgt. Jason Torres, a native of Miami, examined a woman in her late 20's. When she lifted the sleeve on her right arm it was shocking to see her suffering from 2nd and 3rd-degree burns.

"[The burns] looked like they were a week and a half old. It looked like a small infection had begun," said Torres with Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 1-320th.

Torres scraped away as much dead skin on the burn as he could from her upper right arm. In a great deal of obvious pain, she grimaced as the dead skin fell from her arm.

He finished cleaning the wound and placed bandages on the burn. She was given antibiotics, instructed to clean it often, and see a burn specialist as soon as possible.

Torres has seen four burn patients during his time patrolling the village, and said it's quite simple to treat a burn patient, but treating see **MEDICINE**, pg. 16

LEADER

was deploying real soon, and I wanted to get back in it as quickly as possible."

Faggiano joined Chaos Company soon after, and just as he wanted, was thrown into it quickly as he was appointed as an assistant team leader.

"It was real tough going from sitting on my couch at home to having a five-man team of Soldiers who are ready to be molded into infantryman who are getting ready to deploy to Baghdad, Iraq, one of the most dangerous places in the world," Faggiano said. "It was hard at first, but I feel real comfortable with it now."

In October 2007, Faggiano deployed to northwest Baghdad, where his company controls the Jouadine, Ramaniyah and Katieb areas of northern Ghazaliyah.

Currently they are interacting with the local populace, searching for enemy caches, gathering information to the whereabouts of enemy forces, and continuing to help build the local economy through micro-grants and projects within the community.

"We are doing a lot to maintain security in our zone and are trying to assist the Iraqi Security Forces and help them get better at being able to secure their own AO and support them as they need it," said Faggiano. "We help the population as much as possible; build their economy, defend the zone and conduct offensive operations when needed."

When Faggiano first arrived in Iraq he was a bit surprised and thrown off to the amount of people they mix in with daily.

In Afghanistan, there were only a small amount of people within the villages, as they and the enemy basically outnumbered the community. However, in Iraq, it's a large amount of civilians mixed among the Soldiers and the criminals.

With that, it has been a different experience as a whole for Faggiano. Interacting with the local populace is key to their success within northern Ghazaliyah.

"It makes no sense to not take into account the large amount of people," he said. "You can't leave them out of it. You have to take into account humanitarian aide and how people feel about you."

With the enemy mixed with the people, Faggiano believes this presents itself as a problem.

"When you go out in sector during the day everyone is waving at you. I can be talking to a little kid on the street one moment and all of a sudden checkpoints 11 gets hit or there is an [impro-

vised explosive device]," Faggiano said. "It's a difficult task very politically and militarily to solve this militia problem in Baghdad."

However, the Soldiers are doing what they must to track these criminals amongst the people. They continue to target and build information on these men to remove them from the streets, continually making the Iraqis life a lot better.

For the most part, the activity within their area has been low. However, when the intensity for the Soldiers was high and they were fighting the enemy forces, Faggiano recalls it being the most exciting for him during the deployment.

One night in March, when they were receiving heavy enemy contact, his team was on a dismounted patrol and were going to set up an observation post.

"I was walking point and we made contact, and I got to maneuver my guys the real, old-school way. It went well, by the book," said Faggiano. "We had suppressed them and [the enemy] had to break contact."



(Left) Sgt. Victor Faggiano, a native of Manchester, N.H., patrols through a field of trash using a metal detector to search for possible enemy caches in northern Ghazaliyah July 10. Faggiano serves with 1st Platoon, Company C, 1st Squadron, 75th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), Multi-National Division - Baghdad.

photo by Sgt. James Hunter, 2nd BCT PAO

Faggiano got to lead his troops in combat, just as he has throughout the deployment. For him, this is what he enjoys doing.

"I enjoy being able to run a team, mentoring Soldiers on the right way to do things," he said. "I really enjoy being in a team with guys who all rely on each other. I really like my job as an [assistant team leader] because I still get to do what the Soldiers do but still lead them."

According to Staff Sgt. Robert Smith, a native of Burlington,

N.C., Faggiano is a very approachable leader, who continually leads from the front.

"He is constantly trying to learn," said Smith, Faggiano's platoon sergeant. "He is very approachable and good with the Soldier. The Soldiers come to him with their problems."

Smith believes Faggiano's experience from Afghanistan, his constant motivation and good attitude help him and his Soldiers succeed.

To this point, Faggiano has yet to regret his return to the military. Though, he doesn't regret getting out the first time either. "I'm glad I got out the first time because if I hadn't I really wouldn't have tried to improve," he said. "Now I am older and I can see the advantages of being in the Army."

Faggiano loves his job, and at the end of the day he feels comfortable knowing he is an infantryman in the 101st.

ORGANIZATIONS

families. They need a meaningful skill to make that happen.”

Van Lanen believes this is a positive change for Iraq, employing women and boosting the education level is key to success.

“A lot of these women are widowed and must be the sole provider to their families,” she said. “I think it’s a positive step in the right direction.”

These programs are just teaching them skills, but letting them, especially the women, know they aren’t alone is the struggle to bear the brunt and move forward in life.

One project, currently ongoing in Atafiya, an area in the Kadhamiyah District of Baghdad, needed to purchase 20 computers, a power generator, electronic boards and printers to set up a classroom. This was for the Women’s Business Management, English Language and Computer Skills Training Center.

The intent of this project is to provide the women of Atafiya with marketability in the Iraqi job market. Through training, they hope to build their business skills, language and practical computer usage skills.

The intent is to train approximately 80 women per month for up to a year.

Another project is a workshop for sewing and embroidery, which aims at giving women skills in tailoring, sewing and embroidery that will give them an opportunity to bring income into their household.

These women are specifically chosen according to their current economic status, with special emphasis placed on women without jobs and those caring for large families.

The workshop proposes to train 120 women in 20-25 months.

With these skills they are encouraging people to take charge of their own destinies, said Collier.

“They may not get a job sewing clothes for a living, but the experience that they gain may lead to other opportunities and it leads to a more self-starting kind of mind set,” he said. “Some of these Iraqi women will emerge from the computer training feeling confident enough to go to an internet café and see what’s out there. They’ll have the understanding and knowledge from how to do that from the training.”

These projects are giving Iraqis the chance to explore employment opportunities and better their lives.

“[NGOs] really do see their neighbors in need and are really trying to do something and are pursuing this as a way to improve their situation and their neighbor’s situations,” Collier said.

they had all the necessary equipment on hand, especially when it comes to children.

“I just don’t like seeing little kids in pain,” said Torres. “They are innocent. It makes you feel helpless.”

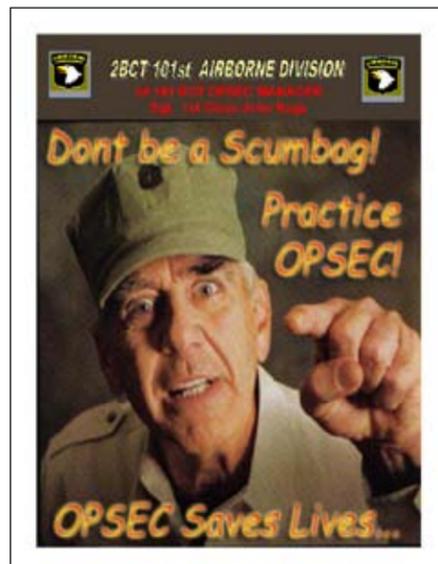
But helpless is not what they are in the eyes of those Iraqis receiving the treatment.

They were able to treat 423 Iraqis, supplying many with antibiotics, burn ointment, pain relievers, asthma medications, multi-vitamins and penicillin.

Dr. Yousif Yousif, who earned his degree at Baghdad University, left for the U.S. 12 years ago, but felt obliged to come back to his birth nation and help his fellow Iraqis.

“I came back because I got a job here to help both the Iraqis and Americans supporting the War on Terrorism,” said Yousif. “It’s always good to help the Iraqis, to know what’s going on and what they are going through.”

He came across many Iraqis who don’t have basic medical care, or the money to see



MEDICINE

a burn quickly is a necessity.

“The main thing you are trying to prevent on a burn is infection or any type of external debris sticking to it,” said Torres. “The best thing to do is put dry, sterile gauze on the wound.”

The worse burn victim Torres had to treat was a two-year old child, weeks prior to the medical operation. She had burns to the right side of her neck, right arm and 75% of her leg. Her right foot had third degree burns, with the skin barely clinging on.

It was a difficult situation for Torres, who has a little girl himself.

“It was difficult for me to handle that – for me I have a little girl – when I saw the skin coming off, the top layer skin, with the baby crying,” said Torres.

It comes with the job – medics often wish

doctors.

“We just help to the best of our abilities,” Yousif said. “We are dealing with very basic medications here, but we are helping at least 60-70% of the population here.”

There were very few patients they weren’t able to fully help. Even they couldn’t do no more than provide medication, they would direct them to a specialist.

“Basically what we try to do is give them our advice if we can’t treat them here – go see a specialist,” said Yousif. “Others we give medication, especially for those who haven’t seen a doctor in years and don’t have access to medical care. When they get the antibiotics and painkillers I think it will be great for them in the long run.”

At the end of the day it’s a feeling of selfless service the medics and physicians feel.

“For me there is no greater reward to be able to help somebody, put a smile on somebody’s face,” said Torres.

Strike troops ensuring medical readiness of Soldiers at medical center

Story by

2nd Lt. Michelle Lawrence

Co. C, 526th BSB, 2nd BCT

If the mass of Soldiers gathered around the entrance to the Riva Ridge Troop Medical Clinic doesn’t give it away, then maybe it’s the Soldiers rubbing their upper arms amidst a few mildly anxious faces that did. The immunizations clinic at the TMC is in full swing, ensuring the medical readiness of Soldiers and Department of Defense civilians alike.

Don’t let the sheer amount of patients flowing through the immunizations clinic fool you. This is a two person operation and has been since the Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers of Company C, 526th Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), took over the TMC in November 2007.

Lt. Col. Jennifer D. Hines, a native of Greensboro, N.C., and Sgt. Kimberly Tyree Jones, a native of Tiffin, Ohio, have both spent long hours building a successful area support immunizations program.

The immunizations clinic provides support to twenty-three battalions, including all Soldiers and DOD civilians on Camp Liberty and Soldiers at nearby forward operation bases, combat outposts, and joint security stations. This is a tall order for such a small clinic, especially considering the clinic’s ability to adminis-

ter fifteen different vaccines.

The most popular, or least depending upon which end of the needle you are, is the anthrax vaccine, which the clinic has administered over 10,000 vaccines alone.

Collectively, the two person staff administers approximately 1,600 immunizations per month, but the patient flow is never consistent and the daily count can vary from zero to 300.

“The hardest part is not having the staff at your disposal. I don’t mind working, but it would be nice to have one more person,” said Hines during a short, but well deserved break between patients.

The small staff may be strapped with their patient load, but they both take the extra time to examine each individual’s medical record to determine if any additional vaccines are necessary to keep medical readiness of the Soldiers at the highest possible level.

“A Soldier may be sent in for anthrax, but when they walk through the door, they get a thorough screening. They will receive whatever they need, whether they like it or not,” said Jones. She went on to add that there is no excuse for a Soldier who has been on Camp Liberty to return home in need of immunizations.

One of the best parts about working in the clinic, according to Jones, is the command support. Commands have actively been taking responsibility for their Soldiers’ medical readiness.

Jones said immunizations and medical readiness has taken a see **IMMUNIZATIONS**, pg. 21

Checking up on the IA where it matters

Story, photo by

4th BCT, 3rd Inf. Div.

FOB KALSU, Iraq – A company of Soldiers stationed on Patrol Base Copper visited Iraqi soldiers at checkpoints this week to conduct training and refresh their tactical skills.

“The Iraqi army soldiers and leaders were very appreciative of the training,” said 1st Lt. John Staeheli, 1st Platoon leader for Company B, 2nd Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment. “They developed an appreciation for planning for the worst possible scenarios so that they are always prepared.”

Company B visited six different checkpoints manned by Soldiers of 3rd Battalion, 23rd Brigade, 17th IA Division. The platoon taught classes on individual movement techniques and reacting to contact.

The class instructors first demonstrated all movement techniques and then set up a lane for the IA soldiers to practice. The lane included a low-crawl, a high-crawl, a three-second rush and a wall-crossing obstacle.

The group worked together until the IA Soldiers showed a good grasp of the movement techniques.

“After additional practice, the IA grasped the concept that during all [movement techniques

training] the purpose is to move with a low profile and small silhouette,” said see **TRAINING**, pg. 17



An Iraqi army soldier from the 3rd Battalion, 23rd Brigade, 17th IA Division climbs over a wall during a tactical warrior training taught by troops from Company B, 2nd Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, at a checkpoint near Patrol Base Cropper, Oct. 1.

Strike troops continuing difficult mission in once rough area of Baghdad

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

Often with the sunlight hours behind them, Soldiers with Company B, 1st Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, set out on foot through the dimly lit streets of Shulla, once a rough neighborhood in northwest Baghdad, to locate and detain known criminals responsible for attacks against Iraqi Security and Coalition Forces.

When they come upon the house of the known criminal, they immediately push through the home, clearing each room all the way to roof.

“Jack pot!” they call over the radio when the target is found.

“We have taken several bad guys off of the street, but it’s not just the ones you detain, it’s the ones that leave the area or just quit doing bad things that is the key,” said Sgt. 1st Class Erik Jones, a native of Richmond, Ind., and platoon for 3rd Platoon, Co. B, 1-502 Inf. Regt., 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad. “The bad guys are not stupid; they see that we, along with the (Iraqi Army), are detaining the enemy and those that are disrupting the locals’ way of life.”

Jones said he believes their ability to quickly detain known criminals, is a deterrent to others from conducting criminal activities making life in Shulla safer for all.

Shulla, however, is a very different area than others in Baghdad. It was once practically unknown to Coalition Forces and very dangerous to those who dared to enter the area. However, it has been under the control of Iraqi Army and Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers for the last few months.

Prior to the flare-up in fighting from March to June, the fighting in Shulla was practically non-existent mostly due to the fact there was no permanent presence in the area as enemy forces moved freely throughout, said Jones. During the time period however, the conflicts heated up as



Spc. Rashon Ellington, a native of Mesa, Ariz., and Spc. Justin Lawson, a native of Fairfield, Conn., sweep across a rooftop while searching home in the northwest Baghdad neighborhood of Shulla Aug. 6. Ellington and Lawson serve with 2nd Platoon, Company B, 1st Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), Multi-National Division – Baghdad.

Special Group enemy forces fired constantly at Coalition Forces with small-arms and rocket-propelled grenade fire.

Prior to the Soldiers of Co. B taking over the area, such levels of conflict were virtually unknown.

“We knew the units prior to us taking over spoke of it like it was the Wild West,” Jones said. “After our first missions inside of Shulla, it turned out to be just the opposite. We maneuvered freely within Shulla until the uprising in March-June timeframe. We knew that there were plenty of (Special Groups) members there in Shulla; it was just a matter of finding them and destroying them – or disrupting their operations.”

As things flared up, “the Soldiers of Bravo Company responded extremely well to the enemy contact,” said 2nd Lt. Michael Stewart, a native of Savannah, Tenn., who serves as the platoon leader for 3rd Platoon. “We held our ground and defended the IA (checkpoint) without casualties and very little damage to the vehicles.

“We made it very clear to the enemy that if you came to fight, that you must be

prepared to come and die for your cause,” Stewart added.

As they defeated SG criminals within and on the outskirts of Shulla, they were able to push further into the area and successfully set up Joint Security Station Shulla.

Though they have established their presence within Shulla, “the timeframe for Shulla being controlled was, and still is, ongoing,” said Jones.

They, and their Iraqi Army counterparts, have made some serious headway in clearing muhallahs and establishing the joint security station, which is a sure sign the Iraqi Army is continually growing.

Now, with IA and MND-B troops right in the middle of Shulla, it makes it harder for criminals to operate, store their weapons, harass and extort from the locals within.

“With us being here, the enemy is forced to rethink its game plan,” said Stewart. “We are forcing the enemy to do what it is that we want them to do. We are controlling the (area of operation), and the battlefield conditions are being set by us.” see SHULLA, pg. 22

Strike, Iraqi Soldiers ensure security of local nationals during pilgrimage

Story by
Staff Sgt. James Hunter
2nd BCT PAO

When the 7th Imam, Musa ibn Ja’far al-Kazim, died in 799 A.D. he was buried in the town of Kadhimiyyah at the Kadhimiyyah Shrine in northwest Baghdad.

Kazim led a life marked by tremendous generosity toward others. Kazim said, which to this day is his most famous quote, “The best generosity is the help of the oppressed.”

He is known for freeing thousands of slaves, helping others pay debts, feeding the hungry, clothing the naked and helping those in distress.

Though Kazim was a very intelligent, kind-hearted man, he was imprisoned by Caliph Haroon Rasheed for 19 years until his eventual murder in 799 A.D.

Since then, millions of Shiite pilgrims travel to the site of his burial to mourn and celebrate the life of man who led his life helping others.

To ensure the safety of these men, women and children traveling many miles to the Kadhimiyyah Shrine, Iraqi Security Forces and Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers with Company D, 1st Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) manned checkpoints and maintained presence throughout the area during the duration of the festivities toward the end of July.

Leading the way were the Iraqi Security Forces, with American troops reinforcing and augmenting Iraqi Army Traffic Control Points throughout Kadhimiyyah.

The three elements which makeup the Kadhimiyyah Central Security District cordoned off the city approximately 48 hours prior to the celebration, said Capt. Brad Henry, a native of Andover Township, N.J. Iraqi Army Soldiers with 3rd Battalion, 22nd Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division were responsible for manning the outer traffic control points to search pilgrims as they entered Kadhimiyyah.

The Unity Battalion, an Iraqi National Police organization, was responsible for controlling TCPs within Kadhimiyyah, while the 6th Ministry of Interior Battalion was responsible for security around the shrine.

Though Iraqi Soldiers normally man the TCPs daily, they additionally augmented them throughout Kadhimiyyah.

“The entry points into the city were reinforced, search tents were erected and female Soldiers [were] brought to search females,” said Henry. “There was no vehicular traffic 48 hours prior to

the celebration. The tremendous amount of people that made the pilgrimage made the city impassible to anything but pedestrian traffic.”

Coalition troops periodically visited the outer tactical checkpoints to inspect and augment the ISF.

Though the festivities are a time for Shiite Muslims to honor the 7th Imam, historically the threat of attack is great especially with a large amount of pilgrims gathered in a small area in Baghdad.

“The biggest threat faced was from suicide bombers and from indirect fire from outside of the city,” said Henry, commander of Co. D, 1st Bn., 502nd Inf. Regt., 2nd BCT, 101st Abn. Div., MND-B. “There were attacks across the river on Shia pilgrims and the threat of suicide bombers is always possible during large scale Shia religious holidays.”

“Because we don’t have the numbers to realistically try to control a crowd of this size, we had to make sure that we worked well with our ISF counterparts and stayed within the bubble of security provided by the trucks,” said Sgt. Michael Bearden, a native of Cartersville, Ga., with 4th Platoon, Co. D, 1st Bn., 502nd Inf. Regt., 2nd BCT, 101st Abn. Div., MND-B.

Iraqi Security and Coalition Forces took an active role in denying historic indirect fire site throughout the celebration to ensure indirect fire would not affect the celebrations, Henry said.

Female suicide bombers were also a threat for the pilgrims and the security forces within.

“Female suicide bombers were said to be the biggest threat. see IMAM, pg. 23



U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Manuel J. Martinez, Combat Camera

Sgt. Vicente Herrera, native of Chicago, Ill., pulls security while other Soldiers speak with Iraqi Army soldiers controlling the flow of Iraqi citizens walking to the Kadhimiyyah Mosque during the Shiite ceremony commemorating the death of the 7th Imam, Musa ibn Ja’far al-Kazim in Kadhimiyyah July 29. Herrera serves with 4th Platoon, Company D, 1st Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), Multi-National Division – Baghdad.

Support battalion resupplying the war fighter

Story, photo by
2nd Lt. Karla Silva
526th BSB, 2nd BCT

In the dawn hours on a typical Monday morning, a team of two Soldiers are preparing to embark on a three-hour mission. It is a mission that will enable the war fighters to be fully missioned capable with resupply missions to Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers.

This efficient and effective resupply mission is conducted by the Service and Supply Activity from the Supply Platoon of Company A, 526th Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), MND-B.

In order for the SSA to resupply units, a team of Soldiers, called the Logistic Resupply Point Team, prepares the supplies that have arrived for each specific unit. They then package and prepare everything to be delivered the next day.

Delivery is scheduled for every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday to each of the seven logistic release point sites located on Camp Liberty. These sites are established to be forward distribution posts for resupplying units.

Staff Sgt. Jeremy Reynolds, a native of Arlington, Texas, and a customer on one of the LRP routes said, “The LRP drops cut down the time you would have to take to go out to the Service and Supply Activ-

ity, so it leaves us with more time to place toward the daily mission.”

Not only does the LRP help get the units back to their mission quicker, it also helps units that have limited capabilities to transfer their own supplies. Sgt. Lawanda Jones, a native of Columbus, Ga., another customer on the LRP route said, “LRPs are especially helpful with units that have limited abilities to transport their own



photo by 2nd Lt. Michelle Lawrence, Co. C, 526th BSB

The Logistic Release Point team secures the resupply items on a palletized load system in preparation for next day delivery to the war fighter Soldiers on Camp Liberty in Baghdad.

supplies; the LRP site is in a convenient location to assist the customers.”

The coordination for each LRP drop is crucial. The SSA Officer coordinates with each supported battalion supply office to determine the exact LRP site and schedule the LRP operations that will accommodate their units.

The Logistical Release Point teams are

dispatched to deliver Class II, IV and VII supplies to the supported units. The teams arrive at the LRP site and conduct operations for a span of 30 – 45 minutes per stop.

At each stop along the route, there is a designated supply representative to control the flow and ensure timeliness on behalf of the supported units. The teams ensure that only authorized personnel, delegated

on signature cards, receive their supplies. The units must meet the LRP schedule to receive their supplies to ensure consistent flow of merchandise. In case there should be a cause for delay or a no show, the specified unit’s supply officer is responsible to receive those items to pass along to the respective unit since they are always included in the signature cards of their units.

In addition to the Camp Liberty LRP sites, the team prepares distribution of materials to Forward Operating Bases Prosperity and Justice. Depending on the demand of materials, the missions to these two locations will occur every few days or twice a week on

average.

Overall, LRPs have been a success to the resupply of the Warfighter. Sgt. Delvin Maston, a native of Birmingham, Ala., and an LRP team member, said, “The LRP method makes resupply more convenient for the units and allows more time for them to focus on their missions while we contribute from our end.”

Patrolling Baghdad’s markets by Night with Bravo 1/502



Spc. Rashon Ellington, a native of Mesa, Ariz., talks with a group of Iraqi children while patrolling through a market in the northwestern Baghdad neighborhood of Shulla Aug. 7. Ellington serves with 3rd Platoon, Company B, 1st Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), Multi-National Division – Baghdad. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. James P. Hunter, 2nd BCT PAO, 101st Abn. Div., MND-B)

IMMUNIZATIONS

huge step into the spotlight when compared to her last deployment.

“Last deployment mass immunizations were unheard of. This deployment it is commonplace to have large groups of Soldiers come in for immunizations,” Jones said.

Whether you look at the sheer numbers of immunizations given at this one clinic or at the trends across the whole U.S. Army, it is difficult to deny the current emphasis on medical readiness of the military as a whole. “It says a lot about how far we have come with our mission in Iraq when we can put so much focus on medical readiness,” said Jones.



photo by 2nd Lt. Michelle Lawrence, Co. C, 526th BSB

Sgt. Kimberly Tyree Jones of Tiffin, Ohio, administers a vaccine at the Riva Ridge Troop Medical Center at Camp Liberty in Baghdad. Jones serves with Company C, 526th Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), Multi-National Division – Baghdad.



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

Sgt. Alexander Young, with the personnel office for 1st Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment, patrol through the streets of Kadhamiyah after leaving the Kadhamiyah District Advisory Council.

Cavalry troops, Iraqi physicians aid ailing residents in Baghdad

Story by
Sgt. Matthew Vanderboegh
1-75th Cav., 2nd BCT

A woman, with her three children huddled around her Hijab, stood in line with a throng of others at the Al Suasse Elementary School in Kateib, a suburb in northwest Baghdad, Aug. 6.

She, along with hundreds of others, anxiously awaited her turn in line so her children could finally receive a long overdue medical screening.

Multi-National Division – Baghdad’s 1st Squadron, 75th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), with elements from the 432nd Civil Affairs Battalion, Iraqi Security Forces, and local Iraqi physicians came together during a Combined Medical Engagement to reach out to the citizens of Kateib.

They worked together for the combined good of the local citizens of Ghazaliyah who have been without medical care prior to the beginning of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

“We are here to help provide basic medical services to the Iraqi people by getting the Iraqi Army and Iraqi civilians to work together,” said 1st Lt. Brandon Koser, a native of Fairfax, Virg., the medical platoon leader for 1st Squadron, 75th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), Multi-National Division – Baghdad.

Four Iraqi physicians from surrounding areas volunteered their time, providing basic medical treatment and counseling.

According to Oday, the resident dentist, “We are here to serve the people.”

Or as Ali, a pediatrician put it, “I am very happy to help out the Iraqi families.”

They were able to see approximately 500 Iraqis during the medical operation.

“We were able to treat a lot of common ailments,” said Koser. “The most common things were infections, pain, stomach problems, malnutrition and seizures.”

Koser said these ailments they came across during the medical drive are the kinds of things that would normally be seen at a local clinic, but they do not have a clinic in this neighborhood.

“There were some that we could not treat, but the Iraqi doctors were able to refer them to a hospital,” said Koser. “For instance we had a ten year old boy with a bullet still inside his chest. We were not able to perform the surgery but at least got the family in touch with the people that can.”

Along with providing basic medical services to the Iraqis, Soldiers with the 432nd CA Bn. brought 200
see AID, pg. 22

SHULLA

The Soldiers constantly conduct combined patrols throughout Shulla, said Jones, focused on cache exploitation, reestablishing key infrastructure, building confidence in Iraqi Army operations and taking away the ability of the enemy combatants still roaming the area.

"We are leaving no stone unturned right now. By doing so, it's disrupting the enemy's normal way of life," he said. "Since we have moved in, we have made no contact with the enemy, have exploited several tips from the local nationals and have discovered several caches of the enemies. If you take the will for the enemy to fight, it makes it that much harder to get what they are trying to get done."

Perhaps one of the most important factors to their mission in Shulla is winning over the local populace, said Jones.

It's a never-ending campaign really, where the thoughts and knowledge of the people play a huge role in the counter-insurgency battle.

"The best way to win the local population over, in my opinion, is respect," Stewart said. "We focus on doing so by doing little things, like not tearing their wires down and just talking to the locals and saying hello."

"We, along with the IA, have done missions to fix their schools, handed food to those who are in need and are trying to get key infrastructure fixed so they can, for the first time in a long time, go upon their daily lives," he added.

In reality, all the people want is some normalcy in their life right now, Stewart said. As such, it is important for the Iraqi Security and Coalition Forces to provide security, enhance the legitimacy of the local government, accomplish the goals they have set forth and discredit the militants. This, in the end, lets the locals know there is a better way of life at the end of the tunnel.

Their interaction with the people has been very positive, said Jones.

"The locals are talking to us more now than ever before. We are getting more tips and information of that nature from the locals than we ever have," Jones said. "We are also getting more waves and smiles instead of the 'stink eye' we used to get. The locals living a life a normalcy is all that we want because if they are not, that means we aren't doing our jobs very well."

As a result of the Soldiers' constant patrols, for the first time in quite a long time in Shulla, people are leading a normal life, Jones said.

"The most significant thing noticed is that things are returning to normal. Shops are open along main roads late now instead of closing at 6 p.m. The locals are on the streets doing what it is they do," Jones said.

AID

packets of basic items to include tooth brushes, floss, soap and shampoo, said Sgt. 1st Class Lance Steidt, a native of Green Bay, Wisc., with the 432nd CA Bn. They also brought several bags of stuffed animals and toys for the children.

Soldiers from Company C, 1-75th Cav. Regt., also provided humanitarian assistance packages.

The Commanding Officer of Charlie Company, Capt. Terrence Higgins from Point Pleasant, New Jersey said

"There are about two hundred boxes that we put together. They have such things as rice, canned vegetables, dried peas and cooking oil." Capt. Terrence Higgins, a native of Point Pleasant, N.J., and commander of Co. C, 1-75th Cav. Regt. "This was a great idea. We are providing assistance to the Iraqi people by having Iraqi Army and Iraqi doctors working together. It is a win – win for everyone. It shows the people that the Iraqi government cares about them."

Really, the idea behind the CME was to show the Iraqi military how to properly run a medical exercise for future exercises, said Koser.

"The next time that we have one of these, the Iraqis will have an even greater presence," continued Koser.

At the end of the day, the Iraqi physicians and Coalition troops were able to treat many ailments plaguing the Iraqi citizens and get them going in the right direction for future treatments.

A plan is ongoing to have at least two other medical events in adjacent areas in the following months.

TRAINING



Spc. Adam Waeltz, of Bedford, Ind., an infantryman with Company B, 2nd Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment demonstrates the high crawl to Iraqi army soldiers with the 3rd Battalion, 23rd Brigade, 17th IA Division during a tactical training conducted at a checkpoint near Patrol Base Copper, Oct. 1.

Staeheli, of Lakewood, Wash.

While discussing react-to-fire, the IA soldiers showed good awareness of using their towers and structures to best counter-attack any enemy engagement.

The IA soldiers also searched actual vehicles and collaborated in patrols in their operating environment.

"This method allowed for a maximum amount of knowledge to be conveyed and the opportunity for the Iraqi army to build confidence in themselves and trust the training they receive," said Staeheli.

Some of the other training included detainee operations, reacting to a suicide bomber, hot and cold weather injuries, treating trauma and evaluating casualties.

Tigers make "big roar" in Baghdad Zoo

Story, photo by
1st Lt. Lindsey Travis
2nd BSTB, 2nd BCT

In December 2007, the 2nd Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), began working with the Baghdad Zoo, and contacts in the United States, in order to foster a partnership that would bring two new tigers to the zoo.

After much communication with different organizations, Lt. Col. Robert Sindler, veterinarian, Multi National Corps-Iraq, and Capt. Jason Felix, project manager, 2nd BSTB, found the Conservators' Center of North Carolina.

The Conservators' Center is a nonprofit educational wildlife organization that preserves threatened species through responsible captive breeding, helps rescue and place wildlife in need, and offers resources for educators and scientists.

The center had two tigers, Hope and Riley, who were taken in after the zoo they lived in closed in 2007.

The Baghdad Zoo passed intense scrutiny by the Conservators' Center, who

initially expressed concern over the safety and welfare of the tigers. However, they recognized the tigers would be in a safe environment where they would be highly appreciated, and bring enjoyment to the people of Iraq and decided to donate Hope and Riley to the people of Iraq with ap-



Hope and Riley, two Bengal tiger cubs, playfully entertain the crowd at the Baghdad Zoo Aug. 8. As the security situation in Baghdad continues to improve, so does the attendance at the Baghdad Zoo. At least 2,000 Iraqis visit the zoo each weekday, with tens of thousands visitors on the weekends.

proval from the U.S Department of Fish and Wildlife to export the tigers.

After months of work, the tigers arrived in Baghdad Aug. 4 welcomed by U.S.

Army veterinarians and Soldiers of the 2nd BSTB.

The tigers were unveiled to the public at the Baghdad Zoo Aug. 8.

Hope and Riley were in playful form as the cameras snapped and Iraqi families walked by, enjoying the sight of Baghdad's newest residents. They are one more attraction that will bring visitors flocking to the peaceful environment of the zoo, proving once more that security is continually progressing throughout Iraq.

"I think the zoo's progress, culminating in today's arrival of the two tigers, exemplifies that there is significant good news coming out of Baghdad as life continues to return more to normal here and in many other areas of the country," said Felix, a native of Tucson, Ariz.

Dr. Addeh Salman Mousa, the director of the Baghdad Zoo, said it means a lot to him and the people of Iraq to receive such a gift.

"This day is a historical day for the Baghdad Zoo," said the director. "We are really happy today. We want to bring smiles back to the kids and the public, who faced years of deprivation."

As the security situation in Baghdad continues to improve, so does the attendance at the Baghdad Zoo. At least 2,000 Iraqis visit the zoo each weekday, with tens of thousands visitors on the weekends.

IMAM

The crowds could have easily gotten out of control and caused big problems," said Bearden.

Thankfully though there were no attacks during the festivities, which is a true testament to the abilities and continued improvement of the ISF and the efforts of Coalition troops on a daily basis throughout the muhallahs.

"The obvious success was that there were no attacks on Coalition or ISF in our sector during this event," said Bearden. "The local nationals were able to practice their religion safely and freely."

Since deploying to Iraq in November 2007 and taking over operations in Kadhimiyah, the Strike Soldiers have made tremendous progress, especially with their partnership with Iraqi

Security Forces, and to have the largest Shia religious celebration in Kadhimiyah attacked by extremists would be a huge setback, said Henry.

"The success of the celebration continued to cement the ISF's growing reputation as a credible and effective force for security in Kadhimiyah," Henry continued.

The celebration of the 7th Imam tested the ability of the local ISF to secure a large amount of civilians successfully, said Henry.

"Historically, we've seen attacks against Shia pilgrims during religious events such as Ashurra and the 7th Imam, but it is a testament to the professionalism and competence of the ISF in Kadhimiyah that they were able to secure four million pilgrims in Kadhimiyah without an attack," said Henry.

Together, the Iraqi Army and Strike Soldiers were able to successfully secure Kadhimiyah, ensuring a peaceful religious movement for the Iraqi people.



***2nd Brigade Combat Team
101st Airborne Division (Air Assault)***