



# The Striker Torch

*The Official Newsletter of the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division*

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## Mission Possible: 2-6 Gators

# Save the Arch



MAJ Ken Robbins, the Battalion Operations Officer for Task Force 2-6 IN, points to the Ctesiphon Arch as he guides Goli Ameri, the U.S. Department of State's Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs on a tour of the Arch.

# STRIKER 6

## On Line

By COL Pat White  
2nd BCT Commander



## A Time of Transition

As the Iron Brigade nears its half way point of deployment we are going through a time of transition. The Brigade has already served under three division Headquarters in Multi-National Division-Center: the 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division, the 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division, and the 1<sup>st</sup> Armored Division. We are now transitioning to the Multi-National Division-Baghdad and will fall under the 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division.

Throughout all of this transition, the Iron Brigade Soldiers have performed magnificently. The Iron Brigade Headquarters will move from FOB Hammer to Camp Striker which is on the Victory Base Complex in the area surrounding the Baghdad International Airport (BIAP).

This move was prompted by the redeployment of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade Combat Team, 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne Division, Rakkasans and will allow the Iron Brigade to better control the battle space we inherited from 3/101.

The great work of Colonel Dominic Caraccilo and the Rakkasans will make our mission easier in OE Rakkasan in the Mahmudiyah Qada. The new area of operations runs from the southern part of Baghdad to the Euphrates River and is about 1000 square kilometers in size.

LTC Mike Mammay moved TF 4-27 FA 'Iron Thunder from COP Salie, which was transitioned over to Iraqi Army control, to COP Meade. LTC Mike Shrout's TF 2-6 IN Gators and LTC Rich Morales' TF 1-35 'Knights' battle space remain relatively the same, although they both assumed some portions of 4-27's old sector. We also transitioned COP Cleary over to the

Iraqi Army in September with the departure of our Georgian Battalion.

I would like to welcome LTC Jim Bradford and his unit the 1<sup>st</sup> Combined Arms Battalion, 63<sup>rd</sup> Armored Regiment, 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade Combat Team, 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division 'The Big Red One' to the Iron Brigade Family. Before reflagging in March, the unit was formerly the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 70<sup>th</sup> Armor Regiment, 3<sup>rd</sup> Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1<sup>st</sup> Armored Division 'Bulldogs'. Jim's unit is not too far removed from the 1<sup>st</sup> Armored Division, and the unit is no stranger to Germany as the Dagger Brigade recently left Schweinfurt, Germany for Fort Riley. The Dragons held their deployment ceremony on September 30 at Fort Riley, Kansas and are now deploying into Iraq. The Dragons will make a great contribution to the Iron Brigade's mission in Iraq.

Finally, to the Families in Baumholder you remain in our thoughts and are the strength which compels us each day to continue the mission. You are missed greatly.

*Strike Hard!*

**COL Pat White**  
**Commander, 2BCT**  
**"Striker 6"**



# STRIKER 7

## On Point

By CSM Michael Eyer  
2nd BCT Command Sergeant Major



## Don't forget nothing!

Any move is a tough job, but moving a whole brigade really has its headaches. When the Iron Brigade received the news of the “Big Move” it went full force into preparing for the transition to Camp Striker and the new responsibilities we would have there.

Iron Soldiers have put in long hours packing and preparing equipment for the move. From accounting for their assigned property to getting vehicles and containers ready for line-haul, our Soldiers were working hard to have as smooth a transition as possible.

Some of the locations our Soldiers moved to aren't in the best of conditions. We'll do our best to support these Soldiers while they continue to improve their new fighting positions.

Task Force Iron Thunder was the first to assume responsibilities in the new Area of Operations. They took over COPs Meade, Copper, and Dolby. Thunder Soldiers are already working with Iraq Security Forces to improve quality of life for the Iraq population, and in their spare time improving their new living conditions.

Some Thunder Soldiers have moved up in the world with the move and are eager to get started. On a recent visit to COP Copper I was impressed to see how Thunder Soldiers had turned a near non-functional COP, into a secure, functional, and safe facility from which to operate. One small group of Soldiers are doing what it takes to keep Thunder Soldiers happy: the cooks. They are going out of their way to ensure the Soldiers feel a little bit more at home.

On the heels of Thunder are TFs Ram and Pioneer, Ram is moving to four different locations and in some cases starting new jobs. Pioneer, the work horses of the BDE, are setting up in several areas to ensure the BDE is supported in all they do. This is no easy feat with over 100KM distance from east to west.

The remainder of the BDE is in the process of moving to Camp Striker. This will also take a lot of adjustment for our Iron Soldiers as we move from what we called the country to the BIG CITY.

During the next issue of the Torch I will look around Camp Striker and try to compare it to our old home FOB Hammer.

The months ahead of us are going to be challenging as we learn our new areas and adjust to the increased responsibilities that have been placed upon our brigade. Our Soldiers will keep working hard to make sure that the Iraqi people are self-sufficient and that the Iraqi Security Forces are professionalized and able to secure their own areas.

We all look forward to the challenge

In closing I would like to thank all of the Iron Brigade families for their support of our Soldiers.

*Strike Hard!*

**CSM Michael Eyer**  
**“Striker 7”**



# Re-energizing the Al-Ula Market

By CPT  
Andrew Slack



TF 1-6 IN

“We didn’t think they were here to help us.” This was the most recent feedback from the shopkeepers relayed to us from Hassan Ghataa Mahdi, Chairman of the newly formed Ula Market Council. Though incredible to think Coalition Forces in the Thawra I area of Sadr City would be there to do anything else, this was the sentiment of many in the Al Ula Market after the ferocious fighting by the Iraqi Army and US forces in the adjacent streets to the market area in March and April. Nearly a quarter of the southern part of the market was destroyed by a fire and there’s not one building that escaped without broken glass, bullet holes, or some other kind of damage. The uncertain security immediately after the fighting

*C/1-35 AR Executive Officer, CPT Lloyd Osafo, and Commander, CPT Andrew Slack, have a meal at a Falafel Stand to whom the Market Council just issued a micro-grant application. (Courtesy Photo)*



stopped kept many of the shops’ owners away allowing vandals, thieves, and even squatters to briefly pass through.

The Al Ula Market sits dead center in the middle of the lower, southern corner of Sadr City — “Home Plate” — eight muhallas that are home to almost 100,000 people. It is their primary place to buy, sell, or trade goods and services. It houses simple fresh fruit and vegetable stands, bakeries, dry goods, and groceries to clothiers, drug stores, fragrance shops, and entire deli area for meat and fish. If you need it, it can be found in the labyrinthine alleys of stalls and storefronts.

Ever so slowly businesses began to re-open in May and June as the concrete walls stopped and the enemy disappeared. By the current activity each day at the market, it appears to have never skipped a beat — but it doesn’t look that way. The market area still bears the scars of the fire, the combat, and, basically, a lot of debris and junk that came from both the fighting and neglect. Shop owners who were barely making a living or only tenuously staying in the black have returned, but don’t have the capital to repair even their own stores let alone the ancient sewage drains, the ruined roofs and awnings, or take away the piles of detritus.

After seeing the multi-faceted effects of market revitalization programs in other areas of Baghdad and finding the right people to execute the plan, C/1-35 AR and CAT 3233 created the Al Ula Market





*SSG Anthony Black from Civil Affairs Team 3233 walks down one of the market streets crowded with vendors (Courtesy Photo)*

After seeing the multi-faceted effects of market revitalization programs in other areas of Baghdad and finding the right people to execute the plan, C/1-35 AR and CAT 3233 created the Al Ula Market Council in August of 2008. Consisting of three committee chiefs and a council chairman, the council is charged with becoming the “governing” body that represents the voice of all the market shop keepers. The council currently oversees security, essential services, and licensing and is petitioning every vendor in the market to become a member of the market council.

It was slow going at first. What makes four guys working with coalition forces the authority on all matters in the market? A little advertising, at first, but the old adage that actions speak louder than words held true. People started to notice when sanitation workers started to remove the large amounts of trash generated on a daily basis in the market area; they noticed again when a contractor and workers commenced on a nearly \$500,000 dollar rehabilitation and repair project in September;

and, they really took note when the council members and soldiers from C/1-35 and CAT 3233 jointly issued 16 micro-grants to deserving shops selected by the council members — all of which were attributed to the Market Council. Although they officially have no more status than “trusted agent” with coalition forces, the Market Council is making great gains toward legitimacy with shop owners and has started paperwork to achieve the NGO moniker within the US and Iraqi Government’s eyes. They are drafting standards in practice agreements and hope to earn start-up revenue by collecting a first round of dues from all the shop owners who join the council, too. Joining connects you to the benefits and the benefits make the market a better place which in turn helps you make a few more dinar.

In the meantime, the Ula Market continues to thrive and remains a place of divergent products — a place to get dinner for the evening, the newest fashions, a chai tea set, notebooks for school, or even the latest “Barlie” backpack.



*Back to School Special (Courtesy Photo)*



# New Personnel Welcomed

By CPT  
Juan Salva

## Into the Gator Tribe



TF 2-6 IN

**G**uarding the perimeter of the COP is one of the most important duties of any soldier.

Recently, Task Force Gator received some assistance with this important mission in the form of a contracted security force.

Guards and supervisors from the firm EODT moved into COP Carver and assumed responsibility for perimeter security on September 16<sup>th</sup> in a transfer ceremony. The force is comprised of Ugandan nationals, many with prior military experience.

For TF Gator this is a true partnership. In Africa and here in Iraq, tribal affiliations are very important to people. This addition to the "Gator Tribe" is critical to our overall mission accomplishment.

The security force will allow the task force greater flexibility to put more combat power against other operations as we continue to work to provide a safe and secure environment for the people of the Marquez Mada'in around Salman Pak.

The Ugandan's demonstrated their commitment to the task force by conduct-

*LTC ShROUT welcomes the Ugandan's into the "Gator Tribe" (U.S. Army Courtesy Photo)*



ing a ceremony just prior to assuming responsibility.

"They actually put the ceremony together out of respect for you guys. It is unexplainable the amount of honor they get from helping you" said Matt Lehman, the lead EOD-T contractor. "Guaranteed, their loyalty is 100%, they will not fail us because of the honor they have for their family, God and their country."

After marching up in formation, they sang and chanted in accordance with many of their traditions and customs from home. This included the singing of the Ugandan national anthem and several loyalty chants.

At the conclusion of the ceremony, LTC ShROUT took the opportunity to welcome them into the "Gator Tribe" as members of our team. Many of the Ugandan's speak excellent English so soldiers in the task force will have the opportunity to get to know them more personally over the coming weeks and months.



# Helping a Government Grow



By CPT  
Kellen Blythe

TF 1-35 AR

As security has improved dramatically over the past year in the city of Jisr Diyala, so has it's City Council. The members work tirelessly to improve the standard of living for the people whom they represent. Many of them have worked in some form or another for the city government since the first days following the fall of the Saddam Regime.

Others are local leaders that have come recently to assist. Virtually none of them possess formal training or experience in being civil servants. Yet, their desire to help improve the city of Jisr Diyala far surpasses these shortcomings. The leadership of TF Knight has the honor and privilege to work with these Iraqi Patriots on a regular basis.

When the Task Force first assumed responsibility for the city of Jisr Diyala and its surrounding villages, there were scores of projects being conducted improving the area such as school refurbishments, new water pumps, water canal clearing and new parks and soccer fields.

The projects were recommendations made by the local government for TF Knight to help provide funding. In making these rec-

*Hydar Razzaq, the Jisr Diyala City Manager, Sheik Qays Shather Kamiss and CPT Matt Wilkinson discuss projects on the outskirts of Jisr Diyala. (U.S. Army Courtesy Photo)*



ommendations, the Jisr Diyala government demonstrated that they could assess, identify and recommend improvements throughout the area. As more and more of the projects were complete, Leaders from TF Knight celebrated with the council members with ribbon cuttings and feasts, and the fruit of the Council's labor was sweet. But they desired to do more.

In the early weeks of June, the Council came together once again to demonstrate their growing impact. The Jisr Diyala Council, leaders from TF Knight and the Striker Brigade brought concerns and ideas for improvements to the community to Provincial and National leaders. MAJ David Raugh and MAJ Roman Cantu were especially impressed with the thoroughness of the council's proposals to the various Ministries from the Government of Iraq. Once again with the efforts of the Council, more help from the Government of Iraq began to flow.

1LT Marc Corallo, who works closely with the Nahia Council has seen the improvements in the Council. "Attending the Council meetings in Jisr Diyala over time, I have witnessed a growing efficiency as a result of increased communication with all levels of the government." The Council has now taken upon them various vital projects that will greatly improve the area. One such project is installing a 3 kilometer pipeline from a water treatment facility in Jisr Diyala to the local water distribution network.

TF Knight has had the privilege to see the Jisr Diyala Nahia Council mature into a dedicated and knowledgeable professional organization. The members of the Jisr Diyala Council have set a standard for what Iraqi city governments should be.



# “Warm Base”

By *CPT*  
*Theresa Biolsi*

## mission



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**W**ith the 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade Combat Team moving to Camp Striker, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 40<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion, Task Force Ram, has been busy preparing to stay right where they are at! Many Soldiers and Civilians have left or are in the process of packing up and heading out, however a small group of dedicated HHC Soldiers are gearing up to take over Forward Operating Base (FOB) Hammer.

HHC has been given the task of maintaining FOB Hammer as a “warm base”, the first of its kind in Iraq. In preparation, HHC has recruited CPT Scott Snyder, the former 40<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion “Charlie Rock” Company Commander, to act as the “Mayor” of the FOB along side SFC Kevin Mincey, of HHC, 2BCT, who currently works as the Base Defense Operations Center NCOIC. Under their leadership, they will be responsible for the remaining Soldiers and Civilians at FOB Hammer, with the critical, tireless mission of improving and maintaining several elements of the FOB.

Next, HHC split their Support Platoon, leaving the Transportation Squad, led by SSG Buck Edwards, to stay at FOB Hammer in order to maintain and improve the FOB with their Heavy Engineer Equipment. The HHC Senior Medic, SSG Kevin Michaud, will also assist C/47<sup>th</sup> FSB by maintaining the FOB Hammer Aid Station to serve the Soldiers on the FOB as well as our geographical neighbors in Besmaya. Additionally, several of HHC’s Cooks, to include SSG Henry Rollins, will also remain here and continue to run the FOB Hammer Dining Facility.

HHC’s selected Soldiers, as well as attachments from each Task Force in the Brigade will remain to take on the ever challenging and diverse job of keeping FOB Hammer running, with only a handful of personnel. Some of those tasks include maintaining the FOB’s safety and security at the BDOC, keeping the Quick Reaction Force ready at all times, and supervising and training the Sabre guard Force elements.

After the dust settles from the mass exodus to Camp Striker, some of the main priorities of work for FOB Hammer’s permanent party include drastically increasing the safety and security elements for the FOB, due to the small amount of personnel being left behind. Under the oversight of the Mayor Cell, KBR will also be taking advantage of the time when the FOB is in-between Brigades to reconstruct, refurbish, rewire and improve several offices and buildings while they are vacant, in order to prepare for the next Brigade’s arrival in the spring of 2009. Also, the construction of a new Dining Facility will begin along with the completion of the new FOB Hammer Chapel and waste and water treatment plant.

All Soldiers remaining at FOB Hammer will undoubtedly have many long days of work ahead up them, as the population begins to dwindle, however no one unit is more ready for this large undertaking of “Warm Basing” FOB Hammer than CPT Scott Snyder and SFC Kevin Mincey, and several dedicated Soldiers of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Task Force Ram.



# Bulldogs back to



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By *CPT  
John Holcombe*

## Sapper Basics

**T**he month of September was packed full of training events for the brigade's route clearance company, Bravo Company, 40<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion, "The Bulldawgs." The company focused on individual skills, by conducting several ranges and facilitated training events for the new route clearance company, Charlie Company, 40<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion.

The Bulldawg Soldiers were able to take advantage of the ranges at Besamya Range Complex to re-zero their weapons and conduct a standard qualification or familiarization on all weapon systems from .50 Caliber and below.

"This is the first deployment where I shot at pop up targets. Paper targets just have you sitting in one spot and shoot in one direction. With pop up targets you can actually move your weapon left, right or up and down," explained SSG Raymond Scheeler, a Squad Leader in Bravo Company from Watkins, MN. Many Soldiers also enjoy going to the ranges to improve their qualification score. "The desire to shoot expert over a sharpshooter or marksman gives you an edge in promotion boards," said SPC Juvencio Zamora from Arlington, TX.

The term "Sapper" and "demolitions training" go hand in hand. The Bulldawgs conducted a demolition certification range in order to sharpen some of their critical Sapper skills. Route clearance operations require demolition handling and transporting on

a daily basis and using demolitions when the mission dictated. It is imperative that Sapper demolition skills remain iron sharp in order to maintain constant focus on safety and mission accomplishment. "As a combat engineer part of our main job is demolitions," said SSG Raymond Scheeler. "Conducting ranges keeps me in practice and keeps my skills in check. The last demolition range, we used the Talon robot to place a charge on a piece of ordinance. I know that we always need to practice with the Talon and placing a charge. It takes a lot of skill and practice to be proficient."

The Explosive Ordnance Clearing Agents (EOCA) Soldiers use the Talon robot to interrogate IED's. Once they positively identified the IED, they utilize the Talon robot to place a demolition charge on the IED detonate it to render it safe. Even Soldiers that support the engineers got a piece of the demolition training. "As a medic, I try to soak up as much information as possible at the demolition range," said PFC Ethan Stanley, a Medic in Bravo Company from Kansas City, MO. "I have never been to a demolition range where I got to blow stuff up before, it was great!"

The most critical training event that the Bulldawgs conducted last month was training Charlie Company in route clearance operations. Route clearance teams operate a unique set of equipment that is like no other, and requires special



skill sets in order to perform the mission. Both companies came together and developed a thorough training program in order to ensure Charlie Company was ready to conduct their route clearance missions.

The program lasted a little over two weeks and covered everything from basic operator and maintenance tasks to crew and patrol drills. All of the training culminated with a real mission as Bulldawg leaders performed a right seat ride to observe. "The training gave us a good idea of what does and does not work," said 2LT Lucas Irvine, a Platoon

Leader in Charlie Company from Boston, Massachusetts. "The most important part was the ride along and when we controlled the mission. Everything that went along with the mission was useful."

The Bulldawgs are currently partnering with the 1<sup>st</sup> Engineer Company that supports 35<sup>th</sup> Iraqi Army Brigade in Salman Pak. More training events lay ahead for the Bulldawgs and the challenges associated with training Iraqi Soldiers. The company is looking forward to the partnership and future joint operations.



*Ssg Raymond Scheeler operates the Talon robot, a critical piece of engineer equipment used to interrogate suspected IEDs during route clearance missions. (Courtesy Photo)*



# A New Beginning



By *CPT*  
*Elvis Gonzalez*

## for Charlie “Rock”

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When Charlie Company, 40<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion, Task Force Ram deployed in early April 2008, each of Charlie’s Platoons were task organized between three different Task Forces within the 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade Combat Team. Headquarters and Third Platoon were attached to Task Force 1-35 Armor, 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon was attached to Task Force 2-6 Infantry, and First Platoon was attached to Task Force 4-27 Field Artillery. There was uncertainty prior to the deployment of what role each platoon would play in Iraq; however Charlie Company prepared by training on various tasks to ensure each Soldier was prepared to adapt to whatever mission they were assigned.

While attached to Task Force 1-35 Armor, Headquarters and Third Platoon, Charlie Company, conducted a wide variety of combat operations. Both elements conducted over fifty joint patrols with their assigned Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) teams, resulting in the destruction of hundreds of enemy cache’s and munitions, which significantly reduced enemy IED making capabilities within the Task Force 1-35 Armor AOR.

The Company’s QRF responded to several IED and VBIED threats to both secure and reduce explosive hazards. They also performed as escorts for over 100 missions for the Task Force’s Civil Affairs Team, ensuring the construction and quality control of numerous public works projects including three schools, two water treatment facilities, two medical clinics, and one youth center.

While attached to Task Force 2-6

Infantry, 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon, Charlie Company, conducted 148 combat and logistic patrols in fourteen towns surrounding Forward Operating Base Hammer, while resulted in securing and destroying eight cache sites and removing 349 hazardous munitions from the AO. They also conducted seven joint water drops, totaling in 10,000 liters of drinking water and eighty water filters being distributed to local Iraqis.

While attached to Task Force 4-27 Field Artillery, 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon, Charlie Company was directly responsible for the construction of seventy-two projects on COP Carver, contributing tremendously to the morale and security of the Soldiers within the Task Force. Additionally, they executed 56 combat missions, encompassing a wide variety of engineer tasks, including tactical reconnaissance, EOD escorts, five controlled cache detonations, and two demolition missions.

SFC Donald Hoover of Paradise, California, Platoon Sergeant for First Platoon describes his Platoon’s job as, “something that needed to be done,” he said as he described how his Soldiers took their missions in strides. “They did help us stay tactically proficient, and we did welcome the change.”

In September 2008, Charlie Company reconsolidated back to Task Force Ram and rigorously began retraining to prepare for their newest mission of transforming into 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade Combat Team’s newest route clearance company to assist with Striker’s expanding AO. Charlie Company, along with Bravo Company, Task Force Ram, will continue to perform one of



the most important and necessary jobs on today's battlefield as route clearance assets.

Charlie Company's maintenance team also took an active role in their transformation. Route clearance vehicles, were far from the Armored Combat Earthmover's (ACE), Armored Vehicle Launch Bridge's (AVLB), or even the M1151s that their mechanics were used to working on for the last six months. Nevertheless, they were eager to step up to the challenge. SPC Joshua Weiss of Carmi, Illinois, a Wheel Mechanic, who also acted as a driver and gunner

prior to the Company reuniting said, "route clearance vehicles are more complicated, just because of all the wires." He added, "I don't mind staying busy because now we have a clear job and mission."

As "Charlie "Rock" has successfully finished reconsolidating and re-training as a complete Company for the first time in seven months, they are eager to get started with their newly acquired route clearance mission.



By 1LT  
Dexter Smith

# NETOPS



Welcome to 589<sup>th</sup> Signal Company's NETOPS. What is NETOPS? Well, they don't issue out personal IP addresses, reset or unlock computer accounts, fix computers, nor have any numbers that begin with 411, but the Network Operations office does aim to please with the best possible quality of service and support for 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade Combat Team's wide area network. The wide area network consists of all connectivity between operating bases and the outside world. Whether it is SIPR access or the more popular NIPR access, NETOPS are committed to the integrity of the network.

The highly inspired NETOPS Soldiers' desire for tackling the toughest technical issues that they encounter on a day-to-day basis cannot be found in a technical manual, army regulation, or Google. They rely strictly on experience, knowledge, and teamwork. SSG Paul Hirsch, from Crescent City, California is NETOPS technically inclined platoon sergeant and NETOPS NCOIC. SSG Jose Natali, a native of Aibonito, Puerto Rico, is the troubleshooting prowess, while SGT Jaron Haynam, from Alliance, Ohio, is the resident communications security expert as an Information Systems Specialist. SPC Itzael Monge, from Tucson, Arizona, is the resident jack of all trades, as his specialty is keeping his hands on the NETOPS equipment and improving his skills daily. SPC Michael Tinsley, from Greenwood, South Carolina, is the youngest in the platoon and is consumed daily with configuring call managers and fixing phones, while SPC Dean Hedlof, from Phoenix, Arizona, a Signal Support Systems Specialist has been busy enthusiastically learning the role of NETOPS, as he was detached to COP Cleary until September 2008. SPC Ryan Pere, from Lafayette, Louisiana is another

jack of all trades with the NETOPS section and is regularly sought out by senior leaders throughout the Brigade for his extreme technical knowledge.

In addition to the NETOPS team at FOB Hammer, SGT Eric Critzer, SPC Brian Willis, SPC Adam Duke, and PFC Thomas Altman are apart of two radio retrans experts out at two separate combat outposts. Often their responsibilities fall far from their MOS training and they find themselves troubleshooting and working on equipment without any prior knowledge or formal training.

Like most everyone deployed, their work is never done. They are continually troubleshooting, interrogating, and repairing even the most miniscule issue. They are constantly looking forward, planning future network developments and maintaining the best quality communications for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade Combat Team.



*Adjusting to FOB Hammer's dusty season. SSG Jose Natali, SGT Jaron Haynam (kneeling), SSG Paul Hirsch, and SPC Michael Tinsley take over in the NETOPS Office. (Courtesy Photo)*



# Advances in Battlefield Ambulances

By CPT  
Aaron Mallory



47FSB

Anyone who has been deployed to Iraq knows how invaluable helicopters are to the evacuation of casualties on the battlefield.

MEDEVAC helicopters are by far the fastest and safest method available to get an injured Soldier to the treatment they need; however, they are not always available. During periods of decreased visibility, the ability to evacuate by air becomes very tenuous. The back-up plan has always been ground evacuation; however, as the battlefield became less linear and ground convoys have become the targets of preference, doctrinal ground MEDEVAC operations have all but ceased to exist in the normal sense.

As vehicle protection has improved over the years, commanders have imposed requirements for vehicles operating outside the wire to have a minimum level of armor. Due to this constraint, ground evacuation has evolved into self-recovery operations, where units must evacuate their casualties back to the nearest medical treatment facility themselves. With the introduction of the MRAP, this may start to change on today's battlefield.

The first adaptation Soldiers made to overcome the lack of Up-Armored ambulances was to jerry rig Up-Armored HMMWVs (UAHs) to transport litters and spine boards. Eventually, due to safety and improved designs, this concept was turned into what is known as a Casualty Conversion Kit (CCK). The CCK was manufactured and tested specifically with the intent of using UAHs for the MEDEVAC of a single casualty. Once the kit is installed in the vehicle Soldiers can configure it for a patient within two min-

utes. While this kit improved the field expedient methods being used, it still only provided the ability to transport one casualty and sacrificed much of the vehicle's protection by removing the gunner and turning the TC's seat around in order to allow the medic to work on the patient.

The next adaptation came with the fielding of the MRAP. While initially the first MRAPs did not have the capability to transport patients, this shortfall was overcome through the efforts of high-speed mechanics. Bravo Company, 47<sup>th</sup> FSB, retrofitted four basic MRAPs with litter supports allowing these vehicles to be used as MEDEVAC platforms during high-risk out of sector missions. One such mission utilized an ambulance exchange point (AXP) to evacuate two casualties to the CSH that could not be flown out due to poor weather conditions. Soon after, newer MRAPs began to show up with pre-installed litter supports able to support only one casualty.

Eventually, MNC-I issued four brand new Heavy Armored Ground Ambulances (HAGAs) to the brigade. This new type of ambulance incorporates the blast and gunner protection of MRAPs with the integrated medical equipment of a regular ambulance. The HAGA comes with more storage capacity for oxygen cylinders, an EKG machine, and is also capable of transporting three litter patients at once. While air MEDEVAC is always going to be the preferred method, there is now a suitable back-up to get casualties to the care they need when air MEDEVAC is unavailable.



# Free Range Avengers

By 2LT

Kalani Cablay



47FSB

**G**EN Schoomaker, former Army Chief of Staff, once said that, “Every Soldier is a rifleman first, regardless of whether they’re a truck driver or a typist, a maintainer or infantryman.” This has become a mantra of sorts for Alpha Company, 47<sup>th</sup> Forward Support Battalion which has truck drivers, petroleum specialists, water treatment specialists, ammunition handlers, and warehouse technicians. Though they have other specialties they



are always Soldiers. No one embraces or enjoys this maxim more than CPT Greg Darling, A/47<sup>th</sup> FSB Company Commander. Alpha Company heads to ranges on a monthly basis and

participates in regular ruck marches. However, instead of mundane M4 qualifications and crew serve weapons ranges, the Alpha Company Avengers have trained on a wide variety of weapons. In the past two months Alpha Company has run an M203 range, an AK-47 familiarization range and an M18A1 Claymore Range. The M203 range was a day and night qualification range. The AK-47 range was an opportunity for the support Sol-



diers to become familiar with the basic soviet weapons operation and construction. The Soldiers had the opportunity to do some basic rifle marksmanship and became familiar with the weapon’s capability to go fully automatic. The Soldiers’ favorite range was the M18A1 claymore range in which they were tasked to emplace, arm, troubleshoot, and detonate the claymore, directed at a fire team of E-type silhouettes. The Soldiers also reviewed what the field expedient solution when locating a dud claymore. After all of the claymores had been detonated CPT Darling, the range OIC, went over the effects and dangers of a blasting cap. The Avengers don’t just get comfortable on all weapons, they also get comfortable with their rucksacks because the Company’s motto is after all, “Avengers on the move.” They recently completed a 12 mile ruck march around FOB Hammer in a timed standard of less



than three and half hours. In A/47<sup>th</sup> FSB not only they train to support, they train to close with and destroy the enemy. Support, combat arms, old, young, male, female, it makes no difference. We are all Soldiers so let the training begin.





# Iron Brigade hosts Eid al-Fitr festival

By PFC  
Evan Loyd

*COL Pat White, of Apple Valley, Calif., commander of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade Combat Team, 1<sup>st</sup> Armored Division, welcomes Mr. Abu Bahar, Mayor of the Mada'in Qada, to the Eid al-Fitr festival marking the end of Ramadan at Forward Operating Base Hammer, Iraq, Oct. 6. (U.S. Army photo by PFC Evan Loyd)*

**I**ron Brigade Soldiers hosted an Eid al-Fitr festival at Forward Operating Base Hammer marking the end of Ramadan. Guests included Iraqi Security Forces leaders, Mada'in Qada political leaders and influential Sheiks.

The Eid al-Fitr festival celebrates the end of Ramadan and the month of fasting. Traditionally, the festival begins with the sighting of the new moon and Muslims eat a celebratory meal and visit with relatives

and friends.

"We worked hard to set up the invitations, the tents and everything else so everyone could come out here for the feast," said Warrant Officer Mark Deboe, from Harlem, NY, the main event organizer for the festival. "It shows how far along we've come in partnership with the Iraqi people that you have such great people of strength come to our FOB for an Eid al-Fitr feast."

The festival illustrated the strength of the partnership between the Iron Brigade and the leaders of the Mada'in Qada.

"This feast brought together all of the clans of the Mada'in, the Sons of Iraq, the Iraqi Army, the Iraqi Police, Government officials, and our American friends to celebrate being one team working for a better Mada'in," said Mr. Abu Bahar, Mayor of the Mada'in Qada. "This was a great meeting that offered us a chance to thank our brothers and good friends of the Iron Brigade for helping us with the tremendous achievements in the Mada'in."



*Sheik Kaies Shether Guwd al-Jabalawei speaks to local leaders about the improvement in the Mada'in Qada during the Eid al-Fitr festival marking the end of Ramadan at Forward Operating Base Hammer, Iraq, Oct. 6. (U.S. Army photo by PFC Evan Loyd)*

*LTC Anne Resty, Colorado Springs, Co., the physical therapist of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade Combat Team, 1<sup>st</sup> Armored Division, and one of the lead organizers of the women's initiative in the Mada'in Qada, talks with local leaders during the Eid al-Fitr festival marking the end of Ramadan at Forward Operating Base Hammer, Iraq, Oct. 6. (U.S. Army photo by PFC Evan Loyd)*





# MPs patrol streets of Narhwan with their Iraqi Police Partners

By PFC  
Evan Loyd

*A local Iraqi police officer shows CPL Randall Robinson, from Charleston, S.C., the different features of a checkpoint while on a patrol in the town of Narhwan, Iraq, Oct. 9. (U.S. Army Photo by PFC Evan Loyd)*

**S**oldiers of the 988<sup>th</sup> Military Police Company, 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade Combat Team, 1<sup>st</sup> Armored Division, performed a joint patrol with the local Iraqi Police in Narhwan, Iraq, Oct. 9.

In the five months that the Iron Brigade has been providing security for the Narhwan area, the local Iraqis have come to see the Coalition Forces as someone they can trust to keep them secure and have their best interest in mind.

“The soldiers of the Coalition Forces are fantastic partners,” said MAJ Thamir Abid Khaib, commander of the Iraqi Police station in Narhwan.

In preparation for the eventual

handover of security to the Iraqis, the Soldiers of the 988<sup>th</sup> MPs are helping the Iraqi Police prepare for some of the challenges they’ll face when the Coalition Forces are gone. These lessons range from how to react to an Improvised Explosive Device to humanitarian operations designed to care for and gain the trust of the locals.

“The Iraqi Police are doing an outstanding job of learning all that we teach them,” said SSG Shanequa Hamilton, from Teachey N.C., a Squad Leader with the 988<sup>th</sup> Military Police detachment. “They can do everything we can do, we just get them the tools they need.”



*A local Iraqi police officer hands out candy and school supplies to children from the back of a parked truck while on a patrol in the town of Narhwan, Iraq, Oct. 9. (U.S. Army Photo by PFC Evan Loyd)*

Before going out, the Soldiers of the 988<sup>th</sup> plan the patrol with the local police. They also use the Hand-held Inter-agency Identification Equipment system to identify new members of the Iraqi Police force in Narhwan.

This information ranges from name and village, to occupation and known aliases. The information is then readily available to Coalition Forces throughout Iraq and Afghanistan.

While one group of Soldiers was using the HIIDE system to record the Iraqi Police personnel information, another group was teaching a class on how to react to an Improvised Explosive Device going off while conducting convoy operations.

After the training session the Soldiers went along with the Iraqi Police on a patrol to assess three checkpoint operations in Narhwan.

“The Iraqi Police would be doing this even if we were not here,” said Hamil-

ton. “We’re here to assist and help as we can.”

The checkpoints are set up to enable Iraqi Police to search vehicles that travel through the area. This helps prevent any items that could harm Coalition Forces, Iraqi Security Forces and Iraqi citizens, from getting into terrorist hands.

“The checkpoints are having a great influence on stopping the movement of weapons and explosives,” said MAJ Thamir Abid Khaib.

Once finished with the patrol the Soldiers and Iraqi Police stop on a main road and set up a defensive position. Once the position is set up the Iraqi Police begin to distribute goods. The items being handed out include bottles of water, lip balm, candy and school supplies.

“We are doing a lot to protect and help the people,” said MAJ Thamir Abid Khaib. “But I think we can always do more.”

“The Iraqi Police are earning the trust of the people,” said Hamilton.

The 988<sup>th</sup> MP Company’s efforts are an important part of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade Combat Team’s overall mission to professionalize all branches of the Iraqi Security Forces.

*A local Iraqi police officer walks with CPL Randall Robinson, from Charleston, S.C., while assessing a checkpoint during a patrol in the town of Narhwan, Iraq, Oct. 9. (U.S. Army Photo by PFC Evan Loyd)*



# Iraqi and Coalition Soldiers deliver School Supplies



By PFC  
Evan Loyd

*A young Iraqi boy smiles after receiving a soccer ball at the al Zoon school in Hillaliyah from soldiers in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion 35<sup>th</sup> Brigade of the Iraqi Army delivering backpacks filled with notebooks, pencils, pens and other school supplies for students on Oct. 19. (U.S. Army Photo by PFC Evan Loyd)*

**S**oldiers in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion 35<sup>th</sup> Brigade of the Iraqi Army and Coalition Soldiers of the 2-35-9 Military Transition Team distributed school supplies donated by generous Americans to the al Zohear primary school in al Lej and the al Zoon school in Hillaliyah, Iraq, Oct. 19.

Iraqi soldiers delivered backpacks filled with notebooks, pencils, crayons, pens, and other school supplies to stu-

dents.

"It is a great day when you make the kids happy," said Mr. Hammed Abd Ghzewy, principal of the al Zoon school in Hillaliyah. "These children have come to realize that someone cares about them and it wasn't always like that."

Many of these students are children of Internally Displaced People who are coming back to their homes in the



Mada'in. Which was made possible by the security gains of the past year. The Mada'in has made fragile progress with a drop in sectarian violence.

"Need for these supplies are very high indeed. We have a lot of families who are in need and can't get supplies needed for their children," said Muther Esmaael Ibrahem, the principal of the al Zohear primary school. "We are very thankful for the (Iraqi) army's help with the supplies."

The School supply delivery was planned by the Iraqi Army Brigade to not only help the students but also demonstrate that they are meeting the needs of the people.

"These operations help to show the Iraqi population that the Iraqi army cares about the general populace's well being," said MAJ Anthony Fritchle, from Dahlonaga, Ga., the Battalion MiTT Team Chief. "This is another step in the right direction."



*COL Shakir, Commander of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion 35<sup>th</sup> Brigade of the Iraqi Army, hands out a soccer ball at the al Zohear primary school in al Lej after delivering backpacks filled with notebooks, pencils, pens and other school supplies for students on Oct. 19. (U.S. Army Photo by PFC Evan Loyd)*

*CSM Sabiah, the Command Sgt. Maj. of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion 35<sup>th</sup> Brigade of the Iraqi Army, sits with children at the al Zohear primary school in al Lej after delivering backpacks filled with notebooks, pencils, pens and other school supplies for students on Oct. 19..(U.S. Army Photo by PFC Evan Loyd)*





# Iraqi and Coalition Soldiers help young girl receive treatment

By PFC  
Evan Loyd

*Mohamed Ali shows off Jasmine before a feast held in honor of the soldiers in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion 35<sup>th</sup> Brigade of the Iraqi Army, and the Soldiers 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon, A Company, Task Force 2-6 Infantry, 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade Combat Team, 1<sup>st</sup> Armored Division, who donated money for an operation to remove a tumor from Jasmine's stomach. (U.S. Army Photo by PFC Evan Loyd)*

**I**t was a routine patrol done dozens of times before by the Iraqi and Coalition Force Soldiers. But this day, fate would bring the Soldiers to the house of an eight month old girl in desperate need of an operation to remove a tumor protruding from her abdomen.

"We were doing a joint patrol with the IA going from house to house performing a census operation and searching out the area," said SFC Darrell Cornelius, from Baltimore, Md., the 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon Sergeant of

A company, Task Force 2-6 Infantry, 2<sup>nd</sup> BCT, 1<sup>st</sup> AD. "One of the houses had this young girl, she had this growth on her stomach. We were all moved by the pain she was in and we just wanted to help out."

The girls' name was Jasmine and her family didn't have the money to get her an operation she needed to live without pain.

"We went to the doctors but we didn't have the money to get her the



expensive treatment she needed,” said Mohamed Ali, Jasmine’s father

After meeting this child both Sabiah, the Command Sgt. Maj. of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion 35<sup>th</sup> Brigade of the Iraqi Army and Cornelius went to their men and asked for donations to help the family raise the money needed for the operation to remove the tumor from Jasmine.

“I immediately called back to my headquarters and got everyone to start donating money to help this little girl in her time of need,” said Sabiah. “How much and how fast we raised the money surprised me.”

The family needed five hundred dollars to get Jasmine her operation. The soldiers in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion 35<sup>th</sup> Brigade of the Iraqi Army and the Soldiers of 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon, A Company, Task Force 2-6 Infantry, 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade Combat Team, 1<sup>st</sup> Armored Division, raised over one thousand dollars. With the money raised the family took Jasmine to a hospital in Baghdad.

“I can’t thank the Soldiers enough,” said Ali. “She is healthy and active and she doesn’t cry out in pain like she use to.”

Today a feast was held to honor the Soldiers that made it possible for the family to not only get Jasmine her operation but post operation treatment to insure her health.

“It is a glorious day when we can celebrate the renewed life in one so young,” said GEN Abdullah, commander of the 35<sup>th</sup> Brigade, 9<sup>th</sup> Iraqi Army Division.



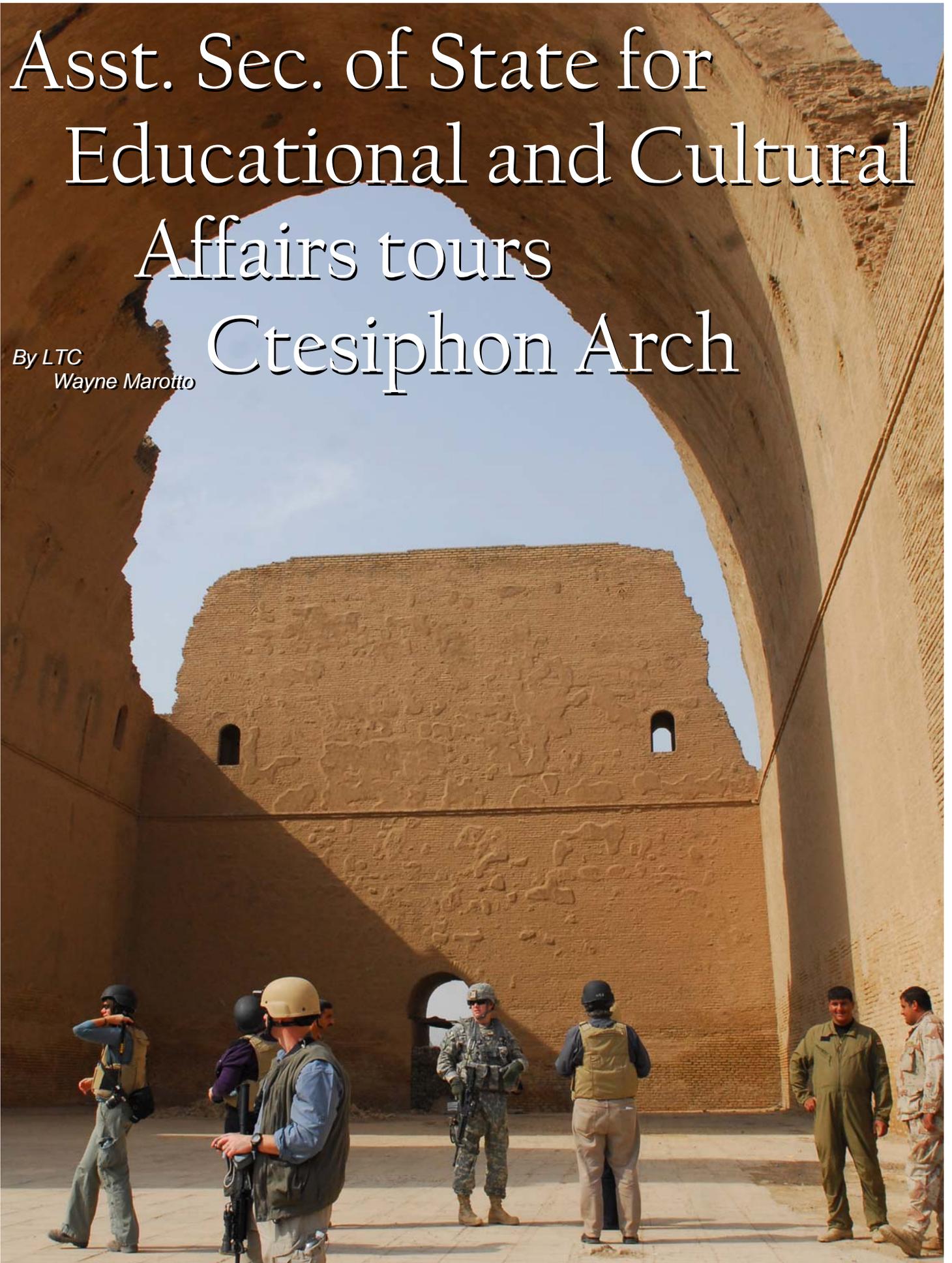
*Sabiah, the Command Sgt. Maj. of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion 35<sup>th</sup> Brigade of the Iraqi Army, holds Jasmine before a feast held in honor of the soldiers in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion 35<sup>th</sup> Brigade of the Iraqi Army, and the Soldiers 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon, A Company, Task Force 2-6 Infantry, 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade Combat Team, 1<sup>st</sup> Armored Division, who donated money for an operation to remove a tumor from Jasmine’s stomach. (U.S. Army Photo by PFC Evan Loyd)*



*SFC Darrell Cornelius, from Baltimore, Md., the 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon Sergeant of A company, Task Force 2-6 Infantry, 2<sup>nd</sup> BCT, 1<sup>st</sup> AD and CPT Augustine Gonzales, from Del Norte, Colo., commander of A company Task Force 2-6 Infantry, 2<sup>nd</sup> BCT, 1<sup>st</sup> AD during a feast held in honor of the soldiers in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion 35<sup>th</sup> Brigade of the Iraqi Army, and the Soldiers 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon, A Company, Task Force 2-6 Infantry, 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade Combat Team, 1<sup>st</sup> Armored Division, who donated money for an operation to remove a tumor from Jasmine’s stomach. (U.S. Army Photo by PFC Evan Loyd)*

# Asst. Sec. of State for Educational and Cultural Affairs tours Ctesiphon Arch

By LTC  
Wayne Marotto





*Goli Ameri, Assistant Secretary of State for Educational and Cultural Affairs and MAJ Ken Robbins, from Albion, Maine, the Battalion Operations Officer for Task Force 2-6 IN, 2<sup>nd</sup> BCT, 1<sup>st</sup> Armd. Div., listen to an Iraqi Officer tell a brief history of the Ctesiphon Arch. Robbins lead Ameri on a tour of the Arch during her visit to Salman Pak. Ameri's visit was to assist the Iraqis with preserving this important cultural property. (U.S. Army Photo by LTC Wayne Marotto)*

**G**oli Ameri, Assistant Secretary of State for Educational and Cultural Affairs toured the Ctesiphon Arch and visited the Soldiers of Task Force 2-6 Infantry at Combat Outpost Carver in Salman Pak.

The purpose of Ameri's trip to Iraq was to follow up on First Lady Laura Bush's announcement last week of a multi-million dollar grant for the Iraqi Cultural Heritage Program. Ameri's visit allowed her the opportunity to be briefed on the types of projects the ICHP may handle.

The sixteen-hundred year old Ctesiphon Arch is deteriorating rapidly and needs major repairs to keep it from collapsing. Ameri's visit is to assist the Iraqis in obtaining a grant to preserve this important cultural property.

"We are incredibly grateful for the U.S. military being here and for all these amazing young men. You show the best of America," said Ameri as she was guided on the tour by Soldiers from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade Combat Team, 1<sup>st</sup> Armored Division.

# ISF and CF partners meet at FOB Hammer



By PFC

Evan Loyd

## to discuss security issues

**L**eaders from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade Combat Team, 1<sup>st</sup> Armored Division, and local Iraqi Security Forces leaders met to assess the security of the Mada'in Qada region of Iraq during a security meeting at Forward Operating Base Hammer, Iraq, Oct. 23.

Participants focused on a number of issues in the Mada'in Qada, including security of the area, cooperation between the security forces, and the security of the provincial elections in January.

Transition of the Sons of Iraq into

an Iraqi Government controlled Security Force was another key point at the security meeting.

"Previously Sons of Iraq didn't trust the Government of Iraq, they feared that when Coalition Forces left they would be left on the street without any money and jobless," said SMG Jassem Nazal Qassim, Commanding General of the 9<sup>th</sup> Iraqi Army Division. "The Government of Iraq recognized the sacrifices of the Sons of Iraq and has accepted them into the Iraqi Security



SMG Jassem Nazal Qassim, Commanding General of the 9<sup>th</sup> Iraqi Army Division, and COL Pat White, from Apple Valley, Calif, commander of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade Combat Team, 1<sup>st</sup> Armored Division, share their goals for the Mada'in Qada during a meeting at Forward Operating Base Hammer, Iraq, Oct. 23. (U.S. Army photo by PFC Evan Loyd)





*COL Pat White, from Apple Valley, Calif, commander of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade Combat Team, 1<sup>st</sup> Armored Division, shares his goals for the Mada'in Qada during a meeting at Forward Operating Base Hammer, Iraq, Oct. 23. (U.S. Army photo by PFC Evan Loyd)*

Forces and will be paying them.”

The Security Council also discussed the U.S. Army’s 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion 6<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment working together and the Iraqi Army’s 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion 35<sup>th</sup> Brigade to disrupt the Improvised Explosive Device activity throughout the Salman Pak area.

SMG Qassim commented on the increased safety in the area.

“Since the Iron Brigade and the 35<sup>th</sup> Iraqi Army Brigade began operations the area has made a complete one-eighty degree turn,” said SMG Qassim. “Eight months ago Local Nationals were displaced and afraid to come back. Now that the area is safer many of them are coming home.”

# Mada'in Qada Council meeting

By PFC  
Evan Loyd

## discusses public services

**A** Mada'in Qada Council meeting brought leaders of the Qada's nahias together at the Wahida Government Center on Oct. 14.

A key issue presented in the meeting was the plan for four new water treatment plants in the southern region of the Mada'in. Another topic raised in the council meeting was the service industries throughout the Qada. Leaders discussions ranged from building schools, sewer systems, agriculture in the Qada to propane distribution.

These meetings are important in allowing the nahia leaders to bring the problems of the Mada'in Qada to the attention of the Qada Council and Coalition Leaders.

After the problems were addressed the Council then proposed possible solutions to those issues. The nahia leaders serve as spokesmen for the citizens to raise issues that they cannot solve on their own.

"This meeting is a public forum that gives the leaders of the nahias a chance to talk about their problems," said LTC Matthew Mckenna, from Pittsburg, Penn., the deputy commander of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade Combat Team, 1<sup>st</sup> Armored Division. "This meeting proves that the Government of Iraq is developing processes to deal with the needs of its people."



*Mr. Mhmod Abd Allah Mahmaod al-Jabalawei chairman for the Mada'in Qada Council addresses issues from the nahia leaders during the Mada'in council meeting at the Wahida Government Center, Iraq, Oct. 14. (U.S. Army photo by PFC Evan Loyd)*



*Mr. Saddam, the leader of the service industries in the Jisr Diyala nahia discusses issues about the Jisr Diyala nahia with LTC Matthew Mckenna, the deputy commander of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade Combat Team, 1<sup>st</sup> Armored Division, from Pittsburg, Penn., after the Mada'in Qada Council meeting at the Wahida Government Center, Iraq, Oct. 14.. (U.S. Army photo by PFC Evan Loyd)*



# Physical Therapist keeps Soldiers ready to complete the mission



By PFC  
Evan Loyd

*LTC Anne Resty, Colorado Springs, Co., the physical therapist of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade Combat Team, 1<sup>st</sup> Armored Division, stretches and exercises the neck muscles of SPC Jannett Whipple, from Bakersfield, Calif., a Soldier in the 47<sup>th</sup> Forward Support Battalion, at the Troop Medical Clinic at Forward Operating Base Hammer, Iraq, Sept. 12. (U.S. Army photo taken by PFC Evan Loyd)*

**I**t is not a game, it's combat. Yet many of the physical tolls athletes face are mirrored in Soldiers. LTC Anne Resty, from Colorado Springs, Colo., the physical therapist of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade Combat Team, 1<sup>st</sup> Armored Division, is a hands-on medical professional, who works at Forward Operating Base Hammer, Iraq, with Soldiers to alleviate muscular and skeletal problems.

Pulled muscles, back pains and sprains

are just a few injuries Soldiers face while conducting day-to-day operations in Iraq.

"We treat our Soldiers on the line as athletes," said Resty. "It allows our Soldiers to stay in theater and complete the mission."

Resty has been an Army physical therapist since 2004, when she earned a Doctorate of Physical Therapy from the University of Kansas, and has been helping Soldiers reach their peak performance ever since.

She and her physical therapy team have helped more than 800 Soldiers get back on their feet since being deployed with the Iron Brigade in April 2008.

The Iron Brigade's physical therapy team handles an array of Soldier's injuries, from acute battle wounds to chronic orthopedic pain.

They use sophisticated machines and braces to help debilitated warriors get back on their feet across the Mada'in Qada.

A large portion of the cases Retsy's team deals with is back pain. Core strengthening is key to avoiding back issues. This entails building the muscle that

acts as a weight belt underneath the superficial layers of muscle around your core.

Beyond being the physical therapist for the 2<sup>nd</sup> BCT, Resty is also the senior physical therapist in all of Iraq. She talks with many physical therapists from around the country on a regular basis. They share their different problems and work together to find solutions.

For Resty, there is no better job than being a physical therapist.

"I have the best job in the Army," said Resty. "I get to help Soldiers get back to one hundred percent."



*LTC Anne Resty, Colorado Springs, Co., the physical therapist of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade Combat Team, 1<sup>st</sup> Armored Division, stretches and exercises the neck muscles of SPC Jannett Whipple, from Bakersfield, Calif., a Soldier in the 47<sup>th</sup> Forward Support Battalion, at the Troop Medical Clinic at Forward Operating Base Hammer, Iraq, Sept. 12. (U.S. Army photo taken by PFC Evan Loyd)*



# Iron Soldier achieves

By SPC Joshua Ramey

## U.S. citizenship in Iraq

**F**or PFC Wislet Genelus of Company B, 40<sup>th</sup> Engineer Battalion, the path to United States citizenship is complete at the age of 40.

Born in Jean-Rabe, Haiti, a speaker of three languages, Genelus has been on the front lines of political turmoil for a total of 23 years.

Genelus' parents moved to Ft. Lauderdale, Fla. shortly after he was born, while he spent the first 15 years of his life living with his aunt in Haiti.

"Growing up, I wasn't aware of what caused the turmoil that surrounded us, but the kids were only allowed to go to school and church," Genelus remembered. "The last five years I was there, I remember there were demonstrations all the time. People were trying to overthrow the dictatorship."

At age 15, Genelus moved to Fla. with his parents, where he spent the next nine years finishing school in the U.S. school system while working as a taxi driver.

In 1993, Genelus was drawn back to Haiti by the memory of the friends and family he had grown up with. Upon his return, he worked with the Haitian National Police for eight years.

"In 2003 while I was a police officer, that's when (the political situation) got really bad," explained Genelus. "The government began to crack down on all opposition. There was no justice, only government rule. You couldn't say what was on your mind and everyone was afraid. We were the police; the strong-arm of the dictator."

Genelus left Haiti shortly after the crackdown on resistance began - this time permanently.

"The crackdown began with us (the Haitian National Police)," he continued. "I couldn't handle that stuff. I had lived nine years in the United States, and I was expected to do things that were unbelievable."

Genelus joined the U.S. Army in 2006 as an engineer and was later assigned to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade Combat Team, 1<sup>st</sup> Armored Division, based out of Baumholder, Germany.

Upon arrival in Baumholder, Genelus was assigned to the 40<sup>th</sup> Eng. Bat. where he began train-

ing for the route clearance missions he would be asked to perform.

In April, 2008, he deployed to the southeast Baghdad province of Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, where he performed nearly 100 missions in just the first five months.

"The work isn't really that much different than the police work (in Haiti)," Genelus remarked. "The Army is what I like to do; it's about providing security."

While stationed on Forward Operating Base Hammer, Iraq, Genelus began to research the steps required to attain U.S. citizenship. After consulting his chain of command, Genelus used channels in the U.S. Army to apply for citizenship and was approved.

In early September, 2008, PFC Wislet Genelus was officially proclaimed a United States citizen, pending a written test and receiving the Oath of Allegiance to the U.S. upon his return from Iraq.

Genelus is not alone in his attempts at U.S. citizenship while deployed to Iraq, as two fellow Soldiers from the 40<sup>th</sup> Eng. Bat. join him in the quest. PFC Alvin Ramirez-Somarriba, of Miami, Fla., and SPC Cauldric Dasent, from the U.S. Virgin Islands, are currently awaiting the results of their applications for citizenship.



*PFC Wislet Genelus, of Ft. Lauderdale, Fla., shortly before servicing route clearance vehicles at Forward Operating Base Hammer, Iraq, July 13. (U.S. Army Courtesy Photo)*

# Brothers Continue

By SSG

J.B. Jaso III

## Family Tradition of service

**A** Wolfhound Soldier marked a memorable birthday celebration on a date now associated with great despair and reflection. The date was even more significant because he was joined by his brother.

On Sept. 11, 2008, CPT Joshua May, a signal officer and native of Fall, Pa., assigned to 1st Battalion, 27th Infantry Regiment "Wolfhounds," 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team "Warrior," 25th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, met with his older brother, CPT Joseph May, brigade surgeon for 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armor Division, Multi-National Division – Central.

The May brothers spent, Sept. 11 catching up, and marked Patriots Day with a special Sept. 11 tribute concert at Forward Operating Base Hammer, southeast of Baghdad. Joseph plays keyboard in the band "12 Lead," along with volunteer musicians from 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armor Division.

Joshua helped support the band's audio-visual efforts, which included a video tribute to the victims, of the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks, and to the Soldiers who have fought in support of the Global War on Terror.

Army service runs deep in the May family. Their father, COL James May III, is a senior Army chaplain in Heidelberg, Germany. He retires in October following 34 years of military service. COL May's children all followed in their father's footsteps into the Army.

COL May's eldest son, James May IV, served in the Army for six years, including a deployment to Iraq in 2005.

"When it came time for my unit to deploy, I was ready to continue a family tradition," said Joseph, the fourth in the family to serve in Iraq.

"It's an honor to be in the military, and I'm especially proud to follow in my brothers' footsteps here in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom," he said.

Following in his brother's footsteps is what brought the brothers together for a birthday reunion.



"It was a great reunion," Joshua noted. "It's not often that military family members get to cross paths with each other, especially within a combat environment."

Ellen May, their mother, might have said it best:

"I pray every day for my sons who are serving overseas, and I'm extremely proud of our military family. My sons are true brothers in arms."



## American Soldier

*We are born and discovered at the age of 18. We are fed a diet of Loyalty, Duty, Respect, Selfless Service, Honor, Integrity, and Personal Courage. We were trained to walk on all continents of the world and speak every language known to man. Sacrifice is a word used only to describe our job. We are Leaders, Specialists, and Technicians trained to defend and protect. We have granted wishes, fed and clothed thousands. We are educated with Bachelors in Science, Masters in Physiology, and PhDs in Medicine. To some we are known as the last hope, but out of all things in this world that we could be, we chose to be an American Soldier.*

*MSG Edward Hall*

## AFN Faces Of Freedom

Be sure and tune in Thursdays at 7:50PM on AFN Prime Atlantic for Faces of Freedom on the following weeks:

- 20 Nov - Part 2 (E-K),
- 04 Dec - Part 3 (L-P),
- 18 Dec - Part 4 (R-Z)

AFN will feature the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division.

Faces of Freedom, Highlighting Units and Personalizing Service members



# S1 Personnel

By SFC Steven Martz



## Effective Army Writing

**W**ell, it is hard to believe, but it is that time in the deployment when we need to turn our attention to writing our end of tour awards. While just the thought may conjure up images of countless hours pecking away at your computer, there are a few things that you can do to help ease your pain and strain. The hardest part of awards writing is the beginning, but in order to begin you must have an understanding of what you want to accomplish and what award that you are recommending. Though Army writing can be difficult, recognizing deserving Soldiers with the awards they rightfully deserve is worth the time and effort involved. Here are a few tips.

What award should you recommend? Well, only you and your chain of command can decide that, but all awards should be indicative of an individual Soldier's level of responsibility and overall performance. Army Achievement Medals (AAMs) are approved by your respective Battalion Commander. Army Commendation Medals (ARCOMs) are approved by COL White, the BCT Commander. Meritorious Service Medals (MSMs) and Bronze Star Medals (BSMs) are routed through your entire chain of command and ultimately approved by the MND-C Commander, MG Michael L. Oates. Each award has their own specific guidelines and instructions but again each and every award that you submit should be representative of the individual Soldier's overall contribution to mission accomplishment.

To help writing awards, resources are

everywhere for you to utilize and it is in your best interest to familiarize yourself with these resources before you get started. The BCT's Award SOP is posted on the BCT web-portal via SIPR. It contains examples of the different award formats and details on their specific criteria. Take a peek at AR 600-8-22, Army Awards regulation for further guidance, or consult with your Battalion S1 personnel, they can always assist you with examples, sample bullets and friendly advice on how to get started. Last but not least, do your own research. Websites like the S1Net, through your AKO login, has search engines geared to assist you in your awards writing endeavors. The bottom line is that you must know what award that you want to write and have the tools in your own toolkit to build that award.

Effective Army writing has it's own rules and styles and Army awards are just one example of that. Be fair and be just! Deployment awards are always a point of some contention, but if the award is not properly written and justified then the proper award might not get approved. Furthermore, look on the bright side, if you are writing end of tour awards then that means an end is in sight. Remember that all Soldiers deserve the award that they worked for, no matter at what level, and you as the recommender have an obligation to each Soldier to draft the appropriate recognition. Hooah!



# Safety Bulletin

By Jerrold Scharninghausen



## Mid-tour Leave

**A**fter 6 months in Theater, we are finally getting cooler weather. While evening temperatures in Iraq are becoming similar to a German Spring day, back in Germany, winter is on the way. For those of us who have EML scheduled between now and March, the dramatic drop in temperatures when you get off the plane in Germany or the States will be intensified. Don't expect to be able to just rush out and enjoy winter activities. Take the time to plan and prepare for the environment. Your body is acclimated to the higher temperatures found in Iraq. The lower temperatures that would not have bothered you prior to the deployment will feel even colder since your body is not use to it. Use common sense as you move about. Ensure that you have a suitable jacket, gloves and hat. Since most of us didn't pack civilian winter versions of these items, plan ahead. Either have someone meet you at the airport with these items or plan on going shopping immediately after arrival.

If your spouse has not serviced your vehicle, make sure that it happens while you are home. If the vehicle has not been driven, engine sediment circulated in oil may have settled to the bottom of your crankcase. Changing the oil will remove the sludge and prevent it from damaging your engine. Check the effectiveness of you antifreeze. No one wants to wake up to a cracked engine block, and if it happens after your leave your wife will have to deal with replacing the engine on her own, Be sure to check all your fluid levels, not just the oil. This will include brake fluid, steering fluid, transmission fluid and windshield washing fluid. Tire pressure is another area that tends to be neglected. Make sure that you have the proper air pressure required for your vehicle and the proper tires. Under German law, if you cause or contribute to an accident because your vehicle is not equipped with winter tires, you can be ticketed. As a matter of fact, if you are in an accident with summer tires on your vehicle during the winter months, you will be cited even if you were not at fault. You can even be fined for impeding traffic, if your speed is causing a backlog of traffic if summer tires are on your vehicle. Any idea where your ice scraper is? Warning Triangles? First Aid Kit? What about your flashlight? When was the last time you changed the batteries? The PCC/PCI's that you have been performing daily can also be applied to your vehicle. Be sure to check the status of all required equipment.

Once you have your vehicle in shape, you need to think about driving under winter conditions. While we will have mud to deal with in Theater once the rains start, back home the roads can also be slick. Accumulations of leaves will slide causing a temporary loss of traction. Ice on the road caused by snowfall, freezing rain or just the temperature drop after sunset can be an unexpected surprise if you are not keeping an eye out for it. Don't assume that you need freezing temperatures to have ice. If the road is wet either from precipitation or dew, the wind chill can form black ice. Ice will be found most often on bridges due to the rapid cooling of the road caused by air flow above and below the road and in wooded areas where the sun does not reach. If you drive a vehicle with a light tail end like a pick-up truck or BMW, add weight to the bed or trunk to help the vehicle maintain traction. If your travel plans include the Alps, be aware that in some areas snow chains may be required. Just like any mission in Theater, planning for EML requires forethought and coordination. This will be your one big break from the sandbox during this deployment. Take time to plan so that you can enjoy it.

# Chaplain's Corner

By CHAP (CPT) Charles H. Lahmon  
Task Force Pioneer Chaplain



## Persevere 2BCT Soldiers

**F**ebruary 22, 1980, was, perhaps, the greatest day in U.S. sports history. The young underdog American hockey team's defeat of the powerful U.S.S.R. "Red Machine" hockey team at the Lake Placid Olympics left a permanent mark on American history.

For me, it was one of the most exciting triumphs that a 10 year old boy could witness.

What made the U.S.A. hockey team so inspiring to watch was the team's PERSEVERANCE. Following the Americans 10-3 pre-Olympic loss against the Soviets, the U.S. team did not give up. Their perseverance continued as a last-minute goal by Bill Baker salvaged a 2-2 tie against Sweden.

After Sweden, the team did not slow down but remained persistent in their pursuit for the Gold, achieving victories over Czechoslovakia, Norway, Romania, and skating to a 4-2 comeback win over Germany.

Then the "Miracle On Ice" happened as the U.S team defeated the undefeated U.S.S.R. team 4 to 3. As the Soviets mounted a final charge, broadcaster Al Michaels delivered one of the most famous calls in American sports: "Eleven seconds. You got ten seconds, the countdown going on right now. Five

seconds left in the game! Do you believe in miracles? Yes!"

The U.S. Olympic team continued to persevere even after their amazing win against the Soviets. The 1980 team played their final game against a strong Finland team on their search for the Gold. After two periods of play, Finland had built a 2-1 lead but once again the young Americans persevered and captured a 4-2 win.

In the words of Al Michaels, "This impossible dream comes true!" The American hockey team had done it; their perseverance had paid off.

The kind of perseverance displayed in the 1980 American hockey team is the same kind of perseverance we need during our remaining time here in Iraq.

The challenges and trials are real but with God's help we can overcome. May we press on as we face the obstacles of life, never giving up in despair nor compromising our faith and integrity.

Those who persevere are rewarded something significantly greater than a Gold Medal; they are rewarded redeployment- truly a dream come true!



# Striker Justice

By SGT Natasha Stevens  
2nd BCT Detention Operations Paralegal NCOIC



## Changing your State of Legal Residence

**Y**our state of residence is the state where your permanent home is located. No matter where you go during your military career, your legal residence almost never changes, unless two requirements are met: physical presence and mental intent.

To acquire a new legal residence, you must be physically present in your new state and have the simultaneous intent to make it your new permanent home. You can show your intent by making certain acts like buying a house, registering to vote, getting married, having bank accounts, working, registering a car, or getting a driver's license.

You cannot change your legal residence just for "tax purposes." You must meet the physical presence and mental intent test discussed above. Filing DD Form 2058, State of Legal Residence Certificate, does not change your legal residence either. That form should be filed to adjust your state income tax withholding after the change has already occurred. Fil-

ing the form has no effect in actually making the change and filling it out improperly may get you in serious trouble. Military personnel have been court-martialed, tried in civilian courts, and given huge fines, for wrongfully claiming legal residency.

Becoming a legal resident does not necessarily qualify someone for in-state tuition rates at colleges. Residency status is usually just one of a long list of factors that schools consider. It is up to the school to determine if you meet its criteria for in-state tuition.

Changing your legal residence while deployed overseas is usually impossible, since the physical presence test cannot be met.



# Doctor's Desk

CPT Michelle Kline, PhD,  
2BCT Psychologist



## Combat Operational Stress Reaction

All deployed Soldiers will encounter stress during their deployments. In fact, over half of Soldiers who visit mental health and/or combat stress teams will be diagnosed with Combat Operational Stress Reactions (COSR). The trick is to learn out to deal with it. There are two types of deployment stress: combat and operational. Combat-related stress is the event or events behind Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, a steady-state psycho-physiological condition that develops as a reaction to severe traumatic events or prolonged trauma. The second type of stress is Operational stress, and the type most Soldiers are susceptible to. This is the day-to-day stress that often comes with stability and support operations. The majority of Soldiers exposed to this type of stress encounter long working hours, boredom, no privacy, restricted movement, and separation from home and loved ones. Under these conditions, anyone can begin to show signs of distress, and knowing how you can help yourself and your battle buddy is important.

The following symptoms are signs of COSR. Mental Health professionals say a person may experience some or none of the stress symptoms because people react differently. Reactions may last for a few days or weeks, but they usually gradually decrease over time. These responses are normal and do not need treatment unless the symptoms continue for extended periods of time.

**Physical signs** may include upset stomach, vomiting, muscular contractions, sweating, shakiness, tension, disorientation, vision problems, hyperventilation, exhaustion, urinary frequency and diarrhea.

**Emotional signs** of stress are anxious or agitated, guilt, fear, anger, grief, general loss of emotional control, depression, emotional numbing, feeling abandoned or lost, helplessness, resentment, shock and feeling overwhelmed, loss of confidence or faith or hope, fear of repetition of the event and avoidance behavior.

**Cognitive signs** include inattention, impaired thinking, poor concentration, confusion, difficulty performing calculations, low attention span, flashbacks, time distortion, memory lapse, distressing dreams, intrusive memories and a decreased alertness to surroundings.

**Behavioral signs** are carelessness, panic running, withdrawal from others, eat habits change, lower interest in loved ones, exaggerated startle response, avoidance behavior, trouble

staying awake or falling asleep, nightmares, night sweats, excessive angry outbursts and crying spells.

The following suggestions may help people cope with COSR.

**Combat-related Stress:** remain calm; get enough rest; focus on day-to-day tasks; exercise; maintain close social ties; talk about your experience with others; think positively; accept support from others; eat right; do not label yourself crazy; give yourself permission to feel rotten; re-establish routine activities; do things that make you feel good and do not make any major life changes

**Operational-related Stress:** learn effective relaxation techniques (ex. deep breathing, mediation, listening to music, spending time with friends, read a book), make certain you get enough sleep, food, water, and exercise; and stay tied in with your battle buddies in your unit; maintain contact with friends and family at home

Unhealthy signs and when to seek help: Poor self care, prolonged isolation from friends, anger, irritability, depression that does not decrease with time, frequent suicidal thoughts and alcohol or drug abuse.

**Additional signs of a Soldier being at risk for significant stress and/or suicide**

Recent break-up in a relationship

Significant financial problems

Poor work performance

Recent administrative or legal action

Threatens suicide

Talks excessively about death and/or wanting to die

Deliberately injures self

Gives away possessions

**What to do if you are concerned about suicide**

-**"Ask"** your battle buddy questions that will give you a better idea of what he/she is thinking. Ask directly about his or her suicidal thoughts.

-**"Care"** for your battle buddy by understanding that he or she may be in pain. Active listening may produce relief, and take action by removing any lethal means such as weapons or pills.

-**"Escort"** your battle buddy immediately to your chain of command, Chaplain, or mental health professional. Stay with them until they receive appropriate help. Do not leave them alone.



# STRIKER TORCH

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