

# Long Knife News

ISSUE 8

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## THUNDER HORSES ALWAYS READY



Ambassador visits Iraqis in Long Knife Brigade's area of operations - Page 3



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Thunder Horse mechanics keep 2-12 Cav. up and running - Page 11

# Commander's Corner

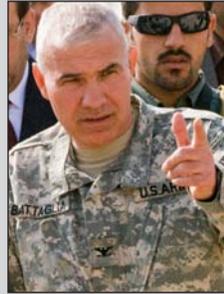
By Col. Philip Battaglia

4th BCT Commander

Congratulations on supporting the Iraqi Security Forces during the provincial elections as they secured the voting sites, avoided violence and allowed the Iraqi people to elect their new local leaders Jan. 31. These elections are important and made a positive impact on Iraqi society.

However, we've seen a slight increase in attacks against us in January simply because we've been turning up the heat on criminals. Those criminals are trying to force us to violate the new Security Agreement – especially in the Maysan province.

Working as a coalition, we have had great success finding these criminals, turning them over to the Iraqi authorities, prosecuting them and sending them to prison. We will continue to pursue these criminals with the ISF to bring them to justice. Keep up the great



Col. Philip Battaglia

work and stay focused. On another note, the brigade and battalion staffs have begun planning for our redeployment and subsequent unit reset cycle. I have established a brigade redeployment working group that is planning every facet of our redeployment back home. The group is developing a plan to tackle every task that must be accomplished to safely and efficiently move us back home. I know that some of you may think it's too early to begin such planning. However, we will be redeploying before we know it and I want us to be ready; and we're

setting the conditions for success.

As we continue our deployment, our mission may continue to change based on the conditions on the ground. We must remain flexible and prepared to tackle any new missions given us during the remainder of our tour.

Your efforts are the model of success for how things should be done in Iraq and I know that you'll

be ready for anything.

I can't tell you enough how proud I am of the tremendous work you do. You have made significant improvements to the conditions in

*// We've been turning up the heat on criminals ... Especially in the Maysan province. //*

Col. Philip Battaglia  
Long Knife Commander

Iraq.

You can be proud of everything you have done in this deployment.

Long Knife! First Team!  
Live the Legend!

## Long Knife News

### FROM THE SHEATH



Long Knife photo by Pfc. Terence Ewings  
2-12th Cav. Regt.'s Soldiers make final preparations for a mission from COB Adder Feb. 7.

- Col. Philip Battaglia ..... 4th BCT Commander
- CSM Edwin Rodriguez ..... 4th BCT CSM
- Maj. Chad Carroll ..... Public Affairs Officer
- 1st Lt. Nathan Hunter ..... Deputy Public Affairs Officer
- Sgt. 1st Class Damian Steptore ..... PAO NCOIC
- Spc. Creighton Holub ..... *Long Knife News* Editor
- Spc. Rebekah Lampman ..... TV Journalist
- Pfc. Terence Ewings ..... Photojournalist

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Long Knife photo by Staff Sgt. Brendan Stephens

# Detainee hand over

Soldiers assigned to the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division hand over Hakim Habib Abd-Al-Rida into Iraqi Police custody. Abd-Al-Rida was held in connection with the assassination of Mohammed Ali al-Hasani, the former governor of the Muthanna province. The hand over occurred in the Thunder Horse Battalion's area of operations Jan. 13.

# Ambassador visits Eastern Barracks

By Capt. Robin Worch

2nd Bn., 12th Cav. Regt.

COB ADDER – The Long Knife Brigade's 2nd Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment made partnership and training its primary goals following the security agreement's implementation at the beginning of the New Year.

Ryan Crocker, the American ambassador to Iraq, wanted to see firsthand how this focus had manifested itself in the construction of the new joint security station at Samawah's Eastern Barracks.

"This is the focus of our mission in southern Iraq: partnership," said Capt. Michael Flynn, the commander of the American company. "With this Joint Security Station we are going to be able to train, coach and mentor the Iraqi

Army on a daily basis whether it is through training events or just through shared experience. The JSS will not only have members of (Company D), but will also be the staging and operations area for the 39th Brigade's Military Transition Team and the Muthanna (Provincial Reconstruction Team). Bringing all these capabilities forward from Tallil to Samawah will improve the standards and responsiveness for all governance and military functions in the province."

The JSS is a cooperative effort linking the Iraqi Army's 39th Brigade and the Thunder Horse Battalion's Company D. The Iraqi brigade generously gave the company space in the barracks and a motor pool to build office space. The space is allowing the unit to create class-

rooms and trainings areas for the Iraqi unit to further the two units' partnership.

"The plan for integration of both units and PRT members will help create a lasting partnership in Muthanna province," said Iraqi Staff Brig. Gen. Salmon Jabar, the 39th Brigade commander. "This partnership is well underway with coordination for provincial elections into the execution phase. The JSS will help with the coordination for this momentous occasion."

The ambassador was pleased with the province's progress and the brigades' partnership in the months since the Thunder Horses took over the mission in the province.

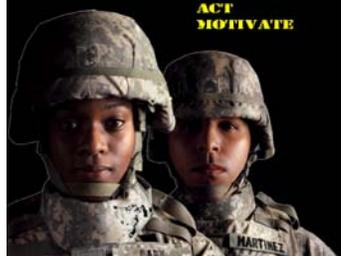
When partnership and training are the focus of the mission, a JSS makes all the difference. 

**BE STRONG – PREVENT SEXUAL ASSAULT**

**I. A.M. STRONG!!!** No one deserves to be sexually assaulted

**INTERVENE  
ACT  
MOTIVATE**

For more information or to report an incident, contact your Long Knife DSARC  
MSG Clark @  
833-1707  
Cell 0790-110-2360

**What can YOU do to prevent suicide?**

- Active emotional support
- Ask "Have you had thoughts of suicide?"
- Listen carefully to the person
- Ask concerned questions
- Above all, stay close until professional help is available

**Consult your unit chaplain and chain of command if you think someone is in trouble!**




# Infantrymen build security outpost by hand

By Staff Sgt. Michel Sauret

10th Mountain Div. PAO  
**CAMP VICTORY, Iraq** — They stacked green soda cans to raise their Christmas tree, built a reindeer from scrap plywood, and placed a cardboard Santa in a makeshift sled.

The Soldiers stationed at Joint Security Station Jenkins followed the same principle in decorating their outpost for the holidays as they did their entire deployment.

“Our theme has always been ‘Make it happen.’ Nobody told us how to establish a JSS. They just told us to get it done,” said Capt. Mat-

thew Prescott, the company commander for the Soldiers stationed at JSS Jenkins.

Jenkins is a tiny outpost inside an Iraqi Army compound, roughly an hour and a half north of Nasiriyah in the Dhi Qar province. The JSS is little more than a three-story building with an outdoor motor pool. The wooden guard shacks, the plumbing and even the outhouses were all constructed by the hands of Soldiers living there. They do their own maintenance, their own cooking and conduct their own force protection.

Just six months ago, Prescott’s troopers, Company A, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, 12<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Regiment had close to nothing on this ground to call a base, let alone a security station.

When the company deployed in support of 4<sup>th</sup> Brigade Combat Team, 1<sup>st</sup> Cavalry Division, the JSS was nothing more than a piece of land guarded by concertina wire. The troopers took turns patrolling the area to fend off attacks while they worked with a battalion of Iraqi Soldiers to train them and increase their war-fighting skills.

The company had a building at their disposal, but as is often the case with transient housing, the Iraqi soldiers who came and went did not care for it.

“You just walked in and it (was) just piles of trash,” said 1<sup>st</sup> Sgt. Robert Fortenberry, of Marietta, Ga., the company’s first sergeant. “You name it, it was in here. Smelled horrible. It had dead birds, bats, feces in the corner, urine bottles everywhere, rats.”

The troopers had to kick the doors in because they were spot welded shut. They asked permission from the Iraqi battalion commander to move into the building, but it would take several weeks before it would be inhabitable. In all, they filled five 2.5-ton trucks with trash to clean that one building.

The job was huge, but their dedication influenced their fellow Iraqi forces.

“As the IA Soldiers saw our Soldiers doing police calls, cleaning weapons, carrying themselves to a high degree, they started emulating us,” Prescott said. “I think they saw us as role models and within weeks,

———— **Jenkins continued on page 5**



Long Knife photo by Staff Sgt. Michel Sauret

Spc. Landry Rogers, of Bay Town, Texas, an infantryman with Co. A, 2-12th Cav. Regt., shaves Dec. 15 in an outdoor sink area built especially for the Soldiers of JSS Jenkins. Just a few months ago, these Soldiers were bathing and shaving using water bottles instead of showers and sinks.



Long Knife photo by Staff Sgt. Michel Sauret

Spc. William Colvin, of Poplar Bluff, Mo., an infantryman with Co. A, 2-12th Cav. Regt., plays video games in his recently-constructed room at JSS Jenkins Dec. 15. The building once was an open bay with cots; it is now divided into single rooms with bunk beds.

#### Jenkins from page 4

this (became) one of the cleanest IA compounds you'll ever go (to) ... And they carry themselves to a very high degree, too, which we did not see when we first moved in here."

Until then, Prescott's troopers slept in their vehicles or on the sidewalk using cots, often moving from one side of the building to the other to stay in the shade throughout the hot day. In addition to force protection, the company faced significant field sanitation issues. They used plastic bags from their Meals Ready to Eat packages to relieve themselves, and they bathed using bottled water.

The troopers took turns manning the outpost and cleaning up the area. For a while, the station couldn't accommodate the entire company, so many remained in the rear at COB Adder and rotated every three days.

Eventually, all of the troopers could sleep in an open bay in the building, but it still lacked a place to call "home."

"One of my most motivating moments out in the summer time was when we had a little extra wood, so the Soldiers made little wash basins to wash our clothes," said Prescott, of Colorado Springs, Colo. "It kind of brought you back to reality when you have to wash your clothes with your own hands. It's pretty interesting, and you take a lot more pride in yourself and your team when you construct something, and you see that with (fellow) Soldiers."

Over the months, the troopers were able to build JSS Jenkins from the ground up. Their only source of knowledge for building a fort came from two field manuals on force protection and field sanitation.

"I chuck it up to being kids, you know - when you're a kid and you build a tree fort. That's how we've always viewed that," said Fortenberry. "So you find a piece of wood here, and you're like, 'Hey, we're going

to put this in,' and that's literally how it all evolved."

Their motivation, however, was not fed from a manual. The base is named after Staff Sgt. Kenneth Jenkins, who was killed in action in Baghdad during Fortenberry's last deployment. He and a few other troopers from Company A today also served with Jenkins in 2006 when he was shot by a sniper.

"When we established this place, I was always trying to figure out what we could do to kind of honor his name, and honestly, it just kind of hit when we were told to take this mission," Fortenberry said. "I wanted to create a lineage within the company just in regards to fallen Soldiers, and instead of going way back to Vietnam and World War II, we ... tried to establish some lineage with our most recent fallen Soldier."

The big turning point for Company A was when a detachment of Seabees, a group of Navy construction engineers, came to the JSS and helped with its remodeling. They built showers, outdoor sinks, tables and desks, installed air-conditioning units and constructed bedrooms for Soldiers to share in doubles.

"Having the Seabees out here ... enabled us to concentrate on doing more operations," Prescott said. "It allowed us to concentrate more on training the IA and professionalizing them and making their junior leaders better so that when we leave here, our goal is that we don't need to be replaced by another American company, and I think we're well on our way of accomplishing that mission."

Eventually, the Soldiers also received internet, television connection and phones to call home. Just recently, washers and driers replaced the old wooden basins, but they still had to figure out on their own how to hook up to their makeshift plumbing system.

"We've always been about (that)," Fortenberry said. "Do as much as it was possible for ourselves, and everything else would fall into place." ❌

# Stop-lossed Long Knives help rebuild Iraq

By Spc. Creighton Holub

Long Knife PAO

**COB ADDER** – Some of the Soldiers assigned to the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, just reached the one-year mark on their countdown to separating from the Army – for a second time.

The Long Knife Brigade deployed to southern Iraq in June of 2008 with Soldiers who were originally scheduled to leave the Army during this combat tour, but were held over due to the Army's stop-loss policy.

Many of those stop-lossed Soldiers have approximately four to six years invested into the Army and have already served at least one

tour in Iraq or Afghanistan, so they bring an extra slice of experience to the brigade's operations in the tri-province area of Muthanna, Dhi Qar and Maysan.

"Stop-loss hurts," said Master Sgt. Ola Clark, the Long Knife's equal opportunity advisor. "But when you get past the initial pain, you realize that you're just fulfilling your obligation. A Soldier who does what Uncle Sam needs done has discipline. It can be hard, but it's our job. All they ask is for them to be let go once their tour is done."

With the brigade's combat tour just past the eight-month mark, many of the troops are using their free time to figure out their next

step. For those Soldiers who are not stop-lossed, it's figuring out how to get into the right military school for their career field or just deciding which base they would like to move to next.

However, the stop-lossed troops who plan to separate from the military are asking, "What school do I attend? Where do I live? What job to do next?"

"I'm glad I enlisted," said Spc. Tyler Rollis, a human resources specialist in the brigade headquarters. "I don't regret what I've done in the Army – the military has made me into a better person. I'm looking forward to see how I can approach the world with my new self."

Rollis could possibly serve an additional year on his current contract due to the U.S. Army's stop-loss policy. "In the civilian world, you don't carry an M-16 rifle around everywhere," Rollis added. "I don't get 'wowed' by seeing a helicopter take off any more because I've been in the military and have experienced that a whole bunch."

Soldiers like Rollis have insight into combat-oriented operations, and have made significant contributions to the brigade's mission here in southern Iraq. Molding the Iraqi Security Forces into a self-sufficient force requires experience that stop-lossed Soldiers commonly possess.

The brigade's combat troops and leaders, a portion of who are stop-lossed, have given new life to the once distraught ISF. The Soldiers who are stop-lossed are looking to start anew also.

"Even if you do 20 years, you could be 38 years old and starting a new life and career," said 1st Lt. Jeffery Clark, the Long Knife Brigade headquarter company's executive officer, promotes Pfc. Ebony Lane, a supply specialist, in one of the brigade's meeting rooms Dec. 1. Clark is one of a number of Soldiers, assigned to the Long Knife Brigade, who is affected by the Army's stop-loss policy.



Long Knife photo by Spc. Creighton Holub

1st Lt. Jeffery Clark, the Long Knife Brigade headquarter company's executive officer, promotes Pfc. Ebony Lane, a supply specialist, in one of the brigade's meeting rooms Dec. 1. Clark is one of a number of Soldiers, assigned to the Long Knife Brigade, who is affected by the Army's stop-loss policy.

—**Stop-Loss continued on page 7**

# Spartans provide school supplies

By Sgt. 1st Class Damian Steptore

Long Knife PAO NCOIC

**COB ADDER** – Approximately 200 Iraqi students of the Ur Primary School, located between Nasiriyah and COB Adder, couldn't wipe the smiles off their faces Jan. 13.

And why should they? For the first time since Coalition Forces arrived to Iraq, the small Bedoin school received a visit from Long Knife Soldiers with school bags and school supplies in hand.

"The kids were really happy and excited today," said Staff Sgt. Kristen Poe, an intelligence analyst assigned to the 4<sup>th</sup> Special Troops Battalion. "If you can make a (difference) in one person's life – to me that means I made my mark on my tour in Iraq," said the 29-year-old Houston native.

Poe decided to visit the school based on a suggestion from Daif, the Ziggurat of Ur's curator. Daif has two children who attend the school, and he told Poe how badly all the kids needed school supplies.

**Spartans continued on page 13**



Long Knife photo by Sgt. 1st Class Damian Steptore

Staff Sgt. Kristen Poe, an intelligence analyst in the 4<sup>th</sup> Special Troops Battalion, hands a school bag to an Iraqi girl at the Ur Primary School, located near the southern Iraqi city of Nasiriyah Jan. 13. Poe, along with fellow Soldiers assigned to the battalion's personal security detachment, handed out more than 200 school bags and supplies during the visit.

## Stop-Loss from page 6

Lt. Jeffrey Clark, the brigade headquarters company's executive officer, from Chelmsford, Mass. Clark is only slightly affected by the stop-loss policy, but it may result in his waiting almost a year for certain graduate degree programs he's interested in.

During his time in the military, Clark insisted that his Soldiers look past their time in the U.S. Army and always think about their future.

"If you're a leader, you have to care," Clark said about his time leading combat troops. "As a leader you have to coach, teach and mentor. I asked my Soldiers in monthly counseling-- What's the key to you achieving your goals? They need to know what they need to get their future taken care of."

The stop-losses Soldiers are currently scheduled to separate from the military shortly after the Long Knife Brigade completes its 12- to 15-month deployment.

Another way for Soldiers to leave the Army earlier will be based on an individual basis. The brigade commander can waive the 90-day "stabilization" period after the unit returns to Fort Hood.

However, the holdover period is designed for the individual Soldier's benefit. Normally, troops get one

year to gradually separate from the military and receive training on finding new civilian employment and building their post-military future. However, deploying to a combat zone preempts that training, leaving stop-losses Soldiers with less time to complete the courses offered by the military. The 90-day stabilization also enables the troops to get medical and dental check-ups and therapy if needed.

"The Army Career and Alumni Program is a great thing," Clark explained, referring to the Army's transitional program for Soldiers who are retiring or separating from the military. "The Army is a great place – insurance, health benefits – everything is there except for my Family."

However, Clark is not shutting the door on the military for good, since he knows the Army is not a bad place to live and work.

All he, or any former Soldier needs to do to re-enter the Army is visit their local recruiting station for a recruiter to start the process of returning to the military.

Long Knife Brigade Soldiers and their Family members can find more information at [www.acap.army.mil](http://www.acap.army.mil) or by calling (254) 288-ACAP. ☎



Long Knife photo by Spc. Creighton Holub

Thunder Horse Battalion troops and other personnel at COB Adder toast a beer to each other during the Pittsburgh Steeler's 27-23 Super Bowl victory over the Arizona Cardinals at the Coalition South Dining Facility Feb. 2. The Super Bowl marked the first time personnel stationed in Iraq were allowed to drink alcoholic beverages. Soldiers were not allowed to consume any beer if they were scheduled for any type of duty within six hours, but the Long Knife Brigade held a late work call to aid in the Soldiers' relaxation and enjoyment of the Super Bowl.

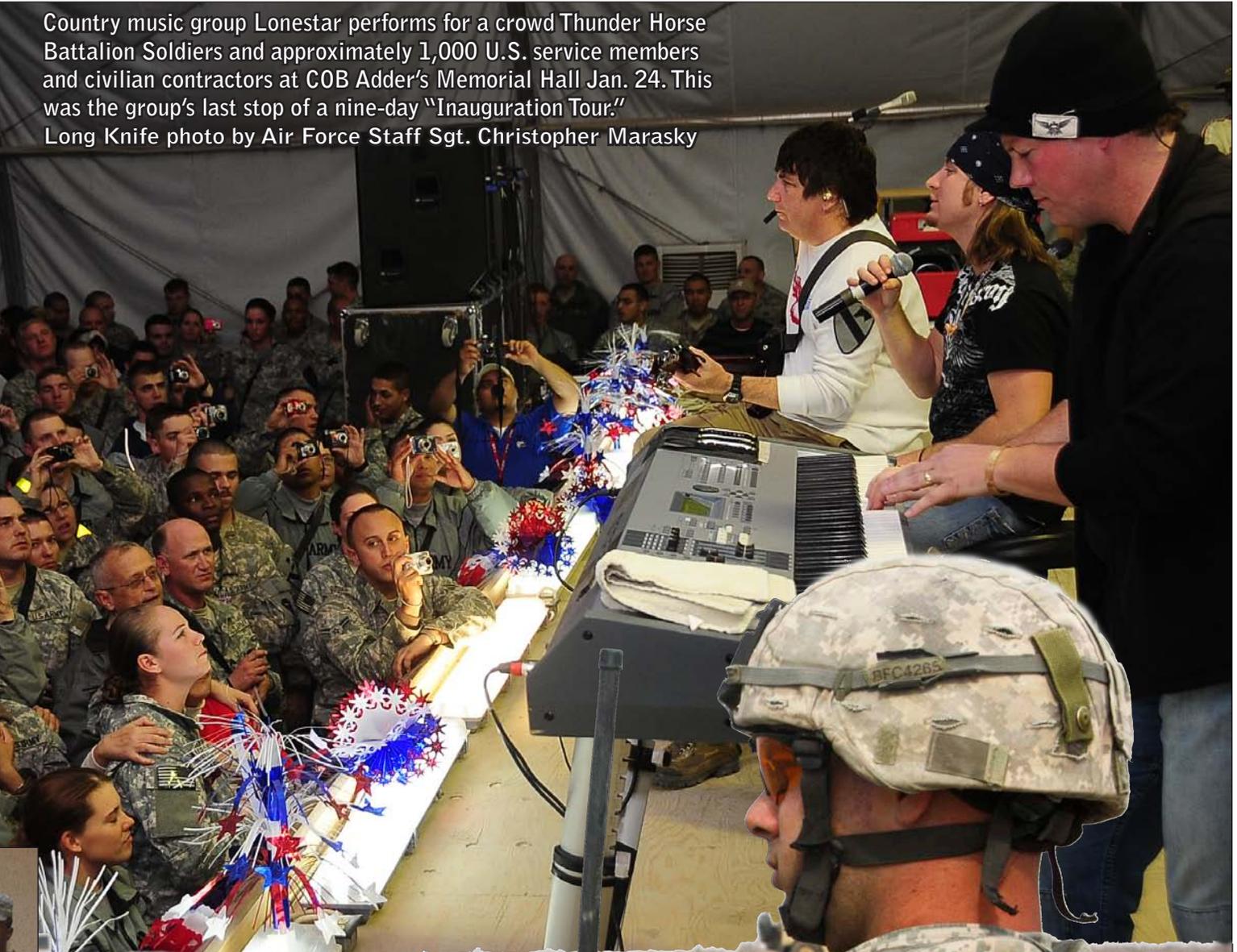


Long Knife photo illustration by Spc. Creighton Holub

Gen. David Petraeus, CENTCOM commander, visits Thunder Horse Battalion troopers from the 2nd Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment, on Christmas morning at COB Adder.



Country music group Lonestar performs for a crowd Thunder Horse Battalion Soldiers and approximately 1,000 U.S. service members and civilian contractors at COB Adder's Memorial Hall Jan. 24. This was the group's last stop of a nine-day "Inauguration Tour." Long Knife photo by Air Force Staff Sgt. Christopher Marasky



A Thunder Horse Battalion Soldier scans his sector during a patrol in the Dhi Qar province Jan. 20. Long Knife photo by Spc. Rebekah Lampman

# Ur Market moves to I-BIZ as Oasis Market

By Pfc. Terence Ewings

Long Knife PAO

**COB ADDER** – As part of a program initiative to spark the economy in the Dhi Qar province, Iraqi businessmen held a grand opening for the new Oasis Market here Jan. 23.

The market is part of the Iraqi-Based Industrial Zone program, which started in October, to help businesses develop within the security of a military installation.

Both military and civilian customers can purchase the latest electronic equipment at the market, to include televisions, DVDs and other entertainment products.

Yassir Ahmed, a salesperson working at the Oasis Market, said the I-BIZ program is an easy and successful way to run a small business that caters to military personnel and civilian contractors.

“The contract that we have with the Americans saves us money,” said Yassir, who was previously leasing land from an Iraqi contractor. “We are now able to use the extra

money to provide a better quality product for the Soldiers here.”

The I-BIZ program also provides a means to directly impact the local economy through income, employment opportunities and training.

Lt. Col. Timothy Norton, commander of the 4th Brigade Special Troops Battalion, attended the ceremony to show his support of the Iraqi contractors.

“It helps (the brigade) to

help these Iraqi businessmen gain economic stability,” Norton explained. “Simple things like this will lead to the Iraqis providing sustainment for this base long after we have gone home.”

Some of the long term goals for the I-BIZ program are to enable self-sustaining Iraqi owned companies, increase employment in the province and grow the working class society in southern Iraq. 🇮🇶



Long Knife photo by Spc. Michael Turner  
Lt. Col. Timothy Norton, 4<sup>th</sup> Brigade Special Troops Battalion commander, cuts the ribbon at the opening of the Oasis Market on COB Adder, Jan. 15.



Long Knife photo by Pfc. Terence Ewings  
Spc. Ramijio Gonzales teaches Pvt. Kris Nagengast, a Thunder Horse infantryman, how to conduct preventive maintenance checks and services on a tactical vehicle before a patrol.

## Thunder Horse

By Pfc. Terence Ewings

Long Knife PAO

**COB ADDER** – Maintaining tactical vehicles and ensuring they are combat ready is a challenging task, but for the Soldiers assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment, who work in the Thunder Horse motor pool it's a routine operation.

Staff Sgt. Fernando Ramirez, a Thunder Horse mechanic, who mentored his Soldiers and other troops on the importance of sustaining their vehicles before they rolled out of the front gate embarking on a convoy Jan. 23.

# Respect everyone, despite 'Ground Hog Day'

*Commentary by Master Sgt. Ola Clark  
Long Knife Equal Opportunity Advisor*

I know that it may appear to be like the Ground Hog Day movie here, but that doesn't justify complacency or stupid acts.

We're a band of brothers and sisters in an enormous organization. We should be protecting one another, not hurting one another. As the brigade's equal opportunity advisor, it is my duty to facilitate a good climate within the brigade.

I'm the eyes and ears for the command team, but I'm also the voice for those individuals who can't speak for his or herself because of the rank structure or fear of reprisal. During the past quarter, there have been several alleged sexual assault reports on COB Adder. My job is to ensure that Soldiers, civilians and contractors are aware of their options with regard to reporting sexual assaults.

Sexual assault is one of the most under-reported crimes in society and in the military. While the brigade command team prefers its Soldiers use the option of unrestricted reporting, the Department of Defense recognized that some victims desire only medical and support services and no command or law enforcement involvement.

The brigade's first priority is for victims to be protected, treated with dignity and respect and to receive the necessary support to overcome trauma from a sexual assault.

Under DOD confidentiality policy, military victims of sexual assault have two reporting options. There is restricted reporting, which doesn't trigger an official investigation. This type of report allows the victim time to heal and receive available support services. There are only four types of personnel to whom a victim can report the sexual assault and retain restricted reporting. They are the deployable sexual assault response coordinator, called a DSARC; the Soldier's unit victim advocate, also called a UVA; medical personnel such as those working in a military clinic and any chaplain.

The other option available for reporting sexual assault is called unrestricted reporting. This type of reporting triggers both victim's services and law enforcement actions. The victim also receives all of the help that is provided with restricted reporting, plus the unit's command team has more options available to them.

If you have any questions or comments feel free to give me a call at 833-1707 or email: [ola.clark@iraq.cent-com.mil](mailto:ola.clark@iraq.cent-com.mil). 

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## mechanics teach Soldiers new tricks of trade

"Every chance I get, I pass down my years of experience to give them the tools to be successful," said Ramirez, a native of Brownsville, Texas, with 16 years of Army experience. "We instill a sense of pride and ownership in the drivers, because no one appreciates their vehicles as much as they do."

Ramirez and his troops service all the battalion's vehicles and they assist the vehicle operators by teaching them how to correctly sustain their machines when a trained mechanic is not available.

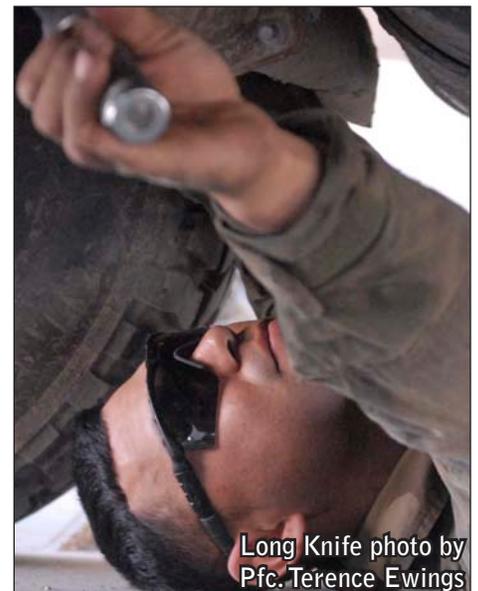
"I like assisting my fellow Soldiers," said Spc. Ramijio Gonzales, another mechanic and a native of

Corpus Christi, Texas.

Gonzales is one of the Soldiers in the motor pool who ensures the vehicles undergo preventive maintenance checks and services so the vehicles and the accessories inside meet Army safety standards before leaving the base.

"The mechanics are very helpful getting us in and out of the motor pool as fast as possible and up to standard," said Pvt. Kris Nagengast, an infantryman from Flint, Mich.

The battalion's mechanics sustain the unit's vehicles and spread knowledge to their fellow Soldiers, so the information gets to the troops who need it most. 



Long Knife photo by  
Pfc. Terence Ewings

Spc. Ramijio Gonzales inspects a tactical vehicle before a patrol.

# From the Pulpit

*By Chaplain (Capt.) H. Myles Bankston  
27th BSB Chaplain*

Two men were walking through a field one day when they spotted an enraged bull. Instantly they darted toward the nearest fence. The storming bull followed in hot pursuit, and it was soon apparent they wouldn't make it.

Terrified, the one shouted to the other, "Put up a prayer, John, we're in for it!"

John answered, "I can't. I've never said a public prayer in my life."

"But you must," his companion implored, "the bull is catching up to us!"

"All right," panted John, "I'll say the only prayer I know, the one my father used to repeat at the table: 'O Lord, for what we are about to receive, make us truly thankful.'"

What can you be thankful for this New Year? Can you be thankful for the weather? Can you be thankful for your Family and friends? Can you be thankful for the food that you will eat? Can you be thankful for your boss and coworkers? Can you be thankful for your aches and pains?

If we could only begin to thank God for everything, we could get through any situation.

Many people think Paul died within weeks of writing to Timothy. He knew the end was near. Never again will he preach to great crowds or stand on the Acropolis in Athens. Never again will he preach in Jerusalem or on the streets of Corinth. Never again will he visit the churches of Asia Minor or sail the high seas. Those days are gone forever. Paul considered Timothy like a son, a beloved son, and Paul didn't want Timothy to be discouraged by his death, so he writes words of encouragement. Paul starts most of his letters this way, but I believe this one letter was special, because in his prison cell he needed God's grace, mercy and peace.

He had experienced these three things in his life, and they can give us help and comfort in our own trials and frustrations.

Have you experienced God's grace, mercy and peace today? I think there is a lesson to be learned from thanking God. I believe we need to praise and thank God even in our prison cells. When I speak of prison cells, I am talking about

prison cells of depression, prison cells of anger, grief and frustration.

It is easy to be thankful when things are going the way you expect them to go, but it is not so easy to be thankful when things don't happen the way you planned. Like when you didn't get that promotion, or when you didn't get that car you had been wanting, or when you didn't win the heart of that boy or girl you had been chasing, or when you didn't get that grade on a test you were expecting, or when you are being accused for something you didn't do or didn't have any control over. These are just a few of the things we should thank God for.

Maybe God saw that if you had gotten that promotion you would have neglected your Family and God didn't want that to happen to you. Or maybe God knew if you got that particular car, you would go too fast and have a bad accident, so God was looking out for you. Or maybe God knew that that certain someone you had been chasing was really going to break your heart down the road, so God was looking out for you. Or maybe God knew that if you would have gotten that good grade on that test that you would have been filled with pride, and that pride always comes before the fall.

Long Knife Family, no matter what situation or circumstance we are going through, we should be thankful to God. He is ultimately in control of our lives and if we are worshipping Him, there is nothing going to happen to us that God doesn't want to happen.

As members of the Long Knife Brigade, many of you will remember, we started training and preparing for this deployment long before this combat tour ever began. Looking back at 2007's field exercises and the National Training Center rotation, we missed some important holidays with our Families and loved ones. Looking at this year's Joint Readiness Training Center rotation, we missed spring break and Easter. We have missed several holidays during this deployment, but instead of focusing on the missed opportunities, we need to remain thankful to the Lord.

In this New Year, I want to encourage every one of you to remember to be thankful to the Lord in all things. God wants us to be thankful in every situation of our lives.

In everything, give thanks to God. 

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# Thunder Horses bring water, food to Bedouins

By Capt. Robin Worch

2nd Bn., 12th Cav. Regt.

**COB ADDER** – At least once each week, a small group of Soldiers drives past a diminutive Bedouin school in southern Iraq’s Dhi Qar province.

That group of Soldiers, led by Command Sgt. Maj. William May, the senior enlisted leader of the 2nd Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment, delivered bottled water, soccer balls and school supplies to the children who spend their days in the school’s almost barren classrooms.

“I couldn’t believe that these children were living out here in this area and drinking river water,” said May, from Monument Beach, Mass. “I decided that it was about time someone paid attention to this and did something.”

The school, made of three mud-hut rooms, houses the province’s Ministry of Education as well as the elementary school for all the children in the local area.

The building has been maintained by only four faculty members who also provide instruction for all grades of the primary school’s students.

The school’s principal and primary instructor said this was a great day for the Bedouin children, who live

in an Iraqi community of families who move around the desert tending to sheep or camels.

The kids rarely receive any visitors, much less Soldiers bearing donations of water and school supplies.

According to the principal, the Thunder Horse Battalion Soldiers gave

the children an unforgettable experience.

The command sergeant major has plans for the area and the school, which include increasing water purification, providing more donated school supplies, and possibly expanding the school house itself. 🇺🇸



Long Knife photo by Capt. Robin Worch

2nd Lt. Christopher Doyle, a native of Parker, Colo., delivers bottled water to a small Bedouin mud-hut school near COB Adder.

## Spartans from page 7

“Since his kids go to this school, and I regularly go out to his home to check on him and his family, I wanted to make a difference in the school,” said Poe.

However, the process took some time because Poe had to find the supplies through donations.

She spoke to Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Kevin Albrecht, the STB Personnel Security Detachment’s platoon sergeant, who knew of a website that people made donations to on behalf of Soldiers who were killed while serving in Operation Iraq Freedom.

“Last deployment, two of my friends, who were also Soldiers, were killed over here,” said Albrecht, who hails from Grand Forks, N.D.

He said the wife of one of his late friends dis-

covered the website, called ‘Fallen Stars of New York,’ to honor her late husband and his fallen gunner, and to send school supplies to help the needy children.

“When both of them were killed, there were two school-age children who were killed also,” added Albrecht.

The delivery demonstrated the continued support of the Long Knife Brigade to stabilize and assist the Iraqi people, but for Poe’s and Albrecht’s reaching out to Nasiriyah’s children was a sign of progress in southern Iraq.

“We thank the Coalition Forces for the gift on behalf of the Nasiriyah Department of Education,” said Camel Ali Joseph, the school principal. 🇺🇸

# 2-7 Cav. captures 5 bomb makers

By 1st Lt. Mark Ruth  
2nd Bn., 7th Cav. Regt.

**FOB GARRY OWEN** – Two joint operations by the Iraqi Army and the 2nd Battalion, 7th Cavalry Regiment, in the Maysan province led to the capture of five suspects accused of planting and detonating an improvised explosive device intended for American personnel Jan. 23.

Iraqi Army leaders said the suspects placed and detonated a roadside bomb during a joint operation between the 38th Brigade, 10th Iraqi Army Division, and the 2nd Bn., 7th Cav. Regt., in Amarah, the provincial capital, and the southern town of Qa'lat Salah, in an effort to stop the military operations.

However, the enemy actions were met with a swift response, as the Iraqi troops quickly gathered evidence from their intelligence network to find the suspects and bring them to justice.

Within hours, the Iraqi intelligence team identified the triggerman and set up a raid on a target house resulting in his capture. Within hours, the detainee confessed on tape to being responsible for the crime.

“If you find an improvised explosive device on the road, you may have saved five or six other people’s lives,” said Staff Brig. Gen. Jabar, the 10th IA Division’s deputy commander.

While the 10th IA didn’t stop the explosion, it

was able to capture the individuals responsible for the attack. According to leaders of the 2nd Bn., 7th Cav. Regt., the explosion did not have a major impact on the original mission, which was to disrupt money supplied to terror cells.

“While violence is down, terrorists will continue to disrupt our success and try to drive a wedge between us and the Iraqi people,” said Capt. Brian Murphy, a native of Eastchester, N.Y., who serves in the American battalion. “However, the Iraqi Army intelligence officers continue to impress us with their professionalism and motivation to secure their people and (with) their ability to produce tangible results.”

In Qa’lat Salah, the 2nd Bn., 38th IA Bde., and 2nd. Bn., 7th Cav. Regt., detained an insurgent IED-making cell during a daring night operation. According to Iraqi Army leaders, one of the detained men had been involved in numerous illegal activities, including attacking Iraqi Security Forces in the past and was already sentenced to life in prison by the Iraqi justice system for his previous transgressions.

In conjunction with the Iraqi investigators, U.S. law enforcement personnel and the 2nd Bn., 7th Cav. Regt., prepared evidence and all other necessary procedures to make sure the suspect is brought to justice by an Iraqi court. 

## Hunters host USO country musicians

By Sgt. 1st Class Mark Schenk  
1st Sqdn., 9th Cav. Regt.

**FOB HUNTER** – A live country western show might not sound like a lot to some folks, but when the Soldiers stationed here heard they were getting some live entertainment, it made them excited.

Never mind that this wasn’t some big name band and that only a few of the Head Hunter Soldiers had even heard of the artist.

Lucas Hodge, a singer and lead guitar player who lives in Nashville by way of Montana, and his fiancé put together an ensemble of like-minded independent musicians and signed up for a USO tour.

“We wanted to give back to you guys,” said John Bohlinger, the group’s guitarist who is also the guitarist and bandleader for the Nashville Star television show. “But being out here and seeing first hand what you guys do is awesome.”

The stop at FOB Hunter was one of the last in Iraq for the group, so the Soldiers tried to make it special. Shortly after their arrival, the musicians were given Army Combat T-shirts to wear while at FOB Hunter and then the Soldiers showed the group an artillery firing point and toured one of the Battery B, 5th Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery Regiment’s Paladins.

Then they visited a small arms range where they received hands-on demonstrations of weapons such as the M2 .50 caliber machine gun, a M240B machine gun and their M-4 carbine and M-16 rifle personal weapons by the squadron’s A Troop Soldiers.

When the band returned to their equipment, a crowd had already gathered and they started playing music and performed a few requests. The music included a lot of good ol’ country western standards with some very special music of their own just for the Soldiers.

“It means a lot to me that they gave

—— **Hunter continued on page 15**

# Tips for a better shoe-buying experience

By Staff Sgt. Heidi Barber

*Long Knife Medical Operations*

Many times guys will give ladies a hard time about all the shoes in their closets. Although this usually comes from the fact that ladies seem to need a new pair of shoes to go with the latest outfit they just bought and they want something that looks great, this is not always the case.

Most people, when shopping for shoes, buy based on what looks cool and goes with their outfits. Many ladies will buy shoes that are too small trying to make their feet look smaller. Our feet are punished daily supporting our weight and carrying us from place to place.

We take an average of three million steps a year. Shopping for footwear based solely on looks can lead to a host of foot problems later in life. Improperly fitted shoes cause more than \$3.5 million worth of foot problems a year such as bunions, corns, calluses, hammertoes and other disabling foot disorders.

Here are a few things that you need to keep in mind when shopping for a new pair of shoes. Although style is often the main thing we look at when we shop for shoes,

the most important quality to look for in shoes is durable construction that will protect your feet and keep them comfortable. The American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons developed some tips to help people reduce their risk of foot problems.

- ❖ Have both feet measured every time you purchase shoes. Your foot size increases as you get older.

- ❖ Women should not wear a shoe with a heel higher than 2-¼ inches. Wearing heels higher than that can lead to foot and posture problems.

- ❖ Try on new shoes at the end of the day. Your feet normally swell and become larger after standing or sitting during the day. Also, wear the socks you would normally wear during the fitting.

- ❖ Shoes should be fitted carefully to your heel as well as your toes.

- ❖ Try on both shoes.

- ❖ There should be ½-inch space from the end of your longest toe to the end of the shoe.

- ❖ Fit new shoes to your largest foot. Most people have one foot larger than the other.

- ❖ Walk around in the shoes

to make sure they fit well and feel comfortable. If they are not comfortable, they will not become comfortable with wear.

- ❖ Sizes vary among shoe brands and styles. Judge a shoe by how it fits on your foot not by the marked size.

- ❖ When the shoe is on your foot, you should be able to wiggle all of your toes freely.

- ❖ If the shoes feel too tight, don't buy them. There is no such thing as a "break-in period."

- ❖ Take into consideration your arch and foot shape when you purchase running shoes. Having a properly fitted running shoe can help increase your performance while running.

- ❖ Don't select a new pair of shoes to wear for athletic purposes the day of the activity, especially if it's something important like the Army Physical Fitness Test or a race. You should train in a pair of shoes for at least a month before a big event.

Don't settle for anything less than the best. Trust your judgment while taking into consideration the above recommendations. 🦋

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## Hunter from page 14

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up their free time and risked so much just to come over here and play such a great show for us," said Spc. Brent McGuire, who watched the entire show.

When the show was over the members of the band signed autographs, shook hands, and took a lot of photos with their newfound fans. The Soldiers were smiling and everyone expressed their gratitude, musician to Soldier and vice versa. When they were loading the equipment onto the UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters to return to Tallil every member of the band expressed that this trip was something that all of them would cherish and never forget. 🦋



Long Knife photo by Sgt. 1st Class Mark Schenk

Country musicians play for the Soldiers of the 1st Squadron, 9th Cavalry Regiment, at FOB Hunter in southeastern Iraq.

# Black Dragons' Iraqi partners finish training, receive gear

By 2nd Lt. Justin Bishop  
5th Bn., 82nd FA Regt.

**COB ADDER** – The 41st Brigade, 10th Iraqi Army Division, celebrated the completion of their equipment fielding program and month-long basic combat training during a graduation ceremony at the Besmayah Range Complex Jan. 14.

Soldiers assigned to the 5th Bn., 82nd Field Artillery Regiment, have partnered with the Iraqi brigade since early October.

The Black Dragons trained the Iraqi soldiers on the new tactical equipment and combat gear prior to the fielding process.

“They are the best Iraqi Army unit to have come through (unit set fielding),” said Lt. Col. Timothy Renshaw, the senior advisor of the Besmayah Range Complex.

During the course, the Iraqi troops received medical combat lifesaver kits, sleeping bags, vehicles and weapons. The new brigade rotated its troops through marksmanship qualification ranges and training events.

“Together, we will make Iraq

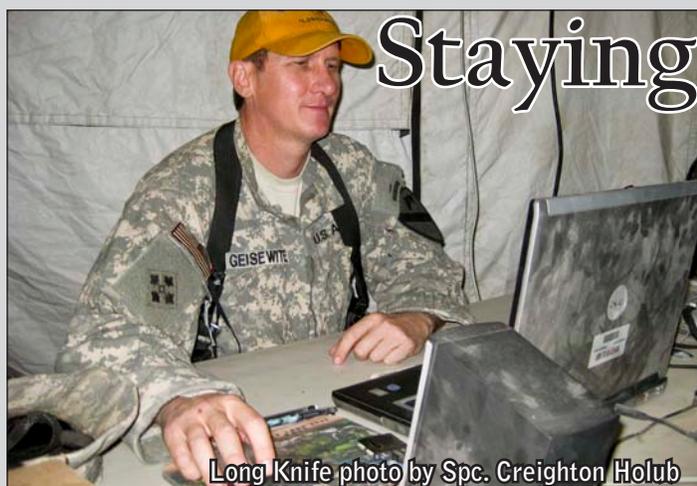
a safer place,” said Lt. Col. Timothy Daugherty, the Black Dragon Battalion commander. Daugherty, who hails from Alabama, said the new Iraqi unit, with assistance from his battalion, has made a positive impact on the people living in the Dhi Qar province in southern Iraq.

At the month’s end, the Iraqi soldiers completed AK-47 marksmanship qualification exercises, military operations in urban terrain courses, improvised explosive device identification and awareness training and combat lifesaver training along with classes. 



Long Knife photo by 2nd Lt. Justin Bishop

Iraqi troops, assigned to the country’s 41st Brigade, practice using a 60mm mortar system at the Besmayah Range Complex Jan. 14.



Long Knife photo by Spc. Creighton Holub

## Staying in contact

Sgt. Maj. Charles Geisewite, a senior operations noncommissioned officer, keeps in contact with Long Knife Brigade leaders at COB Adder while in FOB Garry Owen. Many Soldiers also use computers to stay in contact with their friends and Family members while across the world.