

Citizens stand up to insurgents • Indirect fires in Diyala

www.mnci.centcom.mil/Chronicle

THE COALITION CHRONICLE

Volume 2, Issue 9

September 2007

Coverage Inside
Phantom Strike

Coalition Cooperation

*U.S., Estonian
troops team with
ISF to clear
Sab Al Bor*



What's Inside

THE COALITION CHRONICLE

The Official Magazine of
Multi-National Corps-Iraq

September 2007
Volume 2, Issue 9

MNC-I Commander
Lt. Gen. Ray Odierno

MNC-I Public Affairs Officer
Lt. Col. James Hutton

MNC-I Command Information Chief
Sgt. 1st Class VeShannah Lovelace
Editor

Staff Sgt. Jacob Boyer
Staff Writers

Sgt. D. A. Dickinson
Sgt. Abel Trevino

Cpl. Darhonda Rodela
Spc. Laura M. Bigenho
Spc. Beatrice Florescu
Spc. Stephanie Homan

Coalition Cooperation

Americans, Estonians,
Iraqis team up to clear
Sab Al Bor

Page 5

Kicking Things Off

Indirect fires spark
Lightning Hammer

Page 18

Roll Out!

Tanks punish enemy
in Anbar

Page 19

Grasping Ramadan

Muslim holy month
explained

Page 21

The Road Back

Soldiers aid Baghdad
district's recovery

Page 22

A Better Tomorrow

School educates
juvenile detainees

Page 24

Citizens Stand Up

Aiding the Coalition
in Jurf as Sakhr

Page 26

Departments

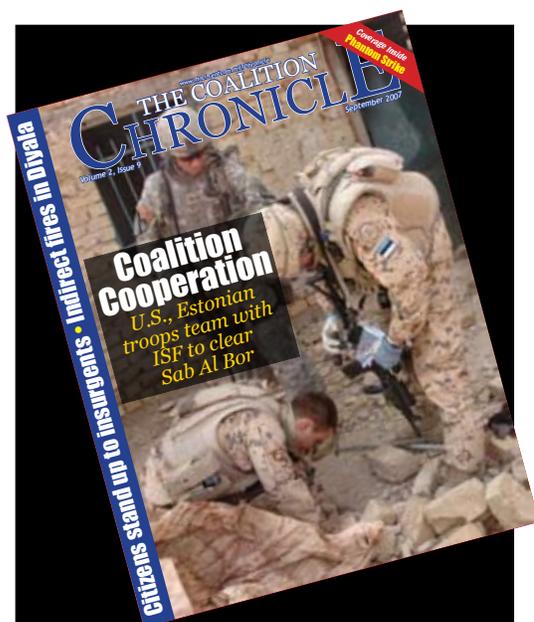
Commander's Voice
Page 1

CSM's Corner
Page 2

Coalition News Briefs
Page 4

Freedom's Focal Point
Page 8

In Remembrance
Page 28



This month's covers

Up front: Estonian Soldiers from Estonian Platoon 15 search for hidden weapons with Staff Sgt. Erich Heinig, section sergeant, for 1/7 Cav., 1st Bde., 1st Cav. Div., during a joint operation in Sab Al Bor. Photo by Army Staff Sgt. Jon Cupp
On the back: Iraqi civilians travel to Imam Moussa al-Kadhim's shrine in Khadamiyah Aug. 9. Photo by Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Summer M. Anderson.

The Coalition Chronicle is an authorized monthly publication for members of the Department of Defense. Contents of this monthly publication are not necessarily the official views of or endorsed by the U.S. Government or the Department of Defense. The editorial content of this publication is the responsibility of the Public Affairs Office of the Multi-National Corps-Iraq.

Questions, comments and concerns about The Coalition Chronicle can be addressed via email at jacob.boyer@iraq.centcom.mil. The Chronicle accepts articles, photos and letters for submission. Send submissions to veshannah.lovelace@iraq.centcom.mil. The Chronicle reserves the right to edit for security, accuracy, propriety, clarity and space.

COMMANDER'S VOICE

Good and bad, remarkable and mundane, through two tours as a commander and dozens of visits in other capacities, I've seen a great deal here in Iraq. Though my experiences are numerous, I continue to be amazed at things I see every day: troops soldiering through an arduous patrol on a blistering day, doctors and nurses working through relentless fatigue to save the life of another Soldier, and the adaptability of so many troops carrying out missions or tasks that aren't in a manual or part of their normal skill set. But most recently, I was amazed by the uncommon bond that has been formed between former insurgents and Coalition troops.

Many of these former insurgents felt alienated and disillusioned after they were cast aside and lumped with former regime elements as we purged former Ba'athists from almost every level of Iraq's governmental framework.

However, these same citizens have recently come to realize the real evil in this country is not the Coalition presence, but extremist exploitation. As the surge continues, the citizens of Iraq are sensing an ever increasing level of security. As they feel more comfortable in their homes and see the faces of Iraqi Security Forces and Coalition troops in their neighborhood every day, they also begin to trust those faces, which is now leading to their cooperation. They are providing valuable intelligence to Iraqi and Coalition forces, and they are joining the fight against al-Qaida in Iraq by volunteering to be a part of the Iraqi Security Forces in droves.

I saw a striking example of this sea change recently in Yusufiya. Once an al-Qaida stronghold just south of Baghdad, it has become another in a long line of communities that have



**Lt. Gen. Ray Odierno
MNC-I Commander**

turned against extremists. The tide started to turn in this small town when a patrol from 2nd Brigade, 10th Mountain Division discovered and cleared a VBIED that was set to detonate in the center of the town. Soon after, the nephew of Harith al-Dari, a local leader, was assassinated and the citizens of Yusufiya decided they had seen enough. They felt compelled to stop the indiscriminate murder of their friends and family members by al-Qaida and they wanted our help.

One of the company commanders in the area, Capt. Palmer Phillips, and the Soldiers of Company B, 2nd Battalion, 14th Infantry Regiment, introduced me to many of these community leaders. Some were former members of the Iraqi Army, others were tribal leaders. All were united in their fight against al-Qaida. They spoke of the community's seven tribes coming together to drive extremists from their homes and described how scores of volunteers wished to join the fight by joining the Iraqi Security Forces. One of the local Sheiks told us how he was so committed to securing his community that he donated his own land so a new Iraqi Police station

could be built.

The Soldiers of 2nd Brigade, 1st Infantry Division have experienced their own shift in local sentiments. The citizens of Baghdad's Ghazaliya district began to become familiar with Coalition and Iraqi Security Forces as joint security stations were constructed, safe neighborhood barriers began to go up, and the frequency of dismounted patrols began to increase. As they saw this effort to ensure their safety, their trust and confidence in Coalition Soldiers began to rise as well. Though Ghazaliya still lacks any substantial police support, the "Ghazaliya Guardians" have stepped into the breach, jointly manning checkpoints with the Iraqi Army to keep al-Qaida and other extremists out of their community.

The vast majority of volunteers like the "Ghazaliya Guardians" are looking to become a part of the Iraqi Security Forces. ISF leaders are still wary of these new volunteers, mainly because they have received little to no guidance regarding these new volunteers and are unsure what to expect. Despite their reservations, this is truly an amazing development that has taken place, largely because of the vigilance and diplomacy of young leaders like Phillips. Junior leaders and Soldiers on the ground are driving our success. They are meeting citizens in their areas, gaining their trust and confidence, and helping change the course of Iraqi history.

We want to continue to capitalize on the momentum we've created with efforts like those I've described. Building on our recent offensive operations, we launched Operation Phantom Strike. This operation consists of a series of targeted operations designed to intensify pursuit of extremists across Iraq. Extremist support zones and safe havens were largely eliminated through Operation Phantom Thunder, and we are now pursuing our enemies into ever-shrinking pockets. Through quick

***We are now
pursuing our
enemies into
ever-shrinking
pockets.***

strike raids, the precision targeting of extremist leadership, and a focus on the extremist's most lethal accelerants of violence — the IED and VBIED — we will continue to diminish extremist influence throughout Iraq. By neutralizing the groups that foment the indiscriminant violence that has gripped Iraq for far too long, we will continue buying time for the Iraqi political process to negotiate the solutions for a peaceful future.

Our enemy is ruthless and will no doubt attempt to exploit the Ramadan season and influence the debate back home by increasing their attacks. So far we have experienced an astonishing downward trend in the amount of IED incidents carried out just prior to Ramadan. Over the past three years, IED attacks have peaked each year leading up to the Islamic holy season, but this year the trend has been a reduction due to your recent hard work and dedication. We all must remain vigilant and aggressive. If our operations continue

to reduce the capability of our enemies, as we have thus far during Phantom Strike, I believe we can continue to buy the Iraqis the time and space they so desperately need.

You are all doing exceptional work. If you would have told most people just a year ago that al-Qaida would be on the run, the vast majority of the ISF would be carrying out their own missions, and former insurgents would be standing beside us fighting extremists they probably wouldn't believe you, but that is exactly what you have done. Each of you has taken the initiative and helped to turn the tide. Without your hard work, dedication, and selfless service there is absolutely no way we would be where we are today. Our course was set to secure Baghdad and its surrounding belts to buy the Government of Iraq and the Security Forces time to develop, and you have done that. You are accomplishing a mission most thought was impossible. You are all truly the heroes of our next greatest generation. 

CSM's CORNER

As I stated in a previous article I was at one time the command sergeant major of the 5th Squadron, 15th Cavalry Regiment, the unit that is responsible for training all 19D cavalry scouts in the Army. As such, I presided over all manner of ceremonies that were conducted to recognize the accomplishments of our Soldiers in training.

One such event we held was the family day retreat, recognizing the transition from Basic Combat Training to Advanced Individual Training. The ceremony was conducted at the end of the ninth week of training and it was the first time a family member or significant other would lay eyes on their young Soldier after two months of isolation from them.

On the day in question, family members would begin arriving as soon as the sun came up in anticipation of catching a glimpse of their trooper. It was all the cadre could do to keep them separated. At 1500 hours we'd open the squadron parade field, family members would begin to take their seats and the Squadron family readiness group would begin selling T-Shirts and other memorabilia. Good Lord, families would scarf up any and all manner of items in an effort to show their support for their wannabe cavalryman.

At 1650, the Soldiers would march onto the squadron parade field and a color guard of drill sergeants would post in front of them. Mothers, fathers, sisters, wives, girlfriends and all manner of extended family would hover at the limit of advance attempting to see their troop, make



**Command Sgt. Maj.
Neil Ciotola
MNC-I Command
Sergeant Major**

eye contact, and scream and shout that they saw this one or that. As was typically the case, the squadron commander and I would stand behind the dais waiting for the event to begin.

I remember it like it happened just yesterday: There I stood with my Stetson pulled low over my eyes, looking straight ahead when a young mother walked up to me. She stood barely taller than that line drawn by my belt, but she stood toe to toe with me, asked me to lean down, which I did and she stated these exact words: "Don't you ever forget that I didn't sign any hand receipt. That's my son out there and you'd best take good care of him."

I have not, nor will I ever, forget that day, that moment and the profound implications of her statement. That was her son on the field and she expected to get him back in at least as good a shape — if not better — as she had given him to us. I thought about the trust she extended to me, the physical personification of that institution we call the United States Army, to do right by the gift we had been given. As one small slice of Americana, she made it clear to me in an instant that it was not her son who had to live up to my expectations; no, it was her Army that had to live up to all the expectations of all the mothers and fathers who bid their son or daughter farewell as they began their journey through its ranks.

I've visited every brigade combat team we have in the Iraqi Theater and done my best to visit every battalion associated with the them, though the latter is still a work in progress. Regardless of where I've gone, I've done my best to accompany as many troopers on their patrols as my schedule and theirs would allow. I've seen Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines on the streets and in the fields of Iraq. I've accompanied them in their wheeled or tracked vehicles or as they walked their sector of responsibility.

As hard as it may be for some to admit or believe, the tactics, techniques and procedures all our services employ outside the wire are pretty much consistent from one to the next. Two of the things that all services, regardless of branch or nationality constantly stress are pre-combat checks and pre-combat inspections. More often than not I observe elements as they prepare to exit the FOB, COB, JSS, combat outpost or battle position. I watch as many troopers literally throw their gear on or throw it in a vehicle and rush outside the wire. I listen as Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Marines tell me "Same !@#\$, different day."

I cringe when they say that. I think of the more than 3,700 killed in action we have endured and the nearly 40,000 wounded that we have sustained. I think of how many of our fallen men and women exited the gate thinking the same thing. I think

of all the NCOs and officers that allow such an attitude to perpetuate itself in their ranks and again, I cringe.

Don't get me wrong ladies and gentlemen; I've seen some damned fine units out there doing all the right things. Much as it pains me to say it, darned near half of our troops don't go through any deliberate process of preparation prior to rolling out, because again, it's just more of the same !@#\$ on a different day. I think of all the times I've asked a trooper when was the last time their leader inspected their equipment and most often I get he or she does not. I've also heard a young troop tell me that their leader told them it's the individual's responsibility to be ready, not the sergeant's to check. Again, I cringe.

I ask young leaders, corporals, sergeants, staff sergeants and some sergeants first class and gunnery sergeants when last they inspected their troops. You'd be amazed, but a significant percentage of the leadership I question tells me they don't inspect their troops because they know what to do. All I can say is I'm sure glad my son isn't assigned to your unit.

My son tells me to trust him when he goes out at night. Even though I do, it does not mean I do not ask him where he's going, who he's going to be with, and what time is he going to return. Even though I trust him, it doesn't mean I don't scrutinize his car each weekend. While he thinks I borrow his little 240SX to look cool, I actually do it to make sure the brakes, lights and all the bells and whistles work. I actually check to ensure he's current on his inspection and registration. I don't want him to think I don't trust him, but then again he's 18 and I'm 49. I've got the experience. He goes out in an effort to gain what I already have — real life skills and experience.

Many of our youngsters engaged in combat operations went straight from home to boot camp or basic train-

ing. Then it was straight to advanced training and maybe a school of choice before they arrived at their first duty station. Many of our young troopers spent all of two or three weeks at their first duty station before hopping on a plane and flying to Kuwait before making the final leap north into Iraq. Many are still 18 and don't even know how to balance a checkbook or manage their money for that matter. Then again, when we were their age, neither did we. Disturbing as it may be to some, many units take their newest arrivals out on mission the first day in country. Is that you?

I've seen troopers exit the wire with either dead or no batteries in their night vision devices. I've seen some roll out of the wire with a weapon that had not been cleaned in good Lord knows how long. I've seen some who don't have a drop of water with them as they

head out for an eight- to 12-hour patrol. Heck, I've accompanied some and asked when they last downloaded their magazines to inspect ammunition and they look at me like I have a third eye. I ask their leaders why they don't inspect and they tell me they don't want their trooper to think they don't trust them. Good Lord, some leaders have their priorities all screwed up.

I think of that mom that approached me that day on the squadron parade field. I think of the words she spoke and the look in her eyes. I think of how much she's counting on all of us to do the right thing. I have no doubt she was trusting I'd do my part to get her son back home. I have no doubt there are tens of thousands of loved ones back in the U.S. right now who are counting on us, trusting that we'll do the right thing. Then I think of all those leaders who don't want their troopers to think they don't trust them.

If you're one of those leaders who worries about what your trooper thinks as you endeavor to do the right thing, then your priorities are all screwed up. If you're one of those leaders who doesn't inspect your troopers or equipment before you head out on the next mission, be honest; it has nothing to do with trust, you're just plain lazy or you were taught wrong.

I cannot count the number of times I've made a correction and a leader of every shape and size has asked me if I don't have anything better to do. My answer to them then and now is still the same; "Nope, that's what I get paid to do: Check everything, assume nothing" and have the backbone to enforce it.

I for one will not be the person who looks a mother in the eye and know in my heart I did not do everything I could to bring her son or daughter home alive. It has nothing to do with trust, but everything to do with who trusts us. What kind of leader are you? 

It was her Army that had to live up to all the expectations of all the mothers and fathers who bid their son or daughter farewell as they began their journey.

COALITION NEWS BRIEFS



MNC-I launches Phantom Strike

BAGHDAD – Multi-National Corps-Iraq launched a major offensive, Operation Phantom Strike, Aug. 13 in a powerful crackdown to disrupt al-Qaida in Iraq and Shia extremist operations. It consists of simultaneous operations throughout Iraq focused on pursuing remaining AQI terrorists and Iranian-supported extremist elements.

“Coalition Forces and Iraqi Security Forces continue to achieve successes and pursue security throughout many areas of Iraq,” said Lt. Gen. Ray Odierno, MNC-I commander. “My intent is to continue to pressure AQI and other extremist elements throughout Iraq to reduce their capabilities.”

Operation Phantom Strike is a joint Iraqi Security and Coalition Forces operation to eliminate remaining elements of AQI and other extremist groups, preventing them from causing further terrorism and inciting sectarian violence. It will intensify pressure on extremist networks across the entire theater. ©



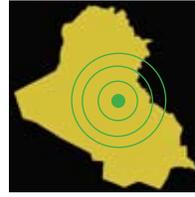
Troops secure route for Shia pilgrimage

MAHMUDIYAH – A shrine in Baghdad’s Kadhimiya neighborhood named after the seventh Shia Imam, Musa al-Kazim was the focal point of a pilgrimage Aug. 7-10.

A large shrine built over his tomb and the tomb of his grandson, ninth Shia Imam Muhammad at-Taqi, beside him, is now a shrine called the Kazimain.

Troops of 2nd Battalion, 15th Field Artillery Regiment, 2nd Brigade, 10th Mountain Division conducted patrols along the highway south of Baghdad that Coalition Forces dubbed Route Jackson, the route most pilgrims took to the northern Baghdad neighborhood.

Mayzel said the battalion had expected more pilgrims than actually passed through their area of operations. Only about 10,000 people traveled through the sector between Lutifiyah and Rasheed. ©



Iraqi sacrifices self to stop suicide bomber

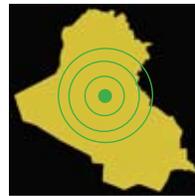
FOB HAMMER – An Iraqi man gave his life for four U.S. Soldiers and eight civilians when he intercepted a suicide bomber during a Concerned Citizens meeting in the town of al-Arafia Aug. 18.

The incident occurred while Soldiers from 3rd Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, were talking with members of the al-Arafia Concerned Citizens, a volunteer community group, at a member’s house.

“I was about 12 feet away when the bomber came around the corner,” said Staff Sgt. Sean Kane, of Los Altos, Calif., acting platoon sergeant of Troop B, 3-1 Cav. “I was about to engage when he jumped in front of us and intercepted the bomber as he ran toward us. As he pushed him away, the bomb went off.”

Kane said he felt the loss personally because he had met and interacted with his rescuer many times before the incident.

“He was high-spirited and really believed what the group (Concerned Citizens) was doing,” he said. ©



Search for MIA Soldiers turns up terrorists

YUSIFIYAH – Coalition and Iraqi troops conducted Operation Polar Schism III Aug. 11 in search of information regarding the May 12 abduction of two U.S. Soldiers.

Soldiers of 4th Battalion, 31st Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade, 10th Mountain Division, and 4th Battalion, 4th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division, flew across the Euphrates River to track down a well-known terrorist cell leader.

Iraqi Army soldiers entered the mosque where Coalition Forces suspected the cell leader was hiding. Coalition Forces secured the area outside the building, while Iraqi Forces entered the mosque. They detained 22 suspected terrorists, including four who had fired upon them as they entered the area. The unit continues its search for to the missing Soldiers. ©



Spc. Patrick Apkin, a scout with Troop B, 1st Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, kicks in the locked gate to an abandoned building during a neighborhood search in Sab Al Bor.

Coalition Cooperation

Cavalry troopers team with Estonians, ISF to clear Sab Al Bor's streets

Story, photos by
Army Staff Sgt. Jon Cupp
MND-B PAO

Nearly 150 combined troops from the 1st Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, the 2nd Brigade, 9th Iraqi Army Division (Mechanized), the Sab Al Bor Iraqi Police and Estonian troops from Estonian Platoon 15 teamed with a few neighborhood watch volunteers to clear Sab Al Bor's streets of insurgents and extremists as they moved in teams through each neighborhood in the city Aug. 11.

Covering every block during the operation, the troops and their joint partners searched door to door for possible weapons caches and continued to build

relationships and trust with locals they have been getting to know for the last nine months. They also took the opportunity to garner any possible information that the people could give them on insurgents or extremists operating in their neighborhoods.

"This is a large multi-troop operation that shows the people we're out here to support them by making their streets safer," said Capt. Timothy Dugan, commander, Troop B, 1/7 Cav., whose unit patrols the village every day. During the operation, his troop worked with other Garryowen units, including Headquarters Troop, Forward Support Troop and the attached Battery D, 1st Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery Regiment. "This is the largest dismounted operation that the people have seen in this city for a long time."

"It's a significant mission because it's the first time



Capt. Timothy Dugan (left), commander, Troop B, 1/7 Cav., 1st Bde., 1st Cav. Div., talks to his Iraqi Army counterparts from the 2nd Brigade, 9th Iraqi Army Division during a joint operation in Sab Al Bor.

we've had the Iraqi Police on a search with us," added Dugan, who hails from Audubon, Pa.

Within a few minutes of his troops hitting the streets, Dugan received a call on his radio. Information received by volunteers led the Estonian troops working with Dugan's Soldiers to finding blasting caps often used in the construction of improvised explosive devices. They were able to detain one suspect.

Shortly after getting the call, Dugan received word that based on tips from volunteers, Iraqi Army troops from the 2nd Bde., 9th IA Div. discovered a Sten machine gun and had detained one more suspect.

"Any time we get information from the people here, we're making money," Dugan said. "The people are becoming more confident about giving out information. We don't know what the insurgents look like and the locals do. They have been a great help in identifying the bad guys in their neighborhoods."

At each stop during the search, the troops would see familiar faces of people they have built relationships with in the houses and store fronts lining each

street. In the alleys and near each house, Soldiers handed out candy and toys to children who ran up to talk with them.

Along with searches, the Soldiers gave out aid packages which included food and other items.

"The people here see that we're here to help. Any time during an operation like this one when we can get them food and other rations it's a good day," Dugan said. "A food package contains seeds, beans and rice — usually enough to feed 20,000 people — and this is a town of about 7,000."

On one of the city streets, Dugan stopped by a small local store where a woman greeted him with a smile.

Dugan spoke with her through an interpreter while pulling a few Iraqi dinars from his pocket to buy a soda from her small corner shop.

"So how are things going here?" Dugan asked the shop keeper.

With smiling eyes, she answered "zahn" which is the Arabic word for good. Things have been improving over the past several months with fewer attacks

and the people feel more confident and safe when they see Iraqi Security Forces and Coalition troops patrolling their streets, she told Dugan.

According to Dugan, this is typical of how most of the people in Sab Al Bor are feeling these days.

Dugan said he attests the decrease in violence and improved stability in the area to the daily presence of Iraqi Security Forces and Coalition troops working out of a nearby joint security station along with the recent success of neighborhood watch volunteers who have aided in the catching of insurgents and extremists.

When Spc. Roy Loucks, a mortarman attached to Troop B, first came to the Sab Al Bor area, attacks were constant and he said he has seen first hand the changes of which Dugan speaks.

“Before we rolled into the village, things were in total chaos,” said Loucks, a Honolulu, Hawaii native. “Things have gotten much better. We used to have to do a lot more counter fires to intimidate the insurgents, but things have gotten more quiet now.”

Loucks, who has been learning Arabic to better communicate with the locals, said he enjoys his work on the streets of Sab Al Bor.

“This is what I joined the Army to do,” said Loucks. “If there’s no security then the people can’t enjoy their lives, it makes me feel good to know that I’m doing my part to help them. Most of them are telling us that they can now come outside with more piece of mind.”

After the joint operation ended with two suspects in custody and some confiscated contraband weapons in tow, Spc. Daniel Emblen, who is attached to Troop B and works with the Estonian platoon, reflected on the success of the day’s operation.

“It really has been a great mission,” said Emblen, an

Elizabethtown, Ky native. “We feel like we’re accomplishing great things here – continuing to support the Iraqis as they take care of things and move towards their transition.”

“I also love working with the Estonians, who are a great group of guys,” he added. ©

“Most of them are telling us that they can now come outside with more peace of mind.”

**Army Spc. Roy Loucks
mortarman**



Iraqi Police and Soldiers from 1/7th Cav. patrol the streets of Sab Al Bor.

Freedom's Focal Point





Top left: August 4, 2007, Hawr Rajab, Iraq. Soldiers with Troop A, 1st Squadron, 40th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, secure a suspected insurgent in Hawr Rajab Aug. 4. Photo by Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Justin K. Thomas.

Top right: An Iraqi sergeant corrects a soldier's movement under a simulated overhead firefight during a training exercise near Forward Operating Base Kalsu Aug. 22. Photo by Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Justin K. Thomas.

Bottom right: A Special Forces Soldier fires a MK-19 grenade launcher at an area target near Mosul Aug. 16. Photo by Navy Seaman Zachary Hernandez.

Bottom left: Marine Lance Cpl. Gregory Dolgner and Marine Pfc. Raymond J. Hahn, with Company B, 1st Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, 1st Marine Expeditionary Force, check to see if chicken is ready before serving their platoon Aug. 26 near Saqlawiyah. Photo by Marine Sgt. Robert B. Brown.

Freedom's Focal Point



A member of the Iraqi National Police holds a copy of the Baghdad Now newspaper and celebrates the Iraqi national soccer team's win in the Asia Cup at a checkpoint in Baghdad's East Rashid district Aug. 6. Photo by Navy Seaman David Quillen.

Freedom's Focal Point





Top left: An Iraqi Special Operations soldier advised by U.S. Special Forces finishes clearing a house during an operation to detain suspected terrorist leader Aug. 13 in Baghdad. Photo by Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Johansen Laurel.

Far right: An Abrams tank belonging to Company C, 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, passes through Traffic Control Point South during a volunteer signup for Iraqi's living in the Taji Market area Aug. 17. Photo by Army Sgt. Rachel M. Ahner.

Bottom left: Soldiers with Company D, 2nd Battalion, 12th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division perform emergency medical services on wounded civilians in the East Rashid District of Baghdad Aug. 30. Photo by Navy Petty Officer 3rd Class David Quillen.



Freedom's Focal Point



Freedom's Focal Point



Soldiers from the 6th Battalion, 9th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, and the Iraqi Army perform a dismounted patrol in Little Abu Sayda Aug. 12. Photo by Air Force Staff Sgt. Dennis J. Henry Jr.



Freedom's Focal Point

Freedom's Focal Point





Top left: Army Sgt. Christopher Swienton, Company B, 1st Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade, 82nd Airborne Division, breaks the window of a suspect vehicle in order to move it to a safe area in Abu Karmah Aug. 17. Photo by Army Sgt. 1st Class Robert C. Brogan.

Top right: A Marine AV-8B Harrier refuels midflight from a KC-130J Hercules from Marine Aerial Refueler Transport Squadron-252/352, while flying over Al Anbar province Aug. 14. Photo by Marine Lance Cpl. James F. Cline III.

Bottom right: Marine Sgt. Jeremy L. Adair, 4th Reconnaissance Battalion, 4th Marine Division, demonstrates proper detainee handling techniques to Iraqi soldiers from 2d Brigade, 7th Iraqi Army Division Aug. 17 in Al Asad. Photo by Marine Cpl. Shane S. Keller.

Bottom left: An Iraqi National Police officer checks a driver's ID during a snap tactical control checkpoint outside Combat Outpost Cahill Sept. 2. Photo by Army Sgt. Timothy Kingston.

Middle left: Soldiers detain and investigate a suspected insurgent in central Iraq. The Soldiers are attached to Company B, 3rd Battalion, 509th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade, 25th Infantry Division. Photo by Navy Petty Officer 2nd Class Justin K. Thomas.



KICKING THINGS OFF

Fire teams Gunny and Storm from 2nd Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery, 3rd Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division fire a M109A6 Paladin into the Diyala River Valley in support of Operation Lightning Hammer Aug. 13. Photo by Army Spc. Ryan Stroud.

Indirect fires preceded Lightning Hammer in Diyala

MND-N PAO

Multi-National Division-North troops kicked off Operation Lightning Hammer with a boom via a barrage of indirect fires and Air Force-delivered munitions on carefully selected targets in Diyala province Aug. 14 as part of a ‘no safe haven’ approach to dealing with al-Qaida in Iraq terrorists. The operations were part of Multi-National Corps-Iraq’s Operation Phantom Strike.

More than 300 artillery munitions, precision rockets and bombs were dropped throughout the night and into the morning, targeting suspected al-Qaida targets and setting the stage for a ground force attack in the Diyala River Valley.

Soldiers from three different brigades, participating in three smaller operations joined together with Iraqi Forces, launched Lightning Hammer.

Soldiers from 6th Squadron, 9th Armored Reconnaissance Regiment, 3rd Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division answered the early stages of the operation with an air assault, clearing two villages.

By mid-day the recon Soldiers discovered a weapons cache, a hardened fighting position, five improvised explosive devices and a house rigged with explosives.

“Enemies of Iraq will not get a chance to rest or hide in Diyala Province,” said Brig. Gen. Mick Bednarek, deputy commanding general for operations, Task Force Lightning and MND-N. “The people of Diyala are now showing their support for the Iraqi Security Forces and our Coalition Forces. They are realizing the difference being made by their cooperation in rooting out extremists.”

Soldiers from 5th Squadron, 73rd Cavalry Regiment, attached to 3rd Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, conducted two air assaults on

villages in the river valley.

The 5/73 Cav. Soldiers defeated a number of ineffective small arms attacks and killed three terrorists, detained eight and found a weapons cache.

Air Force B-1 Bombers dropped ordnance on the weapon caches and IEDs, eliminating the threats.

“We are moving forward together for the benefit of the Iraqi people and this operation proves the growing strength of Iraq’s partnership with the Coalition,” Bednarek said.

In another part of Diyala, the 5th Iraqi Army Division and 5th Battalion, 20th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division discovered an AQI encampment, believed to house 25 fighters, and a substantial weapons cache of IED making material, mortars and rocket propelled grenades. The unit also discovered an assembled IED. The cache was reduced in place. 



ROLL OUT!

A tank with Company B, 1st Tank Battalion, supporting Task Force Highlander, Regimental Combat Team 2, speeds across the Iraqi desert and bursts from a dust cloud. The tanks spent a week combing the desert in support of Operation Punisher III.

Tanks, Highlanders continue punishing enemy in Al Anbar

Story, photos by
Marine Cpl. Ryan C. Heiser
MNF-W PAO

Some people would agree the word ‘punish’ is the perfect term to describe what Marines in Al Anbar province near the western Euphrates River valley have been doing to insurgents in their local areas.

First Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, Regimental Combat Team 2, kicked off Operation Punisher III the first week of August. Company B, 1st Tank Battalion, which has been providing support for 1st LAR and Task Force Highlander since the beginning of its deployment in March, launched Headquarters and 1st Platoons in support of the task force and the operation.

“Tanks help out in situations like this, where you have a large area of open terrain, because we are a highly mobile element that can cover a lot of ground

very rapidly,” said Master Sgt. Jerri A. Schlickemayer, company tank leader. “We have high-powered optics that can see large distances night or day, huge amounts of firepower, and great armor protection — especially from IEDs. Nothing can destroy it and it is very difficult to hide from. It’s a perfect tool.”

The tanks spent several days combing the battalion’s area of operation south of the Euphrates River. They searched several small villages and Bedouin camps, as well as caves and wadis.

“Our presence always makes the civilians happy,” said Lance Cpl. James A. Robson, an Abrams tank main-gun loader with the company. “They know when we roll up they can feel safe and don’t need to be scared anymore because we are there to help. Their expressions are great, especially the kids. They see this huge piece of machinery rumble up and they know it’s there to protect them, as part of their defense. It makes you feel great.”

Schlickemayer, a Bismarck, N.D., native, said the

Marines love going to help support other units during operations.

“Every time we go out, we seem to find something, whether it be a cache or just an ammunitions storage area or whatever. It makes the Marines feel like they are contributing, like they are a part of something, and they get excited about that,” Schlickemayer said.

This time the Marines came back with a small cache of four mortar rounds and fuses, a 14.5mm heavy machine gun — larger than its more common cousin, the 50-caliber machine gun the Marine Corps favors — which was outfitted with a mount and chair for anti-aircraft capabilities, and 500 brand-new 14.5mm rounds still in their packaging.

“We come out and do overwatch, clearing, vehicle check points, and joint operations with grunts through the cities and stuff, but nothing feels as good as when you come back with something like this,”

said Cpl. Daniel J. Halpenny, a tank gunner with the company, indicating the machine gun. “We love finding stuff, that’s why we are here, to stop it before it reaches the cities and can be used against us. Who knows how many lives are saved just by finding one weapon, one round, one fuse. Every one of them counts.”

Operation Punisher III was an ongoing part of the regimental-wide Operation Mawtini, which is aimed at counter-

tering an insurgent surge of activity in the Al Anbar province, as well as disrupting the flow of weapons and other illegal items toward urban areas. 

“That’s why we are here — to stop it before it reaches the cities and can be used against us.”

***Marine Cpl.. Daniel J. Halpenny
tank gunner***



The sun sets in the western Euphrates River Valley as a tank sits in an overwatch position.

Understanding Ramadan

Month of reverence marks Muhammad's revelation

Story, photo by
Army Sgt. Abel Trevino
MNC-I PAO

A sundown in mid-September marks the beginning of the month of Ramadan. Muslims across the globe observe this month of blessing through fasting, prayer and charity.

The tradition of Ramadan dates back to 610 A.D. Its timing is determined by the cycle of the full moon.

“Ramadan falls on or about September 13-15 and it goes back 10 days each year because it is based on the lunar calendar as opposed to the Gregorian calendar,” said Chaplain Khallid Shabazz, 1st Battalion, 227th Aviation Regiment, 1st Air Cavalry Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division.

Since the month of reverence is based on the lunar calendar, its beginning and end vary globally. Muslims typically consult the local imam and to determine the precise start.

This time is important to Muslims as it is the origin of the Quran.

“(Ramadan) is the month when the Holy Quran was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad by the angel Gabriel,” he said. “So Muslims revere the month because of the reverence of the Quranic revelation.”

Muslims use prayer and fasting as tributes and testaments to their faith. While important and highly visible, these are only two of the aspects that are used to demonstrate reverence during Ramadan. Muslims are encouraged to practice the teachings of Islam sternly and abstain from sex and smoking during the time frame.

“This is the month when all inappropriate behavior is to be nullified and we are to focus strictly on our mission of pleasing God,” Shabazz, the only U.S. Army Muslim chaplain in Iraq, said. “No food or water is to build our intestinal fortitude and resistance to these evil forces that take us away from God.

“Lastly, the fast teaches us the very essence of how poor and hungry people feel on a daily level,” he continued. “When one is hungry

and does not have food, it helps them to be more conscious of their brothers and sisters in humanity who are without those basic items.”

The fast is broken at nightfall with a meal called iftar. Muslims usually spend the time after iftar visiting friends and family and reading the Quran.

At night, Muslims conduct the Taraweeh prayer, or night prayer. The Taraweeh Salaah consists of extra prayers, usually in even numbers of raka'ah. These prayers are typically conducted en masse at a mosque, where 1/30th of the Quran is recited nightly so the entire Quran is read by the conclusion of Ramadan.

The 27th night of Ramadan is called Laylat-al-Qadr, the night of power. It is believed that on this night the prophet Muhammad

received the Quran.

“Laylat-al-Qadr, which is the night of power, all devout Muslims congregate in the local mosque and pray tarweeh salah (prayers) and ask God for forgiveness for past sins,” Shabazz said. “The prayer consists of Muslims

standing in line, listening to the recitation of the Quran from the Imam, and reciting from the Quran — usually as much as 15 to 30 minutes absorbing the message

of God in to the hearts of the believers. The Quran was believed to be revealed on this specific night, so the believers celebrate the night hoping for as many blessings from God as possible.”

Eid ul-Fitr officially marks the end of Ramadan. The holiday is full of mixed emotions for Muslims and is marked by celebration for both the ending of the fast and thanks to God for granting them the willpower needed to complete the trials of the previous month.

“The word Eid in Arabic means celebration, so the celebration begins after the completion of Ramadan,” Shabazz said. “It is a time when many are sad that the time of reflection is over and many are also grateful because life again takes on some form of normalcy.”

“We are to focus strictly on our mission of pleasing God.”

**Army Chaplain Khallid Shabazz
Muslim chaplain**

The Road Back

Soldiers help Adhamiyah begin its recovery

Story, photos by
Army Sgt. Mike Pryor
MND-C PAO

“How’s business?” is the question on the tip of Capt. Albert Marckwardt’s tongue as he strolls through the main market of Baghdad’s Adhamiyah District.

The answer, though, is evident all around him. Business in Adhamiyah is booming. The formerly run-down market is bustling. Merchandise spills out of the kiosks and stands, and the street is clogged with shoppers. For Marckwardt, who commands Troop B, 3rd Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, responsible for security in the area, it’s an encouraging scene.

“It’s like in the U.S. when we started to come out of the depression and everyone’s spirits were lifted. We’re starting to hit that kind of recovery period here,” the Columbia, Md., native said. “It’s a night and day difference from when we got here.”

New Beginnings

Sgt. Bryan Lundquist, an explosive ordnance disposal team sergeant who has been based in Ad-

hamiyah since February, compared Adhamiyah at its lowest point to the brutal, civil war-era New York City portrayed in the movie “Gangs of New York.”

“There was no real authority. It was just the law of the jungle,” Lundquist said.

Today, while major stumbling blocks remain, recent improvements in the political and economic situation have given Soldiers like Marckwardt reason to be hopeful about Adhamiyah’s future. The new sense of optimism can be traced back to two major events. The first was the arrival in July of about 500 Soldiers from 3/7 Cav. as part of the surge of U.S. forces into Baghdad. The 3/7’s arrival instantly quadrupled the number of Soldiers operating in Adhamiyah.

The additional combat power has enabled Soldiers to maintain a constant presence on the streets, capitalize quickly on information, and mount precision strikes against key leaders of the insurgency, Marckwardt said. In effect, they can now treat the disease instead of the symptoms.

“The enemy can’t be comfortable like they have been. They can’t sleep in the same bed every night. They’re on the run,” he said.



Capt. Albert Marckwardt, commander of Troop B, 3rd Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment, talks with a shop owner in the main market of Baghdad’s Adhamiyah neighborhood.

The other major event was an uprising by Adhamiyah residents against terrorists. On Aug. 5, a group of citizens, fed-up with terrorist activity in their community, stormed the Abu Hanifa Mosque — a well known terrorist sanctuary — and expelled the insurgents, beginning a chain of events that led Coalition Forces to detain more than 50 suspected terrorists and seize five large weapons caches over the next two days.

“To me, it feels like the community is starting to stand up for itself. They’re fed up,” said Staff Sgt. Christopher Grimm, of Cabot, Ark., a squad leader with Troop B.

Marckwardt said all the progress that U.S. forces have been able to achieve in Adhamiyah over the past few months has been due to the new-found resolve of the people.

“Our success here would not be possible if the community didn’t want it,” Marckwardt said.

The Domino Effect

The idea that Adhamiyah is in a resurgent period is not just wishful thinking. There are a number of concrete indicators of progress. In the past month, entrepreneurs opened a new fuel station, providing residents a steady supply of

affordable gasoline, several banks which had been closed re-opened, and a factory making uniforms and other clothes opened and is employing 50 workers, said Kissimmee, Fla., native, Maj. Ike Sallee, 3/7's operations officer.

"The gas station on its own may not mean much, but then you have the bank that just opened, and then you have the factory, and all these other things. That momentum starts rolling. It's the domino effect," Sallee said.

On the security side, the numbers also show dramatic improvement. Total attacks — which include small arms, mortars, rocket propelled grenades, and improvised explosive devices — are down by 70 percent since July 20, said squadron intelligence analyst Sgt. Timothy Luna, of North Olmstead, Ohio. Soldiers from the 3/7 Cav. have captured 34 suspected terrorists in addition to the 50 detained after the Abu Hanifa raids.

More importantly, the people of Adhamiyah have joined in the effort. More than 700 residents have applied to join the Critical Infrastructure Guard Force, a security force of local people with the support of 3/7 Cav. to protect schools, hospitals, mosques and government buildings.

More than 60 have completed the guard force training and will soon receive assignments.

The unit has also been trying to build on the sense of communal pride by renovating some of the more blighted areas of the city. The unit has funded projects to remove trash and sewage from the streets, beautify a public square, renovate schools, and more. Such projects rejuvenate cities, Marckwardt said.

"You look at cities in the U.S. that are run down, and the smallest things can be tipping points in turning them around," he said. "It's about bringing pride back into the city."

Despite all these successes, the insurgents are not beaten yet, Marckwardt said.

"We've got to stay vigilant. If I was the enemy, I'd be thinking, 'How would I react? What would I do to counter this?'" he said.

The dangers that still lurk in the area were clear during a patrol with Troop A to distribute humanitarian aid rations in a poor part of the city Aug. 22. As the Soldiers were distributing bags of rice and flour, a huge explosion erupted somewhere close by, shaking the ground. Moments later, the report came in over the radio: IED.

"Mount up," said 1st Lt. John Gassmann, platoon leader.

The Soldiers raced off in their humvees, leaving a few bags of rice lying in the street. A few blocks away, another platoon had come within 100 feet of a deadly deep-buried IED. The bomb had exploded prematurely, leaving a phone booth-sized crater in the road. Gassmann's Soldiers reacted quickly to set up an outer security cordon around the area and began questioning people. The smiles and laughter that had been evident as the Soldiers handed out food bags were gone, replaced by cool professionalism. Gassmann said being able to adapt to changing circumstances was the key to success in Adhamiyah.

"We have to always be ready to switch gears," he said.

Irreversible Momentum

The end goal of all the 3/7 Cav.'s efforts in Adhamiyah is to bring progress up to a level where it can't be undone. Marckwardt

calls this point of no return "irreversible momentum," and said it depends on Iraqis taking the lead.

"If we do it all for them, the problems will come right back as soon as we leave," said Roanoke, Va., native Staff Sgt. William Schilling, of Troop B.

Adhamiyah has gone through a boom-and-bust cycle before, said Cabot, Ark.-native Staff Sgt. Christopher Grimm. Grimm, who was based in the area two years ago and saw months of

"We've been telling them to stand up, and they've done just that."

***Army Capt. Albert Marckwardt
Troop B commander***

progress vanish when his unit turned over security to an Iraqi Army unit that wasn't ready for the responsibility. He said he worries about the cycle recurring.

"My biggest fear is history repeating itself," Grimm said.

Leaders from 3/7 Cav. are determined to make sure that doesn't happen. One way is by working with the Iraqi Army to improve their tactical skills and professionalism. The squadron conducts joint patrols with the Iraqi soldiers daily and has begun using embedded Iraqi platoons in some U.S. units. When the Soldiers conduct humanitarian missions for Adhamiyah residents, they make sure Iraqi soldiers are involved.

The other way is through the Critical Infrastructure Guard Force. In a process not unlike the reconciliation effort that turned around Anbar province, 3/7 Cav. has capitalized on a groundswell of resentment against terrorists by essentially deputizing community members to fight back.

"We've been telling them to stand up, and they've done just that," Marckwardt said. 



An Iraqi juvenile detainee puts the finishing touches on his brick to show his willingness to reform during a class at Dar al-Hikmah, a school for minors detained by Coalition Forces run by Task Force 134. Photos by Army Staff Sgt. Jacob Boyer.

When Iraqi juveniles find themselves in Coalition custody, a new school looks to ensure they have

A Better Tomorrow

by Air Force 1st Lt. Angela Webb
TF-134 PAO

Dar Al-Hikmah, also known as the “House of Wisdom”, is a Multi-National Force-Iraq detention operations facility educating more than 800 juvenile detainees held in Coalition Forces custody.

“The mission of Dar Al-Hikmah is to ensure that the future of Iraq is educated, safeguarded and given a vision of hope for the future of pursuing truth,” said Marine Maj. Gen. Doug Stone, MNF-I deputy commanding general of detention operations. “The future of Iraq will be secured by investing in its children. We – Iraqis and Americans – will do this not by occupying their time to stay busy, but occupying their minds with a quality education and giving them the opportunity to perhaps excel in ways previously thought impossible.”

To educate the juvenile detainees, a curriculum of six core classes are taught: Arabic, math, geography, science, civics and English. They also participate in

music, art and sports activities at the center.

The classes are taught at different education levels. To ensure a juvenile is slotted in the right level, assessments by Dar Al-Hikmah faculty are given to them when they enter detention. The education program is mandatory for all juveniles age 17 and under.

Assessments as of August 2007 found that approximately 26 percent had no education through primary school, 17 percent were at the middle to high school education level, and 38 percent had a high school or higher education level.

The school is still fairly new – it opened Aug. 14 – but since then Iraqi leaders and figures have requested to see the center and its students. Many Iraqi visitors have donated items for the juvenile detainees' quality of life there.

Recently, Iraqi Ministry of Youth and Sports representatives visited and donated soccer uniforms, sneaker, cleats and other sports equipment for the students to use.

"We would like to see you all released and at home with your families, but that is not possible at this time," said a Ministry of Youth and Sports administrator speaking to a group of juvenile detainees. "We are working with General Stone and the Coalition Forces to improve your stay here, but we need you to take this opportunity to learn and study so that we can create a better future for Iraq."

Dr. Abd al-Kareem al-Samirra`I, deputy chairman of Security and Defense Committee of the parliament, visited the site Sept. 6. He was representing the Iraqi Vice President Tariq al-Hashimi and spoke to the detainees on what the program means for Iraq.

"This is a great program that the Coalition Forces have created for you and we are working together, so eventually we can bring this program to life throughout Iraq," said al-Samirra`I. "We would like you all to set an example and seize this opportunity to learn as much as you can, so when the U.S. leaves, we can rebuild our country with your educated minds."

During a class at Dar al-Hikmah, the juveniles were given the collaborative assignment of writing a letter to Iraqi leadership.

"We, the children of Iraq, and Iraq's future urge you to work together, to set aside your differences to help build this nation. We are all Iraqis who must work together to build a nation which offer us hope



Maj. Gen. Doug Stone, Task Force 134 commanding general, speaks to a class at Dar al Hikmah.

and a future," the beginning of the letter reads.

"I can see major differences in the students since the school opened," said Nesrin Dickow, Task Force 134 linguist and cultural advisor. "Before we began this experience, all the children were concerned with was 'When am I getting out of here?' They were angry and depressed. Now they still want to be released, but it is obvious they are happy and proud of their achievements and are eager to learn and look forward to school."

Before Dar Al-Hikmah opened, classes were held at Camp Cropper, a Coalition Forces theater internment facility.

"Since the school opened, vast improvements with classroom space, sports fields and other learning materials have

created a better process to educate the youth of Iraq," Stone said. "We are on the right path to complete the mission of educating Iraq's youth, but it has to be a combined effort of Coalition Forces and Iraq to secure its success." ©

"The future of Iraq will be secured by investing in its children."

***Marine Maj. Gen. Doug Stone
MNF-I deputy commanding
general of detainee operations***

Citizens Stand Up

Residents aid paratroopers in denying insurgents, militias safe havens

Story, photos by
Army Sgt. Marcus Butler
MND-C PAO

The people of Jurf as Sakhr have been living in a nightmare of sectarian violence being waged between al-Qaida in Iraq fighters and Jaysh al-Mahdi militants for more than a year.

With help from concerned citizens fed up with the violence, paratroopers from 1st Battalion, 501st Parachute Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, are ending the reign of terror and oppression. Ongoing operations are paving the way to safety, security and a better way of life.

The area of Jurf as Sakhr, a small agricultural community nestled among the Euphrates River, date palm groves and farmland, has been the site of more than 400 attacks against citizens and security forces in the region. Attacks include ambushes, machine-gun fire, car and truck bombs as well as the militant's weapon of choice, roadside bombs.

With no significant security presence since October 2006, Shia militias and Sunni insurgents gained a strong hold over the

Concerned citizens helped the Iraqi Army and paratroopers move along roads and farmland looking for IEDs.



Lt. Col. Robert Balcavage, commander, 1st Battalion, 501st Parachute Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, talks to the sheik in charge of an area being cleared by the first phase of Operation Gecko.

people and land in and around Jurf as Sakhr.

When concerned citizens began standing up in the area, they asked for the help of local security forces to drive out the militants and take back their homes and land.

Operation Gecko, one part of the Coalition Forces' Operation Phantom Thunder, was the answer to the citizens call for help. The operation began systematically cleaning up the area, removing deadly roadside bombs and arresting the terrorists and militiamen responsible for the violence and chaos that had blanketed the city.

'This operation was conducted because the people in the area were tired of living in fear of al-Qaida and Jaysh al-Mahdi,' said



Paratroopers from 1st Battalion, 501st Parachute Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade, 25th Infantry Division, take cover after being dropped off by UH-60 Blackhawk helicopters near Jurf as Sakhr as part of Operation Gecko.

Capt. Charles Canon, of Anchorage, Alaska, commander, Company B. “We started meeting with the local sheiks of the area and they wanted to be a part of the Concerned Citizens Program and help clear the area of the militants.”

Operation Gecko was broken down into three phases focused on clearing a section of Jurf as Sakhr, and encompassed over 20 square kilometers of land to be searched and secured.

The citizens helped the Iraqi Army and paratroopers move along the roads and farmland in the Euphrates River valley search-

ing for IED threats.

During the operation, the Concerned Citizens Program in Jurf as Sakhr has employed nearly 200 people and has 10 checkpoints manned by local residents.

The Iraqi Security Forces and concerned citizens handed out some 125,000 leaflets encouraging residents to help the Concerned Citizens Program and ISF keep peace. They also broadcasted information on what was happening in their neighborhoods while other security teams assessed the road conditions so local contractors

could be hired to repair and reconstruct areas damaged during a year of sectarian violence.

While the operation is still underway, Canon said the first phase was a huge success. The concerned citizens are helping security forces find and destroy roadside bombs and other weapons. They are pointing out safe houses and pointing out terrorists and militiamen.

“It was good to see the citizens out helping protect their neighborhood,” Canon said. “They know that we cannot be here forever, so they realized that is time to cooperate.” ☺

IN MEM

NAMES OF COALITION SERVICE MEM
OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM BETWE

July 16, 2007

Lance Cpl. Shawn W. Starkovich, 20
3/1 Mar. Regt., 1st Mar. Div., 1st MEF

July 17, 2007

Sgt. Nathan S. Barnes, 23
4/31 Inf., 2nd Bde., 10th Mountain Div.
Pfc. Brandon K. Bobb, 20
92nd MP Bn., 89th MP Bde.
Petty Officer 1st Class Jeffrey L. Chaney, 38
EOD Mobile Unit 11
Pfc. James J. Harrelson, 19
2/16 Inf., 4th Bde., 1st Inf. Div.
Pfc. Ron J. Joshua Jr., 19
92nd MP Bn., 89th MP Bde.
Chief Petty Officer Patrick L. Wade, 38
EOD Mobile Unit 11

July 18, 2007

Spc. Zachary R. Clouser, 19
1/26 Inf., 2nd Bde. 1st Inf. Div.
Spc. Richard Gilmore III, 22
1/26 Inf., 2nd Bde. 1st Inf. Div.
Spc. Daniel E. Gomez, 21
1/26 Inf., 2nd Bde. 1st Inf. Div.
Sgt. 1st Class Luis E. Gutierrez-Rosales, 38
1/26 Inf., 2nd Bde. 1st Inf. Div.

July 19, 2007

Senior Aircraftsman Matthew Caulwell, 22
B Flight, No. 1 Squadron, RAF Regt.
Sgt. Ronald L. Coffelt, 36
503rd MP Bn., 16th MP Bde.
Senior Aircraftsman Christopher Dunsmore, 24
B Flight, No. 1 Squadron, RAF Regt.

July 20, 2007

Cpl. Rhett A. Butler, 22
2/1 Cav., 4th Bde., 2nd Inf. Div.

July 21, 2007

Lance Cpl. Timothy Darren Flowers, 25
The Corps of Electrical Mechanical Engineers
Cpl. Christopher G. Scherer, 21
1st CEB, 1st Mar. Div., 1st MEF
Sgt. Jacob S. Schumuecker, 27
755th Recon/Decon Co.

July 22, 2007

Sgt. Shawn G. Adams, 21
3/509 PIR, 4th Bde., 25th Inf. Div.
Lance Cpl. Bobby L. Twitty, 20
CLB 6, CLR 2, 2nd MLG, 2nd MEF

July 24, 2007

Sgt. Courtney D. Finch, 27
714th Maint. Co.
Spc. Camy Florexil, 20
1/28 Inf., 4th Bde., 1st Inf. Div.
Lance Cpl. Robert A. Lynch, 20
1/12 Mar Regt., 3rd Mar. Div., 3rd MEF

**GREATER LOVE HATH
NO MAN THAN THIS:
THAT A MAN LAY DOWN
HIS LIFE FOR HIS
FRIENDS.**

JOHN 15:13

Staff Sgt. Joshua P. Mattero, 29
63rd Explosive Ordnance Bn.
Cpl. James H. McRae, 22
3rd Maint. Bn., CLR 35, 3rd MLG, 3rd MEF
Hospitalman Daniesl S. Noble, 21
1st Mar. Div., Fleet Marine Force Pacific
Cpl. Matthew R. Zindars, 21
2/1 Mar. Regt., 1st Mar. Div., 1st MEF

July 25, 2007

Spc. Daniel A. Leckel, 19
1/28 Inf., 4th Bde., 1st Inf. Div.

July 26, 2007

Pvt. Michael A. Baloga, 21
6/9 Cav., 3rd Bde., 1st Cav. Div.
Spc. Charles E. Bilbrey Jr., 21
5/7 Cav., 1st Bde., 3rd Inf. Div.
Sgt. William R. Howdeshell, 37
5/7 Cav., 1st Bde., 3rd Inf. Div.
Spc. Jaime Rodriguez Jr., 19
5/7 Cav., 1st Bde., 3rd Inf. Div.

July 29, 2007

Pfc. Cody C. Grater, 20
407th BSB, 2nd Bde., 82nd Airborne Div.
Staff Sgt. Wilberto Suliveras, 38
2/8 Cav., 1st Bde., 1st Cav. Div.

July 30, 2007

Cpl. Jason M. Kessler, 29
2/75 Ranger Regt.
Cpl. Sean A. Stokes, 24
3/1 Mar. Regt., 1st Mar. Div., 1st MEF

July 31, 2007

Cpl. Steve Edwards, 35
Badger Sqd., 2nd Royal Tank Regt. Sutton
Spc. Zachariah J. Gonzalez, 23
2/3 Inf., 3rd Bde., 2nd Inf. Div.
Pfc. Charles T. Heinlein Jr., 23
2/3 Inf., 3rd Bde., 2nd Inf. Div.
Pfc. Alfred H. Jairala, 29
2/3 Inf., 3rd Bde., 2nd Inf. Div.
Sgt. Stephen R. Maddies, 41
473rd Counter Rocket, Artillery and Mortar Plt.
Sgt. Bradley W. Marshall, 37
2/377 PIR, 4th Bde., 25th Inf. Div.

MORIAM

MEMBERS WHO DIED WHILE SERVING IN
BETWEEN JULY 16 AND AUGUST 15, 2007

Spc. Daniel F. Reyes, 24
2/377 PIR, 4th Bde., 25th Inf. Div.

August 1, 2007

Sgt. 1st Class Travis S. Bachman, 30
714th Security Force

August 2, 2007

Master Sgt. Julian Ingles Rios, 52
130th Eng. Bn.

Spc. Christian Rojas-Gallego, 24
2/3 Inf., 3rd Bde., 2nd Inf. Div.

Spc. Eric D. Salinas, 25
2/3 Inf., 3rd Bde., 2nd Inf. Div.
Staff Sgt. Fernando Santos, 29
2/3 Inf., 3rd Bde., 2nd Inf. Div.

August 4, 2007

Pfc. Jaron D. Holliday, 21
1/40 Cav., 4th Bde., 25th Inf. Div.

Cpl. Jason K. Lafleur, 28
1/40 Cav., 4th Bde., 25th Inf. Div.

Spc. Braden J. Long, 19
1/40 Cav., 4th Bde., 25th Inf. Div.

Pfc. Matthew M. Murchison, 21
720th MP Bn., 89th MP Bde.

Sgt. Dustin S. Wakeman, 25
1/40 Cav., 4th Bde., 25th Inf. Div.

August 5, 2007

Spc. Justin R. Blackwell, 27
759th MP Bn., 89th MP Bde.

Pvt. Jeremy S. Bohannon, 18
759th MP Bn., 89th MP Bde.

Spc. Charles E. Leonard Jr., 29
1/8 Cav., 2nd Bde., 1st Cav. Div.

Tech Sgt. Joey D. Link, 29
39th Airlift Squadron

August 6, 2007

Cpl. Juan M. Alcantara, 22
1/23 Inf., 3rd Bde., 2nd Inf. Div.

Pvt. Craig Barber, 20
2nd Bn., The Royal Welsh Ogmore

Sgt. Nicholas A. Gummingsall, 23
1/23 Inf., 3rd Bde., 2nd Inf. Div.

Spc. Kareem R. Khan, 20
1/23 Inf., 3rd Bde., 2nd Inf. Div.

Spc. Christopher T. Neiberger, 22
1/18 Inf., 2nd Bde., 1st Inf. Div.

Staff Sgt. Jacob M. Thompson, 26
1/23 Inf., 3rd Bde., 2nd Inf. Div.

August 7, 2007

Cpl. Reynold Armand, 21
2nd AA Bn., 2nd Mar. Div., 2nd MEF

Leading Aircraftman Martin Beard
No. 1 Squadron, RAF Regt.

Sgt. Jon E. Bonnell Jr., 22
1/11 Mar. Regt., 1st Mar. Div.

Spc. Donald M. Young, 19

1/5 Cav., 2nd Bde., 1st Cav. Div.

August 9, 2007

Staff Sgt. Alicia A. Birchett, 29
326th Eng. Bn., 101 Sust. Bde., 101st Airborne Div.

Lance Sgt. Chris Casey, 27
1st Bn., Irish Guards

Lance Cpl. Kirk Redpath, 22
1st Bn., Irish Guards

Sgt. Michael E. Tayaoato, 27
7th ESB, 1st MLG, 1st MEF

August 10, 2007

Staff Sgt. Joan D. Duran, 24
5/73 Cav., 3rd Bde., 82nd Airborne Div.

August 11, 2007

Pfc. William L. Edwards, 23
1/30 Inf., 2nd Bde., 3rd Inf. Div.

Sgt. Scott L. Kirkpatrick, 26
1/30 Inf., 2nd Bde., 3rd Inf. Div.

Sgt. Andrew W. Lancaster, 23
1/30 Inf., 2nd Bde., 3rd Inf. Div.

Spc. Justin O. Penrod, 24
1/30 Inf., 2nd Bde., 3rd Inf. Div.

Staff Sgt. William D. Scates, 31
1/30 Inf., 2nd Bde., 3rd Inf. Div.

August 13, 2007

Staff Sgt. Eric D. Cottrell, 39
5/82 FA, 4th Bde., 1st Cav. Div.

Spc. Alun R. Howells, 20
1/64 AR, 2nd Bde., 3rd Inf. Div.

Pfc. Juan M. Lopez Jr., 23
5/82 FA, 4th Bde., 1st Cav. Div.

Pfc. Paulomarko U. Pacificador, 24
5/82 FA, 4th Bde., 1st Cav. Div.

August 14, 2007

Staff Sgt. Sean P. Fisher, 29
1/52 Avn., TF 49

Pfc. Shawn D. Hensel, 20
2/23 Inf., 4th Bde., 2nd Inf. Div.

Spc. Steven R. Jewell, 26
1/52 Avn., TF 49

Chief Warrant Officer Christopher C. Johnson, 31
1/52 Avn., TF 49

Chief Warrant Officer Jackie L. McFarlane Jr., 30
1/52 Avn., TF 49

Staff Sgt. Stanley B. Reynolds, 37
1/52 Avn., TF 49

August 15, 2007

Sgt. Princess C. Samuels, 22
HHT, 1st Bde., 1st Cav. Div.

Spc. Zandra T. Walker, 28
4/227 Avn., 1st Air Cav. Bde., 1st Cav. Div.

