

THE COALITION CHRONICLE

Volume 3, Issue 5

May 2008

Baby steps • King of battle still reigns • Sniper hunt



Medal of Honor Tribute
Camp Victory servicemembers salute 3rd Infantry Division Soldier



Sgt. Patrick C. West, right, Delta Company, 4th Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, Regimental Combat Team 5, talks with an Iraqi policeman after picking him up for a patrol in Akashat, Iraq, on April 16. Iraqi policemen join Marine patrols to serve as an asset to a successful mission. (Photo by Marine Cpl. Seth Maggard)



page 5

An Iraqi baby winds up on the American doorsteps of Forward Operating Base Callahan.



page 17

Iraqi lifesavers graduate from a firefighting course taught by Airmen of the 407th Expeditionary Civil Engineer Fire Department.



page 18

Soldiers with the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment pursue an enemy sniper through the streets of Mosul.

THE COALITION CHRONICLE

The Official Magazine of
Multi-National Corps-Iraq

May 2008
Volume 3, Issue 5

MNC-I Commander
Lt. Gen. Lt. Gen. Lloyd J. Austin III

MNC-I Public Affairs Officer
Col. Billy J. Buckner

MNC-I Public Affairs Sergeant Major
Sgt. Maj. Sharon Opeka

Layout and Design
Staff Sgt. Jeremy D. Crisp

Editor
Staff Sgt. Jeremy D. Crisp

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

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.

Departments

Feature up Front

_____ *page 1*

Freedom's Focal Point

_____ *page 10*

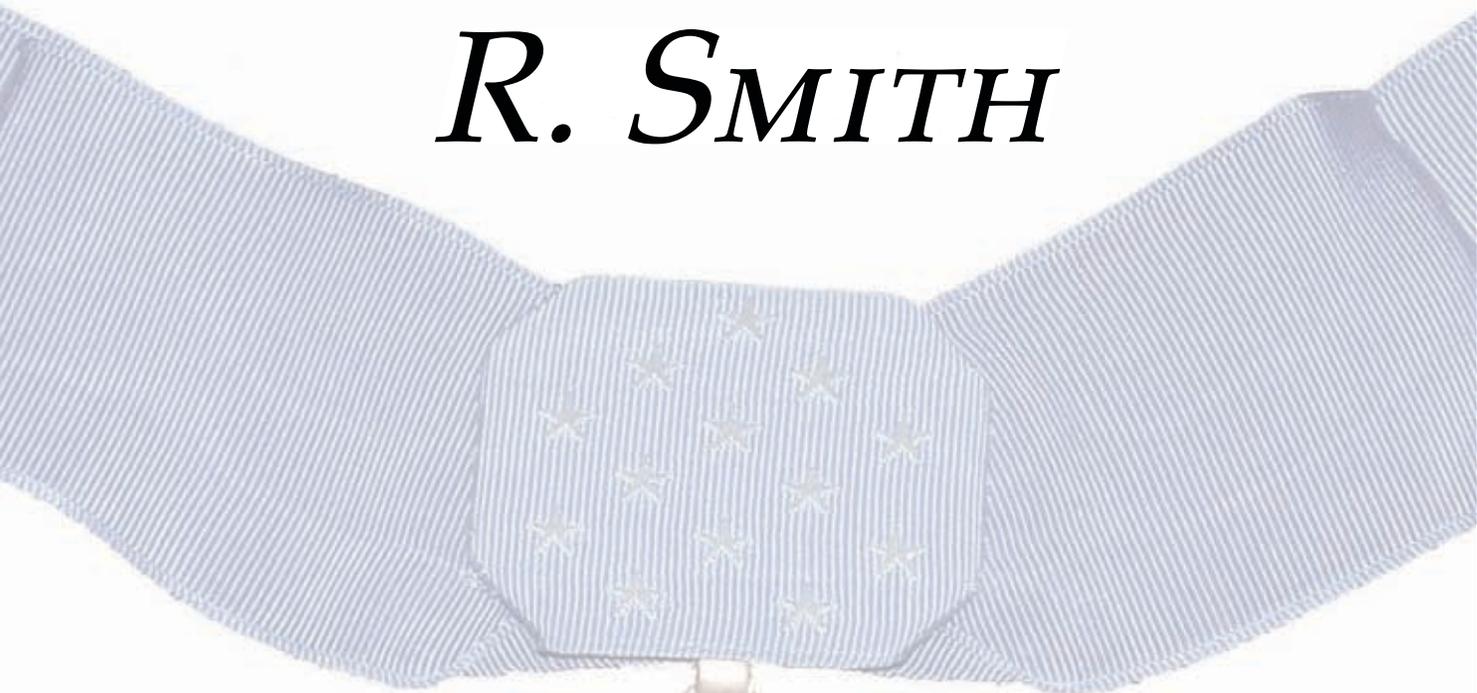
Photo Feature

_____ *page 18*

In Memoriam

_____ *page 21*

MEDAL OF HONOR
RECIPIENT
SGT. 1ST CLASS PAUL
R. SMITH



Tribute
by
Camp
Victory

Story by
Army Sgt. Jasmine Chopra

MND-C PAO

He was a husband, father, Soldier and leader, but on April 4, Sgt. 1st Class Paul R. Smith, the 3rd Infantry Division's 51st Medal of Honor recipient, was remembered simply as a hero.

A remembrance ceremony was held in the courtyard where five years ago to the day, Smith gave his life in defense of others.

He was setting up a short-term enemy prisoner-of-war holding area near the Baghdad International Airport when his unit was attacked by enemy soldiers.

Outnumbered, with wounded Soldiers and damaged vehicles, Smith told his men to get back as he manned a .50-caliber machine gun from the exposed turret of an armored personnel carrier damaged



Brig. Gen. William Grimsley (left) and Staff Sgt. Steven Holloway help unveil a sign during an April 10 ceremony naming the fitness center at Camp Victory in honor of Sgt. 1st Class Paul R. Smith. At the time of Smith's death, Grimsley was commander of the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division. Holloway, a 3rd Inf. Div. engineer, was a member of Smith's platoon and a personal friend. (Photo by Army Sgt. Jasmine Chopra)

by rocket-propelled grenades and mortars. He fired at the enemy and unleashed some 300 rounds allowing other Soldiers to reorganize and mount an attack. Smith and his men defeated the enemy attack. During the attack Smith fell mortally wounded.

A disciplined, no-nonsense platoon sergeant with Company B, 11th Engineer Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Inf. Div., Smith was bestowed the highest award for bravery in 2005, the Medal of Honor.

"He was a Soldier who took care of Soldiers ... he lost his life doing it," said Brig. Gen. William Grimsley, who at the time of Smith's death was the commander, 1st BCT, 3rd Inf. Div.

Grimsley, now the deputy commander, 4th Inf. Div., recommended Smith for the Medal of Honor and was one of several leaders who knew Smith and took a pause from operations in order to attend the ceremony.

In 2003, Capt. Christopher Doerr, of Headquarters and Headquarters Operations Company, Special Troops Battalion, 3rd Inf. Div., was a 23-year-old brand-new second lieutenant.

"I'll always treasure the fact I got to serve with and know Sgt. 1st Class Smith," Doerr said.

He admired Smith's expertise, precision and dedication to mission accomplishment.

"He was an expert engineer, the best in the battalion," Doerr said. "The way he motivated his Soldiers, they didn't necessarily like him, he wasn't their friend, but he made them train to standard.

"It all makes sense now, why he pushed us, why we did the things we did. Now we are here because of that," Doerr said.

Smith had been in combat when he was a young private first class in Desert Storm. In Kuwait, just days before invading Iraq, Doerr asked Smith to tell him what war was going to be like.

"He said, 'war is hell,' and he



showed me that first hand," Doerr said. "He laid it all on the line and that was not a fluke ... he was concerned for the safety of his men and others and he put that above his own personal safety, and I think you've got to say he's a hero for that."

More than 200 people attended the remembrance ceremony, including Lt. Gen. Lloyd J. Austin III, commander of Multi-National Corps - Iraq, who in 2003 was the deputy commander for maneuver for the 3rd Inf. Div.

Large-scale pictures showed Smith in desert camouflage uniform days before the battle. Diagrams, mounted on an armored personnel carrier like the one Smith used, detailed



his heroic action. Visible from the courtyard was the bullet-riddled tower that the enemy had fought but failed to seize. A bugler played Taps and, after the ceremony, Soldiers walked the site and reflected on the sacrifice Smith made for the country.

In continued honor of the fallen 3rd Inf. Div. Soldier, a newly built fitness center on Victory Base Complex was dedicated April 10 in his name.

The Sgt. 1st Class Paul R. Smith Physical Fitness Center serves residents of Camp Victory and other surrounding installations, including Camp Liberty.

“It’s fitting that we dedicate a

fitness center to a man who had high standards, loved Soldiers and loved helping them become better and stronger,” Grimsley said.

Staff Sgt. Steven Holloway, a 3rd Inf. Div. engineer, former member of Smith’s platoon and a personal friend, agreed naming the fitness center after Smith was apt, since Smith constantly pushed his Soldiers to be disciplined, fit and “perfect,” he said.

“He was a person who demanded perfection from his Soldiers. When his squad ran infantry battle drills, if they were good, but not perfect, he’d say, ‘run it again.’”

On April 4, 2003, Holloway was just 100 yards from Smith at the time

Smith was mortally wounded by braving enemy fire and engaging the attacking force, ultimately saving the lives of numerous wounded Soldiers.

Maj. Gen. Rick Lynch, commander of Multi-National Division – Center; Grimsley; Command Sgt. Maj. Jesse Andrews, senior enlisted leader for MND-C and Holloway unveiled a sign that read ‘Sgt. 1st Class Smith Physical Fitness Center’ which contained a picture of Smith smiling, battle-ready.

“I hope that the thousands who come through (the fitness center) see his name, see his face and take time to learn about the great Soldier, the great man that he was,” Holloway said.



Chief Warrant Officer Paul Pritchard, anti-terrorism force protection officer, Marine Wing Support Group 37, speaks with Ali Faris, left, the owner of al Folathey, an Iraqi construction company through the company's interpreter, Thair Ahmed, April 2. Faris is an Iraqi contractor contracted to build a chapel at Al Asad.

Iraqi contractor to build flightline chapel at Al Asad

Story, photo by Marine Sgt. Lukas Atwell

3rd Marine Aircraft Wing

AL ASAD, Iraq – A ground-breaking ceremony held April 2 here marked the beginning of construction for a new chapel on the south side of the base.

The \$280,000 contract, part of the 'Iraqi First' program, marked the first time an Iraqi construction company has performed work at al-Asad since the war began. The program started last year and has contracted dozens of projects at U.S. installations throughout Iraq.

"The U.S. government is reaching out and trying to help the Iraqi companies and people find more work and stimulate their economy," said Navy Cmdr. Roland Mina, the public works officer for al-Asad.

The program has provided work for many Iraqi craftsmen across the country and has a far-reaching impact on the communities surrounding the bases.

"The program allows me to help my people," said Ali Faris, the owner of al Folathey, the company contracted to build the chapel. "I have fulfilled 12 contracts on American bases and the work provides money for my workers and their families and also to the markets where I buy my material and machinery."

The concept of building a chapel on the south side of base began as a request from the 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing, according to Air Force Lt. Col. Tom Sadlo, the former operations officer of Al Asad.

"The request couldn't be filled while 2nd MAW was here, but the Base Command Group made sure it wasn't forgotten as they changed places with 3rd MAW," Sadlo explained. "The BCG took on a lot of responsibility in

order to help the two wings focus on their turnover."

The turnover was the first of many hurdles to overcome before construction could begin.

"We were in uncharted water when this started," said Petty Officer 1st Class Robert Leininger, a contractor accountability assistant for the BCG. "Basically, we had to figure out how we were going to get all of these Iraqis and their equipment on base. In the end, we coordinated with the provost marshal's office and developed a plan for moving the material and getting the appropriate security for the workers and the construction site."

The provost marshal's office performed background checks, issued badges to the workers and will inspect all equipment and material coming onto the base, according to Dallas native, Marine Chief Warrant Officer Paul Pritchard, the anti-terrorism force protection officer for Marine Wing Support Group 37.

The combined efforts of the personnel who made the construction possible will benefit the morale of the flightline personnel, said Navy Lt. Frank Riley, chaplain, Marine Aircraft Group 16.

"Right now, we have a very small chapel for the flightline servicemembers and some have to travel across base for their services," explained Riley, an Orange, Calif. native. "The new chapel will really help them out."

With the construction underway, the chapel will not only be a welcome improvement for the servicemembers, but also strengthens the bond between the air base and the surrounding community outside the gates.

"As the owner of an Iraqi construction business, I look forward to building a reputation for quality work," Faris added.

Baby left on American doorstep finds new home

Story, photo by Army Sgt. Zach Mott
3rd BCT PAO, 4th Inf. Div., MND-B

Spotting irregularities is a tactic that is drilled into the minds of Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers throughout training and in practice while in Iraq.

Soldiers recently watched as a car pulled up to an entry control point at Forward Operating Base Callahan in northern Baghdad. They continued to watch as a woman stepped out of the car holding a bag. Once the woman dropped the bag near the gate, internal alarms were ringing and a careful search was called for and conducted.

That search yielded a newborn baby wrapped tightly in several cloths.

Soldiers raced to the bag, retrieved the child and brought him to the aid station to be examined.

“We unwrapped it to make sure he was alive – and he wasn’t sick, he wasn’t dead, he wasn’t injured,” said Staff Sgt. Paul Briscoe, aid station NCOIC, FOB Callahan. “He was a perfectly healthy

baby. I’m guessing three to seven days old. There wasn’t a scratch on him.”

This unlikely sight brought images of the Las Vegas native’s two children to mind.

“It was like my kids were newborns again,” said Briscoe, who serves with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Combined Arms Battalion, 68th Armor Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad.

After the medics were satisfied the baby, who by this time had drawn the nickname “Alex Callahan” after the Soldier who found him and the name of the

base, was in no need of immediate medical attention, the focus shifted to what they would do with the child.

An interpreter

working at the base volunteered to go to a nearby store to buy diapers and formula while another interpreter took care of Alex. Briscoe said the aid station became a hub of activity as word spread

“
He’s sleeping and pooping – just like a regular baby
”

Staff Sgt. Paul Briscoe
Aid Station NCOIC
FOB Callahan



throughout the small base of the new arrival.

“I’ve fed him twice, just holding him, watching him, making sure that he’s alright,” said Doreen Haddad, an interpreter with 1-68 AR, who helped care for Alex. “I’ve changed his diapers twice.”

While a forward operating base isn’t the ideal location for a baby, Soldiers and those working at FOB Callahan ensured that Alex’s stay there was as comfortable as possible.

The baby is to be adopted by the brother of a local national, who works at the

base.

The brother, and his wife, have been married five years and have been unable to have a baby of their own.

The interpreters at FOB Callahan have taken a collection to donate to the family to help care for the baby.

Despite the thousands of miles that separates the Soldiers from their Families in Colorado, one constant remains with this baby and those they left behind.

“He’s sleeping and pooping – just like a regular baby,” Briscoe said.

KING OF BATTLE

Redlegs conduct fire missions in Iraq

Story, photos by Army Spc. John Crosby
115th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

MOSUL, Iraq – The urban terrain of Operation Iraqi Freedom limits the use of large cannons and field artillery units.

The days of all out destruction and artillery raining down from the skies seem to be over. But there are still uses for these Soldiers and instances in which destruction with precision accuracy is vital to the U.S. Army's mission success.

The Redleg Soldiers of Howitzer Battery, 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment are one of the few field artillery units executing their area of expertise in Iraq today.

The term "Redleg" comes from a time when cannons were much simpler and the field artilleryman's uniform was much different. The

Army blue uniform for artillerymen had a two-inch red stripe on the trousers and horse artillerymen wore red canvas leggings, distinguishing themselves from other Soldiers.

The cannons used by Redleg Soldiers were towed by man, horse or mule, providing no protection to the crew. Misfires, muzzle bursts and exploding weapons were not uncommon. Accuracy and reliability were questionable.

Today, the U.S. Army's M109A6 Paladin self-propelled 155mm howitzer is a tracked vehicle that can reach out and touch a target accurately from 30 km away.

Howitzer Battery uses several strategically placed Paladins located

at Badoush Prison just outside the city of Mosul, to support ground troop movement in the area. They conduct an average of three fire missions a night from their combat outpost, mostly illumination rounds.

"Our role is to support troops in contact with indirect fire, whether it be with 155mm high explosive rounds, Excalibur (guided munitions) or illumination rounds," said, Staff Sgt. Gustavo Martinez, fire direction chief, Howitzer Battery.

"We can use guided munitions to support any task or mission and pinpoint areas or buildings," Martinez said. "We use illumination rounds to light up an area at night to limit or reveal enemy movement."

The Paladin is operated by a four-man crew consisting of a driver, gunner, cannoneer and chief of section. The crews work 24-hour shifts in the Paladins at Badoush, on call to support ground troops in contact. After a shift, the crew will take 48 hours off to conduct maintenance, chores and guard duty around the combat outpost.

Spc. James Simpson, gunner, Howitzer Battery, said working in such tight quarters with fellow teammates can lead to skirmishes at times but nothing too serious.

"You get to know your section and work together really well," he said.

Still, such a work schedule can lead to boredom. The crews conduct training between fire missions to keep busy.

"We get a lot of training done, more



An M109A6 Paladin fires its 155mm howitzer from Badoush prison, just outside Mosul, Iraq, in support of ground forces in Mosul, March 29. The howitzer, belonging to Howitzer Battery, 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment, Fort Hood, Texas, is firing illumination rounds to expose enemy movement.

than we did back in Fort Hood,” said Staff Sgt. Freddy Perdue, section chief, Howitzer Battery. “You gotta do something while we’re all in there together for 24 hours straight. But we enjoy our jobs helping the people out there, especially the maneuver forces.”

While many Redlegs are taking on the role of a foot soldier in Iraq today, Perdue and crew are carrying on the Redleg legacy.

“Being in the war we are fighting now; we can adapt to anything,” said Martinez. “A lot of the guys in our battery are doing infantry tactics and things of that nature. As far as the field artillery guys that are actually doing the field artillery mission, it’s important. You never know. There could be a patrol out there that comes into direct contact with a large group of insurgents and we are here to help by providing indirect fire in a matter of minutes.”



Staff Sgt. Freddy Perdue, section chief, confirms a 155mm illumination round as Spc. James Simpson, gunner, and Pfc. Brian Chandler, cannoneer, stand by to load the round into the breach and fire it from their M109A6 Paladin in Badoush Prison, just outside Mosul, Iraq, March 29. The artillerymen, from Howitzer Battery, 3d Armored Cavalry Regiment, Fort Hood, Texas, fire an average of three missions a night in support of ground troops in Iraq.

KEEPING IT SAFE



Members of the 447th Air Expeditionary Group participate in a foreign object debris walk on the flightline at Sather Air Base, Iraq. Foreign objects on the flight line can be ingested and severely damage aircraft engines. Sather AB averages 6,200 passengers and 1,700 tons of cargo weekly. (Photo by Air Force Tech. Sgt. Jeffrey Allen)



Iraqi security forces

+

coalition forces

=

Secure checkpoints, market patrols, local citizen safety

*Story, photos by Army Sgt. James Hunter
2nd BCT PAO, 101st Abn. Div., MND-B*

BAGHDAD – Prior to fighting breaking out in Kadhamiyah, there were no signs of the possibility of special group cells targeting Iraqi security and coalition forces. The biggest threat at that time appeared to be vehicle-borne improvised-explosive devices.

However, once violence began in Basra and east Baghdad, local citizens in the area began acting differently themselves. Apparently, criminal elements began spreading the word to the local Iraqis to go into their homes and not come out.

These criminals even marched in Kadhamiyah chanting, “Death to Maliki. Death to Maliki.”

Coalition forces even received a tip March 28 that ISF checkpoints would come under attack, said 1st Lt. Sam Rosenberg, a native of Fort Myers, Fla., platoon leader for 2nd Platoon, Company D, 1st Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment. In response,

three platoons pushed out into sector and took their positions to help reinforce the checkpoints – where they sat for a few hours until it was determined there would not be an attack.

“The streets were empty, but it was quiet and the (Iraqi army) was doing what it was supposed to be doing,” said Capt. Brad Henry, a native of Andover Township, N.J., who is the commander of Co. D, 1-502nd Inf. Regt. “It was weird, but nothing was out of the ordinary.”

Once Henry got back to the base, he received another tip that 20 – 25 men were massing in Kadhamiyah. He ordered the company’s 4th Platoon to investigate the tip. As soon as the platoon came to the intersection, they were ambushed by special group criminals.

“The entire area basically blew up,” Rosenberg said. “They called out ‘we are in contact; we are in contact.’”

Fighting broke out

throughout the area. The platoon was attacked with rocket-propelled grenades and PKCs, and immediately started laying down fire on positively identified enemy combatants, said 1st Lt.

Paul Brown, a native of Canfield, Ohio, who is the platoon leader for 4th Plt. “As soon as my gunner was able to PID a guy, he just started engaging him. They did an awesome job.”

“We weren’t running from the fight,” said Henry. “We were going to secure the intersection and engage targets of opportunity.”

With Brown’s platoon under contact and decisively laying down the enemy, Rosenberg sent his platoon forward to support the Soldiers in their engagements.

“We sent our trucks right in behind

them,” Rosenberg said. “They had interlocking fire on the enemy. There was a lot of fire, mostly RPGs.”

As the platoon moved toward the site, its Soldiers were also fired upon at an intersection. With



Sgt. Vicente Herrera, platoon leader, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, and Chicago native, pulls security along the Tigris River in Kadhamiyah April 3.

the amount of RPGs and smalls-arms fire being fired, said Henry, and the numerous caches hidden by the criminals in the area, the right side of the road caught fire.

The Soldiers of Rosenberg's platoon then saw an opportunity to push forward into a market to get a better angle of fire on the enemy. Fourth Platoon shifted fire as Rosenberg's platoon pushed up into what they now call "Death Valley."

"On the right side, there was a huge fire, and to my left were alleyways," Rosenberg said. The Soldiers pulled security down the alleyways and were receiving fire from there also.

"It was a shooting gallery; guys were popping out of everywhere," he said.

"The gunners did an awesome job," said Rosenberg. Initially, the platoon sergeant's truck was in the lead.

One RPG hit right in front of his truck; then, as the criminals came back from behind his corner to fire, he was hit with .50-cal rounds. The gunner, Pfc. Hunter Bruns, saved his fellow comrades from being hit with an RPG.

"He saved my truck," said Rosenberg.

"Pfc. Bruns was absolutely incredible," Rosenberg said. "He was unloading on guys 150 meters away from him and shooting controlled pairs at their head."

He said he really couldn't say enough about how his platoon and the rest of the company performed that night and over the next

couple of days.

"My guys did awesome. With the exception of four guys, it was everyone's first time in contact," said Rosenberg, "so you expect everyone to be nervous, but their training kicked in. Everyone was calm, controlled and did his job perfectly."

For Pfc. Eric Weekly, a native of Urbana, Iowa, and a gunner for 1st Platoon, Co. D, it was his first time coming into contact with the enemy – and he made the most of it.

"We were sitting on Route Vernon facing northeast and an RPG flew over the truck from the west," he said. "We swung around to PID the guy, and he

shot another one. We got positive identification and engaged him with about ten rounds of .50-cal. and shot the guy as he went to shoot the third one."

Altogether, Rosenberg said he believes the company killed an estimated 12 terrorists.

However, the U.S. troops weren't the only ones



An Iraqi army soldier with 5th Battalion, 22nd Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division, directs traffic while securing a checkpoint in Kadhamiyah April 2.

who stayed in the fight, doing what they could to eliminate any enemy activity.

Henry said he believes the special groups criminals expected the Iraqi army soldiers from the 5th Battalion, 22nd Brigade,

6th Iraqi Army Division, to lay down their arms; however, that was not the case. Once the terrorists saw that the IA soldiers were staying, they had

to change their game plan.

"They proved they were there to stay and fight," Henry said. "The first night out, all their guys were manning their (tactical checkpoints); they were securing the intersections they needed to secure."

The Iraqi army battalion is responsible for manning checkpoints in and around

the muhallahs around Kadhamiyah, said Henry, who added he felt they did a good job not letting anyone within.

They secured alleyways, which the criminals were using to maneuver and fire upon Iraqi security and coalition forces, Henry said. "They are reliable," he declared

The IA soldiers played a vital role securing a key checkpoint during the engagements, he said. Along the Tigris River, on one of the main routes in Kadhamiyah, the IA secured the tactical control point, which allowed freedom of movement for Coalition and ISF to push combat power into the fight at any given time.

"I think the IA did very well during the incidents," Brown said. "They did what they thought was right. The Iraqi Army withstood enemy contact and helped secure key terrain during the conflict."

As a result of the combined effort, local citizens are once again moving throughout the area, and the shops are open.

Battle Information

- * Iraqi security forces secure checkpoint
- * Enemy allowed no escape
- * 101st Abn. engages
- * 10 - 12 criminals eliminated



U.S. Marines from 1st Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment out of Camp Lejeune N.C., travel back home on a U.S. Air Force C-17 Globemaster III aircraft April 13, after completing a tour of duty in Ramadi, Iraq. The aircraft is deployed to the 816th Expeditionary Airlift Squadron in Southwest Asia. (Photo by Air Force Master Sgt. Andy Dunaway)



1st Lt. Matheew Lundeen (left) and Maj. Mark Thompson (right) walk around their C-17 Globemaster III aircraft at Mildenhall Air Base, England, during a dust storm April 17. The dust storm was caused by the aircraft landing at Sather Air Base. (Photo by Air Force Tech. Sgt. Jeffery)



U.S. Army Soldiers from the 350th Tactical Psychological Operation Company, an Army Reserve unit from Cleveland - attached to the 10th Mountain Division - conduct a leaflet drop March 27 in several villages southwest of Dibbis, Iraq. (Photo by Army Pfc. Kaimana-Ipulani Kalauli)



on, both pilots from the 817th Expeditionary Airlift Squadron, Master III aircraft while it is parked on the flightline at Sather reduced visibility to 100 meters and stopped all air traffic from (frey Allen)

Chay, a military working dog, attacks simulated enemy U.S. Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Sergio Sandoval during a controlled aggression training session at Balad Air Base, Iraq, April 11. Several types of controlled bite opportunities are presented to military working dogs; how they evaluate these opportunities and respond to their handler's commands determines their success in mission execution. Sandoval is a dog handler with the 332nd Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron and is deployed from San Diego Naval Base, Calif. (Photo by Air Force Senior Airman Julianne Showalter)

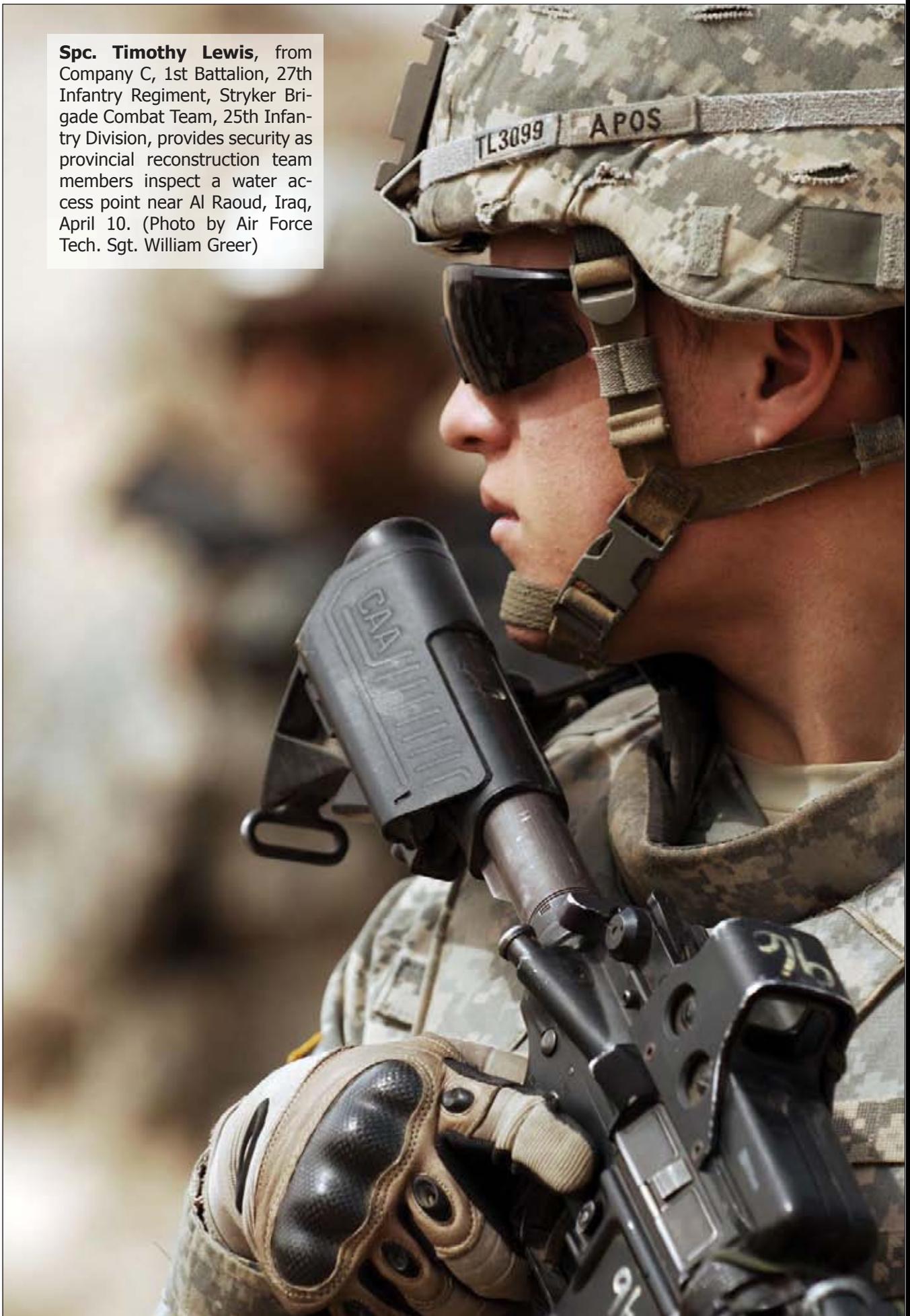
285

THE NUMBER OF
MILITARY
WORKING DOGS
KILLED IN
ACTION IN
VIETNAM



Pfc. Aaron Livas, assigned to Team Iraqi Security Forces, Company C, 2nd Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade, 10th Mountain Division, provides security at a possible improvised explosive device site in Baghdad, April 9. (Photo by Air Force Staff Sgt. Jason T. Bailey)

Spc. Timothy Lewis, from Company C, 1st Battalion, 27th Infantry Regiment, Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, provides security as provincial reconstruction team members inspect a water access point near Al Raoud, Iraq, April 10. (Photo by Air Force Tech. Sgt. William Greer)



FREEDOM'S FOCAL POINT



Staff Sgt. Mario Garcia, assigned to Team Iraqi Security Forces, Company C, 2nd Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, sings along to music before a mission at Joint Security Station Baladiat in Baghdad, April 13. (Photo by Air Force Staff Sgt. Jason T. Bailey)



Spc. Christopher Chance and Sgt. Cameron Miller, both assigned to 3rd Platoon, Company A, 2nd Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, repair Joint Security Station Oubaidy located just outside Sadr City in Baghdad April 2, after a week of firefights, mortar and rocket attacks. (Photo by Air Force Staff Sgt. Jason T. Bailey)



Hospital Corpsman 1st Class J. L. Knuth examines the facial injuries of a patient during combined medical engagement in Al Anbar province. (Photo by Air Force Staff Sgt. Jason T. Bailey)



de Combat Team, 10th Mountain
f Sgt. Jason T. Bailey)



An Iraqi police officer fires an AK-47 assault rifle in the kneeling position at Joint Security Station Iron in Ramadi, Iraq, April 8. Iraqi police from the Ma-laab Police Station are at the rifle range to maintain marksmanship proficiency. (Photo by Marine Cpl. Jeremy M. Giacominio)

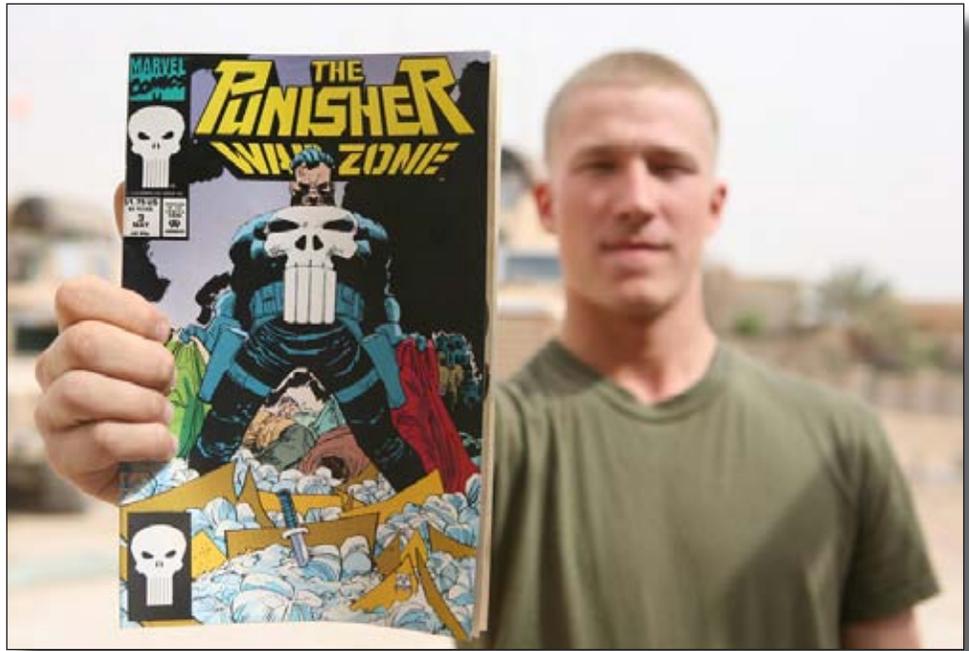


Spc. John Davis, a military policeman with the 411th Military Police Company, 716th Military Police Battalion, 101st Airborne Division, enters information about an Iraqi police officer into a handheld interagency identity detection equipment system at a joint security station in Meshahdah, Iraq, April 8. (Photo by Air Force Tech. Sgt. William Greer)



e of an Iraqi child during a com-
Marine Cpl. Scott B. Wyatt)

Super heroes come to Iraq



Lance Cpl. Brandon M. Barnes, 21, a team leader from Fairbanks, Alaska, assigned to I Company, 3rd Battalion, 4th Marine Regiment, Regimental Combat Team 5, holds out one of the comic books that Marines passed out to Iraqi children in Hit, Iraq, April 10.

MARINE SHARES LOVE OF COMIC BOOKS WITH IRAQI CHILDREN

Story, photo by Marine Cpl. Erik Villagran
Regimental Combat Team 5

HIT, Iraq — Lance Cpl. Brandon M. Barnes is a Marine who grew up reading comic books and idolizing the super heroes in them. His passion for comics continues, and he's sharing it with the children of Hit, Iraq.

Barnes, 21, a team leader with Company I, 3rd Battalion, 4th Marines, Regimental Combat Team 5, from Fairbanks, Alaska, and the Marines in his team have been passing out comics to lucky kids during their foot patrols through the city. The mission, which they've labeled Operation Bringing Iraq Super Heroes, wouldn't have been possible without Barnes' family.

"My uncle and mom sent me a bunch of comic books because I like them," Barnes said. "They bought them in bulk and there's a bunch I don't like, so I figured I'd pass them out to the kids. Who doesn't like comic books?"

Early into operations, the Marines haven't found a child who doesn't

want a comic. When they patrol throughout the city, kids approach them and are quickly drawn to the colorful covers of the comics. They take the books without hesitation.

"At first they wonder what the comics are because it isn't candy," said Lance Cpl. Miguel F. Alvarez, 20, a rifleman from La Habra, Calif. "Once they look at the pictures though, they get excited."

And that is exactly the reaction Barnes wanted. He hands out comic books so that the kids could have something to hold on to. They still hand out candy, but the kids seem to enjoy the comics just as much, if not more.

"I think they're a little better than candy because they actually can keep it to look (again)," said Barnes. "They'll be able to look at it and remember the Marine who gave it to them."

Marines in Barnes' team said they agree with the idea of giving the kids something to look at for a long time. They know the children can't read the books, but will still enjoy flipping

through the pages.

"I think it's cool to give them stuff like this," Alvarez said. "I know they don't all have TVs to see cartoons, so we give them something to look at. Since the pages are cartoons, you know they are going to like them."

Occasionally, after Marines handed a kid a comic book, the child's parents called their child over to see what Marines had handed them. This didn't bother Barnes because he had already taken precautions prior to handing out the comics.

"We look through the comics to make sure there is nothing (offensive to) their culture in them," Barnes said.

Barnes' efforts have illustrated a little about his character and his willingness to bring joy to Iraqi children.

"It's great that he's not selfish," Alvarez said. "He gives something to kids who have nothing just so they can be happy."

And now, children in Hit, like Barnes once did, may dream of growing up to become super heroes.

Airmen teach Iraqis to ...

FIIGHT FIRES

Story, photo by Air Force Staff Sgt. Nathan Gallahan
407th Air Expeditionary Group Public Affairs

ALI BASE, Iraq - Nine Iraqi firefighters graduated the Basic Firefighter Skills Course here as Airmen of the 407th Expeditionary Civil Engineer Fire Department trained the newest graduates March 24 at Ali Base.

The six-week course teaches students “the basics of fighting fires, search and rescue and lifesaving skills,” said Chief Master Sgt. Jeffrey Horne, 407th ECES fire chief.

Hazim Nadoom, an Iraqi who has been translating the course for the firefighters since 2006, said the course is working.

“We have a guy from two classes ago who was able to save a little baby and a 3-year-old in a house fire because of this training,” he said.

The program has two main agendas -- one is to train the firefighters on the basics, and the second is to give the Iraqis equipment donated from fire departments in the United States.

The Iraqis attend six, three-hour training blocks, including courses such as basic fire principles, putting out live fires, or “live burns,” and medical training; all of which are found in a new recruit’s first weeks of training at the Department of Defense Fire Academy.

“Out in town, these guys are just hired and then learn how to fight fires on the job; they don’t attend an academy,” said Tech. Sgt. Robert Bogle, 407th ECES Fire Department assistant chief of training. “Most of these guys have more than a year’s (worth of) experience fighting fires, but they may not understand exactly what they’re fighting or how to fight it safely.”

So eight to 10 local firefighters, chosen from more than 1,400 in the area, travel by bus to attend the training to “take these skills back to those in the fire houses, so they can impact all the firemen who can’t make a class out here,” Bogle said.

As for the basic principle of firefighting, “we are using very old techniques still and it’s great to learn the latest techniques on how to save people and put out fires,” Hazim said.

“We both learn something from this,” Horne said. “We show them and they show us. They’re very resourceful with what they have.”

An assessment detailed the

cross-flow of information saying “Iraqi firefighters utilize hand tools and have taught the U.S. Air Force firefighters very effective extraction skills using locally available tools when reacting to emergency situations.”

“Air Force firefighters are taught to consider their safety first. If you become another casualty you’re in no position to help anybody else,” Bogle said. “(During the class) we spend a lot of time on safety and how to wear their gear properly, because they don’t have this at their fire houses. It’s all new and unfamiliar to them.”

For safety reasons and so the Iraqis can use their new training, the Air Force firefighters here try to find departments back home to donate their excess

equipment.

“They are fighting fires in coveralls and plastic helmets,” he said. “It’s the most important thing they need and they just don’t have enough for the 1,400 firefighters protecting the 750,000 people who live here.”

Although the Iraqis and Americans employ different skill sets and wear different cloths, a firefighter is still a firefighter.

“It doesn’t matter what country you’re from, we’re all one family and the Iraqis come in here and joke and have fun just like the rest of the firefighters,” Horne said.

“This is a brotherhood, that’s all it is,” Hazim said. “When these dudes graduate, they’ll remember this training for the rest of their lives.”



Air Force firefighters from the 407th Expeditionary Civil Engineer Squadron show Iraqi firefighters, in yellow, the proper technique to attack a fire as a team March 3 at Ali Base, Iraq.

SNIPER HUNT



Pvt. 1st Class Kareem Aktari of Lightning Troop, 3rd Squadron, 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment, advances on a sniper's position after coming under fire April 10 in Mosul Iraq.

Photos by Army Capt. Richard Ybarra
115th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment

Soldiers from Lightning Troop, 3rd Squadron, 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment, Fort Hood, Texas, came under sniper fire April 10 in Mosul, Iraq. The troops proceeded to seek out the sniper and ultimately cornered him in a building. The sniper was apprehended that day.



Pvt. 1st Class Jared Bottorff of Lightning Troop, 3rd Squadron, 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment, moves from room to room April 10 in Mosul, Iraq, while clearing a structure during the pursuit of a sniper that had just fired on his squad.



Pvt. 1st Class Anthony Humphries breaches a door while in pursuit of a sniper while the remainder of the squad prepares to enter the building April 10 in Mosul, Iraq. The Soldiers are assigned to Lightning Troop, 3rd Squadron, 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment, Fort Hood, Texas.



Pvt. 1st Class Jared Bottorff (rear) and Sgt. Robert Johnson, both assigned to Lightning Troop, 3rd Squadron, 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment, track a sniper April 10 as he moves from roof to roof in western Mosul, Iraq.

Salvadoran troops deliver wheelchairs, give hope

Story, photo by Army Sgt. 1st Class Stacy Niles
214th Fires Brigade PAO

FORWARD OPERATING BASE DELTA, Iraq – El Salvador's Cuscatlán Battalion, 10th rotation, distributed 125 wheelchairs April 18 to disabled children and adults at the al-Rhama Disabled Association in al-Kut, Iraq.

"I was shocked by the large number of children," said Col. Walter Arévalo, commander, Cuscatlán Battalion.

Many of the wheelchair recipients suffer from conditions such as epilepsy, heart disease, migraines and eye and skin disorders, Arévalo said.

Hussein Kase, 12, received a wheelchair, is mute and suffers from a skin condition in addition to being paralyzed. The chair will give him mobility, said his father Kas Salaman.

"I'm very happy about this gift," Salaman said. "It



Salvadoran Col. Walter Arévalo, commander, Cuscatlán Battalion, 10th rotation, grins with Hussein Kase, 12, during a wheelchair distribution April 18 at the al-Rhama Disabled Association in al-Kut, Iraq. Kase is unable to talk and suffers from a skin condition in addition to being paralyzed.

will help him move and be able to play with the other children."

More resources are needed to increase the quality of life for these individuals, Arévalo said.

People had traveled from as far away as Basra, he said, to receive assistance.

"It is important for us to run this type of activity," he said. "We like to be able to give hope to the people."

In addition to the wheelchairs, the Salvadoran soldiers distributed 125 packets of food and school supply kits.



This view is seen from an OH-58 Kiowa helicopter as it flies over the Tigris River flowing through Mosul, Iraq, April 6. The Kiowas of 4th Squadron, 6th Air Cavalry Regiment from Fort Lewis, Wash., fly patrols over Ninewa province, providing ground troops with extra security and a view of the battlefield from the sky. (Photo by Army Spc. John Crosby)

IN MEMORIAM

NAMES OF COALITION SERVICE MEMBERS WHO DIED BETWEEN MARCH 15 AND
APRIL 12, 2008 WHILE SERVING IN OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM

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

JOHN 15:13

March 15

Spc. Lerando J. Brown, 27.

March 17

Staff Sgt. Michael D. Elledge, 41.

Sgt. Christopher C. Simpson, 23.

March 19

Sgt. Gregory D. Unruh, 28.

March 21

Pfc. Tyler J. Smith, 22.

March 22

Sgt. Thomas C. Ray, II, 40.

Sgt. David S. Stelmat, 27.

Sgt. David B. Williams, 26.

March 24

Pvt. George Delgado, 21.

Staff Sgt. Christopher M. Hake, 26.

Pfc. Andrew J. Habsieger, 22.

Cpl. Jose A. Rubio Hernandez, 24.

March 26

Spc. Gregory B. Rundell, 21.

Cpl. Steven I. Candelo, 20.

March 27

Cpl. Joshua A. Molina, 20.

March 28

Spc. Charles A. Jankowski, 24.

March 29

*Staff Sgt. Keith M. Maupin, 24, pronounced
deceased after being listed as missing-captured
since April 16, 2004.*

Sgt. Jevon K. Jordan, 32.

Spc. Durrell L. Bennett, 22.

March 30

Maj. William G. Hall, 38.

Sgt. Terrell W. Gilmore, 38.

March 31

Sgt. Dayne D. Dhanoolal, 26.

April 3

Staff Sgt. Travis L. Griffin, 28.

April 6

Staff Sgt. Jeremiah E. McNeal, 23.

Col. Stephen K. Scott, 54.

Maj. Stuart A. Wolfer, 36.

Staff Sgt. Emanuel Pickett, 34.

Capt Ulises Burgos-Cruz, 29.

Spc. Matthew T. Morris, 23.

Pfc. Shane D. Penley, 19.

April 7

Sgt. Timothy M. Smith, 25.

Spc. Jason C. Kazarick, 30.

Sgt. Michael T. Lilly, 23.

Sgt. Richard A. Vaughn, 22.

April 8

Maj. Mark E. Rosenberg, 32.

April 9

Spc. Jacob J. Fairbanks, 22.

Sgt. Jesse A. Ault, 28.

Sgt. Shaun P. Tousha, 30.

Tech. Sgt Anthony L. Capra, 31.

Spc. Jeremiah C. Hughes, 26.

Staff Sgt. Jeffery L. Hartley, 25.

Maj. Mark E. Rosenberg, 32.

April 12

Spc. William E. Allmon, 25.

Staff Sgt. Chad Ryan, from Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 27th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, takes a moment of time to write out Arabic phrases in a quick reference book April 17 in al-Taji, Iraq. (Photo by Air Force Tech. Sgt. William Greer)

