

THE DAGGER EDGE

June 2009: Volume 2, Issue 5



Trained & Confident

Dagger hosts 2nd Media Round Table

Runners rely on each other

Soldiers grasp money management



What's Inside...

- 4** Message from Dagger 6
- 5** The 2HBCT CSM sounds off
- 6** The Chaplain's corner
- 7** Stitches: Preventative med advice
- 8** Leaders conduct media round table
- 10** Dagger runners come together
- 12** 1-18th IN: Vanguard hosts Hurriyah walk-through
- 14** 1-63 AR: Women's votech school opens
- 16** 2-8 CAV: Soldiers help villagers in Firra Shia
- 18** 1-7 FA: Steel Knights discourage enemy
- 20** 5-4 CAV: IA gets CLS training
- 22** 299th BSB: Running for fun and causes



◀ *On the cover: Iraqi Soldiers serving with the 6th Iraqi Army Division participate in simulated Combat Life Saver Training in northwest Baghdad May 6. (Photo by Sgt. Dustin Roberts, 2nd HBCT PAO)*



▶ *On the back: Oscoda, Mich. native Sgt. Stephen Ogden, serving with a Personal Security Detachment, 2nd HBCT, helps secure the area during the Hurriyah Media Walkthrough May 11. (Photo by Sgt. Dustin Roberts, 2nd HBCT PAO)*

- 24** 2-1 STB: Soldiers get a taste of Iraqi food, culture
- 26** 2-112 IN: Paxton Rangers search for explosives
- 28** Financial Peace teaches money management
- 29** Soldiers hit home run in partnership
- 30** Safety Zone: Complacency kills
- 31** Army news: Army cuts wish list

The Dagger Edge
Informing the Dagger Community on the issues and events throughout the brigade.

June 2009: Vol. 2, Issue 5

2HBCT Commander
Col. Joseph M. Martin

2HBCT Command Sergeant Major
Donald L. Battle

2HBCT Public Affairs Officer
Maj. Koné C. Faulkner

2HBCT PAO NCOIC
Sgt. Brian Tierce

The Dagger Edge Staff

Editor/Designer
Sgt. Dustin Roberts

Designer
Spc. Jamie Mannion

To contact us, email suggestions to:

Email: brian.d.tierce@mnd-b.army.mil

Website: www.1id.us.army.mil/unitpage.aspx?unit=2bct

The Dagger Edge is a command information publication authorized under provisions of AR 360-1, published monthly for the members of the 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team. Contents of The Dagger Edge are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by the U.S. Government, Department of Defense, 1st Infantry Division, or the 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team.

Editorial content is prepared, edited, and provided by the Command Information Division of the 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team Public Affairs Office.

DAGGER SIX

2HBCT COMMANDER
COLONEL JOSEPH M. MARTIN



Unrelenting discipline is the key



▲ Col. Joseph Martin, commander, 2nd HBCT, hands out pencils to Iraqi children during a walk-through of the Hurriyah neighborhood May 11. (Photo by Sgt Dustin Roberts, 2nd HBCT PAO)

Daggers continue to excel expectations in all we do. Just look at the steady decrease of violence in our area of operations when compared to the violence levels in October, 2008 and you will see what I'm talking about. Other indicators are the hundreds of improvement projects both started and completed since our arrival; there is no question Daggers are "getting it done."

Good deployments don't just happen. They take courage and discipline. Daggers don't just see things happen; Daggers make things happen. When complacency and numbness come into play, however they create an environment of risk and there is a greater opportunity for bad things to happen. I'm all over the AO, but I can't make the difference in order for us to sustain our level of accomplishment. Rather, I believe that a Lieutenant or a Sergeant who will be the one who makes the difference... someone from our midgrade leadership doing what needs to be done when no one is looking.

In previous deployments CSM Battle and I have both seen numerous catastrophic incidents occur toward the end of an operation/deployment, not always due to accidents, but rather to a lack of consistent focus on an enemy who is still out there. No one wants to miss their redeployment day with the team. You are all rock stars and will be treated that way on that day. Good leaders constantly review and execute composite risk management to ensure success.

Remember, nobody wakes up and says, "I'm going to get hurt/wounded or worse today." Yet serious incidents occur each day in combat. However, these incidents are avoidable if everyone remains focused on task.

I implore everyone to spread my message to all Daggers within our ranks. I expect your courage and discipline to ruthlessly execute and maintain the Dagger Edge, which I truly equate to taking care of Soldiers.

I expect all members of this team to ruthlessly enforce standards and maintain the Dagger Edge... because that is the essence of taking care of Soldiers in my view. 

COL. JOSEPH MARTIN

Dagger 6

"Ready Now!"

The Dagger Edge

- 1. LEAD/CARE: Always take care of Soldiers!**
 - A. Mentor and develop- trust subordinates and recognise achievement.
 - B. You are responsible. Take charge -- Attack!
- 2. DISCIPLINE: Always do the right thing!**
 - A. know your job and do it -- without supervision. Take pride.
 - B. Correct deficiencies immediately.
- 3. READINESS: Always prepare for war!**
 - A. Maintenance of vehicles and equipment.
 - B. Physical fitness.
- 4. TRAINING: Always train for combat!**
 - A. Fight to train.
 - B. Stick to basics/ keep it simple/ Task, Condition, Standard/ AAR.
- 5. FORCE PROTECTION: Always assess and mitigate risk!**
 - A. Plan for and anticipate danger.
 - B. Prepare through training.

Polite, Professional & Prepared to Kill.... Ready Now!



DAGGER SEVEN

2HBCT COMMAND SERGEANT MAJOR
DONALD L. BATTLE



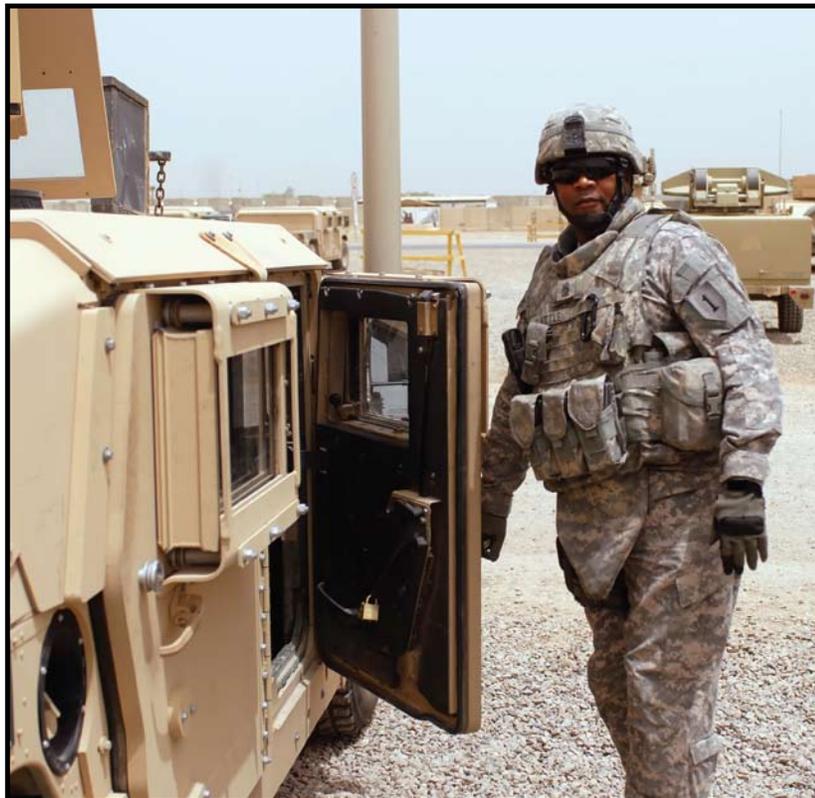
Keeping confidence

I want to thank all the Dagger Soldiers for sticking with it every single day. Your courage and continued sacrifice truly is second to none. Your outstanding teamwork and dedication to this mission is highly impressive. Not only are you making a difference in the lives of the Iraqi citizens in northwest Baghdad and Abu Ghraib, but you are helping to shape the future of the world for the better.

Several months before we deployed, I wanted to ensure that the Soldiers in the Dagger Brigade received the highest quality of training to prepare for the challenging, yet satisfying mission we are executing right now. It is because of the noncommissioned officers in this brigade that we are continuing to be successful. The countless hours of drivers training and combat life saver classes, ranges, field training exercises and our time at the National Training Center and Camp Buehring, Kuwait transformed all of the Dagger Soldiers into confident and willing warriors, ready for any task thrown their way.

You are still working with your Iraqi Security Forces partners every day and as I travel across the Dagger Operational Environment, I have noticed vast improvements in how they operate. They are getting more efficient daily because of the fine Soldiers throughout the brigade working side by side with them on a daily basis. I have noticed a rise in confidence in the ISF that resembles the self-assurance you as U.S. Soldiers have diligently worked toward.

With eight months into our scheduled one-year deployment, you must remain confident in your abilities and actions. Sustaining your discipline and readiness in all that you do is crucial for the ultimate success of this mission. This means maintaining cleanliness of your equipment, maintaining your vehicles and maintaining your health. A healthy Soldier is physically fit, mentally ready for any given task and knows his or her job through and through. Remember the enemy still exists. He does not care if you are having a bad day, forgot to do PCC/PCI, or you did not get enough sleep the last few days. I urge you to stay focused



▲ Command Sgt. Maj. Donald Battle, senior enlisted advisor, 2nd HBCT.
(Photo by Sgt. Brian Tierce, 2nd HBCT PAO)

on your task at hand and be prepared for anything at any given moment. Part of being disciplined is about taking pride in all you do. Out ISF counterparts take notice of that and strive to selflessly serve their country as you proudly continue to serve yours..

June 30th is quickly nearing we are at still at some critical times. You will notice come 1 July 2009 that not much has changed. Your partners in hands are counting on you just as they were four months ago. Let's keep our warriors safe, strong and in the fight. 🇺🇸

COMMAND SGT. MAJ. DONALD BATTLE

Dagger 7
"Nothing Further"



Let us not grow weary of doing good

By Chaplain (Maj.) Peter Johnson, 2nd HBCT

The year was 1917 and the expedition to transverse the Antarctic Ocean led by Ernest Shackleton did not go as planned. Just outside the continent of Antarctica the worst had happened. The ship, named *Endurance*, holding 22 explorers became locked in ice. In total despair the 22 explorers watched as the great ship, built for such frozen seas, was crushed and splintered by the ice flow and then slowly sunk from site. All hope of survival now lay at the bottom of a frozen and un-forgiving ocean.

However, whatever the leadership of this expedition lacked in ensuring a successful exploration, they excelled in the raw leadership of survival and taking care of their own. After an impossible voyage of over 800 miles across the freezing and ruthless Antarctic Ocean in row boats, the entire crew made it safely to Elephant Island - a phenomenal achievement of navigational skill. Once on Elephant Island, Shackleton realized that he needed to get to the other side to get a rescue ship from a whaling station. He chose two other men and on foot crossed the glacier mountain on the Island - a feat that modern professional mountain climbers sponsored by Patagonia found too difficult to complete.

Shackleton left the remaining

men under the leadership of Frank Wild back on Elephant Island to wait for a rescue that seemed all but hopeless. For 105 days Wild and his men lived under improvised shelters made from overturned rowboats. Each morning as the men started the day Wild would say: "Roll up your sleeping bags, get your things ready boys, the boss may come today." I am sure that for the first couple of days this sounded like the "proper" thing for Wild to say to keep his men motivated.

However, as the days droned on from day 27 to day 43 and through day 104 it probably sounded like so much non-sense. But, Wild refused to give in and kept his men on the edge by doing the right thing over and over again even when it seemed completely meaningless. Then the unimaginable happened, on day 105 the men spotted a ship on the horizon, and it was their leader, Ernest Shackleton, coming to their rescue. Once ashore, Shackleton was amazed that not only were the men all well but that they were also immediately ready to board the rescue ship. This is a great testimony to the leadership of Frank Wild who kept a steady and unrelenting course through such adversity.

Each morning you rise from

the bed within your CHU only to do the exact same thing that you've been doing for eight months and will continue to do for another four months. At times it seems pointless. Some may ask: "Does it even matter? Am I really making a difference?" I have no doubt that these same questions were asked by Wild's men and in the end their efforts were proven fruitful as these men thwarted both death and insanity through unwavering discipline. Saint Paul echoes this same sentiment for faith when he said, "And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up." Our mission is a bit different from Shackleton's. We are facing the relentless Iraqi heat and not the frozen seas of Antarctica; we are navigating through this course of partnering with the Iraqis and not setting a course for Elephant Island.

In the end the principles are the same; a steady disciplined course until our ship is on the horizon - and our ship is mission completion.



◀ **Chaplain (Maj.) Peter Johnson is the senior spiritual leader in the Dagger Brigade.**



Stitches:

Preventative medicine advice

Operational nutrition tips: You are what you eat

Providing the body with adequate carbohydrates is the key to maintaining energy during long, intense activity. Remember these facts to sustain your energy:

- Carbohydrates are the best source of fuel/energy during activity.

- During intense exercise, up to 90% of energy used is from carbohydrates. Even during low-intensity exercise, such as walking or marching, carbohydrates are needed to burn fat completely.

- While the body can store more than 100,000 calories as fat, only 1,500-2,000 calories are stored in the body as carbohydrate. Carbohydrate stores are rapidly depleted during 2-3 hours of intense activity/exercise, especially if you are not already eating a high-carbohydrate diet. Rapid carbohydrate consumption necessitates frequent replenishment during exercise.

- A non-active person requires a minimum of 130 grams of carbohydrates each day. An active Soldier may need more than 400 grams of carbohydrates per day to provide fuel for long runs, marches or dismounted patrols.

- 5 grams of carbohydrates for every kilogram of body weight per day is a quick method for calculating

From the Medical Health Force Protection Newsletter, 299th BSB

ing individual requirements.

- Consuming small amounts of carbohydrates throughout the day is the best way to ingest the recommended amounts. Strive for 75-100 grams of carbohydrate per meal and 30-50 grams carbohydrate per snack from either food or drinks.

- Before a long session of exercise it is important to supply the body with carbohydrates. Consuming anywhere from 75-150 grams of carbohydrate within 2 hours of exercise or a mission will help delay fatigue. It is best to consume as little fat as possible with this meal because fat slows digestion and often causes a feeling of fullness.

- Refueling after exercise is one of the most important aspects of sports nutrition. Consuming 100 grams of carbohydrate or more along with 20-25 grams of protein will help replenish the carbohydrate stores that were depleted during exercise and promote muscle repair and development.

- Fat is not a bad nutrient, it just should be avoided before and after exercise/activity because it slows down digestion during times when the body needs to absorb

nutrients quickly.

- Hydration is always crucial. A loss of 1% body weight of water can decrease physical performance by 50%; a loss of >5% can result in heat stroke, coma and death. Consume two cups of water 2 hours before exercise/activity and 1/2-2 cups every 15-30 minutes during. Drink beyond the point of thirst after exercise. Drinking until you're no longer thirsty may only replace 30% of total fluid lost during exercise/activity. Continuously sipping on water every few minutes is the easiest way to get in enough fluid and avoid cramping from drinking too much.

- Consuming enough carbohydrates and fluid are essential for top physical performance, but when high-carbohydrate foods also contain large amounts of fat, you may be getting too many calories. It is easiest to avoid over-consuming by avoiding fatty foods.

- Bottom line: Soldiers can improve performance by adequately addressing carbohydrate and water intake needs.

- Optimal energy and hydration levels reduce illness, improve mental focus, and positively impacts mission accomplishment.



MEETING AT THE TABLE

Dagger Leaders Host 2nd Iraqi Media Gathering

Story and photos by Sgt. Dustin Roberts, 2nd HBCT PAO

Iraqi reporters took advantage of another opportunity to meet with the U.S. Army commanders operating in northwest Baghdad and Abu Ghraib.

In a “round table” setting, Col. Joseph Martin, commander, 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team “Dagger,” 1st Infantry Division, Multi-National Division—Baghdad, and four battalion commanders in the brigade, hosted the second media-focused event April 26 since the brigade arrived in northwest Baghdad in early October 2008.

For U.S. commanders, it was an effort to inform the Iraqi public of the joint security mission with the Iraqi Security Forces, the essential services and civil capacity projects in the area and the continuing implementations of the signed security agreement between the government of Iraq and the U.S. government.

The Security Agreement, enacted in January of this year, states that Coalition Forces will “pull out of

the city” by June 31.

Many members of the Iraqi press wanted to know exactly what that means to not only the population of northwest Baghdad, but to the Dagger Brigade Soldiers.

“We are still in negotiation with the government of Iraq as to how things will work beyond the 30th of June,” Martin said. “Many of the Soldiers in the cities will move to Victory Base Complex or other locations. Anything that is remaining of the cities will be at the request of the Iraqi Security Forces.”

Along with the security agreement, the members of the media were equally concerned of the recent suicide attacks at the Kadamiyah Shrine, which killed more than 60 people and wounded about 120.

“It was a regrettable tragedy what happened two days ago at the Kadamiyah Shrine; my unit’s heart goes out to all those families who suffered losses that day,” said Lt. Col. John Vermeesch, a native of Marshall, Mich., commander, 1st Combined Arms

Battalion, 18th Infantry Regiment, 2nd HBCT, who operates in Kadamiyah. “We continue to gather evidence with our ISF partners to determine what terrorist group was responsible.”

The Dagger commander continued by saying that hatred for peace and democracy is still present in Iraq.

“Nothing is perfect; the enemy still exists, but the enemy is weaker than he ever has been before,” he said.

Martin added that over two years ago an average of 30 attacks per day occurred in the area the Dagger Brigade operates in.

“Now this area experiences over 2.3 attacks per day,” said Martin. “[It is still] an unacceptable number, but a significant improvement from January 2007.”

In other improving areas, he also explained how the Dagger Brigade has conducted over 437 essential service projects.

“When it comes to essential services, if the [Iraqi] government is able to at this point in time fill [the water bottle] up to 90 percent, we will be able to do what we can to try and fill it to the top,” he said. “This way the people receive the services while the government continues to improve.

As the government becomes more sustainable, Martin said the ISF are doing the same.

“You look at the leadership of a brigade that commands essentially 5,000 Soldiers, but in partnership with our Iraqi Security Force partners we now are 21,000 plus strong,” said Martin. “We are there to partner with them in any way we can to be successful, but we are there side-by-side with our Iraqi Security partners.”

After the conference, the media had a chance to sit and talk with the leaders over lunch.

“We all come here with one simple agenda,” said Martin. “That agenda is so that progress can continue over time.



▲ *Col. Joseph Martin, a native of Dearborn, Mich., commander, 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, addresses the local Baghdad media at a press-conference style discussion in the International Zone April 26.*



◀ *Lt. Col. John Richardson, IV, a native of Tallahassee, Fla., commander, 5th Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment.*



◀ *Lt. Col. John Vermeesch, a native of Roscommon, Mich., commander, 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry Regiment.*



◀ *Amb. John Bennett, a native of Wash., ePRT, 2nd HBCT.*



◀ *Lt. Col. Samuel Hayes, a native of central Pa., commander, 2nd Battalion, 112th Infantry Regiment.*



◀ *Lt. Col. Mark Solomons, commander, 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment.*

RELYING ON EACH OTHER

Dagger Runners Come Together In Iraq

Story and photos by Sgt. Dustin Roberts, 2nd HBCT PAO

When Soldiers are deployed, many rely on their fellow companions in uniform for inspiration and motivation.

A handful of Soldiers in the 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team ‘Dagger,’ 1st Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad have turned to running with each other to boost their morale and maintain physical fitness.

“I think it’s important to stay physically fit because it helps your mental state of mind,” said Spc. Lauren Thomas, a native of Paradise, Calif., Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd HBCT.

Thomas added that the endorphins obtained while exercising help nip the edge of stress and take the long hours of work off the mind.

Not only does the running relieve stress, but some agree it reminds them they still have the ability to run.

“During the marathon we had high-points and low points. What we talked about when we were having hard times was, ‘think of all of the people who have lost legs and arms from the deployment and we have good legs and good arms to keep us going,” said Capt. Maja Guandique, a native of Syracuse, N.Y., HHC, 2nd HBCT after running a marathon. “So we are doing this for not only ourselves but for the people that don’t have the ability to.”

One member of the Dagger brigade was injured in an accident and doctor’s told her she would never run again.

“It’s hard to describe it, but it feels amazing because I feel like I am healed again and back to normal,” said Capt. Klara Wright, from Clay Center, Kan, HHC, 2nd HBCT. “I’ve proved to myself that I can do it.”

Whatever the individual reasons for Dagger Soldiers to keep fit and maintain mental health, Soldiers of the Dagger brigade are in it together.

“Running builds camaraderie because you get to hang out outside of work,” said Thomas. “It brings more of a personal atmosphere when you accomplish things together.”



▲ *Capt. Timothy Harris, who hails from West Windsor, N.J., HHC, 2nd HBCT, crosses the finish line during a run at Camp Liberty May 2.*



▲ *Capt. Klara Wright (left), from Clay Center, Kan. and Capt. Maja Guandique, a native of Syracuse, N.Y., both of HHC, 2nd HBCT, run in stride during a run at Camp Liberty May 2.*



▲ *Capt. Christopher Kim, a native of Leonia, N.J., HHC, 2nd HBCT, sprints to cross the finish line during the 2009 Victory marathon at Camp Victory March 15.*

HIGHLIGHTING HURRIYAH

Iraqis Get Tour Of Kadamiya Market

Story and photo by Sgt. Dustin Roberts, 2nd HBCT PAO



In the past year, a neighborhood in northwest Baghdad has overcome sectarian violence and seen vast improvements in security, essential services and civil capacity.

The Iraqi media saw firsthand, May 11, that through partnership with the local government, Iraqi Security Forces and the 1st Combined Arms Battalion “Vanguard,” 18th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, citizens of the Hurriyah neighborhood of northwest Baghdad are witnessing an improvement in their community.

In a walk-through of a busy market street, various Iraqi television stations met with civic, tribal and security leaders, as well as 2nd HBCT leaders, to see a cleaner environment and thriving shops.

“We’re trying to show the people of Hurriyah, the people who live outside of Hurriyah and throughout Baghdad, the security, civic and essential service improvements in Hurriyah,” said Capt. Nathan Williams, a native of Raleigh, N.C., commander, Company A, 1st Bn., 18th Inf. Regt. “There is a lot of misconceptions out there that security is bad and the area hasn’t been prospering recently.”

From 2003-2006, when the security situation was compromised by al-Qaeda in

▶ Civic, tribal and security leaders of northwest Baghdad and members of the Iraqi media walk a market street in the Hurriyah neighborhood of northwest Baghdad May 11.



Iraq and other special group criminals, many Iraqis moved away from Hurriyah and have not had the opportunity to see that the neighborhood has undergone a continuing makeover.

“We’re trying to spread the word that things have improved so people can come back to Hurriyah,” said Williams. “This is a great opportunity to get the word out to the public.”

Because the word came from the neighborhood’s leaders and the local media, it is likely the people of Iraq will find Hurriyah’s improvements more credible.

“Just like in our country, the message doesn’t always get out. It has some sort of shaded lens on it if it comes from us,” said Lt Col. John Vermeesch., a native of Roscommon, Mich., commander of the “Vanguard” Battalion. “If it comes from their own people then it’s more believable and genuine.”

Williams added that the population of Hurriyah also sees street sweepers cleaning up trash and much of the sewage from the past has been removed.

The Vanguard Battalion works with the Beladiyah, or the branch of government which deals with public works, to improve essential services.

When the video camera turned off and the interviews were over, Vermeesch said the the citizens of Baghdad will have a better idea of the situation in Hurriyah.

“I believe that the right message got out to the people of Iraq that Hurriyah is a safe and stable city,” he said. “As we’ve known from the beginning, with regard to sectarian violence, so goes Hurriyah, so goes the rest of Baghdad and I think the right message got out to Baghdad.”

VANGUARD 6



Lt. Col. John Vermeesch

Greetings to the Friends and Families of all Vanguards, we hope this finds you well wherever you may be as you begin the transition into summer! The Vanguards continue to excel as we stand beside our Iraqi partners to secure the people of Northwest Baghdad. As you transition to summer back home, we have entered an amazing period of transition as well.

Internal to the battalion, we have recently experienced a change of command in D/1-18 between CPT Andrew Chovancek and CPT John Campbell. Though the Dawgs of War will miss CPT Chovancek, and we thank him for his honorable and faithful service, he is not going far as he will serve in the Battalion S3 shop. We know CPT Campbell will endeavor to take Delta Company to even greater heights. In yet another transition, we have promoted a whole host of lieutenants and NCOs. Additionally, we are in the throes of transferring JSSs to the Iraqis and repositioning most of the battalion back to Camp Liberty. We embrace change as a necessary action that heroes undertake in order to attain greater achievement. As we enter this period, take time to reflect that nearly 65 years ago, Vanguard Soldiers – heroes just like you – assembled along the English Channel conducting final preparations for the Normandy Invasion. The 18th Infantry Regimental Combat Team was tasked with landing on Omaha Beach on D-Day. As a result, they helped change the history of the world. Today, 65 years later, the Heroes of 1-18 Infantry have the opportunity to make our mark on the history of the world, and I am confident that we are up to the task.

Thank you for the tremendous sacrifices that each of you makes every day. You all are making a difference in the lives of the people of the Kadamiya and Karkh Districts. History will hold a special place for this pivotal time in the transformation of Iraq. God Bless you all, God bless the our efforts here in Iraq and God Bless America!

Vanguard 6

“First to Battle!”

1ST COMBINED ARMS BATTALION, 18TH INFANTRY REGIMENT

EDUCATING WOMEN

Women's Votech School Opens In Mahmudiyah

Story and photo by Spc. Ruth McClary, 30th HBCT PAO, MND-B

Leaders of the 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team and the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, attended a ceremony, May 21, held by the Ready Made Clothing Factory to celebrate the opening of a vocational technical school for women here.

The Mahmudiyah Sewing and Beauty Votech School, on the grounds of the factory south of Baghdad, was established to give war widows a means to provide for their families.

Sixty percent of all women in the district are war widows and make a popular mark for insurgent propaganda.

“Women are a soft target for extremist groups,” said Capt. Sarah Woods, Civil Affairs Team 31 with 2nd BCT, 1st Inf. Div. “They want to take care of their families. Giving them the skills to do so helps prevent them from becoming insurgents.”

Sheik Sadoon Muhsin Al Kaylani, chairman of Bain Alnah Rain Center for Economic Development, and driving force behind the project, said he hopes it will unite the community.

“It is a way for people to come together and find jobs,” said Kaylani. “Even those with different religious beliefs. It will also give females a chance to own businesses in the future to help support their families.”

The program offers advanced sewing and beauty salon management. The school can take up to 30 stu-

dents per session—20 slots for sewing and ten slots for beauty school. Students do not need to meet any special requirements before enrolling in the school.

“There is a waiting list of about 300 applicants,” said Saif Jassim, director of the Ready Made Clothing Factory and the master of ceremony for the event. “Both sewing and beauty students can get jobs here on the premises.”

“The women from the area are so excited; the first three sessions are already full,” said Woods. “The alternative is to travel to Baghdad. They can be close to home and take care of their families with a school in Mahmudiyah.”

“This place is famous in Mahmudiyah. The people know it will be a safe place to work and study.”

--Saif Jassim, director of the Ready Made Clothing Factory

Ms. Rebecca, who asked not to use her real name, has been an employee with the company for more than a decade.

“I am so happy that we have this program,” said Rebecca. “It should increase the amount of workers we have here at RMC factory.”

Graduates of the school can apply for jobs at the factory, which is fortunate as it is tripling its production line, but does not have enough workers.

Following the ceremony, the school opened for tours. Prospective students, who begin classes May 24, sewed samples on the machines while others were becoming familiar with the equipment in the beauty shop.

Wood said the colors of the building are unique. The top half of the school building’s exterior is painted purple and the bottom half is pink. Woods



▲ *Prospective students and local media at the Mahmudiyah Sewing and Beauty Votech School learn more about business opportunities for local women during the school's opening ceremony, May 21.*

said the colors represent prosperity and good luck in the Iraqi culture.

“Also, we paint the building with bright colors for the sun to reflect and fill the room up with light,” said Jassim.

Jassim said the factory is well established within the community, and the students and workers view the school as the beacon that will lead them into the future.

“This place is famous in Mahmudiyah,” said Jassim. “The people know it will be a safe place to work and study. Now that the school is opening on this location, today is a very, very great day.”



Lt. Col. Jim Bradford

Soldiers, Families, and Friends of 1-63 CAB, We are back under the Daggers now. It is good to be home. The Striker Brigade from Baumholder, Germany redeployed in late May allowing us to rejoin the Daggers. The Battalion put their best foot forward and did an incredible job handing over the reins of the Mahmudiyah Qada to 1-120th CAB and 1-150th ARS from the North Carolina and West Virginia National Guard. We are settled into the Abu Ghraib area and have taken control of a portion of Abu Ghraib working hand-in-hand with our Iraqi counterparts. If nothing else, there is more ice cream flavors available to me now than there were in Mahmudiyah. My goal of putting myself on the Army overweight program is alive and well.

Before our relief in place began we did take some time to recognize our Constitution Day on 3 May. The 3rd of May was when the 1-63rd Armor Regiment was formed in 1945. Alpha Company retained the overall Sport's Trophy for the battalion even though they had a little tougher time keeping it this go around.

As we move toward the end of our rotation our focus remains ISF development and improving the essential services in the area. You all have done some tremendous work and the citizens of both Qadas appreciate it. From school renovation to improving agriculture capability these small accomplishments add up to huge improvements in the region. These endeavors along with improving the proficiency of the ISF have led to more independent operations and the IA better able to provide security to the cities and rural areas.

I cannot express my gratitude enough. I am honored to be part of such a great unit. Everyone in this organization both in Iraq and back at FT Riley has done so much, and I appreciate the hard-work to make life better and safer in Iraq. For those of you back home I hope you have a great summer.

Dragon 6.

“Dragons!”

1ST COMBINED ARMS BATTALION, 63RD ARMOR REGIMENT



▲ *An Iraqi Soldier based at Joint Security Station Aqur Quf hands out a bag of food to an Iraqi woman at a school in the village of Firra Shia west of Baghdad.*

The Annihilators of Company A, 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, attached to the 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, did their part to help local villagers here during a humanitarian food drop with the Iraqi Army in the village of Firra Shia, west of Baghdad, on May 17.

The humanitarian food drop followed days of planning by the Soldiers of Co. A and their Iraqi Army partners, both at Joint Security Station Aqur Quf west of Baghdad. The mission highlighted the ability to utilize military assets, to meet needs in the community where the Soldiers live and work.

1st Lt. Michael Neel of

Glendale, Calif., an armor officer assigned to Co. A 2nd Bn., 8th Cav. Regt., said humanitarian missions show the many facets of the American and Iraqi Soldiers ability to improve life for Iraqis. It is also key to overcoming past skepticism Iraqi citizens may have felt toward the ISF, Neel said. The lieutenant said some Iraqis had a fear of their military, dating from the Saddam Hussein era.

“I think it’s important for the community to see that the IA and the government of Iraq care just as much about them as we do,” Neel said. “In the past, they did not trust the IA, but now they trust them and see they can trust them as much as us.”

The Annihilators and the IA arrived at a school in Firra Shia with a truckload of food. The food bags consisted of rice, beans, cooking oil and tomato paste. Iraqi citizens who were identified to receive aid arrived, ready to claim their food. Men, women and children smiled as they accepted their bags from the back of an IA pickup truck. Neel said the Soldiers of Co. A and the IA worked to make the food drop a success through coordination. While distribution of the food was coordinated by the IA, the Annihilators took up defensive positions around the school to keep security.

“The most important thing is coordination – the language barrier

and culture barrier,” Neel said. “You have to be aware of it at all times, but you have to be tactically aware at all times too.”

The mission’s purpose was more than just to help eliminate hunger, according to Neel. It was a way to maintain a good relationship between the Iraqi people, the ISF and American Soldiers.

“We go out on patrols and we talk to them. You get an understanding of the town or village area,” Neel said. “From a security standpoint, it increases our profile in the village itself.”

The Annihilators also want to let the ISF take the lead in humanitarian missions, according to Neel.

Staff Sgt. Valentin Arreola, an infantryman from Los Angeles, said he was pleased with the mission, and also noted that it was the ISF who handed out the bags of food.

“It went pretty well, nobody got hurt and everybody got their rations,” Arreola said. “We want the Iraqi people taking care of the Iraqis to get them to rely on them instead of us.”

The Soldiers of A Co. and their weapons can do much more than fight the enemy, and winning the peace often involves warriors taking on the role of the humanitarian. The Soldiers of Co. A lived up to their “Annihilator” nickname, helping annihilate hunger and improving the lives of Iraqi citizens.

“I thought the T-72 was a manly tank and the Abrams, not so much,” he quipped. “But once they got in it, started working with it and saw the accuracy of the Abrams, they loved it.”

Maintenance of the tanks is a task that 2-8 Cav. Soldiers take on every day. They are required to move the tanks to and from the training site, provide any repairs needed and assist the Iraqis with their understanding of the maintenance process, Pesano said. “The Iraqis do have a maintenance class and we’re working with them to show them how to actually do these tasks but this course is so condensed that they don’t have very much time to get into all the details and aspects of it,” he explained. “That’s why we’re out here every day so they can ask questions and we can provide those answers.”

One class of Iraqi tankers has graduated the course, with another class underway. The first set of graduates are now going through the training again, this time learning to be instructors. “Since they’re taking the M1A1 battle tank, it’s important that they take a new doctrine with it,” he said.

The M1A1 tank is a valuable asset in the Iraqi Army’s battle against insurgency and in its security operations. With proper training and a little help from Demon 2-8, the IA will have troops that can effectively use the Abrams to the full extent of its capabilities, as well as instructors who can teach future Iraqi Army tankers.

STALLION 6



Maj. Jeffrey Schrick

The Stallions continue to make a lasting impact in far Western Baghdad. The dedicated efforts of an outstanding collection of professionals are paying off in positive ways for the people of this area. Along with our Iraqi partners, we have been able to stabilize a critical area that is important in protecting Baghdad. The support we have provided to the Iraqi Army operating in our area has allowed them to take advantage of the security gains and rid this area of illegal weapons and dangerous cache’s. The positive impact we have made on protecting the population will allow the lives of thousands of Iraqi’s to return to normal.

Currently the battalion is working twenty-seven major civil capacity projects to restore essential services to this area. These projects include irrigation restoration, school improvement, road repair, market revitalization, and humanitarian assistance. The Iraqi people are not the only one’s experiencing progress. The living conditions and quality of life in our own living areas continues to improve. The new bed’s, showers, SPAWARE, internet, and gym equipment make life much more tolerable at the JSS. The frequent cards, letters, and care packages from home are a welcomed sight. The support of the Families and Friends back home makes life a little more enjoyable during this time apart.

Thank you all for what you do on a daily basis. Continue to stay safe and look out for one another. Enjoy the lifelong friendships you are making and take time to communicate with your loved ones back home. God Bless you all.

Stallion 6

Honor and Courage

2ND SQUADRON, 8TH CAVALRY REGIMENT

Soldiers who go out on missions to meet and greet local Iraqis have to be prepared for anything. Hand-shaking and smiles can quickly turn into a hunt for the bad guys.

That's exactly what happened for the Steel Knight Soldiers of Battery A, 1st Battalion, 7th Field Artillery Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, while on a combined arms patrol in the Mutanabi neighborhood of Baghdad May 8. The artillerymen received a tip about an insurgent operative in the area while on patrol with local Iraqi Army commander Maj. Mohammed Abdul-Jabar, and snapped to action.

When the Soldiers received the tip, Sgt. 1st Class Sam Cook, a platoon sergeant in Battery A, 1st Bn., 7th FA Regt., called for his troops to mount up. The Steel Knight Soldiers were ready for anything, said Sgt. Christopher Burton of Kansas City, Kan.

"About midway through, we got a call for a

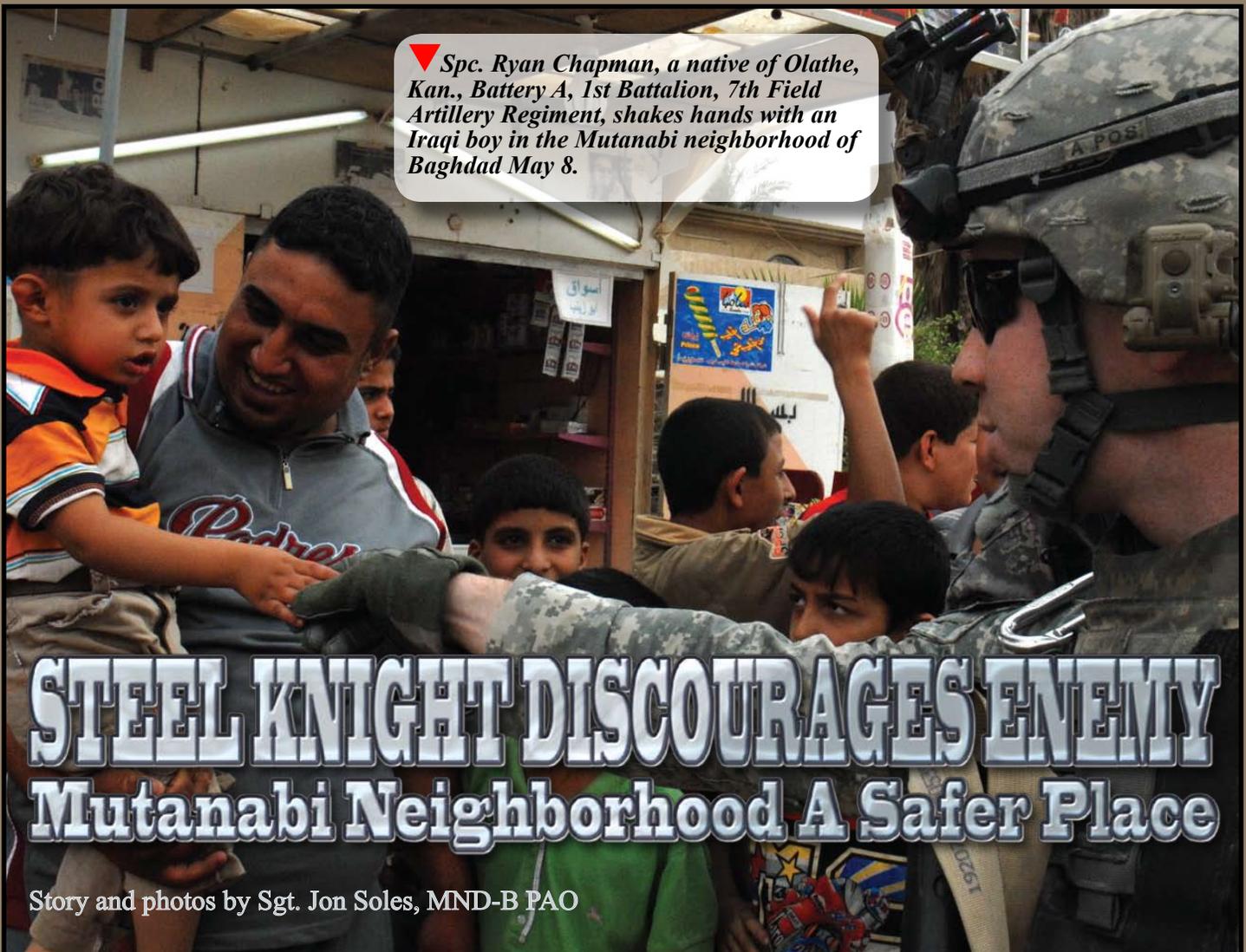
[suspected insurgent], we have been trying to pick up," Sgt. Burton said. "We rolled up on the scene and dismounted, and pretty much checked every single shop."

When the Soldiers arrived in the area, they fanned out and began asking about the suspect, but the lead turned cold. The suspect apparently fled the area before the Soldiers arrived. It was not the first time Battery A Soldiers responded to a tip, but their vigilance had not faded, Burton said.

"Soldiers in my platoon, we live for that," Burton said. "We are field artillery, but we get to do our secondary [military occupational specialty] — infantry."

The community patrol, combined with the information from Iraqis who choose peace and security over terrorism, seemed to leave the Steel Knight Soldiers satisfied with the mission. Cook, the platoon sergeant who is known by his nickname

▼ *Spc. Ryan Chapman, a native of Olathe, Kan., Battery A, 1st Battalion, 7th Field Artillery Regiment, shakes hands with an Iraqi boy in the Mutanabi neighborhood of Baghdad May 8.*



STEEL KNIGHT DISCOURAGES ENEMY Mutanabi Neighborhood A Safer Place

Story and photos by Sgt. Jon Soles, MND-B PAO

“Smoke,” among his troops and officers, said the Soldiers of Battery A will keep up the pressure on enemies who decide to operate from the area.

“Basically, we let the populace know we are still on the ground, still trying to find the bad guys,” said Cook, of Baltimore, Md. “We just come out here, make sure we show our presence.”

Prior to the chase for the bad guy, Cook and his Soldiers met with Abdul-Jabar in the local Iraqi Army safe house. The Iraqi Army officer has been a dependable partner for the Steel Knights, Cook said.

“Whatever info the IAs have, we take it back and see what we come up with,” Cook said. “It’s been great. He gives information and they pretty much take care of their area.”

On the May 8 patrol, the Steel Knights showed up and were greeted by droves of children, as well as adults. Sgt. Burton passed out bottles of water and sports drinks to eager children.

“They see us walking around. They know we are not just in vehicles,” Cook said. “As long as we stay active, we keep it quiet.”

“Keeping it quiet” is a task that’s falling increasingly on the Iraqis, Cook said, as they take more and more responsibility for keeping the peace.

“They got it, we are just here to help,” Cook said. “They keep them quiet and that’s the best thing we can ask for.”

Spc. John Cruz of Battery A, agreed with his platoon sergeant

The Austin, Texas native said he has seen the Iraqi Army soldiers step up in their role during his deployment.

“I think they contribute a great deal,” he said. “Our guidance is to be in a supervisory role and



▲ *Staff Sgt. Trowny Alexis of Miami, signals for the Soldiers of Battery A, 1st Battalion, 7th Artillery Regiment, to mount up at the end of a patrol in a commercial district of the Mutanabi neighborhood of Baghdad May 8.*

help them make a smooth transition.”

Spc. Ryan Chapman of Olathe, Kan., related that his favorite part of any mission is meeting the Iraqi children who flock to American Soldiers. He said he feels a sense of concern for their security.

“I got a lot of nieces and nephews so I like to reach out to the kids,” Chapman said. “A lot of them are afraid of us at first, but we don’t want them to be afraid of us.”

When the patrol was over, Cook and his men returned to their base, sweaty and tired, but still alert. It was another patrol, and another day when the Steel Knight Soldiers could be satisfied with the knowledge that their presence helped strengthen their Iraqi counterparts and kept the bad guy on the run.



▲ *Kerrville, Texas native Spc. David Griffin, Battery A, 1st Battalion, 7th Field Artillery Regiment, pulls security in the Mutanabi neighborhood of Baghdad Friday during a combined arms patrol with Iraqi Army soldiers.*

TEACHING TO SAVE LIVES

IA Gets CLS Training

Story and photos by Sgt. Dustin Roberts, 2nd HBCT PAO

Multi-National Division—Baghdad Soldiers continue to train with their Iraqi Security Force partners in essential war-fighting skills, but not all training requires the firing of weapons.

Medical Soldiers serving with the 5th Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, taught Iraqi Soldiers with the 6th Iraqi Army Division how to conduct the basic medical skills necessary in saving wounded people's lives.

After four days in an indoor learning environment in northwest Baghdad, the Soldiers left their notebooks and pens in the classroom, moved outside and applied what they learned in a hands-on, simulated combat environment May 6.

"It's important for these Soldiers to get this training because they are not always going to have a medic out with them on patrols," said Sgt. James Scaggs, a native of Beaver, Ohio and one of the trainers from 5th Sqdn., 4th Cav. Regt. "Each one of these Soldiers can do basic level care to sustain a patient long enough to get them to a hospital."

Iraqi Soldiers learned how to treat bullet-wounds, head injuries, broken bones, burns and other injuries.

They also put their fears of needles behind them and learned how to properly insert a saline intravenous or IV in the veins of the wounded in case of blood loss.

During the trauma simulation, a squad of 6th IA Soldiers ran through a wall of smoke and heard the screams of five freshly wounded comrades.

"We made it interesting and as realistic as we could for them and they learned fast," said Sgt. David Burke, a U.S. Army trainer from Flint, Mich.

Burke said that some of the Soldiers have done this training before and some of them had to start from scratch.

"We just imparted what we know to them and they took it in very well," he said. "They have the grasp to

use this training not only on Soldiers, but also civilians who may be wounded. Anyone who needs medical help in a combat situation, they are trained and ready to help in any way they can."

When the classroom portion of the training was over, the 6th IA Soldiers couldn't wait to apply what they had learned in a realistic environment.

"What I have noticed is that they love the hands-on training," said Burke. "When they actually get to go in and put their hands on patients and practiced what they learned, that's what they like."

After each group completed a round of training, the Soldiers huddled up to talk about what they did well and what they needed to improve on.

"We gave them first aid and we tried to keep them alive," said a 6th IA Soldier after a training stint. "We might have had a little bit of confusion; we didn't know what to do at first, but after we saw the situation we took a good look and we knew how to deal with it."

Scaggs said the intent of the training is for the 6th IA Soldiers to take what they learned and teach their fellow Soldiers the same basic medical skills. Because these skills are perishable, he said it was important for them to continue practicing.

He added that the practice will also improve their self-assurance.

"This training improves their capabilities because it gives them confidence in their selves to deal with things a lot of people don't deal with," he said. "Just by doing the trauma lane we allowed them to experience somewhat of what a real situation would be like."

The Combat Life Saver training is scheduled to continue with the Soldiers until the 2nd HBCT redeploy this fall.

"As long as we can keep this going, training these guys up, it's a good thing because it is strengthening that bond between ourselves and the IA," said Burke. "We're going to be out here every month; that's our goal and that is what we are going to do until we roll out of here or somebody comes in and replaces us."

▼ *Sgt. James Scaggs, who hails from Beaver, Ohio, 5th Squadron "Longknife," 4th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, observes Iraqi Soldiers serving with the 6th Iraqi Army Division during simulated Combat Life Saver Training in northwest Baghdad May 6.*



LONG KNIFE 6



Lt. Col. John B. Richardson IV

The heat is here! It is going to be a long-hot summer. Continue to take care of each other by watching your buddy and keeping yourself and your wingmen hydrated. Each and every one of us is a key member of this team of teams and we cannot afford to lose a Trooper to something as preventable as becoming a heat casualty. As we enter our 9th month of the deployment we also enter the next in the series of operational transitions that we have seen over the last year here in Baghdad. This is the most significant transition since the 2006 "surge" and its impact will demonstrate how far along the ISF has come in their development. On 30 June we will pull back, "out of the city" except in locations where the Government of Iraq has asked us to stay forward deployed. We will only conduct combined operations upon the request of our Iraqi partners. This is a significant shift in how we have been conducting operations, but one that is necessary to move toward final victory for the Coalition and the Government of Iraq. An independent and capable ISF, able to provide security to the population and a local government able to provide reliable essential services to the community is our target and this transition is huge step forward in achieving that goal.

We will continue to support our Iraqi brothers, we will assist and train them and continue to assist them in improving their capacity and professionalism. You will do this by continuing to role model what a professional Soldier looks like and how he or she handles themselves in tough and challenging situations. You will have the greatest impact by role modeling the Army Values and the Warrior Ethos, being physically and mentally tough, by demonstrating personal courage and treating the population with dignity and respect. Just like the IA want to look like you with their Oakleys and knee pads, they will want to be like you in the intangibles too: Duty, Honor, and love of Country.

Keep up the great work.

LongKnife 6.

"Prepared and Loyal!"

5TH SQUADRON, 4TH CAVALRY REGIMENT



▲ Soldiers prepare to start off the “Year of the NCO” run at Z-Lake on Victory Base Complex May 9. Soldiers from the 299th Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad hosted the event, which highlighted the accomplishments of NCO’s in the U.S. Army’s history. (Photo by 1st Lt. Dwain Settles, Company C, 299th BSB)

RUNNING FOR FUN AND CAUSES

Story by Capt. Kevin Bentz, 299th BSB

Cities across the United States host runs and walks to celebrate different cultures and to support multiple causes.

This is no different for Multi-National Division—Baghdad's 299th Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, which has hosted several runs on Victory Base Complex on the outskirts of Baghdad.

These runs are open to all branches of the military and to Department of Defense contractors within MND-B.

The first run the battalion sponsored was in February in celebration of Black History Month - a five-kilometer run around Camp Liberty's "Z Lake."

"It took months of planning, but I thought it would be good for us to work together," said Staff Sgt. Ericka Benjamin, from Ft. Riley, Kan., 299th BSB.

Motivation for the participants varied from some runners arriving with the hopes of winning first prize, while others came out to show their support and have a fun morning run.

"I came out to support my battalion, but also to win," said 1st Lt. Andrea Bontrager, also a native of Fort Riley, Kan., 299th BSB.

Bontrager, the 1st place winner for females, finished the run in 23 minutes.

As the runners crossed the finish line they gathered back around the final stretch to cheer on the other runners in a show of camaraderie.

"Overall it was a huge success," said Command Sgt. Maj. Julia Kelly, senior enlisted advisor, 299th BSB. "I am proud of everyone who helped or participated."

After the conclusion of their first sponsored fun run, the 299th BSB leadership and Soldiers set out to start planning their next event.

They quickly set their eyes on sponsoring the "Year of The Noncommissioned Officer Run." This run, like the ones before, was part of the yearlong celebration of the NCO, the role that they have in today's Army and to celebrate the role they have played in the Army's history.

The run also saw hundreds of participants show up the morning of May 9 to make the five kilometer run around Z-Lake.

A week after the "Year of the NCO" run on May 16th, the 299th BSB hosted another run as part of MND-B's Asian Pacific Heritage Month Celebration. The month's celebration continued after the end of the run with a luau and a pig roast planned for MND-B Soldiers.

The 299th BSB is looking ahead to their next run and there are many fun runs in planning for Soldiers still to come.

Life Line 6



Lt. Col. Brian Tempest

Another month has come and gone and the LifeLine Battalion continues to excel. The Soldiers are working hard and doing an outstanding job. I could not be more proud of the daily performance of this battalion. We are quickly approaching the June 30 deadline for implementation of the next step of the Security Agreement (Out of the Cities). This will bring a change for how the battalions perform their missions, We will continue our vital missions of supporting the brigade and training the Iraqi Security Forces.

In April the battalion was fortunate enough to have Mike and Carlos Boettcher, two independent reporters, embedded to cover the training conducted with the Iraqi Army. Mike and Carlos are a Father and Son team that travel around Iraq getting the stories that are not told on the nightly news; they tell the Story of the Soldiers. During their time with the battalion they traveled to Camp Taji to film the Combat lifesavers training that Charlie Company Soldiers were performing and maintenance training that Bravo Company was performing on Air Conditioners and welding. Stories from this visit have been published on their blog, <http://blog.newsok.com/Afghanistan-Iraq/>.

The Lifeline Battalion took time to celebrate the "Year of the NCO." Soldiers, NCO's, and Officers recently took time out of their busy schedules to participate in a 5K fun run and a day full of sporting events. I want to thank everyone who participated for making this a great celebration and a fun event. The NCO is the backbone of the Army and is vital to the success of every mission. This battalion has a group of NCO's that are true professionals and masters of their skills. Keep up the good work; I am proud of every Soldier in this battalion.

Lifeline 6

"On Call to Serve."

299TH BRIGADE SUPPORT BATTALION

GETTING A TASTE OF IRAQI CULTURE

Story and photos by Sgt. Dustin Roberts, 2nd HBCT PAO



▲ *Soldiers serving with the Special Troops Battalion “Griffin”, 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, mingle with Iraqi Soldiers serving with the 24th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Division at Forward Operating Base Constitution, May 26.*

Multi-National Division—Baghdad food service Soldiers had the opportunity to experience a meal that isn’t served in the dining facility where they work.

Soldiers serving with the Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, MND-B, who help feed 2nd HBCT Soldiers at the Dagger Inn Dining Facility on Camp Liberty, took a trip to Forward Operating Base Constitution, May 26, where the 24th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division is headquartered.

Walking into the 24th Bde., 6th IA Div. “chow hall”, the troops noticed a few cultural differences between where the IA Soldiers eat and their workplace.

The Soldiers sat in Iraqi-style padded chairs in the facility, equipped with decorated rugs and drapery, and learned a little bit about their counterparts.

They discovered similarities in how the Iraqi Soldiers work and train and learned about each other’s families and cultures.

“It’s important to come to a better mutual understanding and learn how to respect each other and our cultures,” said Pvt. Richard Smalls, a native of New York. “We are accustomed to doing certain things, but when we step foot on someone else’s ground, we still show our upmost respect.”

After the Soldiers formally met each other the aromas of fish, lamb and rice filled the room as the large dining table was set with Iraqi food.

“It was good to actually sit down and get to know them,” said Smalls, who tried the food for the first time. “It was a good experience eating an Iraqi traditional dish; the food was great.”

When the meal was over the Soldiers drank chai

tea together and danced to Iraqi music before getting a tour of the facility's kitchen and storage rooms.

"The Iraqi Soldiers were very interested in this visit and I think the U.S. Soldiers were even more interested," said Lt. Mustafa Abbas, 24th Bde. 6th IA Div. "This visit was to better our relationship with the U.S. Coalition forces. We will benefit from this visit now and in the future."

Because the meeting was such a hit among the Soldiers, their leadership is planning to visit FOB Constitution again.

"I learned a little more about our counterparts today," said Smalls. "I believe the mission that we came out to do was accomplished."



▲ *Soldiers serving with the Brigade Special Troops Battalion "Griffin", 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, dance to Iraqi music with Iraqi Soldiers serving with the 24th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Division at an Iraqi dining facility at Forward Operating Base Constitution May 26.*



Griffins, as another month of our deployment in support of OIF 09-10 becomes history, I want to express how extremely proud I am of every Soldier. You have executed all missions in a professional, disciplined manner to the highest standard.

One of the missions that have become extremely important over the past four months is the battalion's partnership with the Iraqi Army's 6th Engineer Regiment. A Badger is vehicle used for interrogating suspicious items and during these combined route clearance patrols, the Badger crew always takes the lead in examining these suspicious items. Now, we have expanded this partnership to various staff sections to include the S4/ logistics section, maintenance section, Personal Security Detachment, and the Counter-IED section.

In the case of the Griffin battalion, the 6th IA Engineer Regiment is that group. The 6th IA Engineer Regiment is a terrific unit and a fantastic partner. The Soldiers of the 6th IA Engineer Regiment routinely share their insights on the environment we operate in as well as the Iraqi culture. This partnership will lead to the achievement of a "specific goal". In our case, that goal is to continue to maintain a safe and secure area in northwestern Baghdad. Through this partnership, the Soldiers of the Griffin Battalion and 6th Engineer Regiment will successfully achieve this goal, now and in the future.

I am extremely Thankful for the many sacrifices every Family is making in support of their Soldier. The successes of the Griffin battalion and our 6th Engineer Regiment partners would not be possible without the support of our Families. To every Griffin Soldier and Family Member, Thank You for everything you do each and every day to make our battalion a great team!!

Griffin 6

"Griffins! Point of the Dagger!"

2-1 BRIGADE SPECIAL TROOPS BATTALION

STUMPING THE ENEMY

Story and photos by Sgt. Doug Roles, 56th SBCT PAO

Pennsylvania Army National Guard Soldiers from 2nd Battalion, 112th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team partnered with Iraqi Army Soldiers, May 19, to search several locations in the Abu Ghraib area for explosives. The joint patrol was part of an ongoing joint effort to lessen the threat of vehicle borne IED's in Abu Ghraib by searching for components used in making car bombs.

Soldiers from Company B, 2-112th said the continued patrols with the Iraqis serve as a deterrent to would-be insurgents.

"The VBIED is one of the greatest threats. We were actively patrolling to mitigate that threat," said Capt. Jason Hoffman, commander of Co. B. "We maintain a near constant presence."

Hoffman said Soldiers of the 2-112th face "a big challenge" in Abu Ghraib, at one time one of the more volatile areas of Iraq, but said he is proud of the way his Soldiers have met that challenge and have represented both the Pennsylvania Army National Guard and the U.S. Army.

Hoffman said the civilian experience teachers, corrections officers and emergency medical technicians bring to Iraq as Soldiers is invaluable. He said his Soldiers are involved in "full spectrum operations" that range from combat patrols to assisting with civil affairs missions.

"We've done a lot of great things here," said 1st Lt. Michael Keckler, of Bel Air, Md., a platoon leader with Co. B.

Keckler's platoon was in charge of securing a landing zone during the operation, in the event that medical evacuation by air was needed. He echoed Hoffman, saying, his platoon maintains a near constant presence in sector.

He said that level of activity pays off with locals providing more tips on insurgent activity.

"The civilians are stepping up. They're a little less scared, because we're out there all the time," he said. "They're less scared to come and talk to us."

▼ *1st Lt. Michael Keckler, of Bel Air, Md., a platoon commander with Company B, 2nd Battalion, 112th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, photographs a room of a building formerly used as a school during a May 19 search for explosives.*





▲ *Sgt. Sergio Carmona, of Altoona, Pa., with Company B, 2nd Battalion, 112th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, pulls security at the corner of a building, May 19, during a search for explosives in Abu Ghraib.*



▲ *Using an interpreter (left), 1st Lt. Joshua Shearn (center), of Mount Union, Pa., with Company B, 2nd Battalion, 112th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, talks with an Iraqi Army battalion commander, May 19, during a search for explosives in Abu Ghraib, near Baghdad.*

PAXTON 6




Lt. Col. Samuel Hayes

I want to begin by acknowledging the sacrifice of SPC Chad Edmundson. SPC Edmundson was taken from us on 27 May 2009 while he was on patrol in the Abu Ghraib Market. He was the kind of Soldier that every leader wants in his unit. His service was motivated for the right reasons. His optimism was infectious. His humor was refreshing. It was an honor to know this Soldier personally. He was a patriot who's selfless service was an example for all of us. He will be missed by the entire PAXTON Team. I also want to publically thank everyone who worked so hard to honor our warrior both here in Iraq and at home. The PAXTON Team established a new standard for the way we honor our fallen warriors and clearly demonstrated our commitment to excellence in everything that we do. It is a testament to who we are and how we care for each other. Thank you all.

Operationally, the PAXTON Rangers remain focused and continue to establish and maintain a very high standard. We have captured numerous terrorists and weapons/explosives. We are working everyday to improve the security of the Abu Ghraib region. Our non-lethal effort has resulted in the opening of multiple facilities and the improvement of basic services such as electricity, trash, and water. We are providing Iraqis with economic opportunity by supporting business owners and creating a business-friendly environment. As the heat of an Iraqi summer intensifies, we prepare to execute decisively across all lines of effort. Our tireless pursuit of the enemy, partnership with the ISF, and our commitment to the people of Iraq will define the final 100 days of our mission. Our task is not an easy one by any definition. The enemy continues to operate in the OE, despite a high degree of success in disrupting a number of cells and detention of several key HVIs. We must continue our attack on the scourge of terrorism. Our professionalism and honor ensure that the battalion will maintain its momentum and we will complete our mission by leaving Abu Ghraib better than when we arrived.

Paxton 6
"Quick, Silent, Deadly."

FINESSING FINANCES

Financial Peace University Teaches Money Management

Story and photos by Sgt. Dustin Roberts, 2nd HBCT PAO



▲ Chaplain (Maj.) Peter Johnson, a native of San Diego, 2nd HBCT, speaks to Dagger Soldiers after a Financial Peace university Class at Camp Liberty May 5.



▲ Maj. Patrick Wells, communications officer-in-charge, 2nd HBCT, speaks to Dagger Soldiers about managing finances at Camp Liberty May 5.

Soldiers of the 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad are taking a 12-week course at Camp Liberty that teaches how to manage their money.

The Soldiers meet to watch Dave Ramsey's Financial Peace University once a week.

The program is known world-wide and thousands of people have turned their financial frowns upside down because of it.

"This is kind of like working out," said Chaplain (Maj.) Peter Johnson, a native of San Diego, 2nd HBCT. "Sometimes you just need that motivation, that accountability to get yourself in the financial position you want to be."

In Ramsey's FPU, he teaches methods of saving and how to stay debt-free.

"A lot of people are saving a lot of money because we are deployed," said Sgt. 1st Class Jamila Gale, a native of Sacramento, Calif., HHC, 2nd HBCT. "Then they get back and they spend all of their money when they should have invested or continued to save it."

Gale said the program will teach Soldiers not to "waste" money, but set the foundation for a secure future.

As the classes progress, the student Soldiers learn more about investment opportunities like mutual funds and Roth Individual Retirement Accounts.

"But he also teaches discipline when managing your finances," said Johnson. "The knowledge of this stuff means absolutely nothing if you don't apply it to your life."

When the twelve weeks are over, the Gale said she feels the Soldiers will be more knowledgeable about money management and will have the direction they need to save for the future.

For more information about Dave Ramsey's Financial Peace University, visit his website at www.daveramsey.com.

HOME RUN

SOLDIERS DELIVER BASEBALL EQUIPMENT TO KARKH

Story by Sgt. Dustin Roberts, 2nd HBCT PAO

Some of the Iraqi youths in northwest Baghdad's Karkh district set aside their soccer balls and experienced "America's Pastime" May 7.

Soldiers serving with the 403rd Civil Affairs Battalion out of Syracuse, N.Y. brought enough baseball equipment for three recreation locations in the Karkh district.

About four months ago, when the 403rd's Soldiers joined up with civil military affairs leaders serving with the 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad to meet with the Karkh Ministry of Sports and Youth, ideas of different sports in Baghdad came to the table of discussion.

"In one of the early engagements, they said they liked sports of all types; soccer, basketball, volleyball, and one that was mentioned, which surprised us, was baseball," said 1st Lt. Conor Browne, a native of N.J., assistant civil military affairs officer, 2nd HBCT. "There are a lot of people in the states that love baseball and would be willing to donate some stuff, so that's what we did."

The group contacted "Pitch In for Baseball," an organization out of Philadelphia, which is dedicated to donating baseball equipment to youth around the world.

The organization donated running bases, more than a hundred gloves and balls, and more than 60 helmets and bats.

When the equipment was collected, all it took was the will to ship it to Baghdad.

Members of the battalion stationed in the U.S. delivered the equipment from Philadelphia to the unit's Family Readiness Group in Syracuse, N.Y., who packaged the goods for proper shipping.

"The shipment was paid for by the Central Square Lions Club, located in central N.Y.," said Maj. Dennis Greco, a native Syracuse, N.Y., 403rd Civil Affairs Bn. "The Family Readiness Group coordinated the sponsorship, and the Lions said they would cover

the whole deal. It turned out to be about \$500."

When the equipment arrived in country, all it took was a visit to the Karkh Ministry of Youth and Sports.

"We busted out some of the equipment and we got the youth to throw a couple of balls back and forth," said Staff Sgt. Dane Halligan, a native of Sauquoit, N.Y., 403rd Civil Affairs Battalion. "It went from us showing them how to do it and they started taking it up on their own."

Halligan said the new baseball players enjoyed the concept and after a little more practice, will invite the Soldiers back to see a few exhibition games.

"This just reinforces the foundation of that relationship, especially with the young people," said Greco. "As they get older and they see what's going on across the world with the United States, they'll always remember the day a U.S. Soldiers came in and dropped off the equipment."

As Coalition Forces continue to partner with Iraq's local governments, Karkh's youth are able to step up to the plate in a safer environment.

"I think this was a great idea," said Greco. "What better way to get the two countries together than by using baseball?"



▲ Staff Sgt. Dane Halligan of Sauquoit, N.Y., 403rd Civil Affairs Battalion, hands a box of baseball equipment to an Iraqi in Karkh May 7. (Photo courtesy of 403rd C.A. Battalion)

COMPLACENCY KILLS

By Thomas McMurray, 2nd HBCT Safety officer

Too often Soldiers and Leaders become complacent when it comes to Safety. Leaders are satisfied with mediocre Safety performance and do not work to improve the environment by raising Safety awareness and eliminating the potential for injury (Composite Risk Management).

Soldiers are content and are not attentive to their work environments. They become convinced that leaders are not concerned about Safety. They begin to think they are not responsible for their own Safety. Over time, the entire Unit gives little meaningful attention to Safety.

The result is that Soldiers begin to get in a hurry and take shortcuts. They are more focused on the end

result than getting it done Safely. That attitude becomes a Unit norm. Near misses go unreported. No one wants to take the time to conduct Risk Management or fill out forms and Soldiers don't understand the connection between sharing information and eliminating injuries. Leaders do not pay attention to accident reports, so they become unimportant.

The number of injuries increases and they become more severe. Everyone becomes frustrated.

Soldiers blame the leadership and the leadership blames the Soldiers, yet no one is willing to take action to improve the situation.

Unfortunately, it often takes a fatal injury to cause everyone to focus on Safety.

DON'T LET THIS HAPPEN IN YOUR UNIT.

LEADERS, REMEMBER THESE ACTIONS:

1. **Get committed to Safety.**
2. **Take the time to walk around and talk to Soldiers**
3. **Integrate Safety into all aspects of mission planning.**
4. **Enable Soldiers to get involved in the Safety process.**
5. **Use CRM for all tasks/missions.**
6. **Analyze all accident trends, adjust control measures.**



Stay Dagger Safe!

UNFUNDED BUDGET WISH LIST SHRINKS BELOW \$1B

Story courtesy of Army Times

A \$952.8 million wish list of stuff the Army would like to have beyond the 2010 budget request of \$142.1 billion is a quarter of the size of last year's request for \$3.9 billion. The dramatic drop in extra funding requirements from the Army is due in part to the restructuring of major weapons and hardware programs by the Defense Department, such as Future Combat Systems, but it's also because many of the big-ticket items on last year's wish list ended up in the 2010 main budget.

For example, a \$1.6 billion request on last year's unfunded requirements for Humvees is now in this year's main budget, which includes \$1.7 billion for 10,268 Humvees.

The 2009 list also requested \$625 million for driver vision enhancement gear, \$489 million for heavy expanded mobility tactical trucks, \$151 million for cargo trailers and \$152 million for chem-bio trucks.

Many of those heavy vehicles are included in a \$1.6 billion request in this year's budget for 5,532 vehicles in the family of Medium Tactical Vehicles.

The 2010 wish list was sent to the House Armed Services Committee May 19 by Army Chief of Staff Gen. George Casey in response to the com-

mittee's annual request for a breakdown of unfunded requirements.

This year's list is notable in its lower cost and in a lack of a requirement for heavy equipment. Instead, the requirements lean toward higher-technology testing, surveillance and communications systems, such as \$179 million for the Force XXI Battlefield Command Brigade and Below system, \$47.3 million for the Long-Range Advanced Scout Surveillance System and \$41.5 million for thermal weapons sights.

More than \$245 million was requested for Force Provider climate controlled billeting for deployed troops and \$30.7 million for Field Feeding enhancements to how soldiers are fed in the field.

The wish list also asks for \$100 million for the Common Remotely Operated Weapon System and \$47 million for unspecified test, measurement and diagnostic equipment.

The Army's long-standing FCS wish list is also undergoing changes. The drive to get the 27-ton Manned Ground Vehicle is being cancelled, while the FCS network and spinout-gear efforts are being swept into a new program called the Army Brigade Combat Team Modernization under changes proposed by Defense Secretary Robert Gates in April.

end frame...



THE DOGGER EDGE