

December 2008

Call of the WOLF



The Wolf's Howl

Greetings to the Soldiers of the Arctic Wolves and to the entire team in support of operations here in the Diyala Province of Iraq. I wish you all a happy Holiday Season away from home!

In short order, you, the Arctic Wolves, have earned a reputation across Diyala, Multi-National Division-North and Iraq as a lethal, determined, disciplined and, most importantly, a professional fighting force. You are consistently accomplishing every assigned mission and each and every one of you is contributing to your great reputation. As a result the citizens of Diyala are experiencing a relative peace and normalcy that they have not had for a long time. All of this is possible because of your tireless efforts.

Your work with our Provincial Reconstruction Team and with our Iraqi Army and Police partners is resulting in a safe and secure environment for Diyala. You are setting conditions for one of the most important efforts we have – ensuring good governance, justice and the rule of law for all citizens of Diyala; a challenging task under tough conditions.

We are asking a lot from each of you and your families, but among the many important things we are asking you to sacrifice this year is Christmas at home. It is one of the most difficult times to give up. The American family Christmas is one of the great joys of life. At the same time, it is one of the real, tangible things for which we fight. Its preservation is one of the essential reasons for our being at war. Every Soldier

who spends Christmas in service away from home is actually keeping Christmas in his home. To

all members of the Arctic Wolves and Coalition Force Team, I extend cordial greetings and best wishes for the Christmas season.

Please continue to take care of each other and stay focused on the mission. I extend to each of you my sincere appreciation for your dedicated service and sacrifice. Stay safe, fight hard and serve with honor!

The Wolf, Col. Burt Thompson 



Letter from Wolf 7

Hooah! Greetings, Arctic Wolves and Soldiers supporting the Arctic Wolves' efforts. I want you to enjoy this holiday season with fellow brothers and sisters-in-arms while we begin to look forward to being reunited with friends and family as Soldiers begin environmental morale leave.

This holiday season, Arctic Wolf families across America will gather to revive honored traditions and renew the optimism and love that is part of the season. As they do, their thoughts and prayers will naturally turn to you, whose mission it is to defend peace and freedom.

It's a sacrifice made even more precious by the fact that we render it willingly. You have proven yourselves to be the "stryke" force of freedom in Iraq. You humbly serve in a foreign land and put your lives at risk while sacrificing comfort so that all our fellow citizens can enjoy the blessings and the benefits of liberty.

To quote the English author and poet Joseph Rudyard Kipling, "For the strength of the pack is the wolf, and the strength of the wolf is the pack." This applies to the Arctic Wolves. This holiday season we will revive our traditions here in the Diyala Province of Iraq and will also pray for our families

back home. Know that hearts and prayers of Americans are with you.

On behalf of myself and Col. Thompson, I want to express our deep appreciation to you and your families for your service and sacrifice. Happy Holidays, and my God bless all of you and your loved ones.

Very Respectfully,
Wolf 7

"ARCTIC TOUGH

ARCTIC WOLVES"



A LETTER FROM THE MAYOR



Mayor Terry Strle

As Mayor of the City of Fairbanks and on behalf of the Fairbanks City Council and every citizen, I want to thank you for your sacrifice, especially during the holiday season when I know you are missing your friends and family.

We have lighted snowflakes lining the city streets downtown, the days are down to 5 hours of sunlight, the cold has settled in for the winter and we wish you were here!

You are all in our thoughts, prayers, and heart, and we wish you a speedy return to our Golden Heart City. Be safe and call your Mother.

Happy Holidays!

Mayor Terry Strle
City of Fairbanks, Alaska

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1/25 SBCT Commander
Col. Burdett Thompson

1/25 SBCT Command Sgt. Maj.
Command Sgt. Maj. Gabriel Cervantes

1/25 SBCT Public Affairs Office

Maj. Chris Hyde.....Public Affairs Officer/Editor
Staff Sgt. Christina Harwell.....NCOIC/Broadcast Journalist
Spc. Opal Vaughn.....Print Journalist
Pfc. Alisha Nye.....Print Journalist/Design and Layout



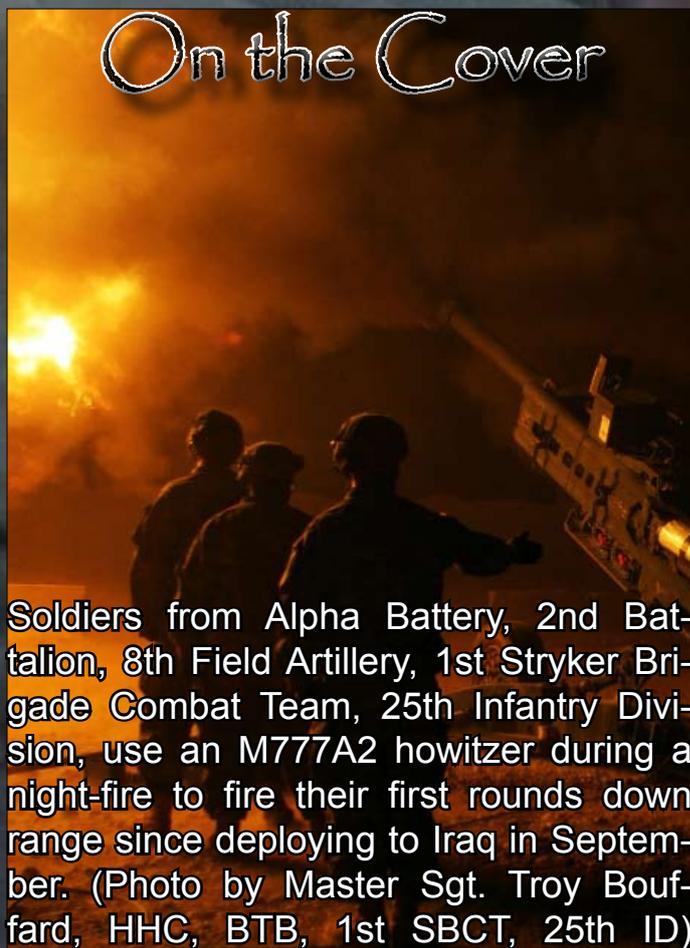
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Mineral Wells, Texas native, Spc. Antonio Ibarra, a wheeled vehicle mechanic with Combat Readiness Team, 5th Squadron, 1st U.S. Cavalry, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, tinkers with some electrical wires on the underbelly of a truck while at the motor pool at Forward Operating Base Caldwell, located in Diyala, Iraq, Nov. 20. (Photo by Spc. Opal Vaughn, 14th PAD)



On the Cover



Soldiers from Alpha Battery, 2nd Battalion, 8th Field Artillery, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, use an M777A2 howitzer during a night-fire to fire their first rounds down range since deploying to Iraq in September. (Photo by Master Sgt. Troy Bouffard, HHC, BTB, 1st SBCT, 25th ID)



Sgt. Monique Raymundo supervises, while Spc. Shaun Grigsby assists, both medics with Brigade Support Medical Company, 25th Brigade Support Battalion, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, local Iraqi Police in how to properly seat carry a patient to safety without injury to themselves or to the patient during a combat life saving class at Callas, Iraq, Nov. 12.

Armed with combat life saving skills

Story and Photos by
Spc. Opal Vaughn
14th Public Affairs Detachment

Saving the life of another takes courage. Combat medics are trained to do just that. They utilize the training they receive in advanced individual training and ensure the health and well-being of an injured or sickly patient.

Forward Operating Base Warhorse houses some of the finest combat medics.

Medics with Brigade Support Medical Company, 25th Brigade Support Battalion, 1st Stryker Bri-

gade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, venture outside the wire on a weekly basis and take the skills they have learned and teach local Iraqi Police to do the same as part of an ongoing mission, BSB Diamond.

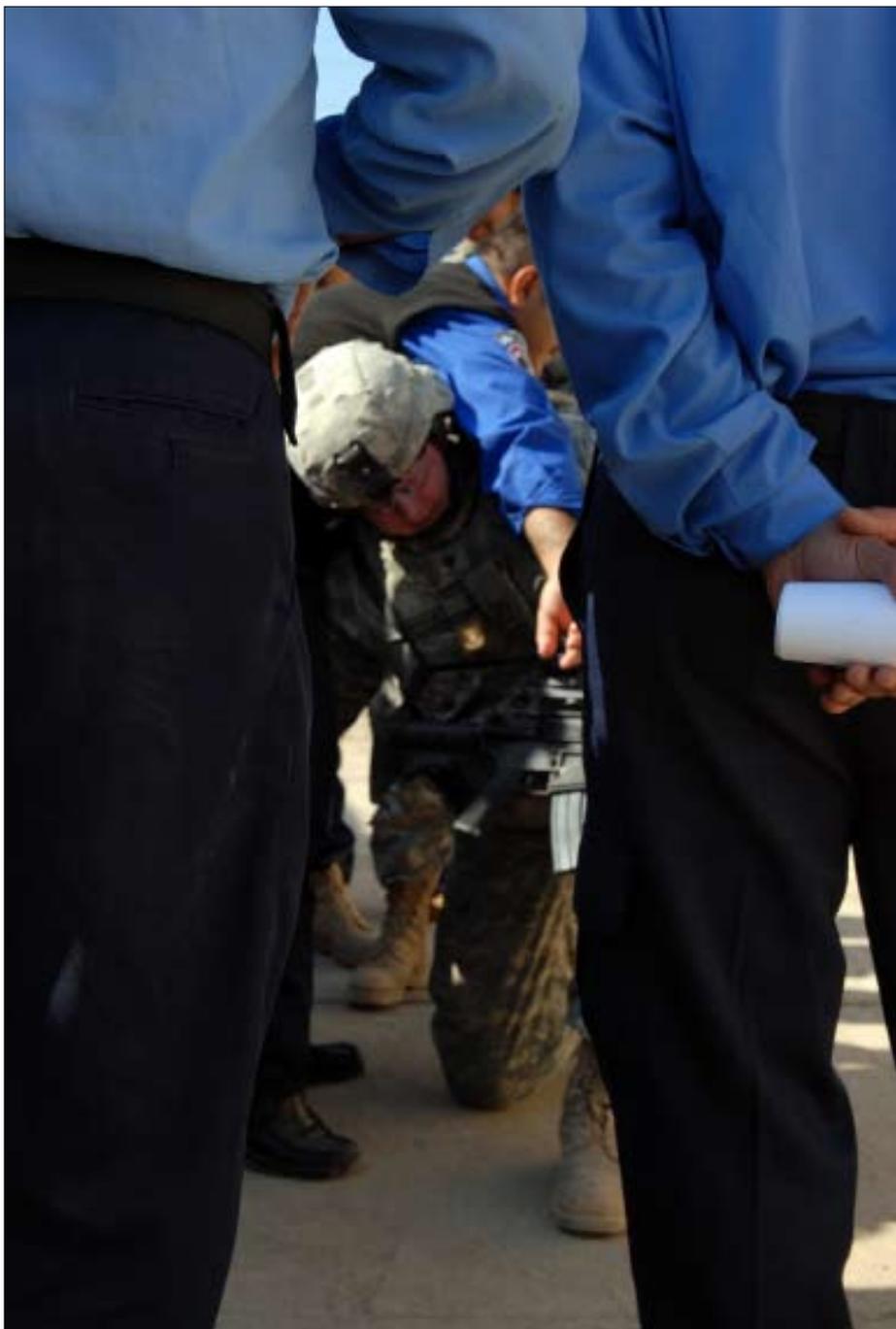
Callas, Iraq is just one stop on the long list of Iraqi Police operational posts in the Diyala province of Iraq, November 12.

“We teach different classes - bleeding control, shock, airway, burns, moving patients around safely and quickly, preventative medicine and field sanitation,” said Sgt. Monique Raymundo, a

medic with BSMC, 25th BSB, 1st SBCT, 25th Inf. Div.

“It was a little difficult for me because it was my first time teaching this class with an interpreter,” Raymundo stated. “But the IPs seemed pretty receptive to what I was teaching them.”

According to Raymundo, for the BSMC Soldiers, teaching is not something new for them. “We usually teach the CLS classes to our Soldiers in the rear all the time. That is how we learn to teach and dually train as well. And during missions, we have a different medic come out to teach each



Spc. Shaun Grigsby, a medic with Brigade Support Medical Company, 25th Brigade Support Battalion, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, shows local Iraqi Police how to properly fireman carry a man to safety without injury to themselves or to the patient during a combat life saving class at Callas, Iraq, Nov. 12.

time so that everyone can get the experience of teaching,” Raymundo added.

Spreading the knowledge of combat life saving techniques is not just for one IP station though. Medics with BSMC try to get out to as many IP operational posts as possible, said Capt. Gabriel

Medley, BSMC, 25th BSB, 1st SBCT, 25th Inf. Div company commander.

“These classes are essential to ease the transitioning process when we’re dealing with the IP’s and Provincial Iraqi control,” Medley stated. “It can be difficult because of the language barriers

but we have several interpreters on hand to mediate the language between the IPs and us.”

“In order to have a smooth transition we have a team of three that usually teach with a hard copy of the training for that day, translated in Arabic so the IPs can follow along. Plus, all of our classes are on digits so that we can make as many copies possible, which the IPs can keep,” Medley continued.

In support of the BSMC medics and the transitioning process, the 202nd Military Police Company, was also at Callas district headquarters to help.

“Our mission is to escort the reconstruction team for medical training, generator mechanical repairs and additional security reinforcement equipment,” said Staff Sgt. David Mickem, 202nd MP Co. non-commissioned officer in charge.

“But we also advise IP operations, training in police techniques and working with our IP counterparts to ensure they are appropriating all of the training and policies, Mickem stated. “We do this to help stabilize all of the IP operations in the area so that we can utilize the Iraqi army forces in other areas.”

“Law and order and security in the area are essential,” Mickem stated.

Even when the BSMC Soldiers aren’t out and about teaching the local IPs CLS classes, they’re back at the FOB providing medical support.

“We provide medical aerial support for the FOB and we also send a lot of our medics out on missions with the personal security detachment and the combat logistic patrols,” Medley stated.

“Our medics are at every echelon of the battlefield,” said Medley. “They’re doing a great job in this transition process.” 



America Samoa native, Staff Sgt. Jason Afusla, a scout with Alpha Troop, 5-1 Cavalry, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, instructs a local Iraqi Policeman to assure proper inspection of a randomly selected vehicle at a checkpoint in Diyala, Iraq, November 19.

Maintaining security in Balad Ruz, Diyala

Story and Photo by
Spc. Opal Vaughn
14th Public Affairs Detachment

Some people might have noticed there's a new unit in town. But that makes no difference at all.

Even though 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division has only been in country for a short while, the mission still remains the same; maintain security while transitioning the return of Iraq to its people.

Alpha Troop, 5th Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment, 1st SBCT, 25th Inf. Div. has taken the lead on maintaining security for Forward Operating Base Caldwell located in Diyala, Iraq, by making it their mission, one day at a time.

FOB Caldwell, formally inhabited by 2nd Squadron, 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment and recently turned over to 5-1 Cav., has already begun creating sand storms throughout Diyala and Balad Ruz by ensuring the local Iraqi Police, Iraqi Army, Sons of Iraq and Emergency Relief Forces continue to stay on task for the betterment of Iraq.

Professional, thorough and a tight-knit group of Soldiers, Alpha Troop lives up to every word they embody.

"I always say three things to my guys before every mission; Do the right thing, do what you're trained to do and take care of your buddy,"

said DesMoines, Iowa native, 1st Lt. Marcus Green, 2nd Platoon, platoon leader, Alpha Troop, 5-1 Cav.

Initially the mission was to clear Balad Ruz of any possible weapons caches in the area. But with quick reaction, Green, working with a combined 40-plus years of service on his team, ventured upon a new mission of assuring the security of local IP checkpoints in the area, November 19.

"We want to ensure the local IP's are doing their jobs correctly and safely," Green stated. "It gives them a sense of confidence to know that eventually we can turn the country over to them all together. A lot times we go to the check points and spot check to ensure the IP's are trained properly and conducting all of the necessary steps to not only make themselves safe, but their areas safe as well."

"By going to the check points, it allows us to fine tune their training as needed if we see something done incorrectly or an unsafe act," Green stated.

For added safety, Spc. Forrest Hull and his military working dog, Flopper, both with Headquarters Headquarters Troop, Canine, 1st SBCT, 25th Inf. Div., assisted Alpha Troop in securing checkpoints in Balad Ruz and Diyala.

"My job is to clear the surrounding areas of checkpoints in the area as well as search vehicles randomly selected for inspection, for any possible explosive devices," said Hull. "Flopper searches by checking the interior and exterior of the vehicles we inspect. If he sits then it means there are explosives or a weapon of some sort aboard in the vehicle. We have several military

working dogs on hand and each one of them is amazingly accurate."

Making sure the dogs are conditioned is essential to keeping the dogs on their toes, according to Hull. "Every once and a while we give the dogs a treat but we keep them on a strict diet because they are military working dogs," Hull stated.

"The dogs hold different job responsibilities just like we do," Hull continued, "for instance, we have combat trackers, dual purpose and single purpose dogs. A combat tracking dog tracks humans, a dual purpose dog attacks and detects and a single purpose dog just tracks."

According to Hull, the use of canines brings a whole new aspect to the fight, in securing Iraq.

"Flopper's only been working with me for about six months now," said Hull, "but he and I have had some big finds."

Alpha Troop ensures the IP's are doing their job correctly and safely, but ensuring Alpha Troop does their job correctly and safely is Alpha Troop scout platoon sergeant, Sgt. First Class Noah Pugh.

"Our mission was to clear the palm groves with the ERF but it was deterred because they could not support us on this mission," said Pugh. "Instead, we changed our route and are now conducting random traffic control point security checks."

"While Alpha Troop checks the traffic control points," Pugh continued, "I ensure quality control of my Soldiers so that the enemy cannot get at us while we assist the IP's. I've been in long enough to have learned my lesson a time or two. So I just want to ensure that my guys are being safe while they secure these checkpoints," Hull said.

EYES in the SKY

Story and Photo by
Pfc. Alisha Nye
14th Public Affairs Detachment

One of the most important assets to military aviation in a deployed environment is the one that leaves its crew on the ground.

The Shadow-200, also called the RQ7, is an unmanned aerial vehicle that allows the United States military to have aerial surveillance of occurrences on the ground.

"It's got an on-board camera that can look down and kind of depict what is going on, on the ground and tips us off to possible enemy activities or do some over-watch if we have some troops on the ground doing something," said Capt. Phillip Mann, commander of Troop D, 5th Battalion, 1st Cavalry Regiment, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, which falls under the SBCT's Brigade Troops Battalion.

The UAV is operated by a team of two, who work out of a shelter in the back of a high mobility multipurpose wheeled vehicle.

"One of them actually flies the aircraft through a series of different radio frequencies and then we've got the mission payload officer, which is another Soldier who mans the camera," Mann said.

These two Soldiers take much of their directives for flying the craft from the mission commander, another Soldier who is in direct line of communication with everyone necessary.

"He is the one who is a direct line of contact with air traffic control, the battle commander and he's monitoring airspace issues so he can relay them directly to the guys

flying the bird from the shelter," said Spc. Ryan Riviere, UAV pilot/mission commander, Troop D, 5-1 Cav., 1st SBCT, 25th Inf. Div.

Mann said these UAVs are an extremely important asset to successfully completing missions in a combat zone.

"They're a great tool," he said. "They provide a commander, at any level, instant eyes on the target or instant eyes on the ground. So, he's got good situational awareness of what's going on before he has to send his troops in and it also helps to protect to forces while the troops are there on the ground."

It is no small task to keep these vehicles operating smoothly and efficiently on a daily basis, said Mann.

"It takes a platoon of 22 people," he said. "Which includes the platoon leader, a warrant officer who is a UAV specialist, the platoon sergeant who is also an air vehicle operator, seven maintainers who have to go to a special UAV maintainer's school, and an additional 12 air vehicle operators who work on an aviation cycle where they have 12-14 hour work days and then 10-12 hours of rest afterward."

While most of these Soldiers may never go outside the wire while deployed, the responsibility that falls on their shoulders is as great as that of any line Soldier.

"One of the things that I tell the platoon all the time is that they are in the unique position of saving

Soldiers' lives every day," Mann said. "They're not the ones who go out there and get bad guys; they're the ones who make sure bad guys don't get us. They let the commanders and the troops on the ground know what's going on around them that they can't see."

This unique job is one that requires a lot of attention, Mann said.

"The air vehicle operators have to be pretty patient," he said. "What's unique about Army UAVs is that we have enlisted Soldiers who fly these things. Unlike manned aviation where we have warrant officers and officers who do it, we have 19, 20 year old kids, sometimes, flying these."

The most important thing that these Soldiers perform are pre-flight, in-flight and launch checklists which ensure that the whole operation goes smoothly, Mann said. The Soldiers operating the UAVs may be young, but once they have mastered going through these checklists and performing a mission smoothly, they have also proven that they are capable, Mann said.

The capability and unwavering patience of these UAV Soldiers to perform a job that requires the utmost attention to detail may be attributed to their fondness for what it is they do, Mann said.

"For me, this is probably the best military intelligence job I'll ever have," he said. "The aviators just love flying. The maintainers, they don't care if they're working 18 hour days, just as long as they get to put that airplane up and it gets to come right back down safely. They've all wanted to do this for 18 months and now they finally get to do it."

A Soldier from Troop D, 5th Battalion, 1st Cavalry Regiment, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, which falls under the SBCT's Brigade Troops Battalion, readies an unmanned aerial vehicle to launch into flight.

Support by **FIRE**

Story and Photo by
Pfc. Alisha Nye
14th Public Affairs Detachment

Soldiers from Alpha Battery, 2nd Battalion, 8th Field Artillery Regiment, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, fired their first rounds “down range” at Forward Operating Base Warhorse, Iraq, using an M777A2 howitzer.

“It was an amazing experience,” said Pvt. Erskine Yarbrough, Battery A, 2-8 FA, 1st SBCT, 25th Inf. Div. “To be the first ones to shoot this actual piece, it’s pretty awesome.”

The M777 is a newer, important asset to the battlefield. The gun replaces the M198 howitzer, which is almost double the size of the M777. The lighter weight and smaller size of the M777 allows for easier movement on and off of the battlefield, improves storage efficiency in military warehouses and also reduces the gun crew size from the previously-required nine to an operational minimum of five, explained Sgt. Jackie Irving, gunner, Battery A, 2-8 FA, 1st SBCT, 25th Inf. Div.

“It’s very easy to operate,” Irving said. “Much easier than the 198.”

In addition to the higher level of this gun’s efficiency and the ease in which it can be employed, the M777 is also an important resource to troops deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan.

“This weapon is used for support by fire,” Yarbrough said. “If we have a target that needs to be taken out or if we have a team out there that needs support by fire, we can assist in that.”

By “support by fire,” Yarbrough means helping to assist and protect troops on ground, he explained.

“We have a lot of threats coming from different angles on the battlefield that we’re on today,” Yarbrough said. “We don’t really have a lot of direct fire from the enemy. When we have to face house-bombs or things like that, we don’t want to send out troops into those situations. If it is verified that a house is booby trapped, for example, we can take it out and make sure there are no Soldier casualties.”

Working with these weapons is something that takes some motivated Soldiers, Irving said.

“It’s a lot of hard work,” Irving said. “But, when there’s a lot of motivation going on, everybody’s helping everybody, and everybody knows his job,

then everything runs very smoothly.”

Irving also said he has the utmost confidence in the Soldiers in his firing section to perform their jobs smoothly.

“These are some pretty tough cats,” Irving said. “A lot of them surprise me a lot of times with their knowledge – things that we didn’t think they knew. Plus, a lot of times, we put them in situations where they have to take charge and they do it.”

This motivation and retention of knowledge can be attributed to the fact that these Soldiers have a working love for their jobs and a brotherly love for each other, said Yarbrough.

“I love my job,” Yarbrough said. “No doubt about it. This is a nice piece (of equipment) to be on. I’m glad I’ve had the opportunity to work with it; and these guys I’m out here with, I feel kind of close to them. I guess you can kind of say they’re my second family.”

Despite the back-breaking work to move these nearly 10,000 pound guns and the late hours these Soldiers work in order to perform the duty of supporting troops on the ground with artillery fire, the excitement of firing the rounds and feelings of brotherly love keep these Soldiers working without hesitation.

“The thing I like about my job isn’t job related,” Irving said. “It’s just the relationship that we have between the guys. Everybody is like a brother. We fight and get mad at each other a lot, just like a real family, but at the end of the day, we’re still the same. We’re still brothers.” 🐺



Soldiers from A Battery, 2-8 FA, 25th Inf. Div., prepare to participate in a night-fire.

Welding a FORTRESS

Story by Pfc. Alisha Nye
14th Public Affairs Detachment

To Soldiers in Stryker units, a Stryker is a fortress on wheels, but even fortresses have their weaknesses. This is why Soldiers, like Spc. Ramiro Sandoval, rise to the challenge of making these rolling fortresses impenetrable – so their fellow brothers and sisters-in-arms can carry out their missions that much more safely.

The installation of Pope Glass on a Stryker is no easy or short-lived task.

“They were long days,” said Sandoval, a metal worker, Forward Maintenance Company, Brigade Support Battalion, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, said. “I worked about 20 hours a day, I would say.”

However, that did not make Sandoval shy away from the tiring 20-hour work days in order to complete the job effectively.

“I welded the Pope Glass on the Strykers,” Sandoval said. “What it does is protect the Soldiers inside from small-arms fire and shrapnel from explosives. It took a while to do. I did two Strykers in four days.”

Sandoval said he didn’t work such long hours because it was required of him. He did it because he wanted to.

“I just wanted to get it done as soon as possible because the guys on the Strykers were going out every day on missions,” he said. “So I did my best to try and get it done fast so they could go out protected.”

As a metal worker, Sandoval’s job includes fabricating and welding metal onto and repairing vehicles. These tasks are all essential to keep the combat vehicles of 1st SBCT, 25th Inf.

Div., operation proficient and the Soldiers inside of them safe.

“It’s so important because things break on the vehicles that need to be fixed so the vehicles can be mission capable,” Sandoval said. “I’m the guy who does that. I weld everything back together for the vehicle to be ready.”

Sandoval also said it is not possible to weld directly to a Stryker, a fact that made his job slightly more challenging.

“When they came up to us about the Pope Glass, it was something new to me,” he said. “So I had to adjust and learn how to do it. In my military career, it was the first big challenge that I had. We actually can’t weld on a Stryker, so we had to come up with something to hold what we were working on and then weld on it. That’s one of the difficulties.”

It was Sandoval’s first time working on Strykers, he said, and the challenge was all of the appeal.

“I was kind of excited at first, trying to accomplish that mission,” he said. “I was motivated to do it. It got my mind going and I was happy to accomplish it. It’s really all a thinking game.”

Sandoval’s dedication did not go unnoticed. He received a Certificate of Achievement and a brigade coin for his work and earned himself the title of brigade “Hero of the Week.”

“I felt surprised, but I felt good about it,” Sandoval said. “It made me feel good because I know someone was looking at it and noticed my work.”

To Sandoval, the reward was all in the work, however.

“It was tiring and I worked long hours,” Sandoval said. “But, the end results left me with satisfaction.”

Spc. Ramiro Sandoval a metal worker, Forward Maintenance Company, Brigade Support Battalion, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, works long hours welding Pope Glass windows and installing them on Strykers. (Courtesy Photo)





Pfc. Aaron Heflinger, 5-1 CAV

Iraq is not as intense as I expected. I thought it would be a little more violent, but everything is real calm.

Is Iraq what you expected it to be?



Sgt. Andrew Brooke, 5-1 CAV

No, Iraq is a little slower than it was last time and the people are more friendly.



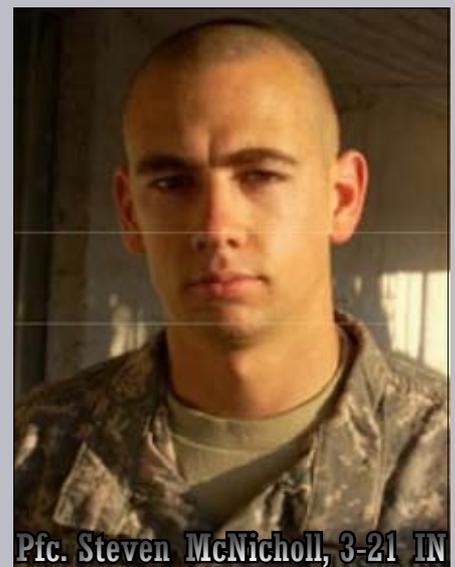
Spc. Frankie Calvaruso, 3-21 IN

No, we're helping people more than we're engaging in combat.



Spc. Wesley Christiansen, 1-24 IN

This is my first tour of Iraq. It's a little bit different than I expected. I was in Afghanistan before this; the area is more open in Iraq.



Pfc. Steven McNicholl, 3-21 IN

No, it is not as intense as the training I received. It seems the training was the worst case scenario.

Did You Know?

the MRAP

Written by 1st Lt. Paul G. Ethier

When the 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, came to Camp Buerhing Kuwait as the first stop on the way to Forward Operating Base Warhorse, Iraq, it was greeted by the Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicle. Though the Arctic Wolves had heard about the MRAP when they were in Fort Wainwright and at the National Training Center, this was the first time that the Soldiers got to see the vehicle in person. While in Kuwait, Soldiers were required to attend classes on the MRAP to learn how to operate and maintain it as well as capabilities and limitations. It would not be until 1st SBCT, 25th Inf. Div., arrived at FOB Warhorse that they would be able to put the MRAP through its paces and find out how the vehicle worked in the field.

The MRAP was designed in response to the encounters with insurgents that Soldiers were facing in Iraq during Operation Iraqi Freedom. The vehicle is used for an array of mission types: cordon and search, raids, mounted combat patrol, traffic control points, convoy security, escort, medical evacuations and protected personnel transport. While not designed as a replacement for the High Mobility Multi-Purposed Wheeled Vehicle, (HMMWV,) it is used by the Arctic Wolves exclusively for off the FOB missions by all non-Stryker personnel. There currently are six major variants of MRAP: MaxxPro Plus, RG33, Heavy Armored Ground Ambulance, (HAGA,) Caimen, RG31 and Cougar Force Protection. While each variant has components that set it apart from the others, there are a number of characteristics that are common among all MRAPs:

- The basic design is made to increase survivability of mine explosions, improvised explosive device blasts and small arms fire
 - "V" shaped hull, integrated armor, raised chassis and blow off wheels are all intended to reduce the effectiveness of enemy attacks
 - M2 .50 caliber, MK-19 automatic grenade launcher or M240 medium machine gun may be mounted on the vehicle
 - Can operate in excess of 300 miles without refueling
 - Equipped with run flat tires, anti-lock brakes and a fire suppression system
 - Has an average maximum speed of 65 miles per hour
- After being here at FOB Warhorse for

a couple months and running operations with the MRAP, Soldiers are impressed.

Staff Sgt. Kip Ellison, who operates as a truck commander, said, "I like it. I think it's the greatest truck the army ever invented. Hands down better than the HMMWV in every aspect. Better visual, more room for the stuff you have to carry, better gun platform. The only down side is getting parts." Maintenance was brought up as an issue by several Soldiers.

Sgt. Michael Rigdon said, "The fuel injectors go out on them entirely too much. And the windshield wipers don't work. They also need LED lights because of the tinted windows." Given that this is a readily new vehicle, these maintenance issues are no surprise. However, Soldiers mention them as more of a nice improvement idea than an overall downfall of the equipment.

Spc. Daniel Lopez, who acts as a gunner, said, "I think it's a good truck. Better than the HMMWV. For the gunner, you have more room to move around. I feel real comfortable." While the MRAP is not considered a replacement for the Stryker in anyway, when asked to compare the MRAP to the Stryker, Sgt. 1st Class Mullins had this to say: "I'd pick it over a Stryker. I never knew a vehicle could be better than a Stryker until I'd ridden in an MRAP. It's taller and has windows all around it so you can see the objective. Hatches on top allow more firepower. Components are easier to get to. It's higher up off the ground. Maintenance is easier."

There are a number of cautions that come with the MRAP though. Given the height of the vehicle it can be easy to rollover if a driver is not cautious enough with speed around corners and especially on sloping terrain. The MRAP handbook advises drivers not to operate an MRAP on any slope greater than 50%. Because of the weight of the vehicle, operators must be cautious when crossing any weak bridges. The vehicle cannot operate in areas with soft soil as the MRAP is prone to becoming bogged down as it sinks into the ground. Finally, many passengers know that when traveling in an MRAP, bumps in the road mean hitting your head on the roof.

Overall, the MRAP is an Army success in the eyes of the Arctic Wolves. Soldiers feel safer, better equipped, and ready to carry out their mission. Given the success of the vehicle, do not be surprised to see the civilian version of the MRAP being driven by a soccer mom upon re-deployment back to the US.

Infantry Soldiers train IPs for take over

Story and Photos by
Pfc. Alisha Nye
14th Public Affairs Detachment

Infantry Soldiers from Company A, 1st Battalion, 5th Infantry Regiment, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, do more while deployed than simply patrol the streets of Iraq in order to keep the towns and villages within the Diyala Province safe for its residents; these Soldiers train Iraqi Police in the Emergency Response Force on various skills that will prepare them for self-sustaining justice on the streets of the province.

“We’ve been going from safe-house to safe-house teaching them different things,” said 2nd Lt. Matthew Kotlarski, platoon leader, Co. A, 1st Bn., 5th Inf. Regt. “Such as room clearing, searches, how to conduct a raid, interrogation techniques, tactical questioning, those sort of things.”

Training these IPs is an effort the newly deployed 1st Bn., 5th Inf. Regt. Soldiers have continued from the unit they recently replaced and have made strides to not only train more often, but improve upon the training as well.

“The last unit was doing classes with the IPs and it was kind of haphazard because the old IP units kept moving in and out,” Kotlarski said. “This current IP unit has been here for a little while, so we started doing the classes.”

The Soldiers train the IPs on tasks that are necessary not only to mission safety, but also the safety of the residents of the Diyala Province and have a working program in place to ensure the training is accomplished, said Kotlarski.

“We had an idea of what they needed to work on and made a list of classes,” he said. “Prior to a patrol, we assign a squad with the teaching for the day.”

When these Soldiers go out on patrol, they first train IPs in the area on a certain skill and proceed to finish their patrol alongside the IPs they just finished training, Kotlarski said, an occurrence which happens five or six times a week and is important to the future safety of the country.

“We’re trying to work on their basic skills,” Kotlarski said. “We’re not trying to get them overly trained, but we’re trying to teach them skills they can use. It’s so when we get pulled out we can turn over the province to them. It’s so they can stand up on their own and conduct police operations to a point

where they don’t need us looking over their shoulder or backing them up.”

This is something Staff Sgt. Timothy Kelly, squad leader, Co. A, 1st Bn., 5th Inf. Regt. feels that while the Iraqi Security Forces are well on their way to achieving, they are still not ready for.

“When I was here two years ago, the ISF were pretty disorganized,” Kelly said of a previous deployment. “They still have a long way to go, but they’re very motivated to learn.”



An infantry Soldier with Company A, 1st Battalion, 5th Infantry Regiment, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, demonstrates one of the steps of properly entering and clearing a room of threats while training Iraqi Police on the procedure Nov. 18.

Kotlarski agreed.

“They’re very receptive to the training,” he said. “In fact, their officers take the training we teach them and they go and teach it to the rest of their guys. It’s not quite to the level of training we’re at, but at least it’s something. It shows that they’re being proactive.”

The IPs that have gone through the training given by the infantry Soldiers have also shown a willingness to apply what they’ve been taught, Kotlarski said.

“They try to apply what they’ve been taught,” he said. “Sometimes they fall back into bad habits. For the most part, though, they’re trying to take it and apply it when they go out on patrols.”

Though Kotlarski feels these Iraqi Police are not yet ready to completely meet the challenge of patrolling the streets of Iraq alone quite yet, he feels that they are well on their way, he said.

“They seem like they’ve come a long way,” he said. “They’re really taking ownership. They’re not ready to go on their own, I’d say, but they’re well on their way.” 🇮🇶



Staff Sgt. Timothy Kelly, squad leader, Co. A, 1st Bn., 5th Inf. Regt., 1st SBCT, 25th Inf. Div., demonstrates one of the steps of properly entering and clearing a room of threats while training IPs on the procedure.



Iraqi Police in the Emergency Response Force participate in a room-clearing training exercise conducted by Soldiers from Company A, 1st Battalion, 5th Infantry Regiment, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, Nov. 18.

from
INFANTRY SOLDIER
to
Humanitarian Assistance



Photos by Pfc. Alisha Nye
14th Public Affairs Detachment



The role of infantry Soldiers in 1st Battalion, 24th Infantry regiment, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, is a versatile one. These soldiers perform not only their duties as Infantry Soldiers while patrolling the streets of Iraq's Diyala Province, but they provide assistance for the residents of the province, as well.

SPARTANS CONDUCT OPERATION SPARTAN ANGEL

Story and Photos by

Capt. Tim Walton

3rd BN, 21st IN, 1st SBCT, 25th ID

Soldiers from Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 3rd Battalion, 21st Infantry Regiment, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, conducted Operation Spartan Angel in the city of Hamrin in the Diyala Province of Iraq, Nov. 10.

Operation Spartan Angel was a civil military operation geared toward establishing and promoting goodwill to enhance and promote the local influence of Coalition Forces by conducting projects through, with and by Iraqi key local leaders.

This project was executed to highlight, recognize and inspire achievement, selfless service and duty. During the operation HHC, 3rd Bn., 21st Inf. Regt., recognized 14 honor students from the elementary school, nine children of Iraqi security forces and 14 teachers for their contribution in rebuilding Iraq.

The students were awarded goodie bags with different toys, cloths, school supplies and soccer balls. The school also received soccer balls for the students to use during physical education and the local soccer league received donation of soccer balls.

During the award ceremony, Capt. Ren Angeles addressed the students and highlighted the purpose of the project. He spoke about how this project hopes to inspire other student to study hard to achieve goals they set for themselves, recognize the selfless service of the Iraqi Security Forces and the contribution of Iraqi teachers in rebuilding Iraq. He encouraged the students to dream big and reach for the stars, the future is bright for them and Iraq. The small ceremony was attended by the members of HHC, 3rd Bn., 21st Inf. Regt., teachers and the Mayor of Hamrin.

The Mayor of Hamrin, Kalid Ibrahim Kalif, also mentioned how important this project was in putting the human side of the coalition forces. They do not only conduct military operations but they are also involved with the community. The Mayor stated that the gift themselves are not what is important; it is the recognition of achievement, inspiration for others to follow and selfless service that the project hoped to recognize and promote. The teachers were appreciative of the recognition they received.

Angeles spoke about how their jobs may seem to be thankless at times, but that on a daily basis they are making a difference in the lives of their students

by providing hope. The students represent the future of Iraq and by their actions the teachers are shaping and enhancing the minds of future leaders. The future is bright for this fledgling democracy and teachers are catalyst of this future. Because of the positive reception and feedback of the project and its goals, future projects on other schools within the HHC, 3rd Bn., 21st Inf. Regt., battle space are in the works.

Members of the HHC, 3rd Bn., 21st Inf. Regt., team who participated on the project felt good about doing it. 1st Sgt. Richard Beaver noted that it was a good event that showcased American Soldiers at their finest: showing care, compassion and professionalism. Other members of the team also expressed good sentiment about doing the project. They noted that projects like these makes the local population think about other things in life, that there is considerable progress being made, because local people can focus on other things besides security.

One of the teachers also commented that events like these allow local citizens to feel hopeful about the future. Projects like these make a difference and shape the local populations perception of coalition forces. It brings focus to the human aspect of warfighting and allows coalition forces to show the aspect that makes them different from any other military force: compassion and professionalism. Future Spartan Angel operations have been planned to continue building goodwill as HHC, 3rd Bn., 21st Inf. Regt., fights to win the hearts and minds of the people of Diyala province. 🇮🇶



First Sgt. Richard Beaver, first sergeant of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 3rd Battalion, 21st Infantry Regiment, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, entertains a small Iraqi girl while conducting Operation Spartan Angel.

Mechanics help Soldiers stay mission ready

Story and Photos by
Spc. Opal Vaughn
14th Public Affairs Detachment

No one ever likes taking their vehicle to the shop.

Often, a person will take their car in to get something simple like the brake pads replaced; a job that will only cost them around \$35 or so.

By the end of the initial consultation, they'll drive out of the shop needing several other parts

and pieces replaced, repaired or added to the vehicle, costing them far more than they originally bargained for.

Good or bad, vehicle maintenance is a necessity which cannot always be avoided. Even in the military, all vehicles and aircraft must be maintained in order to continue supporting missions.

The U.S. military employs a great variety of vehicles and every one must be maintained, especially while deployed. This is particu-

larly true at Forward Operating Base Caldwell, Iraq, where there is an entire team of unit mechanics on the job.

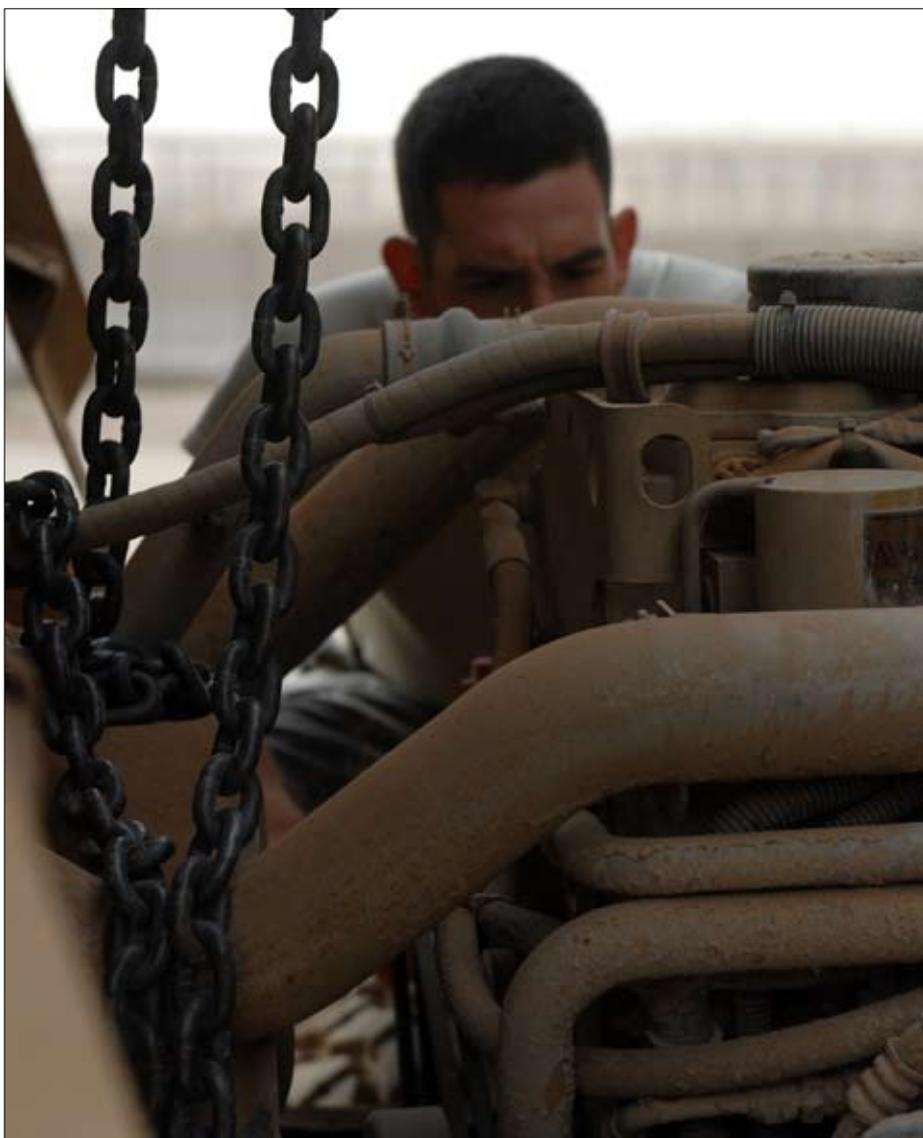
In the middle of Iraq's never ending season of sandstorms, mechanics with the Combat Readiness Team, 5th Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, kept on working until every vehicle in their lot was either fixed or scheduled to be replaced, November 20.

"My unit is responsible for the overall maintenance of all of 5-1 Cav.'s equipment whether it be weapon systems, night vision, any type of wheeled vehicle; if it needs to be fixed, that's what my section does," said Ripley, Tennessee native Sgt. First Class Nicholas Treadway, the motor sergeant with CRT, 5-1 Cav.

Treadway continued, "Right now we're experiencing a sand storm and I'm pretty sure that Wainwright wouldn't have a sand storm right now. What you see here is what you get. Just because there's a storm doesn't mean my guys get a break. As long as there's a mission going on then my guys will press on. These guys, the impact of their job, what they do is the same through and through," Treadway added.

One mechanic continued to be persistence even as the wind continued to kick up more sand. With a bandana-covered face and eye protection donned, Mineral Wells, Texas native, Spc. Antonio Ibarra, a wheeled vehicle mechanic with CRT, 5-1 Cav., continued to work hard with assistance, trying to get a truck engine back in working order.

"Sometimes you just gotta find a way to get something working even if you cannot figure out



Staff Sgt. Scott Newman, shop floor man with Combat Readiness Team, 5th Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, works on a truck engine at the motor pool at Forward Operating Base Caldwell, Iraq, Nov. 20.

the problem, you just gotta keep working until you find a way,” said Ibarra. “The long hours of troubleshooting a maintenance issue and being in Iraq can be difficult at times, but it’s a fun job.”

A mechanics job may not seem important from an outsider’s point of view, but in a battlefield environment, every Soldier’s job is just as important as the next one. “In Iraq there are missions going on all the time, not like in the rear; so you have to be ready to get something done at any time,” Ibarra stated.

“We do not physically support missions outside the wire but we do go on missions to recover vehicles if necessary. Without us though, no one would be out on the front line; a vehicle has to be able to run properly and safely to get you out on mission. If there’s a vehicle down then no one can do their jobs effectively,” Ibarra added.

Assisting Ibarra were several other mechanics, in particular, Emporia, Virginia native, Sgt. Brenton Hobbs, a light wheeled vehicle mechanic with CRT, 5-1 Cav. Standing tiptoed on a cinder block, arm outstretched trying to start the truck, Hobbs, continued to work fiercely not taking his eyes away from his work.

“If we get a vehicle in, we get it fixed and out immediately,” Hobbs stated. “We cannot afford to get backed up and delay any missions. A vehicle not mission capable hinders other Soldiers from going out and doing their job, so we try to make sure we troubleshoot each vehicle until there is nothing more we can do.”

When there is nothing more a mechanic can do, another specialist is called in as a last resource. “My days are usually busy,” said San Jose, Calif. native, Spc. Chad Overholt, a special electronics



Sgt. Brenton Hobbs, a light wheeled vehicle mechanic with CRT, 5-1 Cav., 1st SBCT, 25th Inf. Div., tries starting up a truck as Newman, the shop floor man, looks on while at the motor pool at FOBCaldwell, located in Diyala, Iraq, Nov. 20

devices and radio repairer with CRT, 5-1 Cav.

“When the guys come in from mission they usually have their thermals from their goggles, night vision and most times, their radios come in all broken,” Overholt stated. “So chances are if it takes an electrical current then I work it.”

FOB Caldwell is not as large as its sister bases and, as a result, staffing can sometimes be short-handed.

“It can be difficult at times. There used to be an NCO above me but he left so now I do his job and mine,” Overholt said. “Most problems lie with technical

manuals. There aren’t enough to go around and a lot of the stuff I work on I’m not too familiar with yet. But, I pick things up quickly. With time, I’m sure I will be an expert on every type of equipment.”

Even with the difficulties of sand storms, limited man power and constant troubleshooting, the reality remains the same; Iraq will always be Iraq.

“The difference between being in the rear and Iraq for a mechanic is the possibility of incoming or direct fire,” Treadway said. “But our job never changes despite our status. We do the same thing here, just better.” 

Chaplain's Corner

Coach Wooden's Second Fundamental

In this month's article, we continue by looking at Coach John Wooden's second fundamental. As previously mentioned, Coach Wooden, the most successful basketball coach in history, attributed more than forty years of victories to four things: 1) Knowing players. 2) Getting them to fulfill their roles as part of the team. 3) Paying attention to fundamentals and details. 4) Working well with others.

After pondering these, I realized it is astounding that he could articulate the rudiment causes of more than forty years of coaching/leadership success into just four fundamentals.

Like the first fundamental, the second one is also focused on players. It's interesting that he did not say something like, "getting them to fulfill the roles you need for the team." No doubt, the coach needs them to fulfill specific roles. After all, there are only five positions on a basketball team! His second fundamental focuses on the players' strengths and leverages them to build the skill and capacity of the team. How many times have we seen leaders who look for people to fill "slots?" It is true that we need people to fill slots; however, the slot mentality focuses more on the needed job instead of the art of dovetailing the strength of the team member with the overall needs and possibilities of the team.

Several years ago, I served under a commander who dropped people for push-ups every time they referred to Soldiers as "bodies." He considered leaders inept if they set a command climate that looked at Soldiers in this fashion. He had enormous energy about

communicating the command philosophy that every soldier is a human being with unique strengths, abilities and value. As we so often say, "Words mean something." And the words we use form a climate and culture that shapes the actions of those around us, as well as our own, even when we're not thinking about it.

The culture of our army often rewards those whose skills are quite broad. We call it being well-rounded. But there's something to be said for helping people discover and grow in their skills and strengths. It is an art-form for leaders at every level to develop these people and dovetail them into the team in a synergetic way. Doing this takes work. It requires investment into relationships. We have to invest enough into people that we know them and better understand them.

Each week in the Warhorse DFAC, we are conducting a study entitled, "Lead Like Jesus." Early in the book, the authors draw a contrast between life role leadership and organizational leadership. Life role leadership focuses on growing and developing people and influencing people through relationships rather than just rank. It involves relational commitment to people and developing the spirit of a servant-leader—one who sees leadership as a role of service to the people they lead. With keen accuracy, the authors pinpoint the most common habits of people in leadership and how they are tempted to pursue success as organizational leaders without developing foundational success as life role leaders.

I am convinced that those who pursue success as organizational leaders without developing success as life role leaders will have a hollow kind of leadership. The spirit of this kind of leadership is



Chaplain (Maj.) Roderick Mills

much more likely to communicate the slot mentality and see others as bodies and a means to the organizational end (or to the leader's next rank), because it lacks fundamental depth in the relational dimensions. It is not uncommon to see this kind of leadership develop in arrogance with the ability to win the organizational games and goals without genuine love for soldiers, their families, and recognition of the leader's obligation to build and develop others to become more than they have achieved themselves.

Life role leadership demands humility and character because it always directs the leader to see those they lead as more important than themselves. I'm not sure that any of Coach Wooden's fundamentals are possible without maturity and growth in life role leadership skills. However, I am certain that we cannot successfully live the coach's second fundamental and get others to fulfill their roles as part of the team if we're not completely invested into them as people and take our responsibilities as life role leaders seriously.

Those who gave all...



Chief Warrant Officer 3 Donald V. Clark
Charlie Troop, 6-17 CAV
Born Sep. 12, 1971
Killed in Action Nov. 15 2008
Hometown, Memphis, TN

CW3 Clark is survived by his wife Jaime and their four children.



Chief Warrant Officer 2 Christian P. Humphreys
Alpha Troop, 6-17 CAV
Born April 4, 1980
Killed in Action Nov. 15 2008
Hometown, Fallon, NV

CW2 Humphreys is survived by his wife, Christina.



Military Working Dog, Jok
Alpha Battery, 2-8 FA
Killed in Action Nov. 14 2008

Jok was killed due to injuries sustained from a house-borne improvised explosive device. His handler was injured in the incident.

...will not be forgotten.

The Arctic Warrior March

We conquer the mountains and the
valleys!

We train in the winter's bitter cold!
Alaska Soldiers! Arctic Warriors!
Sentries of the North!

So pick up your weapons and your
snowshoes!

We're ready to fight and to defend!
The finest Soldiers! Arctic Warriors! From
the last Frontier!

The Stryker Creed

Strike fear into the enemy's hearts and
minds; I am a lethal and skilled warfight-
er with unmatched intestinal fortitude.
Being disciplined, professional Soldier, I
live the Army Values.

Committed to my fellow Soldiers, unit and
country, I am ready to answer my na-
tion's call -- NOW!

Tough, both physically and mentally, and
instilled with warrior spirit, I can accom-
plish my mission. Anytime. Anywhere.

Arctic Wolves!

Arctic Tough!

