

THE DAGGER EDGE



February-March 2009
Volume 2, Issue 2



Solar-powered clinic provides 24-hour care to Ameriyah



Northwest Baghdad's citizens get out and vote

Airmen continue Dagger air support



wearing the uniform properly



Election Success!



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8 Proper wear of the uniform

There are many stray dogs in the city of Baghdad. Some dogs are kept as pets, however Dagger Soldiers are not authorized to keep dogs as pets. This puppy can be seen at the Ameriyah clinic in the Ameriyah neighborhood of northwest Baghdad. For the story on the solar-powered clinic, see page 28.

(Photo by Spc. Dustin Roberts, 2nd HBCT PAO) ▶



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▲ On the cover: Iraqi Security Forces, Dagger Soldiers and citizens of northwest Baghdad, who all helped make the Jan. 31 Provincial Elections a success. (Photos by Petty Officer 2nd Class Robert Whelan, Joint Combat Camera, MNCI and Maj. Kone Faulkner, 2nd HBCT PAO)



▲ On the back: A convoy heads home at Camp Liberty Jan. 5th after a day in northwest Baghdad. (Photo by 1st Lt. Conor Browne, assistant military civil affairs, 2nd HBCT)

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

February-March 2009; Vol. 2, Issue 2

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DAGGER SIX

2HBCT COMMANDER
COLONEL JOSEPH M. MARTIN



Polite, professional, prepared to kill



▲ Col. Joseph Martin, commander, 2nd HBCT, addresses the audience in attendance of the Transfer Ceremony of Joint Security Station Adl Feb. 2. (Photo by Spc. Dustin Roberts, 2nd HBCT PAO)

To every Soldier in the Dagger Brigade, thank you for continuing to make a difference in our area of responsibility. Your countless hours of Soldiering and outstanding living of the Army Values and Warrior Ethos have truly made me the happiest commander in the U.S. Army. You are the heart of this mission.

I want to make sure we know that although the enemy is disrupted, they are still present and evolving. We, along with our Iraqi Security Forces Partners, will take nothing for granted when it comes to the security of Iraq, which is improving every day because of you.

In the non-lethal fight, definitive economic growth is seen by the local

nationals throughout the streets of northwest Baghdad. Infrastructure improvements are noticed all around. Commerce floods the shopping districts with a sense of security. This is because of Dagger Soldiers properly working with the Iraqi Army and National Police, allowing them to take the lead in this mission.

Dagger Soldiers, due to your contributions you have helped them gain confidence in their responsibilities by serving beside them on patrols, on guard and on point to ensure that every Iraqi has the possibility of a bright and prosperous future.

As the 4th Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment departs back to Fort Carson, Colo., and the 4th Battalion, 42nd Field Artillery Regiment goes back to Fort Hood, Texas, we welcome new faces to our expanded area of operations. Before I introduce our new partners I want to say what an honor it is to have worked with the phenomenal Soldiers of those distinguished maneuver units. The Soldiers saw outstanding leadership with Lt. Col. Monty Willoughby and Lt. Col. Robert Kirby and Iraq is a better place because of the accomplishments of the Blackjack Squadron and the Straight Arrow Battalion. Their time at home and with their families is well deserved and the Dagger Brigade salutes them for

their efforts.

We also fall under a new division here at MND-B: The 1st Cav. Div., also known as America's 1st Team. We look forward to working with this distinguished and well-known division.

In our expanded AO we welcome the 2nd Stryker Battalion, 112th Infantry Regiment out of the Pennsylvania Army National Guard. They are one of the only National Guard-component Stryker battalions in the Army and I'm sure with their expertise and commitment to this mission, 2-112 will fit perfectly in the Dagger Brigade.

As we near the half-way point of our deployment it is important to reflect on our many accomplishments. The most salient achievement to date has been our role in assisting the Iraqi Security Forces with an incident-free provincial election... This is unprecedented by all accounts. This accomplishment is a direct reflection of our professionalism and dedication to serving the people of northwest Baghdad by, with, and through our Iraqi security partners.

Daggers you are on it, but I want to remind you to stay vigilant. We remain on this wave of success because at all levels we are thoroughly thinking through the problem before committing to action. As always, continue to be polite, professional and prepared to kill.  COL. JOSEPH MARTIN

Dagger 6
"Ready Now!"

Stay focused, stay in the fight

Another month has passed in which Dagger Soldiers Distinguished themselves on the streets of northwest Baghdad. We are undergoing change in every way from gaining more ground for some units to adjusting to new schedules to stay in line with the Security Agreement for others.

Dagger Soldiers are contributing to the fight in so many ways and I am extremely proud of each Soldier who is truly making history as we help the people of northwest Baghdad improve the quality of life.

Once this newsletter makes its way into your hands spring time will be in the air. With the change in season comes a change in climate and the HEAT.

To all the NCO's in the Brigade, make sure your Soldiers stay properly hydrated in the coming months. The last thing we need is a Soldier being sent home because they didn't follow the simple rule of staying hydrated.

Another point I want to make and this one needs to be taken to heart, is to ensure you are following proper procedures when you are clearing weapons. The fastest way to have me in your area is to send out a negligent discharge. The brigade will not tolerate mistakes that are so easily prevented.

Daggers, this deployment is going fast; five months have passed and very soon we will be looking back on our accomplishments here and realizing that it wasn't so bad helping others enjoy the freedoms we enjoy each and everyday in America.

Keep fighting the good fight. No matter what your job it takes the effort of each and every Soldier in this brigade to ensure we reach mission accomplishment.

I hope to get around and see all Dagger Soldiers while I circulate the battle field and watch first the great things that are taking place throughout our operational environment.

Stay focused, stay alert and keep up the good work. 



▲ Command Sgt Maj. Donald Battle, senior enlisted leader, 2HBCT, greets a member of the Iraqi Police Force Feb. 14 at Joint Security Station Ghazaliyah. (Photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Robert Whelan, Joint Combat Camera, MNC-1)

COMMAND SGT. MAJ. DONALD L. BATTLE

Dagger 7
"Nothing Follows"



No such thing as an ordinary day in Iraq

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

The day started just like the previous hundred days. I woke up at 0530 to an obnoxious sounding alarm. I dragged myself out of bed completely envious of my wife who would sleep soundly until sunshine broke through the window and the sound of singing birds would slowly awaken her to the new day. Quickly dressing for PT, I soon found myself in a line of red taillights as I waited with a multitude of others to get on post, park my truck, and make the PT formation before Reveley.

As I stood in formation at present arms, listening to Reveley echo through the morning darkness it occurred to me that the morning air was beginning to take on a slight chill as summer began to fade to fall. After a five mile run, the blitz to get off post with same multitude of people, followed by a quick shower back at home, it was time for an abbreviated breakfast with my family. Kissing my wife good-bye I got in my truck with a cup of coffee as I headed back to post while carefully timing the placing of my cup of coffee on the dash as I switched the gears of my truck and then picked up the cup for another sip. I was finally on post thinking about what I had to do that day and trying to

remember if command and staff was cancelled or not. I was just crossing the railroad tracks near the railhead when a Keith Urban song on the radio was interrupted by a special announcement.

The announcer's voice was concerned and I could of sworn he said something about an airline crashing into the World Trade Center. The day was September 11, 2001 and it would prove to be anything but an ordinary day.

Johann von Goethe stated, "A man can stand almost anything except a succession of ordinary days." I believe this statement is true only for those lacking vision and insight. I would say that especially since 911 no day has been ordinary for those who are the guardians of freedom and liberty. It is easy in the midst of the "daily grind" to underestimate what you bring to the fight each and every day, seeing this deployment as just one "Ground Hog Day" after another. However, let us not forget that every Soldier in this brigade brings something to the fight that matters today and that will bear fruit for tomorrow – its called making history.

Those lacking vision and insight at the start of the Civil War said that Abraham Lincoln

was the worst president in U.S. history. History proved them wrong. In the same vein, I believe that history will prove that your efforts here in Iraq were hardly ordinary – but extraordinary.

With vision and insight there is no such thing as an ordinary day in Iraq. 



▲ Chaplain (Maj.) Peter Johnson



Stitches:

Preventative medicine advice

So you wanna get 'Swol' ?

By Capt. Kenneth Johnson, 2HBCT Surgeon

Big bodies are big business, and there's no end to the snake-oil peddlers looking to sell you the latest mega-hydroxy-corti-splode, but before dropping your bonus on supplements, there are some things you should know.

The Food & Drug Administration treats all supplements, vitamins, and "enhancers" as food. The regulations associated with selling products at GNC are the same as the regulations at KFC. The government does not research or endorse the claims of supplements makers. As long as they make no claim to treat or cure a disease, they can make any claim they wish with no requirement for supporting research.

The 'research' of the supplement industry is largely done by the companies themselves. Unbiased research dieticians and nutrition scientists do not review the methods or results of these studies.

That being said, let's explore some specific examples:

Creatine occurs naturally in muscle. Creatine monohydrate is the supplement form and it drives the important creatine phosphate energy pathway, which is important in high-intensity activity such as weight lifting.

At the recommended dose of three grams per day, creatine appears safe to use over the long term in the studies published so far. Isolated adverse effects are reported but these may be as a result of poor compliance with the recommended amount.

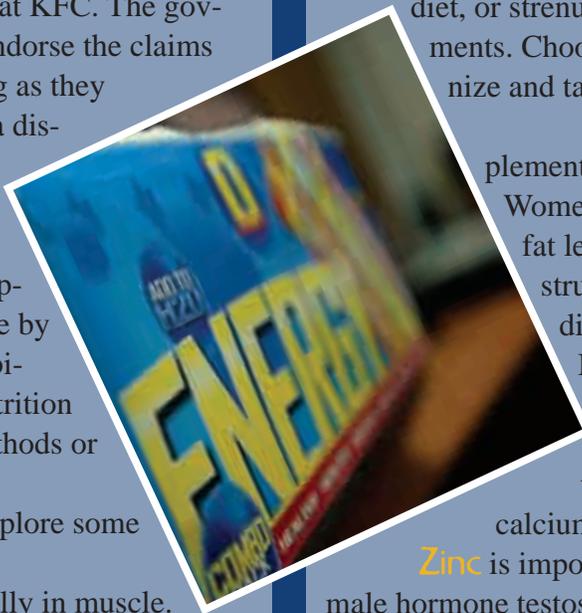
Creatine can improve body bulk and training performance, but not everyone responds to creatine

supplementation and 30 percent of users may not see any improvement at all. Women may not benefit as much as men. Combined with weight training, increased strength, bulk and fat loss are reasonably consistent results.

Multivitamins may help you reach the recommended daily intakes for vitamins and minerals if you have a less than ideal diet, travel impairs your diet, or strenuous exercise increases requirements. Choose a brand name that you recognize and take as directed.

Calcium is an important supplement for female Soldiers to consider. Women who train hard and reach body fat levels below 10% may stop menstruating as a result of the hormonal disruption to estrogen production. If this happens, see your doctor. Exercise-induced estrogen declines can result in bone loss that can be partially protected by calcium supplementation.

Zinc is important for the production of the male hormone testosterone and in building the immune system. **Magnesium** is an essential component of the nervous system and in the maintenance of heart health. They are often marketed together in a supplement called **ZMA**. It claims to increase testosterone levels and thus improve muscle building, but no evidence exists to show that either mineral offers performance enhancement. 



 Look for next month's 'Dagger Edge' "stitches" article, where we'll discuss protein shakes, meal replacements, and protecting muscle while losing fat.

WEARING THE UNIFORM:

On the F.O.B.



Nighttime wear

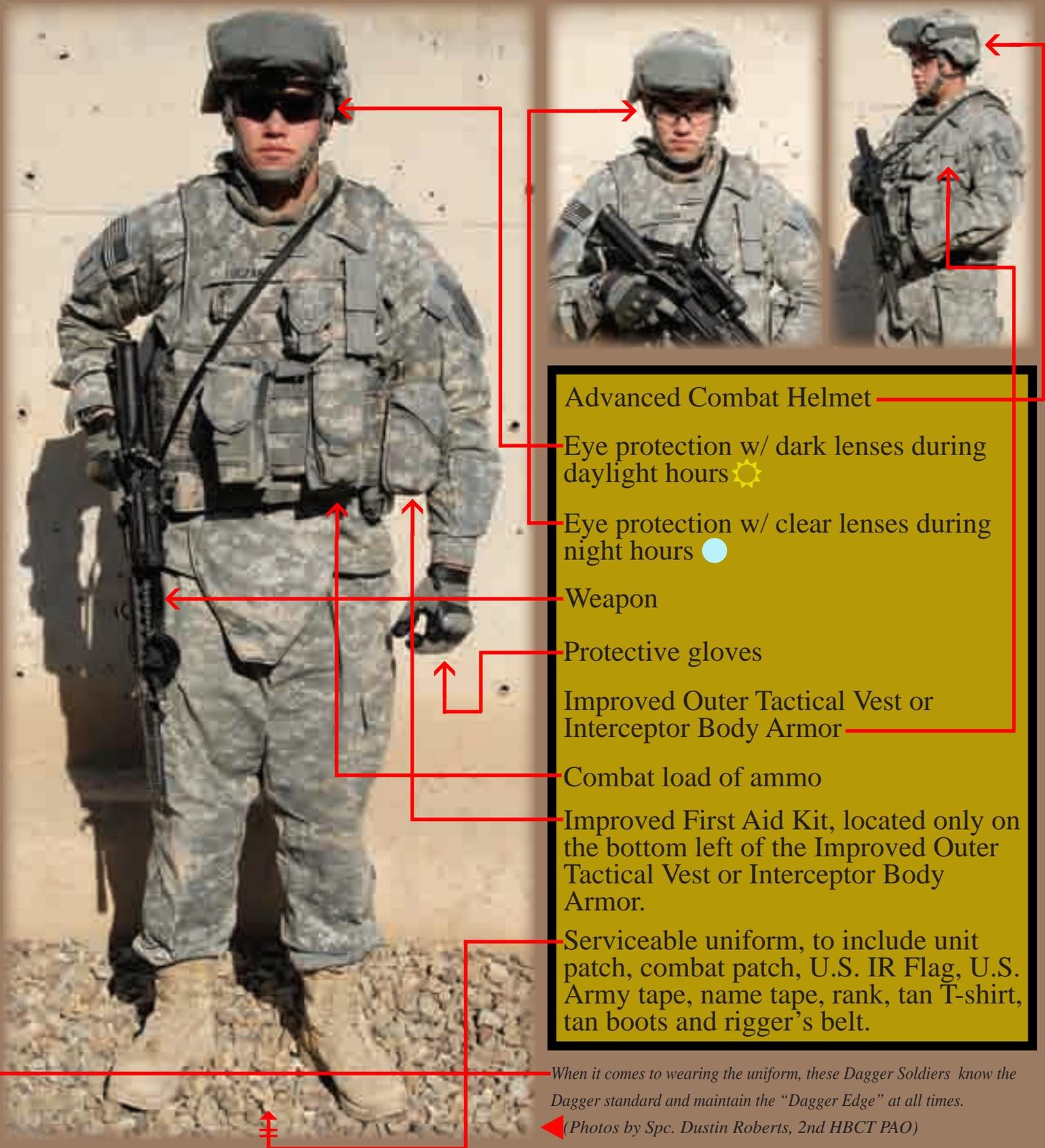
- PT Belt
- Eye protection w/ clear lenses
- Weapon
- Serviceable uniform, to include unit patch, combat patch, U.S. IR Flag, U.S. Army tape, name tape, rank, tan t-shirt, tan boots, rigger's belt and patrol cap, complete with rank and name tape.

FEMALES: When in uniform, ensure hair is off of the ACU collar.

Daytime wear

- ☀ Eye protection w/ dark lenses
- ☀ Weapon
- ☀ Serviceable uniform, to include unit patch, combat patch, U.S. IR Flag, U.S. Army tape, name tape, rank, tan T-shirt, tan boots, rigger's belt and patrol cap, complete with rank and name tape.

Leaving the F.O.B.



Advanced Combat Helmet

Eye protection w/ dark lenses during daylight hours ☀

Eye protection w/ clear lenses during night hours ●

Weapon

Protective gloves

Improved Outer Tactical Vest or Interceptor Body Armor

Combat load of ammo

Improved First Aid Kit, located only on the bottom left of the Improved Outer Tactical Vest or Interceptor Body Armor.

Serviceable uniform, to include unit patch, combat patch, U.S. IR Flag, U.S. Army tape, name tape, rank, tan T-shirt, tan boots and rigger's belt.

When it comes to wearing the uniform, these Dagger Soldiers know the Dagger standard and maintain the "Dagger Edge" at all times.

◀ (Photos by Spc. Dustin Roberts, 2nd HBCT PAO)

ISF, Dagger Soldiers make history in Provincial Elections

Story by Spc. Dustin Roberts, 2nd HBCT PAO

Since the war on terror was brought to Iraq to smother out extremists and special group criminals, the road has been challenging for Soldiers.

The Coalition Forces' uphill endeavor to help build-up and advise the Iraqi Security Forces reached a plateau Jan. 31 when the citizens of Iraq cast their votes for provincial leadership without significant incident.

The 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad have worked in partnership with Iraqi Police and Iraqi Soldiers from the 6th Iraqi Army Division in securing the population of northwest Baghdad, however, for the elections, the security was Iraqi led and Iraqi planned.

“We acted as a quick reaction force in case anything was to happen,” said Lt. Col. Christopher Beckert, deputy commander, 2nd HBCT. “The ISF were actually on the ground securing the polling sites.”

A few weeks before the Election Col. Joseph Martin, commander, 2nd HBCT, visited numerous IP stations in northwest Baghdad to make sure everyone was on the same page and to see how Dagger Soldiers could better assist in preparing for the big day.

The maneuver battalions in the Dagger Brigade, which include the 5th Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment; the 1st Combined Arms Battalion, 18th Infantry Regiment, the 4th Sqdn., 10th Cav. Regt.; and the 4th Battalion, 42nd Field Artillery Regiment did their part by patrolling the streets and collecting information from northwest Baghdad's citizens.

Although that sounds like normal, every day operations, these missions were conducted in partnership with Iraqi Security Forces.

Not only was it a combined effort, but the ISF took charge of the security.

“The ISF has become more professional and proficient and are now in the lead providing their fellow countrymen security,” said Lt. Col. John Richardson, commander, 5th Squad., 4th Cav. Regt. “We have transitioned, as their partners, into an advisory role.”

Because the elections were so successful, Richardson said he was proud of his Troopers and the Soldiers of the Dagger Brigade.



1st Lt. Ryan Fisher, 1st Combined Arms Battalion, 18th Infantry Regiment, 2nd HBCT, high-fives children during the Iraqi Provincial Elections in Kadhimiya Jan. 31. (Photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class-Robert Whelan, Joint Combat Camera, MNC-I)





▲ *Spc. John Houk, 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry Regiment, 2nd HBCT, uses a metal detector to search for possible explosives, prior to the Iraqi Provincial Elections in Kadhimiya, Iraq Jan. 30. (Photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Robert Whelan, Joint Combat Camera, MNC-I)*

▲ *The Iraqi army hands out leaflets during the Iraqi Provincial Elections in Kadhimiya Jan. 31. Leaflets contain information on current events in the community. (Photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Robert Whelan, Joint Combat Camera, MNC-I)*

“I want to herald the Soldier’s accomplishment in our support of the successful and peaceful Iraqi Provincial Elections,” he said. “We were part of a historic event and a major strategic victory in this campaign in the Global War on Terror.” 🇺🇸

▲ *The Iraq police increase their presence during the Iraqi presidential election in Kadhimiya, Jan. 31. (Photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Robert Whelan, Joint Combat Camera, MNC-I)*

1-18th Infantry Regiment

"Vanguards"

New school brings class closer to home

Story by Sgt. Brian Tierce, 2HBCT PAO

In the past year, a number of schools across Iraq were renovated by Iraqi and Coalition Forces. For one specific neighborhood and its children, the grand opening of the al-Hurriyah School, which was built from the ground up, is a sign that the Government of Iraq is placing its high value on educating the youth.

The Jan. 15 grand opening was attended by members of the Iraqi Ministry of Education, Hurriyah Neighborhood Council, Iraqi Soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 22nd Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division, and Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers from the 1st Combined Arms Battalion, 18th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division.

“The new al-Hurriyah School is standing as a new standard in education for the people of Hurriyah,” said Maj. Mark Warden, operations officer, 1st Bn. 18th Inf. Regt., 2nd HBCT.

In addition to building a new school from the ground up, a playground was installed in the school yard, which will provide the school children a place to spend quality time.

“The Al-Hurriyah School stands as a jewel in the crown of the Ministry of Education,” said Staff Sgt. Anthony Miller, attached to the 1st Bn., 18th Inf. Regt., 2nd HBCT. “Hurriyah is standing at the dawn of a new day.”

With the improved security in the area, local children are able to take advantage of a thriving environment, which provides them the opportunity to move freely to and from school. The future of Iraqi education improves with each new school opening. 



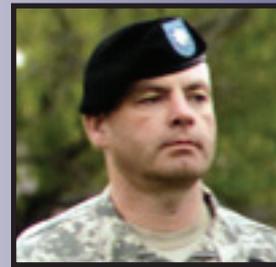


▲ A member of the Hurriyah Neighborhood Advisory Council, alongside officials from the Ministry of Education, cut a ceremonial ribbon to signify the grand opening of the al-Hurriyah School in the Kadhamiyah district of northwest Baghdad Jan. 15. Prior to the opening, children in the Hurriyah neighborhood had to travel to surrounding neighborhoods to attend school. (U.S. Army photo courtesy of 1st Bn., 18th Inf. Regt., 2nd HBCT, 1st Inf. Div, MND-B)

◀ Children from a school in the Kadhamiyah district of northwest Baghdad celebrate shortly after the opening of their school. The children can now stay in their neighborhood to go to school. (U.S. Army photo courtesy of 1st Bn., 18th Inf. Regt., 2nd HBCT, 1st Inf. Div, MND-B)

A new playground is among the amenities available for students of the Hurriyah School in the Kadhamiyah district of northwest Baghdad. The school celebrated its grand opening Jan. 15 and will serve the children of the al-Hurriyah neighborhood. (U.S. Army photo courtesy of 1st Bn., 18th Inf.

▼ Regt., 2nd HBCT, 1st Inf. Div, MND-B)



Lt. Col.
John Vermeesch



Vanguards:

You each are making a difference in a land that is beginning to clearly understand and enjoy the fruits of democracy and freedom. I am absolutely proud of each of you and consider it one of life's greatest privileges to serve alongside and lead our courageous Vanguard Soldiers.

We have definitely started 2009 off with a flurry of activity. In addition to the normal daily combat operations, we have provided security to both Ashura and the Provincial Elections. In partnership with the Iraqi Security Forces, we continue to win the right way every day. On January 3, we accomplished our most complicated and demanding mission so far. We helped our Iraqi Security partners accomplish something that no one thought was possible. We were the cornerstone in the foundation of security in the Kadamiya District that allowed the Iraqi citizens to vote in a democratic election that selected the next set of Provincial Governmental Leaders in Iraq. It was an historic day, and began a new chapter for the sovereign nation of Iraq, for America, and for the world.

Do not underestimate the enormity of this endeavor, as the Vanguards were responsible for over 50% of the election sites throughout the entire Dagger Brigade's area of operations.

That day freedom and democracy continued to move forward in Iraq. Thanks for your continued honorable service to our great Nation!

Vanguard 6

"First to Battle!"

I-63rd Combined Arms Battalion "Dragon"

Death Dealers assist ISF in Securing Ashura

Story by 1st Lt. Francis De Rosa

The Feast of Ashura is one of the most important holidays in the Muslim Calendar.

For Shia Muslims, it represents the martyrdom of the Imam Hussein, the Prophet Muhammad's grandson and the key individual responsible for carrying on Muhammad's message.

For Shia Muslims, direct descendants down the line of Muhammad's family are the authority on all things regarding Islam.

On Oct. 10, 680 AD, the Imam Hussein and his travelling party, which included 108-136 men, were attacked in Karbala by an Army of roughly 4,000 men. Karbala is a city in modern-day Iraq, which is south of Mahmudiyah.

Hussein and his men fought valiantly; however, they were all slain.

The women and children were deported to areas under foreign control.

As a result of this massacre, Hussein became seen as a defender of Islam and a martyr for its cause. Mahmudiyah is a city with a majority Shia population that celebrates Ashura.

This year, according to the Muslim calendar, Ashura fell on Jan. 7. A large-scale celebration was held at the Mahmudiyah Soccer Stadium, located just outside of downtown Mahmudiyah.

It is estimated that 7500 people flocked to the stadium in observance of prayer, mourning, and recreations of the suffering Imam Hussein and his party went through in Karbala.

People came from all over the area to observe the holiday. Also, all schools and businesses were closed. The holiday provided an opportunity for all of the Death Dealers to learn something new about the local Iraqi culture.

"It was great to observe local traditions," said 1st Platoon's Platoon Leader, 2nd. Lt. Kevin Mussman. "The events surrounding Ashura helped to give a better understanding of the people and the area."

Company D contributed to the local Ashura celebration by dedicating three of its four platoons to the event.

"Our role here was to support the Iraqi Army and Iraqi Police as a security force and to enable them to keep the population safe while celebrating Ashura," said Capt. Landgrave Smith, commander, Company D.

The Iraqi Army and Iraqi Police had positions throughout the city and the Death Dealers reinforced the Iraqi Security Forces through roving patrols and tying into Iraqi positions.

"The IA was incorporating all of the manpower they could," said Mussman. "The IA providing security was on top of their job with the Coalition Forces serving mainly in an observation role."

The holiday crowds were largely peaceful and orderly, with no major incidents or injuries to report.

"From top to bottom, this operation was conducted jointly, including IA, IP, and the Coalition Forces in support, said Smith. "It was an excellent example of the Iraqi Security Forces taking the lead." 



▲ Iraqis chant “Ya Hussein,” while participating in Ashura in Kadhimiya Jan. 6. (Photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Robert J Whelan).



▲ Iraqi police roll into a local Bazaar in Kadhimiya Jan 6. There was an increase in Iraqi security for the Ashura celebration (Photo by Petty Officer 2nd Class Robert J Whelan).



Lt. Col.
Jim Bradford



To the Soldiers of 1-63:

We’ve had a very busy month and as we look toward the future, your efforts and hard work do not go unnoticed

Your efforts with the Provincial Election deserve special mention. It is because of YOU that the Election was so successful. It is YOU that helped shape the security situation in the Qada over the last 90 days, and it is because of YOUR efforts, YOUR focused determination and YOUR professionalism that allowed 71,000 voters to vote without fear of intimidation, fear for themselves or their family, or fear of reprisal. YOU allowed the very first Provincial Election to happen without incident and for that I am indebted, but more importantly the citizens of Mahmudiyah, Lutifiyah, Rashid, Warij, and Yusi-fiyah are indebted.

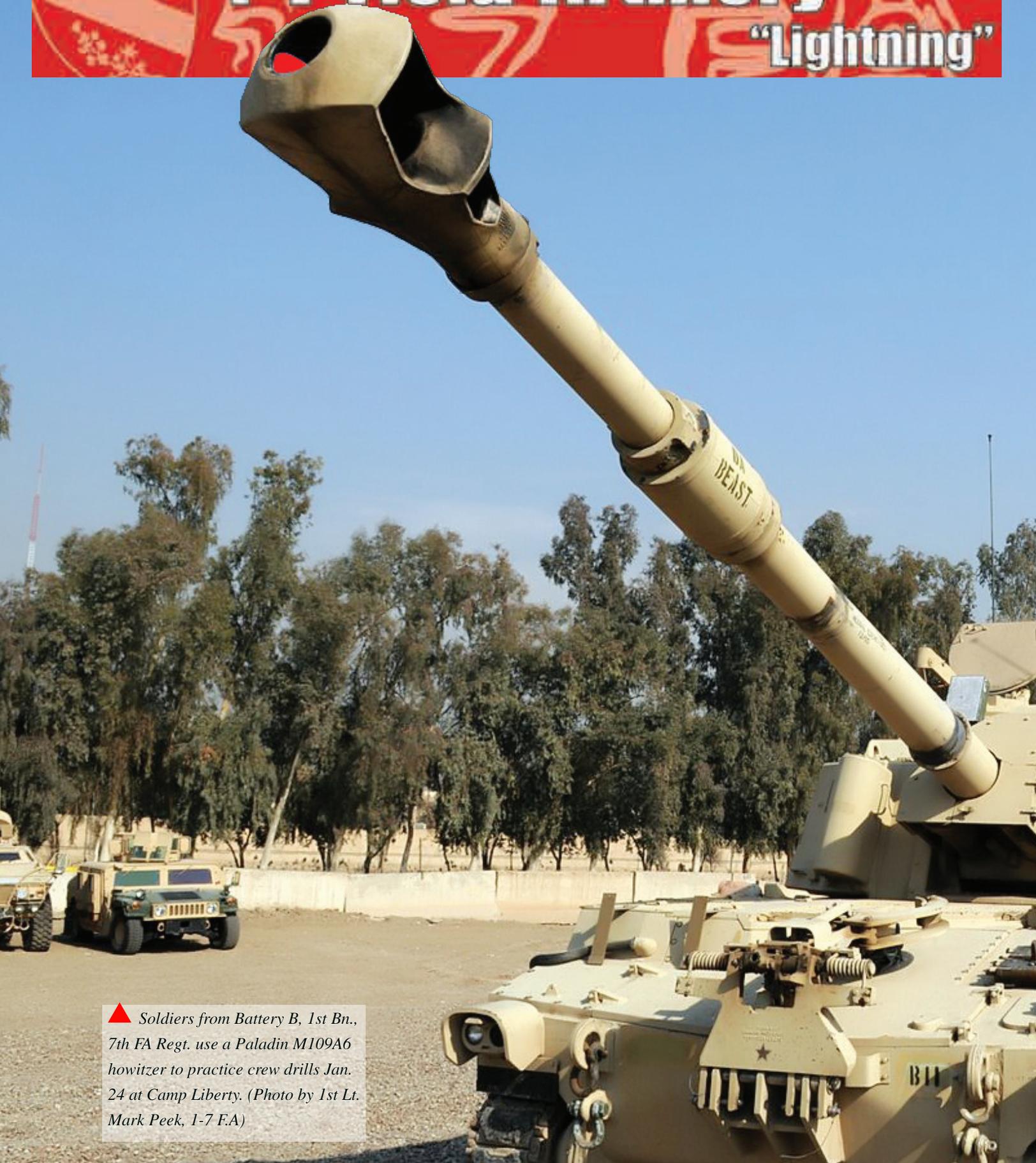
We have Arba’een approaching quickly. This is the large pilgrimage that will occur along ASR Jackson Feb. 10-15. Millions of Shiites will walk from Baghdad to Karbala to honor and pay respect to their religion and their religious icons. Like Eid al Adha and Ashura we will continue to work with our ISF partners to provide support and security in the area to allow this incredible and international event to occur without incident.

Since Nov. 8 we’ve helped facilitate the capture/arrests of 81 individuals connected to terrorism, recovered 70 caches, completed 140 vehicle services, spent \$670 thousand in CERP (with nearly \$2 million more pending), and executed 49 combat logistics patrols, moving 1,200 soldiers across the battlefield. These are the results of your efforts and your sacrifice.

Dragon 6.
“Dragons!”

1-7 Field Artillery

"Lightning"



▲ Soldiers from Battery B, 1st Bn., 7th FA Regt. use a Paladin M109A6 howitzer to practice crew drills Jan. 24 at Camp Liberty. (Photo by 1st Lt. Mark Peek, 1-7 FA)

1st Lightning prepare to strike again

Story by Sgt. Anthony Franklin, 1st Bn., 7th FA Regt.

The 1st Battalion, 7th Field Artillery Regiment is preparing to take on a new mission in Baghdad, Iraq.

Some “First Lightning” battalion Soldiers are returning to their roots and preparing to perform a traditional Field Artillery mission in support of forces in and around the city.

This will mark the first time in the deployment that these Soldiers have had the opportunity to demonstrate their artillery prowess.

For the last two weeks, Soldiers in Battery B, 1st Bn., 7th F.A. have trained to assume a “hot gun” mission for the battalion. Fulfilling this role requires cannons ready to fire at a moment’s notice, 24 hours a day, seven days a week in support of maneuver forces in Baghdad.

The “Bulls” commander, Capt. Steve Padilla hand-selected two sections.

“In my eyes they are the best crews for the job because of their experience and the limited preparation time before we assume the mission,” said Padilla.

To prepare for this mission, the battalion conducted a howitzer and fire direction center section certification.

Leading the certification process was Sgt. 1st Class Timothy Leighty, the battalion’s howitzer master gunner, and Sgt. 1st Class Jerry Payne, the battalion’s fire direction master gunner.

The evaluation included individual and collective artillery tasks and focused on re-establishing proficiency in core artillery tasks that have gone unused thus far in the deployment.

“The training is very good,” said Spc. Steven Chinchak, Battery B, 1st Bn., 7th F.A. “It feels great to be proficient in my [Military Occupational Specialty] again.”

The crews successfully completed their certification tests and are now eager to assume the “hot gun” role, ready to provide fire support for Coalition Forces whenever called upon.



Lt. Col.
Robert Bailes



FIRST LIGHTNING – Guarding the Guardians!

FIRST LIGHTNING!
Congratulations, Redlegs of the 1st Battalion, 7th Field Artillery on your successful transition to a new mission and a new home. We have assumed a highly visible and a vital mission in Iraq; a mission that will set conditions for the enduring success of the Iraqi Government.

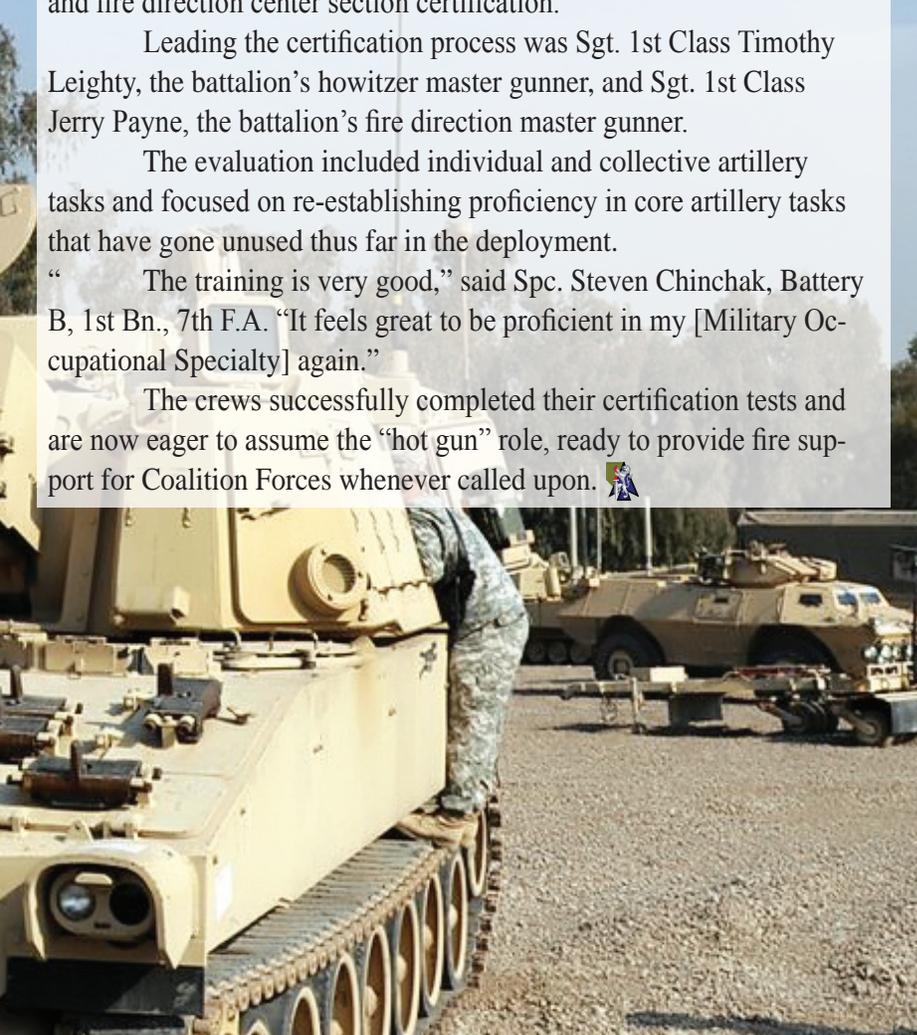
The First Lightning Battalion is the right unit for this mission and I have the utmost confidence we will succeed. Our new mission is diverse, dynamic and challenging but we will succeed. We will succeed because of the high standards you hold yourselves to; because of the pride you take in the performance of your duties and because of the outstanding Soldiers, Non-Commissioned Officers and Officers that make up the First Lightning Team!

The near term future will include a transition of security tasks and potentially sweeping changes to our operating environment landscape. It will be a fast-paced period of change and we will need to rely on our training, our unit standards and our individual discipline. First Lightning Soldiers, you have performed exceptionally well for the first third of this deployment and I know you’ll continue to distinguish yourselves throughout the remaining days of our mission. I am honored to serve with you and inspired each day by your incredible devotion to duty and professionalism. Keep up the great effort, continue to stay safe and continue to take care of one another.

Lightning 6

“Never Broken By Hardship or Battle”

1ST BATTALION, 7TH FIELD ARTILLERY REGIMENT



5-4 CAVALRY "LONG KNIFE"

Operation 'Iron Dagger' highlighted in Arabic media tour

Story by Sgt. Brian Tierce, 2nd HBCT PAO

For the past three months Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers of the 5th Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division worked hard alongside their partners from the 22nd Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division and the Government of Iraq. Together, they worked to improve essential services and provide security for the residents of the Ghazaliyah neighborhood of northwest Baghdad.

Signs of the improvements can be seen all over the district from cleaner streets to the open and thriving markets.

The return to normalcy was put on full display to the Iraqi news media when the 5th Sdqn., 4th Cav. Regt. hosted a media day Jan. 21 to highlight the recent gains made in essential services and security.

“One highlight of these projects is that they have been done in the spirit of partnership,” said Lt. Col. John Richardson IV, a native of Tallahassee, Fla., commander, 5th Sdqn., 4th Cav. Regt., “From the beginning we have worked directly and closely with the Government of Iraq and our Iraqi Security Force counterparts to build civil capacity while simultaneously achieving military victory.”

The event kicked off with a presentation from Richardson to the media representatives and distinguished members of the community.

During the presentation Richardson detailed the accomplishments of the combined force and highlighted ongoing and future projects, which are aimed at improving the quality of life for the residents of Ghazaliyah and praised support provided by local leaders.

“Local leaders have played a key role in our ability to make this a combined effort,” said Richardson. “They have allowed us to achieve quick victories to deny terrain to the enemy while helping to build civil capacity.”

Following the presentation the leader of the South Ghazaliyah Neighborhood Advisory Council spoke to the

audience about the improvements seen from 2006 until now.

“From the end of 2006 until the beginning of 2008 the insurgents were located in this neighborhood,” said Abu Saif, South Ghazaliyah NAC leader. “Then with the assistance of Coalition Forces the security situation improved and was turned over to the Iraqi Army.”

With the improved security came the chance to revitalize the area, which was capitalized on by the squadron.

In the past three months the unit has worked to provide a number of significant upgrades to the area. The most notable improvement is a sewage project, which has removed waste from a number of different locations in the neighborhood.

Another project that helped reduce violence in the area was aimed at stopping the flow of weapons from neighboring communities by establishing security and checkpoints on traditional weapon-smuggling routes. “Clearly there are improvements to essential services in Ghazaliyah and we can see and touch these improvements,” said Sheik Abdel Razaq, chairman of the Ghazaliyah support council. “This is due to the Iraqi Security Forces and Coalition support of these services and the infrastructure of this neighborhood.”

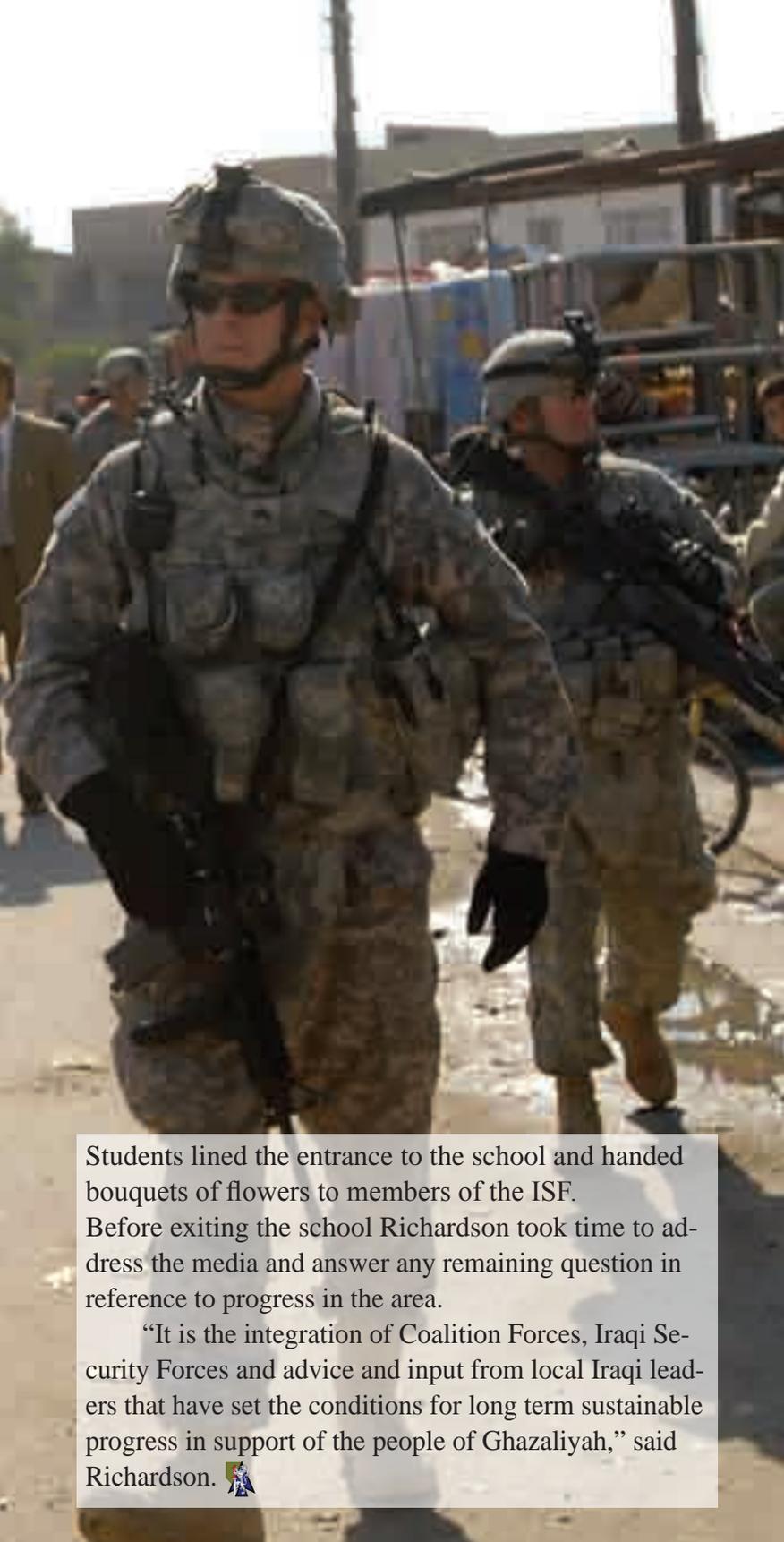
One of the highlights of the event was a market tour at one of the many open air markets in the neighborhood.

Vendors were hard at work preparing fresh vegetables and cooking local delicacies and the market area was filled with smiling children and a sense of optimism not seen in years past.

“Clearly the people are walking the streets of Ghazaliyah with freedom and without fear and we thank the ISF and Coalition forces for that,” said Razaq. The event was capped off with the opening of the Ghazaliyah School.

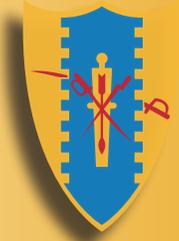
The school is furnished with new classrooms, a computer lab, a basketball court and new bathrooms.

Sgt. Jeremy Dahl, Personal Security Detachment, 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, helps secure a market street in the Ghazaliyah neighborhood of northwest Baghdad Jan. 21. Numerous Arabic media representatives toured parts of the neighborhood to see the economic and security developments that resulted from Operation "Iron Dagger." (Photo by Spc. Dustin Roberts, 2nd HBCT PAO) ▼



Students lined the entrance to the school and handed bouquets of flowers to members of the ISF. Before exiting the school Richardson took time to address the media and answer any remaining question in reference to progress in the area.

"It is the integration of Coalition Forces, Iraqi Security Forces and advice and input from local Iraqi leaders that have set the conditions for long term sustainable progress in support of the people of Ghazaliyah," said Richardson. 



Lt. Col.
John B. Richardson IV

To the Troopers:

Every day I am amazed by your discipline and professionalism. The squadron has experienced no major safety incidents despite the dangerous environment and high operational tempo you have endured over the last few months in the most volatile neighborhood in west Baghdad.

Continue to stick to the fundamentals: PCIs, Risk Assessment and Risk Management, thorough patrol briefs, rehearsals, and recons. Keep taking care of each other, looking out for each other and making professional on-the-spot corrections. That is what is preventing accidents and injuries. Keep it up!

You are living history in Iraq right now. Each of us was here when the Security Agreement between the United States and Iraq was implemented. This was a major step on our road to a final victory in Operation Iraqi Freedom and the Global War on Terrorism. With this transition came the need to change our mindset and TTPs. We are now guests of the Iraqi people, here to help the Iraqi Security Forces provide security to the Iraqi population.

The ISF has become more professional and proficient and are now in the lead providing security. Be patient and professional. Achieve small victories every day and in the end it will add up to a huge success and something you will be proud to have been a part of.

Continue to be the hunter and not the hunted. Don't let the recent period of quiet lull you into complacency. The enemy will attack you as soon as you drop your guard. Be on the ready, be ready to attack, every minute of the day. We have seized the initiative from the enemy. Do not give it back to him. Attack, Attack, Attack!

LongKnife 6.

"Prepared and Loyal."

LIFELINE SOLDIERS DELIVER SECURITY TO WASHASH

Story and photos by Spc. Dustin Roberts, 2HBCT PAO

Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers from the 299th Brigade Support Battalion “Lifeline,” 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division helped enhance security in an effort to ensure voters in northwest Baghdad were safe on election day.

The Lifeline Soldiers worked with their fellow MND-B Soldiers from 4th Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment, attached to the 2nd HBCT, 1st Inf. Div., to deliver 200 concrete barriers and a 30-foot watch tower to the ballot holding facility and voting site in the Washash neighborhood of the Mansour district of northwest Baghdad Jan. 24-25.

The barriers provided additional protection for the Iraqi Security Forces as its members continue to grow in their capabilities in securing the Iraqi population.

“We are trying to create a stand-off and a little extra security by giving a couple of walls and a tower to the Iraqi Army to make them feel a little more comfortable,” said 1st Lt. Ryan Snedegar, 4th Sqdn., 10th Cav. Regt. “We helped the ISF with the upgrades, but this security was planned and controlled by the ISF.”

The ISF took the lead in preparing for the big day while Coalition Forces assisted in planning. Snedegar said the barriers will not only provide protection for the voters and will also build self-assurance in the ISF’s mission.

“It gives them a lot of confidence; we throw a little bit of concrete out there and make it a little more secure,” he said. “Missions like these definitely step up their level of participation and their level of security.”

With the added security, Iraqi Security and Coalition Forces both believed the level of voter participation would be high.

“We would like to see as many voters out as possible,” said Snedegar. “The citizens need to feel comfortable to do what they know is right. I think they want to vote; they know they need to vote, and this is definitely a huge step for us here.”

The combined effort to emplace the barriers required a large element to provide the necessary security. The Soldiers also had the cover of darkness to conceal them as they worked, said Sgt. 1st Class David Spiker, convoy commander, Company B, 299th BSB.

“The night provides a safety



▲ Sgt. Jocelyn Gardner, 299th Brigade Support Battalion, connects an Alaska barrier to a crane in front of an election site in the Washash neighborhood of northwest Baghdad Jan. 24.

element for us. There’s less visibility for the enemy, and they can’t tell how many people we have out there,” he said. “There is less traffic at night, and it’s just safer all around for a convoy this large to roll at night.”

After the elections, the barriers will be taken down as normalcy returns to northwest Baghdad.

“This is giving a feeling of safety for those who want to go out and vote and protect them from anyone trying to stop them from voting,” said Spiker. “It’s a very important mission, and I’m proud of the Soldiers who accomplished it.” 🇺🇸



*Lt. Col.
Brian Tempest*

**To all 299th BSB
Soldiers:**

January has come and gone, and with it many changes were seen locally, nationally, and globally. The Lifeline Battalion got some world press as we were featured in a Presidential Inauguration press release from the Associated Press. This article was published on several news websites, as well as printed in numerous newspapers. We even saw a short bit of film on one of the news shows aired on the Fox News Channel. This was a historic moment for our nation and for our Army as we now have a new Commander-in-Chief.

The End of January saw the Life-Line Battalion working extremely hard to support the National Elections held the 31 of January. Over a three day time frame over 1062 tons of concrete barriers were moved and emplaced to ensure the election sites were secure. The Iraqi people had a safe election with no major incidents at any of the sites.

I look forward to February as it too will bring more change to the Life-Line Battalion. Currently two more companies are scheduled to undergo change-of-commands. The LifeLine Battalion Soldiers are performing their daily missions extremely well and we continue to provide top notch logistical support to the Dagger Brigade. Continue to keep up the good Work.

Lifeline 6
"On Call to Serve."



▲ *Part of a concrete watchtower is lifted to be put into place in front of an election site in the Washash neighborhood of northwest Baghdad Jan. 24.*



▲ *1st Lt. Ryan Snedegar, 4th Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment, attached to the 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, guides a concrete barrier in front of an election site in the Washash neighborhood of northwest Baghdad Jan. 25.*

2-1 BRIGADE SPECIAL TROOPS BATTALION "GRIFFIN"

Cross-trained Soldiers keep up with mission

Story and photo courtesy of 2-1 STB

Signal Soldiers from Company B, Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad are providing a full spectrum of information services to Coalition Forces in support of the Global War on Terror.

This task is possible because of the cross-training plan set up by the platoon leaders at the beginning of the deployment.

Due to the platoons being under-strength personnel-wise, they have aggressively been conducting cross-training over the past three months.

Cross-training involves the systematic training of a Soldier on tasks related to another job outside of his or her military occupational specialty, or tasks related to a secondary MOS within the same skill level. It allows Soldiers to gain experience in multiple tasks and provide personnel backup in different areas anytime.

“Teaching Soldiers the skills and responsibilities of another position at your unit to increase its effectiveness is the most important thing in cross-training,” said 2nd Lt. Auguste Badiel, JNN platoon leader. “The success of the Joint Network Node team is a tribute to the tactical and technical competence of the Soldiers and their willingness to learn and to do beyond what’s expected of them.”

Soldiers within the JNN platoons must remain flexible, as they can be called upon to work on equipment outside their job description in order to accomplish the brigade’s mission to provide and manage communications and information systems that support command and control.

“Cross-training is good for both the unit and its Soldiers. As you prepare cross-training plans, you need to consider both the unit benefits and the Soldier benefits,” said Badiel. “Carefully selecting the Soldiers to be cross-trained is a key element in success. Some people like to learn new things. Some are more comfortable sticking to what they know.”

A JNN platoon’s equipment consists of a Joint Network Node, High Capacity Line of Site Terminal, Secure Mobile Anti-Jam Reliable Tactical Terminal, Ku Band Transportable Satellite Terminal, Retransmission equipment, and power generator units for war-fighters operating in 2HBCT’s battlespace.

This equipment runs 24 hours-a-day and so do the Soldiers. There is always at least one Soldier monitoring the JNN system at all times throughout the day and night.

“Our 24-hour operations are here to maintain the links, make sure everything is in working order, and ensure subscriber’s needs are fulfilled,” said Staff Sgt. Rachael Cargill, the platoon’s enlisted leader.

The JNN transports timely, reliable and mobile information that allows Soldiers to control the battlefield tempo. This means the entire Brigade is counting on the stellar performance of the Soldiers and communication systems in order to be successful in fighting the war.

“I’m proud to be the JNN platoon leader,” said Badiel. “At the end of our cross-training assessment I knew that I could leave my office and not worry about anything because of highly trained and motivated Soldiers.” 



▲ Sgt. John Vozzelli (right), JNN supervisor, 2-1 STB, trains Spc. Joshua Patton on monitoring the Joint Network Node Equipment Jan. 31.



Col.
David S. Imhof



Griffin Soldiers:

As every Griffin Soldier knows, January 2009 was a month of change in Iraq. First, on December 31, 2008, the U.N. Security Council Resolution expired and the Security Agreement, a bilateral agreement between the United States and the Government of Iraq took effect. This was truly a historical event and the “Griffin” battalion was proud to be a part of it and is looking forward to being a part of Baghdad’s future. The efforts of all Griffin Soldiers located throughout the Dagger Area of Operation have set the standard and your actions are a true testament to your service to the nation and the history you are creating as a member of the “Griffin” battalion.

The second change occurred on January 31, 2009, when the Government of Iraq held provincial elections. This was a monumental achievement for Iraq and for furthering democracy in Iraq as citizens across the country of Iraq got involved in the political process. In the upcoming months, there will be changes and there will be events that garner the interest of not only the United States and Iraq, but the interest of many nations throughout the world.

I want every “Griffin” Soldier to continue their steadfast execution.

Griffin Soldiers are maintaining the pride and honor it is to be part of the 1st Infantry Division through their actions every day. CSM Gregory and I extend our heartfelt Thanks to every Soldier and Family Member in the “Griffin” Battalion for their support, sacrifices, and the great efforts you display each and every day.

Griffin 6

“Griffins! Point of the Dagger!”

4th Squadron 10th Cavalry "Blackjack"

BLACKJACK SOLDIERS GIVE JSS ADL TO GOI

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

▲ The Iraqi flag flies at the transfer ceremony of the Adl shopping center Feb. 2.

▲ An Iraqi Soldier from the 54th Brigade, 6th Iraqi Army Division, stands guard during a transfer of control ceremony of the Adl Shopping Center in the Mansour district of northwest Baghdad Feb. 2. The center served as a Joint Security Station since the surge of U.S. troops moved into Baghdad to combat sectarian violence. The transfer to Government of Iraq control shows Coalition Forces' adherence to the Security Agreement and transition troops out of Iraqi cities by June 30.



As per the recently signed security agreement, Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldiers handed over responsibility for a Joint Security Station to the government of Iraq in hopes it will once again serve its intended purpose: shopping.

The 4th Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment "Blackjack," attached to the 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, MND-B transferred JSS Adl, which was once a four-story shopping center, to the Iraqi Ministry of Trade in the Mansour district of northwest Baghdad Feb. 2.

"This location gave us the opportunity to work close with the Iraqi people and close with the Iraqi Security Forces," said Lt. Col. Monty Willoughby, commander, 4th Sqdn. 10th Cav. Regt. "We have seen a decrease in significant activity against the population in western Baghdad, and now it's time to give this facility back to its rightful owner, the Ministry of Trade."

Blackjack Soldiers lived in the facility since 2008 in order to better secure the population of northwest Baghdad, said Willoughby.

Since security has seen momentous improvement the Longknife Battalion and their ISF counterparts agreed it was time to hand over the property.

"This is a measure of the continued progress here and

it's a result of a partnership between us and the ISF and, frankly, their great capability in providing for the security of the people here in Baghdad," said Col. Joseph Martin, commander, 2nd HBCT. "We continue to transfer the JSS to our ISF counterparts as part of the security agreement."

When the agreement was signed Jan. 1, Coalition Forces agreed to remove all troops from JSS's and combat outposts across Iraq and hand the properties over to the Iraqi government by June. 30.

"With a safe and successful election, it is evident that the ISF are willing and ready to take more responsibility in securing the population of northwest Baghdad," Martin said. "The transfer of this land is a product of the devotion the ISF have committed to the irreversible momentum towards a more free and prosperous Iraq."

With JSS Adl in the Ministry of Trade's control, more jobs will be created if the shopping center is renovated and opened to the public.

"This will help the people. Many shoppers will gather here again: people from Baghdad and others who will visit Baghdad," said Moufaq Manee al-Suhail, civil defense chief, Adl market. "Plus, it will return over 300 employees and we hope the government will do its best in refurbishing this building and return it back to its previous purpose, which is very important to the people." 



▲ The inside of the four-story Adl shopping center after its transfer ceremony Feb. 2.



▲ Lt. Col. Monty Willoughby, commander, 4th Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment, presents the key to the Adl Shopping Center to a representative of the Iraqi Ministry of Trade following the transfer of the former Joint Security Station to the control of the Government of Iraq Feb. 2.



Lt. Col.

Monty Willoughby

Troopers of Blackjack:

On January 31st 2009, you were part of a historic event and a major strategic victory in this campaign in the Global War on Terror. On that day, you witnessed the Iraqi people participate in a democratic election, free of violence and free of incidents. The election was secured by the Iraqi Security Forces and run by the Government of Iraq.

Your tireless efforts and patience in coaching and mentoring our partners were critical for their success on Election Day. Your professionalism and competence was evident as our partners planned and prepared for the security of their poll sites with your advice and counsel. The military and political leaders who drafted the Security Agreement had a vision in mind of what this phase of the campaign in Iraq would look like, but no one truly knew if it could be done.

As your commander, I want to pass onto you my pride in your professionalism, in your ability to be agile enough to shift from being in the lead to being successful advisors, and in your graduate-level understanding of what must be done and how it must be done to accomplish our mission and bring final victory to the United States in Iraq.

I told you when we deployed; we were embarking on a mission with historic meaning. These elections and your role in them, no matter how small it may seem, was a strategic victory for our Nation of gigantic proportions. You were part of it and part of the history it will make. Well done.

Blackjack 6
"Blackjack!"

4-42 Field Artillery

▶ An Iraqi Security Forces member hangs up a banner in the Qadasiyah neighborhood of northwest Baghdad Jan. 20. Soldiers from the 4th Battalion, 42nd Field Artillery Regiment, attached to the 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, checked numerous voting sites and checkpoints and provided guidance and mentorship to their ISF partners as they increased security to prepare for elections held Jan. 31.
(Photo courtesy of 4th Bn, 42nd FA Regt.)



◀ A member of the Qadasiyah Emergency Response Unit hands a toy to a child in the Qadasiyah neighborhood of northwest Baghdad Jan. 20. (Photo courtesy of 4th Bn, 42nd FA Regt.)

ISF take lead in Mansour

Story by Capt. Michael Roscoe, 4th Bn., 42nd FA Regt.

For the past several weeks, Iraqi Security Forces stepped up their presence in the Yarmouk, Qadasiyah and Hateen neighborhoods of northwest Baghdad to ensure that the local populace were safe for the recent elections.

The Iraqi Army and Iraqi Police went to each polling site in the area to come up with a plan to keep the sites safe.

The ISF patrolled the polling sites to review the barrier layout and made recommendations aimed to improving security where needed. Leaders have also reviewed their procedures to ensure each site has the appropriate personnel to provide necessary security.

The Soldiers of 3rd Platoon, Battery B, 4th Battalion, 42nd Field Artillery Regiment, attached to the 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad, paid a visit with the Qadasiyah Emergency Response Unit Jan 20 to offer their services in reviewing and discussing plans, which secured elections sites.

“Three of the sites now have barriers in front of them, and these sites now have barriers in the front of the entrances,” said Iraqi Army Capt. Hussein, 54th Brigade, 6th IA Division.

Along with assessing polling sites, the Iraqi Security Forces continue their daily missions of patrolling with Coalition Forces and working at checkpoints.

The Soldiers of Battery B also visited with the ERUs at the checkpoints in Qadasiyah and observed as the ERU stopped vehicles, checked paperwork and searched the interiors and trunks of each car while searching for munitions or illegal items.

The ISF has increased its presence in Hateen and disseminated handbills to prevent grenade attacks and other means of violence from al-Qaeda in Iraq and Special Group criminals.

“I feel good about the security measures we took for the elections,” said 1st Lt. Adon, 54th Brigade, 6th IA Div. “It makes me proud that I am involved with making my country a better place.” 



Lt. Col.
Robert Kirby

Straight Arrow Soldiers:

To the men and women of the Straight Arrow Battalion, I want to thank you and congratulate you on a great deployment in support of Operation of Iraqi Freedom. Your true professionalism in an unfamiliar combat environment will always serve to remind me of the great things American Soldiers are capable of with the right training and attitude. I encourage each of you to not just think of what you are going home to but also remember your comrades and their Families who will not have that luxury. Our fallen brethren will live on forever in not only our thoughts and prayers, but the thoughts and prayers of all Americans who truly recognize that these Soldiers were then and will always be true American Heroes. The accomplishments of Straight Arrow Soldiers will stand as a reminder to the people of the Karkh and southern Mansour district that we were there to truly make their lives better and work with the Iraqi Security Forces to improve their skills as they take the lead in securing their nation. We surely leave Iraq and northwest Baghdad a better place than we found it and I will always be proud of that fact. As we transition home and then forward to Fort Carson and to duty stations all over the world, remember you were a part of real history for the world and our Army. We set a high standard in combat and maintained this standard for the entire duration of our deployment. I'll end by saying enjoy your homecomings, this is one of the best feelings in the world and you all earned every second of it.

Straight Arrow 6
“Straight Arrows!”

Solar-powered clinic opens in Ameriyah

An anticipated project in northwest Baghdad designed to power a clinic with the sun's rays was officially completed and marked by a ribbon-cutting ceremony Jan. 15 in the Ameriyah district of northwest Baghdad.

The staff at the Ameriyah clinic is now capable of treating patients and delivering babies at any time of the day.

Although the clinic has been running on solar power for a few weeks, the clinic staff and supporters of the project wanted to display the project in a ceremony.

Before the installation of the solar panels, which were installed in late November 2008, the clinic could only operate in daylight hours and relied heavily on the national power grid.

That means if Ameriyah citizens needed urgent care or expecting mothers went into labor in the middle of the night, they couldn't go to their local clinic, but had to be transported to a location further away.

"A few weeks ago there was an explosion out on the street [in Ameriyah] that the insurgents were trying to set up; it went off early and two civilians were actually injured in the blast," said Capt. Michael Nau, a native of San Diego, Joint Project Management officer,

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

2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, Multi-National Division – Baghdad. "Instead of trying to take them some place else, like another clinic or another hospital, they were able to bring them to the closest care facility to be treated, which is the Ameriyah Clinic, at hours the clinic would normally be closed. That's a victory right there; that's exactly what we wanted to get out of this project."

Dr. Wafa Ibraheem, director of the clinic, cut the ribbon in the doorway of the clinic's power room.

"I'm thankful for all of the elements that supported this project to provide the electricity needed for this clinic," said Ibraheem. "This is really going to help with running the vital parts of this clinic."

The 32 solar panels installed on the clinic's roof provide power to the key portions of the clinic, to include the labs, the birthing section and the refrigeration units for vaccines and other medical supplies.

Because the clinic staff did not have refrigeration for vaccines, the items had to be kept on ice. When the vaccines started to go bad the staff had no choice but to destroy them without use.

"We want to provide the best services for the residents of this region," Ibraheem said. "This project has proven to be successful."

"Since this is the only clinic available for the citizens of Ameriyah and Ameriyah is one of the safer places in Baghdad, it was ideal to start a project like this here," said Mahdi Johnny, electrical engineer and advisor for the project. "This is a critical area that serves about 500,000 people."

Johnny said many of the people are very satisfied with the clinic and there have not been any technical problems since it started running on solar power.

"This event simply reveals what the Iraqi people are capable of," said Nau. "This was an Iraqi-led and Iraqi-iran project and this event was really to show that the clinic is open and providing care to the people 24 hours a day." 

 *Capt. Michael Nau, a native of San Diego, Joint Project Management officer, 2nd HBCT, stands in front of the recently installed solar panels on the roof of the Ameriyah Clinic in northwest Baghdad Jan. 15. The clinic staff hosted a ribbon cutting ceremony to demonstrate the capabilities of the clinic, which can run for 72 hours powered by 10 hours of sunlight.*



A photograph of a TACP Airman in a cockpit, wearing a helmet and goggles, looking out the window. The background shows the interior of the aircraft with various instruments and controls.

TACP controls the skies

Editorial by Capt. Kevin Rogers, 11th Expeditionary Air Support Operations Squadron

▲ A TACP Airman.

(Photo courtesy of Capt Kevin Rogers)

When the Dagger Brigade deployed from Fort Riley it brought the Air Force along with it. Our team out of the 10th Air Support Operations Squadron at Fort Riley has been supporting brigade operations since even before Dagger took over the Area of Operations. The mission of the brigade Tactical Air Control Party is to support brigade operations with air assets, but that support comes in more forms than you might expect.

With the shift in operational focus toward Iraqi Security Forces-led ops, the role of air power in the Dagger Brigade's mission has changed. While Close Air Support is still among our key capabilities, at this stage in our operations there's a lot more that the TACP brings to the table.

Our most common mission is to supplement Brigade Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance assets in counter-Improvised Explosive Devices and counter-indirect fire missions.

We coordinate with ISR to fill gaps in their coverage. The advantage of air assets in this role is flexibility. The F-16 fighter jet can have "eyes on" any point in the Dagger AO within seconds any time the brigade needs a visual feed. While we may be engaged in routine sweeps, we can be called upon to track time sensitive targets at a moment's notice.

We can also provide armed over-watch when an air weapons team is not available. The TACP also has a robust reconnaissance capability.

We can support ground operations pre-mission by providing detailed imagery of target buildings in the AO. Commanders can use this imagery to plan their missions in

greater detail.

We also provide Electronic Attack designed to deny remote detonation of IEDs or the launch of an IDF. Upon the discovery of a device, we can request airborne EA assets to provide jamming that will degrade or deny its activation without disrupting any form of voice communication. This can buy critical time for Explosive Ordnance Disposal teams to arrive on scene.

The men of the TACP are skilled operators: part radio-technician, part air controller, part Soldier. Our team normally operates out of the brigade at Camp Liberty, but employs at the battalion level when the operation demands.

Most recently we sent a team to provide air support for Vice President Joe Biden during his visit to the International Zone.

In the past, we have worked with the 4th Battalion, 42nd Field Artillery, operationally attached to the Dagger Brigade, to coordinate airspace for the Iraqi Armed Forces Day.

We have also worked with the 1st Combined Arms Battalion, 18th Infantry Regiment to provide armed over-watch during search operations.

The key to our success is communication with the maneuver battalions. We work with the brigade liaison of officers to keep tabs on battalion ops. We want the battalions to keep us in mind when they do mission planning so they can take advantage of what we have to offer. We continue to support the Dagger Brigade by using air assets to keep our Soldiers safe and get the mission accomplished.

Capt. Rogers can be reached at VOIP 776-7105 or via email at 21IDJTAC@2bct1id.army.smil.mil



SAFETY ZONE

NEGLIGENT DISCHARGE

 **Not on your watch!**

By Thomas McMurray, 2nd HBCT tactical safety specialist

Each negligent discharge is unnecessary, preventable and a direct result of a standard failure by a Soldier as well as an enforcement failure by a leader. The weapons handling and clearing standards are very clear, however, these incidents continue to reveal that Soldiers fail to maintain the appropriate weapon status, clear their weapons improperly, conduct an improper function check and demonstrate poor muzzle awareness. Each time a leader fails to enforce a weapon procedure standard, he or she missed an opportunity to prevent a future negligent discharge.

Soldiers must know and practice safe weapon handling procedures. Leaders must continue to train

and enforce these standards. All weapons must be handled as if they are loaded at all times. Soldiers must always be aware of the proper weapons status wherever they are, on or off their FOB. Clearing procedures must be conducted in accordance with the posted standards.

Weapons handling is one of a Soldier's most basic Soldiering tasks. Though they are a part of everyday life here in theater, Soldiers cannot become complacent. Soldiers must execute and leaders must continuously enforce the established standards to minimize the risks. Soldiers must be disciplined to not carelessly injure themselves or their battle buddies. 



Safety Tom says 



"Soldiers must know and practice safe weapon handling procedures. Leaders must continue to train and enforce these standards."

DWELL TIME TO INCREASE BY 2011

Courtesy of Army Times

Defense Secretary Robert Gates forecasts Army units will have 30 months of dwell time between deployments by fiscal 2011.

In his Jan. 27 testimony to the Senate Armed Services Committee, Gates outlined the most specific timeline to date regarding dwell time for a force that has endured repeated deployments and, for parts of 2007 and 2008, 15-month tours with 12 months at home.

“The estimates that I’ve been given are that by the end of fiscal year ’09, we should be in a position where our brigade combat teams have a year deployed and 15 months at home,” Gates said. “In FY10 a year deployed, two years at home, and by FY11, a year deployed, 30 months at home. So I think we’re on the right track. The next few months will continue to be hard.”

Army Chief of Staff Gen. George Casey said Jan. 14 that he projects a slight increase in the number of soldiers deployed between now and mid-2010. He didn’t provide details, but he said the increase would be a temporary measure that should not disrupt the progress the Army is making to provide soldiers with more dwell time.

Soldiers traditionally have served 12-month combat tours, but in April 2007, Gates announced that active Army soldiers would begin serving 15-month deployments to support a surge of five brigades to help quell the growing violence in Iraq. At the height of the surge, 20 Army brigade combat teams were deployed at once — 18 in Iraq and two in Afghanistan.

The flood of troops into Iraq, particularly Baghdad, succeeded in reducing the violence there, and on Aug. 1, 2008, as the last of the surge brigades returned home, the Army moved back to 12-month tours. However, stretched by commitments in Iraq and Afghanistan, Army leaders continue to struggle to give soldiers more time at home with their families, away from the war zone. A senior Army planner said he was surprised when he heard Gates’ remarks on Capitol Hill, adding that 30

months of dwell time is possible but difficult to guarantee.

“It’s possible only with the reduction in demand or a growth in the available supply [of troops], both of which are potential things that could happen, neither of which I have any control over,” said the senior Army planner, who asked not to be identified.

“I think in the long term, the things that the chief [of staff of the Army] and others have described [is] as we grow the force and demand declines, dwell will grow,” the senior Army planner said. “Those demands are achievable, but we don’t know how far we are from achieving that.”

He also added that when Army leaders talk about dwell time, they are referring to units, not individual soldiers.

“Dwell is experienced by individuals,” he said. “It doesn’t matter how long your flag has been home. A visceral reality for soldiers and their families is that they experience dwell, but the complexity of the situation is such that Army leaders can only talk about dwell in [unit] flags.”

It is impossible, given the size of the Army and the countless moves soldiers and their families make throughout their careers, to ensure every single soldier receives a specific amount of dwell time, the senior Army planner said.

“[And] it takes a long time for decisions made today to produce the effects that individual soldiers and their families experience in the future,” he said.

The Army has 43 BCTs and the goal is to build to 48 by fiscal 2013, Maj. Gen. Sean Byrne told Army Times in December.

“We have made good progress with building these units, and they will go a long way toward reaching the Army Force Generation goal of a 1 [year deployed] to 3 [years of] dwell time,” he said. 

end frame...



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