

The Arrowhead Brigade

ON POINT



Arrowhead Arrives in Diyala

NOTES FROM ARROWHEAD 6 AND 7

Dear Family and Friends of the Arrowhead Brigade, Greetings once again from the Diyala Province of Iraq. We're a few days late on this update. We apologize upfront for that. Things are really hopping here in beautiful Diyala. We promise to do better. We finally had our first significant rain this week – great news for the local population. Although transportation (driving and walking) becomes more challenging in the mud, there is a real need here for a wet winter. Days are reaching the low 90s; nights are dipping into the high 60s and low 70s. Dare we use the word pleasant to describe weather in Iraq?

So much has happened since our first update, nearly all of which is very positive and encouraging. As you will remember, we have three major themes to our mission here. The first is supporting the continued growth and development of the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF). That will be the theme of this month's update. The bottom line up front is this: Your Soldiers have absolutely been "getting after it" in this area...so much so that the Corps and Theater-level commands have taken notice and have pointed to the Arrowhead BCT as the example for partnership success. We have come so far from the days of US-centric operations where we planned and rehearsed the mission, then drove by the ISF compound to pick up a squad of Iraqis on the way to the objective. The ISF are now planning their own operations (with our help) and then asking us to come along and support them. This change is profound,

because helping the ISF develop enduring capabilities is the key to the long-term security of Iraq after US forces leave. There are already countless examples of success, but here are a few highlights.

The Patriots of 2-3 IN have integrated themselves into their ISF Brigade to such a degree that Brigadier General Farhan, the Brigade Commander, calls them his 5th Battalion (he really only has four).



Col. David Funk

There is literally no operation that BG Farhan does without consulting and coordinating with Patriot 6 and his staff. This coordination is made easier by the recently-completed Combined Operations and Intelligence Center (COIC) that the 37th Engineer Battalion (ABN) built for them, which allows US and Iraqi staffs to sit side by side to plan and control operations. It has reached the point that when the enemy attacks a Patriot patrol, BG Farhan is offended and chastises his own forces to find and arrest the perpetrators. The Patriots have also made incredible strides in improving the Iraqi Police (IPs), a group that

has long suffered from perceptions of corruption and ineptitude. It is no exaggeration to say that both Army and Police forces are getting better every day because of the presence and influence of the Patriots.

Similarly, the Sykes' Regulars of 5-20 IN have fully embraced the role of partnering with the ISF. In fact, because they operate around the Provincial Capital of Baquba, their ability to influence the IPs is especially critical. And this they have done. The Regulars have conducted numerous combined patrols with IA and IP units, and like the Patriots, they monitor all of these operations from the COIC they have built. Just a few weeks ago, the Iraqi Provincial Chief of Police specifically asked the Regulars to join in conducting a combined patrol with IPs and an Iraqi Commando unit, resulting in the discovery of a sizeable cache. As a reward for their outstanding performance, we're challenging the Regulars with even more partnership responsibilities in the next week. As the Black Knights of 3-66 Armor prepare for their well-deserved trip back home, the Regulars will expand their battlespace and pick up another entire IA brigade with which to partner. Many more successes lie ahead for Sykes' Regulars.

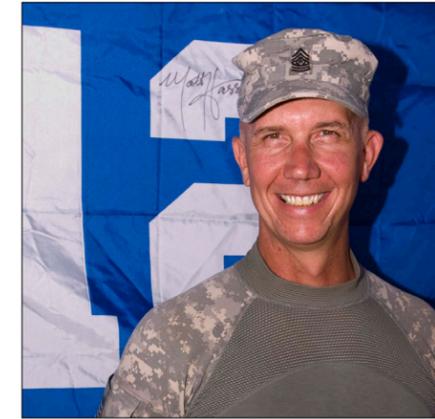
The Tomahawks from 1-23 IN also have an Iraqi Army Brigade and numerous IPs as their partners. And just like our other battalions, they have embraced the opportunity to make the ISF better. Two weeks ago, the Tommies planned and executed an NCO-led train-the-trainer course for Iraqi junior NCOs.

It was such a success, the Iraqis begged for another course. This will now become a recurring program that actually includes ISF NCOs as instructors. On the operations side of the house, the Tommies recently conducted a combined air assault to conduct a clearance operation in a suspected insurgent area. Although the mission didn't result in any large finds, Tomahawk 6 is spot on in his assertion that the important part of this mission was actually doing it in the first place. Last year at this time, such a complex operation would have been impossible. The Tommies are teaching the Iraqis what "right" looks like every day.

Because of their location on the battlefield, the Soldiers of 1-14 CAV - Task Force Warhorse - have the most intricate and complex partnership responsibilities in all of Diyala. They are responsible for two Iraqi brigades, one Pesh Merga (Kurdish) brigade, a Kurdish Police force, and numerous IPs. On top of that, the FOB from which Warhorse operates is, shall we say, "less well-developed" than most of our other FOBs. Such immense responsibilities coupled with Spartan living conditions might intimidate a lesser unit, but the great Warhorse Squadron is no ordinary unit. In typical CAV fashion, the Soldiers of Warhorse have embraced the challenge. They are out there every day in full support of their ISF partners. While dodging the occasional IED and mortar attack, the men of Warhorse still find time to make a difference every day for the ISF in northern Diyala.

Given their massive support

requirements, it would seem improbable for 296 BSB to have ISF partnership responsibilities. Yet they do. In fact, the Frontline Support Battalion may have the biggest partnership challenge of all: teaching the ISF how to conduct logistics operations and maintenance. If you've been here you know the ISF approach to maintenance: "use it until it breaks, then ask the Americans to buy a new



Command Sgt. Maj. Alan Bjerke

one." This is not totally their fault. They have a very antiquated supply system, and they do not possess a culture of good stewardship of equipment. The Frontline team is working feverishly to change that. They run a ten-day maintenance course that teaches Iraqi Soldiers how to operate fix their wheeled vehicles. For the last two classes, at least two of the instructors were themselves Iraqi. Frontline also recently conducted an NCO induction ceremony where Iraqi NCOs stood alongside ours to be welcomed into the NCO Corps – a powerful event.

You'll notice we haven't

addressed the Red Lions of TF 1-37. That's not because they don't partner. They do...and they do it very well. It's just that their partners are the members of the Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) and the Iraqi Government. Their many exploits will be the focus of the next update. Suffice it to say their tasks are multi-layered, complex, never boring, and crucial to the long-term success of our mission here. The Red Lions are indeed "On the Minute." Tune in next month for details.

In closing, let us once again express how amazed we are at the great job your Soldiers are doing each day. What we have written here is but a thumbnail sketch of their remarkable exploits. It would take an entire book to do justice to what these American heroes are accomplishing here. The fact that they do it in such harsh conditions, with an enemy bent on attacking them daily, speaks volumes about their character and patriotism. We are honored and humbled to command such dedicated men and women. Finally, thank you all for your love and support. Know that we derive our strength from you, our friends and families. Until next month we are humbly

--Arrowhead 6 and 7.

ARROWHEAD

SECOND TO NONE

AMERICA'S CORPS!

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Guideon bearers of the nine companies under the 296th Brigade Support Battalion, 3rd Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division render honors during the playing of the Star Spangled Banner during the Battalion's transfer of authority ceremony where the Battalion took over the support and logistics mission in Diyala Province from the 25th Brigade Support Battalion, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, Sept. 3. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Anthony Jones, 145th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)



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ON THE COVER

A combined color guard representing the 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division; 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division; Iraqi Police and the Iraq Army stands at attention during the transfer of authority ceremony marking the change between the two U.S. Army brigades, Sept. 12. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Anthony Jones, 145th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment)

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Tomahawk Medic Saves Iraqi Boy's Life

Story and photo by
Spc. Anthony Jones
145th MPAD

An U.S. Army medic with 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division saved the life of a young Iraqi boy after the child received several gunshot wounds from an unknown assailant, Sept. 20.

Spc. Adam O'Krent, Company A, 1st Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment, 3/2 SBCT, a native of Littleton, Colo., provided the care which saved the young child's life.

O'Krent's unit was patrolling near the village of Biwaniyah, north of the Diyala provincial capitol of Baqubah, when they received small arms fire, striking between their Stryker vehicles and ricocheting off a nearby wall, said 2nd Lt. Terrence Nolan, O'Krent's Platoon Leader. Since there was no positive identification of a shooter, The Soldiers did not return fire in accordance with standard operating procedures, he added.

O'Krent said he knew the situation was serious when his squad leader, Staff Sgt. David Hill, called for him.

"I knew as soon as the



Spc. Adam O'Krent

ramp dropped and he called for me something had happened. When he told me to bring my bag, something definitely something had happened," said O'Krent, recalling his first moments out of the vehicle before reaching the child.

He said when he reached the boy; he was laying face down with some bleeding underneath him but no wounds in his back.

"When I rolled him over I saw he was shot in the chest and later I found he was shot in the pelvis," he said.

After the initial check of the boy's wounds, O'Krent's training kicked in and he went to work to save the boys life. "You're not thinking

about anything at that point. It's instinctual at that point; you know what to do." O'Krent said.

Once O'Krent stabilized the boy, the Soldiers loaded him into one of the Stryker vehicles. As they were loading the boy, his father arrived on the scene and was hurried into the vehicle with his son.

"From the time the shots went off to the time we evacuated him. I couldn't have been more than ten minutes," said Nolan.

The Soldiers transported wounded boy and his worried father to the Forward Operating Base Warhorse medical center and from there the patient was flown to Joint Base Balad.

Diyala Province

Ethnicities and Religion:
Shia ~ 45%
Sunni ~ 39%
Kurdish ~ 16%

Capital: Baqubah
Size: 17,685 sq. Km
Population: Estimated 1,505,000
Other Major Cities: Muqdadiah, Khanaqin

Key Leaders
Governor: Abudl Naser Al-Mahdiwi

Diyala Operations Center Commander: Staff Maj. Gen. Tariq

Provincial Director of Police: Staff. Maj. Gen. Damook



ARROWHEAD BRIGADE TAKES CHARGE OF DIYALA



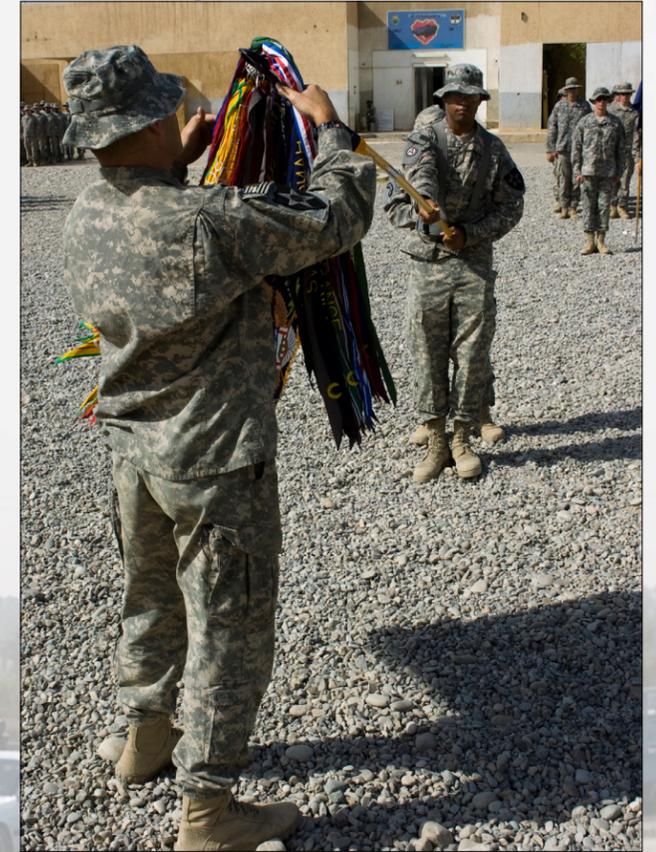
Lt. Col. Harry Hungerford (LEFT), commander, 296th Brigade Support Battalion, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, and Command Sgt. Maj. Steven Winters (RIGHT) command sgt. maj., 296th BSB, "uncase" the Battalion's colors during a transfer of authority ceremony, Sept. 3.



Lt Col. Mitchell Rambin (Right), commander, 5th Battalion, 20th Infantry Regiment and Command Sgt. Maj. William Gentry stand proudly in front of their Battalion colors on FOB Warhorse.



(Above) Lt. Col. Jon Moore, commander, 1st Battalion, 37th Field Artillery Regiment speaks during his unit's transfer of authority ceremony where they replaced the 2nd Battalion, 8th Field Artillery Regiment, Sept. 11. In a change of mission the 1-37th did not assume any battle space and underwent a mission change, becoming the Provincial Reconstruction Team escort ensuring the State Department officials are properly protected as they work with local government offices across Diyala.



(Above) 2nd Battalion, 3rd Infantry Regiment, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division commander, Lt. Col. Adam Rocke spreads apart battle streamers earned by the battalion in previous wars and conflicts during a transfer of authority ceremony on Forward Operating Base Normandy, Sept. 9.

Lt. Col. Chuck Hodges, commander, 1st Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment, unveils a large wooden sign bearing the crest and nickname of the "Tomahawk" Battalion signifying the transfer of authority between the "Tomahawks" and the 1st Battalion, 24th Infantry Regiment, 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, Sept. 5.



Lt. Col. Joseph Davidson (LEFT) unfurls the 1st Squadron, 14th Cavalry Regiment colors with the assistance of Squadron Command Sgt. Maj. Andrew Connette at Forward Operating Base Caldwell, Sept. 7.



PATRIOTS “TAKE OUT” TANKS

Story and photos by
Spc. Anthony Jones
145th MPAD

“There is no reason why these kids should have to grow up with a tank in their front yard,” said 1st Lt. Kenneth Hatcher, pointing to a group of children watching U.S. Soldiers preparing to lift the massive hull of an abandoned tank in the street that runs in front of the children’s homes in Muqdadiyah, Iraq, Sept. 18.

Hatcher, a logistical and support team leader with 2nd Battalion, 3rd Infantry Regiment, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, is talking about the first of three tank hulls to be removed from the street by U.S. Soldiers in a combined operation with Iraqi Security Forces.

Soldiers of 2nd Bn., 3rd Inf. Regt. Combat Repair Team, using an M-88 heavy equipment recovery vehicle, operated in a narrow street between houses to load the tank hull onto a heavy equipment trailer provided by the Kellogg, Brown and Root contract company.

The process to remove the tank hulls began when the 2nd Bn., 3rd Inf. Reg. arrived in Diyala province in mid-September and began working with local leaders.

“During our reconnaissance



Soldiers of the Combat Repair Team, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Infantry Regiment, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division use a M88 heavy equipment recovery vehicle to lift a tank hull, preparing to load in onto a heavy equipment trailer in the city of Muqdadiyah, Iraq, Sept. 18.



Soldiers of the 2nd Battalion, 3rd Infantry Regiment, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division and workers of Kellogg, Brown and Root, load an abandoned tank hull onto a heavy equipment trailer in the city of Muqdadiyah, Iraq, Sept. 18.

of this area, the mayor and I identified the three relic tanks. They were previously placed here to block al-Qaeda from coming into this area,” said Lt. Col. Adam Rocke, commander, 2nd Bn, 3rd Inf. Regt. “They are destroyed, they’re in front of people’s homes, and they are blocking the roads and are remnants of the past.”

Sitting beside Rocke and watching the first tank being lifted off the ground, Zaid Ibrahim Hassam, the mayor of Muqdadiyah said, “These tanks are a reminder of when al-Qaeda was here, and by removing them, we are opening a new page.”

During the work, safety of the local citizens was paramount. Hassam arranged for Iraqi Policemen to secure the site. The IP’s set up checkpoints along the street to restrict access and redirect foot traffic to ensure residents did not enter the worksite.

One resident, Muhammad Hamza, watched the work from his home. Hamza has been living in the same house for nine years and remembers when the tanks were placed on his doorstep.

“All the citizens of the area are really happy and satisfied with the removal of the tanks. The joint effort is good and

will benefit the citizens. In order for us to win we must be united,” said Hamza.

Two of the three hulls were removed by Sept. 22, and plans to remove the third are in the works. Work has been halted due to the end of the Ramadan holiday.

“This is a ‘good news’ story for the people of Iraq. This shows a willingness of progress, of cooperation and support of U.S. Forces and for the people,” said Rocke. “No longer are we putting up T-walls; instead, we are breaking down barriers and removing tanks in order for the local populous to see a better way of life.”

TOMAHAWK BATTALION TAKE IRAQI PARTNERS TO DINNER

Story and photos by
Spc. Anthony Jones
145th MPAD

"This is a celebration of the beginning of a new partnership," Lt. Col. Chuck Hodges, commander, 1st Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment, said about a dinner his battalion hosted for its Iraqi Army counterparts, Sept. 30.

The new partnership Hodges spoke of was that between his battalion and the 19th Brigade, 5th Iraqi Army Division, commanded by Brig. Gen. Hadayet.

Hodges' "Tomahawk" Bn. recently assumed responsibility for the partnership between U.S. forces and 19th Bde., 5th IA.

"My battalion has worked with Gen. Hadayet back in 2006 and 2007 during operations here in Diyala," said Hodges. "This has been a chance to reunite with him, and he has been as helpful now as he was back then. He is a very conscientious officer and puts the needs of the Iraqi people before his own."

Hadayet, who has worked



Lt. Col. Chuck Hodges commander, 1st Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, looks on as his Iraqi Army partner, Brig. Gen. Hadayet, commander, 19th Brigade, 5th Iraqi Army, cuts a cake representing the U.S. - Iraqi partnership during a dinner held to honor the partnership at Forward Operating Base Grizzly, Sept. 30

with U.S. forces since the beginning of the war said this phase of partnership may be new, but it comes as part of a longer, larger partnership between the Iraqi and American armies.

"We have very strong relations with [U.S. forces]. This partnership is very old, and as our commander directs, we maintain our relationships

Command Sgt. Maj. Stanley Sobiech, command sgt. maj., 1st Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment greets his Iraqi Army counter part Command Sgt. Maj. Mohammed Hashim of the 19th Brigade, 5th Iraqi Army Division, at the Tomahawk partnership dinner, Sept. 30.

with [U.S. forces]. I consider all soldiers, whether Iraqi or American, as my sons and brothers," said Hadayet.

Hodges said it's good to work with a commander who already understands how U.S. forces operate. He knows how to implement U.S. troops as combat multipliers to complement his brigade with maintenance programs and logistical assistance.

"It's good to have a guy who understands what our capabilities are, so when he comes to us, he comes with an education of what we can really do for him," said Hodges.

Under the current partnership, each of the companies under 1st Bn., 23rd Inf. is partnered



Lt. Col. Chuck Hodges commander, 1st Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, presents his Iraqi Army partner, Brig. Gen. Hadayet, commander, 19th Brigade, 5th Iraqi Army, with a tomahawk representing the toughness of the partnership between the U.S. and Iraqi Armies during a partnership dinner at Forward Operating Base Grizzly, Sept. 30

with a battalion from the 19th Brigade, which operates in northwestern Diyala province.

During the partnership dinner, each Iraqi Army

battalion commander sat with his U.S. Forces partner and joined in an American style meal of steak and shrimp.

"Iraqi hospitality is

unlimited. Every time we go to one of their headquarters, a meal is always offered," said Hodges. "This was a chance for us to reciprocate and give them some good old American steaks."

After the dinner, Hodges presented Hadayet with a tomahawk, a representation of the Native American heritage each of the 1st Bn., 23rd Inf. companies is named for: Apache, Black Hawk and Comanche. Each of the Iraqi Army battalion commanders was also presented a tomahawk by their U.S. partner.

"The Native Americans had great, strong warriors dedicated to their cause and a good brotherhood together," said Hodges. "The symbolism of our giving the Iraqi leaders a tomahawk is that they are our brothers in arms. While we are separated by the flag we fall under, we still have the strong brotherhood of being soldiers."

Served for dessert after the partnership dinner a cake bearing the names of each partner unit and flags of the two countries was prepared.



Field Artillery Honing Skills on FOB Warhorse

Story and photos by
Sgt. Jeremy Pitcher
145th MPAD

The ability to put rounds down range precisely on a target is essential to the field artillery mission. Members of 1st Battalion, 37th Field Artillery Regiment, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry

Division know however, that this ability does not come without extensive preparation.

Recently 2nd Platoon, 1-37 FA conducted a calibration on their M777 howitzers. The calibration consisted of shooting live rounds down range to test the velocity of the propulsion they are equipped with.

According to Sgt. Jahn Vliieger, 1-37 FA Fire

Control Sergeant, the need to calibrate the howitzers to the velocity of the propulsions is due to the fact that each batch of propulsions is made at different times and many in different plants.

These disparities can cause a round's trajectory to change slightly and therefore not be completely accurate, said Vliieger.

2nd Lt. Jason

Vanderheyden, 1-37 FA Fire Direction Officer said that the process of calibration uses propulsion from each batch. The velocity is measured for each round as it is fired. This velocity is then recorded and can be used along with the weather data and temperature of the propulsion at the time of firing to calculate the exact angles needed to hit a target.

The process to this calibration begins with the acquisition of a suitable area in which the howitzers can fire to according to Capt. Matt Kuhlman, 1-37 FA Fire Control Officer.

"The area is assessed for possible collateral damage. Once it is cleared by us it then goes through a process of verification and acceptance by other groups," said Kuhlman.

The process includes going through the Combined Air Operation Center which takes satellite imagery of the area to ensure that no structures or water canals will be damaged. The process then goes through both U.S. and Iraqi leadership to sign off on the firing.

For the recent calibration for the 1-37 FA the process began more than a month ago.

Once calibration mission



The Soldiers fire a shot as they work to calibrate the howitzer.

Soldiers of the 1st Battalion, 37th Field Artillery Regiment fire an M777 in order to calibrate the howitzer on Forward Operating Base Warhorse, Oct. 12



is cleared the firing mission begins to take shape. The round and size of the propulsion is selected to reach the target area and a time is selected for firing.

For a normal calibration, 10 rounds are fired through each of the three howitzers. Each round is observed and confirmed by a forward observer at the impact point.

The firing mission for the 1-37 FA uses an eight man section who continuously train and prepare for the Brigade's firing missions.

Platoon Sergeant Sgt. 1st Class Franklin oversees each shoot to ensure each member of the section is doing their job correctly and safely.

"Safety comes first here. It is all about procedure. Speed will come the more

you do it, but you must do it right in order to be safe," said Franklin.

Though firing howitzers is becoming scarcer as the security climate changes, they are still often used to illuminate the battlefield and as harassment interdiction fire (HIF). The HIF often involves striking previous indirect fire points of origin.

With many Soldiers being tasked with unconventional jobs to meet the needs of Diyala Province, members of the howitzer team take solace in the fact that they are still doing the job they were trained to do.

"We have to be ready for whatever, but it is good to be doing what they trained us for," said Spc. Roger Prince, the Radio, Telephone Operator for the section.

OPERATION WARHORSE REAPER

Story and photos by
Spc. Anthony Jones
145th MPAD

Beneath the golden light of an eastern Iraqi morning, Soldiers of two nations gathered together to make last minute plans and take the first steps toward a sleepy Iraqi village.

The Soldiers, of the U.S. Army's 1st Squadron, 14th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division and their Iraqi counterparts, the 4th Brigade, 1st Quick Reaction Force Division,

were embarking on Operation Warhorse Reaper; the U.S. name for the Iraqi planned mission.

"This was the IA Brigade's mission, we went with their plan, we met with them and formed our plan based on the way they were going to do things," said 2nd Lt. Brandon Frei, a platoon leader with Crazy Horse Troop, whose part of the combined operation was to conduct clearing operations through five small villages north on the Hamreen Reserve in north-central Diyala.

Crazy Horse Troop was not the only company of the 1st Squadron, 14th Cavalry Regiment

which took part in the operation. Apocalypse Troop worked with 4th Battalion, 4th Brigade to clear along the Diyala River. Bronco Troop, who partners with 1st Battalion, 4th Brigade, cleared the area around the village of Halawiyah.

"Our job during the operation was to follow the Iraqi Army and provide an over watch and offer advice when asked," said Frei, who was one of the U.S. Soldiers who walked house to house with the Iraqi Army.

The village clearing began at daybreak and lasted until approximately two o'clock in

the afternoon. The operation was lead by Iraqi Army officers and non-commissioned officers, who directed their soldiers as they moved house to house and searched the homes.

At each house the Iraqi soldiers would speak with the residents and search the outside of the building and any outer buildings before entering the main home.

"The IA did a great job," said Frei. "Even at the last house, when everyone was tired, they found two magazines with ammunition and after searching further found an old rifle the family was not allowed to have and confiscated it."

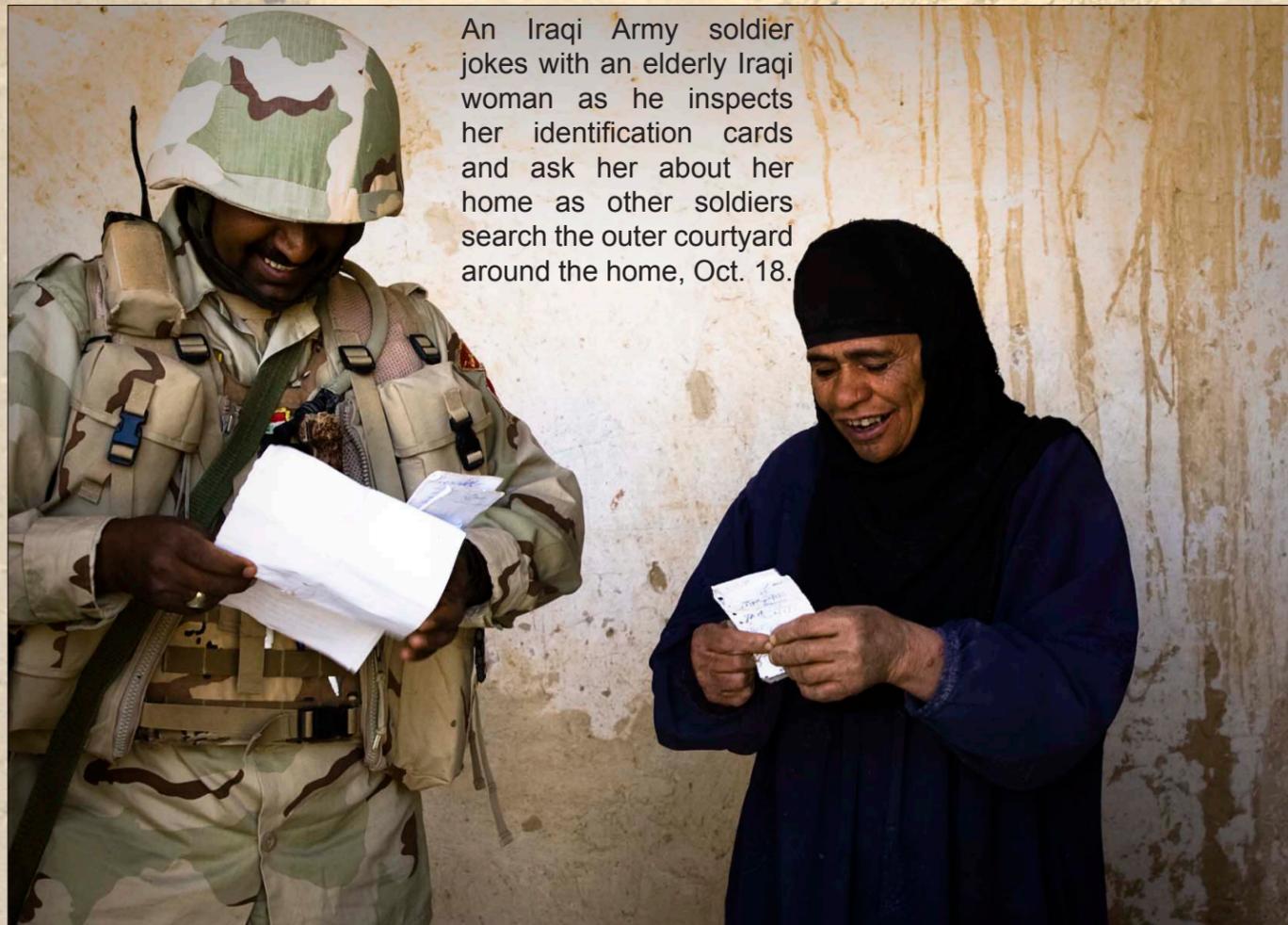
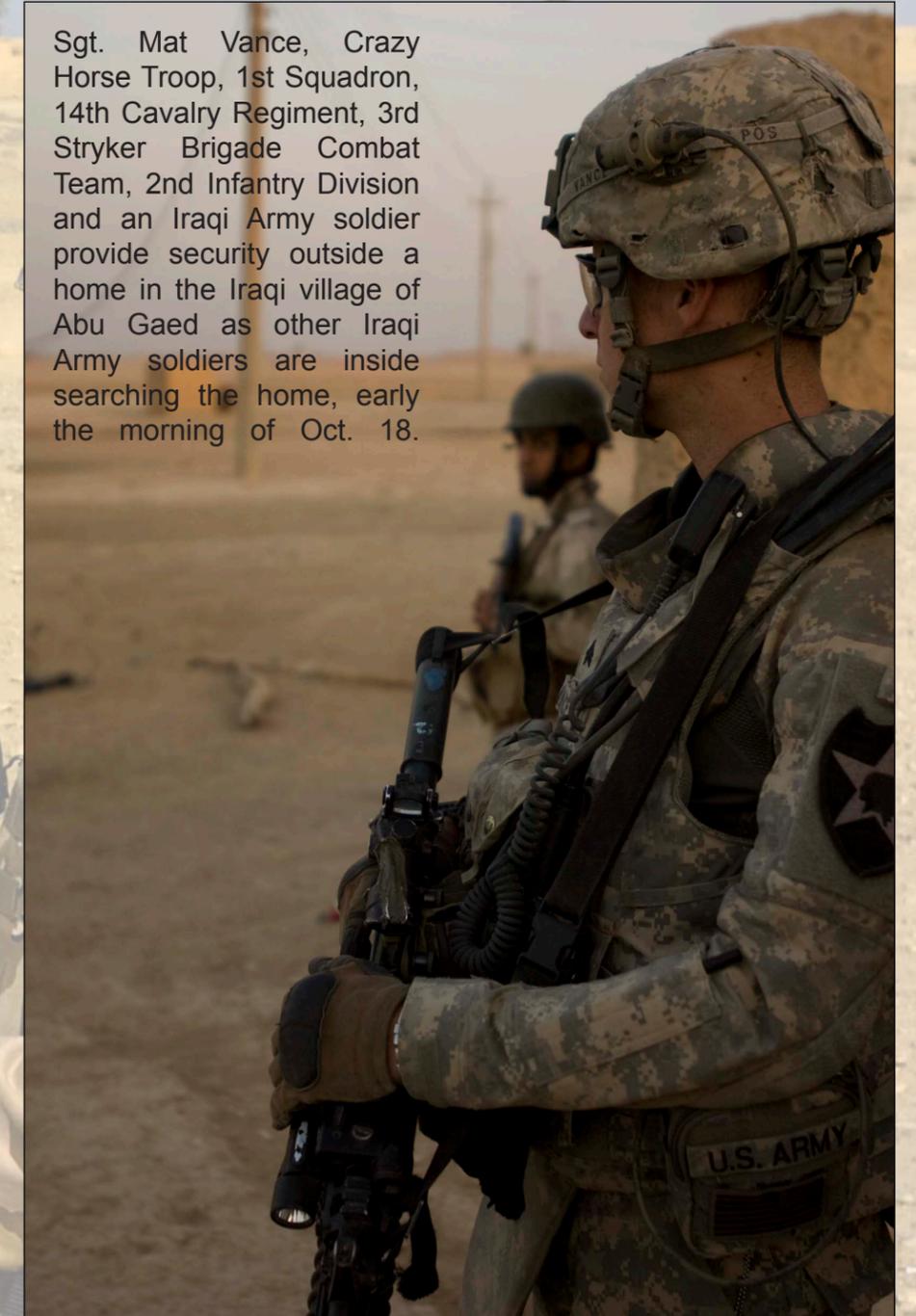
After the Iraqi and U.S. Soldiers completed the job of clearing the villages the U.S. Forces pulled back to allow the Iraqi soldiers to provide the villages with humanitarian aid supplies.

Maj. Scott Schumacher, operations officer, 1st Squadron, 14th Cavalry Regiment, said it is highly important for the U.S. Soldiers to step back and allow the villagers to see the Iraqi Army taking charge of missions and providing the humanitarian assistance.

"It has to be the Iraqi Security Forces gaining the trust and respect of the local population," said Schumacher. "That's why it's important for the IA to be in the lead. They want to help their people."

Schumacher, with two previous deployments to Iraq, added the Iraqi Army of today

Sgt. Mat Vance, Crazy Horse Troop, 1st Squadron, 14th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division and an Iraqi Army soldier provide security outside a home in the Iraqi village of Abu Gaed as other Iraqi Army soldiers are inside searching the home, early the morning of Oct. 18.



An Iraqi Army soldier jokes with an elderly Iraqi woman as he inspects her identification cards and ask her about her home as other soldiers search the outer courtyard around the home, Oct. 18.

is highly improved over those trained. The senior leadership understands what it means to

deployments. "The Iraqi army has made leaps and bounds since I was here in 2003 and 2006, they are better equipped and better trained. The senior leadership understands what it means to take care of soldiers and they are all about protecting the people and are marking every stride to protect the people."

Regulars Work to Provide Microgrants to Local Citizens

Story by Spc. Christopher Bruce
145th MPAD
Photos by MC1 Kirk Worley
Joint Combat Camera

Creating a stable economy in Iraq is a goal of the U.S. Forces. To help, U.S. Forces are providing small grants to local entrepreneurs to start a business and employ others. The micro grants allow someone without working capital to start a business and have a long term job.

The program also allows U.S. Force members to have an immediate positive impact in the areas they work. The grants are designed to create sustainable economies on a local level.

1st Lt. Daniel Shoemaker is a platoon leader in B Co., 5th Battalion, 20th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division. He has been handing out micro grant applications to people in small towns and villages for several months. Shoemaker works with local governments, Iraqi Police, Iraqi Army and local leaders to find business men and women who are most likely to succeed in setting up an enduring business. He believes the micro grants provide the necessary opportunities for the



U.S. Army Soldiers attached to B Co., 5th Battalion, 20th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, conduct a joint patrol of the village of Imam Ways in the Diayala Province, Sept. 30.

economy.

“I think they are one of the answers to fixing the economy here,” Shoemaker said. “I do think this will help the common man on the street.”

The applications that Shoemaker hands out pose basic questions to the new entrepreneurs like their name, business location and description. It also asks the applicant for their business experience and what the business will contribute to the community. All of these questions on the application form a basic business plan.

Capt. Christian Incremona is the 5th Battalion, 20th Infantry Regiment’s Fire Support Officer. His job is to collect all the micro

grant applications and then submit them to higher headquarters for final approval. A large part of his job is confirming a need for the business and making sure there are not other businesses providing the same services nearby.

“For instance if there is one trash pickup for a village of 40 people, you probably don’t need four more trash pickups,” Incremona said. “Although we are willing to provide a micro grant, we want to make sure and provide it to someone who is worthy.”

Incremona said the idea of each micro grant is to employ three or more people and create a business that will sustain itself. After the micro grant application

is approved, U.S. Forces will meet with the grantee and award half of the grant money, up to \$2,500. Then a time will be scheduled, usually around 30 days after, to come back and see the progress made. If there has been progress and the money was spent according to their business plan, the second half is then granted.

“If they haven’t made any progress, then we can identify that it is not worth paying the rest,” Incremona said. “Our hope is that it’s

absolutely worth paying the rest and we pay the second half of the micro grant and continue to look for more opportunities to fund the local economy.” Not all business applications received are approved.

“It’s a good program but you have to be careful on how you employ it and then you have to monitor it very closely to make sure money is going to the right places,” Incremona said.

Popular choices in the Diyala Province have been

chicken farms, coffee shops and internet cafes. These local businesses employ others and create income for their owners. This in turn builds the economy according to Incremona.

“Providing capital to the local economy allows that local economy to grow stronger and be able to sustain itself,” Incremona said. “They don’t need to model what we do; we just hope we can facilitate whatever good system they have set up and set it up for success.”

U.S. Soldiers attached to B Co., 5th Battalion, 20th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, work with local citizens in order to follow up on applications for micro grants in the village of Sanajar, Oct. 22



Iraqi Veterinarians and U.S. Animal Disease Expert Hold Conference

Story and photo by
Spc. Anthony Jones
145th MPAD

In a blue and white conference room at the Diyala Governance Center in Baqubah, Iraq, more than 40 veterinarians from across Diyala Province gathered for a teleconference to discuss issues which have been nearly eradicated in the U.S., Sept. 28.

The focus of the teleconference: Foot and Mouth Disease. Capt. Eddie Neal, the 25th Infantry Division veterinarian, said Foot and Mouth is a contagious disease especially of cloven-footed animals and is marked by ulcerating vesicles

in the mouth around the hooves.

“Foot and Mouth Disease has a low mortality rate, but it is highly infectious,” said Neal. “It hurts the Iraqi cattle industry.”

The disease hurts the Iraqi cattle industry by preventing cattle to be exported outside Iraq, which could potentially spread the disease to countries that have previously eliminated it.

The guest speaker for the teleconference was Dr. Samia Metwally, with the Foreign Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory at the Plum Island Animal Disease Center; a research center located small island off the coast of New York state where researchers work to prevent outbreaks of potential

Dr. Heshmet Mohammed Yaas, a veterinarian in the Iraqi village of Qazainayh in Diyala Province, listens to a video-teleconference where Dr. Samia Metwally, with the Foreign Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory at the Palm Island Animal Disease Center, spoke to more than 40 Diyala Province veterinarians about Foot and Mouth Disease, Sept. 28.



“economic crippling” diseases.

Dr. Heshmet Mohammed Yaas, an Iraqi veterinarian from Qazainayh in Diyala Province who has been practicing veterinary medicine since 1976 said this meeting was a perfect opportunity to learn important information and keep up-to-date on the latest techniques to treat diseases.

According to Neal the teleconference is the first of its kind and is using a “shoe-string” budget to set a precedence the Iraqi’s can follow after U.S. Forces depart.

“We are using Skype, a commercial internet voice chat product, for the audio provided by Dr. Metwally and we’ve downloaded the slide show to avoid the high cost of video-teleconference equipment,” said Neal. “We are hoping to use this as a model for future conferences with Iraqi and U.S. veterinary experts.”

However, the teleconference didn’t work as well as planned. Due to issues with audio equipment the veterinarians present in Diyala could not understand exactly what was being said. The presentation was stopped after a brief discussion on Foot and Mouth Disease and plans were made to hold another meeting sometime in October, taking the lessons learned at this initial meeting and putting them into place.

“We are still planning our October meeting, which will focus on Rabies,” said Neal. “Some of our vets couldn’t hear very well so we are learning from our mistakes and we will be better prepared for our next meeting.”

Task Force 296 works to keep the Iraqi Army “on the move”

Story by Spc. Christopher Bruce
145th MPAD
Photos by 2nd Lt. Jennifer Palmeri
3-2 SBCT Public Affairs Officer

Iraqi Army soldiers completed a 10-day maintenance course instructed by U.S. Forces held at Forward Operating Base Warhorse, Sept. 19.

The eight Iraqi soldiers of the 3rd Regiment, 18th Brigade, 5th Iraqi Army Division completed training in humvee maintenance such as cooling, electrical fuel, air intake, exhaust systems, air conditioner services and basic welding. Each subject was taught in a classroom with Arabic textbooks. Then, a hands-on portion of the course was applied.

The training was arranged by Task Force 296, Bravo Company Logistics Training Advisory Team or LTAT.

Staff Sgt. David Bouchat, LTAT Non-Commissioned Officer in Charge said the Iraqi’s also asked to learn about transmission trouble codes, understanding electrical components and learning the U.S. maintenance structure. He said in the future, the course will be taught by Iraqi’s and not U.S.



After graduation from the humvee maintenance class the eight Iraqi Army soldiers proudly pose with their certificates of completion. The soldiers are with 3rd Regiment 18th Brigade, 5th Iraqi Army Division

“We are getting the officers and NCO’s from the Iraqi side involved teaching classes,” Bouchat said. “That’s sort of the big part of the whole program for us, is to be able to create a self sustaining Iraqi Army, not just teaching them here and there. We are trying to teach them how to do it themselves.”

Lt. Gazeer Naser, leader of the Iraqi maintenance team that is assigned to 3rd Regiment, 18th Brigade, 5th IA Division, said the training will help him and his team to repair and maintain their vehicles.

“I have learned a lot of things for the humvee,” Naser said. “The humvee is a new truck in our army, we never had it before.”

Naser was the distinguished Honor Graduate for the class.

Lt. Col. Harry Hungerford, commander of the Brigade Support Battalion, gave opening remarks for the ceremony. He said that that the training would help improve overall ability of the IA.

“These skills will allow each of you to support your unit and its ability to defend the nation of Iraq and its people,” Hungerford said.

Chaplain's Corner

A Life Purposed By Divine Design

When Michelangelo sculpted his magnificent marble statue of David, he claimed that he simply chipped away until David emerged from his stony captivity. Michelangelo believed that the image of David "had been trapped inside the block of marble."

Three years later that image was set free for all the world to view. Michelangelo wrote in his diaries "it took forty men five days to move it. Once in place, the statue was a warning...whoever governed Florence should govern justly and defend it bravely..." Michelangelo's message in stone was that those who would presume to lead a people are accountable to both God and man.

This ties us into the larger story of David, a study of faith and accountability of a man who was a shepherd and King, a son and a father, a husband and friend, a warrior and a worshipper. David, the man after God's own heart, was a life purposed by divine design!

To better understand David we must remember the story of his great-grandmother, Ruth, a Moabite woman of faith.

Ruth teaches us that accountability to God begins by walking in obedience with the Lord, Who brings us from famine to feast, from failure to victory, from alienation to family.

We learn that faith in God shapes our futures with unimagined possibilities. We are liberated from the prisons of doubt, low self esteem and uncertainty when the Sculptor of our destiny is the living God!

Because the Eye of the Sculptor sees something in each of us, what 'could be,' our lives are open ended! We walk with the promise that God can do something wonderful with our lives if we'll simply let Him!

However, this requires that His skilled hands chip away the unnecessary stone that so often traps and hinders our potential. Such processes are always

difficult and often painful. But the polished result becomes a witness to the universe.

From dust and stone is born a child of the Spirit!

As we search for Scriptural truths about this beloved shepherd king named David while we are here in the desert, let's also search our own hearts and stand ready for the touch of God, our heavenly Sculptor!

CHAPLAIN (MAJ.)
PATRICK BASAL



MAY THOSE FALLEN NEVER BE FORGOTTEN



Staff Sgt. Todd W. Selge
Company A, 5th Battalion,
20th Infantry Regiment
June 22, 1984
September 3, 2009



Sgt. Jordan M. Shay
Company A, 5th Battalion,
20th Infantry Regiment
April 3, 1987
September 3, 2009

3RD STRYKER BRIGADE COMBAT TEAM
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