

USF-I CHRONICLE

Volume 1, Issue 2 February 2010

*Marines Transfer
Authority in Ramadi*

*Love Results from
Combat Injury*

**Iraqi Headquarters
Gets New Home**



Redeploying Soldiers with the 1st Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, file onto a C-17 Globemaster III Jan. 26 at Camp Taji, Iraq. More than 3,000 Soldiers left Camp Taji in a 16-day period, marking the first fixed-wing redeployment operation from Camp Taji. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Michael Camacho)



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Daughters of Iraq doing their part and making a difference



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Soldiers helping Iraqis in need



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U.S. Corps of Engineers bringing good things to light

USF-I CHRONICLE

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**February 2010
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Freedom's Focal Point

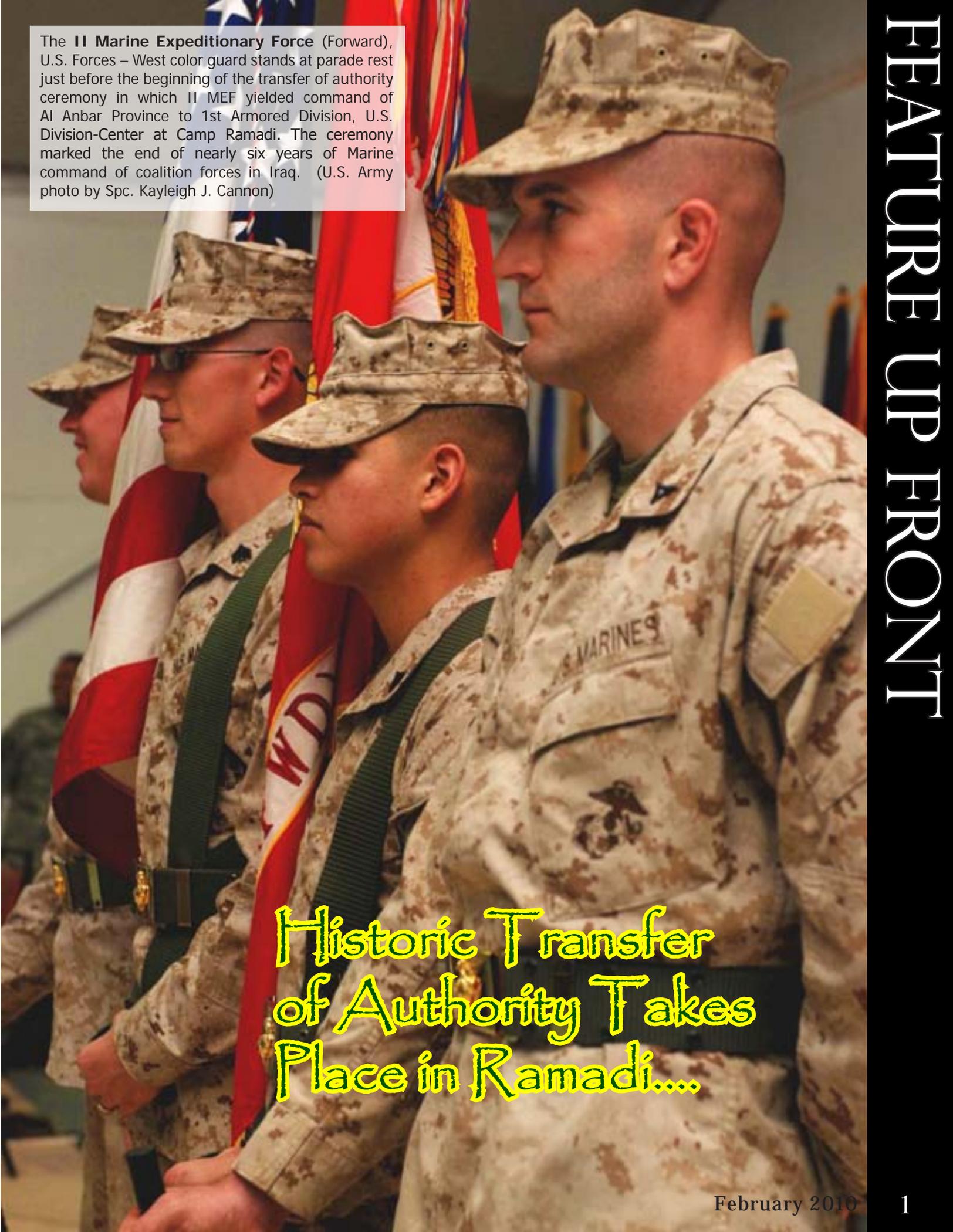
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A photograph of four Marines in camouflage uniforms standing in a line, facing right. They are wearing desert camouflage caps and jackets. The Marine in the foreground has a "MARINES" patch on his chest. Behind them are several flags, including the American flag and a red and white striped flag. The background is slightly blurred, showing other people and flags.

The II Marine Expeditionary Force (Forward), U.S. Forces – West color guard stands at parade rest just before the beginning of the transfer of authority ceremony in which II MEF yielded command of Al Anbar Province to 1st Armored Division, U.S. Division-Center at Camp Ramadi. The ceremony marked the end of nearly six years of Marine command of coalition forces in Iraq. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Kayleigh J. Cannon)

Historic Transfer of Authority Takes Place in Ramadi....

...as II MEF Marines relinquish mission to Soldiers of 1st AD



Story by Spc. Kayleigh Cannon
USD-C Public Affairs

Maj. Gen. Richard T. Tryon (right), commanding general of II Marine Expeditionary Force (Forward), U.S. Forces-West, and his senior noncommissioned officer in charge, Sgt. Maj. Kip Carpenter (center), case the II MEF's colors symbolizing the end of their command responsibility in Al Anbar province the ceremony. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Daniel Schneider)

RAMADI, Iraq – The first major indicator of the responsible drawdown of U.S. forces in Iraq occurred in Ramadi Jan. 23 when II Marine Expeditionary Force (Forward) transferred authority of Iraq's largest province to 1st Armored Division.

Before the ceremony, 1st Armored Division's area of operations, as U.S. Division-Center, encompassed Baghdad and its surrounded communities. The historic transfer of authority ceremony, held at Camp Ramadi, extends the division's reach throughout Al Anbar Province; a vast western landscape spanning more than 53,000 square miles.

The ceremony also marks the closure of a nearly six-year U.S. Marines Corps command presence in Iraq and comes at a pivotal time when U.S. forces are transferring from combat operations to stability operations.

Since its activation as II MEF (Forward) on July 2, 2008, the Marine division worked with the people of Al Anbar and tribal sheiks to help secure peace and stability for the province and all of Iraq. The efforts of II MEF

(Forward) built upon the developments made during two previous Marine Expeditionary Force rotations.

"This is a pivotal moment in the history of Iraq," said Maj. Gen. R.T. Tryon, II MEF (Forward), commanding general of U.S. Force-West.

Marines have been at the heart of almost every major Iraq campaign period since February 2004, from the early battles in an-Najaf and Fallujah, along the western Euphrates River Valley which extends from Al Qa'im to Rawah; and continuing with the pivotal Awakening Movement which many historians and diplomatic experts credit as the turning of the tide against al Qaeda in Iraq.

"Since early 2004, the U.S. Marines serving in Al Anbar have consistently exemplified their motto, Semper Fi – Always Faithful," said Lt. Gen. Charles Jacoby, deputy commanding general for operations and I Corps commanding general, U.S. Forces-Iraq. "They have been especially faithful to the people of Al Anbar; the focal point of their mission in Iraq. Anbaris are resilient

people who have sacrificed dearly but now emerge as stronger people."

As the Marines say their goodbyes to the citizens and tribal leaders of Al Anbar, Iraqi soldiers and police officers in the region will begin working closely with 1st Armored Division, under the continued leadership of 1st Battalion, 82nd Airborne Division (Advise and Assist Brigade) who have been operating there for about six months. Army leaders with 1st Armored Div., said they are eager to build on II MEF's reputation; Tryon expressed confidence in their ability to do so.

"Today's ceremony is certainly an example of continued positive change as we transition and consolidate U.S. forces under the flag of USD-C," said Tryon. "Over the last several years, we have seen a logical and a desired progression in Anbar, moving from combat operations to counter insurgency operations, and now to stability operations."

Tryon praised the efforts of the Iraqis and tribal sheiks in Al Anbar for their courage in standing against tyranny and violence in their streets.

"These things have not been accomplished over the course of the past several years because of what U.S. forces have done alone," said Tryon. "Rather, these achievements are a result of what we have done together in partnership with one another and with the leadership of the Iraqi civil sector.

"We see over and over again that we are at our best when we partner together to achieve our mutual objectives and goals working side-by-side, hand-in-hand," he said, "learning from one another in accomplishing our mutual mission."

The casing of the II MEF colors signified completion of the Marine Corps mission in Iraq. As the Marine color guard marched their colors off the stage, the Army color guard replaced them. Maj. Gen. Terry Wolff, 1st Armored Division, U.S. Division-Center commanding

The color guard of 1st Armored Division, U.S. Division-Center, stands at attention after the division officially assumes responsibility of Al Anbar Province from II Marine Expeditionary Force (Forward), United States Force-West. The transfer of authority ceremony marks the end of nearly six years of Marine command of coalition forces in the province. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Kayleigh J. Cannon)

general, said the accomplishments of the Marines in the region will not be in vain.

"For many of us who have served with you on multiple tours across Iraq, we'll never forget your sacrifices and all that you have given on our behalf," Wolff said.

He emphasized that his division will match Al Anbar's changing environment by assisting the region's tribal sheiks and Iraqi Security Forces to ensure all Iraqis in the region enjoy the security and peace they deserve.

"Today is one of those transition points in the evolution of military operations as the 1st AD and USD-C takes over responsibility for partnering with Iraqi security forces and the provincial government of Al Anbar," said Wolff. "As we move forward, we understand the importance of this year in Iraq, and the USD-C team has dedicated ourselves to that mission and the tasks ahead."



Daughters of Iraq - making their contribution and making a difference

William, an interpreter for Charlie Company, 5th Battalion, 20th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, counts out **Nada Abdul's** monthly payment in Kana-An. Abdul received her the payment, equivalent to \$250, for pulling security at government buildings as one of the "Daughters of Iraq."

Story and photos by
Pfc. Adrian Muehe
USD-N Public Affairs



DIYALA, Iraq – Eleven women lined up to receive their payment for a month's work, another month that saw them perform a vital job in Iraq. They are the "Daughters of Iraq."

Soldiers from Charlie Company, 5th Battalion, 20th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, handed out payments to the "Daughters of Iraq" at the Kana-An town hall, Jan. 7.

The "Daughters of Iraq" are women who augment the security forces at government buildings and checkpoints to provide another layer of safety.

Women are usually not encouraged to work outside of the home. But, this program gives women who have lost family to sectarian violence the chance to make a living and help the people of Iraq. With the Iraqi Police and Army being predominantly male, the "daughters" are called forth to perform female searches.

The "daughters" are doing something that was unheard of here six years ago – empowering women. In a changing culture where women now have rights that once seemed impossible, the example these women set could one day be the standard.

This DoI program is one of the reasons Diyala is a safer place today. It has proven to be an effective measure in preserving the peace in Iraq reducing the stream of recent female

suicide bombers to a low occurrence.

The Soldiers of Company C have been issuing the payments for these women since September 2009, shortly after they arrived in Iraq. Payments are issued during the first week of every month for work done the previous month.

"We started off on a rough note," said 1st Lt. Christopher Maes, the fire support officer for Charlie Company, 5-20 Inf. "When we came in, they hadn't been paid in three months."

With constant visits and good record keeping, the Soldiers of Company C, along with local government officials, were able to get caught up on payments.

The mayor of Kana-An, Mudiyar Medhi, played a significant role in keeping the records accurate.

"This is one of the most squared-away guys I've seen," Maes said, as Mayor Medhi sorted through his extensive records.

The partnership is vitally important to this program. With the Mayor's records matching those of Charlie Company, running this program is a smooth, easy process.

Charlie Company Soldiers also helped with training the DoI in November. They accompanied female Soldiers from the 287th Military Police, to teach them proper searching techniques. The DoI learned, in detail, how to search women and where contraband or SBIEDs may be hidden.

With the pending elections, comes the opportunity for violence. It is vital to ensure these women are fresh and up to speed on what to exactly look for.

"We would like to give them more training before the elections in March, just to give them a refresher course," Maes said.

The funding for these payments come from the Commanders Emergency Response Program, or CERP,



An Iraqi woman signs for her monthly payment in Kana-An, Iraq. As a "Daughter of Iraq," she receives pay for pulling security at government buildings where she performs searches on females.

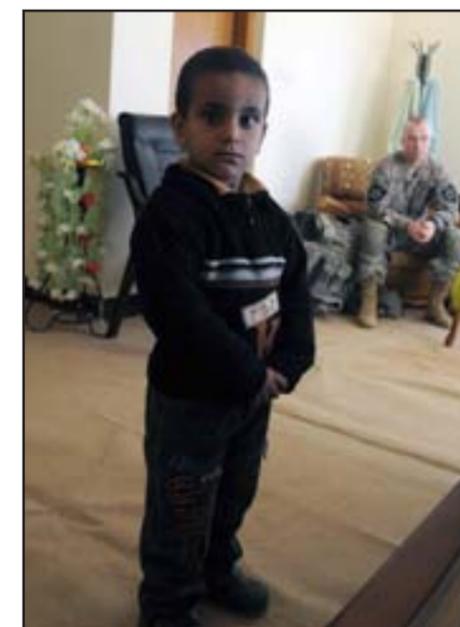
but the Soldiers from 5-20th Inf. would like to make this a permanent fixture in Iraq's society.

Charlie Company Soldiers will be renegotiating and renewing the contracts for these women. Changes, if any are to be made, will not be drastic.

"Some women will have to change the buildings where they pull security," Maes said. "There will be no changes to pay."

With one month's worth of hard work paid for, these brave women will go on doing what they do to make Kana-An a safer place.

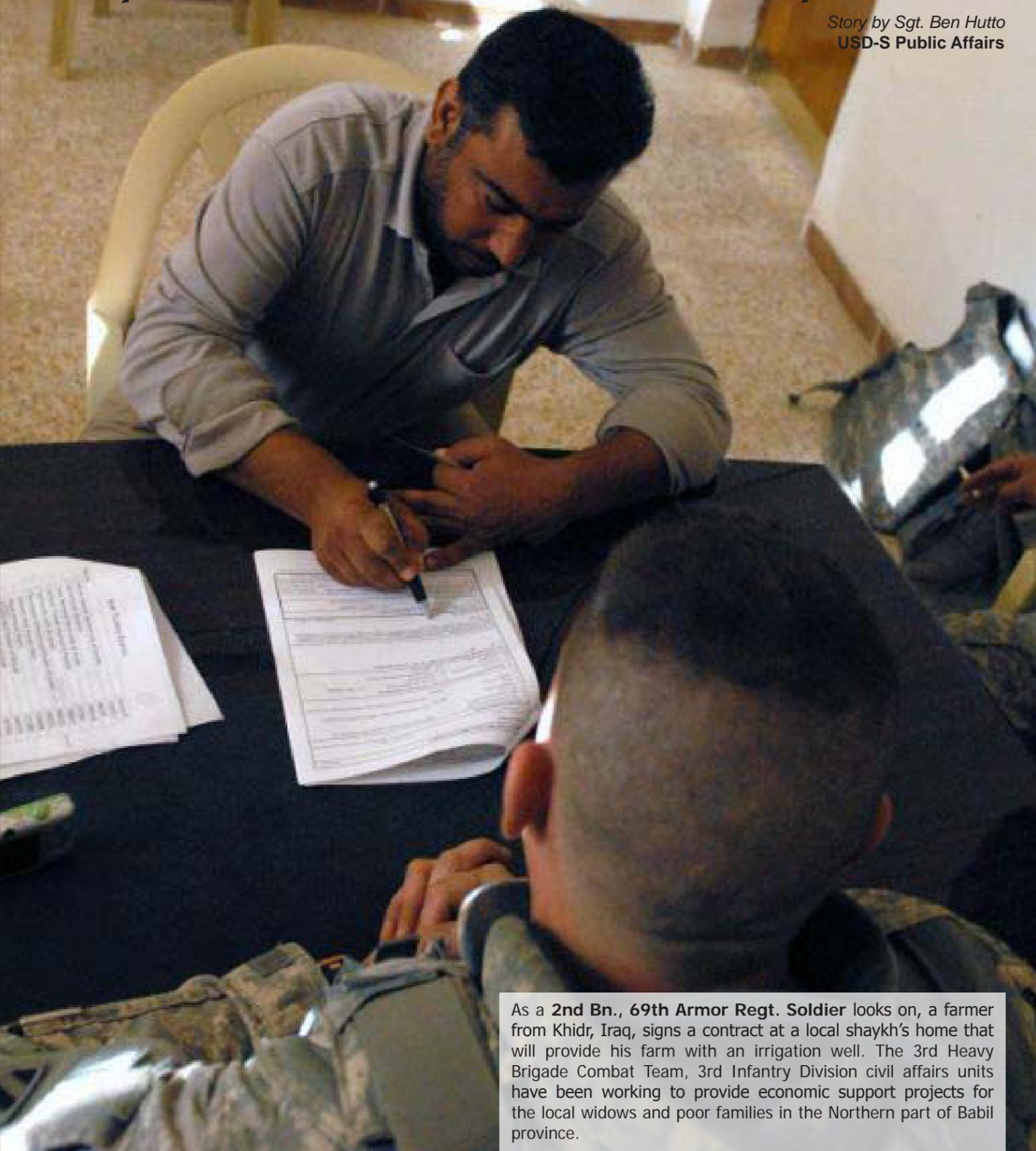
"This program is working really well," Maes said. "Since we've been here, there haven't been any successful suicide attacks in the area."



An Iraqi boy waits in the mayor's office at Kana-An while his mother, a "Daughter of Iraq," receives her monthly payment.

Security Through Stability: Iraqis in Need Given Economic Options

Story by Sgt. Ben Hutto
USD-S Public Affairs



As a 2nd Bn., 69th Armor Regt. Soldier looks on, a farmer from Khidr, Iraq, signs a contract at a local shaykh's home that will provide his farm with an irrigation well. The 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division civil affairs units have been working to provide economic support projects for the local widows and poor families in the Northern part of Babil province.

PATROL BASE HAMIYAH – One-by-one, they filtered into the small room, Jan. 12, filled with hope and carrying sad stories in their hearts.

A 20-year-old widow with five children told of how hard it has been to support her family. Her husband was taken in the middle of the night, three years ago, by “bad men,” she said. His body was found a week later.

A 17-year-old boy came in wearing a tattered pink jacket. He said he was forced to drop out of school to support his brother’s children, explaining in a sad voice that his older brother and father were both killed by terrorists a few years ago.

The list of the needy went on and on that morning.

Life in Khidr, Iraq, a small village in an area once dubbed the “Triangle of Death” by the American media at the beginning of Operation Iraqi Freedom, can be hard. The area still doesn’t have a local police force, although a police station is under construction.

The 8th Iraqi Army Division maintains security as best they can, but a local shaykh says that financial help from the Iraqi government is slow in making its way to the area.

“All farmers in Iraq have a right to go to the government and ask for help,” he said, “but it is never enough for the farmers here, if they get anything at all.”

So far, the Americans have been key to taking up the slack, he said.

“The U.S. forces have been very helpful giving us projects,” he said. “If the Americans don’t help us, who will? I honestly don’t know.”

On Oct. 12, 2009 the Soldiers of Company B, 2nd Battalion, 69th Armor Regiment, working out of Patrol Base Hamiyah, were there to provide much-needed help for the widows and poor of the area.

The battalion brought contracts that will help 70 poor widows and farmers establish turkey farms, beekeeping houses and irrigation wells.

As the applicants signed their names to the contracts, Staff Sgt. Jon Kirkendall, a squad leader in Company B, from Portsmouth, Ohio, said he could finally see a glimmer of hope in many of them.

“These people are exactly who these programs are designed for,” he said. “You can see many of them are desperate for a way to take care of their families. Hopefully, these projects can help them find a way to become self-sufficient.”

According to Sgt. Brian Wilson, a Fort Lewis, Wash.,



Sgt. Brian Wilson, from Fort Lewis, Wash., attached to Company B, 2nd Bn., 69th Armor Regt., congratulates a farmer in Khidr after he signed an economic project contract. The contracts, aimed at helping the needy in northern Babil province, will give struggling families a way to support their families without having to turn to terrorist cells for support.

Soldier attached to Company B, the three programs are perfect for the people they are helping, because they are designed to be self-sufficient enterprises that require very little work on the part of the applicants.

“Honey bees thrive in this area,” said Wilson, a native of Elk Grove, Calif. “It will really just be a matter of the widows waiting for them to make honey and draining it off. The turkey applicants will receive 30 turkeys that will start reproducing a few months after they arrive. With the feed we will provide for the birds, all the applicants really have to do is feed their animals and wait.”

While the cost of starting these projects isn’t that high, Wilson said, the benefit of them could potentially be enormous.

“As long as the applicants are allowed to do what the program is designed for, I think they can all be self-sufficient,” he said. “Obviously, not all 70 applicants will be successful, but even if ten make it, it will have been worthwhile.”

Those ten may not have had much hope outside for the program, Wilson said.

“These programs are reaching a segment of Iraq that, traditionally, has had very few opportunities to support themselves and their families,” he said.

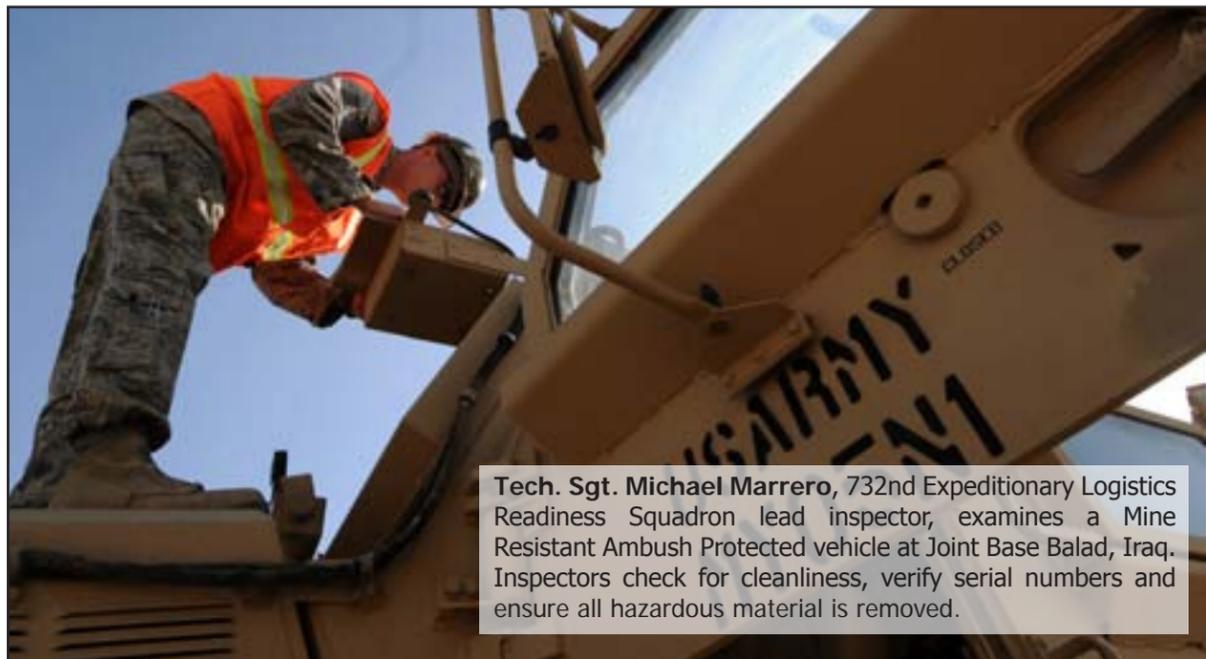
As the applicants filed out of the small room, Wilson and Kirkendall gave each a handshake and wished them luck. Wilson told every applicant that they would be contacted around the first of next month to begin the delivery of their animals and equipment.

“It feels good to help folks,” said Kirkendall. “You just hope that they all find a way to make it last and take care of their families.”

Redistribution team has integral role in drawdown order



Tech. Sgt. Michael Marrero, 732nd Expeditionary Logistics Readiness Squadron lead inspector, verifies the serial number on a Defense Advanced Global Position System Receiver found in a vehicle during an inspection at Joint Base Balad, Iraq.



Tech. Sgt. Michael Marrero, 732nd Expeditionary Logistics Readiness Squadron lead inspector, examines a Mine Resistant Ambush Protected vehicle at Joint Base Balad, Iraq. Inspectors check for cleanliness, verify serial numbers and ensure all hazardous material is removed.

Story by Airman 1st Class Allison M. Boehm
Photos by Airman 1st Class Brittany Y. Bateman
332nd AEW Public Affairs

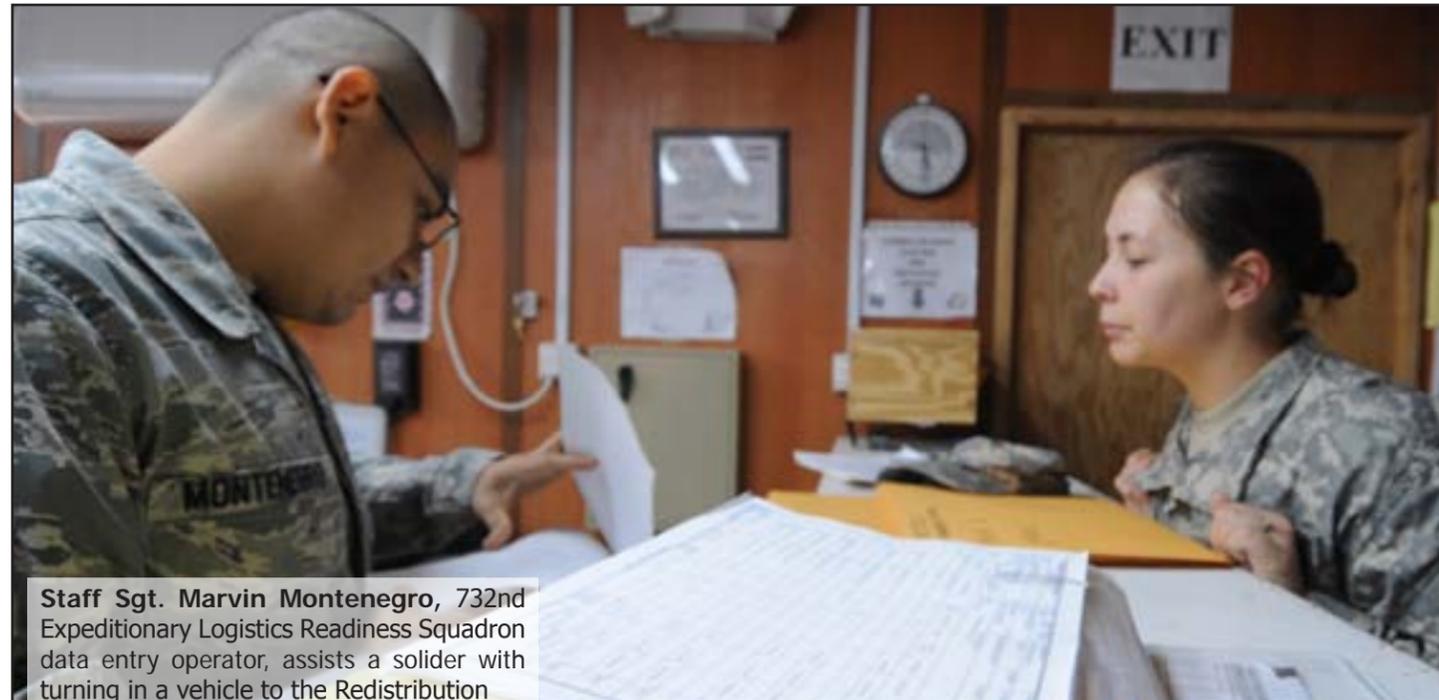
JOINT BASE BALAD, Iraq -- In less than a year, the United States military is scheduled to execute the responsible drawdown of nearly 150,000 troops from Iraq. The troop exodus requires the consignment of cargo, vehicles, supplies and other war-fighting equipment used in deployed locations.

Joint Base Balad's redistribution property assistance team is one of seven in Iraq. They relieve demobilizing units in the local area of excess theater-provided equipment. In doing so, the RPAT reestablishes accountability, enables asset visibility of the received equipment and allocates transportation methods for the flagged provisions.

"We take possession of the equipment that the unit will not be returning with, find disposition for that equipment and ship it to where it is supposed to be going as safely and quickly as possible," said Tech. Sgt. Michael Marrero, 732nd Expeditionary Logistics Readiness Squadron lead inspector and RPAT yard boss.

As U.S. servicemembers prepare to turn over the country of Iraq to its citizens, the equipment that is turned in to the RPAT yard must be shipped out. The yard, which has been in operation for the past three years, has shipped thousands of pieces of equipment to many different locations.

"This is a vital stop for the



Staff Sgt. Marvin Montenegro, 732nd Expeditionary Logistics Readiness Squadron data entry operator, assists a soldier with turning in a vehicle to the Redistribution Property Assistance Team at Joint Base Balad, Iraq.

forward movement of all assets into Afghanistan," said Marrero. "We help ensure the warfighter gets these assets as soon as possible, and if we can avoid sending this equipment on lengthy trips back to the United States then we would like to do so."

Still, Airmen and Soldiers find that some equipment must be sent to depots in the United States for repair before being sent to the front line. Inspectors check for cleanliness while ensuring vehicles meet the standards required for its set destination, verify serial numbers and ensure all hazardous material is removed.

"The inspectors help ensure that the vehicles are fully mission-capable and good to go for reassignment to the OEF," said Staff Sgt. Marvin Montenegro, 732nd ELRS data entry technician. "The criteria we check for here helps ensure future mission success."

JBB's RPAT yard, which is open 24 hours a day, functions as a main supplier of war-fighting equipment to OEF, but its mission has helped ensure the presidential mandate of a responsible drawdown of forces from Iraq.



Spc. Edward Martinez, 249th Quartermaster Company Redistribution Property Assistance Team inspector, bands a tri-wall package to be shipped back to the United States at Joint Base Balad, Iraq. (U.S. Air Force photo by Senior Airman Brittany Y. Bateman)

Lt. Gen. Kenneth Hunzeker (left), deputy commanding general, United States Forces-Iraq, talks to Capt. Sam Brown about the injuries and thanked him and his wife, Capt. Amy Brown (right), for their service and their sacrifice.



Life-Altering Injury Becomes Unique Combat Zone Love Story

Story and photos by Sgt. Lindsey Bradford
USF-I Public Affairs

accident. He was evacuated and once in the United States, was taken to Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio; BAMC is a level I trauma center and home to the Army Burn Center.

The doctors at the hospital began treating Brown from the moment he arrived. He began a series of surgeries to repair his charred flesh using skin grafts from other areas of his body. He said although 30 percent of his body was actually burned, about 85 percent of his body has been affected because they used skin from areas that were not burned.

"I've had 15 surgeries so far and will have another one to gain more range of motion in my hand," Brown said. "My recovery may be up to two years away."

During his treatment, Brown was assigned a dietician since burn victims tend to have fluctuating weight gain after their injuries.

Enter former 1st Lt. Amy Larsen. In November 2008, she began working with Brown during his recovery.

When he was well enough to take convalescent leave, she knew it would be a problem for him to carry a multitude of supplements with him. She arranged to have them shipped to him, and called every week to make sure they arrived.

"When she'd call, I would try to make small talk with her but she was all business," Brown said.

Although both admit they had "crushes" on each other, developing any sort of relationship seemed to be at a standstill. It wasn't until Brown returned for a surgery that he talked to another physician's assistant about stopping by to say hello to her. Brown was in luck because that particular PA worked in the same office.

As a friendship developed, so did the potential for a more intimate relationship, which wasn't too far behind.

"Sam asked me to a rodeo for our first date. I had to make sure it was okay professionally to do that," she said. "We ended up going and I had a great time."

Larsen turned over Brown's care to another dietician and the two continued their relationship.



Capt. Sam Brown stands with his wife, Capt. Amy Brown, Jan. 1 inside Camp Victory's Al Faw Palace. He suffered third-degree burns to 30 percent of his body after being struck by an improvised explosive device in Kandahar, Afghanistan, in September 2008.

Brown added that he wouldn't suggest getting married so fast unless you know it is true.

A few months following the wedding, Amy was called on to deploy to Contingency Operating Base Speicher to serve as a dietician for most of the northern United States bases in Iraq. She left San Antonio in October, but was reunited with her husband on Dec. 28 thanks to Operation Proper Exit, a program designed to help bring closure to service members seriously injured while deployed.

Even though he was injured in Afghanistan, Brown participated in the program because he said he wanted the chance to talk to troops about his experiences. He is also planning to serve as a military mentor when Operation Proper Exit is able to return wounded warriors to Afghanistan.

"I don't think I'll be putting my kit on and running around with Soldiers like I was, but I want to get back and feel productive. I want to help others and do something positive," he said.

Brown said he has come to accept that fact that the hopes he once had for his career may not be possible. However, the dream to settle down with a beautiful wife is one he's already reached.

Together they will build new dreams of their own.

When Capt. Sam Brown was injured in Afghanistan, he saw everything he had planned for his future disappear. Little did he know that what he went through, in fact, helped him discover one part of his life he thought he would never find.

"I had plans for my career and decided a few years after that I would find a beautiful women and settle down and start a family," Brown said. "I thought that was all gone after I got injured."

In September 2008, Brown was conducting route security in Kandahar, Afghanistan. He and his Soldiers began receiving indirect fire, which quickly changed to direct fire, coming at them from different directions. As he went to help the men in the M1151 humvees in front of him, Brown entered an enemy engagement area. It was there that he was struck by an improvised explosive device.

"It was crazy for about the next 15 or 20 minutes. You know, the 1151 is on fire, I'm on fire," he said.

Brown suffered third-degree burns to 30 percent of his body — mostly places his individual body armor did not cover — and lost his left index finger in the



lot about it. We knew God would be the center of our relationship and that was the most important thing," she said.



U.S. Navy Mass Communications Chief Michael Heckman, from Bristow, Va., assigned to Joint Combat Camera Iraq, entertains a group of young Iraqi girls in Yangeshia, Iraq. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Canaan Radcliffe)



The Lion of Kirkuk, portrayed by U.S. Army Spc. Brandon Smith, Mortar Platoon, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, engages laughing children as their families look on during a humanitarian aide drop at the Emergency Response Unit compound in Kirkuk, Iraq. Soldiers from 1-30 IR and members of the Iraqi Emergency Response Unit teamed up to distribute food and supplies to 250 families from Adallah, one of the poorest villages in the province of Kirkuk. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Matthew D. Leistikow)

Below: **U.S. Soldiers** attached to 1-10 Field Artillery Battalion, and **Iraqi Army Soldiers** joke around at a ceremony to present the findings of a Wasit Province Public Works Assessment in Kut, Iraq. The assessment, conducted over a year by members of the University of Baghdad, is the first completed in Iraq to this extent and addresses many issues facing the Wasit province. (U.S. Army photo by Staff Sgt. Brien Vorhees)



A Peshmerga and U.S. Soldier pull another Soldier to safety, during medical rescue training on Forward Operating Base Marez, near Mosul, Iraq. (U.S. Army photo by Pfc. Ali Hargis)

Lt. Col. Vincent Barnhart, surgeon of U.S. Division—Center, meets with **Col. Amir**, the commander of Al-Muthana Military Hospital, to donate medical journals and texts to the hospital after a recent conference. The donation has effectively doubled the size of Al-Muthana Military Hospital's medical library. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Daniel Schneider)





U.S. Navy Mass Communications Chief Michael Heckman, from Reading, Penn., of Joint Combat Camera Iraq, reaches up high to record Iraqi army soldiers from the 4th Battalion, 16th Iraqi army Brigade, 4th Iraqi army Division, during an operator level maintenance class on a HMMWV in the compound of Tuz Qada, Iraq. The Iraqi soldiers are instructed by U.S. Soldiers assigned to Alpha Company, 4-1 Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry division, on how to perform operator level maintenance on HMMWVs. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Canaan Radcliffe)

Below: **U.S. Army 1st Sgt. Kevin Donegan**, assigned to 2nd Battalion, 3rd Field Artillery Regiment, 1st Brigade, 1st Armor Division, struggles with a member of **3rd Battalion, 49th Iraqi Army**, in an arm wrestling match during halftime of a friendly soccer game in Dibbis, Iraq. The two units played a soccer game to share an activity that brought both units together in a unique setting to build trust needed to train together for the upcoming elections. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Matthew D. Leistikow)



A member of the **Iraqi Army Explosive Ordnance Disposal team** demonstrates the EOD gear during a parade honoring the Iraqi Army near Joint Security Station Sparrowhawk, Iraq. The parade was held to commemorate the Iraqi Army's 88th anniversary. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Gavriel Bar-Tzur)



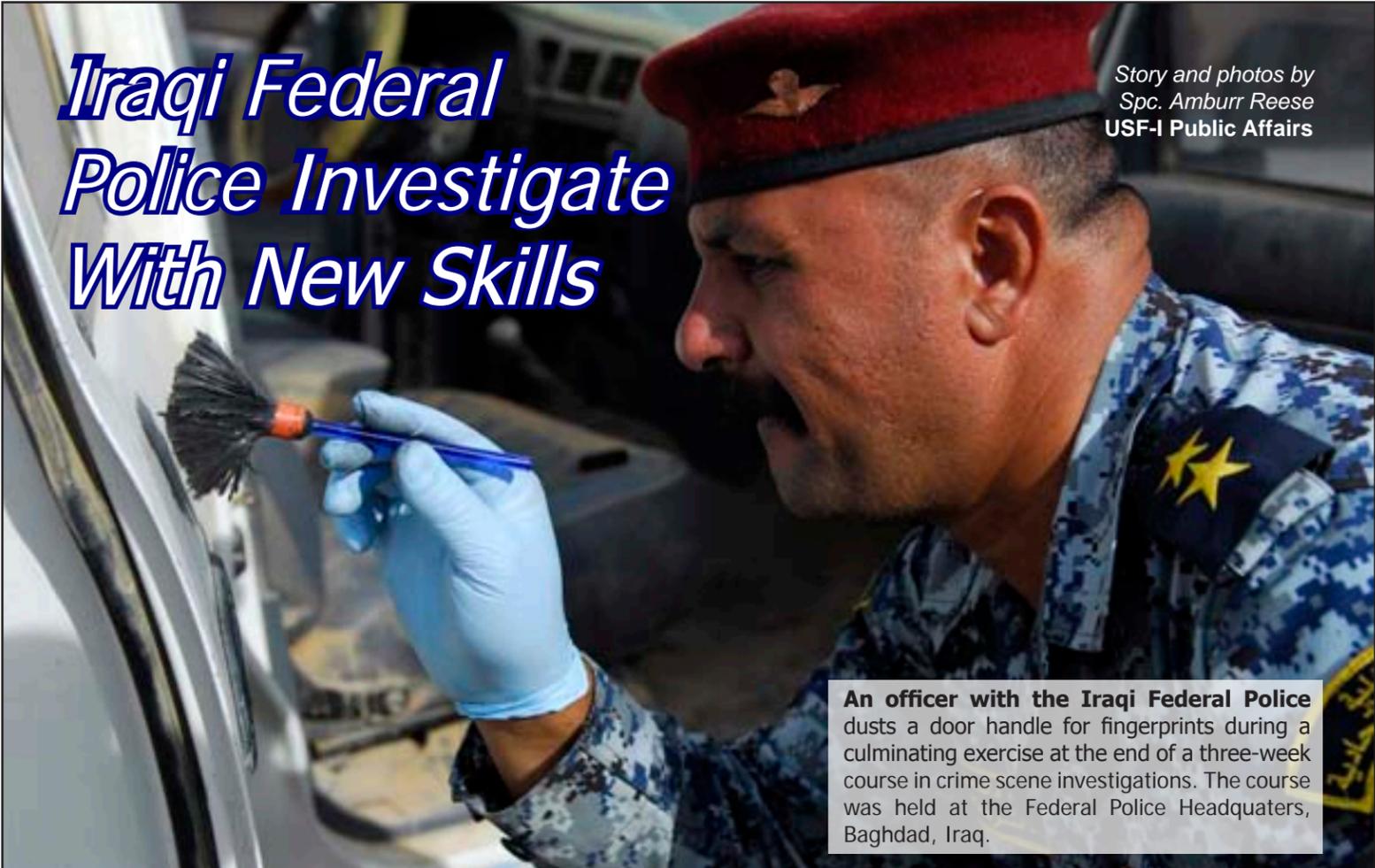
Spc. Christy Willbanks, a West Plains, Mo., native, assigned to 45th Military Intelligence Company, 2nd Battalion, 1st Cavalry Squadron, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, sports the commemorative T-shirt she earned for participating in the Martin Luther King Jr., 10k Holiday Run conducted on the anniversary of King's birthday at Camp Liberty. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. 1st Class Kristina Scott)

Local children play in front of the camera during a visit from U.S. Army Soldiers in Al Batha, Dhi Qar, Iraq. Soldiers from the 16th Psychological Operations Battalion were in the village to to hand out candy and soccer balls to local children. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Ernest E. Sivia III)



Iraqi Federal Police Investigate With New Skills

Story and photos by
Spc. Amburr Reese
USF-I Public Affairs



An officer with the Iraqi Federal Police dusts a door handle for fingerprints during a culminating exercise at the end of a three-week course in crime scene investigations. The course was held at the Federal Police Headquarters, Baghdad, Iraq.

In an effort to enhance the Iraqi Federal Police's investigative abilities, the 364th Civil Affairs Brigade led a three-week training course on crime scene investigation in January at the Iraqi Federal Police headquarters in Baghdad.

The brigade began planning after being asked to hold the class by the Federal Police Transition Team and senior ranking officials of the Iraq Federal Police.

"We gathered a uniquely qualified team with which to train the Federal Police in a crime scene management course," said Col. Jon E. Lopey, Mt. Shasta, Calif., 364th Civil Affairs Brigade deputy commander.

After much coordination, the civil law enforcement experts from the brigade, members of Task Force Troy, and participants from the U.S. Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms Bureau, began the investigative training in late December 2009.

"It started with basically an Army major and a Federal Police lieutenant," said 1st Sgt. William H. Smith, Vancouver, Wash., Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 364th Civil Affairs Brigade. "It worked from there, going all the way up to the generals."

Partnership played a large part in planning for the courses.

"Every step of the way we have been working with the Iraqis to determine exactly what they want in the classes," Smith said.

The main concentration of the three-week training

program was protecting a crime scene, identifying evidence at a crime scene, collecting evidence and marking it properly and fingerprint training.

"Almost every course that we conducted involved hands-on skills type of validation," Lopey said. "Most of it was not classroom; most of it was hands-on practice, which reinforces the teaching points."

Lopey said this training was unique because it was not just a training effort, it was also a train-the-trainer effort.

"Out of the 32 students, 12 were selected as trainers," he said. "So we are training trainers and mentors to go out there and have a positive impact on the [Iraqi] Federal Police."

Some of the classes covered during the three-week course were instructor training, roles and responsibilities in crime scene investigation, robbery and arson investigations, CSI scene protection and searching techniques. The students also went over vehicle searching, criminal law, evidence handling, scene documentation, post-blast investigation, fingerprinting and death investigation.

The students took a day trip to Victory Base Complex where they toured a U.S. forensics lab.

"We wanted them [the students] to make a connection between actually gathering the evidence and why it is important from a forensics analysis stand point to analyze that evidence," said Lopey.

Lopey said the course will make the collection of crime scene evidence more efficient among the Iraqi Federal Police.

"I think this course is huge," Smith said. "If they don't understand how to process that crime scene, they are just going to destroy a lot of their evidence."

Smith went on to add there is a process to everything and knowing that process is one of the first steps, especially for law enforcement.

After three weeks of crime scene investigative training, about 120 hours, the students were put to the test during a culminating exercise.

The students provided security, sought suspects and witnesses, preserved the crime scene and identified virtually all of the evidence that had been scattered. They took fingerprints, gathered the evidence and packaged it.

"They had a plan, they used their plan and then when we threw a twist in the scenario they reacted, adapted. They came up with a new plan," Smith said.

They students also recovered trace evidence.

"We had put blood droplets on the floor and they collected cigarette butts," Lopey said. "They basically took every evidentiary piece that we placed out before them to challenge them."

At the end of the class the students compiled a comprehensive report listing all of the information collected during the training exercise.

Lopey said that what he had found during the evaluation was very impressive.

"Not only were they enthusiastic, they aggressively pursued all of the tasks we had asked them to do in the last three weeks and they put it together into one exercises," Lopey

A member of the Iraqi Federal Police collects evidence during a culminating exercise at the end of a three-week training course in crime scene investigation. The training focused on protecting a crime scene, identifying and collecting evidence and fingerprinting.

said. "We were very pleased with the progress made by our students and we are proud of them all."

Lopey expressed his appreciation of the effort not only from a civil affairs standpoint, but also the opportunity to work with the Iraqi Federal Police.

"It was a great team effort and quite frankly I believe it is the way things should be done and I am very happy with the results," he said.

A member of the Iraqi Federal Police holds a suspect during a culminating exercise at the Iraqi Federal Police Headquarters in Baghdad, Iraq.



Corps of Engineers brings good things to light

Story by Scott Harris
USACE Gulf Region District



Solar powered street lights recently installed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers illuminate what was once a dark and dangerous neighborhood in Fallujah. (Courtesy photo by Gulf Region District)

FALLUJAH, Iraq - More than 35 kilometers of roadway in Fallujah and surrounding communities are now fully lighted with 1,200 solar-powered street lights thanks to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Gulf Region District.

The third and final phase of the project was completed recently by project engineers at the Al-Anbar Resident Office based in Ramadi.

"The administration of this project is an excellent example of USACE's commitment to building Iraq's technical capacity," said Maj. Joseph Geary, officer in charge of the Al-Anbar Resident Office.

Iraqi engineers employed by Gulf Region District were the key to successful liaisoning with local electrical department representatives and city leaders, Geary said.

The project engineer was Nasir Elias, an Iraqi civil engineer who has worked with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for more than three years. He was assisted by Iraqi Quality Assurance representatives Mohammed Kasim Abbas and Hussein Al-Jaboree.

Solar power is widely recognized as a method for reducing the reliance on carbon-based energy generation and the resulting greenhouse gasses held responsible for global climate change. Solar power in Iraq, however, has a more palpable benefit. Iraq's degraded power distribution infrastructure causes frequent and unexpected outages. Unlike Iraq's electrical power grid, the sun is a near constant.

Additionally, in a country with limited power-generation capabilities, solar lights allow energy

to be redistributed to areas of critical need. In an area where hard-wired lights may only operate for a couple of hours, a solar-powered light will provide continuous illumination through the night.

The final phase of the project was completed Dec. 28 at a cost of \$2.9 million and was funded by Multinational Forces West - Iraq.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Iraq has completed thousands of reconstruction projects in partnership with the U.S. government and the government of Iraq. Since 2004, USACE has completed 5,257 projects throughout Iraq, valued at more than \$9.1 billion, and has more than 350 projects ongoing. The overall reconstruction effort in Iraq currently provides jobs for more than 20,000 Iraqis.

Iraqi Operations Centers Now Under One Roof

Story and photo by
Staff Sgt. Luke Koladish
USF-I Public Affairs

Iraq's Minister of Defense Abdul Qadir visited Camp Victory, Jan. 3, to join Lt. Gen. Charles Jacoby, U.S. Forces - Iraq deputy commander for operations and I Corps commanding general, and the commander of Iraqi Ground Forces Command, Lt. Gen. Ali Ghaidan Majid, to celebrate the new IGFC Headquarters facility.

"With the continued support of the U. S. we were able to establish command and control with different technologies and communications throughout the command to coordinate with the ministries, the Army, Air Force and Navy," Qadir said.

Qadir cut the ribbon that stretched across the entrance to the four operational centers composing the IGFC headquarters. The guest made their way first to the IGFC joint operations center for both generals and the minister to address U.S. troops, Iraqi military officers and reporters.

"Since May of 2005 until now, we have achieved significantly more than what we had achieved in the past, and we are proud of this," the minister told those present.

The IGFC joint operations center, staffed entirely by Iraqi officers since, Jan. 1, has direct or indirect

command and control of 10 Iraqi army divisions.

Jacoby said he knew before deploying that in order for the U.S. to be successful in their mission they had to join closely with their Iraqi brothers in the IGFC to form lasting relationships.

"This beautiful facility is a physical example of the hard work we have done together to build those relationships and from that partnership," he said.

Following their remarks, the senior leaders were given a tour of the Combined Intelligence Center and the Senior Work Group Center, ending with a briefing in the Combined Partnership Operations Center.

The result of a shared vision between Jacoby and Ali, the CPOC made the move to the new facility to accommodate the growing staff and partnership between U.S. and Iraqi forces.

"It shows that through this partnership with the IGFC and Corps, the staff has grown as an entity. It reflects the growth of the partnership concept, the requirements of IGFC, and the growth to support elements across the battlefield," said Col. Kelly C. Heatherman, the U. S. officer in charge of the CPOC.

Heatherman called the CPOC the pivot point between with the corps and IGFC to conduct intelligence gathering and sustainment for both forces across the battlefield.

"We are proud on this special day that all the operations centers are operating in one place under one control and command for [Iraqi army] divisions throughout Iraq," Majid said.

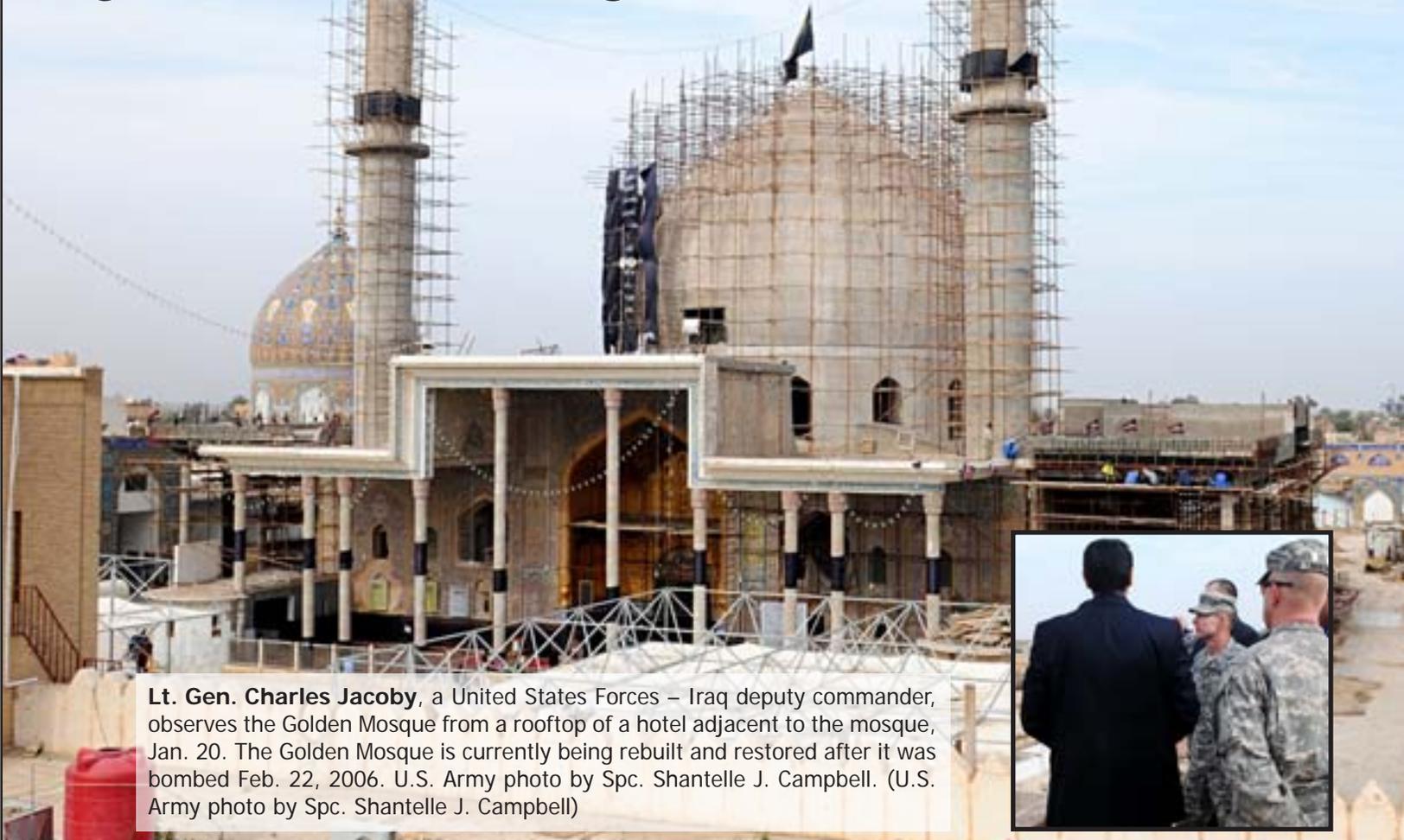
The Iraqi minister of defense charged the IGFC, with the support of U. S. forces, to remain vigilant, to continue to work hard to protect the people of Iraq and provide a safe environment for the upcoming elections.

Iraq's Minister of Defense Abdul Qadir joins Lt. Gen. Charles Jacoby, U.S. Forces - Iraq deputy commander for operations and Lt. Gen. Ali Ghaidan Majid, commander of Iraqi Ground Forces Command, on a tour of the new IGFC Headquarters during the grand opening at Camp Victory.



Restoration of Mosque symbolizes change

Story and photos by
Spc. Shantelle Campbell
USD-N Public Affairs



Lt. Gen. Charles Jacoby, a United States Forces – Iraq deputy commander, observes the Golden Mosque from a rooftop of a hotel adjacent to the mosque, Jan. 20. The Golden Mosque is currently being rebuilt and restored after it was bombed Feb. 22, 2006. U.S. Army photo by Spc. Shantelle J. Campbell. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Shantelle J. Campbell)

SAMARRA, Iraq – During a recent visit to the ancient city of Samarra, Lt. Gen. Charles Jacoby, the United States Corps –Iraq commander, walked along the city’s streets with the 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division commander, Col. Henry A. Arnold, III and the 1st Battalion, 28th Infantry Regiment commander, Lt. Col. Eric Timmerman.

As they made their way to the rooftop of a hotel across from the Golden Mosque, which is currently being rebuilt and restored to its original form, one couldn’t help but notice the evident change that has taken place in a city that was nearly destroyed by war.

On Feb. 22, 2006, the Al-Askari Mosque, or the Golden Mosque was bombed, setting off a chain of sectarian violence in the city. Then, June 13, 2007, terrorists attacked the mosque again, destroying two minarets and the clock tower. Despite the attacks on this prominent landmark and sacred mosque, the citizens of Samarra have made significant progress to restore peace.

In the past three years, violence has significantly decreased as Iraqi Security Forces have taken the lead to provide security of the city. According to Col. Arnold during a recent interview with the New York Times,

the improvements that have been made in the city are a result of the citizens rejecting terrorists and the professionalism of the Iraqi Security Forces.

There is a feeling of peace and security now, as markets are open and children are playing in the streets.

“The citizens are calling in reports,” he said during the interview. “The people have turned against violent extremists.

“I walk around in ACU’s and a soft cap; no body armor, no helmet. I walk to the mosque, something I would not have been able to do in 2006.”

There are future plans being made for Samarra like removing the protective t-walls surrounding the mosque; installing a decorative gate that can be opened and closed to pedestrians as security dictates; and installing security cameras.

Along the streets, Iraqi civilians stood outside their shops or paused long enough to gesture or say “hello” to the commanders as they moved toward their destination. After reaching the rooftop of the hotel, the group walked to the side of the roof that faced the ancient mosque which was still a sight to see even without the 72,000 golden plates that once adorned its dome.

IN MEMORIAM

NAMES OF SERVICEMEMBERS WHO DIED BETWEEN JANUARY 1 AND
JANUARY 31, 2010 WHILE SERVING IN OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM

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

JOHN 15:13

January 1

Spc. Brushaun X. Anderson, 20

January 6

Spc. David A. Croft Jr., 22

Pfc. Michael R. Jarrett, 20

January 20

Pfc. Gifford E. Hurt, 19

January 28

Pfc. Scott G. Barnett, 24

Mohamad Ibraheem, an engineer for National Chemical Plastic Industry Company, takes Lt. Col. **Michael Davey**, of Peru, N.Y., the deputy commander of 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, on a tour of the facility, showing the operations and improvements being made in the water treatment facility. The facility project is 78-percent complete and is scheduled to be operational soon. (U.S. Army photo by Georges Aboumrad)

