

READY FIRST REPORT

READY FIRST



March 2010

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COL. LARRY SWIFT

- READY FIRST COMBAT TEAM COMMANDER -



Ready First Soldiers,

I would like to start off by saying how proud I am of every Soldier, in the Ready First Combat Team and their partners in the Kirkuk Iraqi Security Forces, for the dedication and professionalism each of you showed during the Iraqi elections.

Since arriving we have put in countless hours with our partners, to ensure a safe and secure election. Let me be the one to tell you Ready First, we met and exceeded our goal.

There were no violent attacks in our Area of Operation during the elections and the ISF came together as one to protect Kirkuk.

All of this is attributed to you, Ready First.

You're dedication is the reason the violent extremists that attempt to threaten the area were not able to do so.

Now is not the time to be complacent, Ready First.

We are only partially through the deployment and conducting operations in a safe manner is what will bring every one of us home our families.

Ready First!

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CP 13, Forward Operating Base Warrior, Kirkuk, Iraq



Specialist Zach Bogart of the 1st Battalion, 36th Infantry Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division out of Fort Bliss, Texas, starts his day with an incoming brief of all the significant activities (SigAct) that occurred within the JSS India's Area of Operation (AO) on the shift before.

Command Post of the Future

U.S. Army Story and Photos by Sgt. Steven Livingston
1st Brigade, 1st Armored Division Public Affairs

JOINT SECURITY SITE INDIA, MOSUL, Iraq

Specialist Zach Bogart of the 1st Battalion, 36th Infantry Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division out of Fort Bliss, Texas, starts his day with an incoming brief of all the significant activities (SigAct) that occurred within the JSS India's Area of Operation (AO) on the shift before. Spc. Bogart, from Mountain Home Arkansas, is only one of the personnel who operate the newly developed Command Post of the Future (CPOF) software.

According to us.army.mil the CPOF received the 2009 Network Centric Warfare Award for Outstanding U.S. Government programs.

The website states that the software enables the user to see and interact with another's work space, tools, data, and maps as if they were interacting with their own workspace.

"The ability to have immediate situational awareness of activities occurring in the battle space, regardless of geographic location, is a very powerful tool," said Lt. Col. Richard Hornstein, Product Manager for Tactical Battle Command.

One of the most important task is keeping up with the units moving through the AO, said Spc. Bogart. With near real-time awareness of SigActs, units in the vicinity can either move in to provide support or they can steer away to avoid danger, Lt. Col. Hornstein said.

"The thing I like most about my job is the ability to see the big picture", said Spc. Bogart.

I record and track all SigActs such as small arms fire and Improvised Explosive devices throughout the entire AO, said Spc. Bogart. I then relay that information to the units that are affected by the SigAct.

Specialist Bogart stated that he feels like he is making a direct contribution to U.S. efforts in Iraq. His job satisfaction led to his decision to re-enlist this year.

"As a CPOF operator, essentially you are going to save lives, because you are a resource manager," said 1st Lt. Sean Calleja, a CPOF operator from the 3/17th Field Artillery, Fort Lewis, Wash. "You are managing all of the resources from Brigade and all of the things that you need to request, such as close air support."



Soldiers with Alpha Company, 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division out of Fort Stewart, Ga. use their scopes to check a hillside for suspicious activity during a patrol with the Combined Security Force north of Kirkuk, March 12, 2010.



A Soldier with Alpha Co., 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division out of Fort Stewart, Ga. also known as the 'Gators' shows soldiers of the combined Security Forces how to engage a target while standing, at the range near Kirkuk, Iraq, Jan. 27.

BROTHERHOOD OF THE 'GOLDEN LIONS'

U.S. Army Story and Photos by Pfc. Jessica R. Luhrs
1st Brigade, 1st Armored Division Public Affairs

FORWARD OPERATING BASE WARRIOR, KIRKUK, Iraq

On an Iraqi training compound just off of Forward Operating Base Warrior, Kirkuk, Iraq history is in the making and a brotherhood is being formed between Task Force Marne Soldiers and their counterparts of the Kirkuk Combined Security Force who together call themselves the 'Golden Lions.'

"I feel like I am a part of history because I am a Soldier with the CSF," said Spc. Brett Mango, a native of Midlothian, Ill. and dismount team leader with Red Platoon, Alpha Company, 1st Battalion, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division out of Fort Stewart, Ga.

Spc. Mango explained that, the CSF, consisting of Iraqi army and police, Pesh Murga and Task Force Marne Soldiers, is a fairly new security force and one that many people had doubts about.

"There were many people who said it would be impossible to bring the four very different cultures together but we have done it," he continued. "We have taken four different entities and made them one."

This unity is easily seen by the black sleeve embroidered with a golden lion that all of the soldiers wear on their right arm and the 3rd ID patch that many of the Iraqi soldiers wear on their left.

"Their culture is all about giving," said Spc. Mango.

"So when they presented us with their insignia to wear we were very honored and knew we were truly being accepted into their culture," he said.

These soldiers also share more than the same insignia they also share a lot of time together.

"We are on patrol, sweat, train, sleep and eat together," he said. "Something most Soldiers will never have the opportunity to do."

It is obvious that these Task Force Marne Soldiers have not only have broken barriers between the Iraqi cultures, but also between the U.S. Soldiers and Iraqi soldiers.



A Kirkuk Combined Security Force soldier wears a 3rd Infantry Division Patch along with his 'Golden Lion' insignia that he received from his fellow brother in arms, a Soldier with 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade, 3rd ID out of Fort Stewart, Ga. during a patrol North of Kirkuk, Iraq, March 12, 2010.



Soldiers, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division out of Fort Bliss, Texas, were the first to participate in a trail program that focuses on teaching the Soldiers self-defense so they can better defend themselves against an attacker.

Saving lives: with flashlights

Photos and Article by Pfc. Jessica Luhrs

1st "Ready First" Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division Public Affairs

FORWARD OPERATING BASE WARRIOR, KIRKUK, Iraq

A group of petite female Soldiers laugh as their instructors, 4 much larger non-commissioned officers wince in pain from self-defense techniques they just taught these female Soldiers that could ultimately save their lives.

These Soldiers, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division out of Fort Bliss, Texas, were the first to participate in a trail program that focuses on teaching the Soldiers self-defense so they can better defend themselves against an attacker, according to First Sgt. John Lucas, first sergeant of HHC, of the Ready First Combat Team.

This program is a proactive attempt by the leadership of the Ready First Combat Team to teach their Soldiers to protect themselves if attacked, when they are unarmed.

During the class a very curious crowd of male and female Soldiers gathered around to observe these females learning to immobilize their attacker so that they can have enough time to get away, the importance of preserving evidence and ways to prevent an attack from happening, according to First Sgt. Lucas.

The brigade's sexual assault response coordinator had some advice for the Soldiers to prevent an attack.

"You must show confidence in yourself at all times," said Sgt. 1st Class Gerald Meineke, the SARC. "Walk with your head high and you will not be looked at as a victim."

The junior-enlisted Soldiers that participated in the program were also given a very lethal weapon that would scare off any attacker, according the First Sgt. Lucas.

This weapon was a flashlight and it is the new best friend of the Soldiers participating in the class. With this the Soldiers can blind, hit and gather evidence, such as DNA or even identification, from their attacker.

Overall the instructors said they were very impressed with the Soldiers and that they were very quickly picking up on moves that gives them an advantage over an attacker that can be much larger

than them.

The plan for this class is for it to be held more regularly and have it be mandatory for all females of the Ready First Combat Team, to show that sexual assault has no place at Forward Operating Base Warrior, Kirkuk, Iraq.

Until the classes are scheduled the instructors have urged their students to go out and teach other Soldiers what they had learned and to also practice the techniques often so they do not lose the skill. For more information on the classes, advice for preventing an attack or to report an attack Soldiers on FOB Warrior can call Sgt. 1st Class Meineke at 444-2730 (DSN), 242-2064 (SVOIP) or 0770-400-7426 (cell.)



Soldiers, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division out of Fort Bliss, Texas, were the first to participate in a trail program that focuses on teaching the Soldiers self-defense so they can better defend themselves against an attacker.



The senior enlisted leader for United States Forces-Iraq, Command Sgt. Maj. Lawrence Wilson, visited Forward Operating Base Warrior, Kirkuk, Iraq and spoke with members of the Kirkuk Combined Security Forces, on Feb. 11.

Iraq's most senior enlisted visits Warriors

U.S. Army Story and Photos by Pfc. Jessica R. Luhrs
1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division Public Affairs

FORWARD OPERATING BASE WARRIOR, KIRKUK, Iraq

The senior enlisted leader for United States Forces-Iraq, Command Sgt. Maj. Lawrence Wilson, visited Forward Operating Base Warrior, Kirkuk, Iraq, to spend time with Soldiers of 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division out of Fort Bliss, Tx., on Feb. 11.

Although Command Sgt. Maj. Wilson had a limited time to spend at FOB Warrior during this visit, he made sure that he and Command Sgt. Maj. James Daniels, command sergeant major of the Ready First Combat Team spent their time talking with Soldiers.

Command Sgt. Maj. Wilson began his day by attending a breakfast with Soldiers and Airmen, where he discussed the upcoming push out of Iraq with the 'Warriors.'

"Soon you will see the footprints begin to reduce throughout Iraq as we begin to pull out equipment and Warriors after the elections," said Command Sgt. Maj. Wilson.

Even though Command Sgt. Maj. Wilson mostly discussed the pull-out of Iraq he reminded the Soldiers that this could still be a year-long deployment, because they will be assisting fellow Warriors in Afghanistan by getting them much needed equipment, according to Command Sgt. Maj. Wilson. Following the breakfast with his Warriors, Command Sgt. Maj. Wilson visited each of the units on FOB Warrior talking to Soldiers about issues on FOB Warrior, recognizing outstanding Soldiers by awarding them with a coin and fist bumping others.

During the visits to the units the command sergeant majors were briefed on the mission of each unit and also what they hope to do for the future of Iraq.

At the briefing for 6th Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment of the Ready First Combat Team a senior enlisted non-commissioned officer gave Command Sgt. Maj. Wilson details on their newest project; Adopt an Iraqi Squad Leader.

During this program the Iraqi squad leaders counterparts will be training with them 24/7 for a week on everything from physical training to how to assist their own soldiers, according to leadership of 6/1st Cav.

Following meeting with the units on FOB Warrior, Command Sgt. Maj. Wilson was escorted by the



The senior enlisted leader for United States Forces-Iraq, Command Sgt. Maj. Lawrence Wilson, visited Forward Operating Base Warrior, Kirkuk, Iraq and was escorted by 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, to Kirkuk's main checkpoint, on Feb. 11.

'Battle Boar' Soldiers of 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division out of Fort Stewart, Ga, to Kirkuk's main checkpoint.

During this visit he observed the Iraqi Security Forces successfully checking the identification of citizens of Iraq before letting them into the city and searching cars for contraband.

Command Sgt. Maj. Wilson was impressed with the progress he was seeing on FOB Warrior and in Kirkuk city and promised his Warriors he would return soon to spend more time with them.



The senior enlisted leader for United States Forces-Iraq, Command Sgt. Maj. Lawrence Wilson, visited Forward Operating Base Warrior, Kirkuk, Iraq and spoke with his "Warriors", on Feb. 11.



The senior enlisted leader for United States Forces-Iraq, Command Sgt. Maj. Lawrence Wilson, is greeted by Command Sgt. Maj. Anthony Cortez, the command sergeant major for 2nd Battalion, 3rd Field Artillery Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division out of Fort Bliss, Tx. during his visit to Forward Operating Base Warrior, Kirkuk, Iraq, on Feb. 11.

Around the



e Battlefield



MARCH 2010





Pfc Kevin Zeeb (left) and SPC Keshon Holzendorf (right) both of Foxtrot Company, 1-30th IN BN at FOB Warrior, Kirkuk, Iraq conduct engine repairs on an M1151 in a push to get more than 60 recently acquired vehicles operational for patrolling the streets of Kirkuk.

Young Soldier excels in motorpool

U.S Army Story and Photos by Sgt. John Fielden
F. Co., 1-30th IR, 2/3rd ID UPAR

FORWARD OPERATING BASE WARRIOR, KIRKUK, Iraq

Pfc. Kevin Zeeb, at 18 years of age may be the youngest Soldier in the company, but he's excelling alongside veteran mechanics with the workload of the battalion motorpool.

Pfc. Zeeb is assigned to F. Co., 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment and works in the Forward Support Company (FSC) Maintenance Department of the battalion motorpool performing daily duties as a light wheeled mechanic. Since arriving to FOB Warrior in Kirkuk, Iraq in mid November 2009, F. Co. motorpool mechanics were given an eye-raising task of repairing 108 dead-lined vehicles of 159 assigned. It was a near-impossible task, but one that Soldiers like Pfc. Zeeb was ready to tackle. "It was a team effort overall, but some stood out, and Pfc. Zeeb was one of those", said the FSC Maintenance Supervisor, Sgt. 1st Class Enrico Machino. "For our most junior Soldier to perform as he did is a reflection of his individual drive and work ethic". The entire team of Abrams Tank mechanics, Bradley Fighting Vehicle mechanics, Light-wheeled mechanics, and Generator mechanics completed the task by working around the clock for a sixteen day period during the first 60 days of the deployment. The vehicles were received and transported from a different FOB in Iraq as Foxtrot Company Executive Officer First Lt. Carlos Sanford took physical custody from the FSC of a redeploying Combined Arms Battalion. 1st Lt. Sanford remarked, "We didn't have a lot of choices on what we were given. They were pretty beat up after a 12 month deployment with another battalion. Even those that weren't dead-lined needed quite a bit of work."

Additionally, all Mine-Resistant Ambush Protected vehicles (MRAPs) required "Wire Mitigation" modifications to prevent their protruding antennae from dragging down local village power wires. On top of it all, the tool inventory for the maintenance section was at yet another FOB awaiting transport to the unit at FOB Warrior. In the end though, F-Co. performed brilliantly. He consistently performed component repairs, replacements, and quality control inspections at any hour, under any conditions, and was ready for the next mission without hesitation. "Pfc. Zeeb's level of maturity, professionalism, and performance has exceeded all standards and expectations." added Sgt. 1st Class Troy Tomlinson, F-Co. Maintenance Platoon Sergeant. Pfc. Zeeb and the mechanics of F-Co. keep the 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment rolling along and ready for its next mission.

MARCH 2010

Day in the life of a 'Gator'

Article by 1st Lt. Samuel Gladney
A. Co., 1-30th IR, 2/3rd ID UPAR

FORWARD OPERATING BASE WARRIOR, KIRKUK, Iraq

Alpha Company, 'Gators' 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment is currently training the Combined Security Force (CSF) for future missions in the city of Kirkuk. In addition to members of Alpha Company, the CSF consists of Peshmerga (Kurdish Regional Government Defense Force), Iraqi Army, and Iraqi Police. In such an important and challenging mission, the life of a Soldier in Alpha Company is never dull.

On the morning of Jan. 28, Spc. Glenn Hallford woke up to make final preparations for his day of CSF instruction.

Spc. Hallford's task for the day was to instruct members of the CSF on Improvised Explosive Device (IED) awareness. Specifically, this included what to do in a mounted convoy when a vehicle identifies an IED, and how to conduct security checks when dismounting a Mine Resistant Ambush Protected Vehicle (MRAP).

Such instruction would be difficult even under normal circumstances, but training the CSF poses unique challenges. All CSF instruction and training aides have to be translated into both the Arabic and Kurdish languages.

Before any instruction can begin, the instructor needs to ensure that the interpreters understand the subject matter and have translated all handouts and slides into two additional languages.

In addition, an instructor such as Spc. Hallford, must take into account differences in culture when he plans his class. He needs to understand how to coordinate through Peshmerga, Iraqi Army, and Iraqi Police chains of command. This includes accounting for variations in tactics and differing levels of military experience.

If all of the variables above are accounted for, then training will be successful. The process of turning four different forces into one cohesive unit is one that takes months of preparation.

Every member of Alpha Company plays a vital role in ensuring that the new CSF is ready to conduct missions.

The chain of command plans, resources and supervises all of the training.

The supply system ensures the CSF living area is ready, resources ammunition for ranges, and even sifts through MRE's to ensure they don't contain any pork, which is forbidden in the Islam faith.

The company's platoons conduct the training and build the relationships between our partners.

The days usually begin early, with breakfast and the final preparation of training aides. After breakfast, the entire CSF holds a morning formation where the final plan for the day is briefed to all CSF Soldiers. From there, the CSF moves to the training area, located adjacent to their living quarters. Once at the training site, the CSF platoons begin rotating through their training. At each site, they receive a structured task, condition, and standard based training. After a break for lunch, training commences in a similar fashion in the afternoon.

This process of planning, resourcing, executing, and building relationships in the CSF involves every member of Alpha Company.

Such a mission means that no day is ever the same, but every day is busy. When the training is complete, the CSF, now called the "Golden Lions" will be a cohesive unit capable of conducting combined missions to ensure the security and stability of Kirkuk.



Staff Sgt. Matthew Tardio, a squad leader with Bravo Co., 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, re-enlists at the "Re-enlistment House" in Kirkuk, Iraq.

The Re-enlistment house

U.S Army Story and Photos by 1st Lt. Erich Murray
B.Co., 1-30 IR, 2/3rd ID UPAR

FORWARD OPERATING BASE WARRIOR, KIRKUK, Iraq

14 January 2010 – the morning was clear and brisk, 4th Platoon, Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment departed FOB Warrior. It would be a special day for the Platoon as a whole, but especially so for Staff Sgt. Matthew Tardio, the Platoon's 1st Squad Leader, as it was the day of his reenlistment in the United States Army. The platoon left out early in the morning so that they could conduct an ironically meaningful, yet unorthodox reenlistment ceremony inside the city of Kirkuk. Staff Sgt. Tardio, 25 years old, hails from Banks, Oregon. His initial commitment to service proved to be a more simple decision than his reenlistment. His wife, Brigid, recently gave birth to their first child. Staff Sgt. Tardio would come to specifically reference his daughter as the driving factor behind his decision to reenlist. The ability to provide for her education was what he stated as "the most appealing factor" in regard to reenlistment. Staff Sgt. Tardio is both a family-first man and a dedicated Army leader. He commits himself, fully, to accomplishing both jobs, and it is no surprise that his decision to reenlist took both into serious consideration. With the terms of his reenlistment complete, all he had left was to decide how his ceremony would be conducted. Taking into consideration Staff Sgt. Tardio's deep-rooted sense of humor, it is also no surprise that he was overjoyed to take advantage of one specific reenlistment tradition – the person reenlisting gets to decide on the location of his ceremony. The location he had chosen left no room for long speeches and flowery effects. The ceremony would take place atop a pile of rubble, which used to be a house in the Al Nasser neighborhood of Kirkuk, Iraq. SSG Tardio had chosen this location due to the irony directly associated with it, as the house had been a safe-haven for multiple insurgents inside the city. These insurgents also so happened to be constructing a VBIED in front of their house for use against an unknown target. However, upon completion, the insurgents prematurely detonated the VBIED, and on 09 September 2009, the house collapsed on top of them. To any American Soldier or Iraqi Security Force member, the house itself makes one think of a win for the good guys, and no more fitting a location could have been chosen to represent Staff Sgt. Matthew Tardio. The ceremony was unorthodox and concise, indeed, but most importantly it was everything Staff Sgt. Matthew Tardio had hoped it would be. The leadership is grateful to have had the honor to reenlist such a fine Soldier, and the now infamous "Reenlistment House" now holds a special meaning for all U.S. forces operating inside the city.



Chaplain Patrick Van Durme of 1-9 Field Artillery from Dansville, N.Y., flew from FOB Marez near Mosul, Iraq to FOB Warrior to conduct services.



Priest makes FOB calls

U.S Army Story and Photos by Staff Sgt. Christina J. Turnipseed
1st Brigade, 1st Armored Division Public Affairs

FORWARD OPERATING BASE WARRIOR, KIRKUK, Iraq

“Let’s continue praising God!” This was the inspirational instruction given by the Catholic priest which preceded the mellow sounds from an acoustic guitar and the sound of more than a dozen reverent, joyful voices at Mass on Forward Operating Base Warrior February 03.

Chaplain Capt. Patrick Van Durme of 1st Battalion, 9th Field Artillery, 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division whose hometown is Dansville, N.Y., flew in from FOB Marez near Mosul to FOB Warrior to conduct services.

Chap. Van Durme will also travel to five other FOBs in northern Iraq servicing Sykes, Tal Afar, Doria, Marez/Diamondback, and McHenry.

Chap. Van Durme said he plans to come to FOB Warrior every week.

“We’re gonna be here next week as long as the helicopters fly,” said Chap. Van Durme.

After Mass, Sgt. 1st Class James Burkley, a 1st Brigade Combat Team Soldier, said “I feel like it gives me the freedom to practice my faith. This way, I get to practice the traditions I grew up with.”

Mass was held Feb 03 at 1900 and Feb 04 at 1130 in the Air Force Freedom Chapel for 35 to 45 minutes.

Parishioners were invited, by Chap. Van Durme, to come back next week for Mass and to see him after service for confessions, to join the church, wedding preparations, confirmations, etc.

Major John Tran of 506 Expeditionary Combat Support from Las Angeles, Calif. read the scripture while Master Sgt. Mike McCarthy of the Boarder Transition Team, from Cochection, N.Y., who happened to be here from Erbil, assisted Chaplain Van Durme with conducting the service.

“We don’t have religious services at all (on his FOB),” Master Sgt. McCarthy said. “To get religious services is essential.”

Chap. Van Durme said he joined the Army for the opportunity to help Soldiers.

“I’ve been a priest for a long time,” Chap. Van Durme said. “I’ve only been in the Army for two years. My nephew was in the service and went 18 months without service.”

“I saw a need,” he added. “It’s hard work getting moved all around the battlefield, but it’s what I need to do for the Soldiers.”



Because of the stress involved with deployments psychologists like Capt. Jill Koeing, the brigade psychologist for 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division out of Fort Bliss, Texas, are assigned to each brigade to assist Soldiers with the stress of combat.

U.S Army Story and Photos by Pfc. Jessica Luhrs
1st Brigade, 1st Armored Division Public Affairs

Keeping Soldiers in the Fight

FORWARD OPERATING BASE WARRIOR, KIRKUK, Iraq

Since the beginning of Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003, more than a million Soldiers have been deployed and five-hundred thousand of those Soldiers have been deployed multiple times, according to Veterans for America.

Because of the stress involved with deployments many of the Soldiers return home with behavioral health issues, according to Capt. Jill Koeing, the brigade psychologist for 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division out of Fort Bliss, Texas.

Because of this having someone trained to deal with the operational stress the Soldiers go through on a daily basis is more important than ever.

To assist Soldiers in coping with being deployed on FOB Warrior, Kirkuk, Iraq, Capt. Koeing, opens her mind and ears to Soldiers of the Ready First Combat Team on a daily basis to receive help for stress or to just vent.

"Many of the Soldiers don't realize that it doesn't mean they are crazy if they talk to me," said Capt. Koeing. "It is not my goal to label them or make them leave the deployment but for them to just come in here drop their stuff and just sit here and let off some steam then return to the fight," she added.

To help keep Ready First in the fight Capt. Koeing has been assisting with stress/anger management, battle mind, sleep hygiene, relationships, suicide prevention, smoking cessation, communication skills and operational stress. She is also offering group classes for Ready First such as; Coping Skills and Strategies, Anger Management, Conflict Resolution, Smoking Cessation and Sleep/Relaxation at the Davis Combat Clinic.

Since arriving to Iraq in November, Capt. Koeing has seen many improvements in the operations of the Behavioral Health that she believes is making it easier for Soldiers to get the help they need.

The Behavioral Health Clinic and the DCC operate as one here so Soldiers do not have to inform command that they are seeing behavioral health. Also, in hopes of removing the negative stigma from receiving help the name has been recently changed from mental health to behavioral health.

One of the more powerful changes she has also noticed is more leadership requesting to see Behavioral Health which in turn shows the jr-enlisted Soldiers it is not a bad thing to receive help.

"Everyone from the highest rank to the lowest has some type of reaction to being deployed," said Capt. Koeing. She continued to explain, "Since we are not living normal lives here and put ourselves in danger every day, it is important that Soldiers know it is not a sign of weakness to see us and having a healthy mind is important while deployed."

To see Behavioral Health walk-in hours are Monday to Saturday from 7:30 am – 10:00 am and Sunday from 3:00 pm – 5:00 pm at the Davis Combat Clinic.

To receive information about the classes being held Soldiers can contact Behavioral Health at the DCC DSN at 444-3082.

Chaplains learn first aid

U.S Army Story and Photos by Staff Sgt. Christina Turnipseed
1st Brigade, 1st Armored Division Public Affairs

FORWARD OPERATING BASE WARRIOR, KIRKUK, Iraq

Chaplains from 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division of Fort Bliss, Texas meet in the 2nd Battalion, 3rd Field Artillery Battalion Chapel to learn or to refresh their skills in the latest first aid techniques Feb 22, 2010.

Staff Sergeant Damien Bradley a medic from 6th Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment, whose hometown is Jamaica- Queen, N.Y. taught first aid techniques to 11 members of the 1/1 AD Ready First Chaplain's Department.

"I think the most important part of our job is training," said Staff Sgt. Bradley. The Soldiers are the ones out there on the battlefield who will be the first responders, he said.

Staff Sergeant Bradley demonstrated correct techniques to take care of wounds on extremities, the chest, stomachs, backs, groins, necks and under arm sockets.

These are places where Soldiers are receiving wounds, Staff Sgt. Bradley warns his class.

After demonstrating, Staff Sgt. Bradley paired the first aid class and had them practice bandaging imaginary wounds on each other and applying tourniquets.

Chaplain, Capt. Ronald Hinton of 501st Brigade Support Battalion, whose hometown is Paterson, N.J. said he appreciated "the refresher on the (combat life saver) CLS because with medical they're always finding better ways to do things."

Specialist Jerrod Turner of 6th Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment, whose hometown is Franklin, Va., stated that the class had "good technical aids, good visual aids, and good class participation."

The 1/1 AD Ready First Chaplain, Maj. Mark Diddle, who also attended the class said the class was good because it "gives them (Unit Ministry Team) additional means to assist Soldiers in a battlefield environment."

Staff Sergeant Tameka Dixon of Greenville, N.C., Chaplain Diddle's assistant, set up the class "because as UMT, most of us don't have that (first aid training).

She added that she doesn't want the UMT to focus on Soldier's spiritual and emotional well being without also focusing on their physical well being.



Staff Sergeant Damien Bradley a medic from 6th Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment, whose hometown is Jamaica-Queen, N.Y. uses Staff Sergeant Tameka Dixon of 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division of Fort Bliss, Texas who is originally from Greenville, N.C., to demonstrate how to bandage a neck injury on FOB Warrior Feb 22, 2010.



Colonel Larry Swift, the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division commander and Command Sgt. Maj. James Daniels, the 1/1 AD Ready First Command Sergeant Major leads Soldiers and Airmen into the food court area at FOB Warrior to start the Army/Air Force Sexual Harassment Awareness Walk ceremony Feb 12, 2010.

U.S Army Story and Photos by Staff Sgt. Christina Turnipseed
1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division Public Affairs

Walk against Sexual Harassment

FORWARD OPERATING BASE WARRIOR, KIRKUK, Iraq

A large group of laughing, chit-chatting, cheerful Soldiers led by Col. Larry Swift, the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division commander and Command Sgt. Maj. James Daniels, the 1/1 AD Ready First Command Sergeant Major headed down the road in front of the FOB Warrior BX/PX as a group of cheerful Airmen of the Air Expeditionary Group, whose commander is Col. Leonard S. Dick headed toward them.

Both Air Force and Army were walking to increase awareness to the serious issue of sexual harassment for the servicemembers of FOB Warrior Feb. 12, 2010.

"It was a unique opportunity to work with the other service to make a difference in some Soldier's life by providing awareness," said Sgt. 1st Class Gerald Meineke the 1/1 AD Ready First sexual assault representative coordinator.

"I wanted it to be a joint effort to let everybody know that it's not just an Air Force affair or an Army Affair," said Staff Sgt. Sherita Outsey, sexual assault representative coordinator for the 506 Air Expeditionary Group.

During the ceremony at the end of the walk, sexual assault victim advocates for the 506 AEG and 1/1 AD Ready First introduced themselves to the walkers.

Senior Airman Kimberly N. Jones of the 506th Expeditionary Civil Engineer Squadron ECES Force Protection said, "This was very good. It let everyone know who their Victim Advocate was."

During the ceremony, Col. Leonard S. Dick, commander of the 506 AEG told the assembled servicemembers and contractors that when he asked some female Airmen why they were leaving the Air Force, they responded that they couldn't stand the sexual jokes.

Colonel Dick went on to say you wouldn't make racial jokes so don't make sexual jokes.

Colonel Swift, commander of 1/1 AD Ready First, said during his speech at the ceremony, 1/1 AD you're better than that! 506 Air Expeditionary Group, you're better than that!

The ceremony ended with prizes being given out to ticket holders if their number was pulled from a box.

FOB Warrior is now aware, that its leaders will not tolerate sexual harassment thanks to the Army/Air Force Sexual Harassment Awareness Walk.

Operation Writing Point



Specialist Nateisha A. Grant of 1-1 Special Troops Battalion whose hometown is Bronx, N.Y. has her heart set on helping the children in the Kirkuk, Iraq area by collecting pencils and other school supplies

U.S Army Story and Photos by Staff Sgt. Christina Turniseed
**1st Brigade Combat Team,
1st Armored Division Public Affairs**

FORWARD OPERATING BASE WARRIOR, KIRKUK, Iraq

"My goal is to collect 5,000 pencils for kids."

Specialist Nateisha A. Grant of 1-1 Special Troops Battalion whose hometown is Bronx, N.Y. has her heart set on helping the children in the Kirkuk, Iraq area by collecting pencils and other school supplies.

Specialist Grant said she was running along the fence for exercise when she noticed a little boy waving at her. She waved back and she began to think about the Iraqi children.

I thought--the kids--they're in a bad situation. It's not their fault they're in a war torn country and they lack the basic necessities

like school supplies that other kids get, she said.

"My initial goal was to collect 5,000 pencils," said Spc. Grant. But when I called people I knew back in the states to ask for help, they started collecting notepads, paper, and other school supplies.

Specialist Grant said she wanted to collect pencils because "you have to start somewhere."

"They're so cheap," she said "You can buy a pack for a dollar."

"I believed people would be willing to give generously if they can take a dollar and buy a pack of pencils and realize it's making a difference in people's lives," Spc. Grant said.

Some of the generous people helping Spc. Grant collect school supplies are Sharon Shoemaker the Family Readiness Group leader for the Headquarters and Headquarters 1-1 STB in Fort Bliss, Texas;

Capt. Chrystal Peterson of 5th Brigade, 1st Armored Division of Fort Bliss, Texas; Sgt. 1st Class Michael Barron, Spc. Grant's Non-commissioned Officer in charge of her; and Spc. Daniel Trinidad a fellow 1-1 STB medic.

Specialist Grant also has the support of her officer -in- charge and the other medics that work in the Heredia Aid Station operated on FOB Warrior, Iraq by 2nd Battalion, 3rd Field Artillery Battalion and 1-1 STB.

"She's doing something good for the community, that's always a good thing," said 1st Lt. Raul Villalobos the officer-in-charge of the 2/3rd FA Heredia Aid Station who is from El Paso, Texas.

Specialist Grant has always been proactive, said Spc. Margaret Kerchief of Savannah, Ga. who also works with Spc. Grant at the 2/3rd FA Heredia Aid Station. When everybody else was worried about security, Spc. Grant noticed the children and started this operation to help.



Leadership of Amal Shabi along with Kirkuk Combined Security Forces outside one of the area schools, March 18. This school is one of the many projects of the CSF to help improve the quality of life in the village.

CSF to help people of Kirkuk

U.S Army Story and Photos by Pfc. Jessica R. Luhrs
 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division Public Affairs

FORWARD OPERATING BASE WARRIOR, KIRKUK, Iraq

In the village of Amal Shabi, near Kirkuk, Iraq; the growing population has caused the schools to overflow, sewage in the village to become out of control and more water to become an absolute necessity, according to the leadership and principals in Amal Shabi.

To make begin making plans for improving the quality of life for the people here the Kirkuk Combined Security Force; made up of Task Force Marne Soldiers, Pesh Murga, Iraqi Army and Iraqi Police, met with the leadership, March 18.

During the meeting 1st Lt. Doug Wolfe, a platoon leader with Alpha Co., 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division out of Fort Stewart, Ga., and Lt. Hashem, a CSF platoon leader, met with the leadership of the area to talk about their concerns. The main issues that were addressed during the meeting were the conditions of the schools, lack of clean water and the overflow of sewage.

One of the projects the CSF is lining up is the renovation of the schools in the area.

"We want to help you provide a good quality education to the children because they are the future," said 1st Lt. Wolfe.

The CSF and the leadership of the area all agreed the way to do this was by first combining the schools then working to rebuild and expand them.

"Our main goal is to rebuild the schools," said 1st Lt. Wolfe. "But first we need to get these children into a better working environment to enhance their education."

Another concern that has recently become an issue because of the rapidly growing population of the area, over 1000 families, is the water tower that is not big enough to support the village, according to the village Mukhtar.

Out of all the issues the main concern of the citizens was the overflow of sewage and trash in the area.

"My children and I are sick all the time because of this problem and I know we are not the only fam-



A Soldier with Alpha Co., 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division out of Fort Stewart, Ga., talks to a group of Iraqi children that attend school in Amal Shabi near Kirkuk, Iraq.

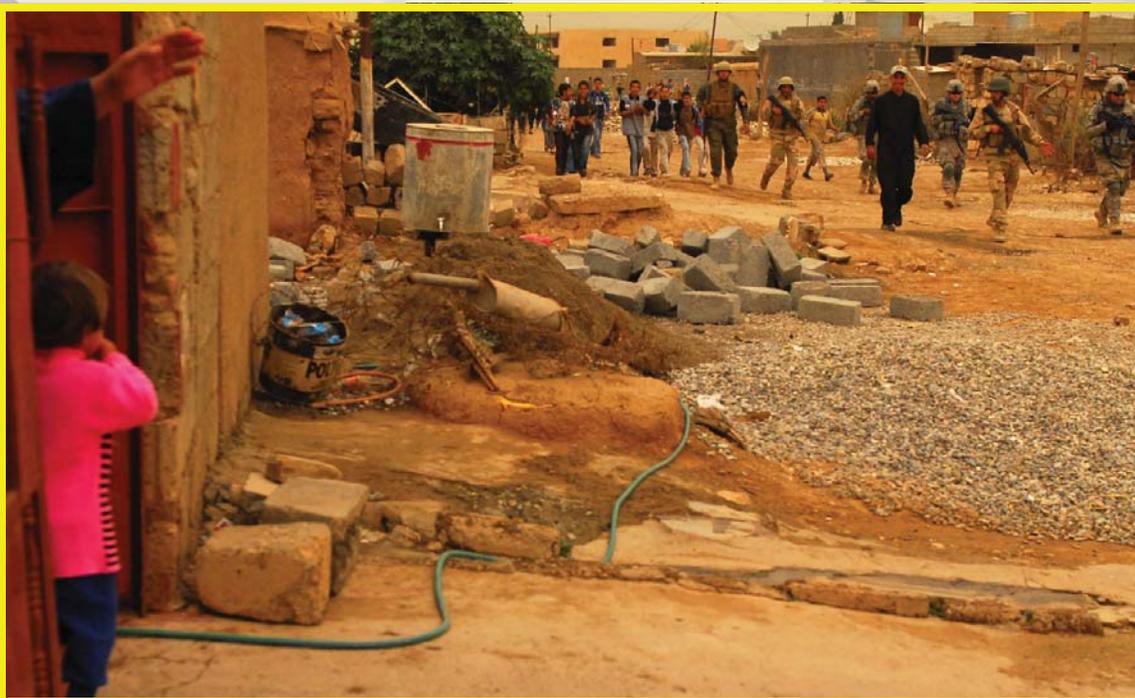
ily like this," said one of the principals, who lives right next to the overflowing sewage.

To help fix this issue the Task Force Marne Soldiers and CSF plan to first clean the area then assist the town in establishing a Department of Public Works.

These projects will help bridge the gap of what the village now has now and what they need to become safe and prosperous in the future, according to 1st Lt. Wolfe.



Task Force Marne Soldiers with the Kirkuk Combined Security Force, during their meeting with the leadership of Amal Shabi a village near Kirkuk, Iraq to discuss the growing population and its effect on the schools, sewage and water





Pvt. Casey Yates, a South Bend, Ind. native and a tanker with Charlie Co. 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division out of Fort Stewart, Ga., observes as a Kirkuk Emergency Service Unit soldier, that is a searcher at a checkpoint outside of Kirkuk, Iraq, searches a local nationals car for any contraband, March 16. The checkpoint that opened in January played a key role in security for the city during the elections and the soldiers have promised it will continue to.

Checkpoints hinder insurgents

U.S. Army Story and Photos by Pfc. Jessica R. Luhrs
1st Brigade, 1st Armored Division Public Affairs

FORWARD OPERATING BASE WARRIOR, KIRKUK, Iraq

Just south of FOB Warrior, Kirkuk, Iraq, is a joint checkpoint known to the Task Force Marne Soldiers and Kirkuk Emergency Services Unit soldiers that occupy it simply as "the castle." Soldiers of Charlie Co., 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division out of Fort Stewart, Ga., along with the ESU were the first to occupy this checkpoint after it opened in Jan. 2010.

Since opening the castle played a key role in giving Kirkuk the safety and security the city needed during the elections and will play an even bigger role in keeping the city secure post-election, according to 2nd Lt. Eddy Olvera, a native of Houston and a platoon leader with C-Co.

"Through our operations we have successfully hindered insurgent activities before and during elections and will continue to do so," said 2nd Lt. Olvera.

At the checkpoint the ESU is incorporating skills taught to them by the Task Force Marne Soldiers and successfully executing them in daily operations at the checkpoint, according to 2nd Lt. Olvera.

The ESU soldiers check the identification of local nationals as they enter the city and search any suspicious vehicles that come through the checkpoint.

"We don't run into many problems at the castle with the citizens of Kirkuk," said Pvt. Casey Yates, a South Bend, Ind. native and a tanker with Charlie Co. "Most of the people that travel this road live in the area and understand that these checkpoints are for their safety."

But all the Soldiers and ESU attribute the lack of issues in the area to fear.

The insurgents know we will catch them as soon as they try to get into the city, said one ESU soldier as he searched a car. So why even try to get past us, he added.

Even though there are not many issues at the checkpoints the Task Force Marne Soldiers and ESU know that now is not the time to be complacent thanks to their platoon leader.

"There is still a threat out there, if there wasn't we wouldn't be here" said 2nd Lt. Olvera, who tells his Soldiers this every day to keep them focused.

Colonel's home open doors for U.S.

U.S. Army Story and Photos by Pfc. Jessica R. Luhrs
1st Brigade, 1st Armored Division Public Affairs

FORWARD OPERATING BASE WARRIOR, KIRKUK, Iraq

"I want to make sure all of the insurgents know that the Kirkuk Pesh Murga is against anyone that threatens Kirkuk, the government or the forces that protect the area," said Col. Kurkuki, a battalion commander with 2nd Brigade Pesh Murga, to soldiers of White Plt., Alpha Co., 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division out of Fort Stewart, Ga and the soldiers of Kirkuk Combined Security Force.

This Pesh Murga colonel and his family opened their minds, home and kitchen to CSF for a gathering at their home in Sona Agoly, a village near Kirkuk, Iraq, March 19.

From the moment the CSF walked in the door they knew they had come to the right place to meet with someone who would have not only a tactical knowledge of the area but a personal connection with the people.

"To be able to meet with Col. Kurkuki, a commander with extensive military history and a man that is very respected by the village, it is a great honor," said Capt. Nick Loudon, a Brockway, Penn. Native and commander for A Co.

Capt. Loudon was not the only person that thought of this gathering as a great honor.

"My mother has spent all day cooking for you," said Shalaw Najim, a son of Col. Kurkuki. "She loves all of you; you saved her life."

He went on to explain that many of the members of his mother's family were killed before the U.S. Forces came to help in 2003 but she got away from danger when U.S. Forces arrived and that she views Soldiers as her brothers.

"Life has gotten a lot better for us since 2003 our people suffered greatly before," said Col. Kurkuki.

"This year has already been one of the best."

Col. Kurkuki said the proof security and life in Kirkuk is improving was how smoothly the elections went. The security forces protected the city and all came together as one for the greater good for the people of Kirkuk, now the citizens trust them even more, said Col. Kurkuki.

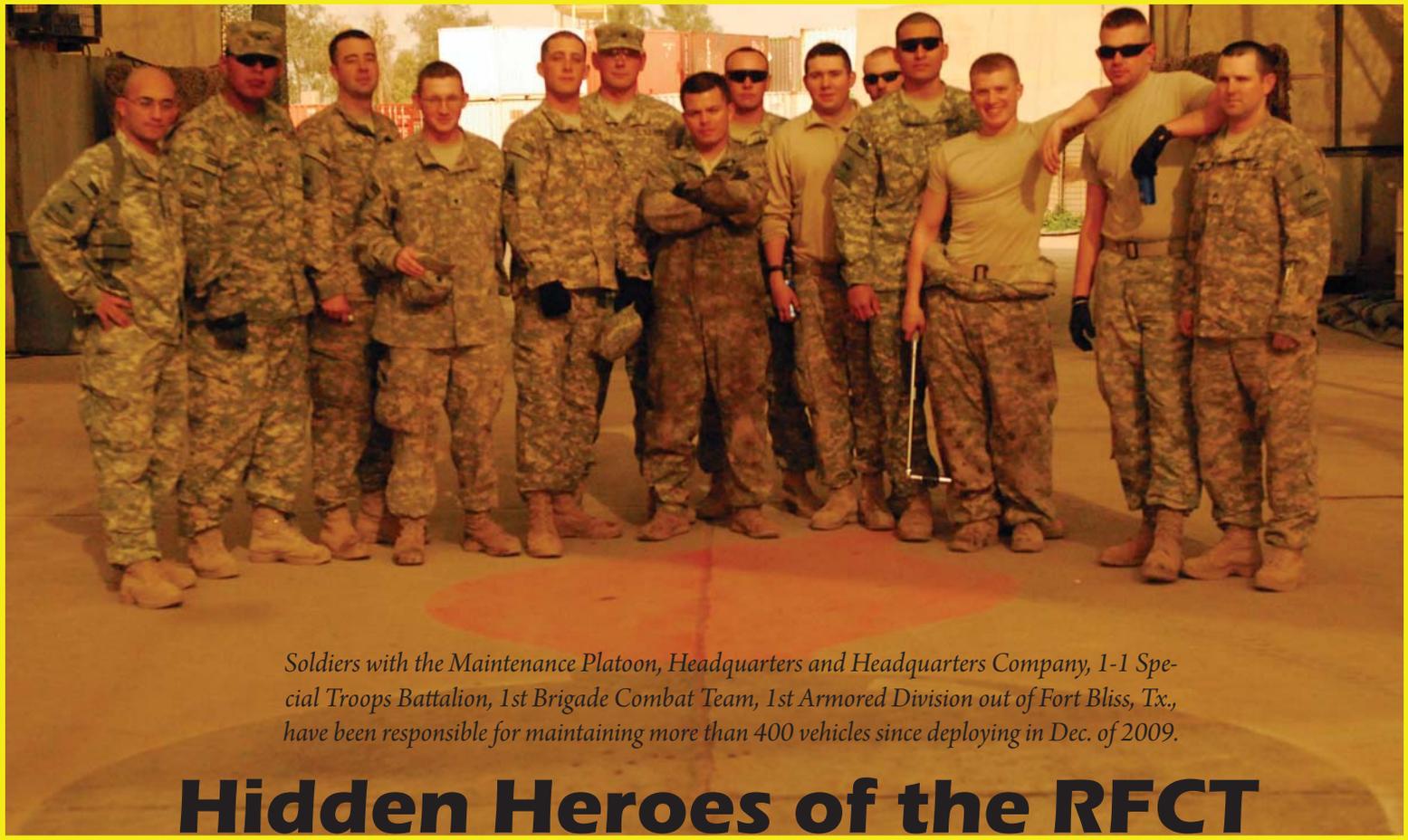
"We know freedom is worth fighting for, so every minute, every hour, every day of every year we (Pesh Murga) will be at your service," said Col. Kurkuki, as he was saying farewell to his new CSF brothers.

Col. Kurkuki, a battalion commander with 2nd Brigade Pesh Murga, Capt. Nick Loudon, a Brockway, Penn. native and commander for A Co 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division out of Fort Stewart, Ga, Soldiers of White Plt., Alpha Co., and soldiers of Kirkuk Combined Security Force, this Pesh Murga colonel and his family opened their home to CSF for a gathering in Sona Agoly, a village near Kirkuk, Iraq, March 19.



MARCH 2010





Soldiers with the Maintenance Platoon, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1-1 Special Troops Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division out of Fort Bliss, Tx., have been responsible for maintaining more than 400 vehicles since deploying in Dec. of 2009.

Hidden Heroes of the RFCT

U.S. Army Story and Photos by Pfc. Jessica R. Luhrs
 1st Brigade, 1st Armored Division Public Affairs

FORWARD OPERATING BASE WARRIOR, KIRKUK, Iraq

Grease and oil stain these Soldiers coveralls and boots, they have their tool boxes open and wrenches out ready to start another day of performing maintenance on the Ready First Combat Team's vehicles that have already begun lining up at their motorpool on Forward Operating Base Warrior, Kirkuk, Iraq.

This is just another typical day for these Soldiers the motorpool, according to Pfc. Ryan Stable, a mechanic with 1-1 Special Troops Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division.

These 15 Soldiers are the Maintenance Platoon and Headquarters STB, Ready First Combat Team, out of Fort Bliss, Tx., and they have been responsible for maintaining more than 400 vehicles since deploying in Dec.

"These mechanics are the hidden heroes of the brigade."

-Sgt. 1st Class William Evans

mechanics with
 ton, Headquar-
 Company, 1-1
 Team, out of Fort
 been responsible
 than 400 vehicles
 of 2009.

"Our days usually include performing routine maintenance on anywhere from five to ten vehicles and any other repair issues that come up throughout the day," said Pfc. Brett Billingsly, a mechanic with 1-1 STB.

At any given moment the motorpool is full of tactical vehicles receiving upgrades, being disassembled, fixed then reassembled and those receiving a typical tune-up.

All of this work is a part of the mission of these Soldiers.

The mission of the Maintenance Platoon, while deployed, is to ensure all of the vehicles that come



A Soldier with the Maintenance Platoon, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1-1 Special Troops Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division out of Fort Bliss, Tx., using a plasma cutter to make a stand to go on a MRAP.

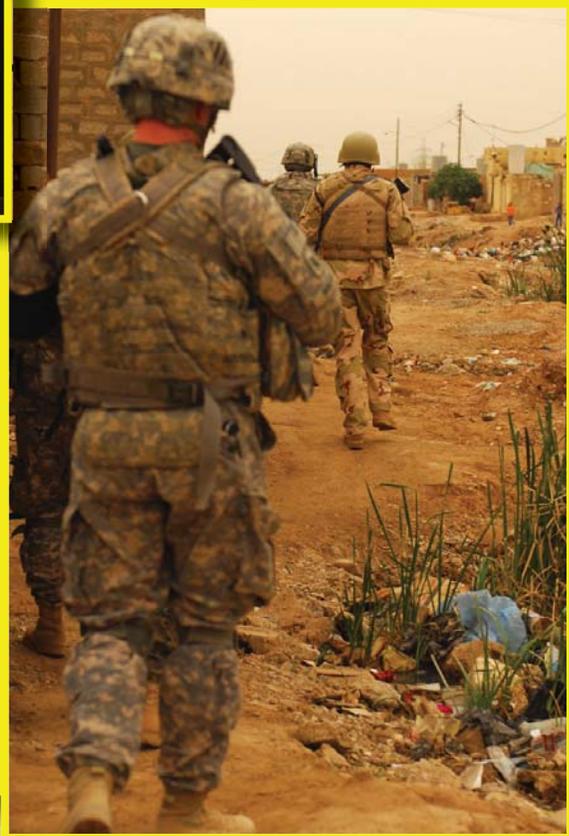


through their motor pool leave fully mission capable, according to Sgt. 1st Class William Evans, the platoon sergeant for the Maintenance Platoon and a native of Eugene, Ore. These Soldiers have really come together to ensure they complete their mission, he added. Every one of the Soldiers takes great pride in what they do, the leadership reminds them every day they are they are the reason the brigade continues their mission. "Without the teamwork, dedication and pride these Soldiers put into everyday the rest of the Ready First Combat Team would not be able to complete their mission," said Sgt. 1st Class Evans. "These mechanics are the hidden heroes of the brigade; they work every day behind the scenes to keep the RFCT rolling."



A Soldier with the Maintenance Platoon, Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1-1 Special Troops Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division out of Fort Bliss, Tx., performing maintenance on a Humvee.

Around the



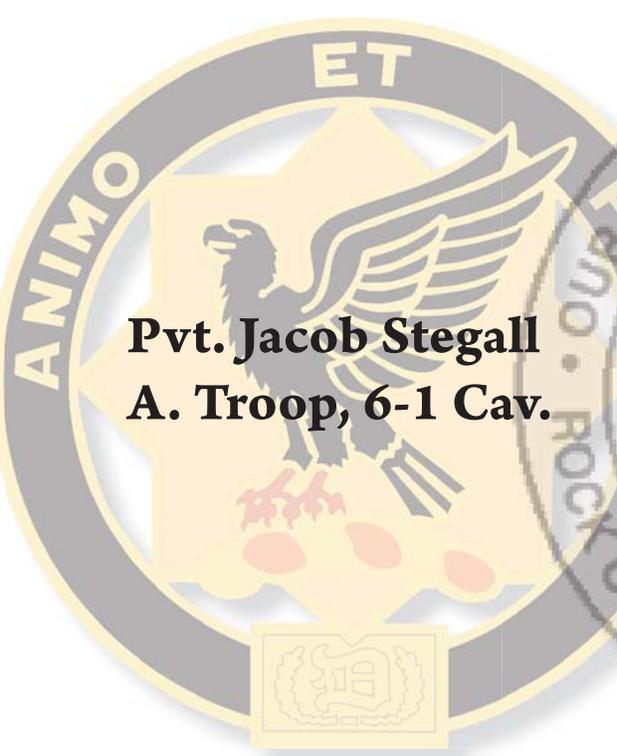
Battlefield



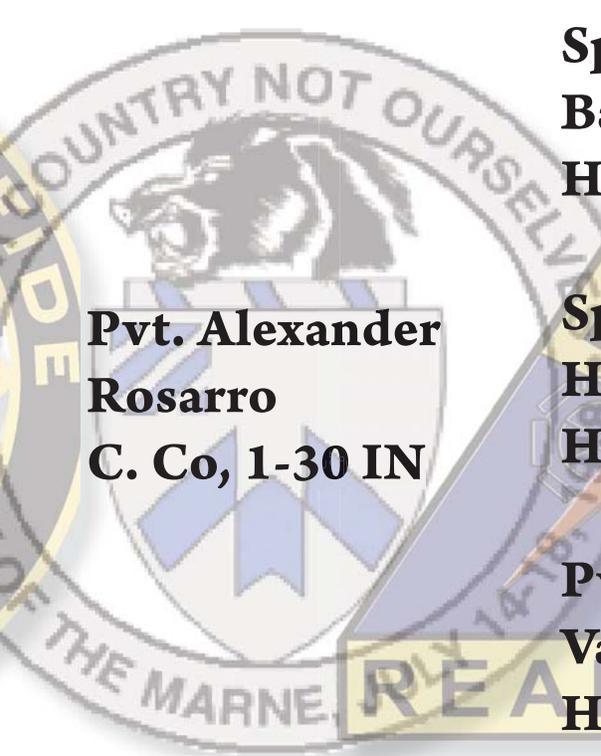
MARCH 2010

Congratulations to these Ready First Soldiers that were named Task Force Marne Hero of the North

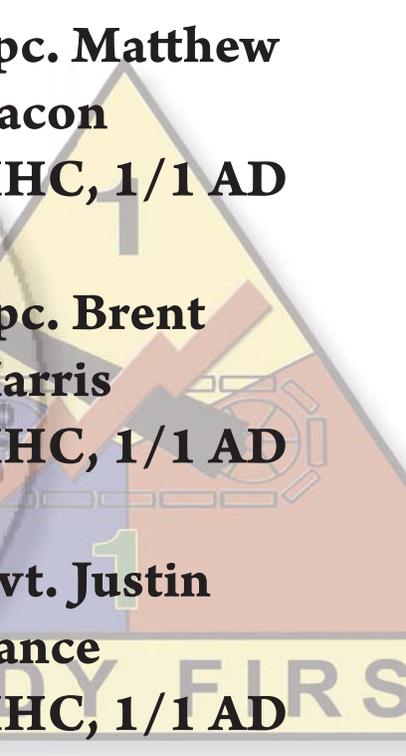
The intent of the "Task Force Marne Hero of the North" is to share some of the stories of what we see our Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines and Civilians do. Daily, Task Force Marne leaders select one individual from across the task force to be recognized by the entire organization because of their duties and actions, their particular military professional exemplified the best that the Armed Services has to offer.



Pvt. Jacob Stegall
A. Troop, 6-1 Cav.



**Pvt. Alexander
Rosarro**
C. Co, 1-30 IN



**Spc. Matthew
Bacon**
HHC, 1/1 AD

**Spc. Brent
Harris**
HHC, 1/1 AD

**Pvt. Justin
Vance**
HHC, 1/1 AD