

# READY FIRST REPORT

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MOBILITY SERVICE  
MUL MILITAMUS  
READY FIRST



**April 2010**  
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Greetings once again to the Soldiers, families, and friends of the Ready First Combat Team.

I would like to make all of you aware of the way ahead for the Ready First and what our part in the Responsible Drawdown of Forces will be.

As some of you may already know, the Ready First Combat Team will execute a phased redeployment home to Fort Bliss.

Army-speak aside, what this means is that, unlike previous deployments where a brigade would come home over the span of a few weeks, Ready First will come home over the span of several months.

The Ready First Combat Team has received word that it must redeploy around twenty-five-hundred of it's Soldiers during July and August back home to Fort Bliss.

This also means that around a thousand of our Soldiers will remain in Kirkuk Province until November. I know this news may be joyous to some and difficult for others.

Please understand that the mission of those soldiers remaining in-country is vitally important to our responsible draw down. Now I would like to explain in some detail how this process will work...

As we enter the month of June, we will make some adjustments to the organization of the brigade.

This will allow us to properly transfer our mission to the unit that will relieve us.

THEREFORE Alpha troop, 6th Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment and Bravo Battery, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Field Artillery will shift to 1st Battalion, 37th Armor Battalion the Blackhawks of 6/1st Cav. will redeploy in late July. They will be followed soon after by the Gunners of 2/3rd FA. the Bandits of 1/37th Armor and the Spartans of 1/36th Inf. will then redeploy in late August.

A small portion of Soldiers from the 501st Brigade Support Battalion, 1-1 Special Troops Battalion, and the Ready First Brigade Headquarters will also redeploy in late

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Forward Operating Base Warrior, Kirkuk, Iraq

APRIL 2010

August.

All in all, our Spartan, Bandit, Blackhawk, and Gunner Soldiers will all be home by the end of August.

The Battleboars of 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division out of Fort Stewart, Ga. will not be affected by this. They still stand to come home in November as ORIGINALLY planned.

The roughly thousand soldiers who remain until November are conducting missions that are absolutely critical to our current support operations.

As we draw down forces, we need to make sure that the correct support systems remain in place to continue operations and safely transfer them to a reduced size force.

This remaining Ready First Combat Team will be made up of approximately three hundred Soldiers from the 501st BSB, over four hundred Soldiers from the 1-1 STB, and about two-hundred Soldiers from the brigade headquarters.

I want you to know that Soldiers who stay will remain in the Kirkuk Province under my command.

I will ensure that the thousand remaining Soldiers have priority for their 15 days of mid-tour leave.

While this news may seem difficult to some, it is NECESSARY for the responsible draw down of forces.

The Soldiers of the Ready First Combat Team have done outstanding job in maintaining stability in the Kirkuk Province of Iraq

None of this would be possible if it were not for the dedication and support of our Ready First families and friends, and support from the Fort Bliss and El Paso communities.

I hope this has helped you understand the process the ready first will undertake in

Our Rear Detachment is available to help you with any of your concerns.

Please, do not hesitate to contact your FRG leaders and Rear D if you have questions.

READY 6

COL. LARRY SWIFT

- READY FIRST COMBAT TEAM COMMANDER -

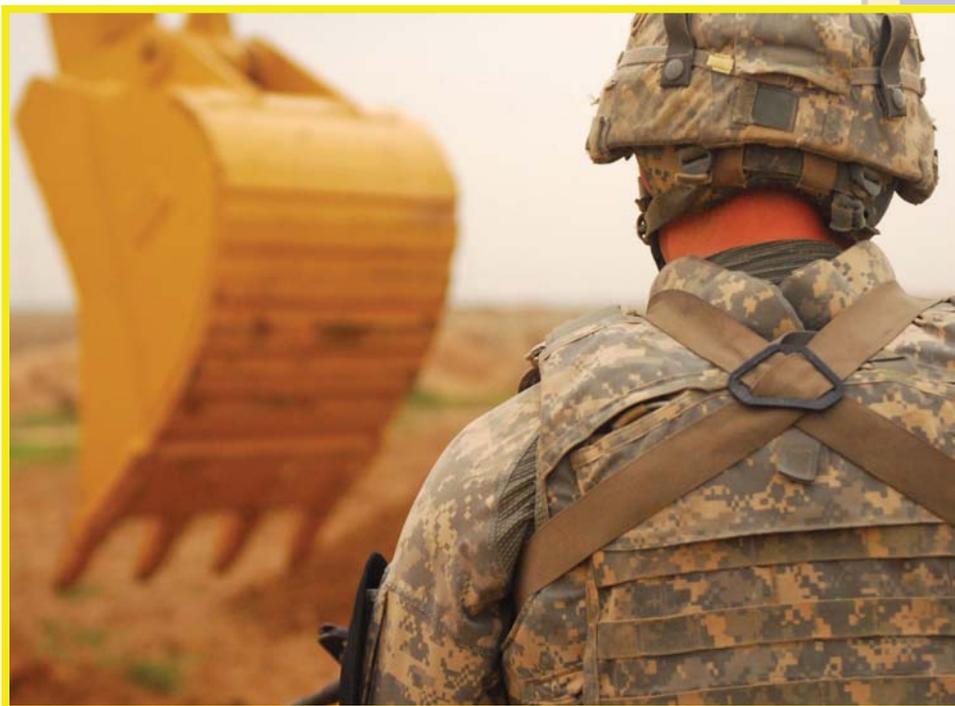
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*Combat engineers with Charlie Co., 1-1 Special Troops Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, out of Fort Bliss, Texas, use metal detectors to assist in the search of a weapons cache in Kirkuk, Iraq, March 27. The search started after an informant came forward and made the Ready First Combat Team aware of a possible weapon cache in the area, the leadership immediately began putting together a team to deny insurgents access to the weapons.*



*A Soldier with 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, out of Fort Stewart, Ga. watches as a soldier with 12th Field Iraqi Army used their heavy digging equipment to search a field in Kirkuk, Iraq for weapons, March 27. The search started after an informant came forward and made the Ready First Combat Team aware of a possible weapon cache in the area, the leadership immediately began putting together a team to deny insurgents access to the weapons.*

# SEARCHING FOR WEAPONS, PROTECTING A CITY

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

## FORWARD OPERATING BASE WARRIOR, KIRKUK, Iraq

After an informant came forward and made the Ready First Combat Team aware of a possible weapon cache in the area, the leadership immediately began putting together a team to deny insurgents access to the weapons, March 27 in Kirkuk, Iraq.

This mission brought together, combat engineers with Charlie Co., 1-1 Special Troops Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, out of Fort Bliss, Texas, a military working dog team and Soldiers with 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, out of Fort Stewart, Ga., and their Iraqi partners, as a search team.

This cache search was a first for the combat engineers, who spend most of their time clearing the various routes used by security forces in Kirkuk but not a first for the Task Force Marne Soldiers or their Iraqi partners.

"We're out almost every day working together searching for weapons in the area," said a Combined Security Force Soldier.

The Kirkuk CSF soldiers provided security while Iraqi soldiers of 12th Field Iraqi Army used their heavy digging equipment to search the area. To assist their ISF partners in searching the area the Ready First Combat Team provided various metal detectors and a Mk. 1 Husky, a military mine-detection vehicle.

Even though during this mission the soldiers came out empty-handed, they all know they accomplished a greater mission, according to Sgt. Travis Harvey, a Ship Rock, N.M. and team leader with Charlie Co.

"We all know what we do is important," said Sgt. Harvey. "Even if we don't find anything we all know that we are denying insurgents the use of the area and they know we are still out here looking for them."

Searching for weapons is perhaps one of the most essential missions ISF and U.S. Soldiers participate in.

"By getting out here and looking for the weapons we make the city more secure for the citizens and security forces," said Sgt. Harvey. "We don't want any more injuries or deaths in the area so we will do what we can to prevent the insurgents from attacking us."

*Combat engineers with Charlie Co., 1-1 Special Troops Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, out of Fort Bliss, Texas, look out into the field for possible bunkers while assisting in the search of a weapons cache in Kirkuk, Iraq, March 27. The search started after an informant came forward and made the Ready First Combat Team aware of a possible weapon cache in the area, the leadership immediately began putting together a team to deny insurgents access to the weapons.*





## Family of Sol receive medical attention

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

The line of widows, wives, children, mothers and sisters of soldiers of the Sons of Iraq reached from their headquarters building in Hawijah, near Kirkuk, Iraq, all the way to the end of the road and each of them had a huge smile on their face.

These women and children gathered at the Sol headquarters, March 24, to receive much needed clothes, shoes, food and medical attention from Soldiers of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Armor Regiment, 37th Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division out of Fort Bliss, Texas.

"We did this to show our appreciation to the Sol, they have assisted us greatly since arriving and their families have made many sacrifices," said Capt. Scott Wares, who also did a project much like this one during his last deployment is an Orange Co., Calif. native and commander of HHC, 1/37th AR.

"These women and children are very happy to receive the medical attention and supplies they need, in a secure environment," said Khalaf Ibrahim Ali, known as Abu Adnan and the Sol contractor in Hawijah.

Abu Adnan went on to explain that many of the families cannot afford to go to the doctor or the medicine from minor pains, colds or respiratory problems.

"That is exactly what we are here to help with basic medical care," said 1st Lt. Jason Hrdina, the battalion physician assistant for 1/37 AR.

1st Lt. Hrdina brought along four of his medics, one of them a female medic to assist the women; these medics assisted more than 300 people.

"It is very important to these women that a female medic is present so they get the care they need, many of them probably would not have seen a medic if we didn't have one here," said Sgt. Lisa Moore, a San Antonio, Texas native and female medic for 1/37 AR.

After being looked at by the medics if they needed to the families then went to another room where the children were able to pick out new shoes, clothing and the women received food and jackets. One of the women, who asked to be called Manar, whose husband was injured fighting with the Sol, was particularly happy to see the Soldiers and receive the assistance.

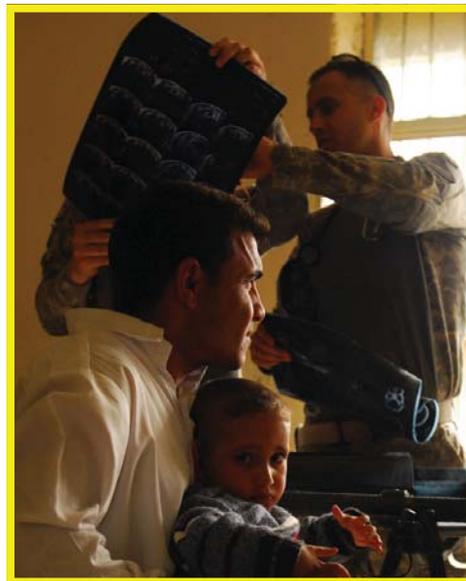
"Thank you so much," she said through an interpreter. "My husband cannot work anymore so to receive food and clothing makes my family so happy."

After receiving the clothing and food the children were able to stop by and see the 1/37 AR Chaplain Cpt. Abrahamyoung Ki Kim, to receive candy and beanie babies.

In a community where many of the people are still suffering these Soldiers truly brightened the day for the families of the Sol and plan to do so many more times.



*A mother of a Son of Iraq, speaks to Sgt. Lisa Moore, a San Antonio, Texas native and female medic with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Armor Regiment, 37th Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division out of Fort Bliss, Texas about medical problems she has been experiencing, during a medical aid mission for the families of the Sol at the Sol Headquarters in Hawijah, near Kirkuk, Iraq, March 24.*



*A Soldier with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Armor Regiment, 37th Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division out of Fort Bliss, Texas helps a wife, of a Sons of Iraq member, find clothing for her child, during a humanitarian and medical aid mission at the Sol Headquarters in Hawijah, near Kirkuk, Iraq, March 24.*



*Soldiers of Apache Troop, 6th Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division and 15th Iraqi Army Brigade Commando Company unload a UH-60 Blackhawk, flown by the 25th Combat Aviation Brigade, 25th Infantry Division (Wheels of Lightning) out of Wheeler Army Airfield, Hawaii, after completing their final air assault training mission, March 30 in Rubaydah, outside of Kirkuk, Iraq.*

# Air assault mission builds confidence

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**

Adrenaline ran high as UH-60 Blackhawks landed on Patrol Base Doria and the Soldiers of Apache Troop, 6th Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division and their partners with 15th Iraqi Army Brigade Commando Company, began their final air assault training mission, March 30 in Rubaydah, outside of Kirkuk, Iraq.

"The purpose of this mission is to prove the Commandos are properly prepared when they have a real-life air assault mission," said Sgt. 1st Class Jared Stevens, a Southern Pines, N.C. native and platoon sergeant for Apache Troop.

Sergeant First Class Stevens, is on his second deployment to the Kirkuk area and said he's has seen a vast improvement in the IA soldiers.

"The Commandos are a perfect example when I first saw them in 2003 they had no real training, just a title," he said. "Now they are Soldiers and have proven they are ready to support their country."

To prepare for this mission the Commandos trained on reflexive firing, moving as a squad, loading and unloading a helicopter, safety in a helicopter and moving to an objective, according to 1st Lt. Galen Cipperly, platoon leader for Apache Troop.

The skills these Commandos obtained during training were put to the test during their air assault mission, March 30.

During this mission the Commandos flew on two UH-60 Blackhawks, flown by the 25th Combat Aviation Brigade, 25th Infantry Division (Wheels of Lightning) out of Wheeler Army Airfield, Hawaii, to Rubaydah where they quickly unloaded the helicopters and set-up security while the Blackhawks took off again.

After the Blackhawks left, the Commandos and Troopers patrolled the village, talked to citizens and learned more about the needs of the area, according to 1st Lt. Galen.

The completion of this exercise marked the end of training missions for these Commandos, now they will begin weekly missions in the area to practice their skills and to build relationships with the citizens of the area.

"We are all looking forward to the weekly missions," said Pishtiwan Tofiq, a vice officer with the Commandos. "Now that we have done our job without any mistakes we are confident in ourselves to support our country."



*Sgt. 1st Class Jared Stevens, a Southern Pines, N.C. native and platoon sergeant of Apache Troop, 6th Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division out of Fort Bliss, Texas, and demonstrates the use of a "littler" with 15th Iraqi Army Brigade Commando Company, before their final air assault training mission, March 30 in Rubaydah, outside of Kirkuk, Iraq*



*Spc. Matt Osborne, a crew chief with the 25th Combat Aviation Brigade, 25th Infantry Division (Wheels of Lightning) out of Wheeler Army Airfield, Hawaii, goes over safety precautions in a UH-60 Blackhawk before Apache Troop, 6th Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division out of Fort Bliss, Texas, and 15th Iraqi Army Brigade Commando Company's final air assault training mission, March 30 in Rubaydah, outside of Kirkuk, Iraq.*



*Soldiers of Apache Troop, 6th Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division and 15th Iraqi Army Brigade Commando Company load a UH-60 Blackhawk, flown by the 25th Combat Aviation Brigade, 25th Infantry Division (Wheels of Lightning) out of Wheeler Army Airfield, Hawaii, during their final air assault training mission, March 30 in Rubaydah, outside of Kirkuk, Iraq.*

# Around the



# e Battlefield



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Women that attended the Widows and Orphans group meeting in Hawijah, near Kirkuk, Iraq, March 24, to discuss Women's History Month and medical issues in the area with a representative of the U.S. Department of State and Soldiers of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division out of Fort Bliss, Texas, reading over the Women's History Month Presentation.

## Women of Hawijah meet to express concerns

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**

Women of all ages gathered in the downstairs in the Hawijah Government Building, to hold a meeting they had been looking forward to for weeks, this was the day that a senior medic with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division and a Foreign Affairs Officer with the Department of State were coming to their meeting, near Kirkuk, Iraq, March 24. Erin Eddy, a Foreign Affairs Officer that has been in the Kirkuk area for a month, arranged this meeting with Fowzeanwer Ali, leader for the Hawijah Women's and Orphan's group, to have an opportunity to talk about Women's History Month, the elections and jobs for women in the area.

Eddy, brought with her Staff Sgt. Vittoria Mejia, a senior medic with the Ready First Combat Team and a El Paso, Texas native, to talk with the women about various medical issues, the hospitals capabilities and ways to help them with their issues.

As soon as the meeting began the questions about Women's History in the U.S. began pouring in, according to Staff Sgt. Mejia.

"It was truly incredible the questions they were asking and how much they wanted to know about our role in the government," she added.

The women also proudly discussed the elections that occurred on March 7, which all 40 women in the room said they participated in.

One woman spoke about why she believed the women in the area went to vote.

"We voted because we want the best government for the community and for the women in the community, we are half the population and need leadership to represent us," she said.

Another topic discussed was women's history in the workforce.

Only one woman in the room currently had a job but everyone in the room needed one, since most of them are widows, to support their families.

During the medical portion of the meeting the women were able to express their concerns about the hospitals and health care available to them in Hawijah.

The main problem for the women here is the ability to pay for doctors visits, said one of the women.

Many of the women in the area are widows and are not able to work because of their children.

Another problem for the women is the lack of female doctors in the area, she continued.



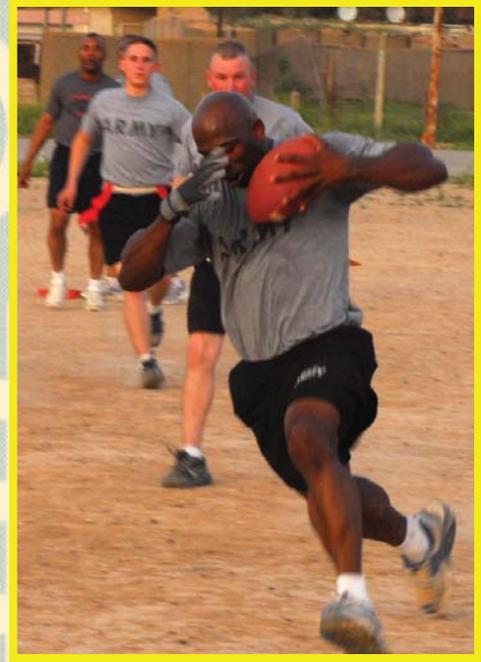
Staff Sgt. Vittoria Mejia, a senior medic with the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division out of Fort Bliss, Texas and a El Paso native in speaks to women of the Widows and Orphans group in Hawijah, near Kirkuk, Iraq, March 24, during a meeting to gain knowledge of medical issues in the area.

To help the women with these two concerns Eddy is planning on setting up basic medical classes, with instructors coming from the Ready First Combat Team. With these classes the women will be able to provide self-care to themselves and their children and also assist other women with treatment. Eddy assured the women that all the assistance would not just be coming for the U.S. Military but that they also needed to have faith in their government.



"Now that you have a new government, the leaders will start working on the needs of the community," she said. "Just give them time."

Erin L. Eddy, a Foreign Service Officer with the U.S. Department of State, talks to women that attended the Widows and Orphans group meeting in Hawijah, near Kirkuk, Iraq, March 24. Eddy joined Soldiers of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division out of Fort Bliss, Texas, to discuss Women's History Month and medical concerns of the women.



Cpl. Jeremy Jackson, a member of the "Blackhawks" 6th Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division out of Fort Bliss, Texas, flag football team dodges a player from 2nd Battalion, 3rd Field Artillery also of 1/1 AD during the Forward Operating Base Warrior Flag Football Championship, April 4. In the end the title of Flag Football Champions was given to Alpha Battery, 2/3rd FA.

## 2/3rd FA, flag-football champions

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 tournament started off with nine teams and within a few months it was down to the final two 6th Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment and 2nd Battalion, 3rd Field Artillery both of 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division out of Fort Bliss, Texas, on April 5 at Forward Operating Base Warrior these two teams gave their all for the title of Flag Football Champions.

Both of the teams have been playing together for more than a year and have won numerous battalion, brigade and post tournaments on Fort Bliss and despite their rivalry both play for the same reasons.

"Playing football builds of esprit de corps and boosts morale for all of the Soldiers out here," said Sgt. 1st Class Michael Thornton, S-1 Non-commissioned officer in charge for 6/1st Cav.

Spc. John Canterella, the captain and receiver for 2/3rd FA's team compared the football games to being back in the states with friends.

"It isn't typical Army structure out here we just play ball, just like home," said Spc. Canterella. Just playing ball is exactly what gave the title of Flag Football Champions to the Soldiers of Alpha Battery, 2/3rd FA, who call themselves "Afternoon Delight" in honor of their favorite movie *Anchor-man*.

After a few hours of practice before the game these Soldiers played an intense hour of football against their Blackhawk rivals and won by two points.

During the first half of the game the Soldiers of 2/3rd FA were down by a touchdown and quickly made a come-back after intercepting the ball to beat 6/1st Cav.

Even though the first flag football tournament for the Ready First Brigade on Forward Operating Base Warrior, Kirkuk, Iraq has ended the teams promise there will be plenty more.

"As soon as one ends another will begin until we go back to the states," said Spc. Canterella. "This is what we love to do, play ball."

Sergeant Nykita Riley of 501st Brigade Support Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, who is from Columbus, Ohio presents part of the 501st BSB Women's History Month program.



# 501st Women's History Program

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

## FORWARD OPERATING BASE WARRIOR, KIRKUK, Iraq

Soldiers from 501st Brigade Support Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division out of Fort Bliss, Texas, hosted a Women's History Month program at the Forward Operating Base Warrior Dining Facility on FOB Warrior, Iraq, March 24.

Command Sergeant Major James Daniels, the Ready First, 1/1 AD command sergeant major also attended the celebration.

"It was great," said CSM Daniels, "501st did a phenomenal job, led by their women currently serving in Iraq and Kirkuk."

The 501st celebration featured a "Who am I?" slide presentation that gave clues to famous females in American history like Michelle Obama, Hillary Clinton, Sonia Sotomayor and many others as Soldiers in the audience guessed their identities.

Command Sergeant Major Daniels continued by stating the "Who am I?" presentation identified key women in American history who paved the way for female Soldiers to serve in Iraq today.

The presentation also featured women from as early as the 1920's, women who first entered the military, women who were heroes in wars America participated in, women who excelled in business, and women from several different cultures, races, and backgrounds who achieved greatness.

Sergeant Nykita Riley of 501st BSB, who is from Columbus, Ohio, stated the presentation that she helped research and prepare was informative.

"I was aware (of the women in American history) a little bit," said Sgt. Riley, "But not as much, until I started doing research for the program today. It's (presentation) very inspiring and it helps me to reach the bigger goal."

Sergeant First Class Roger Raber of 501st BSB also gained more knowledge of Women's contributions to America. "I knew some of the trivia about a few of them, but not all of them," he said. "I learned a great deal today."

First Sergeant Stacy Turner of 501st BSB, who is from Denver, Colo. has served in the United States Army for 18 years and shared her personal experience about becoming a first sergeant.

"It's a lot of hard work. It doesn't matter if you are a female or male, you do your best and just overcome the obstacles."



First place was taken by Milwaukee, Wis., native, Staff Sgt. Lawrence Smith of 1-1 Special Troops Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division (Ready First), out of Fort Bliss, Texas.

*A team of runners from 6th Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, from Fort Bliss, Texas, pose after successfully completing the April 1st Fun Run on Forward Operating Base Warrior, Iraq.*

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

## Team Bliss runner wins April Fool's Fun Run

### FORWARD OPERATING BASE WARRIOR, Iraq

A bright sunny day with clear blue skies was the background for a energy-charged crowd of Airmen and Soldiers chit-chatting, stretching, talking and laughing as they prepared for the Air Force sponsored 4.1-mile Fun Run on Forward Operating Base Warrior, April 1.

Close to 90 servicemembers gathered on FOB Warrior to have fun, maybe place and receive a "Krab" April Fools' Day t-shirt.

First place was taken by Milwaukee, Wis., native Staff Sgt. Lawrence Smith of 1-1 Special Troops Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, out of Fort Bliss, Texas (Ready First).

Staff Sergeant Smith, who is a member of the Fort Bliss 10-Miler team, was described by one of the race facilitators as "that guy who always comes in first."

"This is my fifth one," Staff Sgt. Smith said. "I won three and placed in the top three or better in each race I entered."

Second place went to 1st Lt. Richard Morrow of 6th Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment, Ready First, and a Benton, Ark., native.

Third place was secured by Pfc. Gregory Templeton of 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, out of Fort Stewart, Ga., and a Danville, Calif, native.

"This is my first time placing!" said Pfc. Templeton, who entered six races in six months.

Sergeant First Class Lance Clark, Ready First, came in fourth.

"I haven't run in (a race) in six years," Sgt. 1st Class Clark said.

Jerry Manning, a 56-year-old contractor with West Star, came in fifth.

The race went well as the participants were given water, Gatorade, t-shirts and the opportunity to relax, stay fit and have fun.

# STB Chaplain's Assistant awarded at Prayer Lunch

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

## FORWARD OPERATING BASE WARRIOR, KIRKUK, Iraq

The 1-1 Special Troops Battalion of (Ready First) 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division out of Fort Bliss, Texas, held a prayer luncheon at the Forward Operating Base Warrior, Iraq. Colonel Patricia Sellers, the 1-1 STB commander, declared the prayer luncheon an opportunity to give thanks for all the relationships between 1-1 STB and their Iraqi partners, the civilian employees STB works with daily and other units who help bring peace to the Kirkuk area.

She then introduced the speaker, Chaplain Colonel Bryan Walker the 3rd Infantry Division Chaplain who actually used to be the Ready First Brigade Chaplain in 2002 and 2003.

Chaplain Col. Walker told the Soldiers, who met for prayer, that encouragement is one of the most important tools we have against depression.

"It's a great tool, a great weapon we have to fight against depression," he said. "Anyone here can give a word of encouragement. All you have to do is look beyond yourself."

He went on to say, "Encouragement is something everyone can do regardless of rank."

Throughout the prayer luncheon, prayer for our country, our leaders, our Soldiers and Families and the Kirkuk area was led by Chap. Captain John Lee, the 1-1 STB chaplain and other officers, NCOs, and enlisted.

Along with the prayers was the joyous singing of "What a Fellowship" and "Amazing Grace" also led by Chaplain Lee.

At the end of the prayer luncheon, Master Sergeant Paul Davidson, Task Force Marne Senior Chaplain Assistant and Chaplain Walker presented Sgt. Sara Misorek, 1-1 STB Chaplain's Assistant, with a certificate, a trophy, Marne football, Marne duffle bag and a Marne Camel Back for winning the Chaplain Assistant of the Quarter.

"I was her Advanced Individual Training instructor," said Master Sgt. Davidson. "She showed up to the board and did a phenomenal job."

Sergeant Sara Misorek shared the credit of her success with her fellow Soldiers.

"I had help from my fellow NCOs and Chaplain Assistants," Sgt. Misorek said.

Before leaving, 1-1 STB Soldiers were given small packets which included a compact disc with 1-1 STB photos accompanied by music with candy in the same pouch.



*Master Sergeant Paul Davidson, Task Force Marne Senior Chaplain Assistant presents Sgt. Sara Misorek, 1-1 STB Chaplain's Assistant, with a certificate, a trophy, Marne football, Marne duffle bag and a Marne Camel Back for winning the Chaplain Assistant of the Quarter.*

APRIL 2010





*Servicemembers of Forward Operating Base Warrior, Iraq participate in a run to show appreciation for military working dogs April 10.*

# FOB shows appreciation to MWD

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

## FORWARD OPERATING BASE WARRIOR, Iraq

The 506th Air Expeditionary Group's Moral, Welfare and Recreation Center sponsored a Military Working Dog Awareness run at Air Force Village on Forward Operating Base Warrior, Iraq April 10. "We put it on so everybody can show appreciation for the work (the dogs) do whether on the FOB or outside in the cities," said Spc. Charles Nelson, 91st Military Police Attachment, native of Ahoskie, N.C. "It's good that units and people are actually putting on things like this, because the MWD are often not appreciated."

Minutes before the run, three of the military working dog handlers showed off their dog's bite training to the participants in the race.

"It's just doing what dogs have always done—chase something and bite it," said Spc. Aaron Tippit, 248th Medical Detachment Veterinary Services, a native of Casper, Wyo., who works with some of the dogs.

Air Force Staff Sergeant Casey Ovellette, 506th Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron, a native of Lewiston, Maine who has been working with dogs for six years, invited servicemembers to put on a protective, padded jacket and allow a dog to bite the sleeve.

Private First Class Apolonio Ostigin, 72nd Signal Battalion, a native of Huston, Texas, was the first to volunteer.

"I'm getting my adrenalin pumped before the run," Pfc. Ostigin said after allowing a working dog to bite down on the padded sleeve jerking it side to side. I wanted to do something fun and show appreciation for these working dogs, he said.

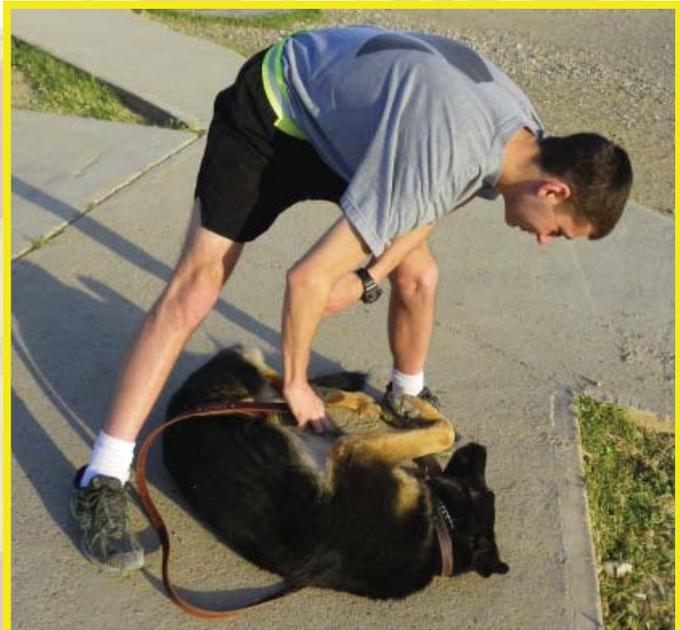
The only other servicemember brave enough to volunteer was Air Force Staff Sgt. Bonilla Maria of the 506th Expeditionary Logistical Readiness Squadron.

Not all of the military working dogs had aggressive training; some of the dogs were trained to find explosives and other weapons.

"These dogs don't have the aggressive training; they're just explosive dogs," said Staff Sgt. Craig Chambers, 252nd Military Police Detachment, who is from Pinghamton, N.Y., of his dog Milo and some of the other dogs.

"We actually go through and train our dogs...they deploy with us... they PCS with us," he said. After the attack demonstration was complete, about 200 Soldiers, Airmen, contractors and military working dogs ran about three miles to show appreciation for the heroic efforts of the dogs.

"These dogs require a lot of care and attention. It's good that people appreciate what they do," said Air Force Staff Sgt. Paul Quilty, 506th ESFS, who is from Coral Springs, Fla. MWD CONT PG 18



*A Soldier plays with his military working dog on Forward Operating Base Warrior, Iraq April 10, 2010 before the Military Working Dog Awareness run.*

*Staff Sergeant Casey Ovellette, 506th Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron, a native of Lewiston, Maine who has been working with dogs for six years, demonstrates one of the abilities of military working dogs at the Military Working Dog Appreciation run on Forward Operating Base Warrior, Iraq, April 10.*



*"I'm getting my adrenalin pumped before the run," said Pfc. Apolonio Ostigin of 72nd Signal Battalion, a native of Huston, Texas was the first to volunteer to let a military working dog take a bite at the Military Working Dog Appreciation run on Forward Operating Base Warrior, Iraq, April 10.*

MWD CONT -  
 Staff Sergeant Lawrence Smith of 1-1 Special Troops Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division out of Fort Bliss, Texas (Ready First) who is originally from Milwaukee, Wis. crossed the finish line first.  
 Captain Maurice Harford of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Ready First, who is from San Antonio, Texas came in second.  
 First Lieutenant Richard Morrow of 6th Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment, Ready First came in third.



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-

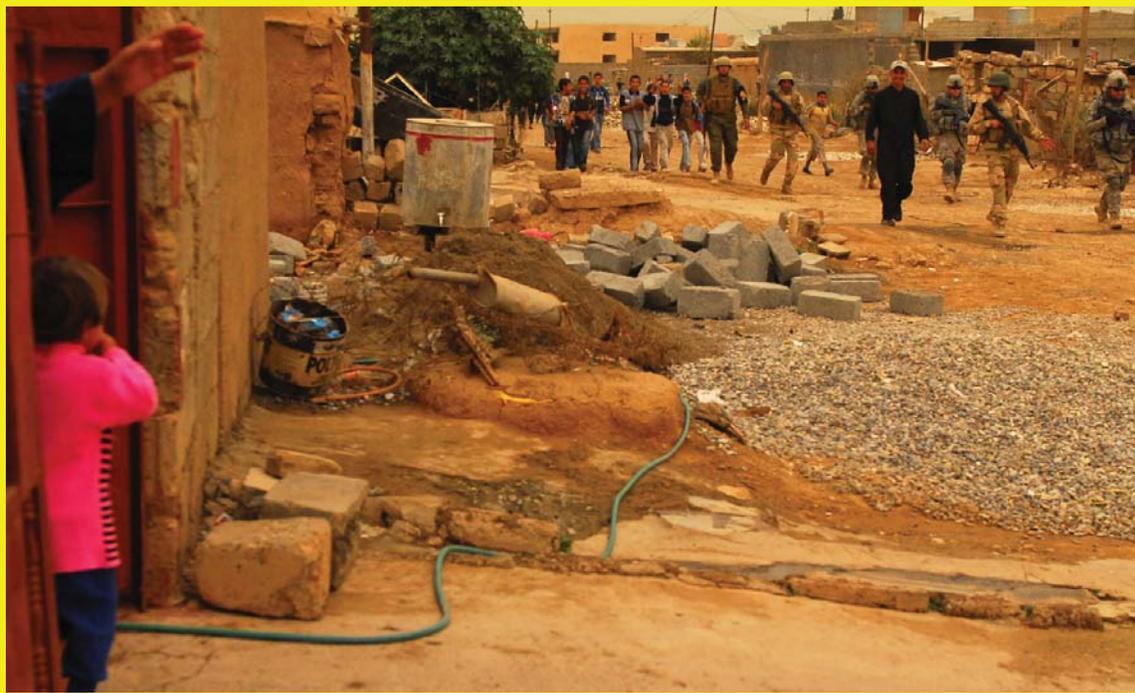


*A Soldier with Alpha Co., 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division out of Fort Stewart, Ga., talks to a group of Iraqi children that attend school in Amal Shabi near Kirkuk, Iraq.*

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*



Sergeant Kito Queen, an Alexandria, La. native and a senior line medic with Fox Co. 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division out of Fort Stewart, Ga. punches his opponent Sgt. Micah Brown, a Decator, Ga. native and paralegal with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division of Fort Bliss, Texas, during the boxing Smoker 2, April 4, on Forward Operating Base Warrior, Kirkuk, Iraq.

# Fight night at FOB Warrior

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

## FORWARD OPERATING BASE WARRIOR, KIRKUK, Iraq

Behind the stage amateur boxers were taping their hands and warming up, out front a crowd of cheering Soldiers and Airmen were gathering around the stage where U.S. Army DJ known as DJ Swift was getting the crowd pumped for the fight night.

This familiar "ding-ding" was sounded and the crowd fell quiet as the first match began, two female Airmen stationed on FOB Warrior were the first to fight.

After throwing dozens of punches, Air Force Airmen 1st Class Yolanda Solido-Espinal, a native of El Paso, Texas and an information management specialist with 11th Apparitions Group of Washington, D.C. was named the champion.

After their fight it was time for the males to take the stage.

The second fight was possibly one of the more interesting for the amped-up crowd.

The 208-pound Sgt. Micah Brown, a native of Decator, Ga. and paralegal with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, out of Fort Bliss, Texas, took on the 280-pound Sgt. Kito Queen, an Alexandria, La. native and a senior line medic with Fox Co. 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division out of Fort Stewart, Ga. Both of the Soldiers put up a good fight for the crowd but in the end Sgt. Queen was named the champion.

After this fight the remainder of the fights was themed Army vs. Air Force, with the Army coming out on top winning three out of the five fights.

"I think this is a good morale boost for the FOB," said Air Force Staff Sgt. Jerred S. Mitchell, a native of Thompson, Ohio and the president of the E-5 and E-6 club on FOB Warrior and project manager for the event. "These Soldiers and Airmen can come out here and get some stress out."

The Soldiers and Airmen of FOB Warrior will have plenty of opportunities to release some stress with the Smoker being held monthly giving the FOB a Sunday to relax and enjoy fight night.

# Blackhawks awarded for accomplishments

U.S. Army Story by Pfc. Jessica R. Luhrs

U.S. Army Photos by Staff Sgt. Christina Turnipseed

*1st Brigade, 1st Armored Division Public Affairs*

## **FORWARD OPERATING BASE WARRIOR, KIRKUK, Iraq**

During an award ceremony, on Forward Operating Base Warrior, April 2, Blackhawk Soldiers of 6th Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division out of Fort Bliss, Texas, were recognized for their outstanding accomplishments during Operation Iraqi Freedom. Distinguished guests of this event included Col. Larry Swift, Ready First Combat Team commander, Lt. Col. Brian J. McHugh, the Blackhawk commander, Command Sgt. Maj. James Daniels, Ready First Combat Team command sergeant major and Command Sgt. Maj. Stanley Varner, the Blackhawk command sergeant major.

During the ceremony 1st Lt. Matthew Mitchell, a Richmond, Va. Native and a platoon leader with Alpha Troop, was awarded a Purple Heart for injuries he sustained during combat operations, Dec. 28, 2009.

Twelve of his Soldiers in Alpha Troop were also awarded with a Combat Action Badge for their actions Dec. 28, 2009 when they were engaged by the enemy.

For outstanding meritorious achievements two Blackhawk Soldiers were awarded the Army Commendation Medal

Also, 79 Soldiers were awarded the Army Achievement Medal for outstanding military accomplishments.

Following the ceremony Lt. Col. McHugh spoke to his Blackhawks about how proud he is of them for all of their accomplishment, since arriving in November, and even gave them a day off to relax and enjoy the FOB Warrior football tournament on Sunday.

"It is very important while you are here to get some rest and enjoy yourselves sometimes," said Lt. Col. McHugh. "So I do not want to see anyone at work from 11:00 p.m., Saturday to 6:00 a.m. on Monday, go enjoy the game Blackhawks."

Receiving the Combat Action Badge: 1st Lt. Matthew Mitchell, Sgt. 1st Class Sean Schnick, Cpl. Jason Mireles, Spc. Steven Shaw, Cpl. Joseph Scrafani, Spc. Derek Adcock, Spc. Eder Andrade, Spc. Elias Kayat, Spc. Patrick Belcher, Cpl. Gregory Mayer, Spc. David Lee, Spc. Joshua Bebbino, Spc. Seth Naranjo and Pfc. Juan Rivera.

Receiving the Army Commendation Medal: Spc. Glenn Meyer and Spc. Tyler Furlich.

*During an award ceremony, on Forward Operating Base Warrior, April 2, Blackhawk Soldiers of 6th Squadron, 1st Cavalry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division out of Fort Bliss, Texas, were recognized for their outstanding accomplishments during Operation Iraqi Freedom by Distinguished guests of this event Lt. Col. Brian J. McHugh, the Blackhawk commander, and Command Sgt. Maj. Stanley Varner, the Blackhawk command sergeant major.*



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*Spc. Shanon Sumter, an Aiken, S.C. native and a truck driver with Alpha Co., 501st Brigade Support Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division out of Fort Bliss, Texas receives assistance from teammate and fellow truck driver Sgt. Nick Anderson, a native of Atlanta, during tire flip challenge at the Mungadai challenge. Soldiers of 501st BSB participated in the Mungadai challenge, April 3 on Forward Operating Base Warrior, Kirkuk, Iraq and described the challenge as both tough and rewarding.*

# Mungadai pushes Soldiers to the limit

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

**FORWARD OPERATING BASE WARRIOR, KIRKUK, Iraq**

According to legend, the Munga-Dai were the Special Forces of Genghis Khan's Mongol army but now the term "Mungadai" has become an adventure challenge, like an Ironman competition, that tests Soldiers' endurance and warrior skills as a team.

Soldiers of 501st Brigade Support Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division out of Fort Bliss, Texas participated in the 501st BSB Mungadai challenge, April 3 on Forward Operating Base Warrior, Kirkuk, Iraq and described the challenge as both tough and rewarding.

The Soldiers that participated were on teams of five, and have been training for the event for more than a month, according to Spc. Virgil Raines, a Tampa Bay, Fl. native and a welder attached to 501st BSB. During the event the teams were required to fire their weapons, disassemble then reassemble the weapon and immediately begin a two-mile run to a checkpoint.

Upon arrival at the checkpoint the teams had to use their combat lifesaving skills on a "patient" then carry the 175 pound "patient" on a litter to the next checkpoint two miles away.

These two portions of the competition required the most teamwork, according to Pfc. Maritess Key, a native of Bagnio City, Philippines and a 501st BSB Soldier.

"We had to stay together at all times and find innovative ways to complete each mission with all team-members," said Pfc. Key.

After the teams arrived with their litters they participated in a water jug carry, tire flip, push-up, pull-up, sit-up and chin-up competition at the Warrior Gym and Track.

Following the events the winners, the Wolfpack Team of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 501st BSB, received prizes from Command Sgt. Maj. Ramon Caisido, a native of Dumunig, Guam and 501st BSB command sergeant major.

The first Mungadai challenge has only been over for a few days and Command Sgt. Maj. Caisido said he already has had a lot of Soldiers ask him about the next competition and how they can participate.

"They want to challenge themselves and push their limits after seeing the first competition they all know this is the way to do it," said Command Sgt. Maj. Caisido.



*Spc. Virgil Raines, a native of Tampa Bay, Fl. and a welder attached to 501st Brigade Support Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, out of Fort Bliss, Texas, receives assistance from fellow teammates during the Mungadai challenge. Soldiers of 501st BSB participated in the Mungadai challenge, April 3 on Forward Operating Base Warrior, Kirkuk, Iraq and described the challenge as both tough and rewarding.*



*Sgt. Nick Anderson, a native of Atlanta and a truck driver with Alpha Co., 501st Brigade Support Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division out of Fort Bliss, Texas, gets motivated by Command Sgt. Maj. James P. Daniels, command sergeant major of 1/1 AD during the Mungadai challenge. Soldiers of 501st BSB participated in the Mungadai challenge, April 3 on Forward Operating Base Warrior, Kirkuk, Iraq and described the challenge as both tough and rewarding.*



*A "Provider" Soldier with 501st Brigade Support Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division out of Fort Bliss, Texas during water jug challenge at the Mungadai challenge. Soldiers of 501st BSB participated in the Mungadai challenge, April 3 on Forward Operating Base Warrior, Kirkuk, Iraq and described the challenge as both tough and rewarding.*



# Around the



# Battlefield



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# **Congratulations to this Ready First Soldier that was 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.

**Spc. Mark Berberette  
A Co., 501st BSB  
Lakeland, Fl.**