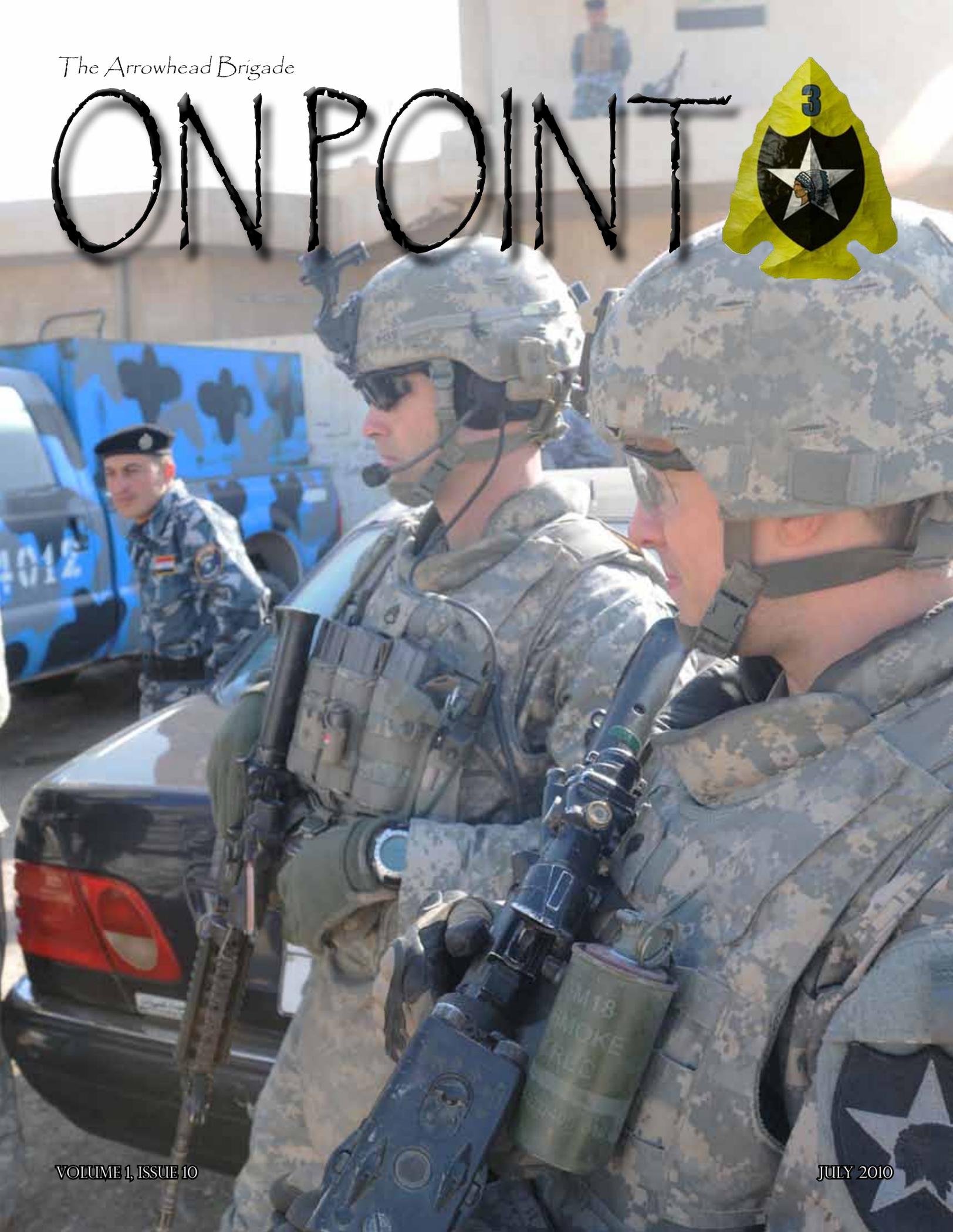


The Arrowhead Brigade

# ON POINT



# NOTE FROM ARROWHEAD 6 AND 7

*“War is an ugly thing, but not the ugliest of things. The decayed and degraded sense of moral and patriotic feeling which thinks that nothing is worth war is much worse. A man who has nothing for which he is willing to fight, nothing he cares about more than his own personal safety, is a miserable creature who has no chance of being free, unless made and kept so by the exertions of better men than himself”*

-- John Stuart Mill

Dear Family and Friends of the Arrowhead Brigade,

Happy Independence Day! As we enter the final month of our long journey here in Iraq, we approach this 4th of July with a combination of feelings: joy that we will soon be home with our loved ones; sorrow at the heroes who will not return with us; hope that we have laid a foundation for a prosperous future in Iraq; and resolve to set our replacement unit up for success during their rotation. We also resolve to take care of each other during our reintegration and reset period. We hope everyone at home is doing well. We also trust you will enjoy the 4th of July fireworks wherever you may be. If it's all the same to you, we think we'll skip the fireworks here. We know what you're thinking: Please, not another weather report! Sorry, but old men have to talk about the weather. It's in the rule book.

But we will keep it short. Hot temperatures; no rain. Any questions? Seriously, we hit a high of 117 this month. About the only break we get is when the dust storms come in to block out the



sun. Please be patient with us if we feel the need to put on a sweat-shirt everywhere we go when we get home.

**Continued Unit Returns.** Well, the Patriots have all but closed on Joint Base Lewis-McChord. Except for a small stay-behind force that is signing over Strykers and other equipment, the whole battalion has now returned. Things are a lot tougher with them gone from the Muqadadiya area, but the Sykes' Regulars have picked up the slack. We are immensely proud of all the Patriots accomplished here. In every area from security to economic development, the Patriots left a positive mark on the citizens of north-central Diyala. Well, done Patriots! And keep a cold one on ice for us. We're not too far behind.

As we told you last month, the 1-23 IN Tomahawks are hot on the Patriots' heels. They are putting

the final touches on the closure of FOB Grizzly, and then they begin the trek home. In fact, their advance elements are already on the ground. This one hurts too, as the Tommies made a real difference in the Khalis area. No mission was too complex, no task too daunting for the Tommies. Just like the Patriots, the heroes of 1-23 Infantry left a profound and permanent mark on the citizens of Diyala.

That leaves us with Sykes' Regulars, the Red Lions, Warhorse, and Frontline Support to finish out the rest of this deployment with us. Each of these great battalions continues everyday to achieve great things. The loss of combat power has not stopped the progress. While we are stretched to keep the tempo up, we do have the advantage assuming the same set now that our replacement unit will assume throughout their year here. It will make for a smoother

transition. Speaking of which, there are already a few Tropic Lightning shoulder patches on the FOB. That's a great sign! It means the end of our tour is finally real and reachable. Our task now is to welcome the Warriors of 2/25 SBCT and make them comfortable operating in this complex environment. Given what we have seen from the great Arrowhead Team thus far, we are confident your Soldiers will set a new standard for this transition.

**Update on Government Formation.** Not really much good news on this front. Things appear to be stalling as each of several parties vies for a position of power. We told you a few months ago that one of the ways to measure the nature of a government was to observe how it transitions power. On the face of it, Iraq doesn't appear to be fairing to well. A deeper look however reveals that things are moving forward. All the competing personalities have at least agreed to meet; no large-scale violence has erupted; and perhaps most importantly, the Iraqis are doing this on their own. We are simply observing and encouraging a rapid resolution. Somehow, our Iraqi friends manage to figure things out sooner or later. It may not always be the solution we envision, but it works for them. We are confident this will too.

**Army Birthday Celebration.** It's hard to believe our Army is 235 years old – one year older in fact, than our nation. This year's commemoration went by without a lot of fanfare. Perhaps we were all too busy. Or perhaps we prefer not to make a big deal of what we do. Rest assured however that each of us who wears the uni-

form, each of us who has sworn to support and defend the Constitution of the United States, we know deep inside what it means to be part of this great brotherhood called the Army. While we drank our allotted one beer that day, we each reflected in our own way what it means to add our names to the honored rolls of U.S. Army Veterans.

**Arrowhead Fallen Soldiers: SGT Israel O'Bryan, CPL William Yauch, and SPC Christopher Opat.** Nothing Soldiers do in training can prepare them for the tragic loss of their brothers. We are saddened this month by the loss of three of ours. SGT O'Bryan and CPL Yauch were lost on the 11th of June when a suicide bomber drove his car into their patrol. SPC Opat died of non-combat related injuries on the 15th of June. These men were all superb Soldiers who made a real difference every day, and who inspired those around them. We held Memorial Ceremonies in

their honor here at FOB Warhorse. Judging by both the turnout and the words spoken by their friends, these men were some of the best our Army has offer. As such, they were also among the best our nation has to offer. Please keep their Families in your prayers.

We want to close this month by extending a special thanks to you, our friends and Families. Your love and support has sustained us these long months. The phone calls, e-mails, and care packages kept us going when our minds and bodies said we were through. Keep the faith a while longer. Know that we will finish strong with your help. We can't wait to see you all when we get home. Until then, we are humbly...

**Arrowhead 6 and 7**

**ARROWHEAD**

**SECOND TO NONE**

**AMERICA'S CORPS!**



# CONTENTS

Private 1st Class Javier Gomez, from Madison, Wis., an assistant gunner for Battle Co., 5/20 Inf., watches a cow as he passes by during a clearing mission in northern Birtiz, Diyala province, Iraq. (US Army photo by Pvt. Zachary Zuber)

Arrowhead 6 and 7 Send.....Page 2	Supporting Iraqi Elections.....Page 26
Brothers Reunited.....Page 6	Training for Checkpoints.....Page 28
Jalula Clearing.....Page 8	Partners Assault by Air.....Page 30
Preparing for Home.....Page 10	Soldier Shots.....Page 32
Chicken Co-Op Success.....Page 12	Diyala Drawdown.....Page 34
Repairing Damaged Hearts.....Page 14	Thanks Through Stone.....Page 36
Caring for Those in Need.....Page 16	Frontline Induction.....Page 38
Photos From the Fourth.....Page 18	Hailstorm After Dark.....Page 40
Handing Over Caldwell.....Page 20	Arrowhead In Action.....Page 42
Chubiernot at Dawn.....Page 22	Igniting the Future.....Page 44
Tomahawks Bring the Heat....Page 24	Final Thoughts.....Page 46

3-2 SBCT Commander  
Col. David Funk

3-2 SBCT Command Sgt. Maj.  
Command Sgt. Maj. Alan Bjerke

3-2 SBCT Public Affairs Office

1stLt. Jennifer Palmeri.....Public Affairs Officer  
Sgt. 1st Class JD Phippen.....NCOIC/Broadcast Journalist  
Pvt. Zachary Zuber.....Print Journalist/Layout and Design  
Pfc. Adrian Muehe.....Print Journalist

The ON POINT is a command information magazine authorized for members of the U.S. Army and the 3-2 SBCT community. Contents of the ON POINT are not necessarily the official views of, or endorsed by, the U.S. Government, the Department of Defense or Department of the Army. The editorial content of the magazine is the responsibility of the 3-2 SBCT Public Affairs Office. ON POINT is prepared monthly by the 3-2 SBCT Public Affairs Office, which includes Soldiers of the 135th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment. Any story or photo submission should be forwarded to the editor at [jennifer.palmeri@sbct1.army.mil](mailto:jennifer.palmeri@sbct1.army.mil).

## ON THE COVER

Soldiers from Crazyhorse Troop, 1/14th Cav., look on as leaders from both U.S. Forces and Iraqi Police plan a patrol in Jalula, Iraq, on Feb. 10. The groups walked through the local market to show a strong security presence in the community. (US Army photo by Pfc. Adrian Muehe)

## THE BACK COVER

This marble carving of the emblem for 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, was created by Charles Wagner, from Rainier, Wash., a mechanic with General Dynamics Land Systems. He will present it, with a shadow box allowing it to stay lit, to the brigade at the end of their deployment to Iraq. (US Army photo by Pvt. Zachary Zuber)

# DEPLOYMENT REUNITES BROTHERS

Story and Photos by  
Pvt. Zachary Zuber  
135th MPAD

DIYALA, Iraq — “The best memory I had of my brother was going to the airport when he left to live with his dad when I was four,” said Specialist Joshua Wagner, a cook from Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 296th Brigade Support Battalion, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division.

With his own father not available, Spc. Wagner was placed in a foster home for a year until he was able to return to his mother, but after saying goodbye at the airport, the two brothers lost contact. During those difficult years, moving in and out of foster

homes, Spc. Wagner learned to adapt to the new environments in which he was placed.

While being moved, his younger brother and sister were separated and Spc. Wagner did his best to stay in contact and support them through their difficulties. This is a quality he may have gotten from his brother, who demanded they stay together until the two were separated.

Once he was on his own, he spent much of his time finding his own path during his youth. He discovered activities, like wrestling, that he enjoyed throughout middle school and high school, but could never quite decide on what to do after graduation.

“When I got done with school, I tried the whole college thing but couldn’t really stay focused,” said Spc. Wagner, a Red Bluff, Calif. native. “So I decided to join the Army because I always liked to cook and figured I could get more experience there.”

Life for his brother, 2nd Lt. Justin Wagner, was in many ways the exact opposite. Living with his father in Pennsylvania provided a

more regimented childhood filled with chores, curfews and an emphasis on school work.

“With my dad, there were a lot more rules on what I could do, which kept me from getting in trouble like we did when we were together,” said 2nd Lt. Wagner. “It was a great childhood but I still always missed the old lifestyle with him [Spc. Wagner].”

As he got older, 2nd Lt. Wagner wanted to help kids growing up in situations similar to what he and his brother faced. When he started college, his goal was to obtain a teaching degree, but later his focus switched to criminal justice. After he received his degree, he first worked in social services, but realized it was not what he truly wanted to do and started considering the military.

Meanwhile, the younger Wagner brother was a step ahead, working through the initial entry phase of his military career. Shortly after Spc. Wagner graduated from Advanced Individual Training, he learned that his little sister had reconnected with their older brother through MySpace, an online social-networking site.

“When my sister and then my mom started talking to him about a year ago, I got his information because I just wanted to know how he was doing,” said Spc. Wagner. “I found out that he was about to graduate from college and he wanted to know what my time in the Army was like.”

Among many topics, the two discussed Spc. Wagner’s career in the Army, and whether or not it would be a good

choice for his older brother.

“At first I recommended he look into the Air Force, but I told him that with a college degree, being an officer [in the Army] would be great,” said Spc. Wagner. “After a couple months he told me that he signed up, which made me really proud.”

Since his Commission, the two have had plenty in common to discuss during their phone calls and emails. Both went to the same training base, at Fort Jackson, S.C., and they were even in the same battalion. Now they find comfort and entertainment in hearing about each other’s daily duties.

“He has told me a lot about what he does, and though a lot of it is different because he’s an officer, we still have a lot of things that we understand,” said Spc. Wagner. “When he graduated OCS [Officer Candidate School], we were kind of hoping he would get stationed at Lewis [Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash.] so that we would get to see each other.”

Instead, 2nd Lt. Wagner was stationed at Ft. Riley, Kan., with the 1st Infantry Division. That did not dampen their spirits though, because soon after he found out he would also be deployed to Iraq.

“When I found out he was coming here, I immediately went to my leaders to see if we would be able to meet,” said Spc. Wagner. “I never thought that I would be in Iraq when that happened, but my command said they would definitely try to make it happen.”

Second Lieutenant Wagner received a warm reception to the idea as well.

“My superiors basically told me that they would do anything I needed to make sure that he could come visit me or I could go see him,” said 2nd Lt. Wagner, execu-

tive officer for Echo Co., 1st Attack Reconnaissance Battalion, 1st Aviation Regiment, Combat Aviation Brigade, 1 ID. “We even set it up so that I would be able to go see him in Kuwait before his brigade goes home if he couldn’t come here.”

With the approval they needed, the brothers simply had to wait for an opportunity to reunite. After working with his command, Spc. Wagner was able to pack his bags and take a flight to his brother’s duty station, Contingency Operating Site Taji, on June 18.

All those years separated did not change the fact that these two share an obvious bond. Both have reserved personalities but were beaming with excitement to see each other. Quickly the stories started spilling from each brother, conversations that were 17 years in the making. Those close to 2nd Lt. Wagner continually made comments about how his younger brother acted just like him. Specialist Wagner had the same outgoing happy personality his older brother remembers from their childhood.

“He seemed to get along with everybody he met here really well, and it showed he hasn’t changed much from when we were kids,” said 2nd Lt. Wagner. “He always used to be the one that wanted to make everyone smile, and would do anything to get it done.”

It didn’t take much to get a smile from the siblings as they spent two days catching up on family, friends and work. Though it was only a short reunion, they were able to make plans for their next visit and agree to take a family vacation when they both return to the United States.

“I’m still going to try and go to Kuwait to see him again, and we’ll keep up through email for now,” said 2nd Lt. Wagner. “But we are

also planning ahead for when we are both home because we have decided we want to take a vacation somewhere.”

Now that the two have been formally reunited, this is just the first of their plans to stick together through the years to come. Soon Spc. Wagner will have a lot more to remember than just the day his brother moved away. 🇺🇸

Specialist Joshua Wagner, a Red Bluff, Calif. native and cook from HHC, 296th BSB, 3 SBCT, 2 ID, does pushups as part of his brother’s office challenge. He visited his brother, 2nd Lt. Justin Wagner, an executive officer for Echo Co., 1st Attack Reconnaissance Battalion, 1st Aviation Regiment, Combat Aviation Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, as they had been separated for nearly seventeen years.



# Clearing Jalula One Neighborhood At A Time

Story and Photos by  
Pfc. Adrian Muehe  
135th MPAD

DIYALA, Iraq — “We have had strangers come into Jalula,” said Maj. Mahmood Mahdi Yahia, commander of the 8th ERF. “They have been chased out of other cities by our forces and now they are here.”

In direct response to a series

of attacks against U.S. Forces in Jalula, Iraq, the Iraqi Army and Iraqi Police in the area started Operation Jalula Peacemaker, a series of clearing operations in specific neighborhoods.

Assisting and advising the 8th Emergency Reaction Force (ERF) and the 3rd Battalion, 4th Brigade, 1st Iraqi Army Division are Soldiers from mortar platoon, Crazyhorse Troop, 1st Squadron, 14th

Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, who accompanied them on their fourth mission of the operation on June 20.

While conducting searches of specific areas of the city, the IA and ERF speak with community members, asking for their assistance in finding people of interest said Maj. Mahmood.

“People are scared,” said Maj. Mahmood. “They are afraid of these terrorists and it is comforting for them to see us doing these missions.”

As the IA and ERF searched houses to clear their objective, the Soldiers of Mortar platoon established an outer cordon with their Stryker vehicles to choke off the selected neighborhood from the main roads. They would only dismount to help their Iraqi counterparts if they were requested to do so.

“This was all their idea, their plan,” said Sgt. 1st Class Jeremy Hare, who hails from Spokane, Wash., and is the mortar platoon sergeant. “Our role is to mainly advise and assist and provide a Quick Reaction Force (QRF) in case they need us.”

So far, the ISF have not requested for the Crazyhorse Troop Soldiers to dismount and physically help them search the buildings of the city. It has become routine for Iraqis to take the lead as U.S. Forces throughout the country transition into advise and assist roles, said Staff Sgt. Kevin Perkins, of Dothan, Ala., and a squad leader for mortar platoon.

“We really don’t do patrols with

them anymore,” said Staff Sgt. Perkins. “We don’t do anything unless they request us to.”

The partnership has significantly evolved during the past four months. The Soldiers of 1/14th Cav. initially started this relationship as trainers and have watched their progress mature to a point where they now serve as advisors and provide assistance when requested, said Sgt. 1st Class Hare.

“Before [four months ago] they didn’t come to us with many ideas and we had to kind of plant ideas in their heads on what they should

do,” said Sgt. 1st Class Hare. “Now they’re coming up with more ideas and we just help advise their plan.”

The Soldiers of 1/14th Cav. will soon be leaving Iraq with the rest of 3 SBCT, 2nd ID, to be replaced by elements of 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, an advise and assist brigade.

“What we are doing here is to prepare them for their next partners [2 SBCT, 25th ID],” said 2nd Lt. Jan Dudzinski, of Hightstown, N.J., and the mortar platoon leader.

“They will be working with them once a week as opposed to every day like we have.”

As the Soldiers of Crazyhorse Troop wind down their deployment with this QRF role in Operation Jalula Peacemaker, they can look back at their deployment and feel pleased with the progress they have watched their ISF partners make.

“I have no complaints,” said Sgt. 1st Class Hare. “They are doing a lot better than they used to. So far there haven’t been any issues that I’ve seen.”



Staff Sergeant Kevin Perkins, of Dothan, Ala., and a squad leader for mortar platoon, Crazyhorse Troop observes from a Stryker vehicle while cordoning off an area in Jalula, Iraq, on June 20. This mission was part of Operation Jalula Peacemaker, a month long undertaking in which ISF search the city, one neighborhood at a time, with minimal participation from U.S. Forces.



Sergeant Daniel Boley, of Arma, Kan., and a team leader for mortar platoon, Crazyhorse Troop, 1st Squadron, 14th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, provides security while his platoon leader meets with Iraqi Security Forces leaders in Jalula, Iraq, on June 20. The meeting was to discuss what ISF found while searching the area.

# A Little Time Offers a Lot of Development

Story and Photos by  
Pvt. Zachary Zuber  
135th MPAD

DIYALA, Iraq — Two Stryker vehicles roll along a sandy road, leaving billowing clouds of dust behind them. Each one has a Soldier inside scanning the horizon through the remote weapon system inside.

These Stryker vehicles are not barreling through the streets of Iraq, nor moving towards a mission objective. They are being driven by the remaining members of 2nd Battalion, 3rd Infantry Regiment, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, during a training class on Contingency Operating Base Speicher, Iraq.

The majority of 2/3 Inf., departed Iraq for Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash., in May, after handing over their station at Forward Operating Base Normandy to the Iraqi Army. Forty-

one Soldiers volunteered to stay behind, in order to prepare their vehicles to transfer to the incoming unit that will replace them.

“We have been doing a lot of work on the vehicles since we have been here, with cleaning and maintenance, to make sure they are in top shape for the new unit,” said Spc. Brandon Blomeley, a Portland, Ore., native and driver for Alpha Co., 2/3 Inf. “There has been a lot more time here for us since we aren’t doing missions, and that gives us a chance to take a closer look at the problems that need fixed to make sure it gets done right.”

In addition to general maintenance needs, their vehicles have been receiving upgrades, including rear camera systems and new side protection armor. The Stryker vehicles will be transferred to the incoming unit, which in turn will transfer theirs to 2/3 Inf. in the United States. The process is designed to ease the transition for units both exiting and entering

Iraq.

Although the main focus has been on vehicles, the Patriot Soldiers have also found some extra time for personal development during their days at COB Speicher. Individual Soldiers have planned and taught several internal classes on the topics that fall under their areas of expertise.

“We’ve got Soldiers here in all different skill levels, branches and fields that are each subject matter experts in what they do,” said Sgt. James Pelletier, a Fort Worth, Texas native and NCO for Headquarters and Headquarters Co., 2/3 Inf. “Each one has prepared and given classes on topics like Ranger school preparation, demolitions, breaching and infantry specific topics as well.”

The Soldiers have found the classes enjoyable, but they remember to balance their developmental process with the primary mission of preparing equipment for the upcoming hand off.

“As the supply sergeant and NCOIC for our company’s representatives here, I have been focused on trying to make sure

Soldiers from 2nd Battalion, 3rd Infantry Regiment, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division demonstrate their knowledge of their remote weapons system to an instructor during the Common Remotely Operated Weapon Station course taught at COB Speicher, Iraq. The Patriots’ remaining party had the opportunity to take the course during the time spent preparing Stryker vehicles for their replacements.



the transition will go smooth and giving the guys an opportunity to further their education,” said Staff Sergeant Troy Shoaf, a Terre Haute, Ind. native and non-commissioned officer in charge of Charlie Co. Soldiers at COB Speicher. “We have done some internal classes with the people we have here, and there are Soldiers that got a chance to go through a CROWS [Common Remotely Operated Weapon Station] class that not many people get to attend.”

CROWS is an upgraded version of the Patriots current weapons systems that allows for a wider selection of weapons to be remotely operated. It also provides software upgrades to the computer systems that run the weapon mounts.

The Soldiers that volunteered to be here are not restricted to simply working on vehicles during this short assignment. They have also had a better chance to connect with friends and family back home and have taken advantage of the opening for relaxation after a fast-paced deployment.

“It’s a good combination of work and relaxation, with more time for our guys to spend talking to their family,” said Sgt. Pelletier. “For the most part, this has been an opportunity for professional development, both with physical training and tactical proficiency. This slower pace will hopefully make an easier transition for these guys to head back into the garrison environment.”

Though the remaining Patriots may not be as busy as they

Stryker vehicles from 2nd Battalion, 3rd Infantry Regiment, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, move out for a training class on the Common Remotely Operated Weapon Station, an upgraded version of their current remote weapon systems. Soldiers from the final party of 2/3 Inf. to leave Iraq have had the opportunity to take the course as part of their professional development.

were at FOB Normandy, they are working hard to prepare for future endeavors. The incoming unit and their own companies at home will see a stronger, more knowledgeable force after the time spent at COB Speicher.



# TOMAHAWKS, PRT AND CHICKEN FARMERS TEAM UP FOR CO-OP

Story and Photos by  
Pfc. Adrian Muehe  
135th MPAD

DIYALA, Iraq — Hussein and Dr. Wejdi Alshammary are just two average brothers and businessmen making a living in Diyala province, Iraq. Their company, the Iraq Grand Parent Company (IGPC), however, is a not so normal operation as it is leading the way for the poultry industry in the province.

Almost a year ago they received their first shipment of day old chicks from Arbor Acres, a poultry company in Alabama, to serve as the grandfather flock for all of Diyala province. Since then, they have constructed a factory where they breed and sell chicks to poultry farmers, a feed mill,

and a slaughter house in Khalis. To meet the high demand, the entrepreneurial duo is building a new feed mill to expand their production capabilities, just north of Baqubah, the provincial capital of Diyala.

These brothers are also working with the Diyala Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) and 1st Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, to create a chicken feed co-operative. From this partnership, the brothers received micro-grants of \$5,000 and vouchers to give to 25 chicken farmers that are purchasing chicks and feed from the IGPC throughout Diyala province.

“The Alshammary Brothers were selected for this project

because they have a lot of experience running poultry operations,” said Mike Rothe, senior economic advisor to the Diyala PRT. “They are willing to invest significant amounts of their own capital for this project.”

Farmers involved with the co-op will receive micro-grants distributed by IGPC, to buy feed along with vouchers for additional 20% discounts from the company, giving them up to \$5,000 worth of free chicken feed. This saves money while encouraging them to buy in bulk.

“Through this they (the farmers) will be able to get 14 metric tons of feed and a whole cycle of baby chickens,” said Hussein Alshammary.

According to Mr. Rothe, chicken feed in Iraq costs double what it does on the global market, and that creates a struggle for the nation’s poultry farmers. The heavily subsidized industry received by the poultry industry under the Saddam regime ceased in 2003, causing farmers to struggle to thrive in a free market economy. The resources they are able to purchase are expensive due to middle-men handling the international shipments.

“The poultry industry in Diyala has faced big problems,” said Hussein Alshammary. “With this step we are trying to encourage farmers, to put them back on the road to being leaders in the industry.”

The IGPC will also be expanding as a result of this. After construction of their new mill is complete they hope to maximize

their production to 10 metric tons (10,000 kilograms) an hour. This will double their production and drastically lower the cost of feed for local farmers and open up a new market for them.

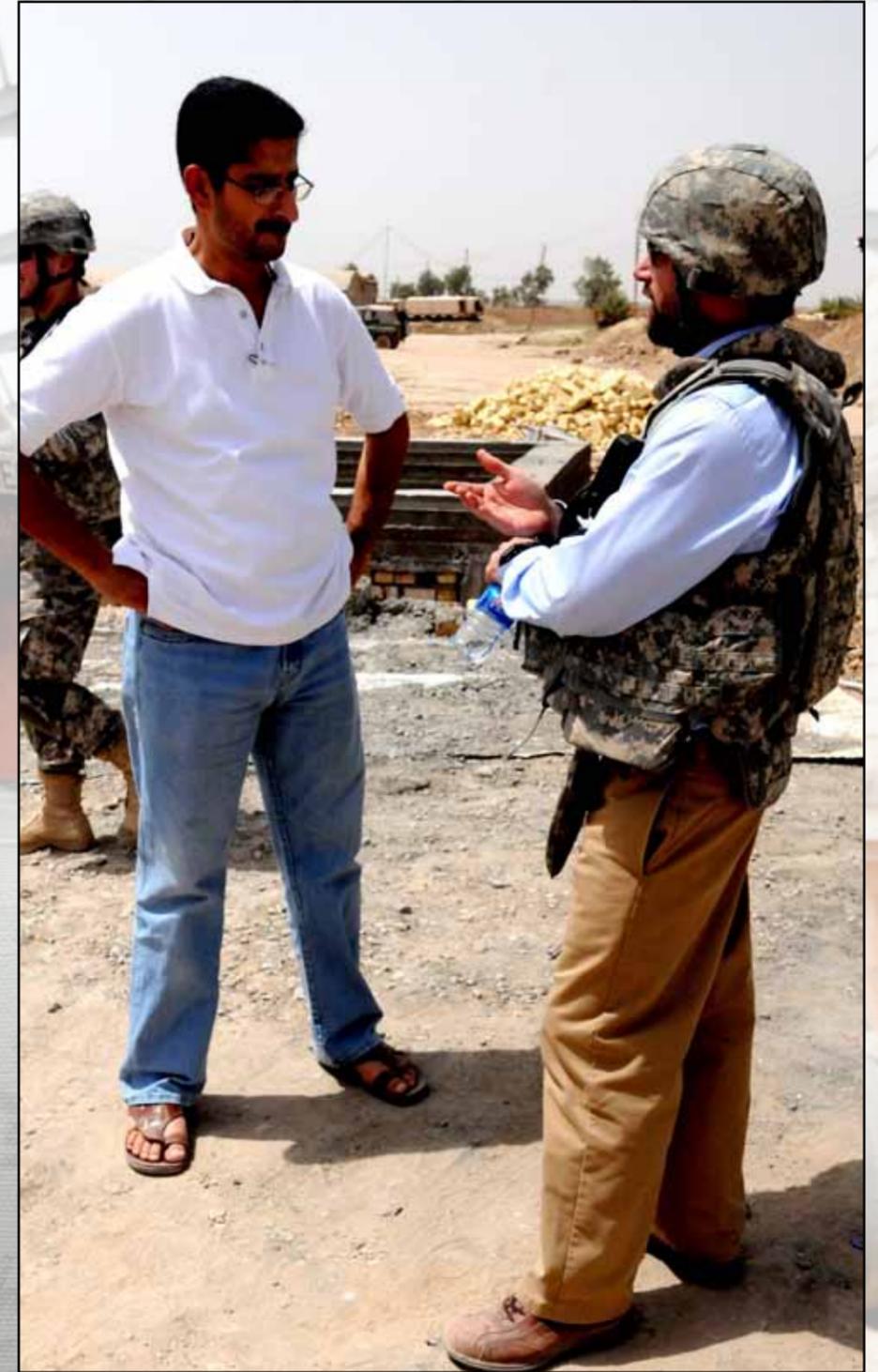
“This is a long range, multi-layered project,” said Lt. Col. Chuck Hodges, commander of 1/23 Inf. “This (micro-grant payout) just happens to be one spoke in the overall cog of re-engineering the poultry industry in Diyala.”

As the Soldiers of 1/23 Inf. prepare to sheath their tomahawks and head home, the PRT will continue to work with other U.S. Army units to keep the cog spinning for Diyala province poultry farmers.

“The next step is actually helping the individual farmers and the (poultry) associations either restart their operations or produce poultry more efficiently,” said Mr. Rothe. “We will be addressing the deficiencies of the farmers here.”

This will be accomplished by establishing training programs about bio-security (making sure chickens are well bred and healthy) to be taught to the farmers and how to use their assets to maximize their full potential.

With the IGPC churning out feed, and continuing their lead for Diyala province chicken farmers, the industry will soon be on its own feet again. When chicken farmers will be able to thrive, people all over Iraq will be able to wake up to the call of a rooster as a new dawn breaks over the country. 🐔



Mike Rothe, the senior economic advisor for the Diyala PRT, discusses farming options with Iraq Grad Parent Company co-owner Dr. Wejdi Alshammary during a tour of where the business’ new feed mill, north of Baqubah, Iraq, on June 14. This company is administering micro-grants and overseeing a chicken feed co-operative in an effort to revitalize the poultry industry in Diyala province.



# Capital Surge Helps Heal Wounds

Story and Photos by  
Pvt. Zachary Zuber  
135th MPAD

DIYALA, Iraq — The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines chaos as a state of utter confusion. Anis Abdnishari's description of the events during a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device attack in the Khalis suq or market, Diyala province, Iraq, fit that definition very well.

"After the first explosion, there was chaos everywhere and I ran to check on my brothers

in our shop," said Mr. Abdnishari, who, along with his family, owns two furniture stores in Khalis. "There were bodies in the streets and nobody was helping because they were too afraid that there would be another explosion."

The attack in the market occurred in early May, and while shop owners and patrons still remember it vividly, they are trying to get back to normal daily life. Merchants and citizens in the city still see hope, especially after receiving fi-

nancial assistance in the form of micro-grants to help rebuild their business.

These grants, which are payments up to \$5,000, were organized by Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 37th Field Artillery Regiment, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, and were paid on June 10. The Diyala Provincial Reconstruction Team and the Red Crescent, an Iraqi government agency similar to the American Red Cross, assisted the 1/37th FA in providing 50 grants that were initially planned to give an economic boost to the city, but will now have an even more significant impact on the community.

"A lot of these people lost their business, which is how they provide for their families," said 1st Lt. Alexander Kim, from Seoul, Korea, the officer in charge of an economic development team for Charlie Battery, 1/37th FA. "If they don't have that they could turn to other more dangerous means of income and it is also important for us [U.S. Soldiers] to show that we want to help them recover from that attack."

Of the many people looking to recover, the ones with

the hardest path to normalcy are the smallest in stature. Two boys, ages eight and nine, were orphaned by the explosions that day and received payments that will allow their extended family members to keep their parents' businesses going so these children can still have a bright future.

These youngsters aren't the only ones who need hope for safety and more economic development in the city. Several shop owners see their payments as an opportunity to encourage customers to return to the market.

"Before the bombs my business was very good, people were very interested in buying furniture," said Mr. Abdnishari. "Afterward it got very slow, people only want to buy food, not goods like our furniture."

The grant money will help with renovations that will hopefully increase his business, said Mr. Abdnishari. He plans to repaint the walls, repair the roof, and purchase an awning that will provide shade for the area in front of his shop.

Others who were not affected by the blast see the money purely as an opportunity to increase their profits. However, amidst

the new assistance, many remain wary of the potential dangers that exist until the security situation is improved in Khalis.

"I am going to double up my business, selling men's clothing, by adding more merchandise to my shop," said Khalil Bashar, co-owner of a clothing store in the market. "The people have not been coming out as much anymore since the bombs, so we need help increasing the security so there will not be anymore IEDs."

The first step taken to resolve security concerns and assist the community were the micro-grants provided and more are soon to follow.

"We are working on about 1,750 micro-grants to be given to businesses, to improve the standing of the economy," said 1st Lt. Kim. "Hopefully by stimulating the economy people will be more focused on businesses rather than on violence." 🇺🇸



Soldiers of Charlie Battery, 1st Battalion, 37th Field Artillery Regiment, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, work at several stations to process micro-grant recipients in Khalis, Diyala province, Iraq on June 10. Several of the shop owners from the local market received grants to revitalize their businesses after suffering damage from a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device attack.



Soldiers from Charlie Battery, 1st Battalion, 37th Field Artillery Regiment, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, attempt to scan the fingerprint of a boy who received a micro-grant in Khalis, Diyala province, Iraq on June 10. The boy's parents were killed in a vehicle borne improvised explosive device attack, and the grant was given to him to help his extended family members keep their business open.

# Medical Mission Aids Refugees

Story and Photos by  
Pfc. Adrian Muehe  
135th MPAD

DIYALA, Iraq — As the sun rose over the Bakhtiyari neighborhood of Khaniqan, Iraq, citizens started lining up at the local clinic to receive medical care on June 22. The treatment being offered wasn't from the normal medical staff of one doctor and several nurses. Instead, medics and doctors from three battalions of 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, treated the patients.

Coming together for this Military Civilian Medical Operation (MCMO) were Soldiers from

Charlie Company, 296th Brigade Support Battalion; Headquarters Support Battery, 1st Battalion, 37th Field Artillery Regiment, and Alpha Troop, 1st Squadron, 14th Cavalry Regiment.

Throughout the day approximately 300 people entered the clinic to seek treatment and medicine for their ailments ranging from minor aches and pains to more serious injuries or diseases. While these men, women, and children displayed different symptoms, they all share a common background.

"Bakhtiyari is actually made up of a lot of residents who were prior displaced persons in Iran," said Capt. Nick Shallcross, of Long-

mont, Colo., and the commander of Alpha Troop, 1/14th Cav. "They are all Iraqi, many of whom are Shia, that were kicked out of Iraq by the Saddam regime. They lived in refugee camps in Iran, and then came back to Khaniqan after the fall of Saddam."

This quarter of Khaniqan was

Captain Rachel Villacorta-Lyew, of Morgan Hill, Calif., surgeon for 296th Brigade Support Battalion, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, listens to the heartbeat of an Iraqi girl during a Military Civilian Medical Operation in the Bakhtiyari neighborhood of Khaniqan, Iraq, on June 22.

a "tent city" a couple years ago before the refugees began building permanent homes for themselves. This neighborhood also has a Red Crescent center, an Iraqi Police Station, and a small clinic, said Capt. Shallcross.

"We've been planning a MCMO in Bakhtiyari for awhile," said Capt. Shallcross. "We have done three MCMOs in this northern part of our AO (Area of Operation) since January. We identified Bakhtiyari for this because, since they were displaced persons, they don't get a lot of support and we wanted to help them out."

Peshmerga, Iraqi Police, and U.S. Forces provided security for this event. Medical personal from the brigade established two private exam rooms to treat minor afflictions, administer medicine, and guide patients where to receive additional care.

"We can only treat for acute care issues," said Capt. Morrie Fanto, commander of HSB, 1/37th FA. "We can treat for pain, common illnesses (such as a cold), and give out medicine. We can also refer more serious cases to the local hospital where hopefully they can get those issues addressed."

While patients waited to be screened, they received a class on public health by Capt. Mary Nolan, of Lewiston, Minn., the preventive medicine officer for 3 SBCT, 2nd ID, where they learned how washing their hands and brushing their teeth can improve their quality of life.

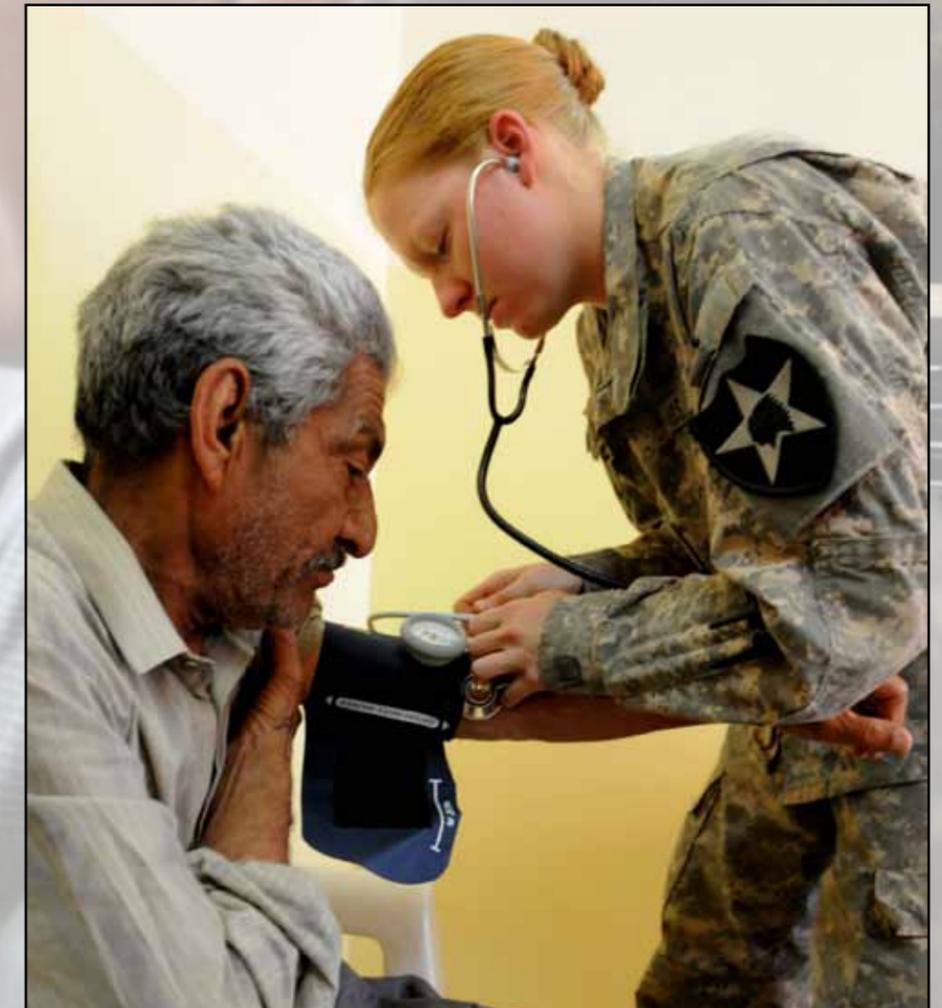
During the hours of the MCMO, workers at the clinic were

walking around with cameras, taking pictures and video of all the excitement happening in their usually deserted clinic.

"Ordinarily, we only have a few visitors come in on a daily basis," said Galib Gafor, the Bakhtiyari Medical Clinic director. "I am very happy about this. I wish this could happen every day."

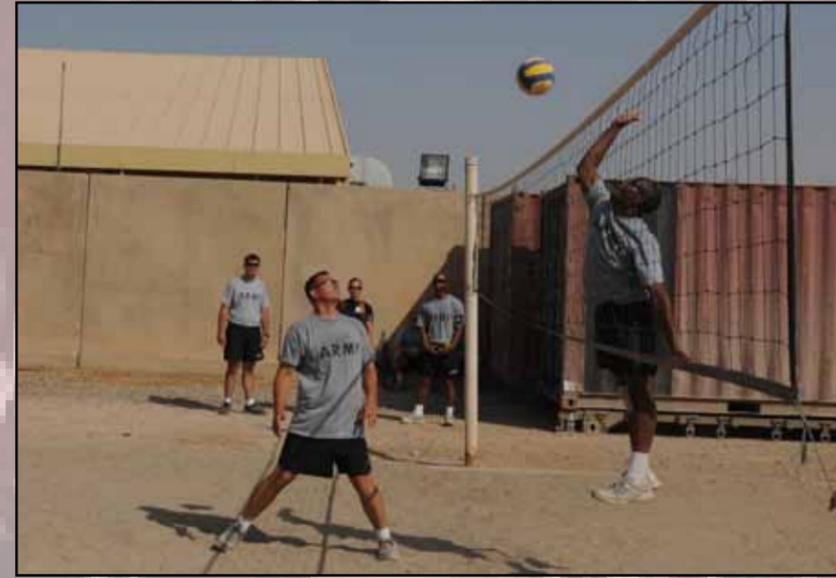
The Soldiers from these three battalions plan on doing two more MCMOs in the surrounding area, and these will be the last ones rendered by 3 SBCT, 2nd ID.

"Our tour is winding down," said Capt. Fanto. "There isn't much time left, so these will be the last ones we will conduct." 🇺🇸



Specialist Leann Ronnebaum, from Eugene, Ore., medic from Charlie Company, 296th Brigade Support Battalion, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, checks the blood pressure of an Iraqi man during his initial screening at a Military Civilian Medical Operation in the Bakhtiyari neighborhood of Khaniqan, Iraq, on June 22.

# Fourth of July Festivities



# Strykers Sign Over Their Final Base to Iraqi Army

Story and Photos by  
Pfc. Adrian Muehe  
135th MPAD

DIYALA, Iraq — After the papers were signed, and the ink was dry, Forward Operating Base Grizzly, Iraq, became property of the Iraqi Army during a transfer of authority ceremony as part of the responsible drawdown of U.S. forces from Iraq, July 2.

“Today, our nations are bonded together with the ideals that freedom and liberty, are the cornerstone of our great nations,” said Iraqi Army Lt. Col. Latiff, commander of 1st Battalion, 37th Infantry. “This has not come cheaply. Thousands of Iraqi and American Soldiers, Marines, Airmen and Sailors have paid for this with their lives. The Soldiers you see in this room, and the ones you’ll see in this ceremony today, are representatives of those we have lost.”

At the end of the ceremony, members of each army assisted in handling the flags of both nations as the U.S. flag was lowered and the Iraqi flag was raised. This is the third base signed

over by the 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, in Diyala province. The Tomahawks of 1st Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment have lived here during the past 10 months and have spent their deployment not only conducting combined missions with the Iraqi Security Forces, but spent many days inventorying and cleaning in preparation to hand off the post.

“We started when we first [arrived to] the base,” said

Lt. Col. Chuck Hodges, the commander of 1/23 Inf. “We had seven years worth of equipment that had piled up here over the years that we had to turn in. We had over 16,000 individual pieces of equipment.”

Much of this equipment was sent back to the U.S., while specific pieces of equipment were sent to Soldiers in Iraq or Afghanistan. Some of it was left behind to be given to the incoming IA battalion, said Capt. Jona-

than Cheek, who hails from Highpoint, N.C., and is the transition officer for 296th Brigade Support Battalion, 3rd SBCT, 2nd ID.

“A lot of CHUs (Containerized Housing Units) and a lot of generators were left behind so we can hand them a fully operating base,” said Capt. Cheek.

Along with moving equipment and personnel out of the base, murals on large T-wall barriers designed by past units were painted over and signs were removed to reduce the size of the footprint left by U.S. forces during their seven year ownership of the base, said Lt. Col. Hodges.

Now that the base that has been home to the Tomahawks for the past year is in the hands of their Iraqi partners, they will begin the journey home.

“We are happy that we’re going home to see our Families, but we are sad to say goodbye to our brothers,” said Lt. Col. Hodges.

“It’s been a great experience to see the Iraqis from the beginning to now, providing for a stable and secure Government of Iraq.” 🇮🇶



Private First Class Logan Perrault, of Rowley, Mass., and a vehicle commander for HHC, 1/23 Inf., catches the U.S. flag, with assistance from an Iraqi Army soldier, as it’s being lowered during a transfer of authority ceremony at FOB Grizzly, Iraq, July 2. The base was handed over to the IA as U.S. forces start to transition out of the country.



Iraqi Army officers salute during the playing of the Star Spangled Banner prior to the lowering of the U.S. flag during a transfer of authority ceremony at Forward Operating Base Grizzly, Iraq, July 2. This is the last base to be handed over to the Iraqi Army by the 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, in Diyala province.

# Joint Force Clears Chubiernot At Dawn

Story and Photos by  
Pfc. Adrian Muehe  
135th MPAD

DIYALA, Iraq – The small village of Chubiernot, Iraq, northwest of the city of Baqubah, was dead calm in the early hours of the morning. Just after 5 a.m., the sun came up, breathing life back in to the community with the sounds of animals waking up to greet the morning light. The lone bridge connecting the village to the outside world was desolate, as the residents of the town were still resting comfortably in their beds, but not for long.

Just after the first rays of sunlight dispersed the darkness, Stryker vehicles, police trucks and Iraqi Army High Mobility Multi-Wheeled Vehicles (HMMWVs) arrived at this quaint scene. Soldiers from Headquarters and Headquarters Company (HHC), 5th Battalion, 20th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, along with IA Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 18th Brigade and Iraqi Police from the 9th Emergency Reaction Force Battalion choked off the village's only access point as they searched for weapons caches and people of interest on April 28.

"We had several different sources tell us that this area was



Specialist Nathan Watts, a native of St. Louis, Mo., and an acting team leader for Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 5th Battalion, 20th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, provides security while taking cover behind stacks of concrete blocks during a clearing operation in Chubiernot, Iraq, on April 28. Iraqi Police took the lead while U.S. Forces followed and assisted as they searched houses in the village for weapons and specific individuals.

an AQI [Al Qaeda in Iraq] support area," said Capt. Joel Ellison, commander of HHC, 5/20 Inf. "We had a few locations and a list of names from ISF [Iraqi Security Forces] sources."

Given maps with specific houses to target, and names of people to speak with, the U.S. Forces and ERF police made their way through the city, entering different houses simultaneously as the Iraqi Army maintained security and blocked off

all traffic from entering or exiting the village.

Also joining this combined force were military working dog teams from Forward Operating Base Warhorse and the IP K-9 Unit to sniff out explosives that may be hidden, waiting to eliminate unsuspecting Soldiers or policemen. Covering from the air were scout weapons teams in Kiowa helicopters on standby with crew serve weapons.

"We did a similar clearing op-

eration here back in December," said Capt. Ellison. "We found a cache of three IEDs [Improvised Explosive Devices] and a few other weapons."

The mission didn't come away with any huge finds, but a weapon was found hidden in the palm groves and individuals of interest were found inhabiting the village.

"This was a success because if we're not finding much, that means that we are doing our job of keeping weapons out of the area," said Spc. Brandon Hancock, a scout with HHC.

The search was over just before 9 a.m. All forces did their part according to plan, allowing the operation to go smoothly.

"The most positive thing was that the IA and IP were working together on their own for this joint operation," said Capt. Ellison.

With U.S. Forces leaving Iraq soon it will be up to ISF to conduct operations. A relationship between the Army and the police is critical for their success, said Capt. Ellison.

"We have a good relationship with the IPs in this area," said Maj. Azad, operations commander for 1-18 IA. "I have been working with the [9th] ERF for two years now. I feel that when U.S. Forces leave, we will work together." 🇺🇸



Above: Specialist Brandon Hancock, of Florence, Ala., and a scout with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 5/20 Inf., provides security, while an Iraqi policeman with the 9th Emergency Reaction Force Battalion watches a road heading in the opposite direction.

Below: Soldiers from Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 5/20 Inf., inspect a field after during a clearing operation in Chubiernot, Iraq, on April 28. This search was conducted in response to reports of suspicious activity and recent attacks from the area



# TOMAHAWKS BRING THE HEAT IN THE IRAQI DESERT

Story and Photos by  
Pfc. Adrian Muehe  
135th MPAD

DIYALA, Iraq – “Hang it,” repeated Spc. Nicholas Keim, of Olympia, Wash., and an assistant gunner for Headquarters and Headquarters Company (HHC), 1st Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, while holding a 120mm mortar round steady over the massive gun pointed out of the back of a Stryker vehicle. While waiting for the call to release, he maintained this position with sweat dripping off his brow in the Iraqi desert.

“Fire,” said Spc. Stephan Forbes of Denver, Co., a gunner for HHC, 1/23 Inf. After this call, Spc. Keim repeated his order. He dropped the mortar into the tube and immediately braced himself for the recoil. A couple short seconds later the round fired. The back of the Stryker vehicle sunk down from the force of the shot, sending the dry dirt resting under the vehicle into the air causing a massive cloud of dust. Flames erupted from the end of the mortar tube as it fired the 120mm shell down range. All eyes immediately went to the target, which was engulfed in a cloud of smoke as the round impacted.

This action was a small part of a fire coordination exercise (FCX) conducted by 1/23 Inf. It lasted three days and coordinated their assets of forward observers, mortar men, close air support,

and field artillery, in the desert just outside of Forward Operating Base (FOB) Grizzly, Iraq, March 21-23.

“This training happened so that we can clearly and accurately identify targets so we can use our assets to the best of our ability,” said Sgt. Victor Ramos, of Hollis, N.Y., and a fire support non-commissioned officer (NCO) for Blackhawk Company, 1/23 Inf. “We bring in close air support. We bring in rotary wing support. We bring in mortars, and we bring in GLMRS (Guided Multiple Launch Rocket Systems).”

This training exercise started with the forward observers, who were running this spectacular show. Their role was to confirm and identify targets before they are cleared to call for fire with

their available assets.

“We usually don’t get to do this in country,” said Spc. Kerry McDonough, of San Antonio, Texas, and a forward observer with 1st Platoon, Apache Company, 1/23 Inf. “I’ve spent most of this deployment acting as an infantryman, out there with them in case something happens and air support needs to be called in.”

After the forward observers identified the targets and their locations, they had to decide what assets they were going to use to minimize the threat. The preferred way to do this is to call in air support, but if the enemies have anti-air capabilities, they would have to be eliminated before pilots can fly over. This is when mortar fire comes into the situation.



Private First Class Daniel Stamper, a native of St. Frances, Minn., and an assistant gunner for Headquarters Platoon, Apache Company, 1/23 Inf., at right, ducks down as a 60mm round is fired in the desert area around FOB Grizzly, Iraq, on March 23.

The Tomahawk mortar men wield three different kinds of artillery. On the ground they fire 60mm and 80mm rounds. Out of the back of Strykers they have 120mm rounds. The size of the target and how far away the objective is located determines what size round is used. Firing these mortars serves two purposes. The first is to destroy targets such as anti-air guns to clear the way for air support. The second is to fire for effect. The purpose of this option is to put a large number of rounds in the same vicinity to scare the enemy as opposed to destroy them.

Assisting with the mortars with indirect fire were GLMRs fired out of FOB Normandy. These rockets were field artillery called in by the forward observers and create more of a destructive force than the portable mortars.



After the mortars and rockets were fired, the anti-air threat was neutralized. After the forward observers confirmed this they talked to the pilots of two Kiowa helicopters who were at hand. The Kiowas went in and dropped ordinance on the targets to annihilate the simulated combatant stronghold.

“My Soldiers see how important this job is,” said Sgt. Ramos. “They know we still have rust on the chains and now we know how to break that rust off.”

After this refresher training, these Soldiers are confident that, if the situation ever arrived, they

can effectively call in the support they need to save Soldiers’ lives, said Sgt. 1st Class Joshua Brooks, a native of Johnsonburg, Pa., and the battalion fire support NCO for 1/23 Inf.

“We identified issues we can fix to make our fire support teams better, and found new training objectives,” said Sgt. 1st Class Brooks.

At the beginning of April, the Tomahawks will take what they have learned and perfected from this exercise and teach Iraqi Army Soldiers how to effectively use these techniques with their assets. 🇮🇶



Left: Specialist Nicholas Keim, of Olympia, Wash., and an assistant gunner for HHC, 1/23 Inf., readies a 120mm mortar round for firing as part of a fire coordination exercise in the desert just outside FOB Grizzly. The mortar was fired during an exercise by forward observers on the ground.

Above: A Kiowa helicopter flies past Stryker vehicles lined up for a fire coordination exercise in the desert near FOB Grizzly, Iraq, on March 21. The pilots were interacting with forward observers on the ground to drop live ordinance on simulated targets as part of the training exercise.

# Successful Elections Prove Progress In Iraq

Story and Photos by  
Pvt. Zachary Zuber  
135th MPAD

DIYALA, Iraq – On March 7, Iraqi citizens in Diyala province proved their desire for democracy and chose to ignore threats of violence and harm. Iraqi Security Forces showed they know how to plan and execute successful security operations to allow this demo-



A member of the command group at the Provincial Joint Coordination Center places a marker for a notable event in the Diyala province during elections.

cratic process to happen. They demonstrated what they have learned and what they have always been capable of, all in one day.

At the Diyala Provincial Joint Coordination Center, leaders from the Iraqi Security Forces came together to manage efforts to keep their people safe as they voted for the leaders they support during the Iraqi Parliamentary Elections.

“We are happy for our success but also sad because one civilian died,” said Brigadier General Kamal Issah Mustafa. “This was a success for democracy that we consider a step forward in our future.”

The day proved a step forward because of the process involved in creating a secure voting environment.

“For approximately a month we have been holding conferences and lectures, creating plans to prepare for the elections,” said Brig. Gen. Mustafa. “We were able to preserve lives and make the voting process much easier.”

Another equally significant factor in this process was that there was almost no involvement by members of the 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, who are the main operational United States Forces-Iraq unit in the

province.

Arrowhead Soldiers throughout the province were stationed strategically to be available if needed, but that situation never arose.

“Our mission was to provide support for our ISF counterparts, and be quickly available if requested,” said 1st Lt. Brett Sim, the fire support officer for the 5th Battalion, 20th Infantry Regiment, 3-2 SBCT. “Today was a test for the ISF if they could secure their cities for a free democratic election.”

“They have proven themselves not to us, but to the people, that they could plan and execute their security missions throughout elections.”

This day did not just provide proof of the ISF’s success, but also successes of the training and cooperative work done by the 3-2 SBCT with their Iraqi counterparts since their arrival in Iraq.

“The partnerships that the company commanders and platoon leaders have developed over the past six months helped make yesterday’s election successful,” said Lt. Col. Mitchell Rambin, the 5/20 Inf. commander. “Through those partnerships, we have modeled professional behavior as well as trained ISF police and soldiers how to search individuals



and vehicles.”

“Another product of the partnership was the sharing of information between all security forces, not only US Forces and ISF but between the Iraqi Army and Iraqi Police.”

As the process of collecting and counting the votes continues, 5/20 Inf. Soldiers will continue to make themselves available if needed.

“We are currently enhancing the security posture at the ballot storage warehouse and the Baqubah Library where the Diyala Province ballots are being counted,” said Lt. Col. Rambin. “This is in response to a request from the Independent High Electoral Commis-

sion for all of Iraq. The ISF in Diyala are currently more than capable of providing the necessary security at these two sites.”

The work they have done in preparation, combined with the successes on election day, provide the leaders of both forces with an opportunity to look at what the country and security forces can do in the future.

“These elections are a tremendous sign for the future of Iraq; the security forces performed magnificently,” said Lt. Col. Rambin. “They had a very good plan that they executed, resulting in a successful election. It was very good to see the progress they have made

Soldiers of the 5th Battalion, 20th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, watch as Iraqi Police forces set up security around a ballot warehouse in Baqubah, Iraq. Soldiers of 5/20 Inf. were visiting with officials to let them know they were available if needed to assist with security.

over the past 4-5 years.”

“We helped ourselves to get rid of a dictator, so now each citizen can vote freely for the member of parliament that they prefer,” said Brig. Gen. Mustafa. “Half of the success belongs to the efforts of coalition forces, and we thank our brothers for supporting us.”

# Three Forces Come Together for Checkpoints

Story and Photos by  
Pvt. Zachary Zuber  
135th MPAD

DIYALA, Iraq – For several weeks in January, members of the 1st Squadron, 14th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division have been training members of both the Iraqi Army and the Kurdish Peshmerga at Combat Outpost Cobra. They are working together to staff checkpoints around the As’Sadiyah area of Diyala, Iraq.

The checkpoints are a part of the Combined Security Area(CSA) in the region. These points, placed in positions throughout the area, will be manned by United States Forces, Iraqi Army Forces, and Peshmerga as a cooperative effort to protect the local communities. The CSA is traditionally a region where Iraqi Security Forces’ responsibility for security ends and the Kurdish Forces take the lead.

Currently the 1/14th Cav. is not only working to prepare members of both



Pfc. Patrick Fisher, Bronco Troop, 1st Squadron, 14th Cavalry Regiment, along with a member of the 4th Brigade Iraqi Army, secures an entrance to a training checkpoint set up at Combat Outpost Cobra on January 10. The Soldiers are training to operate checkpoints along with the Peshmerga in the As’Sadiya area of Diyala Province, Iraq.

groups to handle any and all challenges they may encounter at these points but they’re building a partnership between the two forces. A goal of Capt. Richard Dempsey, Bronco Troop commander, 1/14th Cav., is that both forces will build the foundation for a lasting friendship through training and working together on a daily basis.

“The training is very strategic and goes above and beyond checkpoint tactics to foster cooperation between the two groups who, in their history, have had conflicts,” said Capt. Dempsey.

Through training, the



Soldiers of the Iraqi Army, Peshmerga and the 1/14 Cav. react to a grenade thrown from a vehicle during a training exercise at COP Cobra on Jan. 10. The training sessions were arranged to prepare the forces for their upcoming work at tripartite checkpoints in northern Diyala province, Iraq.

Soldiers have been able to take one step closer to achieving the overall goals of working together and becoming more knowledgeable about the operations of a checkpoint.

“The training has gone very well, and we will try to apply everything we have learned here to the real checkpoints. We have greatly benefited by this training,” said Major Farhat Hamma Muhammed, 2nd Battalion, 34th Peshmerga

Brigade.

Checkpoint training at Cobra is made up of three four hour blocks. During the first block members of Bronco Troop demonstrate procedures used at checkpoints. Soldiers teach the different levels of searching suspects, how to use escalation of force with approaching vehicles, and how to react to casualties during attacks. In the second block, the students perform what they have learned at

a slow speed while U.S. Soldiers provided helpful tips. Finally, a full speed mission readiness exercise allowed all three groups to work together during a real-time simulation.

The Soldiers participated in a variety of scenarios, from trouble-less vehicle searches to reacting to a mass casualty event. Soldiers, role playing as combatants, used smoke grenades to simulate IED explosions or grenades, as they ‘attacked’ the training checkpoint.

“Just like anywhere else, when the groups came in they were initially divided and by the end you could see Pesh soldiers and Iraqi Army working together to help the simulated casualties and really gelling as a group by the end,” said Capt. Dempsey.

“It was very good experience for us to learn different things like indirect fire and moving casualties and I wish the best for everyone as we go to the checkpoints,” said Lt. Hasanen Amir Mohmmed, 2nd Company, 4th Brigade Iraqi Army. 🇮🇶



Members of the Iraqi Army and Peshmerga detain a U.S. Soldier who is pretending to be a hostile during checkpoint training exercises held at Combat Outpost Cobra on January 10. These exercises were created to prepare the three forces to operate several checkpoints in the Combined Security Area throughout Diyala province, Iraq.

# Assaulting by Air Proves Successful for Partnered Forces

Story and Photos by  
Pvt. Zachary Zuber  
135th MPAD

DIYALA, Iraq – Helicopters hovering overhead may be a common sight for Soldiers in Iraq these days, but for those in 1st Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, and their Iraqi Army partners, watching the skies on February 17 provided an interesting sight.

In a rare occurrence, a massive air assault mission was carried out that morning to clear three small villages to which there was no other access. The cooperative effort required extensive planning, but with the partnership of both forces, it ended a success.

“Impeccable planning, hard

work, and excellent rehearsals were essential to our success,” said 2nd Lt. William Horan, a planning officer for the 1/23 Inf. “It was an exhaustive effort to coordinate even just the air assets required for the missions.”

Providing enough helicopters was a major concern because of the nature of the operation. It required three Chinooks to provide transport for the Soldiers that completed the clearing, and four Blackhawks for the troops creating the security cordon. In addition, a team of two Apaches provided air security if needed.

“Once that part of the plan was figured out, we had to build a gigantic terrain model so we could do proper rehearsals,” said 2nd Lt. Horan, a Wethersfield, Conn. native. “During rehearsals, the Iraqi commanders showed an

immense knowledge of the plan and were a direct factor in the success of this mission.”

The Iraqi soldiers, from the 2nd Battalion, 19th Brigade, 5th Iraqi Army Division, played integral role in the overall mission by memorizing locations and roles of U.S. Soldiers as well as their own.

“I learned from the training to try and make more active examples in rehearsals to provide a better understanding,” said Sgt. Abbas Abraham Jassam, a non-commissioned officer with the 2/19 IA. “Those things made us able to work together better to complete this operation.”

All of the thorough planning proved fruitful at the end of the day, as the mission resulted in three arrests and the confiscation of a small weapons cache. It also

improved the relationship between the U.S. and Iraqi forces.

“Our time with them was like being with one of our tribes,” said Sgt. Jassam. “They took care of us like family, providing food and a place to stay during training and before the mission.”

Working together to accomplish such a positive result left a lasting impression on the Iraqi soldiers, building their confidence for unilateral operations in the future.

“This is the first time I have been on a mission like this, flying in with U.S. Soldiers instead of driving like usual,” said Sgt. Jassam. “It has been a great experience and I hope I can do it again soon.”



Comanche Company, 1/23 Inf. Soldiers provide security during a search of a small secluded village in the Diyala province of Iraq on February 17. In cooperation with Iraqi Army forces, the mission was a large scale air assault to look for weapons caches and warranted individuals.

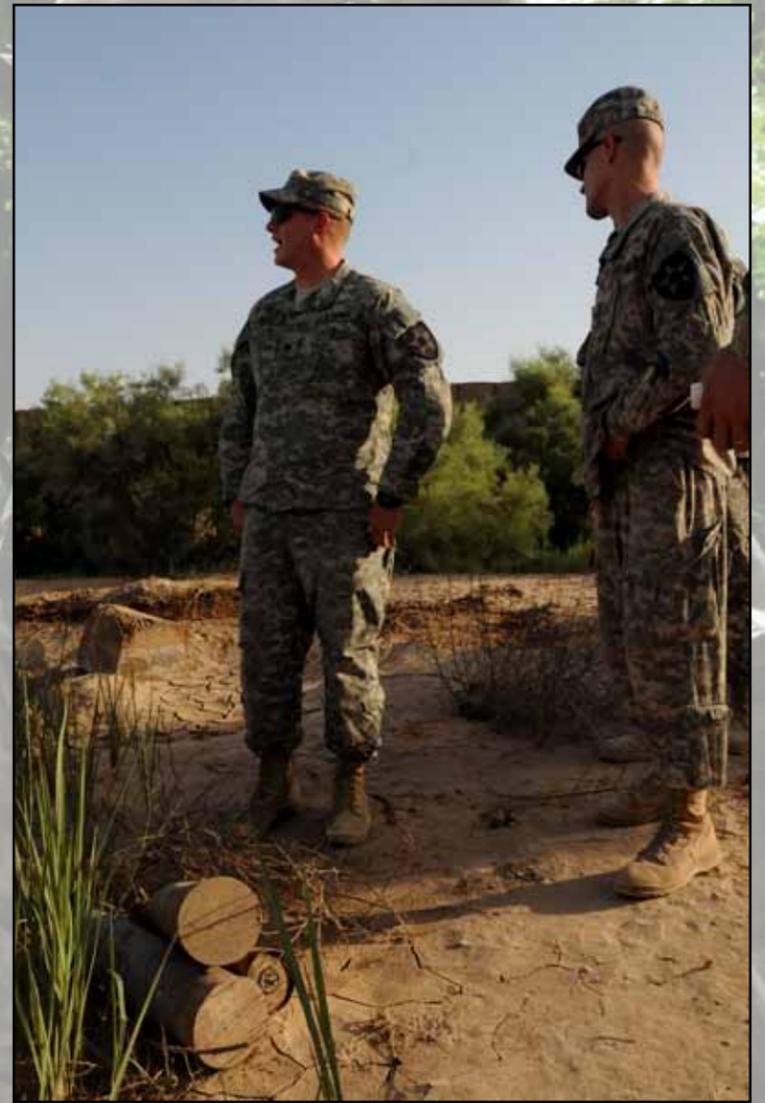


Left: Soldiers of Comanche Company, 1/23 Inf. take cover from debris as the first flight of Blackhawks for an air assault mission lift off. The first flight dropped off security teams outside a secluded village in the Diyala province of Iraq.

Right: After being dropped off by a Chinook, Tomahawk Soldiers work their way through a field to a small village in the Diyala province on Feb. 17.



Making final preparations before landing, Tomahawk Soldiers watch for their cue to jump off their transport flight to a small village in the Diyala province, Iraq. Their flight was part of a massive air assault mission in partnership with the Iraqi Army on February 17.



# Arrowhead Brigade Prepares Diyala Province for Drawdown

Story and Photos by  
Pfc. Adrian Muehe  
135th MPAD

DIYALA, Iraq — Operation Iraqi Freedom has led U.S. Forces to Diyala province, Iraq, for the greater part of the last decade. Along the way they have established bases that units have rotated in and out of, leaving behind equipment such as radios, ammunition and storage containers, to stockpile over the years.

As the 3rd Stryker Brigade

Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, stepped foot inside this province, they knew they would be one of the last units to do so. They started taking immediate action to help erase the footprints left throughout the province. To address the excess equipment that the brigade inherited upon its arrival, Task Force Transition was created by 296th Brigade Support Battalion, 3 SBCT, 2nd ID.

“It’s not going to be like Vietnam with the images of helicopters being pushed into the water,” said Capt. Jonathan Cheek, of

Highpoint, N.C., and the TF Transition officer in charge.

They began this task by exploring every nook and cranny to document everything found on the bases selected to be handed back over to the Government of Iraq by 3 SBCT, 2nd ID. While the group administered this process by making sure all of the paperwork was in order, Clean-Sweep teams were brought in from the 13th Combat Support Sustainment Battalion, 3rd Sustainment Brigade, stationed at Joint Base Balad, Iraq.

The job of these clean-sweep teams was to retrograde (re-enter into the Army supply system) the additional pieces equipment. These groups confirmed, re-inventoried, packaged, and shipped empty containers, and containers full of extra equipment, to other locations to be accounted for once again. So far, a total of 1,370 containers have been relocated by this system, said 1st Lt. Mark Hall, of Hollywood, Fla., and the brigade transportation officer responsible for overseeing movement of equipment and supplies.

Some excess equipment, such as Containerized Housing Units (CHUs), generators, and water tanks, was left behind to be used by the GoI.

“These are things that we have a lot of, but don’t really need,” said Capt. Sarah Komm, of Kenosha, Wis., and the deputy officer for the transition team. “It costs more for us to take it back than to

just leave it here for the Iraqis to have.”

Although supplies from previous units are being left on bases and handed over to the IA, they are not just leaving useless or un-serviceable items to be disposed of by the GoI. Everything left behind is in working order and can be used to maintain operations and living conditions on these bases.

“The Iraqis actually do a joint

inventory with the FOB mayor [U.S. representative responsible for operations on the FOB] where they show them everything on the base,” said Capt. Komm. “We just don’t hand them a bunch of broken stuff. We try to give it to them in working condition.”

After these bases have been handed over, the Soldiers of 3 SBCT, 2nd ID, have continued their partnerships with the Iraqi Security Forces by training and advising them in combat operations. So far, none of the Iraqi units operating out of these bases have voiced any complaints about the condition of the facilities they received, said Capt. Cheek.

Coming to the end of their tour after operating in the province for ten months, Arrowhead Soldiers have shifted their focus from conducting missions to inventorying and packing their own equipment that they brought with them. While TF Transition is getting ready to go home as well, they are continuing their job for the next unit to finish.

“We have already started inventorying everything on [FOBs] Warhorse and Cobra,” said Capt. Komm. “This will make it a lot easier for [2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division] when they close down these bases.”



Specialist Jason Dammann, of Milwaukee, Wis., and a combat engineer with the 18th Engineer Co., 296th Brigade Support Battalion, 3 SBCT, 2 ID, sprays off a storage container to prepare it for shipment back to the U.S. at FOB Warhorse, Iraq, on July 5.



Specialist Anthony Duncan, of Spanuway, Wash., and a combat engineer with the 18th Engineer Co., 296th Brigade Support Battalion, 3 SBCT, 2 ID, loads two .50-caliber machine gun barrels, along with an inventory sheet, into a storage container at FOB Warhorse, Iraq.



A Soldier from the 18th Engineer Company, 296th Brigade Support Battalion, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, serves as a ground guide for a forklift operator as he places a storage container inside a larger one to be shipped back to the U.S.

# A Man With a Heart for Stone

Story and Photos by  
Pvt. Zachary Zuber  
135th MPAD

DIYALA, Iraq — It all started with grief. Three men lost their lives, and another was left with the terrible memory of such a loss. Many people could feel the heartache this situation brings, but this particular case affected Charles Wagner, a mechanic for General Dynamics Land Systems, who was working in Mosul, Iraq.

In an effort to relieve the pain felt from the passing of his friends, Mr. Wagner began shaping marble stones into crests, crosses, or hearts. Since that time, he has created many works of art to escape from the stress that comes during deployment.

“This started out as a way to displace myself from what’s going on over here, working during off hours to focus on other things,” said Mr. Wagner, a native of Rainier, Wash. “I lost three Soldiers on one mission, and it was a way to connect for me to create a heart, crucifix, and a lancer for each one of their parents.”

During that first tour, in 2004 and 2005, he carved a full-size lancer for 1st Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division. Then, during the 2006-07 tour with 3 SBCT, 2 ID, he created a replica of the Indian-head shield that represents 2nd Infantry Division. When he traveled with the Arrowhead

Brigade to Iraq last August, the request was made for the 3rd Stryker Brigade crest, which includes the 2nd ID shield on top of an arrowhead, with the number three located above the shield.

The piece, carved from nearly fifty pounds of marble, is a chance to leave a permanent personal memento with the brigade, said Mr. Wagner.

“I was born at Madigan Army Hospital [at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash.], so I kind of share the pride of the brigade. And for the Soldiers, this is my gift back because of what the military has done

for me,” said Mr. Wagner. “It’s a lot of pride for me to be asked to do this, and to offer it to the Soldiers of the brigade.”

This is not the only contribution he has made to Soldiers from the Arrowhead Brigade. When they bring in vehicles for him to repair, some see the stone carvings he has laying around. If a curious individual asks about them, Mr. Wagner gladly shows them how they can create their own escape from a simple block of stone.

“If you give someone a square block, they can take a saw to the corners and round it off with a

washer to make a perfect circle,” said Mr. Wagner. “That’s what I show to Soldiers I meet to help them take their mind off of what’s going on and let them drift somewhere else.”

After they are taught basic carving techniques, the Soldiers then have the opportunity to enlighten the teacher.

“I can’t understand why people do what they do just from looking in their eyes, but when I see what they make I see different creative views,” said Mr. Wagner. “Everybody has a different opinion of how life is, and you can see that when someone is given a piece of stone and turns it into a unit crest, a shot glass, or even just a ball.”

By spending time here just like Soldiers do, he understands how they feel about being away from home, said Mr. Wagner. His hope is to offer those willing to listen some of the knowledge gained through years of life experience.

“Our main thing here is to help Soldiers,” said Mr. Wagner. “The main thing is to at least make the time here seem shorter.”

Since he started working with stone over seven years ago, he has provided over 100 Soldiers with a piece of marble and the proper tools to shape it. When the time comes this summer for him to provide a stone to the Arrowhead Brigade, many will know that it represents a piece of his heart. 🙏



Charles Wagner, a native of Rainier, Wash., explains the process of carving the 2nd Infantry Division shield into the emblem of 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd ID. Mr. Wagner worked during his down time for almost a month to create the marble carving, which he will present to the brigade at the end of their deployment.



Charles Wagner, a Rainier, Wash. native, uses sand paper to fashion the 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, emblem out of marble. The General Dynamics Land Systems mechanic has worked with the brigade during two tours in Iraq and wanted to make something he could give back to the Soldiers.

# NCOs Receive Fiery Induction into the 296th

Story and Photos by  
Pvt. Zachary Zuber  
135th MPAD

DIYALA, Iraq – The “Year of the NCO” came to a close as Soldiers from both Task Force 296, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division and the 5th Iraqi Army Division faced their final set of challenges together before being inducted in the Non-Commissioned Officer Corps on Dec. 31.

“The NCOs went through a team building event, then the ‘Pit,’ which is a rite of passage for new NCOs, and finally the official induction ceremony,” said First Sgt. Shawn E. Romero, first sergeant for TF 296 medical company.

The team building event divided the Soldiers into four separate elements, charged with completing tasks located at different points around the FOB. They were given a map and a simulated casualty litter to carry as they maneuvered through the exercises to test both their physical and mental skills and their ability to work to complete their tasks and then get to ‘the pit’ for the next part of the induction,” said First Sgt. Romero.

The ‘pit’ is a time-honored ritual that encompasses three

different phases; first is fire, water is the second, and the final section is stones. It was an optional exercise for Soldiers

“The three stages of the pit are symbolic; the fire to burn away old bad habits, the water to cleanse their souls, and the stones to sharpen their skills as new NCOs,” said First Sgt. Romero.

After the pit the new NCOs formally accepted the ‘duties and responsibilities’ of a non-commissioned officer during a formal ceremony welcoming them into the NCO Corps.

“The events leading up

to the ceremony are a great way get soldiers’ motivation to another level before their official induction to the unit as new NCOs,” said First Sgt. Romero.

This event provided a special memory for the soldiers especially since they had a unique opportunity to go through the training with some of the new NCOs in the Iraqi Army.

“It was great to work with the Iraqis during this because we got to see their style of leadership and they were very motivated to do this training,”



Members of Team Scorpion work to pull an inoperable gator up a hill during a challenge that was part of their NCO induction ceremony on Dec. 31, at FOB Warhorse. Four teams went through four different challenges designed to test their mental and physical toughness, teach team building skills before their formal induction ceremony.

said Sgt. Ferguson. “I learned that everybody has different ideas but being a leader means taking other ideas and using them to make the mission happen.”



Sgt. Major Gerald Roberson, operations sergeant major, 296th Brigade Support Battalion, is the first to walk through ‘the pit’ prior to the induction ceremony for the newest non-commissioned officers of the battalion. New NCOs had the option to follow his example in going through the symbolic pits of fire, water, and stone. They were not negatively affected by a choice to not participate.

Sgt. Melissa Woodruff, 296th Brigade Support Battalion, throws sandbags off the back of a humvee during a team-building challenge as part of the NCO induction ceremony held on Dec. 31, at FOB Warhorse. Soldiers were split into four groups and then sent around the base to perform four challenges before going through a pit of fire, water, and stones as a rite of passage, before heading to a formal induction ceremony.



# "Hailstorm" Soldiers Roam At Night With Iraqi Forces

Story and Photos By  
Pfc. Adrian Muehe  
135th MPAD

DIYALA, IRAQ – On the night of Jan 21, residents of Muqdadiyah, Iraq, were soundly asleep in their beds, completely oblivious to the "hailstorm" that was outside. No ice fell from the sky, just the "Hailstorm" Soldiers of 4th Platoon, Company C, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Infantry Regiment, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, doing their part in a joint combat patrol with their partners in the Iraqi Army and Iraqi Police.

The Soldiers of 4th Platoon, Company C, 2/3 Inf., rolled out late at night to meet up with soldiers of 3rd Company, 1st Battalion, 20th Brigade, 5th IA Division, and members of the Muqdadiyah IP Emergency Company Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) team at the IP compound in Muqdadiyah.

After linking up, Capt. Laith Muhammad Nagen, commander of the IP SWAT team and Capt. Zehid Muhammed Shmiel, the commander of IA 3rd Company, provided 2nd Lt. Nicholas Beazley, from Roanoke, Va., platoon leader of 4th Platoon, with intelligence about people they were looking for and identified key points along their designated route where they observed suspicious activity.

Around midnight, the Soldiers of 4th Platoon, along with their IA and IP counterparts, set out on foot to patrol the streets of Muqdadiyah.



Sergeant Jeffery Ship, platoon sergeant, 4th Platoon, Charlie Co., 2/3rd Inf., and 2nd Lt. Nicholas Beazley, platoon leader, 4th Platoon, Charlie Co., 2/3 Inf., discuss plans for a night patrol with Capt. Laith Nagen, commander, Muqdadiyah Iraqi Police Emergency Company SWAT team, and Capt Zehid Shmiel, commander, 3rd Company, 1st Battalion, 20th Brigade, 5th Iraqi Army Division. These leaders have been working together for the past six months to provide security in Muqdadiyah, Iraq.

The patrol, which consisted of about 60 people, marched on with night optical devices and a few flashlights. The city was so dark that one would have to use a flood light to see everyone involved. Communication was done through radios and low volume talking amongst Soldiers close to each other. If anyone looked out their window, they would have had no idea how many troops were out there.

The IA Company and the IP SWAT team took the lead, with 4th Platoon in the rear. The mission lasted approximately two hours and covered about seven miles.

"We didn't find anything, but this has been our best patrol," said Capt. Nagen. "The cooperation

was really good."

This mission took four days of planning between the leaders of the three teams, but they have been working together for the last six months, especially 4th Platoon and the 3rd IA Company.

"We work with these guys every week," said Sgt. 1st Class Jeffery Ship, a native of Laurel, Mont., platoon sergeant for 4th Platoon. "They're our primary partners."

The "Hailstorm" Soldiers have created a good working relationship with the 3rd IA Company through training together and conducting joint combat patrols throughout Muqdadiyah.

The training courses covered a wide variety of combat skills. Sol-



diers of 4th Platoon have taught the IA Company different battle drills such as how to react to contact as well as a reacting to a near ambush. The IA soldiers have also learned how to search personnel and vehicles, and how to operate and move as a fire squad.

"We have a level of trust that allows for better cooperation during training and on missions," said Sgt. 1st Class Ship.

During this training, these warriors of two nations have created a bond.

"Since we started working with them, they have started joking a lot more," said Pfc. Nicholas Bartell, who hails from Syracuse, N.Y., a Stryker driver for 4th Platoon.

While working with this IA Company, the U.S. Soldiers have a first-hand view of the vast improvement in their skills.

"A couple of them have graduated from 'train the trainer' courses, and they have taught the other soldiers," said Pfc. Bartell. "The

ones who understand it easier teach the ones who don't seem to get it right away."

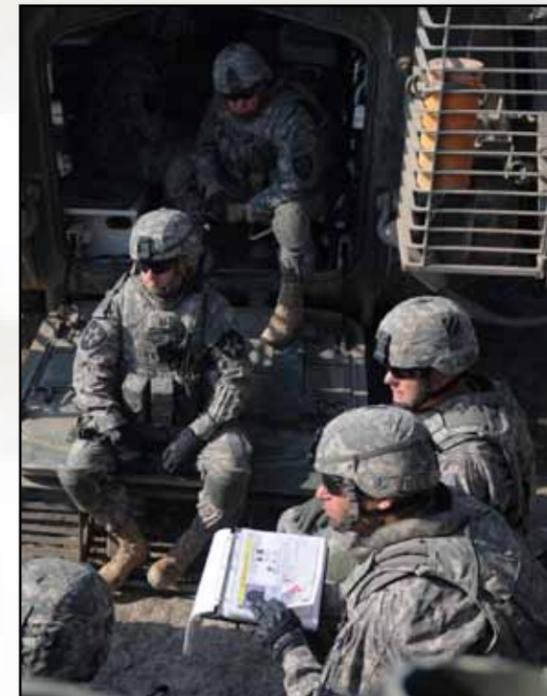
Even with this great relationship between these forces, the IA and IP are hopeful for a future on their own.

"Working with the Coalition Forces has been great, but we will be able to conduct these missions on our own soon," said Capt. Nagen. 🇺🇸



Left: Soldiers from 4th Platoon, Charlie Co., 2/3rd Inf., get ready to go on a night patrol with members of 3rd Company, 1st Battalion, 20th Brigade, 5th Iraqi Army Division, and the Muqdadiyah Iraqi Police Emergency Company Special Weapons and Tactics team on Jan. 21. These three groups have worked together for the past six months to help make Muqdadiyah a safer place.

Above: Second Lieutenant Nicholas Beazley poses for a photo with Capt. Laith Muhammed Nagen, commander of the Muqdadiyah Iraqi Police Emergency Company Special Weapon and Tactics Team, and Capt. Zehid Muhammed Shmiel, commander of 3rd Company, 1st Battalion, 20th Brigade, 5th Iraqi Army Division, after a night patrol of Muqdadiyah, Iraq, on Jan. 21. The groups these three men lead have worked together for the last six months to conduct joint security patrols in Muqdadiyah.



# Sparks Fly As Iraqis Ignite Their Future

Story and Photos by  
Pfc. Adrian Muehe  
135th MPAD

DIYALA, Iraq – Thirty new welders and electricians accepted their diplomas after successfully completing the Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) and Welding Course at Forward Operating Base Normandy on Feb. 22.

The students came from a variety of backgrounds. Most were Iraqi citizens, a few of whom serve as policemen and Soldiers, looking to pursue education in these particular trades. Some of them are militiamen who are part of the Sons of Iraq (SOIZ),

a predominantly Sunni organization committed to protecting their communities.

With Iraq being a much safer place to live, the need for an organized militia such as the SOIZ is dwindling. These men are paid by the Government of Iraq (GOI) to counter the forces of terrorist groups such as Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI), but with violence among Iraqis becoming a thing of the past, these men are looking for another way to lead their lives.

“This class is a chance to give local militiamen career opportunities to get jobs as opposed to finding other avenues of income,” said Sgt. Samuel Ulrich, of Yakima, Wash., the senior utility equipment repair instructor for

Company B, 296th Brigade Support Battalion, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division.

In a more peaceful, stable Iraq, these men will soon be able to lay down their arms for good, and lead normal lives by providing non-violent services to their communities.

This was the third HVAC and welding class held at FOB Normandy. Three previous courses have been held at FOB Warhorse.

“We want to take this class to the people, because most can’t afford the trip to Baquba to take it at (FOB) Warhorse,” said Chief Warrant Officer Fred Delany, from Port Orchard, Wash., officer in charge of the Iraqi Business Initiative (IBIZ), Company B, 296th BSB.

The two week course instills the basics of the trade in these young men, many of whom are in their early twenties. The skills they learned on FOB Normandy will set the foundation for their careers.

The welding students were taught by Spc. Joseph Allen, a native of Coal City, Ill. He serves as a metal worker for Company B.

“I teach them three to four basic joints applied to any kind of welding,” said Spc. Allen. “I go over the welding process. I teach them what goes on, and show them how to identify and correct flaws.”

The HVAC portion was taught with the same concept.

“I break it down to the very

basics,” said Sgt. Ulrich. “I teach them to know what general mechanics will be able to fix. These skills can be applied to generators, lights, and other things of the same principal.”

This course doesn’t just set the foundation for a fresh start in a brand new career field, it solidifies it. The diplomas these men receive hold high value in Diyala province.

“Their certificates are noticed by the Diyala Vocational School,” said Spc. Allen. “Their professionals came out to inspect our program and review our curriculum.”

The Diyala Vocational School gave their approval of the course. Throughout the region, these certificates are as good as a diploma from the school, which many of

the students cannot afford.

The students who decided to take this course came for a variety of reasons. For one student, this class is the door to a better life.

Riadh Abarham Mahmood has been a member of the SOIZ since Aug. 2008.

“U.S. Forces came to my village and asked young men to help protect the area,” said Mahmood. “I volunteered to go.”

Mahmood graduated from the welding class and is looking forward to his new career. He plans on continuing his service in the SOIZ until he is no longer needed. Afterwards he will continue on to be a full time welder.

“My cousin is a welder,” said Mahmood. “I chose this because this is a good career and I’ll be

able to open a shop in my village.”

Another student, Modafar Salman, already has a good career. He is a mortar man for the Iraqi Police, but elected to take the HVAC course.

Salman plans on pursuing more education in electricity and air conditioning repair, as recommended by the instructors. In addition to starting his own business, he will be able to save the Baquba police station money by being able to fix their air conditioning and electrical systems.

“I hope to open a shop in Baquba while working as a policeman,” said Salman. “I hope to make some extra income.” In addition to gaining skills in an exciting new career field, these graduates are able to apply for micro-grants, said Sgt. Ulrich. Micro-grants are funds used to help Iraqis start their own business.

“This gives them an added incentive to strive to do better in the course,” said Sgt. Ulrich. With the third class at FOB Normandy complete, a chapter closes in the HVAC and welding class story. In their efforts to reach out to the citizens of Diyala, the next class will move into the heart of Kurdistan, and will be taught around the area of FOB Edge, along the Iranian border.

“We will actually be teaching this class off the FOB,” said Spc. Allen. “We will be loading up our equipment, and taking the class to them.”



Specialist Joseph Allen, from Coal City, Ill., the welding instructor for the Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioner (HVAC) and Welding course, Company B, 296th BSB, shows students how to grind down metal as part of the welding process. Specialist Allen has taught the basics of welding and metal work to these Iraqi civilians during the two week course.



An Iraqi student welds two pieces of metal together during the Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning (HVAC) and Welding Course. The two week course is instructed by Soldiers of Company B, 296th BSB, to give these men skills they can take back to their communities.

# Soldiers' Final Thoughts

During their final month at FOB Warhorse before returning to Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash., we asked several Arrowhead Soldiers to reflect upon the things they have seen and accomplished while deployed in the Diyala province.



"I'm going to miss the hard work and passionate determination of our ISF counterparts. This deployment has been a resounding success."  
 -- **Staff Sgt. Christopher Montera, Charlie Co., 5/20 Inf. Tijuana, Mexico**

"It was a lot slower than my last deployment, but I still stayed busy the whole way though. I'm glad that things are calming down over here and now we can leave Iraq better than when we found it. I hope they can take up where we left off."  
 -- **Sgt. Luke Hatfield, Battle Co., 5/20 Inf. St. Albans, W. Va.**



"Overall it was really good. It was really cool to be able to work with the Iraqi Army and create a partnership. I'm glad to be finally going home, but it was a fun time."  
 -- **Spc. Cassandra Jacoby, 296th BSB Somerset, N.C.**

"It was a really good experience. Instead of just what you see you on the news back in the United States, you actually get to interact with the locals and get a first-hand view of what their life is like. I've seen the importance of us being here, and that they do want our help. They don't get to work with females too often, and when I got to work the checkpoint they wanted to know if I got paid and all kinds of stuff. Breaking the stigma of females in the military for their country and working with the Daughters of Iraq has been an amazing experience all around, being able to be part of history is just really cool."  
 -- **Spc. Esther Abitia, Charlie Co., 296th BSB Maple Falls, Wash.**



"We really hope that we can walk away from this and draw down successfully. Everybody has made sacrifices. We had friends that we lost, and families that have endured a lot through these deployments. I hope that the Iraqis embrace what we have given them and do the right thing. Whether people feel that we should be here or not we did come in and make this place better for the Iraqi population."  
 -- **Sgt. Chris Schwartz, 1/37th FA Cleveland, Ohio**

"This deployment has been quite different from my previous ones. I've had a different job, working with the PRT and moving teams associated with them. I believe we made an impact on the local infrastructure and the economy. I hope it has a lasting effect on the people of the province. Our guys did a lot of hard work!"  
 -- **Cpl. William Tobin, 1/37th FA Yuma, Ariz.**



# MAY THOSE FALLEN NEVER BE FORGOTTEN

**Staff Sgt. Todd W. Selge**  
 Attack Co., 5th Battalion, 20th  
 Infantry Regiment  
 June 22, 1984 ~ September 3, 2009

**Sgt. Jordan M. Shay**  
 Attack Co., 5th Battalion, 20th  
 Infantry Regiment  
 April 3, 1987 ~ September 3, 2009

**Staff Sgt. Amy C. Tirador**  
 209th Military Intelligence Co.,  
 296th Brigade Support Battalion  
 July 18, 1980 - November 04, 2009

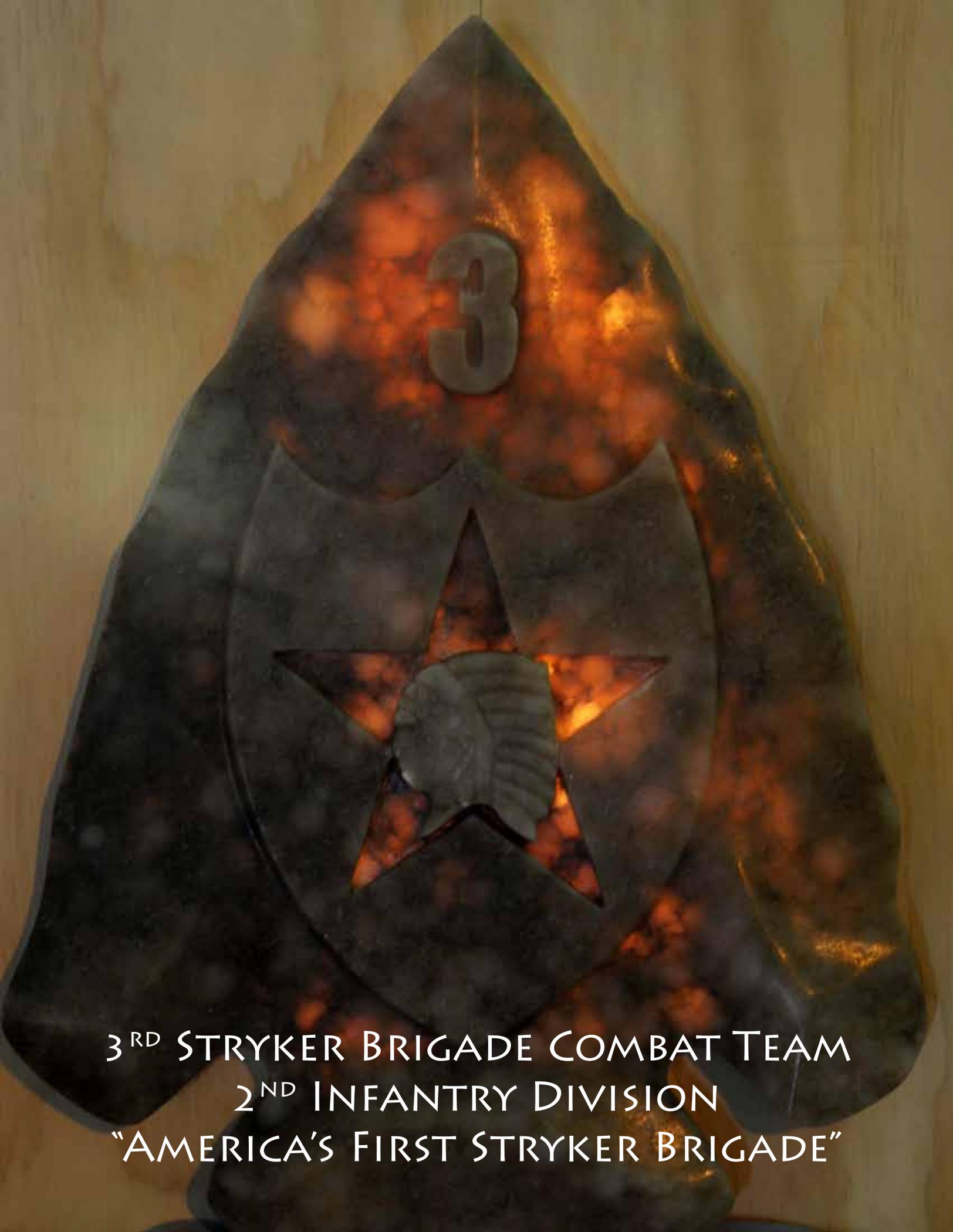
**Pfc. Erin McLyman**  
 296th Brigade Support Battalion  
 May 10, 1983 - March 13, 2010

**Sgt. Keith Adam Coe**  
 1st Battalion,  
 37th Field Artillery Regiment  
 March 18, 1980 - April 27, 2010

**Cpl. William Yauch**  
 Battle Co., 5th Battalion, 20th  
 Infantry Regiment  
 December 24, 1986 - June 11, 2010

**Sgt. Israel O'Bryan**  
 Battle Co., 5th Battalion, 20th  
 Infantry Regiment  
 March 3, 1986 - June 11, 2010

**Spc. Christopher Opat**  
 1st Squadron,  
 14th Cavalry Regiment  
 April 15, 1981 - June 14, 2010



3<sup>RD</sup> STRYKER BRIGADE COMBAT TEAM  
2<sup>ND</sup> INFANTRY DIVISION  
"AMERICA'S FIRST STRYKER BRIGADE"