

# READY FIRST REPORT

READY FIRST



**August  
2010**

**'Tops in Blue,'  
Paul Wall  
entertain FOB  
Warrior**

**USF-I CG, CSM  
visits 'Ready  
First'**

**'Golden Li-  
ons' provide  
school  
supplies**

**'Bandits'  
rewarded**

**1-14th Inf.,  
501st BSB  
train KRGB**

**Burn pits  
replaced**

**AF transfers  
BOS-I to Army**

# READY 6

# COL LARRY SWIFT

- READY FIRST COMMANDER -



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# READY 7

# CSM JAMES DANIELS

- READY FIRST COMMAND SERGEANT MAJOR -



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# 'Tops in Blue' entertain Servicemembers

By Staff Sgt. Demarco Wren, Pfc. Jessica Luhrs

Before the Air Force band "Tops in Blue" took the stage at Forward Operating Base Warrior, Kirkuk, Iraq, during their world tour, they were already receiving rave reviews from the audience, July 9.

"I guarantee everyone will enjoy this show they have something for everybody," said Air Force Col. Steven Slick, the host of the concert and 506th Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron commander, who saw "Tops in Blue" perform at Dover Air Force Base.

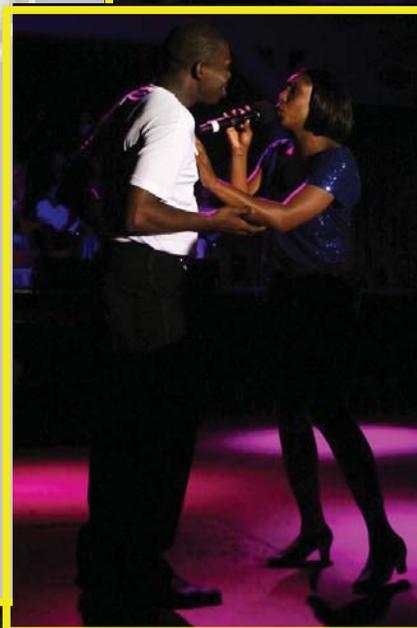
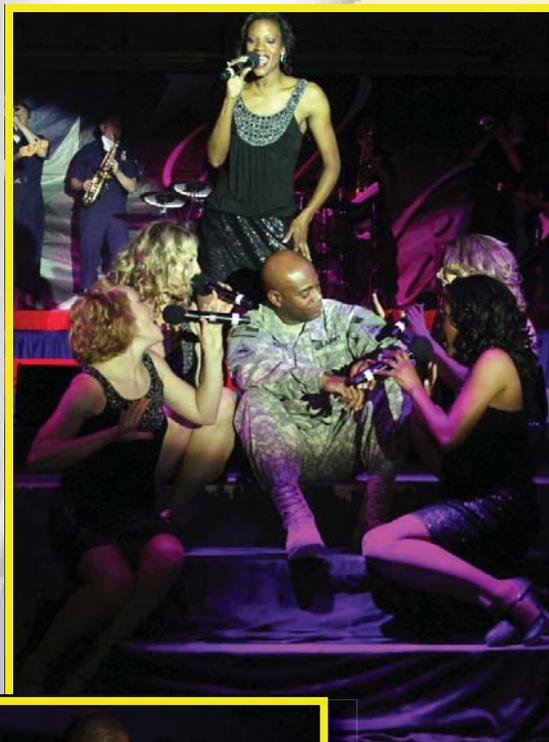
The 90-minute shows theme was "We Believe," is a salute to the ideas we believe in as Americans, and featured the R&B music of Stevie Wonder, swing music from Michael Buble, Montgomery Gentry's all-American country music, hits from Lady Gaga and the Black Eyed Peas and much more, according to their website.

"I really didn't know what to expect from an Air Force band but their performance is one I won't soon forget," Spc. Jimmy Bailey, a communications specialist with 2nd Battalion, 3rd Field Artillery, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division.

He continued by saying seeing them perform brought a little bit of home to the desert.

According to Tops in Blue this is their mission bringing quality entertainment to troops in remote and deployed locations.

This is why the 31-member band is scheduled to tour Iraq for the entire month of July.





# Task Force Marne Commander, CSM welcome 'Golden Dragons'

By Pfc. Jessica Luhrs

"Golden Dragon" Soldiers of 1st Battalion, 14th Infantry, 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division out of Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, were welcomed to the Task Force Marne Team, by Task Force Marne Commanding General, Maj. Gen. Tony Cucolo, and Task Force Marne Command Sergeant Major, Command Sgt. Maj. Jesse Andrews, at the Warrior Gym, Forward Operating Base Warrior, in Kirkuk, Iraq, July 20.

The briefing was held to give the Task Force Marne Command Team an opportunity to introduce themselves to the Soldiers and to explain expectations during the deployment.

The Hawaii-based Soldiers, currently scheduled for a year-long deployment, are joining the "Ready First" Soldiers of 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division out of Fort Bliss, Texas and will work closely with Iraqi security forces around Hawijah, Iraq.

"I wanted to welcome all of you to Task Force Marne, I am honored to serve with all of you and I am happy to have you here for the transition into stability operations," said Maj. Gen. Cucolo.

Soon after introductions were made the Task Force Marne Commander began explaining to the Soldiers exactly what is expected.

"You need to be the best example of a professional Soldier because your behavior is important to a successful mission," said Maj. Gen. Cucolo.

He went on to explain during this deployment much more will be expected out of every Soldier.

The "Golden Dragons" will have a very active role during this advise and assist mission; they will be patrolling with their partners, training them and preparing for the transfer to stability operations, he said.

He also said the "Golden Dragons" could not forget about their personal well-being during this 12-month deployment.

"Each of you need to find a way to improve yourself; read a book to your child once-a-month, quit smoking, improve your bench press or read a book," he said. "Just do something for you."

Major General Cucolo ended the briefing by reminding the "Golden Dragons" how honored he is.

"As American Soldiers you are writing history and it is an honor to serve with you," he said.



## 40 'Bandits' awarded for efforts during OIF

By Pfc. Jessica Luhrs



During an award ceremony, on Forward Operating Base Warrior, July 10, 40 "Bandit" Soldiers of 1st Battalion, 37th Armor, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division out of Fort Bliss, Texas, were recognized for their outstanding accomplishments since arriving in Kirkuk, Iraq in November.

During the ceremony Spc. Michael Hernandez, a combat medic from Charlie Company, 1/37th Armor received the Combat Medic Badge (CMB) for providing medical care to Soldiers while under hostile enemy fire.

Thirty-one "Bandit" Soldiers were also recognized for direct participation in ground combat action and received the Combat Infantryman Badge (CIB.)

Spc. Ramil Bisnar, a "Bandit" team leader with Alpha Company and a native of Alaska was awarded the CIB after being engaged by the enemy on several occasions and said being recognized paid off all of the hard work he put into this deployment.

The Combat Action Badge (CAB) was also awarded to 8 Soldiers for being present under enemy fire.

Following the ceremony Lt. Col. Geoffrey Catlett, "Bandit" commander spoke to his Soldiers about how proud he is of them for a job well done and reminded them to stay safe upon arriving home.

"All of you have made a difference because of your professionalism there is no doubt about it," said Lt. Col. Catlett. "Just remember when you go home to have your well-deserved fun be safe."

# USFI CG, CSM visit 'Ready' Soldiers

By Pfc. Jessica Luhrs

General Raymond T. Odierno, commanding general United States Forces-Iraq and Command Sgt. Maj. Lawrence Wilson, command sergeant major USF-I, met with the senior leadership of Forward Operating Base Warrior, in Kirkuk, Iraq, July 30.

The visit began with a briefing from Task Force Marne Deputy Commanding General Maneuver, Brig. Gen. Patrick J. Donahue, II; Col. Larry Swift, commander of 1st Brigade Combat Team, "Ready First" 1st Armored Division; Command Sgt. Maj. James Daniels, the Ready First command sergeant major; leadership of Ready First and members of the Kirkuk Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT.)

During the briefing the senior leaders discussed the upcoming change-in-mission and the progress that has been made in the area.

The highlight of the briefing for progress in the area was the Kirkuk Combined Security Forces, a combination of U.S. Soldiers, Peshmurga, Iraqi army and Iraqi police.

"We have had great success with the CSF their training has brought these soldiers to the

level of our own Soldiers," said Col. Swift. "We expect great things from this security force."

Following the briefing ten Soldiers were brought into the room to be recognized by the USF-I command team.

"All of you are doing a great job and I am very proud of each of you," he said to the Soldiers after giving them his personal coin.

Before the USF-I Command Team visit came to an end they sat down for dinner with Brig. Gen. Sameer Abdul Kareem Jassin, commander of the 12th Division Iraqi army.

During the dinner Brig. Gen. Sameer talked about his view on security.

"Security in the area is very good the people of Kirkuk trust us because we have been trained very well," he said.

General Odierno said he was very impressed with his visit and the progress being made in Kirkuk.

The Ready First Combat Team is doing a great job in Kirkuk the brigade is building strong relationships with the Iraqi security forces and the PRT and this has attributed to the success in the area, said Gen. Odierno.





# 'Golden Lions' provide supplies to Iraqi school

By Pfc. Jessica Luhrs

The Kirkuk Combined Security Forces also known as the "Golden Lions," made up of Iraqi army, Iraqi Police, Peshmurga and "Battle Boar" Soldiers of 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division out of Fort Stewart, Ga., along with the famous Kirkuk lion mascot "Kirkuki," made a visit to a school in Chemen, near Kirkuk, Iraq, July 24.

The purpose of the visit was to drop off school supplies and stuffed animals, which were donated by citizens of the U.S. as a part of Operation School Supplies, to more than 40 Iraqi children.

"We want to thank all of you for what you brought to our children it means so much to them," said Sukar Arif Abus, the school's principal, to the "Golden Lions."

According to Sgt. Mohammed Socat Azzep Kamil, the "Golden Lions" senior platoon

sergeant, doing humanitarian aid drops helps the children and also builds better country. The first focus for any country is the child, if a child is not taken care of the country's future will not be good, said he explained.

"Which is why we are very honored to be helping the children because it makes our future better," said Sgt. Mohammed.

He continued in saying the progress the "Golden Lions" are making in the villages can already be seen.

The children were dancing and clapping with "Kirkuki" and talking to the "Golden Lions" during the entire mission.

"We will be doing missions like this one much more often," said Sgt. Mohammed. "It makes me and my soldiers happy to see the children smiling."



# Around the



# e Battlefield





*Task Force Marne Deputy Commanding General Maneuver, Brig. Gen. Patrick J. Donahue, II; Col. Patricia Sellers, commander of 1-1 Special Troops Battalion, Ready First, civilian and local contractors and Ready First Soldiers involved in the project marked the opening of the center with a ribbon-cutting ceremony, Aug. 4.*

## New incinerators limit use of burn pits at Warrior

By Pfc. Jessica R. Luhrs

Soldiers of 1st Brigade Combat Team, "Ready First" 1st Armored Division out of Fort Bliss, Texas, are doing their part in cleaning up the air at Forward Operating Base Warrior, Kirkuk, Iraq by opening of three incinerators and a recycling center which will limit the use of burn pits.

Task Force Marne Deputy Commanding General Maneuver, Brig. Gen. Patrick J. Donahue, II; Col. Patricia Sellers, commander of 1-1 Special Troops Battalion, Ready First, civilian and local contractors and Ready First Soldiers involved in the project marked the opening of the center with a ribbon-cutting ceremony, Aug. 4.

Following the ribbon-cutting ceremony the senior-leadership received a tour of the area.

"The incinerators burn six tons of trash per day and will reduce the amount of pollutants released into the air around Kirkuk," said Capt. Elizabeth Ortiz, the Ready First brigade environmental science engineer officer, during the tour.

Captain Ortiz also said reducing the amount of pollution is was made her push for the project to be completed quickly.

"We finished quickly because it was the right thing to do to," she said.

She continued by saying this project protect

the people of Kirkuk and the Soldiers on the FOB (Warrior) from becoming sick from the burn pits, that release dangerous smoke into the air. Also during the tour of the incinerator area Brig. Gen. Donahue and Col. Sellers were able to see the area where the recycling center is soon to be.

John Sasso, a civilian contractor overseeing the project said the recycling center, set to open in September, will reduce pollution even more."By recycling wood, aluminum, cardboard and plastic the amount of waste that reaches the incinerators is greatly reduced," he said.

Sasso added the recycled materials will also stimulate the local economy.

"Local contractors and companies who purchase the recycled materials can then make new products from the materials," he said.

Captain Ortiz added their ultimate goal with the two projects is to eliminate the use of burn pits in Kirkuk.

At the end of the tour and ceremony Brig. Gen. Donahue thanked the contractors and Soldiers for all of their hard-work.

"I am very impressed by the project," he said. "Thank you for all that each of you did."



## 501st BSB begins training KRGB mechanics

By Pfc. Jessica Luhrs

More than 80 Soldiers of the Kurdish Regional Guard Brigade (KRGB) began training to perform Preventive Maintenance Checks and Services (PMCS) on the Iraqi International Troop Carrier Truck, with "Ready First" Soldiers of 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division out of Fort Bliss, Texas, at the KRGB headquarters in Qara Anjir, near Kirkuk, Iraq, Aug. 3.

The course was developed by "Ready First" Soldiers after the KRGB received more than 170 new trucks, said Capt. Justin Herbe, commander of Bravo Company, 501st Brigade Support Battalion, "Ready First."

During the three-month course KRGB soldiers are scheduled to learn basic operator PMCS, from "Ready First" mechanics, then progresses into advanced engine maintenance and recovery operations.

The purpose of the training is to ensure the KRGB soldiers know how to prevent major mechanical issues before they happen, according to Staff Sgt. Luis Beltran, an El Paso, Texas native and senior mechanic for Bravo Co.

"Almost all of the mechanics out here are very good at what they do we are not trying to change their techniques just assist them in preventing damage," he continued.

According to Capt. Herbe, the officer in charge of the training, the soldiers desire to learn

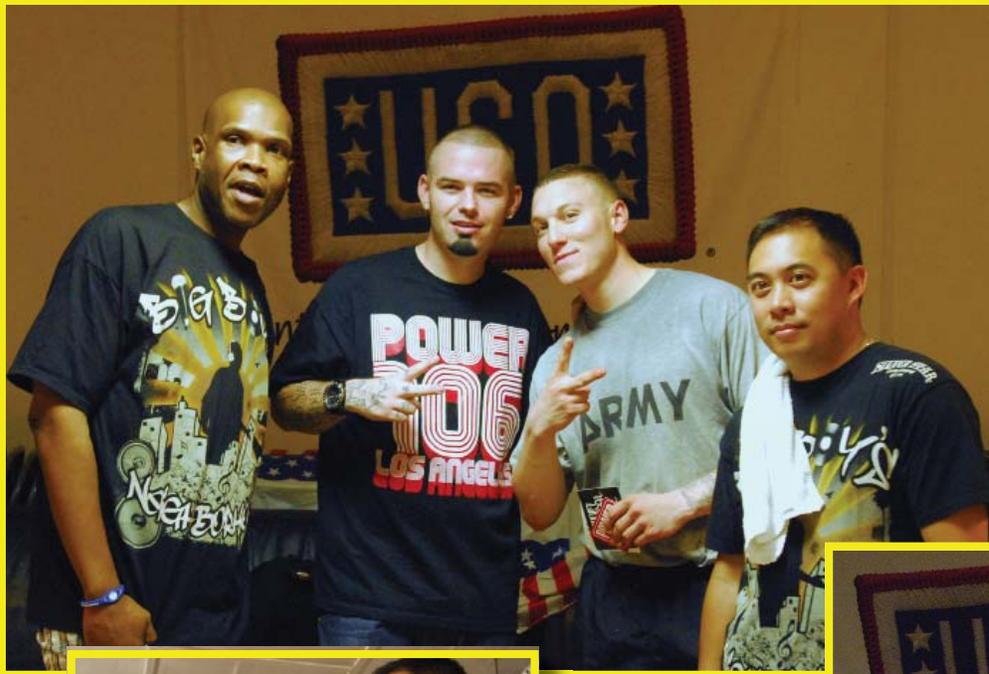
has surprised him the most.

"The response to the training has been outstanding," he said. "It was quite a surprise to see so many soldiers come out to the training willing and ready to learn."

After the training is complete the trainers have high expectations from the KRGB mechanics.

"When the training is complete we expect the soldiers to be the best trained and most prepared mechanics in the KRGB," said Capt. Herbe. "Then take what they learned and pass it on to fellow soldiers."





From left to right, Big Boy, Paul Wall, Pfc. Chase Clark, a tanker with Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 30th Infantry, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division and DJ E-Man, pose for a photo, following their hour-long USO/Armed Forces Entertainment sponsored performance at Forward Operating Base Warrior, Kirkuk, Iraq, Aug. 5.



READY

# Rapper Paul Wall, radio hosts tour Iraq

By Pfc Jessica Luhrs

Less than a month after debuting his fourth album, *Heart of a Champion*, Texas-based rapper Paul Wall, began a week-long USO/Armed Forces Entertainment sponsored tour of Iraq with fellow artists DJ E-Man and Big Boy.

To kick-off their tour of Iraq they performed an hour-long concert for hundreds of Fort Bliss, Texas Soldiers currently deployed to Forward Operating Base Warrior, in Kirkuk, Iraq, Aug. 5.

In a previous interview Paul Wall, who has visited the Middle East on four separate USO tours, said each performance is very personal for him.

"My grandfather was a lieutenant colonel in the military and I grew-up in a very small family," he said. "He was all I knew for a long time and I have a lot of friends who were in the military, I lost a couple of friends in Iraq, then I heard 80% of the military is either from Texas, like me, or is stationed in Texas."

It is just an amazing feeling to see troops

with their assault rifles on their backs and going crazy representing Texas, said the rapper. DJ E-Man and Big Boy, both of the Los Angeles Power 106 station agreed with Paul Wall saying they are both very happy to be in Iraq.

"We wanted to just come out here and have fun with you guys we really want to thank you for all you do and take your mind off of everything for a while," said Big Boy, morning host for Power 106.

Who throughout the concert made it his mission to get the crowd involved in the concert by bringing Soldiers and Airmen on stage to show-off their musical abilities and movie knowledge.

After the group finished performing songs from Paul Wall's new album they invited the audience to the Morale, Welfare and Recreation center where they autographed photos and jerseys and took photos with each person.





## Hawaii Soldiers build confidence in partners

By Pfc. Jessica Luhrs

Just after completing a week-long cordon and search course senior-leadership with the Kurdish Regional Guard Brigade (KRGB), began the land navigation and map reading portion of a three month long infantry course with U.S. Forces at their headquarters in Laylan, near Kirkuk, Iraq, Aug. 11.

The training is being facilitated by Bravo Company, 1st Battalion, 14th Infantry, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division out of Schofield Barracks, Hawaii currently deployed to Forward Operating Base Warrior, Kirkuk.

After the 50 KRGB senior non-commissioned officers, participating in the training, complete this portion of the course they will be able to plan missions more effectively, according to Sgt. Benjamin Sparkman, a St. Louis, Mo. native and trainer from B. Co.

"They will be able to plan a mission using terrain features and map reading instead of going into an area blind," he said. "This is why it is very important they understand this training."

Sergeant Sparkman's platoon sergeant agreed with him and added.

"While the KRGB soldiers are learning these fundamentals they are also learning a very important skill; teaching other," said the Los Angeles, Calif. native, Staff Sgt. Eric Gonzalez.

Throughout the course the trainers have the KRGB soldiers assist in teaching the course, he said.

"The trainers have the KRGB soldiers stand-up in front of the class and teach knocking out two birds with one stone," said Staff Sgt. Gonzalez. "When they get up there to teach it builds their confidence and tell us they



have a good understanding of what is being taught."

The Soldiers of Bravo Co. hope this confidence will assist their partners in training their own soldiers after the course is complete.

"These senior leaders came to us to learn the fundamentals of being a soldier to they can share the fundamentals with their soldiers; in the end we expect all the KRGB to be on the same level," said Staff Sgt. Gonzalez.





# Air Force transfers base control to Army

By Pfc. Jessica R. Luhrs

During a Transfer of Authority (TOA) ceremony, 1-1 Special Troops Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division, out of Fort Bliss, Texas, assumed command of Base Operating Support-Integrator of Contingency Operating Site Warrior, Kirkuk, Iraq from the 506th Air Expeditionary Group, Aug. 13.

The ceremony marked the Army officially assuming command of base operations to include; security forces, incinerators, power plants, road maintenance, 2,900 buildings and life-support for 7,200 personnel.

The ceremony began with a speech from Air Force Col. Steven H. Slick, commander of 506th AEG, to the crowd of distinguished guests, explaining the importance of proper base operating support.

A base cannot run without base operating support, Warriors need a home to come to no matter their branch or what they do, he said.

"For the past seven years the 506th AEG has provided this to the personnel on Warrior and have done a fantastic job," said Col. Slick.

He continued by saying he is very proud to pass this responsibility to the 1-1 STB.

After this was said he passed the ceremonial key for COS Warrior to Col. Patricia A. Sellers, commander 1-1 STB.

"The 1-1 STB is honored to follow the proud tradition of excellent support provided by the Air Force for the past seven years and we pledge to continue outstanding base life support to the personnel here," said Col. Sellers, to the crowd.

She finished by saying, "We will do our very best to ensure that everyone here has a secure, safe and respectful environment on base to conduct the important missions required and set conditions for follow-on forces to transfer to stability operations."

# 1/14th, IA leadership build ISF relationships

By Pfc Jessica Luhrs

Lieutenant Colonel Andrew Ulrich, commander of 1st Battalion, 14th Infantry, "Golden Dragons" 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division met with the commander for the 15th Brigade, 12th Division Iraqi army, for the first time, at the 15th BDE Headquarters, in Kirkuk, Iraq, Aug. 9.

The purpose of this meeting was to develop a concept for sharing information, which is vital to build and maintain security as U.S. forces continue to strategically withdraw from Iraq, according to Capt. Brian Canny, the commander of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1/14th who also attended the meeting.

The 15th BDE Commander, Brig. Gen. Abdul Amir, who has been in command for three months, stated since becoming a commander he has made it his priority to bring all Iraqi security forces (ISF) together.

The only way the ISF will be able to capture all of the insurgents and their weapons is if we all work together no matter the ethnic or religious group, said the IA commander.

This is why Brig. Gen. Abdul and Lt. Col. Ulrich are arranging to hold a meeting once a month for key leaders to share information on insurgents.

Also to open the lines of communication for the 15th IA BDE, their partners the "Golden Dragons" are arranging for computers and internet for the command staff at the 15th IA BDE Headquarters.

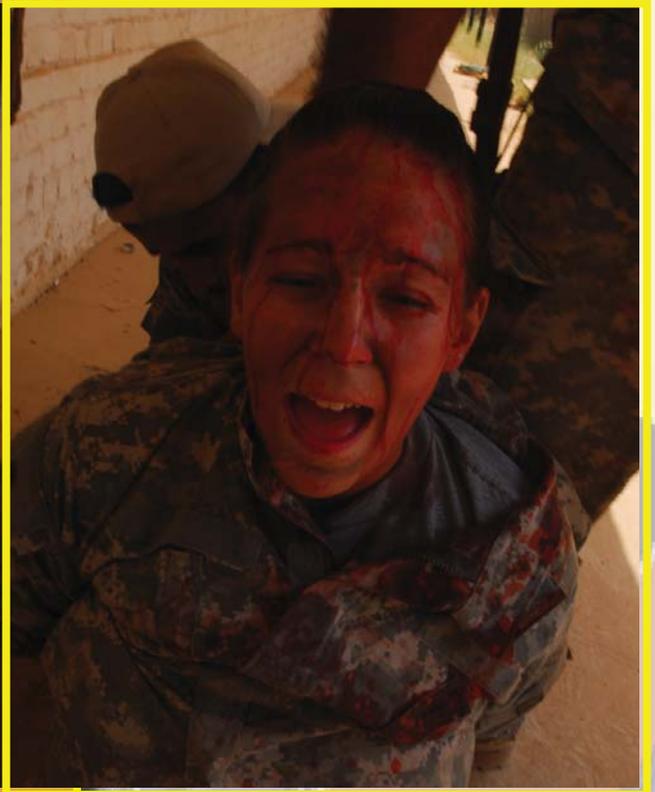
"Having computers and internet at the 15th IA BDE headquarters will make communication between the ISF and USF easier," said Lt. Col. Ulrich, a native of Broomfield, Colo.

Brigadier General Abdul agreed with his partner saying this will ensure everyone can work together.

"The U.S. Forces have always been great partners with the Iraqi army with their help we will now be able to build a better relationship with the Iraqi police and other Iraqi army brigades," he said.



# Around the



READY

# Battlefield



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

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

**Sgt. Christopher Pike**  
**D. Co., 1-30 Inf.**  
**Pensacola, Fla.**

**Sgt. Christopher Hall**  
**A. Troop, 6-1 Cav.**  
**Galveston, Texas**

**Staff Sgt. Thomas Marcoux**  
**A. Troop, 6-1 Cav.**  
**Grand Rapids, Mi.**