



THE DAGGER EDGE



DAGGERS ASSUME AUTHORITY IN BAGHDAD

North "Z" Lake, Camp Liberty, at sunset Jan. 8.
(Photo by Spc. Daniel Stoutamire, 2nd AAB, 1st Inf. Div.)

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On the cover: Col. Paul Calvert (left), commander of 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, United States Division – Center, and Command Sgt. Maj. Rodney Lewis, senior enlisted adviser with 2nd AAB, 1st Inf. Div., USD – C, uncased their brigade’s colors at a Transfer of Authority ceremony Dec. 9 at Camp Liberty, Iraq. At the ceremony, the 2nd AAB, 1st Inf. Div., USD – C, assumed responsibility for partnering with Baghdad province’s Iraqi Security Forces units from the 1st Advise and Assist Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division. (Photo by Spc. Daniel Stoutamire, 2nd AAB, 1st Inf. Div.)



Back Cover: Capt. Robert Fry, chaplain with 1st Battalion, 7th Field Artillery Regiment, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, United States Division – Center, and a Navarre, Fla., native, hands out a stuffed animal and shares a laugh with local children Nov. 23. (U.S. Army photo by Cpt. Brian P. Cotter, 1st Bn., 7 FA Regt., 2nd AAB, 1st Inf. Div.)

The Dagger Edge: Informing the Dagger Community on the issues and events throughout the brigade.

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For current photos, news and video visit the brigade’s DVIDS (Digital Video & Imagery Distribution System) page at <http://www.dvidshub.net/units/2BCT-11D>



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COL PAUL CALVERT "DAGGER 6"



Soldiers, Families and friends of the Dagger brigade,

Happy New Year! We are now two months into our deployment in support of Operation New Dawn and I can't begin to tell you how proud I am of the formation and the commitment to excellence that is demonstrated every single day. The team work, dedication to mission success and the willingness of Soldiers to take care of the buddy on their left and right is truly inspiring. It is what makes the brigade, our division, and our Army so great.

As we transition into a new year, many of us have made a "resolution" to change/improve something about ourselves or the environment in which we live or work. If you have done so, good for you. If you have not, then I would encourage you do so in the following manner:

- **Reflect** – think back about the goals and objectives you have set for yourself in relation to your personal and professional life. Are you doing the things necessary to reach those goals and objectives or have you strayed from the path? Are the goals you established consistent with what you want to achieve or have they changed? Assessing where you are is important to understanding whether or not you are still on azimuth or whether a course correction is required.
- **Repent** – make a decision to change if a correction is required.



Doing so requires you to discard those things that are serving as an obstacle to reaching your goals and objectives while simultaneously prioritizing those things that must be done to reach your desired end state.

- **Restore** – a decision to change requires a plan of action in order to realize change. Our lives are busy – prioritizing those things which enable us to realize our goals and objects are key to achieving success. Understand that most things will not happen overnight, so pick one top priority a week, biweekly, or monthly, and focus on it until you have optimized the effect you are looking for and then move on to the next priority.

- **Recognize** – remember that you are accountable to yourself for what you do or don't do. You have to be the honest broker. Others can assist, but in the end you are the one who has to look yourself in the mirror and determine whether or not you have achieved what you wanted in your personal and professional life.

CSM Lewis and I are proud of you. In this New Year, our desire is that you realize success as individuals, Soldiers, Families and units. In doing so, the success of our brigade is assured.

In the pages that follow, you will read a small sampling of the many great things that are happening across the Dagger brigade. It is humbling to watch. So much, done by a small few (forward and rear) that is enabled by the love and support of our Families.

We represent 93 years of warriors who have come before us and for us – like them – there is No Mission too Difficult, No Sacrifice too Great, Duty First! Shoulder to shoulder we will accomplish our mission. Know that Dagger 7 and I are honored to serve at your side. Ready Now!

Dagger 6



CSM RODNEY R. LEWIS "DAGGER 7"



Dagger Soldiers, Families, and friends,

Happy New Year! Well, here we are in 2011! It quickly arrived with little fanfare and to our enjoyment here in Baghdad, very little "bang." We have been extremely busy since our arrival into theater with reception, integration, conducting a relief in place and a transfer of authority, celebrating Thanksgiving and Christmas, and lastly, combat patch ceremonies.

Much to my surprise, I have already been asked what we're doing here. It reminded me of family road trips and the never ending, "Are we there yet?"

First, let me say that the leadership from 1st Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division conducted one of the finest RIP/TOAs I have experienced here in Iraq. From the moment we first contacted the 'Raider' brigade back at Ft. Riley and all through the TOA, we received nothing but first-class support from their team. My thanks to all of their command and staff teams for a superb job in setting us up for success. We are truly prepared for our mission thanks to their tireless efforts.

I have personally witnessed the herculean efforts the Dagger team has made since our arrival into theater. I am amazed at the amount of work Dagger Soldiers conduct daily. The commander and I have had the privilege of circulating throughout our area of operation and seeing first-hand the efforts demonstrated in all areas, in every imaginable environment. The



brigade is spread out in 12 different locations in and around Baghdad, some locations a little more austere than others. However, in every location and in every situation, the Daggers continue to build on this brigade's great reputation. I could not be more proud of the way our Soldiers are performing.

I could never forget to thank all those on the home front for the sacrifices you make daily. We are thinking of you all and thank each and every one of you. The pain and suffering you feel with your loved ones away during the holidays is not lost on me. It is my personal opinion that deployments are tougher on the ones left behind than they are for us here. As I talked with your Soldiers on Thanksgiving and Christmas, I reminded them of the strength

and resiliency we draw from each other and our Dagger professional family. Some of you are hundreds of miles away from the nearest military family and do not have that understanding from your Families that only military Families can share. I also reminded our Soldiers that only one percent of our nation has answered the call to serve and that our Families have also answered that call, serving side by side through good times and bad. Thank you!

Finally, I want to close by congratulating all of our Dagger Soldiers who were just recently presented their combat patch. Authorization to wear the shoulder sleeve insignia, former wartime service of the 1st Infantry Division is a day these Soldiers will never forget. This division has served proudly in every major combat action our nation has fought in since 1917. That's more battles and campaigns than any other division in our Army. When you see your Soldier again, they may walk with a little more swagger in their step, hold their shoulders a little more square, and they will raise their head high because they are now, and will forever be a part of this great division.

**NO MISSION too DIFFICULT,
NO SACRIFICE too GREAT!
DUTY FIRST! READY NOW!
DAGGERS!**

Dagger 7



MAJ CHARLES PAUL DAGGER CHAPLAIN



Maj. Charles Paul, chaplain with 2nd AAB, 1st Inf. Div., USD-C, leads a moment of prayer and reflection Dec. 24 at Joint Security Station at Rasheed (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Daniel Stoutamire, 2nd AAB, 1st Inf. Div.)



FIGHTING FOR YOUR MARRIAGE: How to keep the "sizzle" from a "fizzle"

Nobody plans for their relationship to fizzle, but often times after the honeymoon, romance runs headlong into everyday reality where something has to give. Usually, it is the romance. As a result, many settle for a relationship without a sizzle, stay around until the kids are older, or look for a more romantic pasture later. However, God offers the best and most exciting alternative: Restoring a first love.

In order to restore a first love, perspectives must first be re-examined. Confusing romance with true love is common. Romance is what brings people together, but love is what keeps them together. Daily chores and routines, such as work, raising children, paying bills, and long deployments are some of the many challenges in life. In most cases, the better part of a given day is spent at work. When it's time to head home, exhaustion hits and taking time out to foster a quality relationship takes a back seat. As result, romance vacates the center stage and reality takes over.

The truth is that love does not die because romance bows out to challenges. In fact, romance can grow again, stronger and more resilient than ever. Love solely based on romance doesn't work. However, taking time to invest in relationships and unselfishly loving a mate with acts of kindness, appreciation and posi-

THE TRUTH IS THAT LOVE DOES NOT DIE BECAUSE ROMANCE BOWS OUT TO CHALLENGES. IN FACT ROMANCE CAN GROW AGAIN STRONGER AND MORE RESILIENT THAN EVER.

tive affirmation—"until death do us part"—and showcasing love that is dependable, consistent and trustworthy is worth it.

Remember, romance brings us together, but it is love that keeps us together. People who love each other can make romance live again at any age or stage of their life if willing to put time and energy into the relationship.

Secondly, realize the sizzle wasn't lost and that it just might have left temporarily. When love fizzles, the solution is often to find a new partner. The idea of the "merry go round"—hopping on and off a relationship when bored, discontent, or stressed out—is not the answer. We live in a disposable society. Whatever doesn't perform to our satisfaction can be replaced rather than repaired. Tragically, we transfer this mentality to our relationship and replace people in our lives that do not play the game our way.

Today's generation is less likely to be tolerant, patient, and flexible in a marriage. The prevailing idea is, "Why grapple with the marriage? Just replace it!" The truth is that over 50% of first marriages end in divorce, 65% of second marriages, and more than 70% of third marriages. Clearly, when it comes to marriage, the more it's done, the worse off it gets. So to

find our first love is the best option.

Lastly, retracing steps and finding the romance within our first love where it was left undernourished, crowded-out and overlooked is necessary. God instituted marriage. Talk to Him and follow his instruction. Your romance will come alive again.

Dagger Chaplain



MAJ JASON CLARK DAGGER SURGEON



Greetings, Daggers!

To begin, I would like to introduce myself, as I have not been with the unit long and many of you may not know me. I am a board-certified Family Medicine Physician, having trained at Madigan Army Medical Center at Fort Lewis, Wash. I was then stationed at Fort Riley for two years, serving in the Warrior Transition Battalion. Upon being offered the job as brigade surgeon for the Dagger brigade, I was excited to become a member of the team.

I will be writing a column for this publication and including some hopefully useful medical tidbits. My focus will be on some of the illnesses and physical challenges that we see clinically in a deployed environment and some that can be anticipated. Please feel free to provide feedback as to whether or not the topics discussed are useful.

For this preliminary issue, I will discuss upper respiratory infections, which include the common cold, coughs, sinusitis and similar illnesses.

For this long deployment, find something you will enjoy for yourself and do it. Most of us have some endeavor we would like to pursue and this is a terrific opportunity to do so.

UPPER RESPIRATORY INFECTIONS

This group of illnesses includes a very broad group of diseases. Commonly, URIs include colds, sinus infections, chest colds, or the commonly known “crud.” Symptoms vary and include runny nose, cough, sore throat, sinus pressure, headaches, muscle aches, ear aches, and itchy, watery eyes. Upon arrival in Iraq, many Soldiers are stricken with colds. This occurs due to being in a new environment with new viruses that we have not been exposed to before. Additionally, there are allergens in Iraq that are new to most of us. In all likelihood,



Maj. Jason Clark, surgeon with 2nd AAB, 1st Inf. Div., treats a Soldier Jan. 7 in his office at USD-C headquarters (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Daniel Stoutamire)

many more of us will have the current URI that is going around. The good news

is that eventually, enough of us will be so immune to it that it stops spreading. However, this time of year is also a prime time to have URIs, so a second wave of illness will likely occur during these chilly months.

The question becomes then, what do we do to prevent getting sick? And once sick, how do we treat it?

A URI is caused by a bacterium, virus, and rarely, a fungus. Approximately 90% of URIs are caused by viruses, which mean that antibiotics won't make it any better (antibiotics kill bacteria, versus anti-virals that kill viruses and anti-fungals for fungi). As far as treating a virus, we unfortunately have very few antiviral

medications and they only work on very specific viruses. The common cold is due to many different viruses and cannot be distinguished without expensive testing, hence the adage “there is no cure for the common cold.” On a good note, most viruses will get better in 7-14 days.

Knowing that usually, viral causes can't be cured, treatment will be aimed at making the symptoms more tolerable. Most medications that improve symptoms can be bought at the Post Exchange, but we also have them at the Aid Stations. The key to improving symptoms will be to decrease the body's inflammation from the virus and improve drainage of mucous from the sinus, chest and throat.

In most cases, UTIs will go away in 7-14 days. In cases that the disease persists or worsens after 10 days, or in those cases that a high fever or progressive shortness of breath occurs, the infection could be bacterial. In these cases, antibiotics are useful.

RESILIENCY

Enough about colds! The other topic I would like to mention is resiliency. The Army is investing a lot into Comprehensive Fitness and we have a lot of resources throughout the brigade. Many of us are beginning to adjust to being in a deployed environment, which follows the stress of the preparing to deploy. As things start to balance-out, we are faced with various new challenges. These challenges can be from battlefield stress, separation from loved ones, and even boredom.

I won't go into the details of resiliency, but I will offer a few suggestions. For this long deployment, find something you will enjoy for yourself and do it. Most of us have some endeavor we would like to pursue and this is a terrific opportunity to do so. While here, if you want to write a book, learn to play guitar or learn a foreign language, do it!

On that note, I wish you all a safe deployment, and that we all grow from this experience and become better for it. Please utilize me and all of the medical assets in the unit as you need. We are here to support the Daggers!



DAGGER BRIGADE ASSUMES AUTHORITY IN BAGHDAD PROVINCE

**STORY BY SPC. DANIEL STOUTAMIRE,
2ND AAB, 1ST INF. DIV., USD-C**

THE RESPONSIBILITY OF ADVISING, TRAINING, AND ASSISTING IRAQI SECURITY FORCES IN BAGHDAD OFFICIALLY PASSED FROM THE SOLDIERS OF THE 1ST ADVISE AND ASSIST BRIGADE, 3RD INFANTRY DIVISION, UNITED STATES DIVISION – CENTER, TO THE SERVICE MEMBERS OF THE 2ND ADVISE AND ASSIST BRIGADE, 1ST INFANTRY DIVISION DURING A CEREMONY DEC. 9 IN FRONT OF UNITED STATES DIVISION – CENTER HEADQUARTERS AT CAMP LIBERTY, IRAQ.

THE CENTERPIECE EVENT DURING THE CEREMONY WAS THE CASING AND UNCASING OF THE DEPARTING AND THE NEWLY-ARRIVED UNITS' COLORS, RESPECTIVELY. THOSE ACTIONS SYMBOLIZE THE OPPOSITE DIRECTIONS THE TWO UNITS ARE TAKING—ONE

RETURNING HOME AFTER A JOB WELL DONE AND THE OTHER TO EMPHASIZE THEIR PRESENCE HERE.

COL. PAUL CALVERT, COMMANDER OF 2ND AAB, 1ST INF. DIV., PLEDGED DURING HIS REMARKS AT THE CEREMONY TO WORK CLOSELY WITH THE IRAQI SECURITY FORCES IN THE PROVINCE TO ENHANCE THEIR ABILITY TO PROVIDE SECURITY AND STABILITY TO THE POPULACE.

“WE ARE HERE SPECIFICALLY TO PROVIDE ADVICE, TRAINING AND ASSISTANCE FOR THE SIX DIVISIONS THAT WE ARE PARTNERED WITH,” CALVERT SAID. “THE TREMENDOUS DIVISION COMMANDERS WHO OPERATE WITHIN THE PROVINCE HAVE A WAY AHEAD, IN TERMS OF THE THINGS THEY WANT TO ACCOMPLISH. THEY ARE TRAINING WHILE THEY ARE STILL FIGHTING, AND WE WILL HELP THEM IN EVERY AREA THEY NEED ASSISTANCE.”



THE 1ST AAB, 3RD INF. DIV. HAS BEEN DEPLOYED FOR TWELVE MONTHS IS IN THE PROCESS OF REINTEGRATING ITS SERVICE MEMBERS BACK AT ITS HOME STATION IN FORT STEWART, GA.

Soldiers representing Iraqi Security Forces and U.S. units stand at attention with their colors prior to the Transfer of Authority ceremony Dec. 9 at Camp Liberty, Iraq. The 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, United States Division – Center assumed responsibility for partnering with Baghdad province’s Iraqi Security Forces units from the 1st Advise and Assist Brigade, 3rd Inf. Div.

THE 2ND AAB, 1ST INF. DIV., OUT OF FORT RILEY, KAN., IS SCHEDULED TO BE THE FINAL U.S. BRIGADE IN BAGHDAD BEFORE THE PROJECTED DEC. 31, 2011 WITHDRAWAL DATE, UNDER THE STATUS OF FORCES AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE U.S. AND IRAQ.

SINCE EARLY NOVEMBER, THE TWO UNITS HAVE BEEN ENGAGED IN A RELIEF IN PLACE (RIP) PROCESS, IN WHICH SOLDIERS FROM THE ARRIVING UNIT CAN TAKE THE LESSONS LEARNED BY THE DEPARTING UNIT AND EASE THE TRANSITION PERIOD.

“YOU HAVE MADE THIS TRANSITION EASY,” SAID COL. ROGER CLOUTIER, COMMANDER OF 1ST AAB, 3RD INF. DIV., TO CALVERT AND HIS SENIOR ENLISTED ADVISER, COMMAND SGT. MAJ. RODNEY R. LEWIS. “YOU AND YOUR SOLDIERS ARE PROFESSIONALS AND ARE EXACTLY WHO WE NEED AT THIS CRITICAL TIME.”

CALVERT AGREED THAT THE RIP PROCESS WAS PRODUCTIVE AND ENHANCED HIS UNIT’S UNDERSTANDING OF THE JOB AHEAD OF THEM.

“YOU’VE SHOWN US YOUR SCAR TISSUE,” HE SAID TO CLOUTIER AND HIS SENIOR ENLISTED ADVISER, COMMAND SGT. MAJ. EDD WATSON, “AND YOU HAVE ALLOWED US TO WALK ACROSS THE ROCKS IN YOUR OWN MOCCASINS. HANDS DOWN, THIS HAS BEEN THE BEST RELIEF IN PLACE I HAVE EVER BEEN A PART OF.”

“WE ARE HERE SPECIFICALLY TO PROVIDE ADVICE, TRAINING AND ASSISTANCE FOR THE SIX DIVISIONS THAT WE ARE PARTNERED WITH,” CALVERT SAID.



Col. Roger Cloutier (left), commander of 1st Advise and Assist Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, United States Division – Center, and Command Sgt. Maj. Edd Watson, senior enlisted adviser with 1st AAB, 3rd Inf. Div., USD – C, prepare to case their brigade’s colors at a Transfer of Authority ceremony Dec. 9 at Camp Liberty, Iraq. At the ceremony, the 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, USD – C, assumed responsibility for partnering with Baghdad province’s Iraqi Security Forces units from the 1st AAB, 3rd Inf. Div.

WITH THE RIP PROCESS NOW OVER AND HAVING ASSUMED AUTHORITY IN THE PROVINCE, CALVERT IS FOCUSED ON CEMENTING A LASTING PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE U.S. AND IRAQ, THAT WILL EXTEND WELL AFTER AMERICAN UNITS HAVE PHYSICALLY LEFT THE COUNTRY.

“IT IS NOT JUST FOR THE NEXT YEAR, WHILE WE ARE HERE HELPING THEM (THAT WE WILL BE PARTNERS), BUT IT WILL BE A LONG-TERM STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN OUR COUNTRIES,” CALVERT SAID.

HE ALSO LAUDED THE CAPACITIES AND CAPABILITIES ALREADY PRESENT IN IRAQ.

“THERE ARE TREMENDOUS OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE PEOPLE OF IRAQ AND THIS COUNTRY. THERE IS A STRONG SENSE OF NATIONALISM ACROSS THE COUNTRY, AND A TREMENDOUS AMOUNT OF RESOURCES WITHIN THIS COUNTRY. SO WE ARE EXCITED ABOUT THE LONG-TERM RELATIONSHIP WE WILL HAVE.”



Col. Paul Calvert, commander of 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, United States Division – Center, speaks at a Transfer of Authority ceremony Dec. 9 at Camp Liberty, Iraq. At the ceremony, the 2nd AAB, 1st Inf. Div., USD – C, assumed responsibility for partnering with Baghdad province’s Iraqi Security Forces units from the 1st Advise and Assist Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division.

1-18 INFANTRY REGIMENT “VANGUARDS”



Torch of responsibility in Baghdad passes to ‘Vanguard’ battalion

Story and photo by Spc. William K. Ermetinger, 2nd AAB, 1st Inf. Div., USD-C

On a warm and calm Wednesday morning, Soldiers and leaders with 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, United States Division – Center and the 3rd Battalion, 69th Armor Regiment, 1st Advise and Assist Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, USD-C came together to conduct a ceremony signifying the transfer of authority from the latter battalion to the former, respectively.

The 3rd Bn., 69th Armor Regt., led by Lt. Col. Jeff Denius, commander, and Command Sgt. Maj. Thilo Hendricks, senior enlisted adviser, operated within Baghdad province over its 12-month deployment. The unit advised, trained and assisted the 9th and 11th Iraqi Army Divisions in combat operations for several months, continuing in that role with the onset of Operation New Dawn, in

September 2010.

Simultaneously, the battalion worked to make significant strides in improving civil capacity and economic stability. The 3rd Bn., 69th Armor Regt. helped to complete 57 projects, including improving roads, reconstructing schools, promoting farming initiatives and new growing techniques, refurbishing water pumps for irrigation and updating hospitals.

The “Speed and Power” Battalion passed the torch to its replacement unit, the 1st Bn., 18th Inf. Regt., 2nd AAB, 1st Inf. Div. The “Vanguard” Battalion is beginning its fourth deployment in Iraq and the first in support of Operation New Dawn. The battalion was last in Baghdad in October 2009.

“The return of the Vanguards at this

time in the history of Iraq and the United States is monumental,” said Lt. Col. John Cross, commander of 1st Bn., 18th Inf. Regt. “We are privileged to see the changes that have occurred here in Iraq, with this being the battalion’s fourth deployment since 2004. We look forward to advising and assisting our partner units—the 9th and 11th Iraqi Army Divisions—in the months to come.”

The unit will focus on improving essential services, stability and conduct joint training with its Iraqi Army counterparts, Cross said. He said the Vanguard Battalion’s Soldiers may not see their victories firsthand, but through the successes of the Iraqi Army and people.



IRAQI ARMY TRAINS TO FIGHT WITH HELP OF VANGUARD SOLDIERS

Iraqi Army Soldiers with 2nd Company, Commando Battalion, 11th Iraqi Army Division, based out of Joint Security Station Old MoD in Baghdad, practice entering and clearing a building in a “glass house” drill Dec. 23 prior to an urban operations live-fire exercise at Camp Taji, Iraq. The live-fire shoot house served as the culminating event of an 18-day counter terrorism course. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Chad Menegay, 196th MPAD, USF-I DCG A&T PAO)

By Sgt. Chad Menegay, 196th MPAD, USF-I DCG A&T PAO

BAGHDAD—Perhaps officials with the Iraq Ministry of Defense understand that, as the Iraqi Army continues to fight an insurgency, its battle-tested Soldiers need time to train, away from the fight, to perfect skills for the fight.

As evidence, Soldiers with 2nd Company, Commando Battalion, 11th Iraqi Army Division, based out of Joint Security Station Old

MoD in Baghdad, trained on urban operations and entering and clearing rooms Dec. 22-23 under the instruction of Soldiers with Company B, 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, United States Division – Center at Camp Taji, Iraq.

The 18-day counter terrorism course culminated with a live-fire exercise in a “shoot house.”

“The live-fire ... instills confidence to prove what they can do,” said Capt. Eric C. Smith, commander of Company B, 1st Bn., 18th Inf. Regt., and a Milwaukee native.

Many Iraqi Army Soldiers enlist, go through a brief basic training and go straight into combat, he said.

“It’s brutal,” Smith said. “A lot of these guys have watched their friends die; they’ve fought for years. They don’t get a chance to go home sometimes, because the mission calls. A lot of these guys have been beaten up for years, so this is a vote of confidence to them that, yes, there is light at the end of the tunnel ... that they are capable of doing room clearing—it’s confidence.”

Iraqi Army Sgt. Amir Ali Hammad, with 2nd Company, Commando Battalion, 11th Iraqi Army Division, was shot three times in a 2007 terrorist attack in Ramadi, Iraq. He is not deterred and continues to fight, and train to fight, the insurgency.

“I will continue to rebuild Iraq,” Amir said. “Until my last breath I will always keep fighting. There are a lot of people who need protection. We’ll follow the insurgents everywhere they go.”

“We defend our country; we are the eye on Iraq. said Iraqi Army Sgt. Hasan Ali Ashour, an instructor with 2nd Company, Commando Battalion, 11th Iraqi Army Division. We will continue fighting for the Iraqi people, because Iraq is in our blood.”



An Iraqi Army Soldier with 2nd Company, Commando Battalion, 11th Iraqi Army Division, based out of Joint Security Station Old MoD in Baghdad, prepares to enter and clear a building Dec. 22 during an urban operations live-fire exercise at Camp Taji, Iraq. The live-fire shoot house served as the culminating event of an 18-day counter terrorism course. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Chad Menegay, 196th MPAD, USF-I DCG A&T PAO)



LTC JOHN CROSS "VANGUARD 6"



To the Dagger Family and the Vanguard Nation,

The men and women of Task Force 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry Regiment have settled into Camp Taji, Old MoD, Al Rashid, and Forward Operating Base Hammer, have assumed the mantle of operations and the partnership with the 9th and 11th Iraqi Army Divisions from 3rd Battalion, 69th Armor Regiment, and are now assisting our Iraqi brothers-in-arms in their operations to provide a secure environment for the people of Iraq.

Company A, "Apocalypse," supporting the Stability Transition Team for the 9th IA division, is busy conducting training and assistance patrols with the 9th IA along Route Tampa.

Company B, "Barbaric," in support of the 11th IA Division's STT, is conducting commando training and assistance patrols in central Baghdad.

Company D, "Dog," supporting the STT for the 9th IA's tactical command post, is training the Iraqis on how to



operate the M1A1 Abrams Tank and also working with the 9th IA's Strike Company.

Company C, "Chaos," located at FOB Hammer, is keeping that installation in a "warm" status and conducting garrison level operations. It's a challenging mission, but one that they are taking on with vigor.

Company F, "Falcon," is keeping the Vanguard Nation sustained and supplied while also providing recovery teams for any incidents that may occur on Route Tampa.

Finally, Company H, "Hammer," is keeping the battalion moving in the right direction while also providing security for our State Department brothers and sisters as they engage

with the local people and conduct a variety of projects.

We are pleased to welcome the Soldiers of Company C, "Venom," Special Troops Battalion and Company C, 1st Battalion, 8th Armor Regiment to our formation. The sappers of "Venom" Company are conducting route clearance operations throughout Baghdad, while also partnering with the 9th and 11th Divisions' Field Engineer Regiments. Company C, 1st Bn., 8th Armor Regt. will be partnering with the 9th IA to assist them with the security of Route Tampa, a vital mission for our current operations.

The Vanguard Nation is off to a great start in Operation New Dawn. I pray that each and every one of you had a blessed and safe Christmas and a happy New Year.

In Omnia Paratus... 'Til the Last Round!

Vanguard 6



CSM MICHAEL EVANS “VANGUARD 7”



Well, the Vanguard Nation has officially assumed responsibility of our battle space from 3rd Battalion, 69th Armor Regiment out of Fort Stewart. I would personally like to thank each of the “Speed and Power” Soldiers for their efforts during the last year in regards to the Global War on Terrorism.

We have added some new combat power to our formation with the addition of Company C, Special Troops Battalion engineers, and Company C, 1st Battalion, 8th Armor Regiment. Both are great additions to the team and will adjust well within the Vanguard Nation.

“Venom” company, our engineers, and Company C, 1st Bn., 8th Armor Regt. are already making a huge impact across the formation.

Our training at the Joint Readiness Training Center back in August/September timeframe no doubt set the cornerstone for our efforts here in Baghdad. Iraq’s success is our success. All those who took part at JRTC, as well as our newest additions, are working as a team of teams with the single mindset that our success in Iraq depends on the success of our Iraqi counterparts.

Each of the companies are actively engaged with their Iraqi



COMMAND SGT. MAJ.
MICHAEL EVANS

counterparts and working closely on finalizing the training process within their respective units. Just watching the training events is a huge pleasure. Our Iraqi brothers are quickly moving through the crawl, walk, and run phase of training. They, like many of us, are not fans of PowerPoint slides. They clearly learn faster with a hands-on approach.

Seven years ago, December 13, 2003, the world received the shocking news of the capture of Saddam Hussein by the 1st Brigade, 4th Infantry Division. Many only heard or read the news. Several of you were actually here in Iraq when the event took place. Such a significant event—and yet on its anniversary, it wasn’t even

mentioned. I received an email simply saying “Congrats.”

As we move into Operation New Dawn, let us stop for a moment and reflect on the significance of the operation’s name, and what it really means to be part of a new chapter in the history of Iraq. OND is about the reduction of U.S. forces in-country to 50,000 service members. We are operating in what use to be a five-to-seven brigade footprint. Granted, the mission has changed, but its significance hasn’t.

With only a month under our belt, I must say: congratulations on a job well done to date. The Iraq we know today is a far cry from the Iraq some of us know from Operation Desert Shield and Operation Desert Storm back in 1991 and Operation Iraqi Freedom from 2003-2010. Our mission is very different than most have been a part of, however, I’m certain in the months ahead, you will only continue to foster the relationships with your counterparts and face new challenges head on.

‘Til the Last Round!

Vanguard 7



LTC MICHAEL HENDERSON “DRAGON 6”



Fellow Soldiers, friends,
and Families -

It's hard to believe we have been here almost three months. For some of us on the Torch and ADVON parties, it's been even longer. First, thanks to 2nd Battalion, 7th Infantry from Fort Stewart, Georgia, for their efforts and hard work during our relief in place. Their efforts were first-rate and the three weeks we spent with the “Cotton Balers” definitely set us up for success.

On all accounts, the men and women of the Dragon battalion have embraced our advise and assist mission and we are cultivating healthy relationships with our Iraqi partners. As I stated before, the Iraqi Security Forces are more capable and professional than they have ever been. The improvements they have made over the past seven years are extraordinary and it is our job to help them maintain this upward trajectory.

On a daily basis, I am impressed by what I see in this formation. We demonstrated hard work and motivation at the Joint Readiness Training Center and this attitude has carried over into Operation New Dawn.



Dragons, I look forward to you all setting the standard during this deployment. I expect the Dragon battalion to treat everyone with dignity and respect. The positive or negative effect that we have today will affect the long term strategic relationship our nation has with Iraq for years to come. So what you do every day in Iraq really matters.

To the Dragon Families, thank you for the wonderful support over the past month. We can't be successful without your help and support. The packages, emails, cards and letters make a difference each day. I hope everyone had a wonderful holiday season and know that we are with you in spirit.

Finally, as we enter the new year please remember to take care of each other. The holiday season can be difficult for some, especially those on their first deployment. Look out for your buddy, ensure he or she calls home regularly and enjoy the company of your deployed Dragon family.

Dragon 6



CSM TONEY SMITH "DRAGON 7"



Fellow Soldiers, friends, and Families – I first want to start off by saying to all the “Dragon” battalion Soldiers: congratulations on completing a successful relief in place and transfer of authority with 2nd Battalion, 7th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Infantry Division. As a battalion, we learned over 100 tasks, transferred and signed for over \$140 million of equipment, conducted Mine-Resistant Ambush-Protected vehicle drivers’ certification training, and met with our Iraqi Army partnered units and we did it all within ten days. You Soldiers did all this in a very seamless and professional manner. I could not be more proud of this battalion.

I have seen first-hand the extraordinary effort and hard work Dragon Soldiers have put in day in and day out. We are all working long hours and getting less sleep than we would like, but it is important to re-



member to take some time for you. Do some physical training or just relax with a movie every once in a while. The new year is upon us all so ensure you stay connected with friends and loved ones back home, no matter where it is that you call home. I can promise you they are thinking of you. I would ask the Dragon Soldiers to seek out those Soldiers that may not have any family and look after them throughout the year; you might just find a friend.

We’re almost three months into our deployment and each company has a slightly differ-

ent mission.

However, the one thing all soldiers have in common is that everyone is at risk to non-combat related injuries. I cannot express how important safety is during our deployment. Always ensure you are wearing your personal protective equipment and not taking shortcuts to save time. I do not want to see a Soldier injured for something that could have been prevented. Have the moral courage to tactfully correct a Soldier that is not wearing his or her PPE because you just might save their life.

In closing I just want to tell all Dragon Soldiers and their Families, and all my Family and friends: Happy New Year. Even though we are far away and in harm’s way, I know we are in our family’s thoughts and prayers.

Dragon 7

1-63 ARMOR REGIMENT “DRAGONS”



“DRAGON” SOLDIERS TEACH IRAQI ARMY CLS TECHNIQUES

Story and photos by Cpl. Daniel Eddy
196th MPAD, 25th Inf. Div., USD-C

Iraqi Army Soldiers learned combat life saving techniques Jan. 5 during a two-day course taught by 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, United States Division – Center Soldiers at Forward Operating Base Constitution, Iraq.

These Iraqi Soldiers recently graduated from basic training and are now attending the CLS class before heading to advanced individual training.

By training the Iraqis, U.S. Soldiers hope the tasks learned will be contagious, and Iraqis will start teaching each other.

“A lot of these Soldiers are picking it up extremely quickly,” said Sgt. Ian Faling, senior line medic with Company B, 1st Battalion, 63rd Armor Regiment, 2nd AAB and a Jackson, Mich., native. “So we can already see in these classes that the ones

Pfc. Oscar Gallego (right), a medic with Company C, 299th Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd Advise and Assist, 1st Infantry Division, United States Division – Center and a Charlotte, N.C., native, helps evacuate a simulated casualty on a litter Jan. 5 with an Iraqi Army Soldier at Forward Operating Base Constitution, Iraq. The 2nd AAB provides two-day classes on combat life saving tasks to the IA Soldiers after graduating from basic training.

that are picking it up a lot quicker are already training other Soldiers. We hope that this class will give them the starting point they need to (continue) training other Soldiers (after the course).”

Faling said he believes they understand the training extremely well. They are enjoying the training, eager to learn, and are putting 100 percent effort into the training days.

Faling said there have been no complications in training the Iraqi Soldiers, and the language barrier is not nearly as great a challenge as he thought it would be. He said by the use of hand motions and a lot of hands-on training, the Iraqis are understanding the concept of CLS quickly— even to the point that when U.S. Soldiers start explaining the technique, the Iraqis will understand what needs to be done even before the interpreter can translate.

“THEY ARE REALLY INTERESTED IN THE MATERIAL. THEY ASK A LOT OF QUESTIONS THAT FRANKLY ... ARE A LOT MORE IN DEPTH THAN I THOUGHT PEOPLE AT A BASIC LEVEL WOULD ASK.”

Remembering Sgt. Duane Gibson

1985-2010



Final Roll Call



Final Salute



Comforting Battle Buddies

*Photos by Spc. Daniel Stoutamire,
2nd AAB, 1st Inf. Div., USD-C*

U.S. forces teaching the Iraqis medical tasks demonstrate one of the paramount goals behind Operation New Dawn—partnership.

“It’s a great opportunity for both our Soldiers and their Soldiers in this partnership,” Faling said. “It gives (Iraqi) Soldiers a chance to get up close and personal with (American) Soldiers. It shows that we care and show us that they care. It’s great training for both of us.”

Faling said most U.S. medics involved with the course are on their first deployment and have never had the chance to work with Iraqis before, but love the opportunity.

“It’s fun,” said Spc. Brian Cross, a medic with Company C, 299th Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd AAB and a West Islip, N.Y., native, and one of five medics training the Iraqis. “It’s like seeing ourselves in basic training and AIT all over again. They are really interested in the material. They ask a lot of questions that frankly ... are a lot more in depth than I thought people at a basic level would ask.”

Cross said, thus far, training the Iraqis is his favorite part of the deployment. He said he has been looking forward to it all week and it is even better than what originally thought.



The CLS training also demonstrates the Iraqis are learning to stabilize themselves as they carry on the missions and the U.S. continues to draw down its forces.

Sgt. Amzi, with the 6th Division, Iraqi Army, said he likes taking CLS training, which can save a friend’s life or possibly his own life in the future.

Pfc. Tyler Allen (background), a medic with Company C, 299th Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd Advise and Assist, 1st Infantry Division, United States Division – Center, and a Las Vegas native, observes Iraqi Army Soldiers carrying a simulated casualty Jan. 5 at Forward Operating Base Constitution, Iraq. Allen helped advise Iraqi Soldiers on medical procedures during two-day combat life saving courses.

Amzi said it was an honor for him to be able to serve his country and wants to protect his fellow Iraqis.

“Some people work in a hospital, some go to school ... somebody has to save the people,” he said. “So I volunteered to save these people. My (purpose) is to save the people.”

Amzi said he, along with all Iraqis, wants Iraq to develop and become stronger and safer as time continues.

Faling said on his last deployment he was frequently out on combat patrols and was focused on countering roadside bombs. This deployment is about building up the Iraqi Army so they can handle situations themselves.

“I am extremely excited for this deployment,” he said. “The difference between this deployment and last deployment is so great. The Iraqi Army seems like they have come so far in just two years and it shows that they are going to be able to take care of their own country.”

1-7 FIELD ARTILLERY REGIMENT “LIGHTNING”



Chaplain (Capt.) Robert Fry (foreground), battalion chaplain with the 1st Battalion, 7th Field Artillery Regiment, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, United States Division Center and a Navarre, Fla., native, gives some local children their first lesson in basketball.



'Lightning' Soldiers continue partnership with eastern Baghdad communities

Story and photos by Capt. Brian Cotter, 1st Bn, 7th FA Regt., 2nd AAB, 1st Inf. Div., USD-C

Over the course of the nearly eight years U.S. forces have been in Iraq, units have regularly rotated into, out of, and within the country, to meet the demands of the ever-changing mission. That constant rotation has—at times—hindered those units' abili-

ties to build and maintain a strong relationship with the local population of the areas in which they operate. In spite of these difficulties, American units have attempted to ensure that the quality of life of Iraqis has not been forgotten amid the constant

attacks and combat patrols that have come to characterize the war.

As the conflict in Iraq winds down during Operation New Dawn, the 1st Battalion, 7th Field Artillery Regiment, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, United States



Soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 7th Field Artillery Regiment, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, United States Division Center and 1st Battalion, 41st Field Artillery Regiment, 1st Advise and Assist Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, United States Division Center prepare to provide medical check-ups to local children

Division – Center, representing the bulk of the remaining U.S. presence in eastern Baghdad, has continued the tradition of upholding the welfare of their Iraqi neighbors.

As the “First Lightning” battalion arrived at Joint Security Station Loyalty, east of the Tigris river, replacing the departing 1st Battalion, 41st Field Artillery, 1st Advise and Assist Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, among the first priorities was the engagement of a struggling family nearby. Soldiers and leaders made their way out to the impoverished home in early December, bringing with them water, hygienic supplies and toys for the children.

Sgt. 1st Class Herman Richardson, the command group personal security detachment platoon sergeant with 1st Bn., 7th FA Regt., and a Willow Springs, N.C. native, recognized the importance of acquainting his unit to the local population in such fashion.

“It was good to get out early so the families are familiar with the new faces,” he said, adding that it was important to “build good relationships with the populace.”

Capt. Robert Fry, chaplain with 1st Bn., 7th FA Regt., was emphatic about the importance of the efforts with the local population.

“If our efforts are genuine, the people will know it,” he said. “As Americans, we have a history of wanting to show compassion.”

Fry took it upon himself to teach the children of the house a little bit about basketball.

“Sports are a universal language,” he said. “We don’t have to speak the same language to understand each other.”

The American mission in Iraq may be winding down over the next year as the last troops are currently scheduled to be out of the country by December 31, 2011. However, the commitment of the U.S. troops to the Iraqi people remains steadfast. The Soldiers of the “First Lightning” battalion carry on this commitment in eastern Baghdad, from the Iraqi Security Forces with whom they’ve partnered to the individual families trying to make a life for themselves in this new era in Iraq.

Sgt. 1st Class Herman Richardson (third from left), personal security detail platoon sergeant for the 1st Battalion, 7th Field Artillery Regiment, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, United States Division Center, and a Willow Springs, N.C. native, shares a laugh with a little girl during a recent visit to drop off supplies and toys to a local family.





LTC ANDREW GAINNEY "LIGHTNING 6"



To our friends, Families and fellow Dagger brigade Soldiers: greetings from Joint Security Station Loyalty. Command Sgt. Maj. Bauer and I first want to extend our warmest holiday wishes and a happy New Year on behalf of the Lightning battalion.

The 1st Battalion, 7th Field Artillery Regiment is now in the driver's seat of Operation New Dawn in eastern Baghdad. As Lightning battalion Soldiers, noncommissioned officers and officers began arriving at JSS Loyalty, their counterparts from the Glory Battalion, 1st Battalion, 41st Field Artillery Regiment, 1st Advise and Assist Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, out of Fort Stewart, Ga., provided an extensive relief in place/transfer of authority to ensure the seamless transition between the two battalions. These efforts have been critical in preparing the Lightning battalion to assume its crucial piece of the nation's mission in Iraq.

The RIP began on November 19 after the first main body elements of 1st Bn., 7th FA Regt. began trickling into JSS Loyalty, a small compound in eastern Baghdad shared with Iraq's 1st Federal Police division. Battery B's Soldiers immediately integrated themselves into the patrols their counterparts were running, assisting the Federal Police and denying the enemy a safe haven in eastern Baghdad. From that point on, Bravo's "Raging Bulls" were advising and assisting our Iraqi brethren in keeping the residents of Baghdad safe. Additionally, the Raging Bulls are manning the Combined Division Operations Center on the Iraqi half of JSS Loyalty, assisting the Federal Police as they conduct operations throughout the city.

Battery A, the newly dubbed Black Knights, has been hard at



work in three separate locations across Baghdad. With platoons at the Old Ministry of Defense, JSS Prosperity in the International Zone (formerly known as the Green Zone), as well as a battery headquarters and additional elements at JSS Loyalty, Alpha's Soldiers and leaders have had to remain resilient and flexible, all the while executing their myriad vital missions across the city.

The Gunslingers of Company G have aggressively taken on the task of supporting a battalion located across the



city from the rest of the brigade and the logistical hub at Victory Base Complex. Company G is now in the lead running combat logistics patrols to supply not only JSS Loyalty, but also small elements from the brigade located at Al Rashid. Additionally, they have taken on the task of maintaining the battalion's fleet of armored vehicles and training the Federal Police how to maintain their own vehicles. The Mayor's Cell at Loyalty is also run by Company G and quality of life at the JSS has never been better!

Headquarters and Headquarters Battery has taken on the role as the battalion's nerve center. Hellhound troops are in the lead on the essential mission of securing the force at JSS Loyalty, manning the Base Defense Operations Center. Additionally, HHB's Soldiers are running the Tactical Operations Center and have been a critical factor in the successful operations conducted by the battalion thus far. The Personal Security Detail is another of HHB's contributions to the fight, securing the command group as they circulate the battlefield and conduct key engagements with the Iraqi leadership, both military and civilian.

In all, it has been a successful transition with 1st Bn., 41st FA Regt. and First Lightning is now in the lead. The Soldiers continue to set new standards for excellence and the leadership has taken on their mission sets headfirst. The efforts of our Glory battalion comrades have set the stage for what will be an eventful and exciting year for the men and women of 1st Bn., 7th FA Regt. First Lightning!

LIGHTNING 6
LTC Andrew C. Gainney
LIGHTNING 7
CSM William F. Bauer



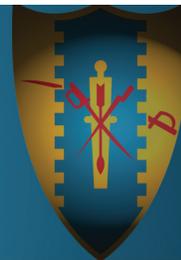
CSM WILLIAM BAUER "LIGHTNING 7"





LTC MATTHEW MOORE

“LONGKNIFE 6”



Troopers of 5-4 Cavalry Squadron and members of the Longknife family back home,

G'day, I hope everyone is well. Let me begin by saying how proud I am of the Men and Women of 5-4 CAV and the incredible work they are doing here in Iraq to support the Iraqi people and prepare them to stand on their own.

The troopers here have hit the ground running, quickly assuming the duties of our brothers in 5-7 CAV and taking their already great work forward. We are working diligently with the 2nd Federal Police Division, advising and assisting them on all security matters. In many ways, they are already extremely proficient at providing security for the people of Baghdad; we are merely helping them refine and improve their capabilities, bringing them to the next level. I am very proud of our Iraqi brothers in arms and look forward to working with them on this deployment. Together, the 2nd Federal Police Division with the full support of 5-4 CAV will deliver the security to the people of Southwestern Baghdad that they rightly deserve.



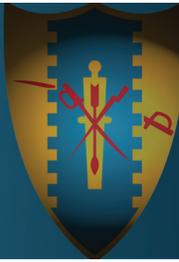
For the troopers of 5-4 CAV, we still have our work cut out for us. The Rashids, both east and west, as well as Khadamiyah remain contested. The enemy is still out there; we must remain vigilant. However, the dedication, commitment, integrity and proficiency of the cavalymen as well as the shurta and officers of the 2nd Federal Police Division are more than capable of defeating this threat and ensuring the security for the people of Iraq. Remember, as cavalymen, we make our own luck; we determine our own fate. We will accomplish our mission with honor. We will honor our comrades, our friends, brothers, sisters, fathers and mothers, who served our great armed forces and have given their lives so that others can live free of tyranny.

As the new year dawns and with the Holidays recently behind us we are reminded of the Families we left behind. We could not have done any of this without the support of the Families and friends in the United States. Your constant and diligent support has been the lifeblood of the troopers here. I thank you immensely for your words of care and dedication to our troopers as we serve. Rest assured that you are not forgotten or dismissed as we continue the difficult work of providing security for the people of Iraq. You are the foundation of everything we do. I ask that you continue to support us as you have throughout the deployment, providing your troopers with strength as we continue our mission.

Looking ahead to the year ahead of us, we will be challenged and we will be tested, but I am sure that we will return proud and victorious. We will continue to serve with honor and integrity, ensuring the safety and security for Americans and Iraqis alike. Have a wonderful and safe 2011. **PREPARED AND LOYAL!**

Longknife 6

5-4 CAVALRY REGIMENT "LONGKNIFE"



Brig. Gen. Ricky D. Gibbs, deputy commander for operations, 1st Infantry Division, and an Austin, Texas, native, reunites Dec. 18, 2010 with Dr. Moyad, a community leader and strategic partner for Gibbs during his prior deployment to Iraq in 2007-2008, outside Moyad's home. (U.S. Army photo by Spc. Daniel Stoutamire, 2nd AAB, 1st Inf. Div., USD-C)



'BIG RED ONE' DEPUTY COMMANDING GENERAL REUNITES WITH IRAQI COMMUNITY LEADER

**STORY BY CAPT. BRANDON STEVENSON
5TH SQUADRON 4TH CAVALRY REGIMENT, 1ST
INF. DIV., USD-C**

Brig. Gen. Ricky D. Gibbs, deputy commander for operations, 1st Infantry Division, reunited Dec. 18 with a noted community leader and a strategic partner during his last deployment to Iraq.

Gibbs, then a colonel, commanded the 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Inf. Div. during its 2007-2008 deployment to Baghdad. Dr. Moyad, a cardiologist for Iraq's former régime, helped Gibbs with his intricate knowledge of the Rasheed area's social, civic, and political complexities. Moreover, he shared the same ideas for improving the Rasheed district, allowing the two leaders to closely work together to bring about change in the area.

Gibbs, whose division is winding down a year-long deployment overseeing United States Division - South, was in Baghdad visiting Col. Paul Calvert, commander of 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st

Infantry Division, United States Division - Center, to check on his unit's progress, and while in the city decided to make a stop at the home of Moyad.

The atmosphere of the reunion was one of an old friend-Gibbs-making a long-awaited return to a house that he once practically lived in.

Lt. Col. Matthew Moore, commander of 5th Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd AAB, 1st Inf. Div., along with his troopers, facilitated and secured the site of the reunion between Gibbs and Moyad. Moore was an operations officer that worked closely with Moyad at the same time Gibbs was last deployed in Baghdad.

At Moyad's residence everyone shared a meal. Moyad, Gibbs, Calvert, Moore and a host of Soldiers shared stories from their previous deployments to the Rasheeds area. Lt. Col. Moore recalled the years of the surge as the "dark days" of Baghdad and marveled at the improvements that the Rasheed District has made in the past three years.

Moyad cited the Rasheeds as a case

study that underscored Moore's observation.

"Iraq must not forget or want to forget the great contribution of America to the security of Iraq," Moyad said.

When Brig. Gen. Gibbs spoke of Moyad's dedication he described him as "a true patriot of Iraq." In the years since Gibbs has last visited, Moyad has spearheaded various projects ranging from the procurement of a generator for each neighborhood of the Rasheeds to the construction of a hospital in the Doura neighborhood in east Rasheed. He has also hosted Christian reconciliation meetings and a local art show at his home.

"Dr. Moyad provided an insight into the culture of the Rasheed district for past and present unit commanders that few commanders ever have the luxury of seeing," said Moore, "Because of Dr. Moyad's ability to paint the social, civic, and political battlefield for these commanders, they have in turn been able to acutely identify and resolve problems within the Rasheeds."

Picnic tables outside of the dining facility at Joint Security Station Falcon, Iraq are unusable Dec. 14 due to flooding from a recent storm. High waters interfered with electrical wiring, shorting out power to many portions of the JSS. The flooding required wastewater pumps to remove the excess.

STORM LASHES JOINT SECURITY STATION FALCON

Story and Photos by 1st Lt. Joseph Malins, 5th Sqdn., 4th Cav. Regt., 2nd AAB, 1st Inf. Div., USD-C

Quarter-sized hail and torrential rain pummeled Soldiers and rooftops Dec. 13 at Joint Security Station Falcon, Iraq, inundating the small post with water.

The high waters tested the limits of the post's capabilities. The Soldiers, with 5th Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Infantry Division - Center, United States Division - Center, weathered the storm and repaired damage quickly.

In the end, rain and hail flooded several buildings and storage containers, and left several inches of standing water across the JSS. The water was eventually pumped out of the area by wastewater removal trucks. High waters caused a two-day power outage in the dining facility and the Morale, Welfare and Recreation area, and for the local Iraqi vendors.

Soldiers ate cold sandwiches until power was restored to the dining facility. While power was out for most local Iraqi vendors, this didn't stop the resourceful proprietor of a local falafel store from powering his equipment with extension cords strung

from a nearby housing unit.

"The rain destroyed over \$50,000 worth of equipment," said Capt. Skipper Jacobs, commander of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 5th Sqdn., 4th Cav. Regt. and JSS Falcon mayor.

It also contributed to several weeks' worth of repairing and improving the weather capability of the JSS.

"This JSS is only two months old and this is the first heavy rain we've had since moving here," Jacobs said. "This was like the first time



Sgt. Billy Thornton, an electronic warfare sergeant with 5th Squadron, 4th Cavalry Regiment, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, United States Division - Center and a Tucson, Ariz., native, picks up a handful of hail Dec. 13 after a storm pounded Joint Security Station Falcon Iraq, near Baghdad.

you take your brand new Jeep off-roading-it gets a little muddy and maybe you need to make some minor fixes, but overall the vehicle makes it through just fine."

The Soldiers manning the guard towers and protecting the JSS remained on shift throughout the entire downpour, never leaving their stations. Indeed, most Soldiers were unaffected by the heavy precipitation and missions continued uninterrupted.

Pfc. Steven Lawson, with 2nd Platoon, Company C, 5th Sqdn., 4th Cav. Regt. and a Frenchburg, Ky., native, wasn't so lucky. His housing unit collapsed due to the strain placed on it by the downpour.

"I didn't think that it rained like that in Iraq, much less hailed," Lawson said. "It caught me by surprise."

Lawson's platoon helped replace anything he lost due to the storm.

"We all pretty much took it in stride," Lawson said. "We continue our mission and move on."

299TH BRIGADE SUPPORT BATTALION “LIFELINE”



LIFELINE SOLDIERS LIVE “ANY MISSION, ANY TIME” MOTTO

STORY AND PHOTOS BY CAPT. JONATHAN BINGHAM
299TH BSB 2ND AAB 1ST INF. DIV.

BAGHDAD—At 2 a.m. on the morning of Dec. 31, lights in the 299th Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, United States Division – Center vehicle staging area



Sgt. Christopher Schamber (left), with 299th Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, United States Division – Center and a Carrollton, Mo. native, and Pfc. Shawn Conway (right), 299th BSB, 2nd AAB and a Clairmount, N.Y., native, prepare a trailer before loading an M1A1 Abrams tank at Joint Security Station Al Rashid, Iraq.

illuminated five Company A, 299th BSB Heavy Equipment Transporter systems and Soldiers, getting ready for their mission: pick up four M1A1 Abrams main battle tanks at Joint Security Station Al Rashid, Iraq, transport them across Baghdad and deliver them to Camp Taji, where the Iraqi Army tank school is relocating.

In the pre-dawn darkness the HET operators completed their preventive maintenance checks and services and pre-combat checks while rain fell and the ground turned to sticky clay and soupy mud.

The success of the mission rested heavily on the preparation prior to its start, when the operators spent hours in the motor pool completing maintenance. Without the requisite care to keep these massive systems operating safely, the tractor-trailer combination would never stand up to the punishment of hauling heavy loads of equipment through Iraq.

With roads often lined with barriers and littered with cinder blocks, an oversight on the operator’s part can have significant consequences for mission success.

Preparation for the JSS Al Rashid-to-Camp Taji mission started days before the mission for the HET operators.

HETs possess five axle lines and 40 tires, said Sgt. Marri Flores, a heavy truck driver with Company A, 299th BSB, 2nd AAB and a Richcrest, Calif., native.



Soldiers from 299th Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, United States Division – Center prepare an M1A1 Abrams tank for transport from Joint Security Station Al Rashid to Camp Taji, Iraq in support of the Iraqi Army tank school moving to its new location.

“The HET trailer is a formidable maintenance challenge,” she said. “The trailer operates on both air and hydraulic systems.”

The brakes are air-over-hydraulic, connected to the tractor via air lines, and must have adequate pressure for proper operation. The hydraulic system aids the steering of the trailer via a system that transfers the steering from the tractor to the trailer, resulting in the 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th axles steering as the trailer pivots.

“If the trailer steering mechanism is not properly aligned prior to operations it will cause...blown tires and ultimately mission failure,” said Staff Sgt. James Ray, a truck

master with Company A, 299th BSB, 2nd AAB, and Peoria, Ill. native.

Upon arrival at JSS Al Rashid, Company A’s HET operators linked up with members of Company D, 1st Battalion, 18th Infantry Regiment, 2nd AAB.

The size of the HET required that the M1A1s to be brought outside the JSS to load them. The loading of four M1A1 Abrams tanks and one M88 Hercules went smoothly, taking only an hour.

After arriving back at Victory Base Complex, the Company A HET operators conducted their weekly PMCS and got the trucks ready for the next mission.

LOGISTICS SOLDIERS ENSURE MAIL GETS DELIVERED

**STORY AND PHOTOS BY CAPT. JACQUELINE RALSTON
299TH BSB 2ND AAB 1ST INF. DIV.**

Some individuals may be familiar with variations of the old saying that declares despite rain, snow, sleet or hail, the mail must be delivered. However, for the Soldiers running postal operations for the 299th Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, United States Division – Center at Camp Liberty, Iraq, the reality they face is a little different—rain, mud, dust or heat.

The mail clerks of the battalion, led by Staff Sgt. Barbara Robb, noncommissioned officer-in-charge of personnel with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 299th BSB, 2nd AAB and a Staten Island, N.Y., native, work every day—picking up mail from the Joint Military Mail Terminal at Baghdad International Airport, transporting it to the battalion headquarters, sorting and distributing it, ensuring Soldiers receive their letters and packages regardless of the weather conditions.

“With the Christmas season upon us, we are busier than ever,” Robb said. “The (unit personnel section) is pushing packages out as quickly as we get them in. The Soldiers are working hard to ensure everyone receives their notes and care packages from loved ones back home.”

“It is always great to see Soldiers finding out they have mail,” said Spc. Deanna Francois, primary mail clerk with 299th BSB, 2nd AAB and a Junction City, Kan., native. “I love seeing the smiles on their faces when they receive it.”

“Getting mail at Christmastime is even more significant than getting it throughout the year because it shows that people are thinking about us over here,” said Sgt. Nathan Allen, with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 299th BSB, 2nd AAB and a Joplin, Mo. native. “It definitely helps us get through the holidays.” Allen received a package from a family who adopted

him through the “Adopt a Soldier” program, he said.

The mail room Soldiers of the 299th BSB, 2nd AAB said they have processed and delivered more than 700 packages and letters since arriving in theater last month.

In addition, the mail clerks coordinate with other battalions within the brigade to ensure that Soldiers from the 299th BSB, who are located on remote forward operating bases, are receiving their mail as well.

“There are a lot of loved ones back home who are taking time to send us mail,” Francois said. “I want them to know how much we appreciate it and look forward to seeing our names on envelopes and boxes. It really helps us feel their encouragement and love, even though we are far away.”



Spc. Andrew Lee, a mail clerk with 299th Brigade Support Battalion, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, United States Division – Center and an Antlers, Okla., native, organizes packages inside the battalion mailroom Dec. 8 at Camp Liberty, Iraq.



LTC DALE FARRAND

“LIFELINE 6”



Greetings residents of Lifeline Land!

On Dec. 3, the 299th Brigade Support Battalion for the fourth time has assumed responsibility for sustaining the Dagger brigade in Iraq. For the first time since the battalion first deployed in February 2004, it is participating in Operation New Dawn instead of Operation Iraqi Freedom. The name of the operation is significant. Dawn is the beginning of a new day and this is a new day, unlike any Iraq has seen before. Since we are one of the only brigades in Baghdad, that also means we are one of the only brigade support battalions operating in the area. The Lifeline Soldiers have adapted well to our new mission.

HHC Headhunters still have the Combat Logistics Patrol Security Detachment in their ranks and they will log a lot of miles in Iraq – with 11 CLPs and nearly 2400 miles driven already. In addition, the Headhunters are running the newly named “Lifeline Land” Dining Facility that feeds over 3,000 service members and civilians a day, and finally they are taking care of the work and living space for the battalion.

Company A, Atlas, is performing the function of a sustainment brigade. They are running a supply support activity five times the size of the warehouse at Fort Riley, supporting and running an ammunition supply point that receives and ships ammunition across the planet and running a 3.5 million gallon fuel farm that supports all of Baghdad. If that isn't enough, they are out there with the CSD delivering supplies whenever called upon.

Company B Bandits have set up a maintenance facility that can support Baghdad for automotive, missile, communications, electronics, small



arms, ground support, and metal working requirements. If it is a broken piece of Army equipment, they can fix it – and they do. The Bandits also maintain all of our IED jamming equipment and whenever there is a CLP on the road, Bandit Recovery is rolling with them.

The Death Stealers of Company C have taken responsibility for the recently reopened Riva Ridge Medical Treatment Facility. In addition to looking after Dagger Soldiers' bodies, they provide all medical supplies, dental, physical therapy, and behavioral health care to Dagger Soldiers in ten locations across Baghdad and they have probably the most well-travelled section in the brigade: preventive medicine.

Finally, we have begun a partnership with the six divisions of Iraqi Security Forces that are in charge of securing Baghdad and believe me, the ISF are in charge. They are extremely good at what they do and we are helping them get better every day. It is truly an honor for us to get to work side by side with another group of uniformed professionals.

CSM Franklin Jordan and I are extremely proud of the speed and effectiveness with which the Lifeline battalion came in and took responsibility from the 3rd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Infantry Division. All Soldiers are settled in and actively providing support to over 30,000 coalition service members and civilians across Baghdad. That's nine times the population we normally support in the Dagger brigade. We are also extremely grateful for what our wonderful Family Readiness Group volunteers and rear detachment are doing to care for the Families, and ultimately the Soldiers of Lifeline. We look forward to seeing them when our mission here is complete.

Lifeline 6



LTC SHILISA GETER

“GRIFFIN 6”



After nearly three months on the ground in Baghdad, I can say proudly that the Griffin Soldiers have performed magnificently. No matter how complex or diverse the mission, Griffin Soldiers consistently get the job done. Command Sgt. Maj. Washington and I been able to travel all over Baghdad visiting you while you provide critical intelligence support to our maneuver forces, maintain signal communications throughout the brigade's operational environment, keep our roads safe for convoys through aggressive route clearance operations, provide food service to various and disparate locations, and many various other unique missions. You are doing all of this with the professionalism and pride that we've come to expect you.

We are reminded continuously of how important each and every one of you are to this mission. Without you at the point of the Dagger, this brigade couldn't do what it does. Never forget that.

The first Medal of Honor



winner from this campaign in Iraq was not an infantryman or tanker. He was an engineer: Sgt. 1st Class Paul R. Smith, MOH. It is something to consider when we reflect on how important the various missions of the STB are. In the tradition of Sgt. 1st Class Smith, we encourage all of you to stand proud. Continue to do your duty and strive for nothing less than excellence each day.

To our dear Families, we are constantly thankful for your support, especially entering the new year. The Family Readiness Group leaders especially deserve our thanks and praise for the hard work they do and dedication they display every day. To all our Families maintaining the home front and taking care of our little ones, we owe you a debt of gratitude.

For the forward deployed sol-

diers in our ranks, let's work hard every day to make our Families proud!

Before signing off, Command Sgt. Maj. Washington and I want to leave you with a final thought for both the Soldiers over here and our Families back home. Let's make the most of this deployment. Though the pain of separation can sting at times, there are opportunities to make something beneficial out of these next ten months. Let's not let these opportunities pass us by! Let's keep the channels of communication open and strengthen our relationships by talking through our relationship challenges and making plans to improve our family life once we reunite. Let's establish budgets, keep our spending well within our means, and try to save some of that extra combat pay in our banks for a rainy day. Let's work on our spiritual lives by growing in prayer and patience, so that we can all meet the challenges ahead. Rest assured, some challenges do remain ahead of us. We can do this!

Griffin 6 and Griffin 7

2-1 SPECIAL TROOPS BN. "GRIFFINS"



Staff Sgt. Henry Pogue (left), a military police officer with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Special Troops Battalion, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, and a Vine Grove, Ky., native, takes a break to look at a bear Dec. 23 during a mission escorting Provincial Reconstruction Team – Baghdad around the Baghdad Zoo.

GRIFFINS ESCORT PROVINCIAL RECONSTRUCTION TEAM TO BAGHDAD ZOO

Story and photo by Cpl. Stephen Rouss and Staff Sgt. Richard Matte
2nd AAB, 1st Inf., Div., USD-C

When the word “Army” is mentioned, most Americans envision firefights, tanks and flanking maneuvers, but in Iraq one of the Army’s primary missions is to help the Iraqi people stabilize their infrastructure.

Provincial reconstruction teams provide the Iraqi government with resources and technical knowledge to aid in rebuilding the country.

Soldiers with Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Special Troops Battalion, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, United States Division – Center have been assigned to protect the members of the Provincial

Reconstruction Team – Baghdad. The various missions assigned to the Soldiers of HHC, STB, 2nd AAB take them through many parts of Baghdad.

“Walking along the road, Baghdad can appear bedraggled and run down,” said Staff Sgt. Henry Pogue, a squad leader with HHC, STB, 2nd AAB and a Vine Grove, Ky., native. “However, lately the citizens of Baghdad have been re-emerging from the streets more vigorous and prepared for the future.”

One of the squad’s most recent missions was escorting PRT-B to the Baghdad Zoo—a popular attraction before Operation Iraqi Freedom.

The purpose of PRT-B’s visit was to evaluate the safety of the zoo and ensure that the organization running the facility was self-sufficient, Pogue said.

“While we all expected old buildings and sand dunes, what we found was truly a sight to behold,” said Spc. Katrina Carpenter, a military police officer with HHC, STB, 2nd AAB and a Columbia, Ga., native. “It looked just like any zoo in the United States. Iraqi citizens and United States forces were working side-by-side to rebuild and maintain the place.”

Once inside the grounds, the Soldiers were greeted by the guards. The staff ushered the Soldiers onto the grounds and showed the troops the exhibits and they all shared a meal. As the Soldiers looked around the zoo, Iraqi families strolled past the exhibits, seemingly unconcerned by the presence of the Soldiers.

“The children were so excited to see all the animals,” Pogue said. “Children were asking us our favorite soccer team and asked how we enjoyed their city.”

The officials with PRT-B found the zoo to be operating effectively on its own, having improved considerably since the team’s last visit.

“Of all the missions 2nd squad has conducted, the escort mission to the zoo was the most pleasant and what the squad witnessed in their visit seems to make the last several years worth it,” Pogue said. “The Iraqi people are growing and striving as a society and a community, trying to make their lives better as well as the lives of their children.”

STB SOLDIERS RECEIVE COMBAT PATCHES

Photos by Sgt. Joseph Weichel, STB, 2nd AAB, 1st Inf. Div.



Soldiers with the 94th Military Police Company, Special Troops Battalion, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, United States Division – Center stand in formation Dec. 31 while Command Sgt. Maj. Verne Washington (second from right), command sergeant major of STB, 2nd AAB and a New York City native, places a 1st Infantry Division shoulder sleeve insignia – former wartime service, commonly known as a combat patch, on their right shoulders at Camp Liberty, Iraq.



Lt. Col. Shilisa Geter (center), commander of Special Troops Battalion, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, United States Division – Center and a McRae, Ga. native, awards the 1st Infantry Division shoulder sleeve insignia – former wartime service, commonly known as a combat patch, to Cpl. Russell Withrow (right), a Milton, Mass., native, Dec. 31 at Camp Liberty, Iraq.

MP UNIT GRADUATES IRAQI INVESTIGATORS FROM CRIMINAL JUSTICE CENTER



BAGHDAD—Soldiers with the 94th Military Police Company, Special Troops Battalion, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, United States Division – Center stand in formation Dec. 30 during a graduation ceremony for Iraqi investigators at the Criminal Justice Center in Baghdad. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Joseph Weichel, 2nd AAB, 1st Inf. Div., USD-C)



BAGHDAD—Graduates of the Criminal Justice Center in Baghdad receive a motivational and congratulatory speech Dec. 30 before taking their new knowledge to the streets of Iraq. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Joseph Weichel, 2nd AAB, 1st Inf. Div., USD-C)



Stepping up to the plate

'DAGGER' PARTNER UNIT SHOWCASES ABILITIES COMPLEX LIVE-FIRE EXERCISE AT QA'QAA RANGE

STORY BY SPC. DANIEL STOUTAMIRE, 2ND AAB, 1ST INF. DIV., USD-C

BAGHDAD—When President Barack Obama announced in August 2010 the transition of the American mission in Iraq from a combat mission to one of advising and assisting Iraqi Security Forces, a key part of that decision being trust in their readiness to close and engage the enemy independently. On Nov. 30, ISF leaders and soldiers proved themselves worthy of that trust.

Elements of the Iraqi Army's 17th Division, along with aviation assets from the Iraqi Air Force, successfully planned, resourced, and ran a complex live-fire

exercise at Qa'qaa range—formerly Qa'qaa weapons facility—south of Baghdad.

U.S. leaders and Soldiers present at the event were strictly there in an advisory role.

"This has been what everybody is working up to, is this type of event," said Capt. Daniel La-Bar, fire support officer with 2nd Battalion, 7th Infantry Regiment, 1st Advise and Assist Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, United States Division - Center, and a Harleysville, Pa., native. "This is what we've been advising, training, and assisting the Iraqi Security Forces

on—for this year and a lot longer—getting them up to this point where they can demonstrate how much training they've been doing."

Using a combined-arms approach, the 17th Division opened the exercise by firing mortars to clear potential defenses. This barrage was followed by IqAF helicopters firing missiles and evasive flares, before other helicopters landed with commando elements in an air-assault maneuver.

Simultaneously, forces from the 17th IA division assaulted a second target location. Finally, IqAF helicopters used smoke to shield the area where they picked up the commando team.

LaBar said the operations went smoothly, and the ISF added some complex elements to the final operation that had not been anticipated by U.S. advisers.

HANDING OVER THIS TYPE OF EVENT ON THE FIRST DAY OF RELIEF IN PLACE IS ESSENTIAL TO CONTINUING THIS TYPE OF EFFORT

"There are a lot of events that happened today that we didn't expect-(like the) downed pilot scenario," he said. "I've been here for two rehearsals, and I haven't seen them rehearse that. That's exactly something that a US force would prepare for, too."

An Iraqi squadron commander was similarly impressed by his Soldiers' execution of the exercise.

"I feel very happy," he said. "I see my army becoming very strong, and we have powerful army aviation."

Lt. Col. Gregory Sierra, commander of 2nd Bn., 7th Inf. Regt., 1st AAB, 3rd Inf. Div., said this exercise was the culmination of a yearlong partnership with the 17th IA division.

Back in January we were conducting an

aerial reconnaissance (mission) with (17th IA division commander) General Ali and there were a couple of different objectives we talked about-this being one of them-do-

ing a combined live fire at Qa'qaa training range," Sierra said. "He planned, resourced and executed this training on his own, so it's an amazing growth over the course of the year."

In attendance were representatives of the unit who will be partnering with the 17th IA division over the next year, the 1st Battalion, 63rd Armor Regiment, 2nd Advise and Assist Brigade, 1st Infantry Division, that will be replacing the 2nd Bn., 7th Inf. Regt., 1st AAB, 3rd Inf. Div. LaBar says they are now fully aware of the capabilities of the unit they will be advising.

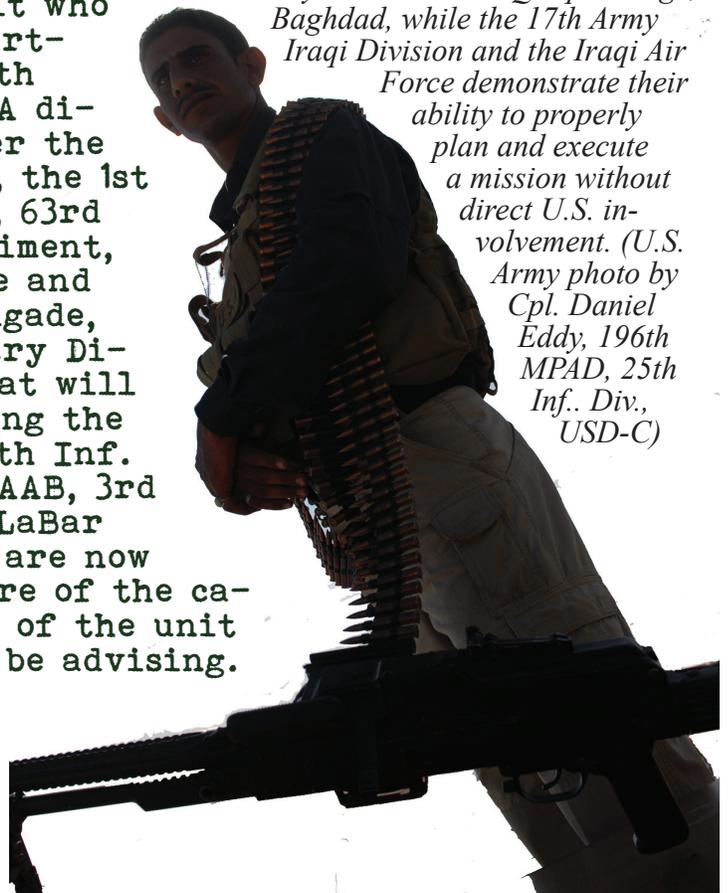
"Handing over this type of event on

the first day of (relief in place) is (essential) to continuing this type of effort," he said. "(1st Bn., 63rd Armor Regt.) will know exactly what the 17th IA Division is capable of, and they know what they are going to be pushing for, as far as training for the future."

LaBar said, in addition, that the exercise was observed by several Iraqi Ministry of Defense officials.

"Iraqis showing Iraqis," he said, "this is the kind of thing they can do."

An Iraqi security guard stands on duty Nov. 29 at the Qa'qaa range, Baghdad, while the 17th Army Iraqi Division and the Iraqi Air Force demonstrate their ability to properly plan and execute a mission without direct U.S. involvement. (U.S. Army photo by Cpl. Daniel Eddy, 196th MPAD, 25th Inf. Div., USD-C)





THE DAGGER EDGE

